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<https://www.winnipegfreepress.com/breakingnews/2022/10/07/jets-impressive-in-pre-season-finale>

Jets impressive in pre-season finale Bowness has players contributing in all aspects of game

By: Mike McIntyre

CALGARY — It's a fool's game to suggest the pre-season is an accurate predictor of how a hockey team might perform once the puck drops for real. Plenty of clubs look like contenders during dress rehearsals, then immediately get a case of stage fright once the bright lights come on.

Still, the Winnipeg Jets we watched on Friday night at Scotiabank Saddledome — and through much of the past two weeks, in fact — sure look like a group poised to make some noise.

"We've got a great team here. We do," coach Rick Bowness said following an impressive 5-3 victory over the Calgary Flames which highlighted many of the ways this group can be dangerous. "We're going to continue to get better. We believe in ourselves and it's going to be a fun year."

It starts in goal, where Connor Hellebuyck was his usual rock-solid self, stopping 35 of 38 shots he faced. Tyler Toffoli on a highlight reel tick-tack-toe play, Blake Coleman off a lucky bounce and Nazem Kadri on a one-timer were the only ones to beat him.

It extends to the new-look top line of Mark Scheifele, Kyle Connor and Nikolaj Ehlers, who all lit the lamp and have the potential to be one of the most potent trios in the league.

"Starting to come together. Last two games were pretty good," Scheifele said. "A lot of speed, a lot of skill. We're excited to get going."

It includes Pierre-Luc Dubois, who sure looked the part of a dominant power forward in potting a pair of first-period goals. Unfortunately, he exited the contest after 20 minutes with a lower-body injury and didn't return. After the game, Dubois was in the dressing joking around with teammates looking none the worse for wear, and Bowness confirmed it was simply a precautionary move given the low-stakes of the contest.

It also involves special teams, which were once again stellar. Winnipeg went 4-for-4 on the penalty kill, following up a 6-for-6 night in Wednesday's 5-0 triumph over Calgary at Canada Life Centre. They scored a shorthanded goal, and also went 1-for-4 on the power play after a 3-for-5 effort 48 hours earlier.

Yes, there was plenty to like as Winnipeg finished the exhibition slate with a flourish, going 4-1-1 in six games. Which, along with a couple bucks, will get you a cup of coffee. The record, of course, now reverts to 0-0-0 with the 82-game regular-season set to get underway next Friday when the New York Rangers pay a visit to Canada Life Centre.

"It's a fun time to get ready for the season now. Training camp is more or less behind us," said Bowness.

Before we put the pre-season in the rear-view mirror, here's some news and notes, analysis and quotes from what went down in the finale:

1 Just as they did Wednesday, both teams dressed close to their A lineups, which makes Winnipeg's performance even more impressive. The Flames are being touted as a legitimate Stanley Cup contender, with the likes of Jacob Markstrom, Kadri, Jonathan Huberdeau, Elias Lindholm leading the way. The Jets are being overlooked by most pundits, given little chance of being much more than a team fighting tooth and nail just to grab a wild-card spot. Yet Winnipeg took the two-game series by a combined 10-3 margin.

2 Does Cole Perfetti have a target on his back? The 20-year-old Jets forward was boarded by Kadri in Wednesday's game and was lucky not to be injured. Kadri was given a minor penalty. On Friday, Dillon Dube crushed him from behind on the numbers — and didn't even go to the sin bin. Blake Wheeler and Morgan Barron, who jumped to his defence, were penalized. Perfetti was shaken up but remained in the game.

3 Scheifele and Connor killing penalties? Together?! Bowness gave it a look Friday, and the duo quickly combined for a beautiful shorthanded goal. As the saying goes, the best defence is a good offence. You wonder if this experiment will carry over into the season?

"I haven't done much of it, but the coaches have done a great job of helping me and teaching me positioning and stuff like that," said Scheifele. "It's exciting for me to play something I haven't really played since I got to the NHL. It's something I take pride in."

4 Bowness wants the Jets to be aggressive on the forecheck, and it was noticeable in this one. They were buzzsaws in the Calgary end, and it was interesting to see how many times defencemen jumped into the play, and were quickly covered by forwards falling back. Ehlers, Connor and Scheifele, not exactly known for their work in the defensive end, all made solid contributions in this department.

"Each game we've done a decent job of it. We're still trying to get a handle on it," said blue-liner Dylan DeMelo, who had a pair of assists in the game and joked that he should "buy a lottery ticket" given he's not exactly known for offence. "That's something we have to continue to work on. It's a bit of a change for our group. The D (last year) were more stay-at-home."

5 The Jets made two cuts earlier in the day, reducing the active roster to 25 skaters. Rookie sensation Brad Lambert is heading to the Manitoba Moose, where the 18-year-old should be given plenty of opportunity to shine. He impressed in his first NHL camp, but a little more seasoning at this stage seems like the smart play. Defenceman Johnathan Kovacevic was the other casualty, and the organization is holding its collective breath that he clears waivers by this afternoon. It would be a shame to lose an asset for nothing, and Kovacevic is on the cusp of being an NHLer.

6 It's hard to get a sense of which two players might still be on the outside looking in. Mason Appleton and Sam Gagner were the forward scratches Friday. Appleton has a minor upper-body injury but is expected to be ready for the season opener, while Gagner is a veteran who didn't need another look. Depending on the health of Dubois, you'd think one forward of Dominic Toninato, Saku Maenalanen and Jansen Harkins are likely out, but time will tell.

