

Winnipegjets.com

[Three things - Jets clinch home ice](#)
[Toffoli scores game winner in third, Jets clinch second in Central](#)

By Jamie Thomas

WINNIPEG – Tyler Toffoli scored a power play goal in the third period that broke a 3-3 tie and that helped the Winnipeg Jets beat the Seattle Kraken 4-3 at Canada Life Centre. The Jets (51-23-6) clinched second spot in the Central Division and will have home ice advantage in their opening round series with the Colorado Avalanche. Kyle Connor scored twice and Nikolaj Ehlers had the other goal for Winnipeg. Connor Hellebuyck made 20 saves to and tied a season high with his fifth straight win. The Jets will close out the regular season schedule against the Vancouver Canucks on Thursday.

KC ANOTHER MULTI-GOAL GAME

The Jets sniper came into tonight with ten points (5G, 5A) in eight all time meetings with the Kraken. Connor opened the scoring at 10:33 of the first period when he converted on a pass from Mark Scheifele, one timing it past Phillip Grubauer. The 27-year-old then notched his 34th goal of the season when Josh Morrissey spotted him off to Grubauer's left and Connor spotted an opening short side with six seconds left in the opening period. It was Connor's seventh multi-goal game of the season, and he also extended his point streak to eight games (4G, 8A).

"You know, myself, I think we're all ramping up and building towards it," said Connor.

"Our confidence is pretty high going into the playoffs. For everybody here and in our team game, we know what it takes to win."

PUCK MANAGEMENT IN SECOND PERIOD

Winnipeg got themselves into trouble in the second period with a 3-1 lead by not taking care of the puck. Before Yanni Gourde made it 3-2 at 5:11, the Jets didn't get the puck in deep. Then at 18:13 of the middle frame, a turnover inside the Jets blueline led to a 2-on-oh for Seattle with Gourde passing over to Tye Kartye who tied the game at three.

TURNED IT AROUND IN THIRD

To their credit, the Jets got their game back in the third period. They didn't give Seattle a whole lot surrendering only one high danger scoring opportunity in the final frame. Winnipeg's second power play unit then went to work with Jared McCann in the box, Nikolaj Ehlers spotted Toffoli in the slot and he went forehand to his backhand to score the eventual game winner. Toffoli is one goal shy of tying his career high of 34 goals set last season.

"His patience is pretty good with the puck. And he gets into the right spots to get that shot off," said Ehlers.

"That's why he scored so many goals in this league. So, I think he's, or I know he's pretty fun to play with."

NHL.com

[Connor scores twice, Jets edge Kraken to clinch 2nd in Central](#)

[Will have home-ice advantage in 1st round of playoffs against Avalanche](#)

By Darrin Bauming

WINNIPEG -- Kyle Connor scored two goals, and the Winnipeg Jets clinched second place in the Central Division with a 4-3 win against the Seattle Kraken at Canada Life Centre on Tuesday.

"For everybody here and in our team game, we know what it takes to win," Connor said. "We kind of found ourselves an identity and I feel like we missed that last month and [we are] really, really, showing what it takes to win."

Winnipeg will have home-ice advantage against the Colorado Avalanche in the Western Conference First Round of the Stanley Cup Playoffs.

"[It's] nice to get it out of the way in this game," Connor said of clinching home-ice advantage. "I thought we stuck with it, you know, ups and downs in the game. No matter what we stuck up for each other, supported each other when we didn't make the plays that we needed to, and just a kind of gritty win there to pull it out."

Nikolaj Ehlers and Tyler Toffoli each had a goal and an assist, and Connor Hellebuyck made 20 saves for the Jets (51-24-6), who have won seven straight. Josh Morrissey, Neal Pionk and Mark Scheifele each had two assists.

"That was something that was our objective once we got later on in the season -- OK, we have a shot at getting home ice, let's go for it," Winnipeg coach Rick Bowness said. "Give the guys a lot of credit, they buckled down and we got it. I think it's important for us to be able to do that."

Yanni Gourde had a goal and an assist, and Philipp Grubauer made 20 saves for the Kraken (33-35-13), who have lost four in a row.

"Our entire team fought hard tonight," Seattle coach Dave Hakstol said. "Regardless of anything else, we're in a situation where we've dug out of a two-goal deficit [and] got ourselves back to even. We take a careless penalty and that's the difference in a hockey game like this."

Toffoli put Winnipeg ahead 4-3 on the power play at 11:40 of the third period. He took a pass from Ehlers in the slot and scored with a backhand around Grubauer's right skate.

"We did a heck of a job for the first minute and 50 of the (penalty) kill, but they found a spot inside and found the game-winner on that," Hakstol said. "But in terms of compete and battle level and level of focus, there's always going to be mistakes made. But our ability to work and stay in the fight, stay in the battle and stay consistent was good tonight."

Connor gave the Jets a 1-0 lead at 10:33 of the first period. Scheifele fed him from behind the net with a backhand pass for a quick shot from the side of the crease.

"I see [Connor] skating really well at both ends of the ice. He really is," Winnipeg coach Rick Bowness said. "That tells you that he's engaged in the game. There have been some great back checks. I know he's scoring goals and creating things, but watch how hard that he comes back. When you see that in your player, you know that you're totally engaged and he's an elite

offensive player, that when he's engaged in the game, he's going to get those opportunities and he's going to bury them."

Tomas Tatar tied it 1-1 at 18:38 with a shot from the right face-off circle on the rush.

"I think we just kept pushing," Kraken forward Oliver Bjorkstrand said. "I think we played a pretty good game. I think we're close, so some good things."

Connor put Winnipeg back in front 2-1 with six seconds left, scoring from the bottom of the right circle.

"[Morrissey] made a great pass there," Connor said. "The way they defend with the center release, I just kind of get lost a little bit behind them, and I think everybody just thought [Morrissey] was shooting that one. He did a really good fake and found some free ice down there."

