

Winnipegjets.com

**[Three things - Avs even series
Jets led 2-1 in 2nd, but Avalanche score four unanswered for 5-2 win](#)**

By Jamie Thomas

WINNIPEG – The Colorado Avalanche scored four unanswered goals on route to a 5-2 win over the Winnipeg Jets in Game 2 to even the series at a game apiece. David Gustafsson and Mark Scheifele scored, and Connor Hellebuyck made 27 saves for the Jets who will now fly to Denver on Wednesday for Game's 3 and 4 of this series. The Jets penalty kill did a great job Tuesday going a perfect three-for-three and the power play went 0-for-3.

GUS BUS

The Jets fourth line chipped in with a big goal in Game 1 when Vladislav Namestnikov gave Winnipeg their first lead of the night in the first period. Tuesday night, it was David Gustafsson's turn to contribute. Gustafsson jumped on a loose puck and hammered in his own rebound for his first career playoff goal to give Winnipeg a 1-0 lead at 3:15 of the opening frame. It was the Swedish forwards first two career shots on goal in the Stanley Cup Playoffs as well. Winnipeg took that one goal lead into the second period.

MISTAKES HURT JETS

With the game tied at two, Winnipeg made a couple of critical errors that ended up in the back of their net in the second period. Yakov Trenin forced Connor Hellebuyck into turning the puck over behind the Jets net and Andrew Cogliano found Zach Parise and the former Wild forward scored on his own rebound to give the Avs their first lead of the night at 17:20. Then with under 10 seconds left, Josh Manson and Gabriel Vilardi jumped out of the penalty box after their roughing minors expired and Manson took a perfect pass from Nathan MacKinnon and scored on a breakaway.

GEORGIEV BOUNCE BACK

Alexandar Georgiev has not had the best of luck facing Winnipeg in the regular season and gave up seven goals in Game 1 on Sunday. Jared Bednar stuck with his number one goaltender, and it paid off on Tuesday night. After Georgiev let in Scheifele's redirected shot in the second period, he closed the door the rest of the way and finished with 28 saves to help his team even the series.

"We need some more zone time. Just too quick in a lot of our plays, getting shots blocked, they did a great job getting into the lanes," said Kyle Connor.

"We need to move more up top and support each other."

NHL.com

**[Georgiev bounces back, looks 'much better' for Avalanche in Game 2 win
Goalie makes 28 saves after allowing 7 goals in Game 1 loss against Jets in
Western 1st Round](#)**

By Tracey Myers

WINNIPEG -- Alexandar Georgiev had his focus, knew what he wanted to accomplish when he got in the net on Tuesday.

"I tried to imagine that feeling, winning the first game of the series for us," the Colorado Avalanche goaltender said after a 5-2 win against the Winnipeg Jets in Game 2 of the Western Conference First Round at Canada Life Centre.

"Trust the game and enjoy the atmosphere. I tried to approach it as a new game, definitely, after the last one."

It was certainly redemption for Georgiev, whose rough outing in Game 1, when he allowed seven goals in a 7-6 loss to the Jets in Game 1, prompted questions on whether he would start Game 2. But the 28-year-old gathered himself and looked outstanding in saving 28 shots.

"Fifty percent of the questions I've had over the last three days with three media availabilities are going to be about 'Georgy,'" Avalanche coach Jared Bednar said. "But to be able to fight through that, get focused on what he needs to do, I thought he was outstanding."

"And he deserves all the credit because our team was better, but it wasn't that much better. But he was much better, and he gave us a chance to win, and we did win and now we have to go repeat it."

The best-of-7 series is tied 1-1. Game 3 is at Ball Arena in Denver on Friday (10 p.m. ET; MAX, truTV, TNT, ALT, TVAS, CBC).

Redemption seemed to be the theme of the night for Colorado. It was there for Josh Manson, who admitted to making some costly miscues in Game 1. On Tuesday the defenseman came out of the penalty box, took a pass from center Nathan MacKinnon and scored a breakaway goal for a 4-2 Avalanche lead with seven seconds remaining in the second period.

"Yeah, that felt good," Manson said. "I mean, first of all, glory to God. I don't get those often and just to be able to put that away, it was nice. It was obviously not my best effort, Game 1 defensively. I wanted to focus on that, and those things happen sometimes like that. So, it was nice."

Georgiev's night included a couple of clutch moments. He saved a point-blank tip-in attempt by Jets forward Sean Monahan, who came down the slot at 4:50 of the first period. That save came 1:35 after Jets center David Gustafsson scored on him to give the Jets a 1-0 lead.

"I felt I played pretty good in that moment," Georgiev said of the Gustafsson goal. "The puck was going to my right side, and he gets the rebound to the left and then it bounces back to the right. Kind of a tough position. And I tried to... it's a long game, try and reset, keep to my game play and trust the process."

Clearly, it didn't disrupt him. Georgiev corralled a bouncing shot from forward Nino Niederreiter at 7:12 of the third period and made a save on a wrist shot by Nikolaj Ehlers when the Jets forward was alone in the right circle at 14:36 of the third.

"Well, we need it. We're going to need him if we want to go on a run," Colorado defenseman Devon Toews said. "We're going to need everybody in this room to have their A-game for us to go on a run. For him to find it tonight was a big one, to take one on the road."

Indeed, getting a split on the road, especially in an environment as raucous as Canada Life Centre, was important. With all the pressure that Georgiev was likely feeling the past few days, he could have wavered, could have buckled. Instead, with the support of his teammates, Georgiev found his game and has the Avalanche feeling great as they head home.

“They showed so much support to me over the last couple of days,” Georgiev said. “A very rough first game, obviously. I just felt so much trust in the room from everybody and I appreciate it so much. It helped me reset, to know that they have got my back. I know I’ll help them out as well during this playoff. It was huge from them. I appreciate it.”

[Avalanche score 4 in 2nd, defeat Jets in Game 2 to even West 1st Round series](#) **[Lehkonen has goal, assist for Colorado; Hellebuyck makes 27 saves for Winnipeg](#)**

By Darrin Bauming

WINNIPEG -- Artturi Lehkonen had a goal and an assist, and the Colorado Avalanche evened their Western Conference First Round series against the Winnipeg Jets with a 5-2 win in Game 2 at Canada Life Centre on Tuesday.

“Obviously, it’s an important win,” Colorado forward Andrew Cogliano said. “We thought we played well in the first game (a 7-6 loss) and didn’t get the result. I thought tonight we dug in. Went down early but it seemed like all four lines contributed, our [defense] played great and [Georgiev] had a bounce-back game, so tied the series. When you play in a building like this against a team like that, 1-1 going home into our building is a pretty good spot to be.”

Cale Makar had two assists for the Avalanche, the No. 3 seed from the Central Division. Alexandar Georgiev made 28 saves after allowing seven goals in 23 shots in Game 1.

“They showed so much support to me over the last couple of days. A very rough first game, obviously,” Georgiev said of his teammates. “I just felt so much trust in the room from everybody and I appreciate it so much. It helped me reset, to know that they have got my back. I know I’ll help them out as well during this playoff. It was huge from them. I appreciate it.”

David Gustafsson and Mark Scheifele scored for the Jets, who are the No. 2 seed from the Central. Connor Hellebuyck made 27 saves.

“It was a tough fought game, and [we] probably gave them a little bit too much zone time and a little bit too much space at times in that game,” Scheifele said. “But also we had some good shifts in there too. We have two days of rest here now. We need to ramp it up as it’s the playoffs. You’re not going to win every game, but you’ve just got to be ready for the punches that are thrown.”

Game 3 of the best-of-7 series will be in Colorado on Friday (10 p.m. ET; MAX, truTV, TNT, ALT, TVAS, CBC).

Gustafsson gave the Jets a 1-0 lead at 3:15 of the first period, scoring on the rebound from Brenden Dillon’s point shot.

"We were a lot better in certain areas," Winnipeg coach Rick Bowness said. "We had some lapses, certainly at the end of the second and it kind of caught up to us a little bit. We had the start we really wanted and then they got their power play and finished up strong in the first. But for the most part it was a lot better in areas, and there's still improvement to be made."

Miles Wood tied it 1-1 at 1:59 of the second period, shooting five-hole on Hellebuyck after Ross Colton won an offensive zone face-off.

"Through the playoffs, you need lines to score, especially the third and fourth lines," Cogliano said. "I thought Miles had a great goal from their line and we were able to chip in. Big two goals and sometimes that's the difference in games like tonight."

Scheifele scored one-handed to put the Jets back in front 2-1 at 8:37, just 32 seconds after Winnipeg killed off a double minor to Kyle Connor for high-sticking. Connor began the rush with a cross-ice outlet pass to Gabriel Vilardi, who then set Scheifele up for a deflection. Scheifele got his stick on the puck at the edge of the crease while tied up by Avalanche defenseman Jack Johnson.

"Fantastic pass by Gabe," Scheifele said. "I knew the guy was kind of there and he didn't really know where the puck was, so if I had to go two-handed there, he probably reacts in the same fashion. I just made a judgment call."

Lehkonen tied it 2-2 with a tip in close off Makar's point shot at 14:16.

"[Lehkonen] is a competitive, competitive guy," Colorado coach Jared Bednar said. "When you talk about all-around, good players that play the game the right way, and it's not always showing up on the stat sheet for a guy like [Lehkonen]. I can pick guys around the league that I'm a big fan of the way they play for multiple reasons. He's one of them. When you do the right things all the time, day after day, practice, games, and you're an intense competitor, it's going to pay off for you at some point. I feel like we've seen that out of [Lehkonen]. Big moments, just doing the right thing."

Zach Parise put the Avalanche in front 3-2 at 17:20. He scored on his own rebound after Hellebuyck was checked by Avalanche forward Yakov Trenin while playing the puck behind his net, allowing Cogliano to find Parise in front.

"I think we did a good job of realizing that's a fluky one, right," Connor said. "How many times does Connor [Hellebuyck] go back and play the puck and it's bang-up, no problem. Our forwards can do a bit better job picking the forwards coming in, too. Maybe a little skate screen can help him out. It's a team effort there, but at the same time I think that's one of those you just brush off."

With seven seconds remaining in the second, Josh Manson came out of the penalty box and scored on a breakaway to make it 4-2. Nathan MacKinnon's stretch pass sprung Manson, who deked Hellebuyck and scored five-hole.

"Just to be able to put it away, that was nice," Manson said. "It was obviously not my best effort in Game 1, so I wanted to focus on that. Those things happen like that sometimes, so it was nice."

Valeri Nichushkin scored with a backhand into an empty net at 19:03 of the third period for the 5-2 final.

“It’s a playoff series. We’re good at home, they’re good at home,” Cogliano said. “We get a 1-1 split in a tough building, so I think we take the positives from that and now we go home to a place we’re pretty comfortable playing.”