7 On the blue line, it was noteworthy the three healthy scratches were Kyle Capobianco, Logan Stanley and Dylan Samberg. It's a safe bet one of those three will be cut. Capobianco, who would have to go on waivers, is most likely.

"Competition is good, internal competition is good," said DeMelo. "We have a lot of guys that maybe won't be in on opening night that can contribute."

8 Ville Heinola was paired with Nate Schmidt on Friday, a first-time look for the duo Bowness wanted to see tested against strong competition. That would seem to give Heinola the nod over Stanley and Samberg when it comes to a job in the top six, but Bowness wasn't ready to declare that just yet.

"We're going to have to sort that out in the next couple days. We've got some tough decisions to make. There's no question," said Bowness. "No one has played their way out of here."

9 Kudos to defenceman Josh Morrissey, who spoke his mind Friday on Hockey Canada's role in multiple sexual assault scandals and their refusal, so far, to make sweeping changes at the highest level. He called the current situation a black mark on the sport's governing body.

"As someone who has played for Hockey Canada, grown up here in Canada, it's really disappointing and I hope going forward the right change is in place so we can have a better game for kids and everyone in the system," said the Calgary native.

"Change can come in different ways. Fortunately the way that major sponsors have put their foot in the ground and demanded change, that's what you need, really. I think it's a really courageous thing and the type of initiative on those companies' behalves to ask for that change."

10 The Jets will enjoy a day off today in Banff, with plenty of team bonding on the menu. Morrissey and teammate Adam Lowry, also a Calgarian, have been tasked with event planning. Then it's three straight days of practice, starting Sunday, in the mountain town before heading home.

Winnipeg Sun

<https://winnipeg.sun.com/sports/hockey/nhl/winnipeg-jets/jets-wrap-up-preseason-with-win-against-flames>

Jets wrap up preseason with win against Flames

By Scott Billeck

CALGARY — Rick Bowness won't be sweating the small stuff after departing the Saddledome in Calgary on Friday night.

Over the past eight periods of hockey — all against the Flames in a home-and-home set to close out each team's respective exhibition slate — the new Winnipeg Jets head coach's squad has done most of what he's been teaching during the past couple of weeks.

It's resulted in two wins, including the latest 5-3 effort in Alberta on Friday. And while it hasn't been perfect at times, the Jets seemed primed to head into the regular season all pulling in the right direction.

Bowness was left to sweat Pierre-Luc Dubois exiting the game after the first period.

Dubois sniped a pair of goals as Winnipeg etched out a 3-1 lead after 20 minutes on Friday, but he didn't emerge for the second period and was subsequently ruled out for the remainder of the evening with a lower-body ailment.

"It was more precautionary than anything," Bowness said. "He's had something lower body that's been bothering him a little bit that flared up. This morning he was fine, yesterday he was fine. It flared up a little bit in the first so it was precautionary. I'm not concerned. He'll be ready to go Friday night."

It makes sense to be extremely cautious with any injury during a meaningless game, with a teaming bonding trip to Banff beginning on Saturday, and with a week before opening night back at Canada Life Centre hosting the New York Rangers.

Dubois's injury aside, Winnipeg played a game they'll want to see in a week's time.

Jets opening roster coming into focus

They were very good defensively, and while they want more shot volume at the other end and less at theirs — Calgary outshot Winnipeg 38-16 — they'll take solace in the fact they're scoring in droves, and finding it from their big guns, with Mark Scheifele, Kyle Connor and Nikolaj Ehlers also notching markers on the night.

"Really good," Bowness said. "They probably got 10 shots in the first period they just gained the blue line and threw it at the net. We will give up that. We will. If they are Grade-A chances, that's a whole other argument."

For what it's worth in preseason, and it may not mean much when the real games begin next week, the Jets only lost the expected goals battle once (on Friday) and never allowed more high-danger — those Grade-A chances — than they generated.

Also: that line — Scheifele centring Connor and Ehlers — has looked dominant in their games so far. That line will be a problem for everyone they face.

Details are right

It may be one of Connor Hellebuyck's go-to quotes at times (he saved 35 on the night, but the way), but it was spot on in Calgary on Friday.

The little things will matter for the Jets if they are to find success this season under Bowness's regime, and they were following his new-look system to a tee during the game.

Perhaps the most promising of all was watching Scheifele move back to the point to cover off a pinching Josh Morrissey mid-way through the first period.

It was a nothing play in the grand scheme of things, but for all the flak that Scheifele has taken for his lack of defensive play in the past, he noticed his blue-liner pressing up the ice and dropped back to cover him off.

"We're still trying to get a handle on it," said defenceman Dylan DeMelo, who had two assists Friday. "A couple of times we did have some breakdowns and some two-on-ones, things of that nature, where we maybe just missed our coverage or it wasn't the right time to join, things like that. That's something we're going to have to continue to work on. It's a bit of a change for our group."

Bowness wants activation from his rearguard this season, vocally unhappy the Jets were in the basement in terms of offensive production last season with a paltry 24 goals. Bowness wants that number nearly doubled this season.

In turn, he needs his forwards to recognize when his defencemen are making a move, and for many, seeing Scheifele aware of it will go a long way.

