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**[Three things - Discipline hurts Jets](#)
[Avalanche score five goals in the third period on route to 6-2 win](#)**

By Jamie Thomas

The Winnipeg Jets fell 6-2 to the Colorado Avalanche in Game 3 on Friday night, the Avs now lead the series 2-1. The Jets lost for just the third time this season when leading after two periods thanks to losing their discipline in the third period. Tyler Toffoli and Josh Morrissey scored for the Jets; Connor Hellebuyck finished with 34 saves. Game 4 of the series will go Sunday afternoon at Ball Arena.

SECOND LINE

Coming into Game 3, the Jets second line of Sean Monahan, Tyler Toffoli and Nikolaj Ehlers hadn't been able to score in the series despite combining for 16 shots. Rick Bowness said on Thursday that he had discussions with the trio about needing more from them. With the Avs leading 1-0, Toffoli would grab a Dylan DeMelo rebound and snuck a backhand under Alexandar Georgiev for his first of the series at 5:03 of the second. Toffoli has now scored a playoff goal with five different franchises – tied with Pat Maroon for the second most amongst active players, Eric Haula has done it with six teams.

MORRISSEY KEEPS PRODUCING

Josh Morrissey was playing some of his best hockey to close out the regular season and it has carried over into the postseason. Morrissey scored his second goal of the series on the power play that gave Winnipeg their only lead of the night at 10:50 of the middle frame. He has 14 points in his last 11 games, dating back to the regular season (4G, 10A).

SERIES OF UNFORTUNATE EVENTS

The Jets took a 2-1 lead into the third period and then allowed the Avalanche power play to go to work. Mason Appleton took an accidental tripping penalty at 1:14, Nathan MacKinnon managed to wrist a shot through a screen and through Hellebuyck's legs to tie the game 2-2. 23 seconds later, Gabriel Vilardi was given a double minor for high sticking Devon Toews and Valeri Nichuskin would score at 4:39 to give Colorado the lead back at 3-2. The power play goals would come 2:38 apart and pushed the game back into the Avalanche's favour.

"We gave them a lot of time on the powerplay and like I said, they've got a bunch of elite players on that unit and they capitalized," said Morrissey.

"So we got to do a better job of trying to stay out of the box."

NHL.com

**[Avalanche power play comes alive in 3rd period in Game 3 win](#)
[Colorado scores twice on 5 opportunities to take lead on Jets in Western 1st Round](#)**

By Tracey Myers

DENVER -- The Colorado Avalanche were creating good scoring opportunities through the first two periods, but getting the puck past Connor Hellebuyck was proving difficult.

Then came the third period. Then came the power-play chances. And in using the man-advantage to, well, their advantage, the Avalanche turned a close game into a convincing 6-2 win against the Winnipeg Jets in Game 3 of the Western Conference First Round at Ball Arena on Friday.

The Avalanche lead the best-of-7 series 3-1. Game 4 will be here on Sunday (2:30 p.m. ET; MAX, truTV, TNT, ALT, SN360, SN, TVAS).

"The power play is what gave us the life, right?" Colorado coach Jared Bednar said after his team scored five goals in the third period, including two on the power play.

"You have to earn your penalties, too. I thought it was a hard-fought, hard-checking game. Offense was tough to come by. Skill players are making some plays and you get some opportunities, you get the right bounce, rebound, etc., but there wasn't a whole lot of room to move, which was fine. That's what we expected. Eventually we kind of worked to get the power plays and the power play came up huge. It's the difference in the hockey game for us tonight."

Play Video

WPG@COL R1, Gm3: Avalanche erupt against the Jets in 3rd

Through the first two periods, it looked as though it was going to be a low-scoring affair, a change of pace from the first two games of the series, which saw the Avalanche and Jets combine for 20 goals.

Colorado had outshot Winnipeg 28-19 through 40 minutes, but the Jets had a 2-1 lead thanks to a goal from Tyler Toffoli at 5:03 of the second period and a power-play goal from Josh Morrissey at 10:50.

Then the penalties began.

Mason Appleton was called for tripping at 1:14 of the third, resulting in a goal from Nathan MacKinnon 57 seconds later to tie it 2-2.

"I'm just looking to see where that F1 is and if I can get it through him, and then pray from there," MacKinnon said. "It's tough to see all four guys, but I figured I was in the middle of the ice, so there's probably no one else in the middle, and lucky. Great screen."

Twenty-three seconds later, Gabriel Vilardi was assessed a double minor for high-sticking Avalanche defenseman Devon Toews. Valeri Nichushkin then scored five seconds into the second minor penalty to put the Avalanche in front 3-2.

In total, the Avalanche had five power plays in the third period, which made it difficult for the Jets to try and start a comeback of their own.

"The third I felt they didn't get into our zone too much. I just have to be sharp and wait for the next shot, and I feel the guys just did such a great job," said Avalanche goaltender Alexandar Georgiev, who faced only five shots in the third.

“The best defense is offense, and we just kept playing in their zone. Helped that we got so many power-play opportunities. Just always keep pushing. That was awesome.”

The Avalanche took over following those two power-play goals. Their speed was evident throughout the game, but with the Jets on their heels, the Avalanche kept taking advantage.

“I think that's really the story of the third. First 10 minutes for sure,” Morrissey said. “We gave them a lot of time on the power play and, you know, like I said, they've got a bunch of elite players on that unit, and they capitalized. So, we got to do a better job of trying to stay out of the box.”

The Avalanche struggled to score goals against the Jets during the regular season, scoring just four in three games (all losses), but they've seemed to figure things out through the first three games of this series (17 goals), a reminder that any resemblance between the regular season and playoffs is purely coincidental.

The Avalanche still want to clean up some aspects of their game up, but Friday was a reminder that when they get going, they are tough to slow down.

“Yeah, I think for us, being down one in the third there, we didn't sit back on our heels, and I think we kind of just took it to them. When we play with that speed, we play with that energy, we're a good team,” Avalanche forward Ross Colton said.

“Obviously, we got some power plays there, but we drew them with hard work and getting in on the forecheck and kind of putting them under pressure. So, it all starts with that. So, I think credit to the guys in the room for just sticking with the process and kind of putting ourselves in a good situation.”

[Avalanche score 5 in 3rd, rally past Jets in Game 3 to take series lead MacKinnon has 2 points, Mittelstadt gets 3 assists for Colorado](#)

By Ryan Boulding

DENVER -- The Colorado Avalanche scored five unanswered goals in the third period of a 6-2 win against the Winnipeg Jets to take a 2-1 lead in their Western Conference First Round series in Game 3 at Ball Arena on Friday.

“Honestly, the struggle and the fight is the best part,” Avalanche forward Nathan MacKinnon said. “That's why it makes the wins so sweet, and they're so hard to get. You only need 16 [to win the Stanley Cup], but it's hard to get 16. Overall, solid effort. The intentions are all in the right place and guys are working hard, and it's just the beginning. We need to reset and come even harder on Sunday.”

MacKinnon had a goal and an assist, Casey Mittelstadt had three assists, and Mikko Rantanen had two assists for the Avalanche, the No. 3 seed from the Central Division. Alexandar Georgiev made 22 saves.

“I thought [Georgiev] was awesome again tonight,” Colorado coach Jared Bednar said. “So, he gives us time to like just keep chipping away and chipping away, and eventually we earn some

power plays and capitalize on 'em. The power play's what gave us the life, right? You got to earn your penalties, too. Like I thought it was a hard fought, hard checking game.

"Offense was tough to come by, skilled players are making some plays and you get some opportunities if you get the right bounce, rebound, et cetera. But there wasn't a whole lot of room to move."

Tyler Toffoli and Josh Morrissey scored for the Jets, who are the No. 2 seed from the Central. Connor Hellebuyck made 34 saves.

"Clearly the discipline in the third period and the penalty kill just took us out of the game," Winnipeg coach Rick Bowness said. "Listen, there's three series out East that are 3-0. We're 2-1. They won a game in our rink. We have to come in here and win a game in their rink. It's as simple as that. 3-2, 6-2, we lost the game. Our focus now is getting ready for Sunday afternoon."

Game 4 of the best-of-7 series will be in Colorado on Sunday (2:30 p.m. ET; MAX, truTV, TNT, ALT, SN360, SN, TVAS).

Zach Parise scored to give Colorado a 1-0 lead at 11:18 of the first period when he tucked in the rebound of Josh Manson's shot from the slot.

"I think everyone in the room looks up to Zach, me especially, being a Minnesota kid," Mittelstadt said. "It's an honor play with him and he did a heck of a job. I mean, he's flying around out there hitting guys, making plays. So, made my job easy tonight."

Toffoli tied it 1-1 at 5:03 of the second period with a backhand from below the left circle after gathering the rebound of his initial shot.

Morrissey made it 2-1 with a power-play goal at 10:50 of the second, beating Georgiev with a one-timer through traffic from the blue line.

"We're doing a lot of good things to put ourselves in a position to try and win a game in a tough building on the road in the playoffs, and I think the easiest story is we got into penalty trouble," Morrissey said. "You can take some real positives from that game, especially in the first two periods. It's a seven-game series for a reason. Unfortunately, we dropped this one tonight and Game 4 is pivotal. We need to come out with our game and [play] a full 60-minute game on Sunday."

MacKinnon tied it 2-2 with a power-play goal at 2:11 of the third period. His one-timer from just inside the blue line went through traffic and between Hellebuyck's pads.

"I'm just looking to see where that F1 is and if I can get it through him, and then pray from there," MacKinnon said. "It's tough to see all four guys, but I figured I was in the middle of the ice. So, there's probably no one else in the middle, and [I was] lucky. Great screen."

Valeri Nichushkin made it 3-2 at 4:39, taking a cross-crease pass from Rantanen and lifting a snap shot over an outstretched Hellebuyck.

Artturi Lehkonen pushed it to 4-2 at 8:11, finishing off a 2-on-1 with Mittelstadt.