NOTES: Avalanche defenseman Sean Walker left the game after colliding in the corner with Jets center Vladislav Namestnikov in the third period. “Yeah, he’s fine, completely fine,” Bednar said. ... MacKinnon’s assist on Manson’s goal was his 58th in the playoffs, surpassing Peter Stastny for fourth place on the Avalanche/Quebec Nordiques all-time list.

Canadian Press

[Avalanche Roll Past Jets 5-2, Head Home with Series Tied 1-1](#)

By Judy Owen, The Canadian Press

WINNIPEG — Alexandar Georgiev paid back his Colorado Avalanche teammates for believing in him.

Georgiev had a bounce-back game Tuesday, making 28 saves to help the Avalanche earn a 5-2 victory over the Winnipeg Jets that tied their first-round NHL playoff series at a game apiece.

“They showed so much support to me over the last couple of days. A very rough first game, obviously,” said Georgiev, who allowed seven goals on 23 shots in Winnipeg’s 7-6 Game 1 victory on Sunday.

“I just felt so much trust in the room from everybody and I appreciate it so much. It helped me reset, to know that they have got my back. I know I’ll help them out as well during this playoff.”

Artturi Lehkonen had a goal and assist as the Avalanche scored three unanswered second-period goals.

Miles Wood, Zach Parise, Josh Manson and Valeri Nichushkin, with an empty-netter, also scored for the Avalanche.

The best-of-seven Western Conference matchup shifts to Denver for Friday’s Game 3.

Colorado head coach Jared Bednar said it was “fantastic” Georgiev rebounded.

“I thought he was outstanding and he deserves all the credit because our team was better, but it wasn’t that much better. But he was much better and he gave us a chance to win and we did win and now we have to go repeat it (at home),” Bednar said.

David Gustaffson and Mark Scheifele scored for the Jets.

Connor Hellebuyck stopped 27 of the 31 shots he faced for Winnipeg in front of another sold-out crowd of 15,225 white-clad fans at Canada Life Centre.

Scheifele said the Jets probably didn’t test Georgiev enough.

“But he did make some big saves,” Scheifele acknowledged. “(Kyle Connor) hit the crossbar in that third period. We get some looks.

“He hits the post in the second period and then they go down and score shortly after. That’s playoffs, you know? We’ve just got to continue to make adjustments and try to find ways to get to the front of the net a little more and get a few more chances and get a bit more o-zone time.”

The Jets led 1-0 after the first period, but Colorado mounted a 4-2 lead after scoring three goals in the final 5:37 seconds of the middle frame.

Winnipeg fans were razzing Georgiev from the get-go, giving the netminder a loud cheer when he made his first save of the game.

Georgiev was then beaten by Gustafsson 3:15 into the first period when he capitalized on a loose puck off a rebound and put it into an open net.

It was the fourth-line forward’s first career playoff goal in his fifth career post-season game.

The Avalanche were down 9-2 in shots on goal near the 13-minute mark, but turned up the heat as the opening period ended with the visitors ahead 15-12.

Wood tied it at 1:59 into the second period when Ross Colton won a faceoff and sent the puck to him and he fired it past Hellebuyck.

“I think we need some more zone time,” Connor said of making Georgiev work harder. “We were just too quick on a lot of our plays. Getting shots blocked. They did a good job getting into lanes.”

Connor received a double minor for high-sticking Cale Makar but Colorado only put one shot on net.

Winnipeg responded 32 seconds after the penalty expired when Scheifele raced to the net and redirected a pass from Gabriel Vilardi at 8:37.

After Connor had a shot hit the post and bounce out, Colorado scored three in a row.

Lehkonen tipped in a Makar shot at 14:16 and Parise made it 3-2 three minutes later during a scramble for the puck in front of the Winnipeg net.

Manson came out of the penalty box for roughing and received a breakaway pass from Nathan MacKinnon, beating Hellebuyck with seven seconds remaining.

The Jets 6-foot-7 defenceman Logan Stanley crushed Avs’ defenceman Sean Walker in the corner going for the puck nine minutes into the third. Walker headed to the dressing room, while Stanley and Colorado forward Brandon Duhaim went to the box for roughing. Bednar said Walker was “fine.”

Duhaim returned to the penalty box a few minutes later for interference but Winnipeg couldn’t capitalize.

Nichushkin sent the puck in an empty net with 57 seconds left.

ENTERING ENEMY TERRITORY

The Avalanche were the NHL's best home team during the regular season, finishing 31-9-1 at Ball Arena to rank first in home wins.

However, the Jets accounted for two of those losses as they took the season series 3-0, including a 7-0 victory on April 13 and a 4-2 win Dec. 7.

Winnipeg went 25-13-3 on the road this season, tied for third in the NHL in road wins.

UP NEXT

Game 3 in the series is Friday night in Denver.

Sportsnet.ca

[Jets must get back to defensive identity following Game 2 loss](#) (VIDEO)

Sean Reynolds and Eric Engels break down the Winnipeg Jets' 5-2 loss in Game 2 to the Colorado Avalanche, discussing how Winnipeg needs to return to its defensive identity to have success in the remainder of the series.

[Jets' style of play not holding up against Avalanche](#)

By Eric Engels

WINNIPEG — We're two games into the NHL's most exciting playoff series and if the Winnipeg Jets had it their way it would be its most boring one.

But this is now 1-1 going to Colorado because the Jets haven't found a way to do that.

This team, which stifled and suffocated opponents to record 52 wins in the regular season, has started the playoffs by putting the welcome mat down in front of Connor Hellebuyck and allowing the high-octane Avalanche stomp all over it. They struggled mightily to contain Colorado's stars in Game 1 — failing to deny them zone entries, premium scoring chances and goals — and couldn't clamp down on their depth players in a 5-2 loss in Game 2.

It's cost the Jets one of the biggest advantages they had coming into this series, with home ice surrendered to a team that went 31-9-1 at Ball Arena in the regular season.

That's a major concern.

But nothing should be more concerning to the Jets than the wide-open nature of play that's mostly prevailed so far. It's the opposite of how they've wanted it to go.

Prior to the series, when we asked Jets shutdown forward Mason Appleton to identify the hallmark of his team's DNA, he pointed immediately to what they do without the puck.

“It’s just our defensive mindset, I think,” he said. “I think we pride ourselves, obviously winning (the Jennings) Trophy for the least goals against, we felt that’s the bread and butter of our team. And there’s the cliché of defence wins championships, and we all believe that in here.

“You look at how many depth scoring pieces you have, like I don’t know if there’s a team in the playoffs that is as deep as us in my opinion. So we’re kind of a collective group offensively, and we can all defend hard and defend the right way. That’s when our team wins.”

The Jets managed to sneak a win out in Game 1 without doing it, finding the back of the net seven times in large part because Avalanche goaltender Alexandar Georgiev couldn’t stop them.

He found a way in Game 2, rebounding to make 28 saves.

But the Jets once again couldn’t keep the Avalanche at bay at the other end.

Hellebuyck helped them mitigate that in the first period, making 14 saves to help them carry the 1-0 lead David Gustafsson gave them early into intermission.

But Miles Wood got a free shot at him off a faceoff play 1:59 into the second period and scored.

Later on in the frame, the Jets couldn’t suppress the chance Artturi Lehkonen capitalized on to tie the game after Mark Scheifele scored, and they couldn’t tie up Zach Parise from notching the winner after Hellebuyck misplayed the puck beside his net.

Josh Manson’s breakaway out of the penalty box made it 4-2 Avalanche with seconds to go in the second period. The shot he notched was Colorado’s 29th of the game, which only served to reinforce how leaky the Jets ultimately were over these two games in front of sellout, whiteout crowds at Canada Life Centre.

During the regular season, they held their opposition to an average of 29.6 shots against per game. After giving up 46 in Game 1, giving up 29 through two periods couldn’t have been the plan.

During the regular season, the Jets gave their opposition under five minutes of offensive-zone possession time per game. But through five periods of this series, they gave up control in their zone for 11:11.

Not exactly a lucky number in this case.

Credit the Avalanche, who push teams back on their heels with frightening speed and unparalleled skill in players like Nathan MacKinnon and Cale Makar.

“They’re a fantastic team. They have been that all year,” said Scheifele. “They have some world-class players that move really well and make you pay when you give them time and space.”

But as Scheifele also noted, the Jets, who have been so good at not affording anyone that this season, haven’t been good enough at that in this series.

“We just have to make our adjustments, and they’re going to do the same as well,” he said. “That’s just what makes the playoffs fun.”

They won’t be fun at all for the Jets at Ball Arena if they don’t make major adjustments immediately.

Granted, they won 7-0 last time they were there. But the Jets didn’t come close to seeing Colorado’s best that night.

Their best has been on display at home all season.

“I do know this, our fans in our building over the course of my time in Denver have been phenomenal,” said Avalanche coach Jared Bednar. “They can appreciate the work that we put in and the desire that we have to win in front of them, and they’ve helped us get there. We’ve been a really good home team this year, and our fans and the city of Denver have supported us. I think our guys understand that. They want to come out on the ice every time and put their best foot forward and put on a show and be entertaining and play the right way...”

It’s what the Avalanche did in hostile territory, and what the Jets didn’t do enough of in front of their incredibly supportive crowd.

“This was a great environment, one of the best I’ve been in,” Bednar said. “I know our building’s going to be rocking when we get back home.”

For the Jets to silence it, they must find a way to play the game that put them ahead of the Avalanche in the first place.

TSN.ca

[Corrado: Avs showed how quickly they can change the momentum of a game \(VIDEO\)](#)

After giving up three goals in the last five minutes of the second period, TSN Hockey analyst Frankie Corrado joins SportsCentre to discuss how the Avalanche showed in Game 2 how quickly they can turn momentum in their favour, and what Colorado did differently to keep Winnipeg in check offensively.

[Unforced errors bite Jets in momentum-changing second period \(VIDEO\)](#)

After giving up three goals in the last five minutes of the second period in Game 2, TSN Hockey Insider Darren Dreger joins John Lu to pinpoint the unforced errors the Jets committed in the frame, and discuss Alexandar Georgiev outduelling Connor Hellebuyck in an impressive bounce back performance.

Winnipeg Free Press

[Colorado’s Georgiev rebounds with a solid effort in win over Jets](#)

By: Ken Wiebe

Today's lesson is brought to you by the letter R, as in resilience.

And resilience is what a team brings to the table when you've been to the top of the mountain recently, like the Colorado Avalanche have in 2022.

After dropping the series opener by a 7-6 score to the Winnipeg Jets, the Avalanche spent the past couple of days saying all the right things and focusing on their preparation.

The Avalanche knew full well what was at stake on Tuesday and they didn't want to find themselves in a 2-0 hole as the series shifts to the Mile High City for Games 3 and 4.