It's all a bit rudimentary when you think of it, but the Jets have been a wayward bunch for several years now, often giving up odd-man chances because the fundamentals of the game haven't been adhered to.

It's clear that Bowness's voice is resonating from the very top of the roster down.

"A big part of the NHL today is that it's a four-man attack and you watch Calgary, their D are coming all of the time and our D are going to come," Bowness said. "We need more shots from our D and we need them to keep coming up. The other thing is we got to get our forwards looking for them. There were times that they were wide-open coming down and the forwards just didn't see them coming. We'll continue to work on that."

These may be preseason games, but the Jets have faced two strong Calgary rosters while icing their own similarly matched squads and played them well.

Everyone on Winnipeg's top line of Connor, Ehlers and Scheifele was backchecking en masse on Friday. It's been the case all preseason.

Again, it's elementary hockey, but the Jets have missed too many classes in recent memory.

They are paying attention heading into the regular season, finishing 4-1-1 in preseason action. Stringing together some results should only strengthen their resolve to not cheat the game.

Special teams on point

How's 10-for-10 on the penalty kill sound over the past six periods?

What about a potent 4-for-9 on the power play in the same span?

With the same old preseason caveat, Winnipeg's special teams look quite good at the moment.

The biggest thing is the team's movement, and it helps to have Ehlers in for Blake Wheeler. The power play is far less predictable, if it is at all anymore.

Perfetti boarded again

For the second time in as many games, and second time by the same team, Jets young gun Cole Perfetti was drilled right on the numbers into the boards.

Inexplicably, on Friday, it wasn't called... even with one of the referees sitting in the front row for the show.

Nazem Kadri was the guilty party on Wednesday, with Dillon Dube picking right up where Kadri left off with his third-period wallop of the 20-year-old Jets 2020 first-rounder.

For what it's worth, Wheeler and Morgan Barron jumped in to defend Perfetti. Calgary somehow got a power play out of the deal, but Dube was tagged with a make-up roughing call a couple of minutes later.

"I talked to the players after the game. You take a run at one of us, you take a run at all of us," Bowness said. "We'll kill those penalties. We're not going to hesitate to stick up for each other.

"I think with Cole we have to teach him not to put himself in those positions. Some of the onus is on the guy that's getting hit. A lot of the onus is on the guy finishing his check. But if you turn at the last second, sometimes you're a little bit responsible. But no matter up, we'll be sticking up for each other."

<https://winnipeg.sun.com/sports/hockey/nhl/winnipeg-jets/snapshots-morrissey-weighs-in-on-hockey-canada-mess-jets-cut-two>

SNAPSHOTS: Morrissey weighs in on Hockey Canada mess; Jets cut two

By Scott Billeck

Winnipeg Jets defenceman Josh Morrissey has donned the red and white of Team Canada in the past, including winning gold for the country at the 2015 world junior hockey championships.

And he's been more than proud to do so.

But when it comes to Hockey Canada, the game's embattled governing body — marred with scandal and controversy at the moment — Morrissey is only seeing black.

"It's a troubling situation," Morrissey said Friday. "I think at the end of the day, it's a real black mark on Hockey Canada right now. I think based on the reception in the media and whatnot, there has been some reckoning."

Morrissey, like many kids in this country, has played under the Hockey Canada umbrella.

"It's really disappointing and I hope going forward the right change is in place so we can have a better game for kids and everyone in the system," he said.

Much of the reckoning Winnipeg's top blue-liner alluded to has come just this week with major sponsors, including Tim Hortons, Scotiabank, Canadian Tire and Esso, pulling their funding going forward — a courageous statement, according to Morrissey.

"Change can come in different ways," Morrissey said. "Fortunately the way that major sponsors have put their foot in the ground and demanded change, that's what you need, really. Everyone understands that's the way that you can enact change. Major sponsors carry a lot of the weight within an organization and the way an organization can run.

"I think it's a really courageous thing and the type of initiative on those companies' behalves to ask for that change. If they're not happy with someone they're sponsoring, and the way it's been running, then to make a big statement that's been heard all around the country."

On a lighter note, Morrissey, along with Jets forward Adam Lowry, have been tasked with many of the plans for the team while they enjoy some bonding time together in Banff over the Thanksgiving weekend.

That sort of thing comes with a bit of pressure to make sure everyone has a good time.

"I'm excited to get the guys out there and have them see a pretty cool part of the world that I think you kind of take for granted when you live in Calgary," said Morrissey, who hails from the southern Alberta city. "Every year when I get back after the season it's like, 'Oh yeah there are mountains right there.' After a week you forget they're even there. It'll be fun to do that. The pressure is on us, so hopefully, the guys have a good time and we show them a good experience."

The bonding experience is something the team couldn't do as much during the COVID-19 pandemic. And with a new head coach, a new system and some new faces in the locker room, there will be a chance to work on the on- and off-ice produce during their three-day stay.

"The closer you are as a team, the better," Morrissey said. "You have a bunch of guys coming together to try to win, try to see what we can do, and try to build something here. When you can have opportunities to spend time together as a group, get to know each other better. When you're at home or into the season, everyone has their own lives going on and things like that, older guys with kids, younger guys just figuring out the league, so it's nice to get everyone together and have that bonding experience in a non-pressure environment before the season and build those relationships.

"I don't think you can measure how important it is. It's something we're really trying to make a point of doing a lot more this year."

