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Bowness honoured to have coached Jets again
Bowness led the Jets to a 98-57-9 record during his two seasons as the head coach

By Jamie Thomas

WINNIPEG – Of all the things that were said at Rick Bowness' retirement news conference on Monday, the Moncton native hit a home run with this.

"I couldn't have picked a better place to come back to and finish my career."

Bowness retired from his playing days in 1984 to begin his career as a full-time coach as an assistant with the Winnipeg Jets at the age of 28 and retired as the Jets bench boss at age 69.

In total, Bowness served as a coach for eight different franchises and was behind the bench for 17 playoff appearances, including trips to the final as an associate coach with the Vancouver Canucks in 2011, as an assistant with the Tampa Bay Lightning in 2015, and as Dallas Stars head coach in 2020. He is one of only three head coaches (along with Scotty Bowman and Pat Quinn) to serve behind the bench in five different decades. His 2,726 games as an NHL coach are the most by anyone in league history.

"We've got great players. I've been fortunate to have a great coaching staff, and all the accolades with the All-Star game and the nomination, man, it's the players and it's the coaches that got me there. And like I said a couple times, how many coaches can take the month of November off and still be where we are. [[laughs]]," said Bowness.

"The coaches and the players deserve all the credit for that. It's been my pleasure to come back. It's been a real honour for me to coach the Winnipeg Jets again."

The announcement comes less than a week after the Jets saw their season end in five games at the hands of the Colorado Avalanche in the opening round of the Stanley Cup Playoffs. Bowness said he knew that he was done when he was walking off the ice at Canada Life Centre last Tuesday.

"I didn't like — me — I didn't like the way our team played, which is on me. So, I was unhappy with myself, unhappy that we had lost, and that bothered me. But as I was standing there and I was looking around, it dawned on me," said Bowness.

"Coaches have always told me, — and I'm talking to the older coaches, older than me — and they've always said, 'you'll know when it's time.' And when I was looking around, and just, I wasn't happy with the job I had done, and it just hit me then, 'it's time.'"

Bowness told his coaching staff his plans immediately after Game 5.

"Yeah, obviously it was right after the game, and he just got back from talking to the media and kind of caught us all off-guard a little bit. Him and I have talked a lot over the course of the season, and I knew the health thing was a big part of his decision. But at the end of the day, it was still hard to hear," said associate coach Scott Arniel.

“And I might have been the one to say, 'Sleep on it a little bit, let's talk maybe a little bit later on down the road here.' We talked on I think it was Thursday again, and then he was still adamant that he'd had enough. And he's going out on his terms and obviously a fantastic career.”

Bowness didn't get to talk to every player on the Jets roster but did speak with the leadership group, Adam Lowry, Mark Scheifele, Josh Morrissey and Connor Hellebuyck. He also saw Vladislav Namestnikov and told him the news. Lowry, Namestnikov and new father Mason Appleton attended the news conference this afternoon. Lowry talked about how Bowness has left the organization in a good place.

“He did such a good job of making everyone like a big part of the team whether they played five minutes, whether they're in and out of the lineup or whether they're on the first line, first power play. I think he talks about trying to uplift his assistant coaches, but he empowers everyone in our room. He talked about wanting to have an impact on our lives and he's a tremendous role model,” said Lowry.

“Looking at when he had to step away to take care of Judy and the emotion, you can see the love he has for her. The amount of things he was willing to sacrifice to come to Winnipeg, to come to a spot where the rumblings were that we weren't in that great of a spot, right? So. A tremendous human being. It's a group that I don't think we're as far off as the results may say. I think Rick played a huge part in it.”

Cheveldayoff also discussed the impact that Bowness had on him.

“I think I have a greater appreciation for the National Hockey League and what it means to be in the National Hockey League each and every day from being around Rick and how he carried himself and what he talked about and the presence that he brings,” said Cheveldayoff.

“To be able to watch him interact with the players, to see how he communicated with the players, to see how he would deliver hard news to players that wasn't something that wasn't going to be popular and just his compassion and his directness, one thing that Bones always was and is he's been authentic.”

The Jets were coming off a season in which they missed the playoffs and in came Bowness before the 2022-23 campaign. In two years, he helped turn the team around defensively as shown by their franchise record of going 35 consecutive games allowing three goals or fewer (Nov. 4/23-Jan. 20/24). During that stretch, they also set a club record with a 14-game run without allowing more than two goals (Dec. 20/23- Jan. 20/24). Winnipeg didn't end up with a Stanley Cup championship, but the 69-year-old has changed the culture and has the team on the right path.

“Then you see the team game that I talk an awful lot about when it's on how good it looked, and then the players felt good about that team game and this is how we're going to win, and we came up short of all of our objectives and the players are just as disappointed as all of us are. And they are. They're the ones that have to go out there every night and work and compete, take hits, block shots,” said Bowness.

“They're the ones paying the price, so they're disappointed, as well. But there's a growth in that. You take a positive out of that that 'OK, we're better than this.' Now last year at the end of the year, 'Oh my God, we've got to straighten out some more things.' And they did by the time

training camp came along. This summer, they'll grow again. They will, and they'll be a better team for it next year."

Canadian Press

Winnipeg Jets Head Coach Rick Bowness to Retire

Winnipeg Jets head coach Rick Bowness has announced he's retiring after 38 seasons in the NHL.

Bowness, 69, coached the Jets for two seasons and led the team to a 98-57-9 record during his tenure, including two Stanley Cup Playoffs appearances.

Bowness served as a coach for eight different franchises and was behind the bench for 17 playoff appearances, including trips to the finals as an associate coach with the Vancouver Canucks in 2011, as an assistant with the Tampa Bay Lightning in 2015, and as Dallas Stars head coach in 2020.

Bowness was named a finalist for the Jack Adams Award, recognizing the top head coach in the NHL.

"Coaches have always told me ... they've always said you'll know it's time," Bowness said on Monday. "It just hit me then: It's time."

He served as a coach for eight different franchises and was behind the bench for 17 playoff appearances, including trips to the Stanley Cup Finals as an associate coach with the Vancouver Canucks in 2011, as an assistant with the Tampa Bay Lightning in 2015, and as head coach of the Dallas Stars in 2020.

"When I leave, I just want to be remembered," Bowness told reporters at a news conference in Winnipeg, choking back tears. "I just love the game, and I respected the game. I love this league. I respect the league."

Health issues of his own and his wife, Judy, played a role in his decision, which went beyond disappointment over losing to Colorado in five games. After all, Bowness did a good enough job the rest of the time to be a finalist for the Jack Adams Award as coach of the year for the first time for leading the Jets to a franchise-record 52 wins and a second consecutive postseason appearance in as many seasons on the job.

Bowness is one of only three head coaches — along with Scotty Bowman and Pat Quinn — to serve behind the bench in five different decades. His 2,726 games as an NHL coach are the most by anyone in league history.

NHL.com

Bowness built NHL success, longevity on being 'authentic'* *Jack Adams Award finalist retires from Jets after 40 years coaching in League

By Tim Campbell / Special to NHL.com

WINNIPEG -- Rick Bowness the hockey lifer unlocked the key to longevity in the NHL a long time ago.

"I take time to get to know people, the players, then figure out the best way to go around dealing with them," the 69-year-old from Moncton, New Brunswick, said Monday after he told the Winnipeg Jets that he is retiring from coaching after 40 seasons in the League.

"The bottom line is that they know I care about them as people. The players I coached always knew I cared about them."

Bowness combined that abundance of empathy with a heart-on-his-sleeve approach to every situation of every day.

On Aug. 18, 2020, a couple of hours before Bowness would coach the Dallas Stars in Game 5 of the Western Conference First Round against the Calgary Flames in the bubble at Rogers Place in Edmonton, arena production staff were checking their in-game scoreboard videos.

A tribute to Dale Hawerchuk, who died earlier that day after a battle with stomach cancer, appeared on the screen while Bowness was collecting his thoughts on the bench in the empty arena.

Seeing the screen sparked deep emotion and the coach wept openly for his former Jets teammate (1981-82), having also coached Hawerchuk during his first NHL coaching stint when he was promoted from his assistant's role in February 1989 to replace Dan Maloney.

At a press conference Monday, Jets general manager Kevin Cheveldayoff praised Bowness for his work of the past two seasons, noting Bowness's selection as coach for the Central Division at the 2024 Honda (U.S.)/Rogers (Canada) NHL All-Star Game and being named one of three finalists for the Jack Adams Award as coach of the year, along with Rick Tocchet of the Vancouver Canucks and Andrew Brunette of the Nashville Predators.

The GM used the word "authentic" to describe Bowness.

It was another of Bowness's positive effects, having accepted what could politely be called a less-than-desirable assignment when he was hired July 3, 2022.

The Jets (39-32-11, sixth in the Central Division) missed the playoffs in 2021-22 and were plagued with inconsistency, chemistry and culture issues.

Bowness guided them back to the playoffs in 2022-23 (46-33-3, second wild card in the Western Conference) and then to an even better finish this season (52-24-6, second in the Central).

This season, Winnipeg's 198 goals against were fewest in the NHL (tied with the Florida Panthers) and its 110 points were tied for fourth-best with the Panthers, behind the New York Rangers (114), Dallas Stars (113) and Carolina Hurricanes (111).

Over his 14 seasons as an NHL coach, Bowness was 310-408-37 with 48 ties in 803 games with the original Jets, Boston Bruins, Ottawa Senators, New York Islanders, Phoenix Coyotes, Dallas Stars and current Jets.