With that in mind, the Avalanche were forced to battle back from a pair of one-goal deficits before pulling away late in the second period in what became a 5-2 victory over the Jets before a stunned Whiteout crowd of 15,225 at Canada Life Centre.

"When you come into the playoffs, you have to be resilient," said Avalanche defenceman Josh Manson, the son of former Jets 1.0 defenceman Dave Manson.

"There are going to be roller-coasters, ups-and-downs and with that win in 2022, that was a big focus of ours. Not letting frustration set in, whatever it may be. Just being that resilient, callous brain, where you just keep pushing forward and sticking to your game plan and the results will come. We have a few guys in our room that have been there — and we've got more guys that have been in the same situation on other teams in the playoffs. It's something that we know we have, that resiliency and how important it is in the playoffs. We've got guys that know how to do it."

Do they ever — and that's why the Avalanche were able to shake off the disappointing loss in the series opener and head back home to the Mile High City all even at 1-1, turning this into a best-of-five with a race to three more wins.

Much of the discussion going into the contest revolved around how goalie Alexandar Georgiev would play after giving up seven goals on 23 shots on goal on Sunday.

But with Justus Annunen "still sick" and unavailable, Georgiev rebounded with a solid effort, making 28 saves — shaking off the Bronx cheers that occasionally rained down on him.

"I try to enjoy it. I've seen the atmosphere here before on YouTube," said Georgiev, who led the NHL in wins (38) during the regular season and appeared in 63 games during the regular season.

"It's one of the more fun buildings probably, in the playoffs, the way that they come together — and the whole crowd is white. It's super fun, even though I don't really focus on them. But you feel the energy, you feel the atmosphere, you feel how important it is, how much fun those games are."

Georgiev said he changed his routine slightly, taking fewer shots at the morning skate and working to take a more positive mindset into the contest.

Whether it was related to the change or not, Georgiev looked much quieter in the crease and seemed to appreciate the vote of confidence he received going into the second game.

“They showed so much support to me over the last couple of days. A very rough first game, obviously,” said Georgiev. “I just felt so much trust in the room from everybody and I appreciate it so much. It helped me reset, to know that they have got my back. I know I’ll help them out as well during this playoff. It was huge from them. I appreciate it.”

Georgiev’s teammates appreciated his efforts as well.

“I don’t know if we made it easier or not but he played great. He was awesome,” said Avalanche centre Nathan MacKinnon. “Our goal is to be really good defensively every night and (we were) definitely better tonight.”

“I thought he was very calm, he was square, he controlled rebounds,” added Avalanche forward Andrew Cogliano. “I thought we did a good job in front of him but, ultimately, he stood tall for a couple big saves when we needed them and had a huge bounce-back game. Hopefully, he builds some confidence.”

On the day between games, Manson expressed his disappointment with a couple of defensive miscues that ended up in the back of the net in the series opener. He was a physical force in this game, finishing with six hits and delivering the backbreaker goal that made it 4-2.

After serving coincidental roughing minors with Gabriel Vilardi, Manson jumped out of the box as the penalty expired, took a pass from Nathan MacKinnon, went in on a breakaway and beat Jets goalie Connor Hellebuyck with 6.9 seconds to go in the second period.

“You don’t get those often,” said Manson. “And just to be able to put it away, that was nice. It was obviously not my best effort in Game 1, so I wanted to focus on that. Those things happen like that sometimes, so it was nice.”

Jets centre Mark Scheifele didn’t sound concerned as he answered a question about the first dose of adversity his team is facing in this playoff series.

“We just have to continue to work on our game and continue to find what makes us us. They are a fantastic team over there, so you’ve got to give them a lot of credit. They did a lot of good things,” said Scheifele.

“They blocked a lot of shots, they made it tough to get anything going. That’s the fun part of the playoffs. We weren’t expecting this to be an easy series. They’re a great team over there. We’ve just got to continue to roll with the punches.”

[Avs grab momentum, roll over Jets](#) **[Colorado capitalizes on sloppy play, evens series at one](#)**

By: Mike McIntyre

The Winnipeg Jets took the foot off the gas pedal for just a few minutes on Tuesday night — and ended up getting run right off the road by a high-octane Colorado Avalanche club.

A 5-2 loss at Canada Life Centre levels the best-of-seven playoff series at 1-1.

“It stings. You never like losing, let alone a home game here. I’m sure they’re happy with the split,” said Jets forward Kyle Connor.

You can file this under “one that got away” from the home team. Winnipeg had built a well-deserved 2-1 lead by the midway mark of the game and seemed in full control.

But some poor puck management proved costly, as the opportunistic visitors scored three times in the span of 5:37 in the latter half of the second period to silence the sold-out crowd and turn this into a best-of-five while seizing home-ice advantage in the process.

“They’re a fantastic team. They have been that all year. They have some world-class players that move really well and make you pay when you give them time and space. I think we gave those guys too much time and space tonight,” said forward Mark Scheifele.

“We just have to make our adjustments and they’re going to do the same as well. That’s just what makes the playoffs fun.”

The action now shifts to Denver for Games 3 and 4. Before we get there, let’s review all that transpired at the downtown rink.

1) Fire up the Gus Bus

Despite winning Game 1 by a 7-6 score, the Jets stressed they needed to be better. And they were off the hop, with David Gustafsson opening the scoring just 3:15 into the game.

The young forward, who is only in the lineup because of an injury to winger Morgan Barron, swept home a loose puck for his first career playoff goal in his fifth career postseason contest.

Defenceman Brenden Dillon fired a shot from the blue line which was stopped by Avalanche goaltender Alexandar Georgiev, who seemed to kick the puck right to Gustafsson’s stick.

Winnipeg’s fourth line has now connected in both games, with Alex Iafallo setting up Vlad Namestnikov in Game 1. That’s the kind of depth production you need at this time of year.

2) What could have been the turning point

Colorado, as you’d expect after falling behind, came out strong to start the second period, taking the play to Winnipeg and knotting the score just 1:59 into the frame as Miles Wood ripped a shot past a surprised Connor Hellebuyck right off an offensive zone faceoff win from Ross Colton.

Just over two minutes later, Connor clipped Avalanche defenceman Cale Makar with a high stick, drawing blood. That gave Colorado’s potent power play, which went 2-for-2 in Game 1, a golden four-minute opportunity.

Credit to the Jets, who killed it off thanks to a pair of huge shot blocks by Dylan Samberg and some timely clears, limiting the Avalanche to just one shot.

“They did a fantastic job. They clogged up the seams and kept them to the outside and blocked some shots, which is huge. They did a fantastic job and gave us a good chance,” said coach Rick Bowness.

With the crowd roaring its approval, this felt like a true momentum shifter when Scheifele finished off a perfect dish from Gabe Vilardi to give the Jets a 2-1 lead at 8:37.

“Fantastic pass by Gabe,” said Scheifele. “I knew the guy was kind of there and he didn’t really know where the puck was. So, if I had to go two-handed there, he probably reacts in the same fashion. I just made a judgment call.”

Surely they’d channel all that energy and keep going, right?

3) *What really was the turning point*

With the Avalanche suddenly reeling at the big swing, the Jets kept coming and nearly made it 3-1 when Connor’s shot hit the post.

A huge miss, as it turned out.

Colorado tied it shortly after, as Makar’s shot was tipped by Artturi Lehkonen to make it 2-2.

Then, a couple of terrible decisions came back to bite Winnipeg.

First up was Hellebuyck attempting to play the puck behind his net, only to have his pocket picked. The end result was Zach Parise scoring into what was basically an empty net.

“That’s a fluky one. How many times does Connor go back and play the puck and it’s bang up, no problem,” said Connor.

“Our forwards can do a bit better job picking the forwards coming in, too. Maybe a little skate screen can help him out. It’s a team effort there, but at the same time I think that’s one of those you just brush off. You know you’re playing good at that point. Hopefully you follow up on the next shift.”

The dagger came courtesy of Nikolaj Ehlers, who had control of the puck in the Avalanche zone, slipped and fell, and rather than just push the puck deep and kill the clock, he tried to force a play back to the blue line which was picked off and resulted in a breakaway pass to Josh Manson, who had just exited the penalty box after serving a coincidental roughing minor with Vilardi.

Manson beat Hellebuyck on the deke with seven seconds left in the frame, and suddenly the Jets were in a two-goal hole.

“It’s just the timing of it. He’s on that side of the ice so you can’t give him the puck, you can’t catch him. It was just unfortunate timing and they took advantage of it,” Bowness said of the play.

4) *Georgiev’s redemption*

Colorado’s goaltending was the big story in Game 1, as Georgiev gave up seven goals on just 23 shots. With regular backup Justus Annunen still out with illness, there was plenty of pressure on him to come up with a better performance in this one.

He certainly did, stopping 28 of 30 shots and really settling things down for his team, especially once they jumped out to the lead and the Jets started to push in the final period.

“We get some looks. (Connor) hits the post the second period and then they go down and score shortly after. That’s playoffs, you know?” said Scheifele.

“We’ve just got to continue to make adjustments and try to find ways to get to the front of the net a little more and get a few more chances and get a bit more o-zone time.”

Valeri Nichushkin sealed the victory with an empty-net goal.

“Just a little bit of the ebbs and flows of the game. They had a good push there. Maybe we didn’t stick with it,” Connor said of what went wrong.

“We could have done a lot better job of developing some offence in their zone and kind of getting some more zone time. I thought we were a little bit too quick to go one and out. I don’t think we had too much sustained zone time. At the end of the day it’s about adjustments. I thought our power play could be better. I don’t think we were very good tonight. Disconnected all over the ice. So, we’ll do some adjustments. It’s a 1-1 series. It’s about that next game.”

5) Let’s get physical

The two teams combined for 100 hits in Game 1, which is a massive number that speaks to the intensity of playoff hockey.

Could they keep up that torrid pace?

“Listen, it’s a seven-game series and every chance you get, you’ve got to finish your checks,” Bowness said prior to puck drop.

“Does that mean you want to run all over the ice and hit them? Absolutely not. Don’t want to chase the game. But when the opportunity is there to finish checks, they’re doing it, we’re doing it, every series is doing it. So, you’re hoping as the series goes on that you’re wearing guys down.”

They came close in this one, finishing with 87 (44 for the Avalanche, 43 for the Jets). Nobody had more than Logan Stanley’s eight.

6) Extra, extra

Both teams finished 0-for-3 on the power play.

After giving up six goals on 46 shots in Game 1, Hellebuyck stopped all 15 he faced in a busy first period — then let in four of the next 16 over the final 40 minutes.

With his Game 1 victory, the 69-year-old Bowness became the oldest coach in NHL history to record a playoff win. He’ll continue breaking his own record with each subsequent victory.

Winnipeg had won nine straight games coming into this one, including the final eight of the regular season. That’s the most in franchise history. The Jets had also beaten the Avalanche in all four previous meetings this year prior to Tuesday.