Gus Bus happy to be parked with Jets

When Jets training camp began around this time last season, David Gustafsson was in a much different spot.

Already on the outside looking in — planted on the team's fifth line — the writing seemed to be on the wall. He wasn't in then-head coach Paul Maurice's initial plans.

A year later, the prose changed. He's been cemented at centre on the fourth line and it's a job he's won without question.

"It's always nice to see you're one line above where you were last year," the 22-year-old Swede said on Friday. "That's the direction you want to be moving. In the end, it doesn't matter what line you're on in training camp. It all matters where you end up after training camp. There have been some guys that have been on the fifth line and made the team. But there is some psychological thing when you're one line above where you were last year. It's nice to see."

Lambert to Moose, Kovacevic on waivers

One of Winnipeg's biggest standouts in this year's training camp will be heading to the Manitoba Moose to start the season.

Finnish prospect forward Brad Lambert was released to the Moose on Friday as the Jets made a couple of roster moves ahead of it needing to be trimmed down to 23 by Monday's deadline.

Lambert had a solid camp, showing he doesn't need time spent in junior hockey with the Seattle Thunderbirds. The 18-year-old will get a chance to hone his skills in the American Hockey League, and is expected to command a lot of ice time while doing so.

Meanwhile, defensive Jonathan Kovacevic has been placed on waivers.

If he makes it through, he will be sent to the Moose as well. The Jets will likely be sweating the move until they find out Saturday afternoon if the 25-year-old former third-round pick makes it through.

Sportsnet.ca

<https://www.sportsnet.ca/nhl/article/jets-pre-season-wrap-six-things-that-stand-out-ahead-of-2022-23-campaign/>

Jets pre-season wrap: Six things that stand out ahead of 2022-23 campaign

By Ken Wiebe

CALGARY — Now that the dress rehearsals have come to a close, it's time to sort through what Rick Bowness and his staff have learned about this edition of the Winnipeg Jets and what the final roster decisions will be.

Friday's 5-3 win over the Calgary Flames left the Jets with a 4-1-2 record after six pre-season games, but what history has taught us is that those results won't play much of a role when the curtain actually raises next Friday at Canada Life Centre with a game against the New York Rangers.

That's not to say nothing that transpired over the past two weeks and change didn't matter, quite the contrary actually.

The work done between games is equally important, but those dress rehearsals revealed plenty of things when it comes to roster construction and how prepared this group is to execute the aggressive systems that are now being implemented.

"We've got a great team here. We do. We're going to continue to get better," said Bowness. "We believe in ourselves and it's going to be a fun year."

After all of the talk about the importance of ownership and the veterans needing to lead the way, there's little question the Jets top guns played their best hockey when the opposing lineups improved during the final two games.

Whether it was Pierre-Luc Dubois scoring twice before exiting with a lower-body injury for precautionary reasons or Kyle Connor ripping home a one-timer, then setting up Mark Scheifele for a shorthanded goal (no, that is not a misprint) or Nikolaj Ehlers scoring a bank shot from

below the goal line, the offence is being led by the folks who are expected to be driving the bus this season.

“Yeah probably wasn't our prettiest. A little sloppy, got away from us a little bit in second but we capitalized on our chances, which was great,” said Scheifele. “I think we're all happy to get training camp over with on a winning note.”

The Jets will spend the next four days in Banff as part of a team-building experience that will also include three practices.

Here are some thoughts on what stood out during training camp:

The defence is still crowded

The blue line has been under the microscope since training camp began and the truth of the matter is the competition may continue through four practices next week.

Ville Heinola got the final game-speed opportunity on Friday, skating alongside Nate Schmidt on the third pairing, as Dylan Samberg, Logan Stanley watched patiently from the sidelines.

It was a relatively quiet night for Heinola — and that's not necessarily a bad thing since there were a few times during training camp when a mistake ended up in the back of the net with him on the ice.

While Heinola was on the ice for the Flames' third goal from Nazem Kadri, he finished with one shot and took 24 shifts for 15:30 of work, including 51 seconds on the power play.

Heinola was part of a three D-man second unit during a third-period power play, and for a team looking to activate their blue-liners with regularity, he's got the skill set to contribute in that area.

Even after six pre-season games, it's still too early to tell which blue-liner won the competition for the sixth spot, and Bowness wasn't about to show his hand on Friday.

“We're going to have to sort that out in the next couple of days,” said Bowness. “They're mobile and...we've got some tough decisions to make. There's no question.”

Jets defenceman Dylan DeMelo was asked for an assessment of what he's seen from those on the blue line so far.

“Probably just how deep we are. We have a lot of guys that maybe won't be in on opening night that can contribute,” said DeMelo, who had two assists and is set to open the campaign on the top pairing with Josh Morrissey. “Competition is good, internal competition is good. Even up front, a lot of guys are playing hard and doing a lot of good things. It's exciting for our team that we have guys that are developing and can help the team immediately.

The number of D-men in camp was reduced by one to nine on Friday afternoon when Johnny Kovacevic was placed on waivers.

Kovacevic, 25, could draw some interest on the waiver wire, but one thing to remember is that the three-year deal he signed this off-season (that includes a substantial AHL salary in the first two seasons - \$150,000 and \$250,000 - and a one-way deal in the final campaign) could either serve as a deterrent or an incentive to a team putting in a claim.

That's not said to sit on the fence, it just depends on the perspective of the team showing interest, as it could be viewed as cost certainty or a major commitment.