“Being down one in the third there, we didn't sit back on our heels and I think we kind of just took it to them,” Ross Colton said. “When we play with that speed, we play with that energy, we're good team. Obviously, we got some power plays there, but we drew them with hard work and getting in on the forecheck and kind of putting them under pressure. So, it all starts with that.”

Colton scored a power-play goal to make it 5-2 at 12:35 when he redirected Mittelstadt's centering pass in the slot.

“[Mittelstadt's] been unreal. I just love his competitive level,” MacKinnon said. “it's great to see him rise his game on the biggest stage, the brightest lights, and he looked awesome tonight. Not many guys would sauce that over in a third period playoff game, and it just shows you the confidence and poise he has.”

Devon Toews scored into the empty net from his own zone while short-handed at 16:25 for the 6-2 final.

NOTES: Colorado defenseman Samuel Girard made his series debut after missing the previous two games while in concussion protocol. He finished plus-3 with one assist in 21:05 of ice time. ... The Avalanche improved to 145-104 in playoff games since relocating to Denver in 1995-96, tying the Detroit Red Wings for the most wins in that span. ... Parise became the first player aged 39 or older to score in consecutive playoff games since Daniel Alfredsson did it for the Ottawa Senators in Games 3 and 4 of the 2013 Conference Semifinals. Parise also tied Chris Drury (21) for the third-most playoff goals by a U.S.-born player in NHL history.

TSN.ca

[7-Eleven That's Hockey: A quick fix to Hellebuyck's playoff struggles?](#) (VIDEO)

Connor Hellebuyck currently ranks dead last in the playoffs with a 5.04 GAA as the Jets travel to Colorado for Game 3 against the Avalanche, That's Hockey discusses how Hellebuyck can stop the bleeding and how important his improved play is if Winnipeg wants to continue containing Nathan MacKinnon.

[All In: Colorado scored five unanswered goals in the third period to take the series lead](#) (VIDEO)

The Avalanche scored five unanswered goals in the third period as they handed the Jets a 'demoralizing' loss in Game 3 to take the series lead. TSN's Jets reporter John Lu breaks down the game, what went wrong for the Jets and how they will need to improve to get back into the series.

Sportsnet.ca

[How can Jets gain control of series vs. Avalanche?](#) (VIDEO)

Colby Armstrong joins Martine Gaillard and Ken Reid to discuss how the Colorado Avalanche have effectively disrupted the Winnipeg Jets' game plan, the Jets' unfortunate third period, and how the Jets can improve in Game 4.

[Jets must find a way to slow Avalanche with series slipping from their hands](#)

By Eric Engels

DENVER— Out broke Casey Mittelstadt and Artturi Lehkonen on a rush that left Dylan DeMelo and Mark Scheifele in the dust and the Winnipeg Jets in a hole they weren't going to be able to climb out of.

This goal, which helped pad a lead the Colorado Avalanche wouldn't relinquish en route to a 6-2 win in their first game of these Stanley Cup Playoffs in front of their fans at Ball Arena, perfectly encapsulated why they lead this series 2-1.

Their speed was too much for the Jets to handle on the play, with DeMelo and Scheifele tripping over themselves just to catch up, and it's overwhelmed them since the games began at Canada Life Centre last week.

Given how it's gone so far, we're not sure how the Jets will stop the Avalanche cascade from ending their season.

"You slow them down with better puck management in their zone and making sure that we don't get our forwards trapped deep because, again, their D are coming," said Jets coach Rick Bowness after Friday's loss.

"If it's a four-on-three, we can live with that," he added, "but they had a couple of four-on-twos and they do an excellent job of pushing our D back and gaining the blue line and curling up and finding that second wave. Our forwards are going to have to reload and know exactly where they're going to take away that rush."

Through three games, the Jets haven't been able to do that enough.

That, coupled with their indiscipline in the third period of Friday's game, has proven costly.

Nathan MacKinnon tied this one 2-2 on the power play just 2:11 into the third period while Winnipeg's Mason Appleton was serving a penalty for tripping Miles Wood.

Valeri Nichushkin scored 2:28 later while Jets forward Gabriel Vilardi was serving the last two minutes of a double-minor for high-sticking Devon Toews.

And it was after Lehkonen made it 4-2 off that rush with Mittelstadt that Ross Colton buried one. Neal Pionk had stepped out of the box two seconds earlier, following his puck-over-glass penalty.

Toews capped the five-goal period for the Avalanche with an empty-net goal at 16:25.

It was the second time in this series they had scored at least four in a frame, making it the second time since the puck dropped in October that the Jets had allowed as many in a frame.

They were so good at stifling and suffocating everyone they played through the regular season, accumulating 52 wins and winning the William M. Jennings Trophy for allowing the least goals against in the league. They beat the Avalanche twice in this building (where the Avs went 31-7-1 against the rest of the league) and outscored them 11-2 in the process.

But the Jets didn't see this version of this team in those games, and they're struggling to find the best version of themselves while failing to contain Colorado's speed in these ones.

"Every team has their strengths," said Jets defenceman Josh Morrissey, who scored on the power play to give them a 2-1 lead 10:50 into the second period. "You look at the way they like to play, they're really aggressive up ice. Obviously, they've got a lot of speed in their lineup and they like to transition fast.

"For us, I think managing the puck is key at the blue lines, winning the blue lines and trying to sustain O-zone time on them to wear them down and slow down their game a little bit. They got some good looks off the rush tonight, and I think we can do a little bit better job of that. That's the M.O. of their team. They're a great team, they're going to have plays where they're flying and stuff will happen and we can bend, but we can't break, which I thought we did a pretty good job of through two periods."

But the Jets haven't done it well enough through the other seven that have been played in this series.

They've struggled under the pressure of Colorado's forecheck, failing to breakout as cleanly as they proved capable during the regular season. They've also been stifled by the Avalanche's back pressure, which has kept them from establishing the type of offensive-zone time they're accustomed to.

It's led to the Jets scoring just four goals over the last two games after managing seven on a weaker version of Alexandar Georgiev in Game 1.

Meanwhile, 15 of 17 Colorado goals in this series have gotten past Connor Hellebuyck, who has made big saves throughout but not enough of them to mitigate the mistakes the Jets have made in front of him.

Most of them have come chasing the Avalanche. And the Jets have spent the majority of their time chasing because they're faulty execution at both ends of the ice has fed Colorado's speed.

It's hurt them, it will continue to if they don't find a way to counter it.

The potential loss of Brenden Dillon on their backend could be damaging to the Jets, as well. The rugged defenceman suffered a serious laceration to his hand in a scuffle with Avalanche forward Brandon Duhaime at the conclusion of Game 3.

"Scary, scary situation there," Morrissey said before Bowness offered that Dillon was still being evaluated by the Jets' medical staff.

"We're all really concerned for him and just hoping everything's okay," said Morrissey.

He and the rest of the Jets will have that on their minds between now and 12:30 local time Sunday, when Game 4 is set to take place.

They will have to find a way to limit Colorado's speed in that one, or this series is heading back to Winnipeg with the Jets' season on the line.

Canadian Press

[Avalanche score five third-period goals to top Jets, take 2-1 series lead](#)

By Canadian Press

DENVER — The Colorado Avalanche scored three goals in a span of six minutes early in the third period of a 6-2 victory over the Winnipeg Jets on Friday night at Ball Arena.

Nathan MacKinnon and Valeri Nichushkin got the rally started with power-play goals before Artturi Lehkonen gave Colorado a two-goal cushion. Ross Colton tacked on an insurance goal and Devon Toews iced the win with an empty-netter.

Zach Parise had the other goal for the Avalanche, who took a 2-1 lead in the best-of-seven series. Alexander Georgiev made 22 saves for Colorado.

Josh Morrissey and Tyler Toffoli scored for the Jets, who got 34 saves from Connor Hellebuyck.

Winnipeg will try to even the first-round playoff series in Game 4 on Sunday afternoon.

The Jets edged Colorado 7-6 in Game 1 but the Avalanche rebounded with a 5-2 victory to earn a split of the first two games at Canada Life Centre.

The Avalanche had the best home record in the NHL during the regular season at 31-9-1. Two of the nine regulation losses were to the Jets, including a 7-0 shellacking on April 13.

The white pompom-waving sellout crowd in the Mile High City was in strong voice for the Avalanche's first home game of the post-season. The road side applied the early pressure though and was nearly rewarded.

Georgiev stopped Mason Appleton after a goalmouth scramble and denied Gabriel Vilardi on a wraparound attempt a short time later.

The Avalanche started to test Hellebuyck midway through the opening period. The Vezina Trophy favourite stopped Lehkonen on a clean look from the left side and caught a break when MacKinnon zinged one off the crossbar.

Hellebuyck made a pad save on a Josh Manson shot from the slot but the rebound kicked out to Parise, who one-timed it to open the scoring at 11:18.

The Jets had some good chances late in the stanza but Georgiev stood firm. He slid across the crease to deny Mark Scheifele's shot from the faceoff circle as time expired.

Winnipeg's second line of Toffoli, Sean Monahan and Nikolaj Ehlers combined for 185 points in the regular season but was held without a point in the series until early in the second period.

Toffoli flipped a backhand shot from a tight angle that somehow got behind Georgiev at 5:03. Ehlers had an assist.

The first penalty of the game didn't come until midway through the game when Casey Mittelstadt was called for hooking Schiefele. The Jets converted with the man advantage as Morrissey's one-timer from the point beat a screened Georgiev at 10:50.

Toffoli was sent in on a breakaway moments later but was stoned by the Bulgarian backstop. The Avalanche replied with a rush of their own but Hellebuyck stopped MacKinnon.

With Appleton off for tripping, Colorado tied the game at 2:11 of the third period. MacKinnon one-timed a shot from the point that went through the legs of a screened Hellebuyck.

Vilardi was given a double-minor after his stick caught Toews in the face and drew blood. Nichushkin roofed a shot over a sprawled Hellebuyck at 4:39.

Lehkonen made it a two-goal lead at 8:11 and Colton tallied at 12:36.

The Jets pulled Hellebuyck for an extra attacker with about four minutes left to play. Toews sent a puck the length of the ice into the empty cage at 16:25.