Both teams will now fly to Denver on Wednesday, skate Thursday, and get ready for Game 3 on Friday night. Game 4 will go on Sunday afternoon, with Game 5 now guaranteed next Tuesday back in Winnipeg.

“We have two days of rest here now. We need to ramp it up as it’s playoffs. You’re not going to win every game, but you’ve just got to be ready for the punches that are thrown,” said Scheifele.

7) Adding Landy would be dandy

It's been two years since Avalanche captain Gabe Landeskog last played an NHL game, the result of a serious knee injury that led to cartilage replacement surgery. But he made his presence felt on Tuesday as he took a twirl with his healthy teammates during the morning skate, albeit without equipment.

"I think he helps our team morale. Landy's just a great person, player, sort of just an extension of the coaching staff, a guy that anyone on our team can go to and lean on with any issues," said coach Jared Bednar.

Could he potentially return at some point during these playoffs?

"That would be an ideal situation for us if we were able to continue to advance and he were able to get back," said Bednar.

"We don't know that that's the case, but we've got a lot of motivation as a team."

Middle men make the difference **Jets and Avs prove four strong centres key to success in NHL**

By: Ken Wiebe

Having a solid one-two punch down the middle is no longer enough.

To be the last team standing in the chase for the Stanley Cup these days, having four reliable centres is the rule and not the exception.

As the opening-round series between the Winnipeg Jets and Colorado Avalanche continues, a quick look under the hood supports the aforementioned theory.

Much like when the Vegas Golden Knights reached the top of the mountain last spring with Jack Eichel, Chandler Stephenson, William Karlsson and Nicolas Roy taking the majority of the reps at centre, the Jets and Avalanche feature the type of four-line depth that is required to go on a deep run.

Reaching that point meant the respective general managers — Kevin Cheveldayoff of the Jets and Chris MacFarland of the Avalanche — went shopping prior to the NHL trade deadline.

Winnipeg went with a pre-emptive strike, acquiring Sean Monahan from the Montreal Canadiens for a first-round pick in the 2024 NHL Draft and a conditional third rounder in 2027 if the Jets win the Stanley Cup this spring.

Monahan has been an optimal fit for the Jets, providing a steady presence on the second scoring line with Nikolaj Ehlers and Tyler Toffoli, a deadline-day acquisition.

The Jets were incredibly deep down the middle during the 2018 run to the Western Conference final, when Mark Scheifele, Paul Stastny, Adam Lowry and Bryan Little were the pivots — with Andrew Copp and several others able to play the position if a situation arose where that skillset was required.

This group certainly rivals that one.

“We’ve had some good centremen here over the years, and this year it’s the same,” said Scheifele. “We have a lot of tremendous centremen, we also have a lot of guys who play (on the) wing that can play centre. That always makes for a good team, when you have guys that can play in different positions and take faceoffs.”

Much like Little moving down the lineup after the arrival of Stastny, Vladislav Namestnikov is currently anchoring the fourth line after spending a good chunk of this season playing on the second line with Ehlers and Cole Perfetti (who started the campaign at centre before shifting to the wing).

Gabriel Vilardi is another player who has been used at centre at the NHL level, though he’s spent the bulk of this season at right wing on the top line with Scheifele and Kyle Connor.

David Gustafsson is another natural centre playing on the wing right now.

Although trading Pierre-Luc Dubois to the Los Angeles Kings took a bite out of the Jets’ centre depth, they’ve filled that void and are now so deep that Rasmus Kupari has been a frequent healthy scratch.

Having such great depth down the middle is a benefit for head coach Rick Bowness, whether he has last change or not.

“You can get away from matchups easily,” said Monahan. “To be able to have four centremen who can play against anybody, that’s huge.”

The Jets haven’t given up on Perfetti eventually playing centre full time at the NHL level, and they also watched Brad Lambert develop incredibly well this season with the Manitoba Moose of the American Hockey League.

That won’t prevent them from trying to sign Monahan to an extension before he hits the open market — and there’s a good reason for that.

“It’s very important. But overall, it’s not just centres, it’s the overall depth. Guys can move around,” said Namestnikov. “We have all the ingredients. Now, we just have to put it together.”

Ehlers is often the guy who is forced to adapt to an incoming centre, whether that was Stastny, Kevin Hayes or Monahan, and he has high praise for the guy currently occupying the job.

“(Stastny) was constantly in the right position, every single time,” said Ehlers. “(Monahan) is a little faster than Stas was, so he’s able to get into those positions as well. Maybe a little more (involved) off the rush as well.

“I’ve always said (Stastny) is the best player I’ve ever played with and (Monahan) is almost just as easy to play with, which is pretty fun for me.”

When the Avalanche captured the Stanley Cup in 2022, their depth down the middle was led by Nathan MacKinnon and supported strongly by Nazem Kadri, JT Compher and Manitoba product Darren Helm, whose championship-winning experience and penalty killing capabilities came in quite handy.

The Avalanche felt so strongly about upgrading the position in March that they moved one of their best defencemen, Bowen Byram (the fourth-overall pick in the 2019) to the Buffalo Sabres to acquire Casey Mittelstadt.

They also added some sandpaper by picking up Yakov Trenin from the Nashville Predators.

Those moves came after the off-season move to acquire Ross Colton from the Tampa Bay Lightning.

“(Mittelstadt) has been really good. I thought he played awesome (in Game 1). He was really hard on the puck and had a goal at the end there to give us a chance and, obviously, we got (Colton), who is a physical, two-way guy and (Trenin) is the same thing,” said MacKinnon. “We’re deep there. We have the players to do this. I’m not sure we’ll ever be on as good of a team as we were in 2022, but we’re still good enough to win in this room and we’re excited for the challenge.”

As this series shifts to Denver for the next two games, there’s a sense the eight centres will be critical in the race to four wins to advance to the second round.

“It’s all about depth and being able to not just have responsible players on both sides of the puck, but then also to have guys that can contribute and chip in offensively,” said Avalanche head coach Jared Bednar. “(Adding Monahan) just makes (the Jets) that much more difficult to deal with. No different than us adding Mittelstadt, Trenin, and guys like that.”

[Hawerchuk’s son in wonder of Winnipeg’s “Whiteout” conditions ‘I feel like I’m connected to my dad here... this place meant so much to him’](#)

By: Mike McIntyre

Dale Hawerchuk and the Winnipeg Jets will forever be linked, and a statue of the late, great “Ducky” that stands outside the downtown rink serves as a permanent reminder.

That deep bond has been re-enforced this week as Hawerchuk’s son, Eric, has returned to his birthplace to experience his first “Whiteout”.

“My whole family has felt a big connection to this city for a long time, but especially since they put the statue up,” Eric told the Free Press on Tuesday, a few hours before the puck was dropped in Game 2 between the Jets and Colorado Avalanche.

“I feel like I’m connected to my dad here. This place meant so much to him, and it meant a lot to us. It’s nice to come and visit friends and family. I’ve never seen the city like this.”

Hawerchuk was drafted first overall by the Jets in 1981, playing his first nine seasons in Winnipeg in which he racked up plenty of franchise records and was one of the best players in the game.

Now 34, Eric was just one year old when his father was traded to the Buffalo Sabres in 1990, so he never got to experience Winnipeg in full playoff frenzy during his childhood.

Although he heard plenty of stories from his family, nothing could have prepared him for what he experienced Sunday night inside Canada Life Centre. A late flight from his current home in Arizona meant he missed the first period, which ended in a 3-3 tie.

“I walked in, sat down and boom, we scored. And the place just goes nuts,” Eric said of the go-ahead goal in the middle frame scored by Jets captain Adam Lowry.

“I was like, ‘Holy, smokes.’ I’ll never forget that. It was something else. It was just electric in here.”

“I feel like I’m connected to my dad here. This place meant so much to him, and it meant a lot to us. It’s nice to come and visit friends and family. I’ve never seen the city like this.”

–Eric Hawerchuk

The emotional roller-coaster continued until the final buzzer, with the Jets holding on for a 7-6 victory. Moments later, there was Eric sharing a hug with Jets co-owner and chairman Mark Chipman,.

“It’s funny. The older I’m getting, the more I’m understanding why this city meant so much to my dad. And why he loved it here,” said Eric.

“It is a special place. I think the players that are here now are seeing that, too.”

Those heavy feelings kept coming after the game, as Eric spotted hundreds of jubilant fans posing for pictures with his father’s bronzed likeness, with plenty tagging him on social media to express their love and admiration.

“It gave me chills, honestly,” he said.

“This whole trip already, I’ve only been here 48 hours, but I’ve had chills multiple times. I’m getting choked up now just thinking about it. It’s awesome.”

Hawerchuk died of stomach cancer in August 2020 at the age of 57, and the statue was unveiled prior to the 2022-23 season, with dozens of family members, former teammates and opponents flying in for the first-of-its-kind ceremony for the Jets organization.

“For them to embrace Dale the way they did when the Jets came back, it meant so much to him. Being born here, I want to support the city and support the Jets,” Eric said, of why it’s so important to maintain connections.

To that extent, he’s developed a close friendship with Jets centre Mark Scheifele, who was previously coached and mentored by Hawerchuk in junior (Barrie Colts).

The family has also launched “Ducky’s Dills,” which is based on a pickle recipe passed down through multiple generations.

They’re now being sold at Red River Co-op locations around Winnipeg and at Mottola Grocery, just steps away from the statue in True North Square where Eric spent some time Tuesday meeting fans.

Although he didn't inherit his father's hockey talents, Eric has carved out a career as a professional golfer including 15 events on the PGA Tour Canada. He's got some upcoming tournaments to play south of the border but plans to attend as many Jets games as he can over what he hopes is the next couple months.

Perhaps the end result can be something his father wanted so desperately for his beloved hockey home — a Stanley Cup.

"I think the vibes are as high as they can be," said Eric.

"I think the players feel that. I think you know as a team when you have it, and these guys have it. And they know it. They know if they play the right way we can get this done. And I just want to be a part of it."

Global Winnipeg

[ANALYSIS: Momentum swings against Jets for Game 3 — if you believe that kind of thing](#)

By Paul Edmonds CJOB

The line is pretty clear: either you believe game-to-game momentum swings can exist in the Stanley Cup playoffs, or you don't.

But regardless of which side you stand on, time will certainly tell us what is more likely as this first-round playoff series between Winnipeg and Colorado progresses into the weekend, and now into next week, with at least five games to decide it a certainty.

After Tuesday night's Game 2 victory over the Jets to wrestle away home ice advantage, the Avalanche have now gained the upper hand in the series as it shifts to Denver for the next two games on Friday and Sunday afternoon.

The daily email you need for Winnipeg's top news stories.

In bouncing back from a series-opening, one-goal loss, the Avs found another level in their game, particularly as Tuesday night's contest continued to advance into the night.