Speaking of the waiver wire

Although the Jets still have one decision to make when it comes to the 13th forward job, it will be interesting to see if the organization shows any interest in Mattias Janmark.

Bowness is familiar with Janmark from his time with the Stars and while he doesn't produce much offensively, he is a conscientious and versatile forward with 420 NHL games of experience (including three seasons of double-digit goal production).

Janmark, 29, signed a one-year deal with the Oilers during the off-season worth \$1.25 million but was placed on waivers Friday with the purpose of assigning him to the Bakersfield Condors of the AHL.

Other depth forwards that could generate interest on the wire include Jordan Martinook of the Carolina Hurricanes and Andreas Johnsson of the New Jersey Devils.

Johnsson has one more season left at \$3.4 million, while Martinook has two years left on his deal that carries an average annual value of \$1.8 million.

The pack mentality

For the second time in as many games, Jets forward Cole Perfetti was on the receiving end of a heavy hit from a Flames forward.

This time it was Dillon Dube who appeared to catch Perfetti on the numbers, prompting a melee.

"Of course, but I love our response. I talked to the players after the game. You take a run at one of us, you take a run at all of us. We'll kill those penalties," said Bowness. "We're not going to hesitate to stick up for each other. Group mentality. We're a team, and we're going to stick up for each other. We're a family. If they take a run at one of us, they take a run at all of us. It's as simple as that."

The Jets don't have a designated tough guy, but they aren't going to be backing down either.

"It's going to have to be by committee. Obviously we have guys that can handle themselves better than others," said DeMelo. "You don't have to go in there and start brawling everybody. As long as you're in there in numbers and getting in the mix. That goes a long way."

The future is soon for Brad Lambert

The 30th overall pick in the 2022 NHL Draft made an impact during his first training camp with the big club, despite sitting out roughly a week with a minor injury.

In his three pre-season games, the Finnish winger provided glimpses of his enormous potential, flashing a skillset that definitely translates, thanks in part to his blazing speed and finishing ability. Of course, there's an urge to try and push fast forward, to give Lambert a further taste and see if he might be able to chip in offensively immediately.

But here's the thing, there was no need whatsoever to turn this into an Alex Burmistrov situation.

Friday's decision to include Lambert in the cuts was the right call.

This is about providing Lambert with the best chance to succeed long-term, not finding out if he might be able to put up a few points in the first month of a long NHL season.

The best place for Lambert right now is the American Hockey League, where he will be afforded top-six minutes and ample ice time to continue to shine offensively and to work on his play away from the puck (something nearly every young player needs).

"He clearly is going to play in the league at some point. He just needs a little more experience," said Bowness. "When you're 18 years old, there's a lot to learn. He's just tremendous speed, tremendous skill. We've seen all that. Now, like any other young player, he's got to learn to play without the puck and learn how to play at a higher pace against the professionals. We're very, very happy with his camp. Very happy."

As for the folks worried about the wording of his change of scenery, don't be.

The reason Lambert was released to the Moose instead of being reassigned was because he has yet to sign his entry-level contract, but that should be taken care of at some point this week.

The backup position seems stable

As the goalie carousel spun quickly on the first day of free agency, the game of musical chairs left the Jets scrambling to fill the vacancy after Eric Comrie signed his multi-year deal with the Buffalo Sabres.

Ultimately, the Jets decided that David Rittich was the best option available to play behind workhorse Connor Hellebuyck.

While he'll need to remain sharp, Rittich did a solid job in three outings during the pre-season, allowing just one goal over the past five periods - finishing with a 37-save shutout over the Flames on Wednesday night, where he was tracking the puck well, positionally sound and mixed in some athletic saves for good measure.

Rittich isn't going to be asked to go into a job share, but when he's called upon for his 20-to-22 starts (or whatever the number ends up being), he needs to give his team a chance to win, just like Comrie did last season.

With points at a premium, having a reliable backup is a must for the Jets.

Rittich is highly motivated to have a bounce-back season and the early indications suggest it's more than just a remote possibility.

As for Hellebuyck, he was busy on Friday, making 35 saves - including 27 through the first two periods.

Gagner fitting in

He probably waited longer than he would have liked to sign his latest free-agent deal, but veteran forward Sam Gagner seems to be making a seamless transition.

Sure, he only appeared in two pre-season tilts as the coaching staff focused its attention on younger players fighting for jobs, but Gagner will begin the campaign on the fourth line with David Gustafsson and do more than just serve a role as a mentor.

During Wednesday's game, Gagner played on the top power-play unit (filling in for Dubois) and produced a pair of assists - including his eye-popping cross-ice feed to Nikolaj Ehlers.

Gagner figures to get a shot with the second unit once the regular season begins and could end up moving up the lineup if necessary while providing a responsible two-way game that includes bolstering a bottom six that needs to chip in more offence than last season.

Canadian Press

https://www.sportsnet.ca/nhl/dubois-scores-twice-but-gets-injured-in-jets-pre-season-win-over-flames/?_vz=medium%3Dconversations_top_pages

Dubois scores twice, but gets injured in Jets' pre-season win over Flames

By Canadian Press

CALGARY — The Winnipeg Jets capped their pre-season Friday with a second straight decisive win over the Calgary Flames.

Pierre-Luc Dubois scored a pair of first-period goals in a 5-3 victory at the Saddledome after the Jets blanked the visiting Flames 5-0 on Wednesday.