Ehlers extended it to 3-1 at 2:30 of the second period. After his initial shot hit Kraken defenseman Justin Schultz in the shoulder and flipped over Grubauer's head, Ehlers banged in the loose puck in the crease.

"[We are] very close, I mean, the last few games have been great," Ehlers said. "But a lot of the game today, besides the second period, was really good. The second period, we play like that in the playoffs, it's not going to be very good. But it's also not horrible to take that period, look at it and talk about it. So I think we're close, but no matter how close we get it's never going to be perfect. And we've got to keep working out our game."

Gourde cut it to 3-2 at 5:11 with a deflection of Ryker Evans' point shot.

"Obviously they're a good team," Kraken forward Tye Kartye said. "I think it doesn't matter who we're playing, we've got to bring that every night. It's a good team over there and it was a pretty good effort by us."

Kartye tied it 3-3 at 18:13. Gourde stole the puck from Pionk, then froze Hellebuyck with a fake before sliding it over to Kartye for a one-timer on the 2-on-0.

"He works hard, he battles, and on top of that he makes plays and creates chances," Bjorkstrand said of Kartye. "It helps when he's out there battling and hitting guys. It creates momentum for the team. He does that well and it opens up space for his linemates. ... It's good, and he's only going to get better."

Winnipeg forward Morgan Barron left the game in the first period with a lower-body injury.

"We'll probably know more tomorrow morning," Bowness said. "We've got to get him re-evaluated."

NOTES: Each team has one regular-season game remaining. ... Six of the past seven games between Seattle and Winnipeg have been decided by one goal. ... The Jets are 7-2-0 against the Kraken since Seattle entered the NHL in 2021-22. ... Winnipeg can tie its franchise record of 52 wins (2017-18) when it hosts the Vancouver Canucks on Thursday. ... Connor has 12 points (four goals, eight assists) during an eight-game point streak. ... Ehlers has five points (two goals, three assists) during a three-game point streak.

Canadian Press

[Jets Edge Kraken 4-3, Clinch Second in Central Division](#)

By Judy Owen, The Canadian Press

WINNIPEG — Nikolaj Ehlers was satisfied the Winnipeg Jets checked an item off their playoff to-do list, even if it wasn't accomplished in a dominant fashion.

Kyle Connor scored twice and Tyler Toffoli broke a third-period tie to lift the Jets to a key 4-3 victory over the Seattle Kraken on Tuesday.

The win clinched second place in the NHL Central Division for the Jets and home-ice advantage in their first-round playoff series with the Colorado Avalanche.

"Obviously that's what we wanted to do tonight," said Ehlers, who had a goal and assist. "Wasn't beautiful all the way through, but we got it done and that's what's important."

Winnipeg (51-24-6) also stretched its win streak to seven games in front of its eighth sold-out crowd of the season at Canada Life Centre.

Toffoli took a pass from Ehlers during a power play and sent a backhand shot past Seattle goalie Philipp Grubauer with 8:20 remaining in the third period.

The Jets wrap up the regular season on Thursday at home against the Vancouver Canucks.

"Nice to get that out of the way in this game," Connor said of securing home-ice advantage. "I thought we stuck with it, you know, ups and downs in the game."

Connor's pair of markers extended his point streak to eight games, including four goals and eight assists.

"I see him skating really well at both ends of the ice. He really is," Jets coach Rick Bowness said of Connor. "That tells you that he's engaged in the game. There have been some great back checks."

Toffoli had one helper and Mark Scheifele, Josh Morrissey and Neal Pionk each contributed a pair of assists. Connor Hellebuyck made 20 saves.

Yanni Gourde had a goal and assist and Tomas Tatar and Tye Kartye also scored for the Kraken (33-35-13). Brandon Tanev recorded two assists.

Grubauer stopped 20 shots for Seattle, which lost its fourth game in a row and concludes its playoff-less season Thursday in Minnesota against the Wild.

"Our entire team fought hard tonight," Seattle coach Dave Hakstol said. "Regardless of anything else, we're in a situation where we've dug out of a two-goal deficit, got ourselves back to even."

“We take a careless penalty and that’s the difference in a hockey game like this. We did a heck of a job for the first minute and 50 of the kill, but they found a spot inside and found the game-winner on that.”

Winnipeg led 2-1 after the first period and it was tied 3-3 heading into the third.

Connor scored his team-leading 33rd goal of the season at 10:33 after he flipped a high shot past Grubauer.

Tatar tied it up with 1:22 remaining, but Connor notched his second of the night with 5.8 seconds left on the clock.

Seattle outshot the Jets 8-6 in the opening period.

Ehlers swatted in his own rebound 2:30 into the second period to make it 3-1, but Seattle responded with Gourde’s tip-in goal at 5:11.

Gourde and Kartye then went in alone on Hellebuyck, with Gourde sending the puck across to Kartye for the tying goal with 1:47 left in the period.

“I think it doesn’t matter who we’re playing, we’ve got to bring that every night,” Kartye said. “It’s a good team over there and it was a pretty good effort by us.”

Both teams had missed opportunities early in the third, with Seattle unable to get a loose puck and put it into an open side of Winnipeg’s net.

During Winnipeg’s second man advantage of the game, Morrissey’s point shot hit the crossbar, but Toffoli made it 4-3 at 11:40 with his 33rd goal of the season.

The Jets then went on a four-minute power play when Kraken Ryker Evans was dinged for high-sticking.

NOTES

The Jets had veteran forward Nino Niederreiter back on the ice after he missed the past five games because of skate cut that nicked his Achilles tendon. ... Winnipeg forward Morgan Barron left the game in the first period and didn’t return because of a lower-body injury. Bowness said he’ll be evaluated more. ... Tatar’s goal ended Winnipeg’s shutout streak at 151 minutes 19 seconds.

UP NEXT

Jets: Host the Vancouver Canucks on Thursday.

Kraken: Travel to Minnesota to play the Wild Thursday.