He also was on the staff of the Coyotes, Islanders, Jets, Tampa Bay Lightning, Stars and Canucks at times from 1984-2019.

His first coaching appointment, with the Jets in 1988-89, and his job as coach of the expansion Senators from 1992-96 were among his other difficult positions, but those only enhanced his survival skills.

“Those Ottawa years were tough,” he said. “It was a tough situation in Winnipeg when they fired Dan Maloney. That was a mess. You just come in and do the best you can. Be honest with people and let them know you care. All you can do is the best you can, and I think players respected that.”

When that interaction wasn't available to him during the lockout that delayed the start of the 2012-13 season, the then-associate coach of the Canucks (his stint there was from 2006-13) was more than out of sorts.

During a round of golf -- another of his passions -- during that shutdown, it wasn't slow play or scruffy shots that caused his frustrations to boil over, it was being away from hockey.

“I need to be at work,” he bellowed to his playing partner, one of the strangest things ever said on a golf course.

But that's Bowness, looking for the next road to progress.

“I love the game, respect the game, love the League,” he said Monday. “You just hope you have an impact on the players' lives.”

It's pretty obvious that's been accomplished. Monday, after the announcement that he will retire, the relationships of his past started lighting up his phone.

Sami Salo, the former Canucks defenseman (2002-12), was among the first. Another was former Jets, Bruins and Lightning defenseman Matt Hervey, whom Bowness also coached in Moncton of the American Hockey League, as well as former Red Wings teammate Nick Libett (1977-78).

“Those are the things that will matter to me,” Bowness said. “Honestly, because I'm older, that'll be more important than awards and trophies. This game brings you life-long friendships.”

When NHL.com was reporting on Bowness' work with the Stars after he replaced Jim Montgomery midseason in 2019-20, going to the Stanley Cup Final before losing in six games to the Lightning, the depth of positive commentary from around the League was remarkable.

One that still sticks out was from Jets assistant GM Craig Heisinger, once Bowness' “teammate” but in 2020, a rival.

Heisinger said Bowness thrived over his career because of a consistent ability to make people around him better.

“And people skills,” Heisinger said. “Hard work and people skills, those get you everywhere in the real world. That, and he was never, ever offended by being an assistant coach.”

True to form, Bowness, the hockey lifer, said Monday he'll be retiring, not disconnecting.

"I'll be watching. I have a phone. I'm retired, not dead," he said.

[Bowness retires from NHL after 40 years of coaching](#) [69-year-old named Jack Adams Award finalist for 1st time after guiding Jets to 2nd in Central Division](#)

By NHL.com

Rick Bowness retired from the NHL on Monday after 40 years of coaching.

The 69-year-old leaves after guiding the Winnipeg Jets (52-24-6) to a second-place finish in the Central Division, improving by 15 points from last season (95 to 110) and being named a first-time finalist for the Jack Adams Award, given to the NHL coach of the year, with Andrew Brunette (Nashville Predators) and Rick Tocchet (Vancouver Canucks). His final game was a 6-3 loss to the Colorado Avalanche at Canada Life Centre in Game 5 of the Western Conference First Round on April 30 that eliminated the Jets from the Stanley Cup Playoffs.

"As I was standing there and as I was looking around [after Game 5], it dawned on me," Bowness said. "Coaches have always told me, and I'm talking the older coaches -- older than me -- and they've always said, 'You'll know [when] it's time. And when I was looking around ... I wasn't happy with the job I had done. It just hit me then, like, 'It's time.'

"... I told the coaches an hour later that I'm done, I'm finished, I'm going to retire. They're all looking at me, 'You sure? You want to take some time on this?' But I knew. I knew in my heart it was time."

Bowness also coached the original Jets, Boston Bruins, Ottawa Senators, New York Islanders, Phoenix Coyotes and Dallas Stars. His coaching career began as a Jets assistant in 1984-85 after playing 173 NHL games as a forward for the Atlanta Flames, St. Louis Blues and Jets. He went to the Stanley Cup Final as an associate coach with the Canucks in 2011, a Tampa Bay Lightning assistant in 2015 and Stars coach in 2020. His 2,726 games as head coach, associate or assistant are the most in NHL history, and he's one of three coaches (Scotty Bowman and Pat Quinn) to work in five different decades and the last active coach to guide an NHL team in the 1980s.

"Lifetime in hockey, and obviously well respected by all of the coaching peers but also the players he's had an effect on over their careers, especially the young defensemen in the League," Stars coach Pete DeBoer said Monday. "It's a who's-who list of the last 20 years, so great career and feel fortunate to have coached against him and just want him to enjoy his retirement and congratulate him on a great run."

DeBoer replaced Bowness as Dallas coach before last season and led them to the Western Conference Final. This season, the Stars have advanced to the second round against the Colorado Avalanche after defeating the Vegas Golden Knights in Game 7 of the Western Conference First Round on Sunday.

"Well, his fingerprints are on it for sure," DeBoer said. "His defensive detail, he kind of ingrained that in this group's DNA, and we've definitely been the beneficiary of that."

In 802 NHL games as a head coach, Bowness is 309-408-37 with 48 ties.

Bowness would be the first coach in Jets/Atlanta Thrashers history to win the Jack Adams Award. He missed four games from March 19-24 because of a minor medical procedure, and 11 while he was away from Oct. 23-Nov. 22 after his wife, Judy, suffered a seizure Oct. 22. The Jets' 52 wins tied a franchise record set in 2017-18, and their 110 points were second-most. Goalies Connor Hellebuyck, a Vezina Trophy finalist, and Laurent Brossoit won the William M. Jennings trophy for allowing an NHL-low 199 goals, including the shootout.

Bowness returned to Winnipeg, replacing current Florida Panthers coach Paul Maurice, for the 2022-23 season after coaching the Stars the previous three. He was 8-17 with three ties in 28 games of his first coaching tenure with the original Jets in 1998-89, seven seasons before the franchise relocated to Phoenix.

"That's a guy you want to talk hockey with because he's got a perspective and experience from players, different leagues, assistant coach -- I mean, just everything," Maurice said. "A lifetime. I'm happy that he has the rare opportunity as a coach to call your shot. He did a marvelous, marvelous job with that team over the last two years. They played exceptional. I hope he's appreciated for the work he did there. I know the people there appreciate him, but he did a really strong job."

Bowness' retirement leaves the Jets as one of three teams (San Jose Sharks, Seattle Kraken) without a full-time coach. Drew Bannister (Blues), Jacques Martin (Senators), Jim Hiller (Los Angeles Kings) and Travis Green (New Jersey Devils) are interim coaches.

"Working with him, the career is second to the person that he really is and what he's brought to the game," Winnipeg general manager Kevin Cheveldayoff said.

Global Winnipeg

ANALYSIS: Tough decisions for Jets management with Bowness retirement/early playoff exit

By Kelly Moore Global News

ANALYSIS: Tough decisions for Jets management with Bowness retirement/early playoff exit - [imageView image in full screen](#)
Change is inevitable on a year-to-year basis for any National Hockey League franchise.

But the combination of Rick Bowness' retirement, and another quick exit from the playoffs leaves Winnipeg Jets GM Kevin Cheveldayoff and his management team at an important crossroads this off season.

Obviously the first order of business will be behind the bench.

With Bones making his decision official, does turning the reins over to Associate Coach Scott Aniel make better sense than considering some of the names on a list of available candidates outside the organization?

The daily email you need for Winnipeg's top news stories.
For the Jets' half-dozen pending unrestricted free agents, I'd argue Dylan DeMelo and Sean Monahan should be priority retentions.

DeMelo is one half of the top D pairing. He embodies everything True North stands for.

A significant investment was made to acquire Monahan. And if an injection of youth becomes part of the plan now, or further down the road, the veteran centre is a proven commodity in mentoring younger players.

Term will be key. Anything beyond a four-year to five-year commitment for either player presents the risk of contracts not aging well from the idea of re-signing players for what they can provide presently and for the future.

And in looking ahead, the time is nigh to give the likes of Ville Heinola and Logan Stanley the opportunity to be everyday players or parlay them into assets.

The latter might also clear a path of strong consideration for keeping heart-and-soul defenceman Brenden Dillon in the fold.

Cheveldayoff has said, repeatedly, nothing is off the table, so there is the potential for a buyout to clear cap space.

Nikolaj Ehlers is among several players on an expiring contract when the puck drops in the fall. Does that cloud his future in Winnipeg as others have already reported?

For all of Ehlers' highlight-reel exploits in the regular season, the majority of his playoff video has wound up on the cutting room floor. But he hasn't been alone — far from it.

Otherwise, the Jets wouldn't be in the position they find themselves in today.

[ANALYSIS: Retiring coach Rick Bowness left indelible mark on the game of hockey](#)

By Paul Edmonds CJOB

It was fitting — and a little ironic — that on a day when the ice was being removed from Canada Life Centre for the season, Rick Bowness removed himself from the game for good.

After a return to Winnipeg and after two years as the Jets head coach in their new era, the 69-year-old officially retired from hockey on Monday, citing what he called “life changing moments.” Those moments included health issues: those of his own with COVID and those of his wife, Judy, who suffering a seizure last fall.

The decision, he said, was made as he was walking off the ice following the Jets' elimination from the Stanley Cup playoffs last Tuesday, which made Monday's timely announcement more appropriate in order to avoid speculation about his future with the team.

For the man everyone in the game calls “Bones,” it was a sterling career, one that spanned five decades, over 2,700 games, and stints in nine NHL cities, including Winnipeg twice, thus completing his coaching circle that began with the Jets in 1984.