Kyle Conner had a goal and two assists, Mark Scheifele scored short-handed and Nikolaj Ehlers also scored for the Jets in the final tune-up for both teams ahead of their 2022-23 NHL regular seasons.

"Starting to come together," Scheifele said. "The last two games were pretty good. We'd probably like a little more o-zone time. We're excited to get the season going and see what we can do in real games."

Tyler Toffoli had a goal and an assist with Blake Coleman and Nazem Kadri also scoring for the Flames.

"Giving up 10 goals in two games is not good enough, so a lot to clean up," Flames centre Elias Lindholm said.

Dubois didn't return for the second period with what the Jets called a lower-body injury.

"It was more precautionary than anything," Jets head coach Rick Bowness said. "He's had something lower body that's been bothering him a little bit that flared up."

Winnipeg ended the pre-season 4-1-1 and host the New York Rangers in their season-opener Oct. 14. Conner led the Jets in pre-season points with four goals and four assists in three games.

"Still lots of work to do," Scheifele said. "We've got lots of practices from now until the start of the season to hone in on a few things, clarify a few things."

Bowness 67, was the head coach of the Dallas Stars for three seasons before stepping behind Winnipeg's bench this season.

"Coach has been great," Scheifele said. "Really helping us. A lot of video, a lot of teaching, which has been awesome. Guys are really excited about our system and how it's going to be implemented."

Calgary went 4-4 in pre-season games and open at home Thursday against the defending Stanley Cup champion Colorado Avalanche.

Both teams played lineups closely resembling their opening-day rosters and started their aces in goal Friday.

Winnipeg's Connor Hellebuyck made 35 saves for the win, while Calgary's Jacob Markstrom gave up five goals on 16 shots.

The Flames announced earlier Friday an eight-year, \$50-million contract extension for defenceman MacKenzie Weegar, who was acquired in a July 25 trade with the Florida Panthers alongside Jonathan Huberdeau.

Calgary's power-play was scoreless on four chances Friday and 0-for-10 in the two losses.

"Coming from the game in Winnipeg, we wanted to come out and have a good performance," Toffoli said. "It wasn't good enough."

Kadri scored with 3 1/2 minutes left in the game from the slot on a behind-the-net feed from Toffoli.

Scheifele scored short-handed on a two-on-one with Conner at 16:52 of the second period to give the Jets a 5-2 lead. Conner's laser one-timer at 9:27 beat Markstrom on Winnipeg's second shot of the period.

The Flames pulled within a goal on Coleman's goal at 5:29. Hellebuyck made the initial save on his off-speed shot from the slot, but the puck deflected off Jets defenceman Brenden Dillon and behind the goalie.

Winnipeg was outshot 15-6 but led 3-1 after the opening period.

Dubois' power-play goal at 17:17 was his second of the period. Scheifele on the wing fed an unchecked Dubois in the slot to roof the puck top corner.

Toffoli finished a passing play with Huberdeau and Lindholm off the rush at 15:05. Huberdeau's spin move along the defensive zone boards gave him a lane up ice. Lindholm dished to Toffoli down low for a successful shot.

Winnipeg led 2-0 at 8:29 when Ehlers corralled the puck off the glass and put it off Markstrom's arm and into the net.

Dylan DeMelo's shot from the boards pinging off sticks and bodies beat Markstrom far side at 4:18, with Dubois awarded the goal.

Global Winnipeg

<https://globalnews.ca/news/9183797/winnipeg-jets-pre-season-games/>

ANALYSIS: Time for some Jets games that mean something

By John Shannon CJOB

The Jets finish their pre-season tonight in Calgary, and it's not a moment too soon.

Don't get me wrong, I am thrilled that the NHL is back and we will soon be immersed in more than 1,200 regular season hockey games — hockey games that mean something, that have some relevance. For these past few weeks, the Jets and the 31 other teams have been practising and playing games — games that for the most part have been played to fill two, maybe three, positions.

You see, management and coaches have known (for the most part) who should be on the 23-man roster for a long time ... for months!

So what's the purpose of these pre-season games, when truly just two or three games are relevant and entertaining?

The NHL and its member clubs need to look at training camp and pre-season games. Twenty years ago, players came to camp to get in shape. Now, with this generation of players, they are never out of shape. Camp should be for coaches to implement systems and build team loyalty, not play inconsequential games in half-empty buildings.

The prospects get seen in the rookie tournaments. The veterans want the season to begin, simple as that.

And if managers are adamant to play games, put them in Brandon, Dauphin and Flin Flon to reach more fans who can't see games regularly. Make them cornerstones to outreach.

When you consider it will take a team more than 100 games to win the Stanley Cup, in a season that runs from October to June, it's not unreasonable to limit the pre-season, and ensure that when the Jets and the other teams are playing, it really means something.

The Hockey News

<https://thehockeynews.com/news/breakout-candidates-in-the-central-division>

BREAKOUT CANDIDATES IN THE CENTRAL DIVISION

BY TONY FERRARI

Every year, players break out all over the NHL.

Sometimes, it's young players making the jump to full-time NHL status and scoring at the rate expected of them. Other times, it's under-the-radar players who just find themselves in an opportune position with a new team. These aren't rookies vying for the Calder – rather, they're players looking to prove they belong in their respective club's plans.