LINEUP CHANGES

The Jets inserted defenceman Nate Schmidt into the lineup after sitting the first two games as a healthy scratch. He replaced Logan Stanley and played on a pairing with Dylan Samberg.

Blueliner Samuel Girard returned to the Colorado lineup after missing nearly two weeks due to a concussion.

NORTHERN RETURN

The series will return to Winnipeg for Game 5 on Tuesday. If a sixth game is necessary, it would be played Thursday in Denver.

Denver Gazette

[Avalanche continue solving Jets goalie Connor Hellebuyck in Game 3 victory](#)

By Kyle Fredrickson

The Colorado Avalanche are roasting the likely Vezina Trophy winner.

Is Connor Hellebuyck cooked?

A 6-2 victory in Game 3 over the Jets at Ball Arena pulled the Avs ahead in their first-round playoff series — 2-1 — with Hellebuyck and a stingy Winnipeg defense allowing 17 goals (two empty netters) after three games.

It's a stark contrast from Hellebuyck's regular season. He allowed two goals or fewer in 35-of-60 starts.

The Avs trailed 2-1 at the second intermission on Friday before scoring five goals in the third period.

"We go with the mentality that the only score that matters is the one at the end of the game," coach Jared Bednar said. "We're not going to get rattled up two or down two. We just want to

stick to our process, right. It's what we've been preaching all year. We've been very good at it. We've come back in a lot of games this year. ... You've got to try and stick with your process right to the final buzzer."

The most promising aspect of Colorado's scoring barrage is the source.

Zach Parise has a goal in each of his last two games. Casey Mittelstadt recorded three assists. The Avalanche scored twice on the power play.

"Being down one (goal) in the third there, we didn't sit back on our heels," said Ross Colton, who tipped in a third-period goal. "We just took it to them. When we play with that speed and when we play with that energy, we're a good team. Obviously, we got some power plays there, but we drew them with hard work."

Counterpoint: The series is far from over.

Winnipeg will make adjustments before a critical Game 4.

"Every team has their strengths. You look at the way they like to play, they're really aggressive up ice, obviously they've got a lot of speed throughout their lineup. They like to transition fast," Jets defenseman Josh Morrissey said. "For us, managing the puck is key at the blue lines. Winning the blue lines and trying to get some sustained O-zone time on them, to wear them down and slow down their game a little bit. They got some looks off the rush tonight. We can do a bit better job at that. That's the MO of their team. They're a great team. They're going to have plays where they're flying and make stuff happen. We can bend, but we can't break."

[Avalanche vs. Jets: 3 takeaways from Colorado's Game 3 win](#)

By Kyle Fredrickson

The Avalanche defeated the Jets, 6-2, Friday night in Game 3 of their first-round playoff series. Here are three takeaways from Ball Arena.

GEORGIE! GEORGIE! GEORGIE!

The Ball Arena crowd chanted early and often for their starting goaltender. Alexandar Georgiev delivered. Winnipeg scored twice in the second period. But Georgiev bounced back with a shutout third to keep the Avalanche alive for their rally. His continued rebound from an awful Game 1 performance is becoming the most important Avs storyline this postseason.

Second-line production

Take a bow, Casey Mittelstadt. The second line buzzed behind their trade deadline center with the first goal of the night; Zach Parise ripping home a rebound off a Josh Manson shot attempt. Parise — a 39-year-old veteran seeking his first Stanley Cup — has two goals in his last two playoff games. Mittelstadt later assisted Artturi Lehkonen with a tape-to-tape pass on a rush goal.

Special teams

The Jets led, 2-1, in the second when Josh Morrissey landed a power-play bomb after the Avs failed to capitalize on their own PP chance. But momentum shifted in the third period. Colorado converted two power-play opportunities — goals from Nathan MacKinnon and Valeri Nichushkin — to put Winnipeg away. Winning the special teams battle was a key to the Avalanche victory.

What happened: Colorado rallied from an early deficit with strong goaltending and special teams.

What went right: Zach Parise opened the scoring with a rebound goal in the first period. The Avalanche scored two power-play goals in the third period; Nathan MacKinnon (from the point through traffic) and Valeri Nichushkin (wristed from the left circle). Ross Colton tipped in a third-period goal. Devon Toews closed the night with an empty netter.

What went wrong: Winnipeg tied the game with a Tyler Toffoli backhand at the goal line that snuck past Alexandar Georgiev. The Jets led, 2-1, after a Josh Morrissey power-play goal midway through the second period.

Between the pipes: Georgiev made 22-of-24 saves. Winnipeg's Connor Hellebuyck stopped 34 of Colorado's 39 shots on goal.

Injury report: Sam Girard (concussion protocol) returned to the lineup. Devon Toews required stitches in the third period after taking a high stick and returned to play.

What's next: The Avalanche face the Jets, 12:30 p.m. Sunday at Ball Arena for Game 4 of their first-round playoff series.

[Samuel Girard returns for Avs in Game 3 against Winnipeg with assist, shot on goal](#)

BY CARSON FIELD

Defenseman Samuel Girard, who missed the last several games with a concussion, returned to action in Game 3 on Friday.

Girard played on the team's second defensive line, alongside Josh Manson. He logged an assist in the third period and fired one shot on goal.

Girard suffered his injury against the Jets earlier in April. He exited the Avs' 7-0 loss to Winnipeg on April 13 in the first period.

Avs coach Jared Bednar was optimistic that Girard would be able to go after the defenseman participated in morning skate.

"He had a good skate this morning," Bednar said. "We'll see about tonight when we get to the rink."

Nichushkin shines in third period

Winnipeg quieted the crowd in the second period, but Valeri Nichushkin brought the energy back.

The forward scored back-to-back goals early in the third period to give Colorado a 3-2 lead. The second of those came on a power play.

Nichushkin has three goals in the first three games of the series. The right wing logged 28 goals and 53 total points during the regular season.

His presence has been crucial for the Avalanche. Nichushkin played in only the first two games of their first-round series against the Seattle Kraken in 2023, taking a leave of absence for personal reasons before Game 3 of that series.

Avalanche faithful were on full display in Game 3. It was their first postseason contest of the 2023-24 campaign, and the fans made their presence known.

Avs fans were most energetic early in the game. The white pom-poms, used only during the playoffs, were shaken regularly. And fans screamed for Parise's early goal and chanted "Georgie" several times after goalie Alexandar Georgiev made key saves.

The mood dampened slightly in the second period, when the Jets scored back-to-back goals to take their first lead. Still, the "Georgie" chants continued, and Avs fans rose to their feet often.

It really picked up in the third period, when Nichushkin scored back-to-back goals to give the Avs the lead again. The place roared minutes later when Artturi Lehkonen made it a two-goal game on an odd-man rush. And it continued for the rest of the game until the final buzzer sounded and the Avalanche won 6-2.

In the regular season, the Avalanche went 31-9-1 at Ball Arena. They went 19-6-6 on the road.

Prior to the game, Bednar stressed the importance of the crowd's energy.

"They've helped us all year," the coach said. "We know that the atmosphere in here will be crazy again tonight, and our guys certainly like playing at home and they've shown that throughout the course of the regular season.

"Playoffs are a different animal. It's a whole new season now, and it's the same opponent over and over, and we'll take their support. I know they'll be excited to be able to watch us play a playoff game here after a long, hard-fought season."

The Athletic

[Jets vs. Avalanche bloody finish in Game 3 result of unnecessary playoff mentality](#)

By Eric Duhatschek

The lasting impression, after all the players had been cleared from the ice and sent to the dressing room, was all that blood.

Blood everywhere. Blood flowing from either the wrist or the hand of Winnipeg Jets defenseman Brenden Dillon, the result of the foolish and unnecessary aftermath of what ended as a lopsided 6-2 loss to the Colorado Avalanche on Friday night. Blood on the jersey of Avalanche forward Brandon Duhaime, with whom Dillon got entangled in a meaningless scrum.

In his postgame media availability, Jets coach Rick Bowness could only offer that Dillon was being examined by the medical staff.

“Scary, scary situation there. I don’t really have anything to say, but we’re all really concerned for him and just hoping everything’s OK,” added Jets defenseman Josh Morrissey.

For anyone who’s watched the NHL enough, what happened after the game ended followed a familiar script. Early in the third period, Winnipeg was nursing a one-goal lead in a close, entertaining, hard-fought, well-played game. Then, after the Avs tied it 2-2, the Jets’ Gabriel Vilardi was guilty of high-sticking the Avs’ Devon Toews.

There was a lot of blood there, too, flowing from Toews’ face — enough to warrant a double minor penalty against Vilardi. Naturally, Colorado — with one of the NHL’s most potent power plays — scored with the man advantage, a goal by Valeri Nichushkin, to go up 3-2. From there, the Avs won going away. There was the usual moaning on social media about the officiating, but the reality is, the two calls that really hurt Winnipeg — Vilardi’s double minor and then a puck-over-the-glass call against Neal Pionk, were automatic.

No discretion or unnecessarily nuanced calls.

In the end, Colorado was the better team, and deserved the win — and it should have ended there. Both teams go home, reset on the off day and prepare for Sunday’s fourth game.

But no. It didn’t go that way. In the past, the Jets have been criticized for not having enough pushback when things go south. It felt as if they needed to send a message, ahead of Game 4, that they wouldn’t be pushed around. So there was a scrum in the final minute; which the referees cleared up, with mostly no harm done.

Time ran out, and that should have been that. But instead of going to the dressing room, the teams engaged in more pushing and shoving. Sometimes it’s harmless. But this time, it wasn’t. Because once the gloves come off, and the players fall to the ice and start rolling around with each other, bad things can happen. Skate blades are sharp. In this case, the casualty was Dillon, who had to make a beeline to the dressing room, clutching his left arm, bleeding profusely.

It was just so unnecessary. The league doesn’t need it, and the Jets really don’t need it either. Dillon is just too critical a piece. They need him on the ice if they want to come back in the series.