As an assistant, associate and head coach, Bowness evolved his skills through years, experiencing the scrappy '70s, the high scoring '80s, the dead-puck '90s, and the high tempo 2000s. Through it all, his best qualities like honesty, accountability and keen communication never wavered as a lifer in the game. As he said himself, "hockey is my life; it's all I know."

By his own admission, when he was hired by the Jets two summers ago, it was to accomplish three items: improve the team's defence, get the club back to the playoffs and — of primary focus — improve the team's culture. He leaves with all three boxes checked — in black felt, no less.

That, undoubtedly, will be his legacy as the Jets' head coach in this city.

And so, it is with creative licence that we alter an old adage to conclude: Rick Bowness might have removed himself from the game on Monday, but the game will never remove itself from Rick Bowness.

Winnipeg Sun

FRIESEN: Jets' Bowness a straight shooter to the end

By Paul Friesen

In two short years with the Winnipeg Jets, Rick Bowness may have produced as many interesting sound bites as he did victories.

His straightforward, honest approach was short on BS and typical hockey-speak.

Sometimes it rubbed his players the wrong way, like his use of the word "disgusted" following their playoff exit a year ago.

But it was rarely dull, and his Monday farewell news conference provided more of the same, a sharp contrast to the more couched approach of the man sitting next to him, Jets GM Kevin Cheveldayoff.

As Bowness holsters his proverbial pistols and rides off into the sunset, we thought we'd highlight a few of the well-aimed words we didn't get to on Monday.

Too blunt for the times?

Near the end of the half-hour session, I asked the outgoing head coach if he ever thinks he's too honest, too blunt, for today's player.

His response: he had to do things his way.

"You've got to be true to yourself," Bowness said. "My goal was never to be the best coach in the league. My goal was to be the best coach I could be, and to be that you've got to be honest with yourself. If they don't like hearing it, I'm going to deal with it.

"You know how hard it is to win a Stanley Cup? You've got to have a thick skin. You've got to be mentally tough to get there."

Bowness had touched on a similar theme minutes earlier, when asked about the biggest difference between coaching now and when he first got behind the bench in the 1980s.

He mentioned how many young players are “force-fed” into the NHL today compared to then, how much more coaching they need.

And yes, how much thinner their skins are.

“Your tone is just about as important as the words you use today,” he said. “They’re not as thick-skinned and you’ve got to be patient with them, which is fine. So there’s a huge difference between how I coached in the ‘80s.

“But you can’t be afraid to have those conversations and you’ve just got to get things on the table and you work from that.”

Jets had a bad rep

Asked what he’s most proud of, Bowness once again laid bare the dysfunction that existed when he took over the Jets.

“The issues that were going on here before we got here had to be addressed,” he said. “I didn’t like the things that people were talking about the Winnipeg Jets. That bothered me even though I wasn’t even working here. So we did have to change the culture. You have to take some very unpopular strides.

“The other things don’t fall into place until you get the culture all straightened out. Once that’s in place and the players are all in and they’re in there every day and you can see the camaraderie, you know we’ve made progress there.”

That progress took a step back in that flurry of backlash over his comments at the end of Year 1.

“Oh my God, we’ve got to straighten out some more things,” the coach recalled. “And they did by the time training camp came along. This summer, they’ll grow again. And they’ll be a better team for it next year.”

Giving up some control

Here’s Bowness on why he empowers his assistant coaches the way he does, having them run drills or, in the case of associate coach Scott Arniel, deal with the media some days.

“Listen, I was an assistant coach for a long time and I always wanted to feel valuable. I wanted to feel like my opinion mattered. I always wanted to run the drills and I always wanted to feel part of it. There’s been head coaches in this league and they do every meeting and every practice, they do everything.

“I couldn’t work for a guy like that. There was no way I would ever coach like that.”

That said, he acknowledges when coaches disagree, there’s only one boss.

“Then the head coach ultimately has to make that final call. But you have to get their opinion.”

Gone fishin’?

We'll leave you with Bowness's reply to a question about how much fishing he'll do in retirement.

"I'm not much of a fisherman," he said. "We live on the lake and I cast and I'm just watching the sunset. I don't care if I catch a fish."

'Life-changing moments' bring Jets' Bowness to end of the road

By Paul Friesen

The reason Rick Bowness is retiring after 38 seasons on NHL benches is the same reason he cried at his farewell news conference on Monday.

It wasn't the result of a hockey game or a playoff series.

It wasn't a realization he'd wrung everything he could from the Winnipeg Jets, that there was no more to get.

And it certainly wasn't a loss of passion for the game.

The reason Bowness is going to stay at his lakefront home in Nova Scotia beyond the summer months for the first time in his life was sitting at the back of the room.

It was his wife, Judy.

At one point on Monday, Bowness paused mid-sentence, emotion stealing his breath and tears filling his eyes.

"It's your fault," he said, managing a smile and pointing at his partner of 53 years.

Together since they were 16, the couple has faced what Bowness describes as "life-changing moments" in his two years on the Winnipeg bench.

In Season 1, it was a harsh case of COVID that felled the coach, the side effects lingering on and on.

This past season, it was his wife suffering a middle-of-the-night seizure which caused their world to stand still.

Another medical procedure took the coach away from his team yet again, and other health issues are still to be resolved.

Along with simply getting up there, that's the kind of stuff that causes one to pause.

Bowness had already decided to call it a career two summers ago when Jets GM Kevin Cheveldayoff called him during a round of golf and eventually changed his mind.

The coach made this latest decision right after a round of the playoffs.

"Honestly, walking off the ice," he said. "I didn't like me, I didn't like the way our team played, which is on me. So I was unhappy with myself, unhappy that we had lost, and that bothered me."

“As I was standing there and I was looking around, it dawned on me. It just hit me then. It’s time.”

Former coaches had told him he’d know, something he’d always kept in mind.

Minutes later, after leaving the bench for the 2,726th time, more than anyone in NHL history, he was holding back tears as he addressed his players one last time.

“There was an inkling that he was leaning this way,” captain Adam Lowry recalled.

After his post-game media session that night, Bowness returned to the coaches’ offices and let it out.

“I’m done,” he told them. “I’m finished. I’m going to retire. And they’re all looking at me, ‘You sure? You want to take some time on this?’”

Associate coach Scott Arniel says his boss “caught us all off-guard.”

“I knew the health thing was a big part of his decision,” Arniel said. “But ... it was still hard to hear.”

It has to be hard to leave, too.

Particularly after getting so close to the ultimate goal he could taste it – three times.

Bowness reached Stanley Cup finals with three different teams, most recently as the head coach in Dallas (2020) and as an assistant in Tampa Bay (2015) and Vancouver (2011).

He took the Jets job for one last run at it, falling well short.

But experience also puts that in perspective.

“As you age, you hope you have an impact on your players’ lives off the ice, on the ice,” Bowness said. “And that’s been more important to me over the last 10 years.”

While Bowness never sipped champagne from the Stanley Cup, he did spoon some of Judy’s clam chowder from it when his son, Ryan, then a scout for the champion Pittsburgh Penguins, brought it to Nova Scotia for a day in 2017.

“She’s been through the whole ride,” Bowness said.

Going back to junior hockey, that ride went through 14 different cities in 12 seasons as a player, another 12 stops coming as a coach, two of them in Winnipeg.

“Hockey is all we know as a family,” Bowness said. “We’d run into people at home in the summer, like, ‘How do you do this?’ But it’s the only life our kids knew. ‘Dad’s playing, dad’s coaching, we’re moving again.’ That was a normal life to them.”

In all that packing and unpacking, pulling up stakes here, hammering them back in there, what are the odds of a 38-year career beginning and ending in the same place?

"I couldn't have picked a better place to come back and finish my career."

In some ways, Bowness saved his best for last.

His 52 wins this season was a career high. For the first time he's a finalist for the Jack Adams Award as the NHL coach of the year.

His record in two seasons with the Jets, 98-57-9, is much better than his career winning percentage of .439.

None of those numbers stack up to the people whose lives he's touched, the lifetime friends he's made.

"I'm hearing today from guys I played with ... and from all over the world, just people you coached," the 69-year-old said. "People don't understand what we go through. But we all understand what we go through."

One understood more than the rest.

The one who was waving the Jets towel from the stands last Tuesday, cheering her husband and his team as he walked off the ice for the last time.

Here's to a healthy and happy retirement, coach.

Jets' Arniel more interested in tribute to Bowness than his job

By Paul Friesen

The moment Rick Bowness retired, Scott Arniel became one of the top candidates to replace him behind the Winnipeg Jets bench.

So it was somewhat surprising to see the Jets associate coach available for questions at his boss's farewell on Monday.

As a sendoff, though, there are few people better qualified, as Arniel played under Bowness with the original Jets in the 1980s, then worked under him as an assistant coach in Boston and Winnipeg.

Arniel acknowledged he'll be interested in talking to Jets GM Kevin Cheveldayoff and co-owner Mark Chipman about the sudden job opening.

"This is Rick's day so I'm not going to go too far into this," Arniel said. "Chevy, Mark, they know my intentions. They know what I'd like. We'll talk more. It really is in the early stage. We'll just let the process play itself out."

Promoting Arniel would make for a seamless transition and a potential continuation of the progress the Jets made under Bowness the last two seasons.

He has head coaching experience, too, albeit in an unsuccessful, two-season stint with Columbus from 2010-2012.

He was also in charge of the Jets woeful penalty-killing unit this season.