Colorado, led by the usual cast of all-star characters, built on a strong finish to Game 1, withstood a quick start from the Jets in Game 2, and hopscotched out of Manitoba with the series knotted at a win apiece.

But perhaps the biggest difference was the play of much-maligned goaltender Alexandar Georgiev, who shook off a troubling first game to turn in one of his best performances in weeks, all the while helping to prevent Winnipeg from building on what they felt was a satisfying win on Sunday.

But that laurel was short-lived and the work begins again in earnest for Winnipeg to find a solution for the "M & M boys": MacKinnon, Makar, and with a goal and a plus-3 rating on Tuesday, Manson.

With Tuesday night's win, it is now the Avalanche who have a chance to double down for a second-straight victory as they head home with, as some might suggest, all the momentum from one Stanley Cup playoff game to the next.

That is, of course, depending on what side of that line you stand.

[Four-goal second period propels Colorado to 5-2 Game 2 win over Winnipeg Jets](#)

By Christian Aumell & Russ Hobson Global News

The Colorado Avalanche scored four unanswered goals and stole home ice advantage with a Game 2 triumph over the Winnipeg Jets.

The Avs evened up the first round playoff series with a 5-2 victory in front of another sellout crowd at the Canada Life Centre.

The Jets got off to a strong start in Game 2, but the Avalanche took the game over in the second period, scoring three times in the span of just over five minutes to take the lead for good.

"We were a lot better in certain areas," said Jets head coach Rick Bowness. "We had some lapses. Certainly at the end of the second there. That kinda caught up to us a little bit. But we had the start we really wanted.

"For the most part it was a lot better in areas and there's still improvement to be made in other areas."

David Gustafsson and Mark Scheifele had the goals for the Jets in the loss.

The Jets scored seven times on only 23 shots in the series opener, but Avs netminder Alexandar Georgiev had a bounce-back performance, stopping 28 of 30 shots to tie up the series.

"We need to spend more time in their end," Bowness said. "We don't get our 'D' involved enough. They're throwing a lot of pucks, just throwing them at the net and we're not getting enough of that.

"We can spend more time in their zone, but the only way we're going to do that is to win some battles low and get our defence a lot more involved. And we're still passing up chances to shoot the puck."

Winnipeg didn't have a lot of sustained zone time, and while they were only outshot 32-30, the Avs hit several posts and had the bulk of the quality scoring chances.

"It stings," Kyle Connor said. "I'm sure they're happy with the split. At the same time we've got to respond. We've got to dictate that play going into their barn."

The daily email you need for Winnipeg's top news stories.

"It was a tough fought game," Scheifele said. "They probably had a little too much zone time. Kind of gave them too much space at times in that game.

“It’s the playoffs. You’re not going to win every game. You just got to be prepared for all the punches that are thrown.”

The Jets wasted little time picking up where they left off after a 7-6 Game 1 triumph, scoring on their third shot of the night just 3:15 into the game.

Winnipeg’s fourth line put the pressure on Colorado in their own end, leading to a chance in front for Gustafsson. His attempted tip-in was turned aside by Georgiev but Gustafsson had a wide open net in which to bury the rebound for his first career playoff goal in the NHL.

The Jets continued to pour on the pressure as the first period went along, earning a pair of power plays along the way but they couldn’t build on their lead.

Shots at one point in the first were 8-2 in favour of the Jets but Colorado swung the momentum their way over the latter half of the first, outshooting the Jets 12-2 in the final five minutes. Connor Hellebuyck stood tall to keep the Jets in front on the scoreboard after one.

But it didn’t stay that way for long in the second. Ross Colton won a faceoff to the right of Hellebuyck and sent the puck to Miles Wood, who let a quick shot go that went through the legs of Logan Stanley before going through the five-hole of a screened, unsuspecting Hellebuyck to tie the game 1:59 into the second.

The Avalanche earned a huge opportunity to take the lead when Connor took a double-minor for high-sticking Cale Makar 4:05 into the period but Winnipeg killed it off, thanks in part to three blocked shots by Dylan Samberg.

Winnipeg took that momentum and rode it to the go-ahead goal 32 seconds after Connor returned to the ice. Gabriel Vilardi carried the puck into the Colorado end and sent a perfect pass to Scheifele at the back door. Scheifele deflected it over Georgiev and into the net to send the crowd into a frenzy.

Connor nearly made it 3-1 with just under seven minutes left in the frame when he wired one off the inside of the post, an inch or two from scoring.

Colorado took advantage of the close call by tying the game 57 seconds later. A point shot from Cale Makar was tipped in front by Artturi Lehkonen to level the score.

The Avalanche then took advantage of a miscue from Hellebuyck to take the lead just over three minutes later. The Jets’ goalie came out of crease to play the puck behind his net but he had his stick lifted by Yakov Trenin as chaos ensued. Andrew Cogliano found the loose puck and fed it in front to Zach Parise, whose initial shot was turned aside by a sliding Hellebuyck but he buried the rebound to give the Avalanche their first lead of the night with 2:40 left in the second.

It looked like it would stay 3-2 into the intermission before the Jets gave up an absolute backbreaker. With teams playing at 4-on-4, Nikolaj Ehlers fell, possibly via an uncalled trip, in the Colorado end and tried to play the puck while on the ice but he lost the handle.

Lehkonen took the puck away and slid it up the wall to Nathan MacKinnon, who noticed that Josh Manson had just jumped out of the penalty box and had nobody around him. MacKinnon

fed Manson with a perfect stretch pass and the blueliner beat Hellebuyck five-hole with 6.9 seconds left in the period to make it 4-2 after 40 minutes.

Colorado did a good job limiting Winnipeg's chances to mount a comeback in the third, keeping them mostly to the outside and allowing five shots in the first 12:25 before Brandon Duhaime went to the box for interference, giving the Jets as good a chance as they would get to try and cut into the lead.

Instead, they managed only one shot on goal as the two minutes came and went without incident for Colorado.

Hellebuyck was pulled for an extra attacker with under two minutes left but with 56.4 seconds remaining, Valeri Nichushkin hit the empty net to ensure the Avs would be heading back to Colorado with a split of the first two games.

Hellebuyck got saddled with the loss after making 27 saves.

Game 3 in the best-of-seven series goes Friday night in Denver. Puck drop is scheduled for 9 p.m. with pregame coverage on 680 CJOB starting at 6:30.

[Moose on brink of elimination after Game 1 loss to Texas](#)

By Kevin Hirschfield Global News

There is little room for error in a best-of-three series and the Manitoba Moose can afford no more letdowns as they are one loss away from elimination.

The Moose fell 6-3 to the Texas Stars Tuesday night in Game 1 of their AHL Central Division First Round matchup and their season is now on the line in the short series.

Manitoba opened the scoring late in first period on a Daniel Torgersson goal but the Stars took over from there, with four unanswered goals.

The daily email you need for Winnipeg's top news stories.

Nikita Chibrikov and Parker Ford scored for the Moose to cut the lead to 4-3, but Texas would answer with two more after that to put away the game.

Thomas Milic made 30 saves in net for Manitoba in a losing effort.

The Moose were riding some momentum heading into Game 1, as they defeated Texas twice over the weekend to wrap up the regular season, but the Stars were able to bounce back and move a win away from advancing.

All three games in this series are in Cedar Park, Texas, with a must-win Game 2 for the Moose scheduled for Thursday night.

[The Athletic](#)

[How the Winnipeg Jets let Game 2 slip away to the Avalanche](#)

By Murat Ates

The Winnipeg Jets wrote themselves a perfect script.

Block the shots. Get the clears. Kill Kyle Connor's four-minute high-sticking penalty. Watch as Connor comes out of the penalty box as if shot out of a cannon, then passes to Gabriel Vilardi whose centring feed sparks one-handed genius in Mark Scheifele for a game-breaking 2-1 goal.

That was it. That was the moment partway through the second period Winnipeg put a 2-0 series lead within its grasp.

Then Avalanche coach Jared Bednar and his trio of superstars took it away. Nathan MacKinnon was double-shifted throughout the second period, rolling his way through Jets defenders until Bednar had the matchups he wanted. MacKinnon, Mikko Rantanen and Valeri Nichushkin all played over nine minutes in that middle frame, kick-starting Artturi Lehkonen's game-tying goal on a minute-long shift. The goal ended MacKinnon's sixth shift of at least one minute in the period.

Bednar took MacKinnon off the ice for a whole minute and a half after that before putting him right back out there, darting behind Logan Stanley on a play that could have become the game-winning goal. The Jets escaped the moment but soon it became clear: The Avalanche weren't alone in orchestrating Colorado's comeback. Lehkonen's goal had been a deft deflection after multiple waves of attack, but Zach Parise's game-winning goal came with 2:40 left in the second period and was a play Winnipeg had all the power to stop.

Connor Hellebuyck had been sensational in the first period and good to start the second. He's the best goaltender in the series and was the better of the two goalies in Winnipeg's Game 1 win. There had been "Helly! Helly! Helly!" chants reverberating through Canada Life Centre before the anthems were sung and again after making five massive saves on Colorado's first-period power play.

Then Hellebuyck made a misplay that might remind Jets fans of giveaways of playoff nightmares gone by. He'd left his net to knock down a Colorado dump-in to his right, looked up to see Yakov Trenin barreling in on him, and then fanned on his escape-hatch pass to Brenden Dillon. He had the presence of mind to box Trenin out of the play as the puck sat beside his vacated net, but Neal Pionk swatted it to Andrew Cogliano behind the net. Cogliano centred, Zach Parise shot and Hellebuyck made the first save — a desperate, diving effort off his helmet — but was beaten on the rebound.

I think Pionk's role in the giveaway absolves the goaltender a little but that whole play needs to be made faster, cleaner and with more support. It's the kind of goal that can determine a playoff game.

"I think we did a good job of realizing that's a fluky one," Connor said. "How many times does (Hellebuyck) go back and play the puck and it's bang up, no problem. Our forwards can do a bit better job picking the forwards coming in, too. Maybe a little skate screen can help him out. It's a team effort there, but at the same time, I think that's one of those you just brush off. You know you're playing good at that point. Hopefully you follow up on the next shift."

The perfect Colorado storm did not end there.

Two minutes after Parise's goal, Nikolaj Ehlers tried to spin off Nichushkin at four-on-four just as Gabriel Vilardi's and Josh Manson's penalties came to an end. Sean Monahan went off for a line change as Ehlers fished for the puck along the boards. Ehlers is meant to be a deadly weapon at four-on-four, using his speed to take over the game, exploiting open ice to make opponents pay. But MacKinnon stepped in and fired a breakaway pass to Manson for Colorado's fourth goal.

In the first or third period, Ehlers' giveaway, Monahan's line change and MacKinnon's stretch pass wouldn't have been a problem. In the second period, however, Manson's penalty box is closer to Hellebuyck's net than Vilardi's, and MacKinnon's pass became a breakaway. What golden script the Jets had written, what opportunity for glory they'd gathered in Scheifele's one-handed goal had evaporated in five minutes and 37 seconds of play.