Global Winnipeg

[Winnipeg Jets secure home ice in round 1 of playoffs with 4-3 win over Seattle](#)

By Christian Aumell & Russ Hobson Global News

When the Winnipeg Jets open the Stanley Cup Playoffs against the Colorado Avalanche in a matter of days, Game 1 will be played in Manitoba.

The Jets confirmed that by taking down the Seattle Kraken 4-3 Tuesday night, clinching second place in the Central Division with their seventh straight win in front of another sellout crowd at Canada Life Centre.

Kyle Connor scored a pair of goals and six different Jets players had multi-point nights in the victory.

The Jets built up a two-goal lead, only to watch it vanish in the second period. But Tyler Toffoli scored the only goal of the third on the power play to secure home ice advantage in the first round.

“Obviously that’s what we wanted to do tonight,” said Jets forward Nikolaj Ehlers. “It wasn’t beautiful all the way through, but we got it done, and that’s what’s important.”

It was the Jets 51st win of the season, which is just one shy of their team record set back in 2018. They’re 34-0 this season when scoring at least four goals.

It’s just the fifth time in franchise history the Jets will start the playoffs at home.

“Nice to get it out of the way in this game,” said Connor. “I thought we stuck with it, the ups and downs of the game, no matter what we stuck up for each other, supported each other when we didn’t make the plays that we needed to. And just a kind of gritty win there to pull it out.”

While the Jets have been a whole lot more consistent in the second half of their current win streak, they once again had too many giveaways in the second period to allow the Kraken to get back in the game.

“The second period was all just terrible puck management, it had nothing to do with structure,” said Jets head coach Rick Bowness. “It was just puck management, all of it. But they recognized that too, right. Now okay we’re feeding their transition, we’re giving them opportunities. We let them get back in the game just with our puck possession, our puck management. That’s really the biggest issue we had in the second period.”

The Jets are the hottest team in the NHL on the eve of the playoffs and haven’t allowed four goals in a game in their last eight straight contests, while outscoring the opposition 31-13 during the current win streak.

It was one of the few games this season the Jets have had a completely healthy lineup, but Morgan Barron left the game in the first period after falling awkwardly near the boards.

“We’ll probably know more tomorrow morning,” Bowness said. “We’ll see him get re-evaluated.”

Just past the midway point of the first period, Connor regained the team lead in goals when he opened the scoring. Mark Scheifele had the puck behind the Seattle net and Connor eluded coverage in front where Scheifele found him for his 33rd goal of the season at 10:33.

The Kraken answered back with just 1:22 remaining when Tomas Tatar fired a shot past a screened Connor Hellebuyck to tie the game.

But with 5.8 seconds left in the period, Connor restored Winnipeg's lead when he received a pass from Josh Morrissey, faked a pass that sent Seattle goalie Philipp Grubauer out of position and potted his second of the night.

It was a low-event first period with Seattle outshooting Winnipeg 8-6.

Early in the second, the Jets doubled their lead. A low shot on goal from Toffoli created a big rebound that bounced off a Kraken defender and landed near the goal line where a diving Ehlers knocked it home to make it 3-1 at the 2:30 mark.

Seattle answered back at the 5:11 mark when Yannick Gourde got a piece of a shot that was going wide of the net and sent it past Hellebuyck.

Late in the period, the Kraken found the equalizer after some sustained pressure in the Winnipeg end. The tired Jets tried to break the puck out of their own end but Neal Pionk overskated the puck in the slot, gifting Seattle a 2-on-none. Gourde faked a shot before passing to Tye Kartye who beat a helpless Hellebuyck to level the score after 40 minutes.

The game stayed tied past the midway point of the third before Winnipeg capitalized on their second power play chance of the game.

Josh Morrissey nearly put the Jets ahead with Jared McCann in the box when he rang one off the crossbar, but it was the team's second power play unit who put them ahead.

Ehlers had the puck at the point and hit Toffoli in the slot, who made a good move before backhanding the puck into an open net to make it 4-3 Winnipeg with 8:20 remaining.

A Ryker Evans double-minor for high-sticking with 6:29 to go gave Winnipeg a great opportunity to shut the door on Seattle but the Kraken managed to kill it off.

Seattle pulled Grubauer for an extra attacker with 40 seconds to go but ran out of time before they could generate any kind of push.

Hellebuyck stopped 20 shots in the win, his 37th of the season.

Winnipeg will wrap up the regular season Thursday night at home against Vancouver. The pregame show begins at 5 p.m. on 680 CJOB with puck drop just after 7 p.m.

[ANALYSIS: No guarantees as Winnipeg Jets' playoff run set to begin](#)

By Paul Edmonds CJOB

Depending on whom you might ask, Tuesday night's win over Seattle wasn't supposed to be that difficult for the Winnipeg Jets.

In the most utopian of scenarios, Winnipeg was presumed to take the ice, win a game, and secure second place in the Central Division.

Oh sure, the Jets won and did earn home ice in the first round of the playoffs against Colorado next week, but they surrendered a two-goal lead in the second and needed a power-play marker in the final eight minutes to eventually tilt the compelling contest in their favour.

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After all, leading up to game time, it was a mere tap-in based on the Jets' six-game winning streak, the Kraken losing three in a row, and with Winnipeg destined for the playoffs with over 100 points and Seattle going to miss them by 17.

In the end, the Jets produced the point they required and will now have the advantage against the Avalanche with home ice, last change in the majority of games, and invariably travel one less time in the series if it goes the distance.

Those, of course, are all important assets and aspects when you're looking for an upper hand in the Stanley Cup playoffs, and ones the Jets earned by producing seven straight wins down the stretch.

But there is no guarantee of anything when the puck drops Sunday or Monday and what Winnipeg captured Tuesday is really the only opportunity to play before two sellouts at Canada Life Centre to begin the series, and nothing more.

Beyond that, what's expected to be a captivating postseason go-around between the Jets and the Avs for the first time in history is guaranteed to open in Winnipeg now, based on Tuesday's result — and it could play out just as unpredictably, depending on who you might ask.