“You want that next person to pick up on their own ways,” Jets GM Kevin Cheveldayoff said of Bowness’s eventual replacement. “But obviously understanding that we need to continue what was being built here.”

The 61-year-old Arniel’s ties to the Jets organization are strong.

Drafted in 1981, he finished his playing career with the Manitoba Moose, then in the IHL, and coached the Moose both as an assistant and head coach for four seasons in the AHL.

He’s spent 23 seasons behind the bench, 16 of them in the NHL, including stints as the associate coach with the New York Rangers and Jets.

All that experience, and Arniel says he still learned something under Bowness the last two years.

“His honesty and his straightforwardness, his ability to connect with players,” he said. “I’d never (seen) it as I’ve seen the last two years. Just the way he recognizes what needs to be fixed and he attacks that certain thing that day. And he always wants to make sure that he doesn’t leave a stone unturned.

“I’ve had some great people that have helped me with my career as a coach and he’s right near the top.”

Three players, captain Adam Lowry, Mason Appleton and Vlad Namestnikov, were present for Bowness’s announcement.

Lowry says while he had an inkling his head coach might call it a career, he didn’t know for sure until he got a call from him on Sunday night.

“An incredible communicator,” is how Lowry described him. “The environment and the atmosphere in the room ... he really made sure everyone had a voice. I can’t say enough good things about him.”

As Lowry put it, Bowness took over the Jets when “the rumblings were that we weren’t in that great of a spot” and was the key figure in changing the team’s culture.

He leaves with more games as a head or assistant coach than anyone in NHL history.

“To be able to end it on his own terms, to go into retirement and to be able to spend more time with his family and not leave with a bitter taste in his mouth, but to leave with his head held up high ... we are certainly going to miss him,” Lowry said. “He’s a remarkable human being. He deserves to be in the Hall of Fame.”

[Josh Morrissey shares emotional goodbye with Jets coach Bowness](#)

By Paul Friesen

Two years ago, the Winnipeg Jets were in a state of flux.

Longtime coach Paul Maurice had resigned, leaving a team that not only missed the playoffs but had no clear direction, its core players entering what was supposed to be their prime.

Defenceman Josh Morrissey credits Rick Bowness with much of the ensuing turnaround.

“There was lots of noise around our team,” Morrissey told the Winnipeg Sun from his home in Calgary on Monday. “He really wanted to preach that we are a family. He really believed that we needed to treat one another in that fashion and have that level of care, and it would result in a better environment but also better play on the ice.

“He empowered our group to be better, to be more of a team ... and that every cog in the wheel was equally important.”

Bowness led the Jets to the playoffs both of the last two seasons.

Morrissey is probably the player who has blossomed most under him.

So when Bowness called Morrissey on Sunday night to tell him he was retiring, the Jets assistant captain immediately recalled the first phone call he got from his new head coach.

“It was emotional to talk to him,” Morrissey said. “From my first conversation with him, he’s really preached his belief in me the player, the leader and the person. It’s really special when you have someone that believes in you and tries to get the most out of you and believes you have more to grow into ... just really made me believe in myself.”

For someone involved in the NHL for 49 years, Morrissey says Bowness still exuded a passion he could only marvel at.

“I’ve been part of the NHL world for nine years, and to think I’ve got another 40 years to equal what he’s done is pretty insane,” he said. “To think that was Year 48 and 49 for him will stick with me. He brought it all emotionally ... every single day.”

[JETS POLL RESULTS: This year’s loss to Colorado worse than last year’s to Vegas, Hellebucyk can’t be let off hook](#)

By Ted Wyman

A large majority of Winnipeg Jets fans say this year’s loss to the Colorado Avalanche was more difficult to swallow than last year’s first-round exit because they simply expected more out of this team.

In the Sun’s post-season poll, 73% of respondents said it was more discouraging to lose to a super-charged and playoff-savvy Avalanche team in the first round after posting 110 points in the regular season than it was to go out without much of a fight against eventual Stanley Cup champion Vegas a year ago.

“They are not capable of sustaining playoff intensity hockey,” Steve P wrote in the comments section that accompanied the poll. “It’s not the regular season and they are the only team in the playoffs that seems to think they can keep doing what they did to get there and it’s enough.”

He may well have a point. The Jets were the only higher-seeded team in the first round of the playoffs to lose in the opening round.

Despite finishing second in the Central Division and Western Conference with a 52-24-6 record — and fourth overall in the league — the Jets were completely outclassed by the Avalanche, losing in five games and getting outscored 28-15 in the series. They set an NHL record by being the first team to ever allow at least five goals in the first five games in the playoffs.

You can see why many fans would think it was a waste of a strong regular season.

This after leading the NHL in goals against during the regular season and winning the William Jennings Trophy.

“Lack of depth on defence,” Donald McLevin wrote in the comments.

“Twenty-eight goals scored against in five playoff games, while the Jets managed 15 (with seven in the first game) ... what could possibly go wrong?” added Werner Hohler.

“Jets need better defensive core like 2017-18,” added Robert Sutton. “Time to make some trades and get some capable blue-liners who play to win.”

The respondents were none too happy with the performance of Jets netminder Connor Hellebuyck, who will get his name on the Jennings trophy and is a front-runner to win the Vezina Trophy as the league’s best goaltender. He had a 5.23 goals against average and .870 save percentage against Colorado.

Despite Hellebuyck saying he was “playing the best hockey of his career” during the series and many players taking the blame away from him and pointing to poor team performance, many fans weren’t having it.

Of almost 1,000 respondents, 73.6% said they are concerned that Hellebuyck is simply not a good playoff performer. The other 32.4% said his teammates hung him out to dry.

“Helly has never shown an ability to win big, be a money player or rise to the occasion,” a reader calling himself Phil Hartman said.

“It’s not rocket science. It’s intransigence. (Head coach Rick) Bowness sticks with Hellybuckle through playoff disaster after playoff disaster, while ignoring a very capable goaltender on his bench.”

Bowness announced his retirement from the Jets and the NHL on Monday after 40 years of coaching professional hockey. He’s one of the most well-liked and respected coaches on the planet and he did wonders with the Jets in the regular season in both his years at the helm in Winnipeg.

He is even nominated for the Jack Adams Award as the NHL’s coach of the year for his work this season.

However, fans seemed to be in favour of not having him behind the bench next season, even before he made his announcement.

A total of 54% of respondents said someone else should be behind the bench next year, with 22.4% saying it should be current associate coach Scott Arniel and 31% saying it should be someone from outside the organization.

Only 18% of respondents said Bowness should be back without some sort of succession plan in place, based on the fact that he is a great coach and has done great work with the team in the regular season.

Another big talking point during the series surrounded the fact that 19-goal scorer Cole Perfetti didn't get into the line-up until Game 5, even though the Jets were struggling to score in Games 2, 3 and 4.

While 69% of the people said he should have been given more playing time, the other 31% said he was right where he belonged.

Among some of the other interesting results of the poll, 65% of readers said the players were most responsible for the Jets' failure, while 25% put the blame on the coaching staff and 10% on management.

As for the Jets most glaring problem during the series, 40% said it was lack of defensive structure and 22% said it was the inability to kill penalties.

A surprising 68% said backup goalie Laurent Brossoit should have been given a chance to start a game, with Hellebuyck struggling to keep the puck out of the net.

Defenceman Josh Morrissey was the Jets best player in the series, by a long shot, and Neal Pionk the worst, according to poll participants. Asked which player they'd most like to see traded in the off-season, 40% said Pionk and 26% said forward Nikolaj Ehlers.

The unrestricted free agents fans would most like to see the Jets re-sign include defenceman Brenden Dillon (31.2%), centre Sean Monahan (27.4%) and Brossoit (24.8%).

Although he did a masterful job of trading for and signing key players before and during the season, fans weren't showing the love for Jets general manager Kevin Cheveldayoff — 53% threw shade at him for putting together a team that was not built for the playoffs, while 47% said he was either the best GM in the league or right near the top.

Fans were also asked if the Jets would have had a better result had they played a different opponent in the first round and 50% said no, 40% said they would have won one more round, and 10% said they would have reached the third round or further.

Finally, fans were asked how they would characterize the season and 82% said it was either a disappointment or a complete failure because of the playoff result and just 18% said it was a success because the Jets had a great regular season and made the playoffs.

The Athletic

[Who should Winnipeg Jets' next head coach be? Dean Evason, Craig Berube and 9 more options](#)

By Murat Ates

Rick Bowness stood behind an NHL bench for more games than any coach in league history. His coaching career spanned five decades and 2,726 games — and that followed 173 NHL games as a player. He made the Stanley Cup Final three times without winning it all, earned an All-Star selection this season and is a finalist for the Jack Adams Award for the first time in his career.

Yet, after Bowness announced his retirement Monday, his legacy will go well beyond his on-ice accomplishments.

“The X’s and O’s are such a minor detail of the impact that he’s had on our group. He’s a tremendous human being, a tremendous communicator,” said Jets captain Adam Lowry. “He empowers everyone in our room. He talked about wanting to have an impact on our lives and he’s a tremendous role model. When he had to step away to take care of Judy (after she suffered a seizure) and the emotion, you (could) see the love he has for her. The amount of things he was willing to sacrifice to come to Winnipeg, to come to a spot where the rumblings were that we weren’t in that great of a spot.”

Winnipeg is in a better spot now as it begins its search for its next head coach, but the Jets were in a state of chaos in 2022 before he arrived. They had grown publicly self-critical, turning a 2022 playoffs miss into a series of exit interviews wherein team culture was called into question. Bowness’ impact includes democratizing Jets leadership — Lowry credited him for the team’s ever-increasing sense of inclusivity — and helping to transform the Jets from the group of individuals they seemed to be back then into the 110-point team they were this season.