Right now, the Jets have segued badly away from their identity, which is to play strong defensive hockey. In the last week of the regular season, they went into Colorado and clobbered the Avalanche 7-0. Hard to believe that was only 13 days ago. They were clicking on all cylinders.

But playoffs are different from the regular season. Colorado has something of a playoff pedigree and Friday night, the Avalanche got contributions from every corner of the lineup. It was a textbook comeback, capitalizing on their opportunities, making the presumptive Vezina Trophy winner Connor Hellebuyck look decidedly ordinary.

Game 4 on Sunday is a chance for Winnipeg to regroup. The hope is the Jets have Dillon on hand to help turn the series around.

The stupidity at the end of the game, trying to prove a needless point, ultimately helped no one.

Least of all the Jets.

[The Winnipeg Jets collapsed again. Here's why they're in trouble](#)

By Murat Ates

DENVER — Rick Bowness has said this team is different.

Before Game 3, the Winnipeg coach talked about how the Jets came into not just this series against the Colorado Avalanche but the entire season with a chip on their shoulder. Something to prove.

Now, after the Jets scored the go-ahead goal — again — and proceeded to collapse — again — as self-inflicted wounds took them out of a game they controlled, Bowness is still urgently trying to solve a familiar problem: how to bounce back from a playoff loss.

The Jets fought harder in the middle of the ice in Game 3. They boxed out better. Cleared pucks out of the slot. Their goaltender played better, stopping 27 of 28 shots through 40 minutes, giving the Jets a 2-1 lead heading into the third period. Winnipeg even spent more time in Colorado's zone in Game 3 than at any point in the series. With that opportunity to break the series open in Winnipeg's favour, the Jets imploded for the second straight game, losing 6-2 and falling behind 2-1 in the series.

Winnipeg took 10 minutes' worth of minor penalties in the first 10:34 of the third period. The first call was questionable — with Mason Appleton's stick catching Miles Wood as Appleton followed through on a shot — while the next several were obvious and unmissable. The Colorado power play vs. Winnipeg penalty kill is the only mismatch for which the Jets don't have an answer, so Nathan MacKinnon scored. Of course he did. It was inevitable.

But a game-tying goal is just a game-tying goal. A veteran, composed, elite team would shake it off and pour it on all over again.

Winnipeg followed MacKinnon's goal with an offensive zone double-minor for high-sticking when Gabriel Vilardi's stick caught Devon Toews in the face. It was a call that the referees missed but the linesman caught — likely waiting until he was sure that the high-stick drew blood (linesmen cannot stop play for minor penalties). Double-minor high sticks are reviewable by video, which confirmed Vilardi's four-minute penalty.

That sequence of officiating, plus the Jets' struggles to win faceoffs, clear the puck, take away seams, or pressure Colorado's star players, created the perfect storm for Valeri Nichushkin's 3-2 Avalanche goal.

This is where the problem lies. Appleton's penalty was questionable but it was called. Winnipeg's players were irate — and justifiably so, given that Appleton was following through on a shot and it looked like Miles Wood embellished the play. Vilardi's high stick was careless and necessary to call but, even then, in a story about an elite Jets team, there would be a major sidebar about how Colorado failed to score on the power play.

Instead, there was an absolute shooting gallery: Nine of Colorado's 40 shots and 15 of its 74 shot attempts came on the third-period power plays. By the time Nichushkin scored, Hellebuyck had taken himself out of the play, losing his balance trying to stop a cross-seam pass with the

paddle of his stick. Thus Winnipeg's implosion wasn't about things going wrong; it was about its inability to cope after things went wrong.

The Jets put together three shifts' worth of pushback before Mark Scheifele gave the puck away at the blue line, Dylan DeMelo stumbled, and Casey Mittelstadt took full advantage, feeding Artturi Lehkonen a cross-ice pass for a counterattack tap-in into a gaping net.

A veteran, composed, elite team gets Scheifele's puck deep. It makes DeMelo's turn cleanly. It doesn't give away a goal for free at five-on-five at a time it's positively reeling on the penalty kill. And it doesn't follow that up with David Gustafsson's clear tripping penalty or Neal Pionk's clear over the glass to give Colorado a five-on-three for free. The Avalanche have proven to be tough enough to beat without Winnipeg's help. Ross Colton scored the 5-2 goal one second after Pionk's penalty came to an end.

It's not just the players. Bowness seemed to want to counter MacKinnon's Game 2 dominance, wherein MacKinnon played nearly half the second period via a series of double shifts, with a Scheifele game of the same ilk. He double-shifted Scheifele in the first period, giving his star centre extra shifts with Vladislav Namestnikov and Alex Iafallo, then Nino Niederreiter and Mason Appleton, and in various combinations with Sean Monahan. Scheifele ended up leading Jets forwards with a completely sensible 19:34 of ice time, but it was a curious beginning from the Jets coaching staff.

Coaching is also partly to blame for Winnipeg's penalty kill — a shooting gallery against Hellebuyck that we knew would be a shooting gallery — although Colorado deserves credit for running an elite power play all season.

Winnipeg's most risky loss of composure came at the end of the game. Colorado had added a short-handed, empty-net goal during a Jets power play that looked a world away from dangerous, despite a good start to the game and Josh Morrissey's 2-1 goal that set the table for the third period. Down 6-2, Winnipeg's focus seemed to turn toward setting the tone for Game 4. Adam Lowry fought Miles Wood, defeating him handily but doing nothing to change the scoreline.

Then, as the final buzzer sounded, all 10 Jets and Avalanche skaters got involved in a lengthy scrum, leading to a dogpile in the Colorado zone. Brenden Dillon's hand was badly cut, sending him off the ice in a hurry, leaving his teammates shaken — and perhaps his team without one of its top-four defencemen heading into Sunday's pivotal Game 4. It's difficult to imagine Winnipeg coming back from a 3-1 deficit. It would be harder, still, without Dillon's steadying presence on Winnipeg's second pair. If Dillon misses time, Winnipeg could bring Logan Stanley back into the lineup or give trade deadline acquisition Colin Miller a shot, but neither brings Dillon's five-on-five game or penalty killing ability. Bowness didn't have an update after the game, saying Dillon was still being examined at the time.

What are the Jets meant to do now?

They'll start Hellebuyck in Game 4. This much is expected. They may be forced to dress another defenceman, pending Dillon's status. Is Cole Perfetti is going to play any games in the postseason? It seems far from guaranteed, but I suspect Gustafsson's tripping penalty cracks the door more open than it's been. We can also get into various combinations and permutations of Winnipeg's lineup — the old Ehlers/Scheifele/Vilardi and Perfetti/Namestnikov/Iafallo debates, based on their tremendous analytics.

Bowness will focus on puck management, execution in the offensive zone, and coping with Colorado's speed.

"You slow them down with better puck management in their zone and making sure we don't get our forwards trapped deep," Bowness said. "Their D are coming. ... If it's a four-on-three, we can live with that. But they had a couple of four-on-twos. They do an excellent job of pushing our D back and gaining the blue line and turning up and finding that second wave."

This is supposed to be a resilient Jets team capable of pushing back with a much higher floor in quality of play compared to last year. I believe those things are true — or at least that they have been true for much of the season — but this is the worst time of year for those qualities to fade.

The offence appears stuck in second gear.

"I think we still pass up too many shooting opportunities for sure," Bowness said. "We've got to stop looking for that extra play and just do what they do — throw it at the net. Even when we did that, they were getting the retrievals and coming out. We've got to be careful watching that too, because that's where they're so strong, off the rush. We can't waste shots. We've got to make sure they're on a good chance."

So, the Jets need to shoot more often, but also less wastefully. That seems like a philosophical problem.

Meanwhile, there are the MacKinnon problems and the overall problem of Colorado's depth. All four Avalanche lines are forechecking with such pace that Winnipeg goes long stretches without being able to string consecutive breakout passes together. During Game 3, it got so bad for a while that Winnipeg made several stretch passes from its own zone to Avalanche players in the neutral zone.

That kind of pace is part of Colorado's game from top to bottom.

"The forecheck has been the key to our team for years now," said Avalanche veteran Andrew Cogliano. "With our team, it seems like our bottom lines, their identity is the forecheck. When you start forechecking hard, you start putting teams on their heels and then our big guys come out and sometimes teams back up and give them more respect."

It has to be exhausting to play against a team like that. Mind you, I also remember when the Jets were a team like that. So I asked MacKinnon how Colorado was taking Winnipeg's time away.

"Just trying to forecheck as hard as we can," he said with a smile. "That's really it. I mean, skating as hard as we can with the puck and trying to get active sticks. Obviously they'll make some adjustments and we'll have to be ready for it but our team is built on forechecking with the forwards we have. We have to keep that going."

Does it take a special kind of grit to play that way?

"Yeah ... It's also just awareness," MacKinnon said. "You can't even let up for half a second against these guys or anybody in the playoffs."

It turns out that Winnipeg's half-seconds are adding up.

The biggest reason for concern for the Jets is that they played a lot better in Game 3 than they did to start the series — and they still lost. Hellebuyck put together a 40-minute highlight reel, including five saves on MacKinnon alone heading into the second intermission — and they still lost. The second line scored, via Tyler Toffoli from DeMelo and Nikolaj Ehlers — but Winnipeg still lost.

It's getting harder to see the Jets establishing enough of an edge at five-on-five to overcome their beleaguered penalty kill.

The Jets have to dig deeper, again, and give themselves a chance to get back into the series, again, lest we start talking about a one-and-done postseason for a much-improved team.

Again.

The trouble is teams develop a past. Winnipeg is a good team that hasn't responded to a playoff loss with a playoff win of its own since the qualification round against Calgary in 2020.

This is a much better team than any the Jets have iced between those years and now.

Now, the Jets need to overcome their own history — and to stop beating themselves. Colorado is good enough all on its own.

Global Winnipeg

[Third period meltdown dooms Winnipeg Jets in 6-2 game 3 loss in Colorado](#)

By Christian Aumell & Russ Hobson Global News

If the Winnipeg Jets want to advance to the second round of the Stanley Cup Playoffs, they've got a lot of work to do.