TSN.ca

[Does home-ice advantage give Jets the edge over Avalanche in first round? \(VIDEO\)](#)

With a win over the Kraken on Tuesday, the Jets locked up home-ice advantage for the first round of the playoffs, where they will face the Avalanche. Which team has the edge in that matchup? TSN Hockey analyst Martin Biron shares his thoughts.

Sportsnet.ca

[Do Jets have advantage over Avalanche in upcoming series? \(VIDEO\)](#)

The Hockey Central panel discusses the upcoming first-round playoff series between the Winnipeg Jets and the Colorado Avalanche, illustrating the Jets' dominance in the regular-season series before breaking down the seven-game set to come.

Seattle Times

[Kraken put up fight, but fall to streaking Jets for 4th straight loss](#)

By Geoff Baker

WINNIPEG, Manitoba — In a Kraken season long ago lost to missed opportunities and no-show nights, rookie Tye Kartye securing a 10-goal campaign might not seem like much for his team to hang their skates on.

But there's been little quit for Kartye, especially the season's latter half as he's solidified his fourth-line spot and also moved up to the third trio late alongside Yann Gourde and Oliver Bjorkstrand. And now, he has his first NHL scoring milestone of sorts for a Kraken team that doesn't score much and couldn't enough on Tuesday night in a 4-3 loss to the streaking Winnipeg Jets.

"I think I've just learned how to do little things properly," Kartye said after a fourth consecutive Kraken defeat with the season finale ahead Thursday night against the Minnesota Wild. "Obviously, the little things lead to the bigger things and I think playing well in the defensive zone, getting pucks out on the wall, making good plays, being reliable, is a really important piece of a successful team."

Fourth-line players are typically not top goal scorers, expected to handle the heavy-lifting, physical duties Kartye described. So, the fact he's taken a stride forward from the undrafted, AHL call-up that joined the Kraken's opening round playoff series a year ago this month rates as one of the bigger successes of his team's season.

There's been plenty of debate about the Kraken jettisoning free-agent forwards Morgan Geekie, Daniel Sprong and Ryan Donato to free up spots this season and in coming ones for prospects such as Kartye, Shane Wright and others. But Kartye has mostly done his part even as the team around him — which laudably didn't quit in taking this latest defeat — has faded fast.

This was the one game of a season-ending road trip the Kraken certainly weren't expected to win. The surging Jets, who've wrapped up second place in the Central Division, have now won six straight games — the two before this one being 7-0 and 3-0 over Colorado and Dallas squads expected to contend for the Stanley Cup.

Throw in all-world Jets netminder Connor Hellebuyck, who rarely yields more than a goal or two in any game, and the Kraken seemed cooked after falling behind 3-1 early in the second period. But Kraken forward Yann Gourde had spoken earlier in the day about the team continuing to battle these final games and certainly didn't quit in that middle frame.

Gourde got the Kraken back within a goal just five minutes into the period by redirecting a Ryker Evans point shot at the net front. Then, with the period winding down, he stole a puck in Winnipeg's end, raced in alone and slipped a pass across to Kartye to one-time the tying goal into a vacated right side of the net.

Jared McCann then nearly put the Kraken ahead four minutes into the final period as they buzzed all around Hellebuyck, but a goal-mouth pass from Andre Burakovsky hit the Kraken's leading goal scorer in the skates before he could get a stick to it.

Then, with just under 10 minutes to go in regulation, McCann was sent off for hooking. Tyler Toffoli took a Nicolaj Ehlers feed on the ensuing power play, went in alone and beat Philipp Grubauer for the decisive goal.

Tomas Tatar also scored for the Kraken while Kyle Connor had a pair for the Jets and Ehlers another.

Kartye said the Kraken still putting up a fight after Ehlers made it 3-1 by lunging to knock home a rebound was something the team needs to keep doing right through the season's final horn.

“We’ve got to just keep playing for each other,” Kartye said. “Obviously, every game matters. It doesn’t matter what game it is. It’s important to us, so we want to just try and fight back. We did, but we just fell a little bit short.”

Bjorkstrand has had a firsthand look at his new linemate’s NHL progress and likes what he’s seen since last spring’s call-up.

“When he’s out there battling and hitting guys it creates momentum for a team, so I think he does that well,” Bjorkstrand said. “It opens up space for his linemates.”

And even though his linemates have changed to more skilled ones, Bjorkstrand doesn’t feel Kartye’s confidence has wavered.

“He just keeps taking strides in the right direction,” Bjorkstrand said. “I think he probably keeps getting more comfortable game after game. So you can see that. I think he plays with confidence and attitude and all that stuff and it’s built throughout the season. So, it’s good to see.”

The Kraken have also gotten pushed around at times. So, Kartye developing into one of the more physically imposing forwards while also being productive on the scoresheet fills at least one future need.

Kraken coach Dave Hakstol certainly felt his players put up some fight in this one.

“Our entire team fought hard tonight,” Hakstol said. “You know, regardless of anything else, we were in a situation where we’d dug ourselves out of a two-goal deficit, got ourselves even and then we take a careless penalty and that’s the difference in the hockey game.”

But he added: “In terms of compete and battle and level of focus ... our ability to work and stay in the fight, stay in the battle and stay consistent was good tonight.”

On an individual level, Hakstol feels Kartye’s ability to continue battling with consistency is key to his future and the team’s.

“It’s a matter of consistency and what he brings to the table night in and night out,” Hakstol said. “You know, he’s one of the guys for us up front that’s consistently physical. He has an idea of the right guys at the right time to be hard on. He’s got some of that intuition in him and he’s a character guy. So, he’s going to continue to grow in this league.”

Winnipeg Free Press

[Jets stave off dogged Kraken](#) [Seventh consecutive victory clinches home-ice advantage in playoff showdown with Avs](#)

By: Mike McIntyre

Gentlemen, feel free to make yourselves at home.

The Winnipeg Jets took care of business Tuesday night, downing the Seattle Kraken 4-3 to ensure their first-round playoff series against the Colorado Avalanche will start next week in the friendly confines of Canada Life Centre.