Here are players from each Central Division team who look likely to step up their game:

ARIZONA COYOTES: BARRETT HAYTON, C

The hero of the 2020 World Junior Championship for Team Canada hasn't quite been able to get his NHL career going full force as of yet. In 60 games last season, Hayton was inconsistent offensively but found ways to affect the game in other ways. His defensive engagement was solid, and he began to show that he's a capable transition player as the primary puck carrier, entering the zone with control at an above-average level.

Hayton has the shooting prowess and passing ability to be a better scorer at the NHL level. But every time he seems to get going, his body seems to break down in some way.

His injury history has been well documented, and it goes back to his junior career. Being drafted in the top five comes with expectations, and Hayton could finally get on track toward fulfilling the Coyotes' hopes for him.

COLORADO AVALANCHE: ALEX NEWHOOK, C

After a 33-point rookie campaign and ending the year with his name etched into the Stanley Cup, Alex Newhook is probably pretty pumped to get back on the ice for the upcoming season. The speedy forward will once again suit up for a powerhouse Avalanche squad but this year, he could see his role expand in a big way. With Nazem Kadri gone, it could be Newhook that's looked to as the pivot on the second line.

Newhook plays with incredible pace and should help the Avs provide their opponents with a second helping of high-octane play after the first line – centered by the newly extended Nathan MacKinnon – forces them onto their heels. It was evident that Newhook had more to give but, the ability to leave him lower in the lineup as a rookie allowed him to get his feet wet in the NHL. Now that he's been there and done that, he should be poised to take on a much bigger role and explode offensively.

CHICAGO BLACKHAWKS: TAYLOR RADDYSH, LW

After years of biding his time in Tampa Bay's system, Raddysh was traded to Chicago in the Brandon Hagel deal at last season's trade deadline. With Chicago in a rebuild, it's the polar opposite of the situation that the 2016 second-round pick was dealing with as Tampa was competing for Cups the last half-decade.

After posting 12 points across 53 games in a limited role down south, Raddysh nearly matched the total with 10 points in just 21 games in Chicago. Although he won't find the same team success in Chicago, Raddysh has waited patiently for his opportunity for years. He's shown he can be a very good offensive player at just about every level aside from the NHL. Raddysh is a big winger who has a nose for the net and some sneaky good hands, especially in tight. With the opportunity readily available, it's now or never for the 24-year-old.

DALLAS STARS: THOMAS HARLEY, D

Harley has done all that he needs to do in the AHL with two successful stints in the league and a promising, albeit quiet, run in the NHL last year. This season should give him ample opportunity to earn a bigger role on the Stars, especially considering the departure of John Klingberg vacates a spot on the power play. Harley should be able to convert his puck skill and offensive mind into some power play time.

The Stars have flirted with having Harley on their roster since he was drafted, almost making the team in training camp and then getting into a playoff game in the 2019-20 season. Harley is a crisp and effortless skater who understands how to manage his gaps and knows when to pressure the puck carrier in his own zone. His ability to pass and skate the puck in transition is NHL-ready, and his offensive game is maturing into the NHL game. With newfound opportunity, this could be his year.

MINNESOTA WILD: FILIP GUSTAVSSON, G

Despite his raw statistics not looking particularly great last season with the Senators, Gustavsson has a chance to really take on a big role on a good team with Minnesota. 'Gus the Bus' has always had the talent to be a solid NHLer but fought his way onto the Senators roster where their defensive depth was unimpressive, to say the least. He has stretches of extremely good play.

The Swedish netminder has shown he is a high-end AHL netminder with impressive showings in the past two seasons, and now, a role as an NHL backup with a strong Wild team seems like an excellent opportunity. The 24-year-old is going to back up Marc-Andre Fleury – who isn't a spring chicken anymore – so the more Gustavsson can play, the better it will end up being for the Wild in the long run.

NASHVILLE PREDATORS: PHILIP TOMASINO, RW

Tomasino had a decent rookie season after a solid stint in the AHL the year before. He didn't see a ton of top-six time as a rookie, but that should change as the season kicks off this year. He's set to get a chance with Nino Niederreiter and Ryan Johansen on the second line as the Predators look for Tomasino to take that next step.

The former OHL star has the offensive tools as a dual-threat attacker to be a difference-maker in the NHL, but it's going to be about him proving that his skill and speed can work with his new linemates. Tomasino managed to put up 32 points in 76 games despite playing under 12 minutes a night. If his ice time gets a boost to 16 or 17 minutes a night, it's not impossible that he breaks the 50-point mark.

ST. LOUIS BLUES: LOGAN BROWN, RW

The 24-year-old finally seems to have found a semblance of consistency and understanding of what he needs to do at the NHL level. Brown has never fully embraced using his huge frame but seems to have found the power element in his game that made him an 11th overall pick all the way back in 2016. After needing a change of scenery while toiling in the Ottawa Senators' system, Brown split last season between the Blues and AHL Springfield. With his play so far in the pre-season, he may not have to spend much – if any time – in the AHL this year.

Coach Craig Berube praised the hulking forward for his ability to stay on the puck and make plays the way he always looked to be able to do in flashes. The 6-foot-6 forward is looking to crack the Blues' top nine, and if he does, he could be an integral piece towards making them a competitive team once again in the Western Conference.

Primarily a playmaker, he has used his powerful frame to leverage some more goal scoring ability. If Brown can capture some of the potential he was once said to have, the Blues could be a scary squad yet again this year.