Winnipeg allowed five goals in the third period in a 6-2 loss in Colorado Friday night to fall behind 2-1 to the Avalanche in their best-of-seven series.

For the second straight game the Jets let a lead slip away and they spent a good chunk of the third period in the penalty box. The Avs scored five unanswered goals after closing out Game 2 with four straight markers.

"I think we can still do a better job managing the puck in their zone," said Jets head coach Rick Bowness. "As soon as we take a shot and there's a loose puck they're getting and they're gone. So, I think we can tighten that up. That's an area we'll look at. And clearly the discipline in the third period and the penalty kill just took us out of the game."

The Jets took 10 minutes in penalties in the first 11 minutes of the third period and the Avalanche made them pay by notching a pair of power play markers. The Avs scored three goals in the span of just six minutes for the second game in a row.

Colorado had a one goal lead after the first, and the Jets scored back-to-back goals to take the lead, but the wheels completely came off in the final frame for Winnipeg.

“We can play better than that,” Bowness said. “There’s good parts of the game. The discipline and staying out of the box is gonna be a huge factor for us.”

The Jets were outshot 12-5 in the third and 40-24 overall, but they made a strong push in the middle stanza to get a lead.

“We can take some real positives from that game, especially in the first two periods and it’s a seven-game series for a reason,” said defenceman Josh Morrissey. “We unfortunately dropped this one tonight but Game 4 is pivotal, and we need to come out here with our best game.”

Breaking news from Canada and around the world sent to your email, as it happens. Brenden Dillon’s status is also now in question. He appeared to be cut on the hand or forearm by a skate during a post-game melee and left blood all over the ice.

“I can’t give you an update,” said Bowness. “I don’t have an update. He’s still being examined.

“I’ll give you an update when I know more information.”

The Jets have never won a best-of-seven series when trailing two games to one.

Colorado got the crowd rocking at the 11:18 mark of the opening period when Zach Parise banged home a rebound off a Josh Manson net drive.

The Avalanche carried play for most of the opening period, though the Jets pushed hard in the final minute for the equalizer. It remained 1-0 after 20 minutes with Colorado leading 12-9 on the shot clock.

The Jets drew even just over five minutes into the second. After one of Winnipeg’s stronger shifts in the offensive zone, Tyler Toffoli was turned aside by Alexandar Georgiev and as the rebound drifted to the corner, Toffoli fired a second try from along the goal line and it squeaked through to make it 1-1.

Winnipeg earned the game’s first power play at the 9:15 mark when Casey Mittlestadt hooked Mark Scheifele, and the Jets made them pay. A blast off the stick of Morrissey beat Georgiev through a screen set by Gabriel Vilardi to put the Jets in front 2-1 with 9:10 to go in the second.

Colorado would get their own power play look a few minutes later but Connor Hellebuyck made several strong saves to keep it 2-1, which would remain the score after 40 minutes with the Avalanche outshooting Winnipeg 16-10 in the second.

But the unravelling began early in the third for the Jets. Mason Appleton took a tripping penalty 1:14 into the final frame, leading to Nathan MacKinnon’s game-tying goal. He let a wrister go from the point and it found a way through a maze of bodies and through Hellebuyck’s five-hole.

23 seconds later, Vilardi cut Devon Toews with a high-stick, putting the Avalanche on a four-minute power play, but unlike game 2, the Jets couldn’t kill this one off.

Moments after the first half of the double-minor lapsed, Mikko Rantanen found Valeri Nichushkin with a cross-ice pass. Tired penalty killers couldn’t catch up to him, nor could a flailing Hellebuyck get in the way as Nichushkin buried it to put the Avs ahead at the 4:39 mark.

Colorado doubled their lead at the 8:11 mark after the Avs forced a turnover at their blueline. Mittlestadt picked up the puck in the neutral zone and sped ahead as Dylan DeMelo stumbled trying to backpedal. Mittlestadt carried the puck into the Jets' zone and a tired Mark Scheifele couldn't keep up as Artturi Lehkonen took a pass from Mittlestadt and knocked it home to make it 4-2.

Two more Jets penalties to David Gustafsson and Neal Pionk put the Avalanche on a brief 5-on-3 and while the Jets wound up killing off both, just one second after Pionk's minor ended, Ross Colton redirected a pass into the net to make it 5-2 with 7:25 left.

Winnipeg pulled the goalie to try and pull off a long-shot comeback but Toews scored into the empty net with 3:35 to go to put a bow on the win for the Avalanche, who scored five goals in a period in which the Jets only managed five shots.

Frustration boiled over for the Jets in the final minute as Adam Lowry got in a scrap with Miles Wood and after the final horn sounded, a skirmish broke out but it led to a scary moment when Dillon was badly cut, bolting to the bench as blood pooled on the ice.

Hellebuyck was saddled with the loss despite making 34 stops, while Georgiev gets the win after turning aside 22 shots.

The two teams will meet again Sunday afternoon in Denver. Game 4 begins at 1:30 p.m. with pregame coverage on 680 CJOB starting at 11 a.m.

Winnipeg Free Press

[Collapse in Colorado](#) [Jets unravel in third period, fall 6-2 to Avalanche](#)

By: Mike McIntyre

DENVER — They lost their lead. They lost their composure. They lost the game. And they may have lost a key player to an ugly injury.

Add it all up and it was a Friday night to forget for the Winnipeg Jets, who now find themselves trailing their first-round playoff series 2-1 following a 6-2 defeat to the Colorado Avalanche at Ball Arena.

Winnipeg appeared to be in full control through 40 minutes, carrying a hard-fought 2-1 advantage into the second intermission. All they needed was one more solid period to wrestle home-ice advantage back from Colorado after a split of the first two games at Canada Life Centre.

It was easier said than done. A parade to the penalty box and an inability to get a kill proved fatal, with the home team scoring five times in the final frame to absolutely bury them.

"That's the M.O. of their team. They're a great team. They're going to have plays where they're flying and make stuff happen," defenceman Josh Morrissey said of trying to survive the Avalanche.

“We can bend, but we can’t break, which I thought we actually did a pretty good job through two periods.”

Unfortunately for Winnipeg, a hockey game is three periods long.

1) A bloody ending

Given how this one finished, it’s not surprising the Jets were rather feisty in the waning seconds, with a major skirmish breaking out at the final buzzer. The post-game shenanigans may have come with a heavy price, too.

With fists and bodies flying around, defenceman Brenden Dillon ended up at the bottom of the pile and appeared to suffer a gruesome cut to his hand, seemingly from a skate. He rushed off the ice, leaving a trail of blood behind, and there was significant concern around the Winnipeg room in the immediate aftermath.

Morrissey was clearly emotional as he spoke with reporters outside the room, his voice cracking.

“Scary, scary situation there. I don’t really have anything to say, but we’re all really concerned for him and just hoping everything’s okay,” said Morrissey.

Coach Rick Bowness had no immediate update other than to say Dillon, a pending unrestricted free agent coming off a career season with the Jets, was undergoing medical treatment.

2) Seeing red

Dillon’s injury was actually the second time the ice crew had to come out with a shovel and wheelbarrow to scrape blood off the ice.

The first happened early in the third period and proved to be a significant turning point in the game. And, perhaps, the series.

Winnipeg’s 2-1 lead had already vanished just 2:11 into the third period, with Nathan MacKinnon scoring on a power play that came after an offensive zone tripping penalty against Mason Appleton.

“He’s trying to take a shot with the puck and the guy follows through and gets it, and... listen, they made the calls. We’re not even going to get into that,” said Bowness, who clearly wasn’t happy with what the Jets felt were some missed infractions earlier in the contest.

Then, with the building buzzing, Gabe Vilardi’s errant stick caught Avalanche defenceman Devon Toews in the face only 23 seconds later, cutting him badly. Although referees initially missed the incident, a linesman called it after the fact, and the Jets were given a double-minor.

You could feel the inevitable coming. Sure enough, Valeri Nichushkin nearly brought the roof down as he scored 2:05 into the four-minute advantage, putting the Avalanche up 3-2.

Reeling from seeing a lead turn into a deficit in the blink of an eye, the Jets then got caught trying to be too aggressive in the offensive zone, which resulted in an odd-man rush and an Artturi Lehkonen goal to make it 4-2 a few minutes later.

The on-ice sins continued, with David Gustafsson whistled for tripping and then Neal Pionk called for delay-of-game. Ross Colton made it 5-2, scoring two seconds after Pionk's infraction ended.

Add it all up, and it was four Colorado goals in 10:25 of play, with two coming on the power play and a third that might as well have been.

That is not a recipe for success at any time in a hockey season, let alone the playoffs.

"They've got, obviously, a lot of speed and they like to play an aggressive game and I thought through two periods, maybe they had more shots, but we were doing a lot of good things to put ourselves in a position to try and win a game in a tough building on the road in the playoffs," said Morrissey.

"And I think the easiest story is we got into penalty trouble. You can look at them any way you want — accidental plays, unlucky plays — but we obviously let their pretty potent power play have some opportunities and they capitalized."

Colorado finished off the scoring later in the period with an empty-netter off the stick of Toews. Down three and with a power play, Bowness pulled Hellebuyck for the extra attacker. It didn't work.

"If we can win the faceoff and get it down the ice, then be a little more aggressive up ice so they are not getting in," Bowness said when asked what the much-maligned penalty kill of his club can do better.

"And then on their other entries, be more aggressive. Once they get control of it, then yeah, we've gotta protect the seams better and gotta protect that down and in they found a couple of times. Then it's a matter of tightening up, cutting that ice in half. We can do a better job of that."

3) Silver linings

There are no moral victories in the playoffs, of course. But the Jets did do some good work in the first 40 minutes which ultimately went for naught.

Zach Parise had opened the scoring at 8:42 of the first period, burying a rebound created by a Josh Manson shot. The veteran, who came out of an expected retirement to sign with the Avalanche during the season, now has two goals in this series.