“You talk about someone who left it better than when he came in, I think Rick really embodies that,” Lowry said.

Bowness’ retirement leaves the Jets with one more enormous challenge. They must consolidate the gains they made during his tenure, keeping the improvements to team cohesion and defensive play while pushing the organization forward. Winnipeg is days removed from a devastating first-round exit, wherein it was outclassed by a dominant Colorado Avalanche team. Jared Bednar’s talk of systemic adjustments, the pace with which his team played, and the way Colorado used data to inform the way the Avalanche attacked Winnipeg — as per this tremendous story from Corey Masisak — showed that the Jets still have a long way to go to be great.

This is a delicate moment in organizational growth. Consolidate the wins and continue to strive forward and Winnipeg will compete for home ice in the playoffs all over again. Backslide to what it was just two years ago and it won’t take a team of Colorado’s quality to expose the Jets’ weaknesses.

So who will be responsible for the next era of Jets history? Associate coach Scott Arniel appears to be first in line. Arniel spoke to reporters after Bowness did, offering a simple, direct “yeah, it is,” when asked to clarify whether he hopes to become Winnipeg’s next head coach. He’s already played the role, albeit temporarily, finishing this season with a 10-5-2 record spread between Bowness’ two absences.

Before we dig deeper into Arniel’s candidacy, let’s be clear about one thing: After GM Kevin Cheveldayoff and so many players talked about everybody in the organization needing to come

back from this offseason 5 or 10 percent better than they are right now, it would be a surprising move on the Jets' part to name him Winnipeg's next head coach by default.

In 2022, the Jets spoke to Barry Trotz, Jim Montgomery and John Tortorella, among others, and learned a lot from them on the way to hiring Bowness. The Jets need to cast a similarly wide net now — even if they ultimately choose to believe in Arniel's local track record and organizational fit — and I expect they will start a formal search in the coming days. For now, let's take a look at the candidates.

Scott Arniel

"In a perfect world, this scenario leads Winnipeg to a long-term succession plan," we wrote in 2022. Since then, Arniel has carried himself well when forced into emergency head coaching action. He's also been at the helm of Winnipeg's defence corps, which should be a point in his favour given the team's systemic defensive strengths — and the Jets' penalty kill, which struggled miserably in the playoffs and throughout the season that preceded them.

Winnipeg's players like Arniel, and he's made an impression with his calm demeanour on the bench. He played six seasons for Winnipeg's first NHL franchise, keeps his home in the city, and has already been hired by True North three times in his coaching career.

Arniel worked as an assistant coach for the Manitoba Moose for two seasons in 2000-01 and 2001-02 before getting hired as an assistant coach for the Buffalo Sabres. True North hired him again in 2006, setting up four consecutive playoff appearances and a Calder Cup Final loss in 2009.

"Chevy, Mark (Chipman), they know my intentions, they know what I want, they know what I'd like," Arniel said on Monday. "We'll talk more. It really is in the early stage."

Todd Nelson

Nelson is one of three people to win the AHL's Calder Cup as a player, assistant coach and head coach, and his Hershey Bears currently lead the Lehigh Valley Phantoms 2-0 in the Atlantic Division semifinals. Nelson has NHL head coaching experience — he took over from Dallas Eakins in Edmonton on the Oilers' way to drafting Connor McDavid in 2015. Nelson's record on that team (17-22-7, compared to Eakins' 7-19-5) wasn't enough to convince Edmonton to keep him around; instead, he took over the AHL's Grand Rapids Griffins, with whom he won the 2017 Calder Cup.

Nelson has ties to Winnipeg. He worked with Bowness on Montgomery's staff in Dallas, then for Bowness when the Stars went to the Stanley Cup Final in 2020. He worked for Cheveldayoff as an assistant coach with the Chicago Wolves for two seasons in the AHL.

Most importantly, Nelson has won at every level. As head coach, he's a UHL champion, a two-time AHL champion and has a chance to go back-to-back with Hershey after posting a 53-14-5 record during the regular season — a feat that earned him coach of the year honours.

Todd McLellan

McLellan is a Stanley Cup champion — he won with the 2008 Detroit Red Wings as an assistant — and a Presidents' Trophy winner with the San Jose Sharks in 2009. He also took over in Edmonton after the Oilers let Nelson go, but was unable to get the team out of its struggles at that low point in franchise history. McLellan's biggest impacts have come in the defensive zone, making him a reasonable comparable for Bowness. However, he never guided any of those

great Sharks teams to the final, nor has he had much recent playoff success — and that includes two good Kings teams in recent years, featuring Gabriel Vilardi, Alex Lafallo and Rasmus Kupari.

Jay Woodcroft

Woodcroft was the video coach on the same 2008 Cup-winning Red Wings and was head coach of the AHL champion Bakersfield Condors in 2021. He was also the victim of horrible goaltending early this season in Edmonton, despite a roster that was — and is — good enough to go deep in the playoffs. Woodcroft had a 79-41-13 coaching record with the Oilers, led by Connor McDavid and Leon Draisaitl. He will be on Canada's staff at the World Championship in Czechia.

Dean Evason

Depending on your frame of reference, Evason is either a proud product of Flin Flon, Man., whose Wild were a more aggressive, up-tempo team than Minnesota's NHL franchise is known for ... or he's the coach Bowness nearly fought the day Winnipeg clinched its 2023 playoff spot.

Either way, Evason led Minnesota to its highest points percentage in franchise history. Some of that came from coaching a team that featured Kirill Kaprizov coming into his own; some of it is due to his sometimes freakish level of competitiveness.

"I don't need time off," Evason told Michael Russo after the Wild let him go. "What do I need time off for?"

I think the hard-nosed, accountability-focused coach will be hired this summer.

Craig Berube

Winnipeg has made a habit of being eliminated by the eventual Stanley Cup champions. The Jets did it last season, falling to Mark Stone's Vegas Golden Knights in five games, and they did it in 2019 when Berube shocked the NHL by turning the St. Louis Blues' ugly start to the season into the league's most consistent, committed team.

The Blues weren't able to recreate the formula that won them the Cup in 2019 and Berube was let go in December. The Ottawa Citizen has reported he's had extensive talks with the New Jersey Devils.

Gerard Gallant

Gallant has become famous for pushing good teams to great heights for two-to-three-year stints and then promptly getting let go. Florida made the playoffs in Gallant's second season as head coach, then fired him in the third. The Golden Knights beat Winnipeg with Gallant behind the bench on their way to the 2018 Cup Final, lost in the first round of Gallant's second season, and replaced him with Pete DeBoer in his third. The New York Rangers eventually picked him up, surpassing 100 points in back-to-back seasons, but replaced him with Peter Laviolette after losing in the first round last season.

I don't think the Jets would have interest in another two- or three-year tenure in anything but the most unique circumstances, making Gallant's short-term supernovas an unlikely fit.

Lane Lambert

I don't think Winnipeg would hire a top prospect's uncle. Still, Brad Lambert's uncle was one of the NHL's most highly touted assistants when he worked on Barry Trotz's New York Islanders

staff. Taking over for Trotz in 2022-23, Lambert hoped to maintain Trotz's tremendous defensive schemes while generating more buy-in (it's a pain to play defence as hard as Trotz demanded it). In the end, Lambert's head coaching tenure lasted just one and a half seasons and his 61-46-20 record lagged behind Trotz, his predecessor, and Patrick Roy, his replacement. Islanders defensive and PK metrics were miserable under Lambert but it still shocked many to see him let go after just one and a half seasons.

Dave Hakstol

Hakstol was a University of North Dakota legend before he was an NHL coach, leading UND to the Frozen Four in seven of his 11 seasons as head coach. He won two Coach of the Year awards within his conference and was an eight-time finalist for NCAA Coach of the Year. He's coached Team Canada on multiple occasions at the World Championship, including on Alain Vigneault's staff — notable for Vigneault's many ties to the Moose and Jets. The Seattle Kraken didn't have Vegas-esque success in Hakstol's three seasons there but that might not be a fair bar for comparison.

Sheldon Keefe

At 43, Keefe is the youngest NHL coach on this list. It's also possible he's not made available at all — Toronto's exit interviews will be held later this week, with Keefe's future appearing up in the air. He won the 2018 Calder Cup championship with the Toronto Marlies; last season, he helped the Maple Leafs win their first playoff series since 2004; and his .665 is substantially better than that of his predecessor, Mike Babcock, as well as the highest points percentage among head coaches with at least 300 games of NHL experience. There's a lot to like about his resume, even as Toronto loses in the playoffs again, but firing Keefe would be among the easiest transformative moves the Maple Leafs could make right now.

David Carle

Carle took over as Denver Pioneers coach when Montgomery was hired by Dallas in 2018. Since then, Carle has done little else but win; Denver has won two out of the last three NCAA championships, while Carle's winning percentage has surpassed Montgomery's before him. If and when he makes his NHL transition, one imagines Carle will be just as sought after as Montgomery and other NCAA stars have been on their way out of college. Between that star status and his youth — Carle turns 35 in November — he seems like a highly unlikely hire, but his success makes him a popular name in coaching discussions. He'll coach Team USA at the world juniors again in 2025 after winning gold, captained by Rutger McGroarty, at the 2024 tournament.

There have been so many recent head coach firings — and there are so many candidates outside of former NHL head coaches — that even this summary leaves out valid candidates. Jeff Blashill, David Quinn, Jay Leach, Marco Sturm and Ryan Warsofsky are all next-wave coaches with various levels of NHL experience and success.