WINNIPEG JETS: VILLE HEINOLA, D

Heinola came into this training camp and was looking to win a job, no easy task with a new coaching staff and a bit of a rocky relationship with the club. To say he's done wonders for his chances would be an understatement. Heinola has been one of the best stories of Jets' camp so far with his high-level puck-moving ability on display shift after shift.

Heinola has been quite productive every chance he's had at NHL time, but he's been sent back down due to the former coaching staff's insistence on not using him in the lineup regularly. With a fresh start and new coaching staff, a more mature approach to the game, and the same flair and skill that he's always brought to the ice, it could be time for Heinola to not only take an NHL role full-time but also showcase the fact that he can be one of Winnipeg's best defenders.

www.winnipegjets.com

<https://www.nhl.com/jets/news/jets-end-preseason-with-a-road-win-in-calgary/c-336174592>

Jets end preseason with a road win in Calgary Dubois scores twice, Hellebuyck makes 35 saves as Jets finish preseason 4-1-1

by Mitchell Clinton @MitchellClinton / WinnipegJets.com

On a night when the Winnipeg Jets were outshot 38-16, it would be easy to suggest that the 5-3 victory over the Calgary Flames was the result of Connor Hellebuyck stealing one for his team.

However, a closer look at the numbers from the preseason finale showed that the high-danger chances were dead even at five, according to Natural Stat Trick, and the Jets made those chances count.

Pierre-Luc Dubois scored twice, while Kyle Connor, Nikolaj Ehlers, and Mark Scheifele added singles to help the Jets to a 4-1-1 record in the preseason - the first time they've hit four wins in the exhibition season since 2018.

"This is a shot-volume team. They shoot from everywhere," said Jets head coach Rick Bowness of the shot discrepancy. "They probably got 10 shots in the first period they just gained the blue line and threw it at the net. We will give up that. We will."

It took over four minutes for the Winnipeg Jets to get their first shot on goal, but they made it count. Dylan DeMelo's point shot from the right side went off Dubois and past Jacob Markstrom to give the visitors a 1-0 lead. It was the first goal of the preseason for Dubois, with the other assist going to linemate Cole Perfetti, as well as DeMelo.

"I should probably get a lottery ticket," laughed DeMelo following his two-assist night. "It's always nice to contribute a little bit. Hopefully I can do that a little more this year, and something that I like to have in my game."

Then, on their third shot of the opening frame 4:11 later, Ehlers banked one in off Markstrom's left shoulder and in. He beat Noah Hanifin to a puck that came off the end boards after Adam Lowry's original shot from the top of the left circle went wide and popped out on the other side.

Tyler Toffoli cut that lead in half with 4:55 remaining in the first, as he finished off a rush chance with Jonathan Huberdeau and Elias Lindholm, beating Connor Hellebuyck with his first of the preseason.

The Jets got that back quickly though, as they cashed in on their first of four power plays on the night. Dubois got behind the Flames defence and faked backhand, before flipping a forehand just under the bar for his second of the game. That made it 3-1 with 2:43 on the clock in an eventful first period.

"We capitalized on our chances," said Scheifele, who sent Dubois in on the partial break. "I think we're all we're all happy to end that and training camp off and on a winning note."

Blake Coleman was able to get the Flames back within one exactly five minutes into the second, but Connor restored the two-goal cushion 4:27 later. He pounded a one-timer from the left face-off dot - on a set-up from DeMelo who had pinched down into the offensive zone - for his fourth goal of the preseason in just his third appearance.

In fact, Connor had a multi-point outing in every exhibition game he played, finishing with eight points.

Connor factored into Winnipeg's next goal as well, a shorthanded marker that pushed the lead to 5-2. The speedy forward set up Scheifele on a rush chance, sending a saucer pass across the crease to Scheifele who tapped it past Markstrom.

Scheifele played less than five minutes shorthanded all of last season, but has seen some penalty killing time in the preseason.

"I haven't played much of it, but the coaches have done a great job of helping me and teaching me positioning and stuff like that," Scheifele said. "It's something that I take very much pride in."

It also gave the Jets five goals in 10 shots.

Nazem Kadri scored with 3:37 to go to pull Calgary within two, but that's as close as the Flames would get, as the final minutes got a bit chippy between the two clubs. Both Cole Perfetti and Dominic Toninato being sent into the boards on questionable hits.

It didn't matter who was on the ice though, as everyone jumped in to help their teammates.

"As long as you're in there in numbers and getting in the mix. That goes a long way," said DeMelo. "We had Ville (Heinola) in there a few times on Wednesday at home. We don't want that guy fighting or anything. But to see him in there, and the guys, it's important for this group and the cohesiveness and sticking up for each other."

With the preseason in the rear-view mirror, the Jets now head to Banff for team-building and practice time before returning to Winnipeg early next week.

The home opener is set for October 14.

"We're excited to get going," said Scheifele. "Thank goodness preseason is done."

Buckle up.

ICE CHIPS

Pierre-Luc Dubois left the game after the first period with a lower-body injury and didn't return.

Thankfully it was just a precautionary measure.

"He's had something lower body that's been bothering him a little bit that flared up," Bowness said. "This morning he was fine, yesterday he was fine. It flared up a little bit in the first so it was precautionary. I'm not concerned. He'll be ready to go Friday night."