Winnipeg stormed back in the second with a pair. The trio of Tyler Toffoli, Nikolaj Ehlers and Sean Monahan, who had all been blanked in the first two games, all contributed.

First was Toffoli's backhander somehow trickling past Alexandar Georgiev at 5:03, with Dylan DeMelo and Ehlers drawing the assists.

Winnipeg earned the first power play of the night later in the period as Casey Mittelstadt was called for hooking against Mark Scheifele. The Jets made them pay, with Morrissey finishing off some nice puck movement and finding a seam to beat Georgiev at 10:50. Scheifele and Monahan had the helpers.

Winnipeg kept coming, and they nearly made it 3-1 a few minutes later as Toffoli got a golden chance on a breakaway. Georgiev redeemed himself a bit for the earlier stinker and made a nice save.

In hindsight, a failure to capitalize on this may have been the turning point, given what transpired over the final 20 minutes.

After taking Game 1 by a 7-6 score, the Jets have now lost consecutive games in which they had 2-1 leads in the second period, only to implode.

“Listen, there’s three series out east that are 3-zip. We’re 2-1,” said Bowness.

“They won a game in our rink. We have to come in here and win a game in their rink. It’s as simple as that. 3-2, 6-2, we lost the game. Our focus now is getting ready for (Game 4) Sunday afternoon.”

4) *Extra, extra*

Winnipeg made one lineup change, with Nate Schmidt replacing Logan Stanley on the blue line. The healthy scratches were Stanley, Colin Miller, Cole Perfetti and Rasmus Kupari. Morgan Barron remains out with a lower-body injury.

Hellebuyck stopped 34 of 39 shots and has now surrendered 15 goals in the three games.

Georgiev stopped 22 of 24 shots.

Winnipeg went 1-for-2 on the power play, while Colorado finished the game 2-for-6.

The Avalanche welcomed back defenceman Sam Girard, who missed the first two games with a concussion. He replaced Caleb Jones in the lineup.

Game 4 in the best-of-seven series is set for Sunday at 1:30 p.m. in Denver. Considering the teams had to wait three days between Games 2 and 3, a one-and-a-half day gap will seem like nothing.

“It’s about getting as much rest and recovery, doing all of those little things to feel our best come Sunday and it’s turning the page,” said Morrissey.

“You can take some real positives from that game, especially in the first two periods. It’s a seven-game series for a reason. Unfortunately, we dropped this one tonight and Game 4 is pivotal. We need to come out with our game and (play) a full 60-minute game on Sunday.”

[Draft class of 2017 reunion](#) [Vilardi, Makar and Mittlestadt all having impact on Jets-Avs series](#)

By: Mike McIntyre

DENVER — The Winnipeg Jets and Colorado Avalanche have played some sensational, highlight-reel shinny this week, with their first playoff meeting providing no shortage of entertainment for fans.

It’s not a stretch to suggest it’s been the best opening-round matchup, by far.

Some of the seeds for this bountiful hockey harvest were actually planted in 2017, when general managers around the NHL gathered in Chicago for the annual teen-talent show known as the entry draft.

Go figure that three of the top picks that year are now playing crucial roles in this Central Division clash — Cale Makar, Casey Mittelstadt and Gabriel Vilardi.

Turns out there's a bit of a shared history to this story.

"It was a cool experience. The NHL does a really good job with that," Vilardi said of the days leading up to the draft, in which he was flown into the Windy City early as part of a promotional tour as one of the "top prospects" that year.

So, too, was Mittelstadt, who got to know Vilardi pretty well.

"There were a few nights we were rooming together, if I recall correctly," he said. "We did a ton of media. He was a super nice kid. We hung out quite a bit and had a great time. Super nice guy."

Among the pre-draft events: Taking the mound at Wrigley Field to help toss out a ceremonial first pitch prior to the Chicago Cubs game against the San Diego Padres.

The ball was actually delivered by Winnipegger Nolan Patrick, who was in the running for top pick that year, while Vilardi and Mittelstadt looked on in front of tens of thousands of fans. The trio of fresh-faced hockey players were all wearing Cubs jerseys.

They also took a boat tour on the Chicago River, played street hockey with Blackhawks legend and hall of famer Denis Savard (and plenty of kids) and were whisked away for a night to Nashville to take in a Stanley Cup Final game between the Predators and Pittsburgh Penguins.

All while forming a bit of a bond that remains to this day, despite going their separate ways.

"Nothing but good things to say about him," Mittelstadt said of Vilardi.

Right back 'atcha, Casey.

"I knew his game and remember leading up to the draft and after the draft watching him," said Vilardi. "A really skilled player. He's a great player."

What does Makar remember about the entire pre-draft experience? Not a whole lot, actually.

"I wasn't able to be a part of those," he told the Free Press. "I never got an invite."

Despite putting up huge numbers with the Brooks Bandits of the Alberta Junior Hockey League — an unconventional path to the NHL to say the least — Makar was snubbed by the league when it came to showcasing what they viewed at the time as the best and brightest.

Swing-and-a-miss there.

"It's pretty crazy to think," Mittelstadt said of his teammate. "That's kind of how it goes, you go back and people want to remake the draft order. I think he'd go No. 1 in pretty much all of them."

History shows the New Jersey Devils selected Nico Hischier first-overall. He joined Vilardi, Mittelstadt and Patrick for some of the draft events, although he missed the baseball game because his flight hadn't yet arrived from Switzerland.

Patrick went second-overall to the Philadelphia Flyers, with the Dallas Stars then nabbing defenceman Miro Heiskanen third.

Next up was the Avalanche, who landed themselves a franchise blue-liner in Makar with the No. 4 selection.

The Vancouver Canucks selected Elias Pettersson fifth, the Vegas Golden Knights made Winnipegger Cody Glass their first franchise pick at No. 6, the New York Rangers selected Lias Andersson at No. 7, and the Buffalo Sabres then grabbed Mittelstadt at No 8.

Vilardi patiently waited for his name to get called, watching the Detroit Red Wings select Michael Rasmussen at No. 9 and the Florida Panthers take Owen Tippett at 10 before the Los Angeles Kings ended the suspense and pulled the trigger at No. 11.

All of which gave Vilardi a little extra incentive to prove any doubters wrong.

"You can do all the re-drafts you want. At the end of the day some guys pan out, some guys don't, for whatever reasons. That's life," he said.

"There's different opportunities. Everyone gets different opportunities when they are drafted. Some get drafted to a team that's rebuilding and they get the opportunity to play on the first line right away. Other guys get drafted to a good team and they might not be looking at playing top-six minutes ever."

The Jets had a first-round pick that year, and would probably want a do-over. The selection of Kristian Vesalainen at No. 24 goes down as a whiff, considering he only appeared in 70 NHL games before heading back home to Finland two years ago, where he remains.

However, second-round pick Dylan Samberg (43rd-overall) is now playing a key role on the blue-line trying to shut the likes of Makar and Mittelstadt down.

To Vilardi's point, there's no such thing as a slam-dunk, and the case of Patrick shows how quickly things can change. The now 25-year-old has missed the last two-and-a-half seasons with injury, and his career is likely over after just 222 NHL games. (32 goals, 45 assists).

"It's so tough when you're dealing with injuries at such a young age and everyone else is developing," said Vilardi, who has suffered his share of ailments as well, which have limited him to just 199 regular-season games over parts of five years.

Now in his first year with the Jets following last summer's huge Pierre-Luc Dubois trade, Vilardi is savouring every minute of this playoff run. Skating on the top line with Mark Schiefele and Kyle Connor, he had three assists in the first two games.

Mittelstadt, too, has battled some aches and growing pains, which ultimately led to the Sabres sending him to the Avalanche earlier this season in a blockbuster trade that saw defenceman

Bowen Byram (No. 4 overall in 2019) going the other way. He's now centring the second line with the Avalanche, with a goal in the first two games against the Jets.

As for Makar, he's not going anywhere. He won the Calder Trophy as top rookie in 2020, the Norris Trophy as top defenceman in 2022, and the Conn Smythe Trophy as playoff MVP that same year en route to winning his first Stanley Cup.

As fun as a boat ride and ball game in Chicago would have been a blast seven years ago, it's safe to say Makar has made out pretty well. Now in pursuit of a second shiny ring, Mittelstadt and Vilardi have a thirst for their first.

No question all three players from the Class of 2017 will have a significant say in which team moves on to the next round.

[Makar measures up to all-time greats Avalanche blue-liner's stats put him in same class as Orr, Coffey](#)

By: Mike McIntyre and Ken Wiebe

DENVER —There's no question Cale Makar is breathing some rarefied hockey air while playing here in the Mile High City.

Might the Colorado Avalanche defenceman ultimately be among the best to ever lace up the skates and hit the ice at his position?

We here at Dump & Chase certainly think he's in the conversation, even if his coach tried to stickhandle around the question Friday.

"I mean, comparing players from different eras is always tough," Jared Bednar began.

"There's a bias when you grow up watching certain guys that you know were so great at what they did and then now there's a player or players around the League that are currently breaking records. I think it's hard. Everyone's going to have their own opinion on it but certainly I think Cale's deserving of some of that credit he gets. He's an elite player, early in his career his numbers would say that, the eye test says that."

Indeed it does, Consider that the 25-year-old has 336 points (86 goals, 250 assists) through his first 315 regular-season games, which amounts to 1.07 points-per-game so far in his career.

Bobby Orr, at 1.39 points-per-game, is all the all-time leader in that category. Paul Coffey is second at 1.09. Then there's Makar right behind him.

"I think it's a matter of time before everyone sees what he's capable of and just watching his career unfold," Bednar continued.

"But certainly there's an appreciation here in Denver and I think growing across north America, anyway, if what he's able to do and how he's able to play in a really tough league."

The Winnipeg Jets are getting an up-close look in this first round playoff series, as Makar has five points (one goal, four assists) in the first two games. That gives him 70 points (17 goals 53

assists) in 63 career playoff games, which is 1.11 points-per-game — an even higher clip than the regular-season.

Incredible stuff.

Veteran Avalanche defenceman Jack Johnson was asked to compare Makar versus Orr on Friday.