Needing just a single point over their last two regular-season games to lock up second place in the Central Division, the Jets did one better in skating to a seventh straight victory.

Kyle Connor scored twice, while Nikolaj Ehlers and Tyler Toffoli had the other tallies for a team that appears to be peaking at the perfect time.

“It’s great. Obviously that’s what we wanted to do tonight,” Ehlers said. “It wasn’t beautiful all the way through, but we got it done. That’s what’s important.”

Winnipeg improves to 51-24-6 on the year, just one victory short of the franchise record they established during the 2017-18 season. They’ll have a chance to get there on Thursday night when they close out the 82-game campaign by hosting the Vancouver Canucks in what will now amount to an exhibition game.

“It feels good. That was something that was our objective once we got later on in the season,” said coach Rick Bowness. “Give the guys a lot of credit, they buckled down and we got it. I think it’s important for us, to be able to do that.”

Before we look too far ahead, here’s a breakdown of what stood out in this one:

1) *All hands on deck* — Hard to believe, but this was only the second game of the year in which the Jets had the entire roster at the ready since adding Sean Monahan and then Toffoli in big trade deadline deals.

With forward Nino Niederreiter returning from a skate laceration that kept him out the past five contests, there wasn’t a single player on the injured list.

Unlike that first outing back on March 30, in which they fell 3-2 to the Ottawa Senators, this one turned out a bit better. However, winger Morgan Barron didn’t finish the game after suffering a lower-body ailment in the first period, forcing Winnipeg to play the majority of the night with 11 forwards.

“We’ll know more (Wednesday) morning. He’s got to be re-evaluated,” was the only update Bowness could offer.

There were a couple other close calls on the night, with Josh Morrissey crashing hard into the boards after a bit of a can opener from Jordan Eberle, and Gabe Vilardi left bloodied after taking a high-stick to the face from Ryker Evans.

2) *Top lines shine* — If the Jets are going to make some noise in the playoffs, they’ll need their stars to shine bright. Bowness appears to have settled on a mix he likes when it comes to the top two forward lines, and both played big parts of this victory.

The first line of Connor, Mark Scheifele and Vilardi struck twice in the first period, with Connor burying goals No. 33 and 34 of the season. Scheifele and Morrissey had slick helpers on both, which bookended a Tomas Tatar goal in the opening frame.

“You know what I see in his game? I see him skating really well at both ends of the ice. He really is,” Bowness said of Connor.

“That tells you that he’s engaged in the game. There have been some great back checks. I know he’s scoring goals and creating things, but watch how hard that he comes back. When you see that in your player, you know that you’re totally engaged and he’s an elite offensive player, that when he’s engaged in the game, he’s going to get those opportunities and he’s going to bury them.”

Then it was time for the second line to shine, as Ehlers scored his 25th early in the second period off a nice feed from Toffoli, while Monahan did some heavy lifting in the offensive zone as well.

After Seattle’s Yannic Gourde and Tye Kartye erased the 3-1 deficit later in the frame, it was Toffoli (from Ehlers) who made the difference when he scored his 33rd with 8:20 left in regulation. The goal came at the tail end of a Jets power play.

Add it all up and Connor (two goals), Scheifele (two assists), Ehlers (goal, assist), Toffoli (goal, assist), Morrissey (two assists) and defenceman Neal Pionk (two assists) all had multi-point outings.

“It’s important to have all four lines going in the playoffs,” said Ehlers. “You’ve seen it throughout the years. It’s not the first line scoring every single night. It’s exciting to get everyone going. It changes every game, and we’ve got to keep that going. That’s how you win in the playoffs. It’s exciting for us.”

3) Jennings watch — Connor Hellebuyck wasn’t all that busy, but he was forced to make several quality stops to keep his team from falling behind once the game was tied and Winnipeg’s defensive zone structure slipped a bit early in the third period.

He finished the night with 20 saves, improving his personal record to 37-19-4 over 60 starts this season.

The Jets have now surrendered 197 goals this season through 81 games, which is the fewest in the NHL. Right behind them are the Florida Panthers, who played their 82nd game on Tuesday (5-2 win over Toronto) and finish the year with 200 goals against.

The team that gives up the least at the end of the year takes home the William M. Jennings Trophy. That does create something to keep an eye on Thursday night in an otherwise meaningless affair: The Jets will take home the honours if they can hold the Canucks to two goals or less. Give up three and they’ll share the award with Paul Maurice’s crew. Give up four or more and it’s second place.

The Jets were coming off back-to-back shutouts of the Dallas Stars (3-0) and Avalanche (7-0) to close out their road trip, and Tatar’s goal at 18:38 of the first period ended a streak of 151:19 (just over seven and-a-half periods) without surrendering a goal. Impressive stuff.

4) Good soldiers — With the Jets at their deepest and healthiest, some tough decisions have to be made. Forwards David Gustafsson, Cole Perfetti and Rasmus Kupari, along with defencemen Nate Schmidt and Colin Miller, were all healthy scratches on Tuesday.

With the team playing well, there's simply no room for these guys in the lineup right now. And that likely isn't going to change when the playoffs begin next week.

But if anyone is hanging their head feeling sorry for themselves, or angry about the hand they've been dealt, they're certainly not showing it publicly. It appears to be an "all for one, one for all" mentality, which can be easier said than done when dealing with big egos and big salaries in the highly-competitive world of pro sports

"Listen, I give them all credit because they've all handled it like true pros," Bowness said Tuesday morning of the good problem the team has.

"The worst part of being a coach is telling a guy who wants to play, who's a competitive guy, he's not playing. And to get ready just in case your name is called the next game. I give all these guys full marks for buying into the team. They know we have a good team here. They see the talent on the team and know we've had a really good season, so they understand the challenges of getting in and playing in the lineup. We're fortunate to have the depth, and we're fortunate that those guys are handling it like true pros."