Winnipeg's last hiring process found Bowness, the coach who pushed the Jets forward for two straight seasons, leaving them in a better place than he found them. There's still a ton of ground to cover and, if Arniel is the coach for the job, Winnipeg needs to be sure it's hiring him for performance and not familiarity. Even if the Jets decide he's the best coach available, they need to show they're leaving no stone unturned.

If not, it will get a lot harder to pitch the idea of continual improvement to a market that just watched five games of Avalanche dominance with a Stanley Cup champion at the helm.

Winnipeg Jets head coach Rick Bowness announces retirement

By Murat Ates

Rick Bowness is retiring after two seasons as Winnipeg Jets head coach, the team announced Monday. Bowness, 69, had a 98-57-9 record in his two seasons as head coach, bringing the Jets back to the playoffs and losing in the first round against Vegas in 2023 and Colorado in 2024. He's a finalist for the Jack Adams Award this season.

When the Jets hired him in 2022, Bowness inherited a team that had just missed the playoffs. Paul Maurice had resigned early in the 2021-22 season and Dave Lowry had taken over as interim coach. At the end of that season, Paul Stastny famously talked about a lack of respect, Blake Wheeler spoke critically of the team's commitment to a 200-foot game, PL Dubois didn't want to be a Jet and Mark Scheifele and Connor Hellebuyck were both unclear about their plans for 2024 free agency.

Bowness spent that summer talking to his new players at length and asking them — not telling them — what the Jets needed most. At summer's end, he changed the Jets' leadership group, removing Wheeler's captaincy and ultimately paving the way for his summer 2023 buyout. The locker room was democratized — instead of belonging to Wheeler and the veterans, Bowness made sure more players' voices were heard. Sources have told The Athletic that the impact of this was substantial — that players who didn't feel as comfortable speaking up in the previous era found their voice in Bowness' first season.

On the ice, Bowness and his new coaching staff — associate coach Scott Arniel plus assistants Marty Johnston and Brad Lauer — changed the way Winnipeg defended. A man-to-man/zone hybrid was tossed. In came zone defense with a greater emphasis on protecting the “guts of the ice” between the faceoff dots, all the way up the ice. And Bowness held people accountable for it, reducing Winnipeg's goals against from the 253 it allowed in 2021-22 before him to 224 in his first season. This year, the Jets allowed a league-best 198 goals against, not including shootout goals, while winning 52 games and finishing with 110 points.

That's a massive step forward for an organization in two seasons. Remarkably, Bowness and his staff achieved this while also making concessions for Bowness' health and for him to be away from the team, with his wife Judy, when she suffered a seizure in October.

Arniel took the reins at that time, with substantial long-distance input from Bowness, guiding the Jets to a 9-2-2 record. Later in the season, Arniel took over again when Bowness underwent a minor medical procedure. Arniel is one option to become Winnipeg's next head coach, although one expects a formal search to begin soon.

Some of Bowness' decisions telegraphed his exit. Arniel and his assistants ran most Jets drills in Denver during the playoffs, as one example, and were heavily relied upon during Bowness' full tenure. Assistants would sometimes speak to the media in Bowness' stead. This was proactive on Bowness' part, giving his staff a chance to grow, and would have been proactive whether Bowness retired now or next summer.

The Athletic also learned that Bowness didn't participate in players' end-of-season meetings last week, suggesting he knew his plans even at that time.

Bowness coached for eight different franchises and was behind the bench for 17 playoff appearances, including trips to the Final as an associate coach with Vancouver in 2011, an assistant with Tampa Bay in 2015 and as Dallas Stars head coach in 2020.

He's one of only three head coaches, along with Scotty Bowman and Pat Quinn, to serve behind the bench in five different decades. His 2,726 games as an NHL coach are the most by anyone in league history.

Are there enough fans to keep a team in the NHL's smallest market?

By Dan Robson

WINNIPEG – Three hours before puck drop, Greg Burnett awaited the fate of his beloved Winnipeg Jets, on the brink of elimination.

The 56-year-old retired high school teacher stood in a fenced-off courtyard, just beyond a statue of the late Jets legend Dale Hawerchuk, between the glittering reflection of newly developed office towers on what used to be a vast parking lot in Winnipeg's age-worn downtown.

Burnett felt optimistic. He calls it a glass-half-full mentality when his team is "paradoxically aligned with impending doom."

He sipped a Michelob Light as hundreds of Jets fans filled the streets around Canada Life Centre ahead of Game 5 of the team's first-round playoff series against the Colorado Avalanche, trailing 3-1.

The stakes that night felt particularly high. The Jets' successful regular season (second in the NHL's Western Conference) was clouded by dwindling attendance and concerning comments made by ownership about the team's future.

Winnipeg is Canada's seventh-largest city. With a population of 758,000, it is the NHL's smallest market.

The prairie hub proudly leans into its reputation as a large "small town." The region boasts a rich history in the game — and a passionate fan base.

But Winnipeg is often overlooked by players. The Jets appear with great frequency on the "no-trade" lists of many contracts. High-profile players like Jacob Trouba, Evander Kane and PL Dubois have all forced their way out of town. In The Athletic's anonymous player poll, Winnipeg was declared the destination that players least liked to visit on the road, with 41.24 percent of the vote.

That sentiment has a galvanizing effect on the fan base.

"The perception is that people want us to fail," Burnett said, adding that the Jets faithful embrace the team's underdog position.

Burnett wore a white Connor Hellebuyck jersey, the team's All-Star goalie who recently signed a seven-year deal to stay in Winnipeg and was named a finalist for the Vezina Trophy. Burnett's jersey could have been any member of the current Jets roster, aside from the team's most recent trade deadline acquisitions. He has a jersey for almost every player who has played

multiple seasons in Winnipeg since the team's return more than a dozen years ago. His collection includes more than 60 jerseys from two generations of the Jets.

I first met Burnett in 2011, when he was one of the 13,500 fans who signed up for season tickets in 17 minutes when the Atlanta Thrashers moved to the Canadian Prairies, becoming the second iteration of the Jets.

He gave me a tour of the basement he'd dedicated to the team that left the city for Arizona in 1996, which had become central to Burnett's life. Celia Burnett relinquished the basement to her husband, knowing he needed a place to address his anger and sadness at the Jets' move to Arizona. He turned it into a shrine that includes a miniature locker room, old jerseys, game programs and memorabilia that spoke to the love and agony that comes with being a fan. The final A from the Winnipeg Arena sign above the entrance of the now demolished building sat on a landing above the basement stairs. Gillian, the youngest of the Burnetts' four daughters, helped her father show off his prized Jets possessions.

Gillian was 9 then. She's grown up sitting in the family's seats — section 312, row 5 — next to her father. She is now 22 and has a Winnipeg Jets tattoo on her forearm.

"I got it in honor of my dad, because that's what my dad is — the Winnipeg Jets," Gillian said. "It's part of him."

She sat next to her 78-year-old grandmother, Donna, on a concrete stoop in True North Square, as a DJ pumped music into the pregame festival. Donna, who wore a white and pink Jets zip-up hoodie, also never misses a game, not because of an obsession with an on-ice product but because of what the team means to her family.

In the late 1970s, Donna bought season tickets to the original Jets franchise. For a single mother, the Jets became a way for her to connect with her rambunctious 8-year-old son. They drove more than a half-hour to each game and always went out to a restaurant they considered to be fancy. At the time, it was all doable on Donna's teacher salary.

"We had a wonderful time," she said. "I just loved it."

But that "wonderful time" didn't last. In 1996, the original Jets franchise left for Arizona. When the ownership group True North announced in 2011 that it was purchasing the Atlanta Thrashers and moving the team to Winnipeg, Jets love was rekindled.

The NHL's return kicked off a revival so fervent that the franchise nurtured a waiting list of several thousand people willing to purchase season tickets should a seat ever open up.

The Canada Life Centre is the smallest arena in the NHL, with a capacity of just more than 15,000. And for years the Jets boasted constant sellouts and one of the loudest fan bases in the league.

But over the past couple of seasons, the Jets have had only a handful of sellouts.

And then early this season, Greg Burnett started to feel that familiar pang of dread when he saw rows of empty seats inside the Jets home rink. It was a reminder of an underlying anxiety shared by many fans old enough to remember the first time the team left town.

It was just the second home game of the 2023-24 season and only 11,226 fans showed up to watch the team play the L.A. Kings, the lowest attendance Burnett said he had ever seen at a Jets game.

Things didn't get much better. Aside from the smoldering ashes of the Arizona Coyotes — the former Jets franchise playing out its final days at a 5,000-seat college rink — Winnipeg had the lowest attendance in the NHL this season, averaging 13,490 fans. By percentage of rink capacity, the Jets were third worst at 89.9 percent, ahead of only the Buffalo Sabres and San Jose Sharks. In Winnipeg, it was the continuation of a downward trend that started with the NHL's first full 82-game season after the Covid-19 pandemic.

The Jets' season-ticket base shrunk by 27 percent in three years, falling to under 9,500 from close to 13,000.

The team's mediocre results didn't help. The Jets missed the playoffs in 2022, then lost in the first round after barely squeaking into the postseason in 2023.

Last spring, True North angered fans with a poorly conceived "Forever Winnipeg" ticket drive.

"So is Winnipeg an NHL city? You better believe it," narrator Kenny Omega, a Winnipeg-born wrestling star asks over sentimental visuals of Jets highlights and smiling fans, before the background music turns abruptly somber. "But it takes all of us."