“I mean, I think it’s like bar talk, right? Comparing people from different eras, or cafeteria-room talk with kids,” he said with a laugh.

“It’s hard to compare people from different eras. Personally I think each generation is bigger, stronger, faster than the last, just like, when I’m done I’ll watch the game in 10-15 years and think, ‘Man, those guys are better than we were.’ It’s just the progression of sports and athleticism, everything. First of all I think it’s an honor for him to have that comparison. I think it’s well deserved. But I think you can make those comparisons until you’re blue in the face.”

Johnson, 37, has skated in 1,187 career regular-season games, so he’s seen a few things. He’s never seen anyone quite like his teammate.

“It’s as good as it gets,” he said.

“I think he’s the best defenceman in the league, the way he skates, he’s bigger than people think, he’s got a mean streak, but his skating and skill and everything separates him from everyone else. He does some things you can’t teach. For the most part, he just skates better than everyone else and with his size and everything, he’s pretty unique.”

AROUND THE GLASS:

How important is home-ice advantage in the Stanley Cup playoffs? It hasn’t been a huge deal so far in the Western Conference, with visiting teams winning five of the first eight games heading into Friday night’s action. It’s been a slightly different story in the East, visitors only winning three of 10 so far.

It will be interesting to see how the Jets-Avalanche series plays out. After splitting in Winnipeg, Games 3 and 4 are at Ball Arena where Colorado went an NHL-best 31-9-1. However, two of those nine losses came against Winnipeg, which won 25 games in enemy territory this season, third-best in the NHL.

Something’s gotta give.

“I think every game is a new challenge, especially in the playoffs. It’s completely different than the regular season,” Jets centre Mark Scheifele said of the recent past.

“But obviously we know we have the confidence in how we’ve played in this building and how we’ve felt. We’re still going up against a good team. Obviously it’s going to be a different animal being in the playoffs. But we’re excited to take that challenge in stride and obviously we know it’s going to be a great atmosphere out there. So we’re looking forward to it.”

There's an old saying that defence wins championships. With 20 goals through the first two games, it would appear the Jets and Avalanche have been all about offence.

Are these two talented teams simply not capable of playing a tight-checking, low-event affair?

"It's hard to predict," said Bednar. "Around the league, you think that the games are going to be hard-fought, low scoring, and I thought both those games played in Winnipeg were hard-fought and high intensity. But good players are making plays. Even though both teams are defending hard and doing the right things structurally, there's still been some breakdowns and guys have been capitalizing on that. So it's hard to predict. Certainly, we have some things that we want to clean up on the defensive side of it, but at the same time we want to keep doing what we're doing on the offensive side and building off that. You just never know; you've gotta play the game the way it's presented in front of you and some nights they take a turn that you weren't expecting."

There's certainly no shortage of firepower in both lineups, which is helping fuel the fireworks.

"The players are dictating what's going on out there, they're all engaged, they're all playing hard," said Jets coach Rick Bowness.

"Listen, it's the most explosive team in the league and they're going to create their chances. We have to make sure we do our best to minimize them and obviously take care of the puck when we get it and create a little bit more."

Still on the subject of famous phrases, "pressure makes diamonds" is a popular one to describe how a little adversity can go a long way. Bowness certainly believes that when it comes to his hockey club, which he believes is a resilient bunch.

"We go back to the first day of training camp. Our players came in with the right frame of mind and they knew they had something to prove, they knew they had to be better. And that's the attitude we played the whole year with," he said Friday.

"When things didn't go our way, we lost a couple in a row, we bounced back pretty quickly because of that resiliency and because of that commitment. So the team's far more committed for 82 games, playing the right way, how we want to play, than we were last year. Far more committed to that. And it showed, so that when we got into a couple of bad spells we came out of it, a little quicker than normal. And sometimes you come out of it but you're still not playing well. But we always came out of those bad spells playing well. So that goes back to the commitment the players have had from Day 1."

Winnipeg Sun

[Avs dismantle Jets in a 6-2 Game 3 thumping to take 2-1 series lead](#)

By Scott Billeck

The stunned look on the faces of the Winnipeg Jets said it all.

Arguably, the biggest fight they showed came with 30 seconds left in regulation, then immediately after the final whistle blew.

By then, the game was over. The Colorado Avalanche had earned themselves a 2-1 lead in the best-of-series series on the back of a 6-2 win in Game 3 on Friday night at Ball Arena.

What Winnipeg couldn't do with the puck on their stick, they tried to do with the knuckles on their hand, anything to score a moral victory in a game they were dismantled.

The Jets held a 2-1 lead for the second straight game, with second-period goals by Tyler Toffoli and a power-play marker by Josh Morrissey wiping out Zach Parise's second of the series in the first.

And for the second straight game, they blew it.

A string of three goals in a six-minute span in the third period ended any hopes of the Jets coming out on top on Friday.

A penalty parade started with Mason Appleton's offensive-zone tripping call, where Nathan MacKinnon soon tied the game 2-2.

Then Gabriel Vilardi cut Avs blue-liner Devon Toews badly with a high stick, and Valeri Nichushkin potted the go-ahead goal and game-winner.

David Gustafsson and Neal Pionk piled on more PIMs, with the latter's leading to Ross Colton's 5-2 goal just a second after the delay-of-game call expired.

When it was all tallied up, the Jets took 10 minutes worth of penalties in the first 10:35 of the third, repeatedly shooting themselves in the foot.

Connor Hellebuyck played brilliantly through the first 40 minutes, making 27 saves. But as the Jets crumbled before him, his ability to bear the brunt did so, too.

Artturi Lehkonen finished off an odd-man rush after Dylan DeMelo tripped himself up to make it 4-2. Before that, Mark Scheifele was far too casual with the puck, resulting in the giveaway that started it all, and his backcheck was just as pedestrian.

Ross Colton would add insult to injury on a backdoor tap-in just as Neal Pionk's delay of game call for putting the puck over the glass expired.

That was that, with Toews getting some revenge for the teeth he was missing, scoring shorthanded into the empty net just after Hellebuyck vacated it with 3:35 to go.

To make matters worse for Winnipeg, Brenden Dillon was cut badly in the scrum after the game ended. Replays seemed to show an ugly cut to his left hand as he was tussling on the ice with Avs forward Brandon Duhaime.

The linesman trying to break up the wrestling match could clearly be seen telling Duhaime to let go of Dillon, who raced to the dressing room.

Blood was all over the ice and on the back of Duhaime's jersey.

After the game, head coach Rick Bowness said he had no update on Dillon, only saying he was still being checked out.

Game 4 of the series goes Sunday afternoon in Denver, with a 1:30 p.m. CT puck drop.

[SNAPSHOTS: 'Scary situation' as Jets' Dillon cut by skate; Jets have no answers for Colorado's Avalanche of offence; Parise, Lehtonen are Jets killers](#)

By Ted Wyman

For the second straight year, the Winnipeg Jets have had a player leave the ice pouring blood after getting cut by a skate blade during a playoff game.

Jets players and staff were clearly concerned after defenceman Brenden Dillon was cut on the left hand during a scuffle with Brandon Duhaime of the Colorado Avalanche at the end of Friday night's post-season game in Denver.

Dillon skated off frantically after realizing he had been cut and left a large pool of blood on the ice surface. More blood was apparent on Duhaime's sweater as well.

Jets coach Rick Bowness did not provide an update on his condition after the game, but reports indicated defenceman Josh Morrissey seemed shaken.

"Scary, scary situation there," Morrissey said. "I don't really have anything to say, but we're all really concerned for him and just hoping everything's OK."

Last season, Jets winger Morgan Barron suffered a deep cut in a playoff game in Las Vegas. He was cut on the side of his face by a skate blade for 75 stitches but actually returned to that game after getting some extensive repairs.

This situation looked bad for Dillon, a veteran defenceman who is a popular leader in the locker room and is one of the Jets' most hard-nosed players. He's old school, a nice man off the ice and a beast on it, and the Jets will miss him dearly if he can't continue in the series.

"He's still being examined," Jets coach Rick Bowness told reporters in Denver after the game. "I'll give you an update when I know more information."

Bowness admitted it was distressing for Dillon's teammates.

"Yeah, when you see the blood," he said.

Even the Avalanche players were showing concern for Dillon. Once people realized he was cut, the scuffle broke up immediately.

"You just hope that everyone's OK," Avalanche centre Ross Colton told reporters. "I mean, there was a lot of blood there. So I don't know. Obviously, it's a battle out there. He's a warrior so I mean, hopefully, he's OK for the next game."

Dillon was injured when the Jets and Avalanche got into a meaningless dust-up after the game, which was won 6-2 by Colorado. The Avalanche now have a 2-1 lead in the best-of-seven.

JETS SECOND BEST AGAIN

It's a fact that the Jets have held leads for a decent amount of time in every game of this series and they even managed to win once.

But at no point in this series have the Jets looked like the better team.

The Jets have been outshot badly, have been a distant second in terms of possession, and have generally been steamrolled by the high-powered Avalanche.

Things looked promising in Friday's loss in Game 3, just as they did midway through Game 2. The Jets led 2-1 going into the third period and then, just as they did in Game 2 on Tuesday, handed all the momentum over to Colorado.

Entering the period protecting a one-goal lead, the Jets took 10 minutes in penalties in the first 10:36 of the third and allowed two power-play goals that completely broke their backs.

They couldn't kill penalties, allowed five goals in the third period, and were just a complete mess down the stretch.

The Avalanche have simply been way better than the Jets — on offence, on defence, on special teams and even in goal, where Vezina Trophy front-runner Connor Hellebuyck now has allowed 15 goals through three games — and there's been no indication that it's going to change as the series goes on.

The Jets have never been able to establish the game that made them the stingiest defensive team in the NHL this season. Meanwhile, Colorado has imposed its will and has all the momentum, with Game 4 slated for Sunday afternoon at Ball Arena.

While Hellebuyck has been good early in games, giving the Jets a chance to stay close, he's been outplayed by Alexandar Georgiev in the last two games, and it's simply not good enough. His save percentage in the series is a woeful .871.