5) *Extra, extra* — The game was played in front of a sellout crowd of 15,225. It was the eighth full house of the season, all of which have come over the last 22 games after Winnipeg had none in the first 18 games. Every ticket is already spoken for on Thursday, making it nine over the final 23.

There was a celebrity sighting at the game, as former NFL running back Marshawn Lynch took in the action from section 122. The former Seattle Seahawks star nicknamed "Beast Mode" is a minority investor in the Kraken, so he clearly wanted to take an up-close look at the product. Seattle is now 33-35-13 and will miss the playoffs for the second time in their three-year existence.

Winnipeg finished 1-for-4 on the power play, while Seattle went 0-for-1.

[Seattle spark plug remembers Jets fondly](#) [Tanev sees similarities between current team and 2018 squad that went on long playoff run](#)

By: Joshua Frey-Sam

Brandon Tanev has fond memories of the spring of 2018.

The Seattle Kraken forward, who spent the first four years of his NHL career as a spark plug for the Winnipeg Jets, enjoyed his most productive season (14 goals, 15 assists) to that point and held a crucial checking role on the Jets' third line.

It's also the deepest Tanev — and Jets 2.0 — have gone in the Stanley Cup playoffs.

"Playoff time in Winnipeg is something special," said Tanev, following Seattle's morning skate Tuesday. "To experience it for the first time, seeing the Whiteout, walking to the rink, how passionate the fans are, it was amazing.

“We had a great team. Obviously, (we) went pretty far down the stretch there. Unfortunately, (we) couldn’t get past Vegas in the conference finals, but that group of guys — that team, that experience, what it meant to the city — was pretty special to us all.”

Indeed, it was a magical spring. While the Jets fell short of their goal, this year’s iteration has a chance to avenge those shortfalls with a group that has had similar success and will have similar expectations when the playoffs begin next week.

The 2017-18 Jets posted a 52-20-10 record during the regular season, were one of the best defensive teams in the league (fifth in goals allowed), and iced one of the deepest rosters in the playoffs after trading for a veteran centre to bolster the forward group (Paul Stastny) and a defenceman (Joe Morrow) to add some insurance on the blue line.

They also had a goaltender playing at an all-world level.

Sound familiar?

“It’s a pretty similar build to what we had in those years but I think it’s a team that understands their identity and it’s been working for them throughout the year,” Tanev said of this year’s Jets squad, which broke the 50-win threshold for the first time since 2017-18, tops the league in goals allowed and added forwards Sean Monahan, Tyler Toffoli and defenceman Colin Miller ahead of this year’s trade deadline.

So, which Jets team would win in a best-of-seven series?

It’s a coin flip, said centre Adam Lowry, who was linemates with Tanev and now-Detroit Red Wing Andrew Copp during that run.

“I look at our (defensive) corps. That (was) one of the best corps I’ve seen in a long time,” Lowry said. “Stylistically, I think we play a little better structurally defensively as a group, but when you have Buff (Dustin Byfuglien), (Tyler) Myers, Trouba (Jacob Trouba), JMo (Josh Morrissey), (Dmitry) Kulikov, (Tobias) Enstrom, (Ben) Chiarot— it was so much depth on the back end.

“Obviously, Helle (Connor Hellebuyck) was incredible back then. I think he’s gotten even better now.”

The Winnipeg captain said he relished the time he spent skating alongside an energy guy like Tanev.

“It’s funny, you see it in Seattle with his energy — it’s kind of infectious,” Lowry said. “He’s a spark plug, he brings that energy, he brings everyone into that forechecking style, he never quit on pucks.

“If you ever have the camera on him, he’s coming back to the bench, he’s cursing, he’s yelling all the time. I was almost playing the middleman between him and Copper. But the way he is on the ice, off the ice he doesn’t turn it off. He’s always just got so much energy — he’s ready, he’s competitive, he’s fun to be around.”

Tanev joined Lowry and some of his former Winnipeg teammates for dinner Monday.

“A lot of fun memories playing with him. He’s a really good friend of mine,” Lowry added.

Only six players are left from the team that came oh, so close to the NHL final that spring. Up front, it's Lowry, Kyle Connor, Mark Scheifele and Nikolaj Ehlers, plus defenceman Josh Morrissey and Hellebuyck.

Scheifele disagreed that the 2018 team and the 2024 versions are comparable, beyond their lofty position in the standings.

"We had a lot more star power on that team and this year it's a lot more by collective," said Scheifele. "That team was obviously tremendously skilled... we had some really big bodies on the backend that can also move the puck and play.

"Our forward corps was younger than we are now. A completely different makeup, a completely different structure. But that's the cool thing about hockey is there's not one formula for a winning team. There's not a whole lot of comparisons other than we're both very good teams."

Winnipeg Sun

[BILLECK: Jets stars Mark Scheifele, Kyle Connor clicking at right time](#)

By Scott Billeck

The Colorado Avalanche will have a big problem on their hands if Mark Scheifele is given an inch, allowing Kyle Connor to take a mile.

Go back and watch Winnipeg's 1-0 goal on Tuesday night in their eventual 4-3 win over the Seattle Kraken.

Scheifele gets the puck below the goal line, and within milliseconds, he threads a pass to Connor, who is sitting on the doorstep.

Seattle blue-liner Adam Larsson could only shake his head.

"He does that in his sleep," Connor said of Scheifele's wizardry.

Later in the period, Scheifele was at it again, this time feeding a puck up high to Josh Morrissey, who picked out Connor all alone on the same doorstep to make it 2-1.

Winnipeg's top line had a great game against the Kraken. They've been playing pretty well lately, and this has really solidified the team's lineup heading into its first-round series against the Avs.

Granted, Cale Makar, Samuel Girard and Devon Toews will offer a stiffer defensive test. But if Scheifele and Connor are feeling it like the former did in 2017-18 and the latter against Edmonton in the sweep a few seasons ago, look out.

Scheifele's line was moving in their win on Tuesday, something Connor said post-game is a staple when the line is successful.