The campaign was widely viewed as a not-so-veiled threat, recalling painful memories of the Jets' departure.

In February, concern about the franchise's future was stoked by comments Mark Chipman, True North's chairman, made in an interview with The Athletic's Chris Johnston.

"I wouldn't be honest with you if I didn't say, 'We've got to get back to 13,000,'" Chipman told Johnston. "This place we find ourselves in right now, it's not going to work over the long haul."

In the upper bowl, behind the visiting goal — section 312, row 5 — Greg, Gillian and Donna took their regular seats in the sea of white. The rink filled quickly, as it had through the final stretch of the regular season when the Jets sold out six of the team's last eight games. A late-season surge helped build excitement for the playoffs. The Jets carried an eight-game winning streak into the playoffs. They drew the Colorado Avalanche in the first round, a team they hadn't lost to all season and had recently stomped 7-0.

Maybe the fans just needed a reason to believe?

If that hope was fleeting with the Jets trailing 3-1 in the series, you wouldn't have noticed as the Jets took the ice for warmups in Game 5. The arena buzz rose to a crescendo.

Just after warmups, Celia Burnett met her family at their seats, taking a quick break from her job working at the front gate of Canada Life Centre, ushering lively fans through the ticket line at Portage Avenue. The family was at the arena so much that a few years ago she decided it made sense that she get paid to be close by.

"It's a constant," Celia said. "It's always about the Jets."

The arena thundered. The sold-out crowd twirled white towels and cheered at a relentless volume. Fans belted the words “True North” in unison when the Canadian national anthem lyrics were sung — a tradition that started with the team’s inaugural season in 2011.

Outside the Jets “whiteout” street party on Donald Street, next to the arena, another 5,000 fans packed as close to two massive projection screens. All wore white. Some reveled in more creative attire. Several wore full white bodysuits and white old-school goalie masks. One man wore a white beer-stained pinstripe suit. Another wore a Panda head.

Jets fans packed the streets around the Canada Life Centre for Game 5. (David Lipnowski / Getty Images)

Evan Chubaty wore a low-cut wedding dress he found at a thrift store, fastened by dirty shoelaces he borrowed from a pair of sneakers. He was 9 when the Jets arrived. He’s not worried about them leaving. He thinks the fans would never actually let that happen.

“Everyone loves them,” Chubaty said. “It’s a huge part of Winnipeg. The city wouldn’t be the same without them.”

Benny, the original Jets mascot, interrupted the conversation and got down on a furry blue knee in front of Chubaty.

The Bloodworth family stood quietly amid the crowd of mostly twentysomethings, reflecting both the older and younger generation of fans. Shayne and Maureen Bloodworth brought their children out for the experience. Shayne was a “1.0” Jets fan.

“I’m the old guy,” he said, as a crush of well-imbibed fans weaved around the family.

His 10-year-old twins — Max, who sat sleepily on his shoulders, and Jack who leaned against him — have grown up in the “2.0” era. They play minor hockey for the River East Royals and catch every Jets game they can stay awake for.

“It’s become a part of this city’s culture, for sure,” Shayne said. “It’s brought a lot of people together.”

Moments later, the street erupted as Josh Morrissey scored for the Jets halfway through the second period, tying the game at two. But before the period was over, Colorado was ahead again.

Greg Burnett admitted that his optimism was fading. The Jets were 20 minutes away from another first-round exit. Considering the empty seats of the regular season, the stakes felt especially high.

“I hope I’m wrong,” he said.

So is Winnipeg an NHL city?

Glen Hodgson, an Ottawa-based economist and expert in the economics of sports franchises, believes it is — but in a unique, inherently precarious way. Hodgson wrote a book on the business of sports franchises, developing a methodology with his co-author for evaluating whether a sports franchise would succeed or fail.

As a market, Winnipeg falls short in almost every key component. The population is too small, the per capita income is too low, and there are a dwindling number of corporations with a head office in Canada's windy city.

"But then you get to the intangibles, like passion," Hodgson said. "And Manitoba is off the chart."

Hodgson knows the psyche of the city's sports fans well. He grew up in Winnipeg and was a devoted follower of the CFL's Winnipeg Blue Bombers, the other franchise that holds a deeply rooted place in the region's culture and identity.

For many, like Burnett, the NHL's return in 2011 was a miracle, faithfully prayed for.

Nostalgia and pride alone were enough to sell the team to local fans. For more than a decade, True North was viewed as a savior.

The franchise was able to operate in an "if you build it, they will come" mode, Hodgson said.

But after the pandemic, amid a wavering Canadian economy, high inflation, and growing dissatisfaction with rising prices, stringent policies and a perceived lack of appreciation from the organization, many fans decided to stay home. The magic faded. The season-ticket waiting list disappeared. And the franchise entered a new, critical era.

Chipman later clarified his comments about the franchise's sustainability and season-ticket sales, saying he was referring to the team's ability to spend to the cap and ice a contender. Gary Bettman, the NHL commissioner, visited Winnipeg this winter and underscored his confidence in the city as an ideal hockey market — which is something he has previously said about several other cities that ended up losing NHL teams.

But there is plenty of reason for Jets fans to be confident in the team's commitment to Winnipeg.

The franchise's books are kept private, but Chipman has said it's never lost money since its inaugural NHL season. And there is plenty of cash underpinning it. David Thomson, one of True North's co-owners, is the richest person in Canada — and 21st richest in the world — with a net worth of \$61.3 billion, according to Forbes.

True North has also invested hundreds of millions into the city, revitalizing the area around Canada Life Centre with sparkling new office towers. Last year, the group announced a \$500 million plan to redevelop a worn-down shopping center across the street from the arena, a healthcare and social services hub for the community.

Still, Winnipeg remains a constrained market, Hodgson said. There are only so many businesses and people to commit to season tickets.

Chipman has been candid about True North's missteps in taking the community of Jets fans for granted. At the same time, fans like Burnett say it's also on the community to re-up its commitment to the team. He's reached out to friends who've let their season tickets lapse in recent years, urging them to come back.

The team's future likely depends on that rekindled relationship.

“If you’re asking the fundamental question, is the market really big enough to sustain over time, it really depends on engaging the passion,” Hodgson said.

“If any city is going to make it with those limitations, it will be Winnipeg.”

As the Colorado Avalanche pulled away from the Jets, those passionate fans started to head for the exits. Before the final horn sounded on a 6-3 Avalanche win, large sections of the stands sat empty. Celia watched people stream through the doors onto Portage Avenue.

Gillian joined her friends who’d watched from the street party, which emptied off Donald Street within minutes. Hundreds of crushed silver cans sparkled beneath the street lights.

In section 312, Greg sat next to his mother, watching the teams shake hands, trying to process another lost opportunity. As the players left the ice, Greg helped Donna from her seat and carefully guided her down the steep stadium stairs.

He paused for a moment in the atrium, trying to describe the dejection he knew would linger until the Jets begin again. A deep playoff run would certainly have stoked deeper interest in the team across the city. But this first-round exit felt perilously familiar.

“You know, as a Winnipegger,” Greg said, “it feels like we can’t have nice things.”

Donna smiled softly. Her son extended his arm and she took it. They walked away together, disappearing among the fans left and leaving.

Winnipeg Free Press

‘I knew in my heart it was time’

Bowness bows out as Jets coach; NHL a better place because of people like Rick, says captain Lowry

By: Ken Wiebe

When he reached the end of the handshake line last Tuesday, Rick Bowness took a long hard look into the stands and came to a stark realization as he took those final steps off the ice and made his way back down the tunnel and into the Winnipeg Jets dressing room.

After dedicating so much of his life to the sport of hockey and getting so much out of it, it was time to call it a career as a coach.

“Honestly it’s walking off the ice after Tuesday night. It is,” said Bowness. “I didn’t like the way our team played, which is on me. So I was unhappy with myself, unhappy that we had lost, and that bothered me. But as I was standing there and I was looking around, it dawned on me.

“Coaches have always told me — and I’m talking to the older coaches, older than me — and they’ve always said, ‘You’ll know when it’s time.’ And when I was looking around, and just, I wasn’t happy with the job I had done, and it just hit me then, it’s time.’

Bowness told the rest of the coaching staff about his decision about an hour after the conclusion of Game 5, when the Colorado Avalanche eliminated the Jets with a 6-3 victory to secure the opening-round series.

"I knew in my heart it was time," said Bowness.

In his two seasons back with the 2.0 version of the Jets, Bowness had an outstanding impact both on and off the ice.

Although playoff success didn't follow (they went 2-8 against the Avalanche and Vegas Golden Knights), that doesn't take away from what Bowness was able to accomplish both on and off the ice.

This past season, the Jets tied a franchise record for wins (52) and set another for road wins (25) while securing the William M. Jennings Trophy for allowing the fewest goals in the NHL (199).

Bowness represented the Jets at the NHL All-Star festivities in Toronto in February and was also nominated for the Jack Adams Award as the top coach in the NHL.

When addressing the players after the defeat last week, Jets captain Adam Lowry admitted he had an inkling Bowness might be done, though he wasn't sure until he reached out Sunday night with the news he was stepping away for good.

"Anyone you talk to in the game of hockey will have nothing but good things to say about Bones," said Lowry. "An incredible communicator. The environment and the atmosphere in the room and what he was able to do to foster a room of inclusivity. He really made sure everyone had a voice. I can't say enough good things about him."

Lowry praised Bowness for his ability to connect with players and to show he cares about them on a personal level.

That's a trait Bowness has shown since his playing days, as Dallas Stars GM Jim Nill can attest to.