And that is how the Jets let Game 2 slip away.

"We didn't forget about (Manson) but it's just we turned the puck over," Rick Bowness said. "We lost the battle on the boards. It's just the timing of it. He's on that side of the ice so you can't give him the puck, you can't catch him. It was just unfortunate timing and they took advantage of it."

The Jets pushed back in the third period but it wasn't enough.

Josh Morrissey was able to dance along the offensive blue line effectively for most of the third period. Connor, Scheifele and Vilardi played big, desperate minutes looking for the tie. There was a five-on-five play in which Joel Kiviranta blocked a Dylan DeMelo shot after traffic in front of the net had taken Alexandar Georgiev right out of the play and a four-on-four deflection by Adam Lowry that bounced just wide.

Ehlers got a Grade-A chance from a Nino Niederreiter pass as a Jets power play expired but Georgiev got his blocker on it. Ehlers skated off, dejected. Then, with five minutes to go in the game, an Avalanche dump-in bounced awkwardly off of Hellebuyck into the corner; it seemed for a moment like there had been a reversal of fortunes in each team's goal. Canada Life Centre's mock cheers of Georgiev's first save or the loud, lengthy "Georgiev!" chants didn't seem to bother him anymore.

It helped that Colorado did such a good job stopping Winnipeg from chaining together consecutive offensive zone shifts, particularly in the third period when Georgiev stopped all eight shots he faced.

Connor, who hit a post shortly before Lehtonen's goal, saw it as a big story in the 5-2 loss.

"We could have done a lot better job of developing some offence in their zone and getting some more zone time," Connor said. "I thought we were a little bit too quick to one and out. Get the puck in, maybe (go) low to high, (get) one shot and then they transitioned."

Winnipeg had entered Game 2 believing it could do a better job of limiting Colorado in transition. Bowness had talked about the Jets spending an uncharacteristic six and a half minutes of time in their own zone in Game 1, allowing the Avalanche to turn their elite transition game into sustained pressure.

The Jets started Game 2 so much better than that before finishing the night with a loss. David Gustafsson opened the scoring 3:15 into the game on Winnipeg's third shot of the night. The Jets continued to press, earning one power play and then getting a second one before Niederreiter's hooking penalty negated it. The five-save PK was all Hellebuyck, with Colorado taking control of the game.

That's why the four-minute kill of Connor's high-sticking penalty had been such an enormous momentum swing. Colorado scored on both of its power plays in Game 1, looking appropriately dominant for a unit that finished the regular season ranked fifth in the NHL. Winnipeg's all-out scramble to survive that PK would have been the stuff of long-term Jets lore — if the Jets had won the game.

Alex Iafallo was everywhere. Dylan Samberg blocked multiple shots. Dylan DeMelo, Neal Pionk and Brenden Dillon threw body checks. Adam Lowry and Sean Monahan got massive clears, killing precious time by taking the puck down the ice. Mason Appleton and Vladislav Namestnikov got into shooting lanes and kept the Avalanche at bay.

For that desperation to turn into a 2-1 Jets lead? That was Winnipeg's opportunity to push Colorado out of their building.

Now the Avalanche get to talk about resilience as the Jets focus on their adjustments for Friday's Game 3.

"When you come into the playoffs, you have to be resilient," Manson said. "There are going to be roller coasters, ups-and-downs and with that win in 2022, that was a big focus of ours. Not letting frustration set in, whatever it may be. Just being that resilient, callous brain, where you just keep pushing forward and sticking to your game plan and the results will come. We have a few guys in our room that have been there — and we've got more guys that have been in the same situation on other teams in the playoffs."

"(My teammates) showed so much support to me over the last couple of days," said Georgiev. "A very rough first game, obviously. I just felt so much trust in the room from everybody and I appreciate it so much. It helped me reset, to know that they have got my back."

Bednar threw the full weight of his support behind his starting goalie.

"Hey, listen: More so than any other player on your team, the goalie, and some of your stars, when things go well, they're gonna get the credit, and when things go poorly, they're gonna take a lot of the blame, right?" he said. "It is what it is, and nobody's perfect. You can imagine coming in here, not having a good night as a team, not having a good night on the defensive side. If you give up seven as a goalie, like what type of things you read online, what you're hearing from everyone. Everyone just goes immediately to doubt and criticism, so to be able to sort of put that aside, focus on his process just like we would with the team, be mentally strong, resilient, and then go out and prove people wrong again too, that's a tough job to do because you are the last line of defense."

Now it's Winnipeg's turn to stay strong and mentally resilient.

The opportunity to go up 2-0 is gone but the Jets believe the series is still very young. They took defensive strides forward in Game 1, limiting their neutral zone turnovers and feeding less directly into Colorado's transition game. There were better, more desperate boxouts that could

have been the story if not for the giveaways and gaffes that spotted Colorado its lead. There were also times when the Jets did a much better job supporting the puck down low to feed their own transition game, although there were inconsistencies throughout Winnipeg's night.

The bottom line is that Winnipeg needs to find a way to hold on to the puck in Colorado's zone for much longer periods of time than it has so far. The Jets have skilled wingers who know how to exploit Colorado's man-to-man coverage, drawing defenders high into the zone and opening up space down low.

Bowness says they need help.

"We needed to spend more time in their end (but) we don't get our D involved enough," he said. "(The Avalanche) are throwing a lot of pucks in there, just throwing them at the net. We're not getting enough of that. We can spend more time in their zone and the only way we're going to do that is to win some battles low and get our defence more involved. And we're still passing up chances. We have to fix that. We can tell them all we want, 'Shoot the puck, shoot the puck.' There has to be a commitment to get more pucks on the net."

In the meantime, consider that best-of-seven series — as long as they might feel, and as much blood, sweat, guts and glory they might take from the people playing the games — are statistically quite short. The Jets can't afford to spot Colorado multiple goals in a game. Games add up. Opportunities, like the one that presented itself with Scheifele's second-period goal, can quickly run dry.

"That's the fun part of the playoffs," Scheifele said. "We weren't expecting this to be an easy series. They're a great team over there. We've just got to continue to roll with the punches."

[NHL teams, take note: Alexandar Georgiev is proof that anything can happen in the playoffs](#)

By Sean Gentille

It's hard to say when, exactly, Alexandar Georgiev truly began to win some hearts and change some minds on Tuesday night.

Maybe it was in the back half of the second period; that was when the Colorado Avalanche, for the first time in their first-round Stanley Cup playoff series against the Winnipeg Jets, actually managed to hold a lead for more than, oh, two minutes or thereabouts. Maybe it was when the Avs walked into the locker room up 4-2 with 20 minutes to play.

Maybe it was midway through the third, when a series of saves by the Avalanche's beleaguered starting goaltender helped preserve their two-goal buffer. Maybe it was when the buzzer sounded after their 5-2 win. Maybe it didn't happen until the Avs made it into their locker room at Canada Life Centre, tied 1-1 with the Jets and headed for Denver.

At some point, though, it should've happened. If you were watching, you should've realized that Colorado — after a 7-6 Game 1 loss that had us all talking not just about all those goals, but at least one of the guys who'd allowed them — had squared things up, thanks in part to ... well, that same guy.

Georgiev, indeed, was the story of Game 2, stopping 28 of 30 shots, improving as the game progressed and providing a lesson on how quickly things can change in the playoffs — series to series, game to game, period to period, moment to moment. The narrative doesn't always hold. Facts don't always cooperate. Alexandar Georgiev, for one night and counting, was not a problem for the Colorado Avalanche. He was, in direct opposition to the way he played in Game 1, a solution. How could we view him as anything else?

He had a few big-moment saves, and most of them came midway through the third period with his team up 4-2. There he was with 12:44 remaining, stopping a puck that had awkwardly rolled off Nino Niederreiter's stick; two missed posts by the Avs at the other end had helped spring Niederreiter for a breakaway. Game 1 Georgiev doesn't make that save.

There he was, stopping Nikolaj Ehlers from the circle a few minutes later. There wasn't an Avs defender within five feet, and there was nothing awkward about the puck Ehlers fired at his shoulder. Game 1 Georgiev gets scored on twice.

(That one might've been poetic justice. It was Ehlers who'd put the first puck of the night on Georgiev — a chip from center ice that he stopped, and that the crowd in Winnipeg greeted with the ol' mock cheer. Whoops.)

By the end of it all, Georgiev had stared down Connor Hellebuyck and won, saving nearly 0.5 goals more than expected according to Natural Stat Trick, giving the Avalanche precisely what they needed and looking almost nothing like the guy we'd seen a couple days before. Conventional wisdom coming into this series was twofold: That the Avs have firepower, high-end talent and an overall edge — slight as it may be — on Winnipeg, and that Georgiev is shaky enough to nuke the whole thing.

That wasn't without merit, either. Georgiev's .897 save percentage in the regular season was six percentage points below the league average, and he hadn't broken even in expected goals allowed (minus-0.21). He'd been even worse down the stretch, putting up an .856 save percentage in his final eight appearances, and worse still in Game 1, allowing seven goals on 23 shots and more than five goals more than expected. That's not bad; that's an oil spill. Writing him off would've been understandable. Writing off Jared Bednar for rolling him out there in Game 2 would've been understandable. Writing the Avs off — for all of Nathan MacKinnon and Cale Makar's greatness — would've been understandable.

It just wouldn't have been correct.

The fact that this all went down now, four days into a two-month ordeal, is a gift — because the postseason thus far has been short on surprises, almost as a rule. The Rangers and Oilers are overwhelming the Capitals and Kings. The Hurricanes are halfway done with the Islanders. The Canucks are struggling with the Predators. Panthers–Lightning is tight, but one team is clearly better than the other. Bruins–Maple Leafs is a close matchup featuring psychic baggage that we don't have time to unpack. In Golden Knights–Stars, Mark Stone came back and scored a huge goal.

None of that should shock you. None of that should make you blink.

Georgiev being good enough for Colorado, though? After what we saw in Game 1? Strange, surprising and completely true. For now.

Winnipeg Sun

FRIESEN: Jets nod off for six minutes against Avs, pay the price

By Paul Friesen

Before Tuesday's tilt with Colorado, Winnipeg Jets coach Rick Bowness, talking about the 8:45 p.m. start time, joked about having a nap on the bench during the game.

Hours later his team went out and did just that.

In good shape with a 2-1 lead past the middle mark of the second period, the Jets plopped their heads on the proverbial pillow and curled up into a ball.

By the time they'd pull on their pajamas for real, they'd dropped a 5-2 decision, evening the series at a game apiece as it moves to Denver.

Three Colorado goals in the last six minutes of the second period turned what could have been such a sweet dream into a nightmare.