"First time you get the puck, you gotta get those feet moving, those quick strides," the team leader with 34 goals said. "It takes everybody being on the same page, all as a unit.

“If one guy’s not doing their job, it slows everybody down. And you see in our neutral zone, when we press teams and two forwards on that forecheck, we turn a lot of pucks over and we get the player with the puck in the middle.”

It’s sort of how Connor scored his first of the game.

But it’s the work they’re doing in that neutral zone that’s making the difference.

“We’re not getting hung up (there),” Connor said. “Just being a little more mature for us and, I think that’s created a lot more offence in their zone.”

A few weeks back, head coach Rick Bowness was being asked why he was still trying to make Connor and Scheifele work.

They had Nikolaj Ehlers there, ready to sub in and fix the line’s defensive woes. But since Ehlers has found a great home on the left side of Sean Monahan’s line, returning to the Connor-Scheifele tandem has worked.

It’s come with Winnipeg’s return to form as a team. Go figure that players like Scheifele and Connor would eventually have to lead that charge.

They have, and the team has won seven straight.

“It’s a little easier now to see it for themselves because we’ve been doing that for two years,” Bowness said. “It’s a little bit easier to recognize and, again, they have to buy in and they’ve done that.”

Bowness is seeing Connor skating at both ends of the ice.

He’s engaged again.

“I know he’s scoring goals and creating things, but watch how hard he comes back,” Bowness said. When you see that in your player, you know that you’re totally engaged, and he’s an elite offensive player. When he’s engaged in the game, he’s going to get those opportunities, and he’s going to bury them.”

Next week, heading into a best-of-seven series with the 2022 champs will require those backchecks and that buy-in.

The headline on Tuesday was that Winnipeg clinched second place in the division and home-ice advantage against the Avs.

But the biggest news over the past week or so has been the Jets finding their groove, from their first line to their fourth, on the eve of the Stanley Cup playoffs.

- Of course, the Jets will want to eliminate the sort of shift they endured in the second period against Seattle. They gave up a 2-on-1 that Connor Hellebuyck bailed them out of before giving up a 2-on-0 where Hellebuyck didn’t stand a chance. Bowness summed it up rather bluntly, as he often does. “The second period was all terrible puck management,” he said. “It had nothing to do with structure. It was puck management, all of it. (The players) recognized that, too. We’re

feeding their transition, we're giving them opportunities, we let them get back in the game with our puck possession, our puck management. That's really the biggest issue we had in the second period."

- After blowing their 3-1 lead in the second, the Jets returned to a much better game in the third. They allowed four Grade-As against over the first and second periods, but with the game deadlocked, they only allowed one in the third and limited Seattle to just three shots 5-on-5. A Jets team that can handle those moments in tight games is a must in the playoffs and something they did so well in the first half of the season.

- The Jets have three goals to give in the William M. Jennings Trophy race. Winnipeg has allowed a league-low 197 goals against, with Florida three goals up the road at 200. Florida is done, playing to a 5-2 win over Toronto on Tuesday to wrap up their regular-season schedule. The Jets will win the trophy outright if they can keep Vancouver to two goals or fewer on Thursday. A tie would see both teams split the honour as there is no tiebreaker.

- From what I've heard, Game 1 of the Jets-Avs first-round series will begin on Monday, with an 8:45 p.m. CT start time. The game will follow Game 2 of the Toronto-Boston first-round series in the East. Don't shoot the messenger.

[Jets' third line reunited and excited](#)

By Graham Sceviour-Fraehlich, For the , Winnipeg Sun

Defence? Check. Scoring? Check. Good health? Check that one, too.

They may not have the glitz or glam of hockey's rockstars, but with the Winnipeg Jets' third line now healthy, it is precisely what the team needs from them heading into beard-growing time.

"I think it's huge," Jets right-winger Mason Appleton said, as Nino Niederreiter returned to the lineup Tuesday after missing five games with a cut to his Achilles tendon.

"There's such thing as too much rest this time of year," he said. "Obviously, you want to find that perfect balance but, to get him back and to get our line feeling good and whole these last couple games, it'll go a long way for us."

After Niederreiter confirmed he felt good to go on Monday, Appleton said he's excited to click with his full-time linemates.

Along with Jets captain Adam Lowry, they form a trio that has combined for 44 goals and 59 assists for 103 points.

"I think (Lowry) and (Niederreiter) are two awesome players," he said. "There's so much similarities between our line... or between all of us and then I think it just goes to show how we can play against anyone in this league and usually do a solid job."

The line played together 66 of the first 80 games this season, which has seen the team cross the 100-point threshold for only the second time in franchise history.

Even in Niederreiter's recent absence, the line produced three goals and four assists over the past two games, going plus-eight.

Three of the line's points in the past two contests came from David Gustafsson, who drew into the lineup in Niederreiter's absence for shutout wins in Dallas and Colorado to close out Winnipeg's recent four-game road trip.

The Swede hasn't been an everyday player on the team, appearing in only 38 games this season. But Gustafsson's recent contributions haven't gone unnoticed.

"He did a heck of a job," Appleton said. "Whenever you're coming into the lineup like that, it's not the easiest task. And he played his butt off, and he was very effective in his role."

The line has produced offensively, but Appleton says it shines most defensively.

"We're not a line that's always gonna fill the scoresheet, but I think we're gonna defend really hard," he said. "We can shut down a lot of good lines in this league."

That will be put to the test soon, with the Jets guaranteed a date with the Avs in the first round of the playoffs. Colorado paces the Central Division in goals scored, led by the daunting trio of Nathan MacKinnon, Jonathan Drouin, and Mikko Rantanen.

Entering Tuesday's action, the Jets had allowed the fewest goals in the NHL with 194, four fewer than the Florida Panthers, the only other team to keep the total under 200.

[Jets clinch second in Central, home-ice against Avs](#)

By Scott Billeck

The Winnipeg Jets will host the Colorado Avalanche to begin the Stanley Cup playoffs.