"He had it as a player. He was competitive, he played hard. When he got into the coaching business, he had that same passion but he was very supportive of the players. He cares about people," Nill said from Dallas on Monday. "He would push people, but that's because he cares about you and he wanted you to be the best you could be. And he did that with everybody."

His personal nature didn't just apply to players, coaches or staff either.

"One of the things I love about Rick Bowness is that you fly all over the country going into different rinks and it didn't matter what rink you walked into, but when you walked into the bowels of the building of the arena, he knew the security guards, he knew the trainers," said Nill. "They just appreciated who he was. They remembered him and they respected him. He just had time for people and that's a great trait as a human being."

"To see what he did with his coaching record, the number of games that he's coached (2,726), it's an amazing testament and that just shows you how much people valued him as a person leading the club."

Bowness shared the podium with Kevin Cheveldayoff on Monday afternoon and before he started taking questions, he joked with the Jets general manager about talking him out of retirement two summers ago, when he was originally hired.

There were several emotional moments for Bowness as he spoke about his journey.

“When I leave, I just want to be remembered (that) I just love the game, and I respected the game,” said Bowness. “I love this league. I respect the league. Over the years as you age, you hope you have an impact on your players’ lives off the ice, on the ice and that’s been more important to me over the last 10 years.”

Questions about what he planned to do in the future were met with a shrug of the shoulders.

When you make a decision of this magnitude, it’s impossible to know if you’re going to be ready to contribute to an organization in another capacity right away, though Bowness made it clear that he would be watching on TV and he would be sharing his opinions with players and coaches.

“One thing that Bones always was and is is he’s been authentic,” said Cheveldayoff. “Just a great hockey coach and an even better person. Just so thankful that he picked up my phone call that day that we called a couple years ago.”

Bowness, 69, thanked his wife Judy and his family for their unwavering support over the years.

He said he had no regrets, noting he’d done some stupid things over the years but always learned from them.

“You have to be true to yourself and that’s the biggest thing,” said Bowness. “My goal was never to be the best coach in the league. My goal was to be the best coach I could be, and to be that, you’ve got to be honest with yourself.”

When it comes to the legacy Bowness — who played for the 1.0 version of the Jets and was later an assistant coach and head coach for the franchise — is leaving behind, that is easy to pinpoint.

“Over his five decades in this game.... I think the NHL’s a better place because of people like Rick and the amount of time and sacrifice him and Judy and their family have had to put in over their incredible career... He deserves to be in the Hall of Fame,” said Lowry. “You talk about someone who left it better than when he came in, I think Rick really embodies that.”

Who’s next?

Arniel seems like a natural fit to succeed Bowness as Jets head coach

By: Ken Wiebe

Kevin Cheveldayoff was trying to keep the focus on the news of the day, though the general manager of the Winnipeg Jets understands a head coaching vacancy is going to generate buzz.

After all, there are only 32 of those jobs available in the NHL.

There were already some established vacancies, with a few more potential opening in the days and weeks ahead as the Stanley Cup playoffs continue and expectations are not met.

As he sat at the podium discussing the retirement of Rick Bowness, Cheveldayoff was naturally asked about what he's looking for in his replacement.

While Cheveldayoff deflected when asked directly about the interview process, he did shine a light on what he might be looking for when a question was posed about the importance of the next hire.

"There's no question that you're not replacing Rick Bowness. There's one of him," said Cheveldayoff. "Every time you get into a situation like this, you want to make sure that the next person can be their own selves as well. This isn't following Rick Bowness and all of the great work that he did. This is establishing, whoever that next person is, from that day moving forward. But it does take a special acknowledgment to understand the different levels of foundations that have been put in place here."

The Jets already have a head coach in waiting on the staff in associate coach Scott Arniel, who has filled in admirably during a series of absences for Bowness during the past two seasons.

Arniel didn't want to sound like he was grandstanding for the job on a day the Jets' organization went out of its way to celebrate the storied career of Bowness.

"Like you first said, this is Rick's day, so I'm not going to go too far into this," said Arniel. "Chevy, Mark (Chipman), they know my intentions, they know what I want, they know what I'd like. We'll talk more. It really is in the early stage.

"At the end of the day we'll just let the process play itself out. We'll kind of tackle things as they get put forward here."

Is one of those things to be the head coach of the Jets?

"Yeah, it is," said Arniel.

It's no surprise that Arniel would be throwing his hat into the ring, since he was a candidate for the job when Bowness was hired in the summer of 2022.

The last search included interviews and/or discussions with a number of interesting candidates, including Barry Trotz, Rick Tocchet, Jim Montgomery and John Tortorella, so one would expect the Jets are going to be casting a fairly wide net before a final decision is made.

Here are six candidates for the position:

Scott Arniel

Age: 61

Current job: Associate coach of Winnipeg Jets

The skinny — Arniel spent parts of two seasons as the head coach of the Columbus Blue Jackets between 2010 and 2012 and he was replaced midway through the second season. He's also been a longtime NHL assistant and associate with the Washington Capitals, New York Rangers and Buffalo Sabres.

His head coaching history includes taking the Manitoba Moose to the Calder Cup final in 2009 and a stint with the Chicago Wolves of the American Hockey League. Arniel was with the Rangers when they advanced to the Stanley Cup final in 2014.

His history with True North would be considered a bonus, but his credentials are legit and he's put in the time to deserve another opportunity to call the shots.

Craig Berube

Age: 58

Current job: Free agent after being fired by the St. Louis Blues 28 games into this season

The skinny — The former NHLer is generating plenty of interest as the coaching carousel spins. He's already interviewed for several opportunities and his 2019 Stanley Cup championship with the St. Louis Blues only boosts his stock.

The Jets are familiar with Berube from the many battles within the Central Division. Berube also spent one season as the head coach of the Wolves, where Cheveldayoff still has ties dating back to his time there as GM.

Berube was 281-190-78 with the Blues and Philadelphia Flyers and his playoff record is 27-31.

Todd Nelson

Age: 54

Current job: Head coach of the Hershey Bears of the AHL

The skinny — Nelson helped the Bears capture the Calder Cup last spring and he helped the Grand Rapids Griffins do the same in 2017. He also helped the Muskegon Fury to a pair of United Hockey League titles in 2004 and 2005.

He was 17-22-7 as the interim head coach of the Edmonton Oilers during the 2014-15 season and has ample experience as an NHL assistant with the Oilers, Dallas Stars and Atlanta Thrashers.

Jay Woodcroft

Age: 47

Current job: Free agent after his firing from the Edmonton Oilers 13 games into this past season.

The skinny — Helped the Oilers reach the Western Conference final in 2022 before the team was swept by the Avalanche.

The Oilers struggled to start the season under the weight of expectations and Woodcroft was a casualty. He was a longtime assistant with the San Jose Sharks and Detroit Red Wings before joining the Oilers organization.

He spent parts of four seasons with the Bakersfield Condors and captured a Calder Cup in 2021. Woodcroft replaced Dave Tippett in February of 2022 and had a .643 winning percentage in the regular season (79-4-13) — and was .500 in the playoffs (14-14) before Kris Knoblauch took over from him.

Woodcroft's brother Todd previously worked for the Jets as an assistant coach.

Ryan Warsofsky

Age: 36

Current job: Assistant coach with San Jose Sharks

The skinny — One of the up-and-comers in the coaching ranks. He spent the past two seasons with the Sharks after spending three seasons as a head coach in the American Hockey League with the Wolves and Charlotte Checkers.

He helped the Wolves capture the Calder Cup title in 2022 before leaving to join the Sharks.

Warsofsky also has two seasons as head coach with the South Carolina Stingrays of the ECHL on his resume, losing in the Kelly Cup final in 2017.

David Carle

Age: 34

Current job: Head coach of University of Denver Pioneers, who just captured the NCAA Frozen Four championship last month.

The skinny — Considered one of the brightest hockey minds in the game, Carle has enjoyed tremendous success so far and is scheduled to be the head coach of Team USA at the 2025 World Junior Hockey Championship after helping his country to a gold medal at the 2024 event in Sweden.

There would need to be a significant commitment to lure him away from his current situation, but perhaps the lure of an NHL job would be enticing.

Sportsnet.ca

[How Rick Bowness created a lasting impact on players he coached](#) (VIDEO)

The Hockey Central panel discusses Rick Bowness retiring after 38 seasons in the NHL, why he was so beloved by the players he coached, his passion for the game, and his lasting impact on the organizations he was a part of.

TSN.ca

[Corrado weighs in on Sens hiring Green, who Jets should tab as replacement for Bowness](#) (VIDEO)

TSN Hockey analyst Frankie Corrado joins SC with Jay Onrait to discuss the Senators hiring Travis Green as head coach and which direction the Jets should go behind the bench after Rick Bowness announced his retirement on Monday.

[What led to Bowness' decision to retire?](#) (VIDEO)

Rick Bowness went through a lot personally this season but what ultimately led to his decision to retire? What legacy will he leave behind after his second stint as Jets head coach? TSN Jets reporter John Lu joins SportsCentre to discuss.

7-Eleven That's Hockey: Who should Jets target for their next head coach? (VIDEO)

Two weeks ago, the Jets had a 1-0 series lead against the Avalanche but almost in an instant, they dropped the subsequent four games with Connor Hellebuyck looking like a shell of his Vezina finalist self. How did things turn so sour, so quickly for Winnipeg? What should the Jets be looking for in their next head coach? TSN Hockey analyst Martin Biron and OverDrive host Bryan Hayes weigh in.