Inches from a 3-1 lead – Kyle Connor rang a shot off the goal post, sending play the other way – the Jets instead saw Artturi Lehkonen's deflection tie it.

No problem, no panic, right? Bowness's crew hadn't been nearly as loose as it was in Game 1.

What came next can best be described as a recurring nightmare from Connor Hellebuyck's past.

Out to play the puck, the Jets goalie, his stick checked just enough by Yakov Trenin, whiffed on it and the ensuing scramble saw Zach Parise put it into the open net.

It was the kind of misplay we haven't seen from Hellebuyck in a few years, and it seemed to rattle his teammates.

"It can, but we did a good job of realizing that's a fluky one," Connor said. "How many times Connor goes back and plays the puck like that and it's bang-bang out, no problem. Our forwards can do a bit better job picking the forwards coming in, too. It's a team effort there, but at the same time that's one of those you just brush off. You know you're playing good at this point. Hopefully you follow up on the next shift."

Problem is their earlier mojo vanished, and now they were handling pucks like they were half asleep.

They reached the REM stage at the worst possible time.

With the period winding down, Avs defenceman Josh Manson slid from the penalty box to get behind everybody for the backbreaking fourth goal with just seven seconds to go.

"We didn't forget about him," Bowness said. "But it's just we turned the puck over, we lost the battle on the boards. He's on that side of the ice ... you can't catch him. It was just unfortunate timing and they took advantage of it."

Manson is no Nate MacKinnon, but he finished like the Avs superstar, tucking it under Hellebuyck's pad.

That made it five periods of playoff hockey and 10 goals against the likely Vezina Trophy winner, a tidy 2.00 average for the series – per period.

If you had that on your Bingo card, turn it in for a hefty payoff.

Hellebuyck had looked dialled in until the dam broke in the second, as did the team in front of him.

There still remained an entire 20 minutes to fight back, but their bed was made.

Instead of being wrapped in the blanket of a 2-0 series lead, they've lost home-ice advantage, squandering the energy of a whiteout crowd.

They'll fly to Colorado early Wednesday afternoon after counting sheep for half the night.

The Avs will have slept much better in the knowledge that Game 1 goat Alexandar Georgiev, their beleaguered goalie, managed to pull himself together after Sunday's seven-goal disaster.

"It stings," Connor said. "You never like losing, let alone a home game. I'm sure they're happy with the split. At the same time, we've got to respond. We've got to dictate that play going into their barn. It's about everyone in here trying to respond."

The good news for the Jets: this was more the kind of game they expected and wanted.

The bad: they still aren't generating as much against Georgiev as the Avs are against Hellebuyck.

"I don't think we had too much sustained zone time," Connor said, and his coach agreed.

"We don't get our D involved enough," Bowness said. "They're throwing a lot of pucks in there, just throwing them at the net. We're not getting enough of that. We can spend more time in their zone and the only way we're going to do that is to win some battles low and get our defence more involved.

"And we're still passing up chances. We have to fix that. We can tell them all we want, 'Shoot the puck, shoot the puck.' There has to be a commitment to get more pucks on the net."

Instead of being in control, it feels like the Jets are still searching for parts of their game. Or at least, for something closer to a 60-minute game.

They'll have to find it away from home, against a team that won more home games than anybody in the NHL this season.

They'll also have two days to sleep on it.

[**Avs' Georgiev finds redemption as Jets let Game 2 slip away**](#)

By Scott Billeck

There was a moment in Game 2 on Tuesday night where it felt like the Winnipeg Jets were about to take their first-round series by the scruff of the neck.

They had just killed off Kyle Connor's four-minute double-minor, and riding that wave of momentum moments later, Mark Scheifele put one on the highlight reel, a one-handed redirect that seemingly put his Jets in the driver's seat.

Then Winnipeg loosened their grip, allowing the Colorado Avalanche to get themselves up off the mat.

The series is shifting to The Rockies knotted 1-1 after the Avs took Game 2 of their best-of-seven series 5-2 at Canada Life Centre.

"It was a tough fought game, and (we) probably gave them a little bit too much zone time and a little bit too much space at times in that game," Scheifele said.

Scheifele's goal put Winnipeg up 2-1 at 8:37 of the second, but Colorado scored three times in a span of 5:37 to close out the period.

"They had a good push there," Connor said. "Maybe we didn't stick with it. We could have done a lot better job of developing some offence in their zone and kind of getting some more zone time. I thought we were a little bit too quick to one and out."

Artturi Lehkonen tipped home his second of the series to tie the game back up. Then Andrew Cogliano's ferocious forecheck led to the veteran stripping the puck of Connor Hellebuyck before finding Zach Parise for the go-ahead goal.

Rubbing salt in the wound was Josh Manson, who stepped out of the penalty box and into a breakaway to put the Avs up 4-2 with 6.9 seconds left in the middle frame.

Lehkonen picked the puck off a fallen Nikolaj Ehlers, who couldn't get it deep, and shovelled it to Cale Makar, who found Manson a penalty box width ahead of Gabriel Vilardi, who was serving the other half of the coincidental roughing minor with Manson.

"We didn't forget about him but it's just we turned the puck over, we lost the battle on the boards," head coach Rick Bowness said. "It's just the timing of it. He's on that side of the ice so you can't give him the puck, you can't catch him. It was just unfortunate timing and they took advantage of it."

Winnipeg didn't have much of a counter-assault in the third, and Valeri Nichushkin backhanded an empty-netter to seal Winnipeg's fate.

Hellebuyck, who looked dialled in early, stopping 15 first-period Avs shots, gave up four on the last 16 he saw.

Alexandar Georgiev had a tremendous bounce-back game at the other end, shaking off the doubts of almost everyone in the hockey world after Game 1 to stop 28 pucks in the win.

“We needed to spend more time in their end,” Bowness said. “We don’t get our D involved enough. (The Avs) are throwing a lot of pucks in there, just throwing them at the net. We’re not getting enough of that. We can spend more time in their zone and the only way we’re going to do that is to win some battles low and get our defence more involved.

“And we’re still passing up chances. We have to fix that. We can tell them all we want, ‘Shoot the puck, shoot the puck.’ There has to be a commitment to get more pucks on the net.”

Both teams ended 0-for-3 on their respective power plays.

David Gustafsson fired in his first career playoff goal to give the Jets a 1-0 lead after 20 minutes, finishing off a strong forecheck by Winnipeg’s fourth line.

Game 3 goes on Friday at Ball Arena, with a 9 p.m. CT start time.

“I’m sure they’re happy with the split,” Connor said. “At the same time, we gotta respond. We’ve got to dictate that play going into their barn. It’s about everyone in here trying to respond.”

[GOALTENDER REPORT: Jets’ Hellebuyck outplayed by much-maligned Georgiev in Game 2.](#)

By Ted Wyman

In Game 1 of the first-round playoff series between Colorado and Winnipeg, Avalanche goaltender Alexandar Georgiev was mercilessly mocked by Jets fans after giving up his seventh goal of the night.

“Pull the goalie, pull the goalie,” the fans chanted in unison, and Georgiev deserved it somewhat, having allowed seven goals on just 23 shots.

Then in Game 2, when Georgiev stopped a long shoot-in by the Jets, the fans gave him a boisterous Bronx Cheer, hoping to throw him even further off his game than he already was.

But a funny thing happened after that.

Georgiev finally showed up for the series and made some huge saves while leading the Avalanche to a 5-2 win that sends the series to Denver all tied up at one win apiece.

Georgiev stopped 28 of 30 shots directed his way, earning a .933 save percentage that was well above his season mark of .897.

He looked calm and cool and not rattled in the least, despite hearing it from the fans throughout Games 1 and 2.

“(It was) super fun,” Georgiev said. “I tried to imagine that feeling of winning the first game of the series for us. Trust the game, enjoy the atmosphere and try to approach it as a new game after the last one.”

At the other end, Jets goalie Connor Hellebuyck started off great, stopping the first 18 shots that came his way, but faltered from there and wound up allowing four goals on 31 shots (.871 save percentage).

Hellebuyck has now allowed 10 goals in two games and has a concerning 5.04 goals against average and .870 save percentage for the series.

Those don't sound much like numbers you'd expect from a player who is the front-runner to win the Vezina Trophy as the NHL's best goalie this season. But it's not as surprising as it may appear — Hellebuyck has yet to show in his career that he can produce at the same level in the post-season as he does during the regular season.

Hellebuyck also made a terrible mistake in the second period, while trying to play the puck outside of his goal crease. He took too long to make up his mind about where to go with the puck and Yakov Trenin of the Avs lifted his stick. With the net empty, Colorado got control of the puck, and eventually, Zach Parise scored what would turn out to be the game-winning goal.

"I think we did a good job of realizing that's a fluky one," Jets forward Kyle Connor said of his goalie's error. "How many times does (Hellebuyck) go back and play the puck and it's bang up, no problem.

"Our forwards can do a bit better job picking the forwards coming in, too. Maybe a little skate screen can help him out. It's a team effort there, but at the same time I think that's one of those you just brush off. You know you're playing good at that point. Hopefully you follow up on the next shift."

Hellebuyck is likely in no danger of giving way to backup Laurent Brossoit any time soon.

And with that performance, Georgiev earned himself at least another start on Friday night in Game 3.

His leash is surely shorter than Hellebuyck's, though. The Jets are sure to ride their star netminder as far as they can but they are likely going to need him to steal a game for them at some point to win this series.

[BILLECK: Too many of Winnipeg's faults crept into Game 2](#)

By Scott Billeck

They got away with it in Game 1.

And with a goaltender who could finally stop a puck on Tuesday night, the Winnipeg Jets were punished by the Colorado Avalanche for playing half a game.

The Avs took Game 2 by a 5-2 margin, fending off a sea of white to earn the split as the series shifts to Denver for Games 3 and 4 later this week.

You can look at the result in a couple of ways:

1. The Jets had their nine-game winning streak snapped. They weren't going to win 16 in a row in the Stanley Cup playoffs, and few teams venture off on heaters like the Jets were on.

2. The Jets fell victim to those self-inflicted wounds head coach Rick Bowness has harped on about all season.

Your view may vary depending on the colour of the glasses you wear.

But the truth is this: if the Jets want to respond in Game 3 on Friday, they will have to play the other half of the game.

They earned a hard-fought 2-1 lead approaching the midway point of Tuesday's game, doing so with the momentum that comes from killing off a four-minute double-minor.

All of those good vibes when Mark Scheifele one-handed in a centring pass from Gabriel Vilardi were killed off in the latter half of that second period.

The Jets caved to an Avalanche of pressure, resulting in a span of a little under six minutes where Colorado turned a 2-1 deficit into a 4-2 lead with 20 minutes to go.

They didn't have much left in the tank for the third, firing just eight shots Alexandar Georgiev's way.