Winnipeg clinched home-ice advantage in the first round — and second place in the Central Division — with a 4-3 win over the Seattle Kraken on Tuesday night at Canada Life Centre.

The Jets, who improved to 51-24-6 (108 points) are locked into playing the 2022 Stanley Cup champion Avs, who will finish third.

The playoffs begin Saturday, although the start of the best-of-seven Jets-Avs series isn't expected to start until Monday at the earliest.

Tyler Toffoli scored his 33rd of the season on the power play at 11:40 of the third, breaking a 3-3 deadlock to extend Winnipeg's winning streak to seven games.

Kyle Connor notched his 33rd and team-leading 34th of the year, while Nikolaj Ehlers also scored.

Josh Morrissey added a pair of assists to sit on 69 points for the season.

Connor Hellebuyck, meanwhile, grabbed his 27th win of the season in his 60th start, making 20 saves.

Winnipeg led 3-1 early in the second, with Connor's pair and Ehlers' 25th building the Jets a cushion.

Tomas Tatar's goal that tied the game 1-1 in the first ended Winnipeg's shutout streak at 151:19 after blanking both Dallas and Colorado to close out their final road trip of the regulation season.

The worst lead in hockey would be realized for Winnipeg after they went up by two. Yannick Gourde scored his ninth before setting up Tye Kartye for his 10th, sending the game to the second intermission tied 3-3.

Toffoli's second in as many games came at the tail-end of Jared McCann's hooking penalty to put the Jets in front for good.

Earlier in the second, Morgan Barron left the game with a lower-body injury and did not return.

Winnipeg plays Game 82 on Thursday at home to Vancouver, a game that is likely to feature several of its regular scratches.

The Canucks beat the Flames Tuesday to lock down the Pacific Division making it a matchup with no playoff implications for either team.

With a win on Thursday, the Jets can match their season-long win streak of eight games and their franchise-record 52 wins in a season.

[Push with a purpose: Relentless Rick Bowness never satisfied and it's working for Jets](#)

By Paul Friesen

If you have thin skin, do not come in.

Winnipeg Jets defenceman Dylan DeMelo had a junior coach who used to say that when it was time to go over video.

It sounds like Rick Bowness should have a similar policy, preferably one stamped in large, bold letters and nailed to the door of the room by the Jets boss himself.

Because that game we've seen the Jets put on the ice of late, the one that saw them pound and smother division rivals Dallas and Colorado to the combined tune of 10-0 in back-to-back games, starts in video sessions that can be as blunt as the business end of a hammer.

"It's tough sometimes if you're on the video every night," DeMelo was telling me on Tuesday. "But if you don't want to be on the video, then maybe let's work on not getting on the video. As much as we want to be friends and be happy here, sometimes you need to be blunt and have honest conversations. We're trying to win. And sometimes guys' feelings get hurt.

"We can repair those."

Last season ended with just that: Hurt feelings. Their coach had been too blunt when his team bowed out far too easily.

Bowness mended those fences, but he refuses to let this turn into a country club of non-accountability.

His approach can be relentless.

“We’re winning 7-0 in Colorado and he’s giving it to guys for not getting the puck in,” DeMelo said. “Like, holy f—, Bones. Come on.’ ”

DeMelo was smiling as he said it.

“That’s the mentality we need to have,” he continued. “We haven’t won a Stanley Cup. Only a few guys in here have won a Stanley Cup. We’re trying to do everything we can to win one. At this time of year, too, every detail matters because the margin of error is so slim. And as you continue on, and hopefully we go really far, the (margin) is going to be even more slim.”

It’s a fine line for a coach to walk.

Bowness isn’t the only one in the NHL who walks it, every day.

Few have walked it as successfully this season. His Jets were one of just five teams with 50 or more wins going into Tuesday night’s schedule.

“I’ve played for some coaches that are a little bit harder,” Tyler Toffoli said. “Yeah, he’ll call guys out or explain certain things. But it’s more a conversation than pointing a finger. And if he’s pointing a finger, then there’s always the, ‘Well, why wasn’t somebody else there to fill in for the mistake?’ That’s why we’ve slowly turned things around.”

Acquired at the trade deadline, Toffoli is new to the Bowness way, and what came before it.

But DeMelo, in his fourth full season with the Jets, has seen the before and the after.

In the moment, it can be startling.

“Even when we were on that great streak of whatever it was, (allowing) three goals or less, you’d come in and you would never think that we were on this streak,” the 30-year-old said. “You’d be like, ‘Man, maybe these guys have allowed seven the last few games.’ It’s always, ‘Let’s push the envelope. Let’s see how far we can take this.’”

At the root of the constant reminders and the relentless pursuit for more: The desire to win.

It’s push with a purpose.

“He’s the type of guy that will give you the gears but then he’ll put his arm around you right after,” DeMelo said. “And he always says that whatever he’s trying to do, it’s for the betterment of the team. And he’s got an open-door policy.

“He’s hungry. And he’s been the big force of our drive and this change in our mindset.”

It’s taken a while. And there have been times when the Jets have strayed, even teetered on the brink, it seemed, at one point not long ago.

Bowness has brought them back.

Today they're on a roll and on the verge of having home-ice advantage for the first round of the postseason.

Safe to say he hasn't lost them, despite his demanding style.

But it's not fun when you're the one whose mistake is under the microscope.

"Not ideal," Toffoli said. "You live and you learn. That makes you a better player."

That's the whole point.

With Bowness, nothing lingers.

"He doesn't let you get away with anything," is how Kyle Connor described it to me a while back. "He tries to, every little play, every little possibility that he thinks can teach us and help us out, he'll show it in the video."

When that's hard on somebody — sometimes it's hard on the whole team — DeMelo says teammates pick each other up.

Belief in each other fuels the common goal.

DeMelo compares it to playing a video game: You're always trying to reach another level.

Being satisfied is a death wish.

"As soon as you take your foot off the gas and you settle in this league," he said. "It's game over."