It seems crazy to think the Jets could sit their Vezina-frontrunner goaltender in favour of Laurent Brossoit, and we don't think it will happen, but this team really needs a spark soon or this season is going to be over in a hurry.

Some observations from Colorado's 6-2 win in Game 3:

— The shots were 40-24 for the Avalanche. The shot attempts were 74-59. For the series, the shots are now 118-77. For the series, the shot attempts are now 233-167. If the eye test isn't enough for you to know the Jets are getting badly outplayed, the analytics will surely tell you.

— If there's one thing hockey doesn't need, it's scums like the one at the end of Friday's game. Yes, the players wanted to burn off some frustrations, particularly those on the Jets side, but when a player like Dillon gets hurt, it simply illustrates how needless those scuffles really are.

— The minute of silence observed by broadcasters John Barlett and Garry Galley to honour the late Bob Cole was a nice touch. The game was played without commentary for the first minute, a tribute that was fitting for a legend of the broadcasting industry and the game of hockey.

— Zach Parise scored against the Jets for the second straight game. The 39-year-old has played six career playoff games against the Jets and has scored five goals. The first three came in 2018 when he was with the Minnesota Wild.

— As we pointed out before, the Jets took five penalties in the first 10 minutes of the third period. The first was a tripping call on Mason Appleton, which the Jets didn't like as Appleton was trying to shoot the puck and wound up tripping Miles Wood on the follow-through. The Avs tied the game at 2-2 as Nathan MacKinnon scored on the ensuing power play. Then Gabe Vilardi high stuck Devon Toews and was given a four-minute penalty, on which Val Nichushkin scored the game-winning goal. At the same time, it appeared Kyle Connor the Jets was tripped, which could have mitigated at least half the double-minor. No matter what, the Jets simply have to be more aware of their sticks, especially when they had a chance to clamp down and protect a one-goal lead in the third.

— Mark Scheifele turned the puck over at the Colorado blue-line, Dylan DeMelo stumbled as the Avalanche made it a 2-on-1 and another Jets killer — Artturi Lehkonen — scored his third of the series. Lehkonen now has five goals in six career playoff games against the Jets, with the first two coming while he was with the Montreal Canadiens in 2021.

[BILLECK: Penalty-fest shot down Jets' chances in Game 3](#)

By Scott Billeck

Few things are as foolish in the NHL as giving Colorado's power play a chance to cook.

On Friday, the Avalanche served up a gourmet menu.

Through 40 minutes at Ball Arena, Game 3 between the Winnipeg Jets and Avs was a pretty even affair, and the visitors held the advantage on the scoreboard.

At 5-on-5, where most of the game was played through the first two periods, the Avs held a slight lead in attempts at 46-39, including a 28-19 lead on the shot clock, but the Jets had the better scoring chances (23-18), high-danger attempts (11-4), and, crucially, a 2-1 lead where it really counts.

So, how did it all go so wrong?

Winnipeg's demise began with Mason Appleton's tripping call in the offensive zone, and only got worse just over a minute later with Gabriel Vilardi's high-sticking double-minor early in the third period. It ended with the Jets taking 10 minutes worth of penalties in the first 10:35 of that final frame.

By 12:35, Colorado had reversed the 2-1 deficit into a 5-2 lead, scoring twice on the power play and one more just a second after Neal Pionk's delay of game penalty for firing the puck over the glass expired.

The game was effectively over at that point, the Avs winning 6-2 after rubbing salt in the wound with a shorthanded empty-netter from their own end.

“We were just hoping to not give them those chances,” Jets defenceman Josh Morrissey said. “That’s really the story of the third. First 10 minutes, for sure. We gave them a lot of time on the powerplay and they’ve got a bunch of elite players on that unit and they capitalized.

“So we got to do a better job of trying to stay out of the box.”

The Avs hit the afterburners to open the period, forcing their tremendous speed and aggressiveness on Winnipeg.

Appleton’s and David Gustaffson’s respective tripping calls in the offensive zone had little to do with speed. Vilardi’s careless stick had nothing to do with it at all. And the same was true with Pionk’s delay-of-game call.

That’s four unforced errors while trying to hold a lead.

“If we can win the faceoff and get it down the ice, then be a little more aggressive up ice so they are not getting in,” Jets coach Rick Bowness said of stopping Colorado’s power play. “And then on their other entries, be more aggressive. Once they get control of it, we’ve gotta protect the seams better and gotta protect that down and in they found a couple of times. Then it’s a matter of tightening up, cutting that ice in half. We can do a better job of that.”

They say the four-letter word for fecal matter flows downhill. The third period on Friday night was proof-positive of that.

Colorado is already a big challenge when playing at even strength. Sending out four players to defend five of theirs only drains the batteries faster.

Connor Hellebuyck played brilliantly through the first 40 minutes, turning aside 27 of the 28 shots he faced.

But as the foundation that got Winnipeg a lead began to crumble beneath, Hellebuyck could do little to stop the avalanche that had already trampled over those in front of him.

Toss in a bad giveaway by Mark Scheifele, and a worse backcheck followed, and that was all she wrote.

The Jets now have the unenviable task of trying to put that behind them and rebound in Game 4 on Sunday afternoon.

It’s not just the power play the Jets need to avoid.

Puck management, a problem that’s plagued this team all season, didn’t suddenly disappear on Friday.

“As soon as we take a shot and there’s a loose puck, they’re getting it and they’re gone,” Bowness said.

And then there’s a team that simply needs to shoot more.

Tyler Toffoli’s goal in the second period, which tied the game 1-1, exploited Colorado’s weakness — its goaltending.

Alexandar Georgiev had a solid Game 2, and he won the duel on Friday as well. But it still stands to reason that if the Jets put more pucks on net, from anywhere and everywhere, they'd score more goals, combined with better offensive zone puck management.

"When we're playing in their zone, we still pass up too many shooting opportunities for sure," Bowness said.

"We've got to stop looking for that extra play and just do what they do — throw it at the net.

"Even when we did that, they were getting the retrievals and coming out. We've got to be careful watching that, too, because that's where they're so strong off the rush. We can't waste shots. We've got to make sure they're on a good chance. But there were times when we had two forwards swinging in behind the net, looking for those pucks, and that's why they're getting those odd-mans.

"Listen, we can play better than that. There were parts of the game, the discipline, staying out of the box is going to be a huge factor for us."

Indeed, it may be Winnipeg's only chance to survive the series.

[GOALTENDER REPORT: Hellebuyck can't hold off Avalanche surge; Georgiev getting job done](#)

By Ted Wyman

The numbers are truly awful for Winnipeg Jets goalie Connor Hellebuyck, even though he has shown flashes of his brilliance at times.

The favourite to win the Vezina Trophy this season allowed another five goals during Friday's Game 3 loss to the Avs and has now given up 15 in the series.

Just as was the case in Game 2 on Tuesday, Hellebuyck stopped almost everything that came his way in the first half of the game and then simply couldn't hold off the onslaught in the later going.

He now has a 5.04 goals against average and a .871 save percentage in the series and he's being outplayed by much-maligned Colorado goaltender Alexandar Georgiev as the Jets have fallen behind 2-1 in the best-of-seven.

Hellebuyck has now allowed 32 goals in his last seven playoff starts (4.57 GAA), and has only once had a save percentage over .900 in his last eight post-season games.

As great as he has been in the regular season, winning the Vezina in 2020, being a finalist in 2022, and quite likely winning it again this year, Hellebuyck has simply not been very good in the playoffs.

Over the last five years, he has rarely been the best goalie on the ice in the playoffs.

He made some great saves on Friday, but not enough of them.

Meanwhile, at the other end, Georgiev gave up one soft goal to Tyler Toffoli of the Jets, but then stopped Toffoli on a breakaway not long after.

He has looked calm and settled, despite having one of the worst save percentages in the NHL (.897 through 63 games) during the regular season.

Since giving up seven goals on 23 shots in Game 1 of the series, he has a 2.00 GAA and a .925 save percentage.

Those are winning numbers.

Hellebuyck's are not.

For a time on Friday, it looked like Hellebuyck just might help the Jets steal a game. They were up 2-1 and he stopped 27 of 28 shots that came his way in the first two periods.

In the third, when the Jets were trying to kill penalty after penalty and needed him most, Hellebuyck allowed four goals on 11 shots.

At some point, he's going to have to steal a game for the Jets, or at very least be the best goalie on the ice, for them to have any chance of getting back in this series.

[PLAYER SPOTLIGHT: Morrissey bringing it even as Jets struggle to defend Avalanche](#)

By Ted Wyman

Just like everyone else on the Winnipeg Jets, Josh Morrissey must be feeling seasick as the Colorado Avalanche come at him in wave after wave.

But the smooth-skating defenceman would never show it, and he continued to play his steady game in the face of growing adversity.

On the whole, the Jets have been outplayed by the Avs throughout their best-of-seven, first-round playoff series and that's why they find themselves trailing 2-1.

A 6-2 loss by the Jets Friday night at Ball Arena was another indicator that the Avalanche are imposing their will and have all the momentum on their side.

And yet, Morrissey still looks and sounds calm, and he has been one of Winnipeg's better and most consistent players so far in the series.

He scored his second goal of the series on Friday, getting a point shot past Colorado goalie Alexandar Georgiev on a second-period power play, and finished the game with both a positive plus-minus (plus-1) and a positive Corsi (55.81%).

The Avalanche scored six goals, three at five-on-five, two on the power play and one when the Jets had an empty net, and Morrissey wasn't on the ice for any of them.

He was on the ice for both Jets goals, including a second-period marker by Tyler Toffoli that tied the game at 1-1. He had five shot attempts in the game, two shots on goal and was credited with three hits.

So far in the series, Morrissey has two goals and an assist, a minus-1 rating and a Corsi (48.21%). That's not a particularly good number but it's the best on the team, other than defenceman Nate Schmidt, who has only played one game.

All in all, Morrissey gets a B grade for his performance in Friday's game.