When Colorado was trailing 4-3 after the second in Game 1 on Sunday, they came out with a flurry, shooting 21 times in the final frame.

On a night when the Jets found an early goal on a netminder whose confidence was close to nil after a historically bad performance on Sunday, it felt like the Jets let him off the hook.

This isn't taking anything away from Georgiev's bounce-back effort. He was solid.

But it stands to reason that if the Jets would have kept their foot on his neck, it may have snapped with a second goal in quick succession.

Watch David Gustafsson's first career playoff goal again. Georgiev is swimming on the play, caught in no-man's land.

There would have been a bit of a letdown on the bench. The goal came just 3:15 into the game.

Winnipeg had two power-play opportunities before the period was through, but there was nothing doing there. They mustered just three shots on three attempts with the man advantage total.

The Jets came out precisely the way they would have wanted to, got the game's first goal, and then seemingly rested on their good work.

And that's when Colorado went to work.

Sure, they didn't find a goal on Kyle Connor's high-sticking infraction. And yes, they conceded a brilliant, Crosby-esque play by Scheifele.

But they seemed undeterred.

Winnipeg heads to Colorado on the back foot. They know they didn't engineer enough zone time. They know they allowed Colorado to sustain far too much of that.

They also know they made some errors with the puck, most notably Connor Hellebuyck failing to pick up on the forecheck that led to him getting stripped of the puck and Zach Parise scoring the eventual game-winner, and Nikolaj Ehlers coughing up a puck from his posterior that led to Josh Manson getting a breakaway out of the penalty box.

Those are fatal errors in the playoffs, and they killed Winnipeg on Tuesday.

Puck management issues have been a thread woven into Winnipeg's season's fabric. More than ever, they will have to find a seam ripper to get rid of it starting Friday, going up against a team that won more games at home than any other in the NHL this season.

- Manson had a tremendous game, a bounce back that was only overshadowed by the one Georgiev had. The breakaway goal with seconds left in the second was just a cherry on top. Well earned. "You don't get those often," Manson said. "And just to be able to put it away, that was nice. It was obviously not my best effort in Game 1, so I wanted to focus on that."
- Georgiev composed himself not long after Gustafsson's goal to make a save in tight on a cross-ice pass into the slot. That was the start of what ended up being a terrific, and potentially series-saving game from the netminder. "I tried to imagine that feeling of winning the first game of the series for us," Georgiev said. "Trust the game, enjoy the atmosphere and try to approach it as a new game after the last one."
- Dylan Samberg's dash-two on the night won't show it, but he was tremendous on the penalty kill. On the four-minute kill in the second, he blocked three shots, sacrificing the body to keep Colorado at bay. Samberg was in the crosshairs after Game 1, with a couple of tough plays that ended in goals against. He had a better effort in Game 2, including four blocks total.

SNAPSHOTS: Jets had all the momentum and then, just like that, it was gone

By Ted Wyman

Up until the midway mark of the second period Tuesday night, the Winnipeg Jets had all the momentum on their side.

They were playing a much more structured game than they did when they beat the Colorado Avalanche 7-6 on Sunday night in the opener of a best-of-seven Stanley Cup playoff series, and it looked like they had the Avalanche right where they wanted them.

The Jets led 1-0 after the first period and were tied 1-1 when they did a terrific job of killing off a four-minute Colorado power play that was awarded after Winnipeg forward Kyle Connor inadvertently clipped Cale Makar of the Avalanche with a high stick.

As if killing that penalty didn't already have the whiteout crowd in a frenzy, the Jets took the lead moments later when Gabe Vilardi found a streaking Mark Scheifele for a beautiful one-handed re-direction that beat Colorado goalie Alexandar Georgiev and gave Winnipeg a 2-1 lead.

A few minutes later, with the building still rocking, Connor beat Georgiev again but hit the goal post. Not long after that, a Makar floater was tipped by Artturi Lehkonen for a goal that knotted the score at 2-2.

It all went downhill in a hurry after that for the home-side, the Jets wound up losing 5-2, and the first round series will now head to Denver tied at 1-1.

“We just have to continue to work on our game and continue to find what makes us, us,” Jets centre Mark Scheifele said.

“They are a fantastic team over there, so you’ve got to give them a lot of credit. They did a lot of good things. They blocked a lot of shots, they made it tough to get anything going.”

For the second half of the game, things were completely different. The Jets were discombobulated on the power play, in the neutral zone and trying to break out of their own end.

While they were winning puck battles in the first 30 minutes, they didn’t win many after that.

They couldn’t get pucks through to the net from the point or the slot, couldn’t seem to complete passes, with far too many of them fired into one another’s skates, and made a couple of gaffes that cost them goals.

Goalie Connor Hellebuyck, who wound up having a pedestrian night between the pipes after a rock-solid start, gave away a puck and left the net open as Zach Parise scored the game-winner and the Jets lost Josh Manson coming out of the penalty box in the final 10 seconds of the second period, leading to a breakaway goal for the defenceman.

Everything that could go wrong seemed to go wrong, and the Jets couldn’t recover.

Overall in the series, they haven’t been themselves and if they don’t find their game soon, this could be over quickly.

Here are some observations from the game:

— While the Jets gave up four goals, only one of them was scored by the top line and Jets coach Rick Bowness was very happy with the work done by Adam Lowry, Mason Appleton and Nino Niederreiter on Nathan MacKinnon, Mikko Rantanen and whichever left-winger joined them. “For the most part, we did a good job on those guys,” Bowness said. “Look who scored their goals (Parise, Miles Wood, Manson). Those guys got in there and got some greasy goals, so I feel like Adam’s line has done a great job against the (MacKinnon) line for the most part. They’re elite players, they’re going to control the puck, they’re going to make their plays. I thought we minimized them for the most part and it was better than what we did last game.” MacKinnon and Rantanen had an assist each in the game, while Lehkonen was on their line when he scored.

— The Avalanche had 71 shot attempts to 60 by the Jets and now have 151 in the series, compared to Winnipeg’s 108. The fact is, if it were not for some shoddy goaltending by Georgiev in Game 1, this series could easily be 2-0 for the visitors, with the next two games slated to be played in Denver.

— The Jets fourth line has scored goals in both games so far, with one each coming from Vlad Namestnikov (Sunday) and David Gustafsson (Tuesday). Now, if only the Jets second line would find a way to produce. The unit of Sean Monahan, Nikolaj Ehlers and Tyler Toffoli, with its top-line type of firepower, can potentially be a difference-maker in this series but has put up a goose egg so far.

— The Avalanche beat the Jets for the first time in over a year. The last time Colorado won against Winnipeg was April 13, 2023, in a meaningless contest to end the regular season. The Jets had won four straight games since that time.

— The Jets are now 2-8 in their last 10 games played in front of a whiteout at Canada Life Centre. The fans are certainly doing their best to spur this team on but clearly crowd noise can only do so much.

— Alex Iafallo didn't get credit for an assist, but his dirty work in front of the net was integral in Gustafsson getting the game's first goal. Iafallo battled for a loose puck with Georgiev, who inadvertently kicked the puck into the open for Gustafsson, who had a wide-open net to shoot at. Clearly, Iafallo made an impact without even touching the puck.

— After combining for 100 hits in Game 1, the Jets and Avalanche produced a total of 88 more in Game 2. This time, each team was credited with 44 hits. Those can be subjective, depending on the stats keepers in different arenas, but it's fair to say both these teams are embracing the physical game. Jets defenceman Logan Stanley led all players with eight hits on the night, while Dylan DeMelo had seven. Manson led the Avalanche with six.

[Hawerchuk makes emotional return for Jets whiteout at dad's old stomping grounds](#)

By Paul Friesen

Like most people with any interest in the Winnipeg Jets, Eric Hawerchuk had seen playoff whiteouts on TV and was suitably impressed.

But he'd never seen his late father's former team host a playoff game in the flesh.

Until this week.

Dale Hawerchuk's son flew up from his home in Phoenix on Sunday just in time to catch most of Game 1 against Colorado and couldn't believe what he saw, heard — and felt.

"It exceeded all my expectations, honestly," Hawerchuk told the Winnipeg Sun before Tuesday's Game 2. "And my expectations were pretty high. It's one of those things that you just have to see in person to really feel it. 'Cause I've seen it on TV and can tell it's crazy in there. But when you're in the building and you feel the vibration of the sound on your chest, it's different."

Hawerchuk actually arrived in Winnipeg just as Sunday's game started, spending some agonizing time on the tarmac and in a taxi as the scoreboard began to light up.

“It felt like an eternity,” he said. “I’m in the cab and every time I check the phone, it’s like 2-1, 2-2, 3-2 – I was like, ‘Get me to the darn game!’ I made it for the second period, sat down and two minutes later we scored to make it 4-3.

“That barn erupted and it was like nothing I ever heard in my life.”

The 34-year-old was to get an even more complete experience on Tuesday, as he planned to take in the pregame street party and Game 2.

He’s been attending off-day practices and morning skates, too.

Each time he walks to the arena, he passes by the statue of his dad, erected in 2022 to honour the former Jets great who died of cancer in 2020.

“I walked by it this morning,” Eric said. “You come around the corner and you see it there, and it’s just so unbelievably...”

He paused, searching for the right words.

“It’s just an epic piece,” he said. “I can’t believe that it’s real sometimes. So I had to take a picture and post it. It’s magnificent. That’s the word I use for it.”

Hawerchuk was on hand for the statue’s unveiling two years ago, along with former teammates and a few thousand fans.

After Sunday’s 7-6 Jets victory, he was there again.

Again, he wasn’t alone, as it’s become a gathering place.

“Walking out and just seeing all the fans standing around it, celebrating, taking pictures with it – it gets emotional,” he said. “Because there’s nothing my dad liked more than Winnipeg and seeing the Jets succeed. We needed that home win. It had been a while, right, for a whiteout win?”

It had been.

Sunday’s win ended a four-game home playoff losing streak that dated back to the 2021 postseason.

“I felt like I had to come up there and turn the tide,” Hawerchuk said. “I’m glad it didn’t hurt.”

A former pro golfer who’s now teaching the game in Arizona, along with dabbling in the sports agent business, Hawerchuk says he’s not planning to fly up for every home game.

But he’ll get to Manitoba as often as he can.

“If they win tonight (Tuesday) and then they run into some trouble, I may have to talk to the Jets and figure something out to be here,” he said. “We’ve got to get it done tonight. Then I’ve got some negotiating power.”

Despite his dabbling as an agent, Hawerchuk says his future remains with golf, teaching it and maybe playing it as a pro again.

“There’s so many things I learned over the years that I’m like, ‘I wish I knew that a lot sooner.’ To be able to help people improve, it’s pretty rewarding.”

He says he may come back to Winnipeg in August and try to qualify for the local stop on the Canadian Tour.

“I got away from it for a couple of years,” he said. “And it’s calling me back.”

Just like Winnipeg does.