

**Winnipegjets.com**

<https://www.nhl.com/jets/news/three-things-jets-lose-4-2-to-canucks>

***Three things - Jets lose 4-2 to Canucks  
Lambert has a goal and an assist in Jets first loss at Young Stars***

By Jamie Thomas

PENTICTON – The Winnipeg Jets saw their record fall to 1-1 at the 2024 Young Stars Classic after a 4-2 loss to the Vancouver Canucks this afternoon.

Brad Lambert and Nikita Chibrikov scored for Winnipeg; Lambert also had an assist for a multi-point effort for the Jets who will now finish the tournament Monday against the Edmonton Oilers. Puck drop is scheduled for 1 pm CT.

***1. LAMBERT SHOW***

After a scoreless first period, the Jets looked on top of their game when Brad Lambert opened the scoring taking a pass from Kevin He in the neutral zone and waiting patiently cutting to the faceoff circle before he wired a low shot in the net. The Jets 2022 first round pick then added another point with the Jets on the power play, Lambert sent a perfect backhand pass right to Nikita Chibrikov who one-timed the puck past Canucks goaltender Ty Young for the 2-0 lead.

“I thought he was excellent, I really did. I thought he created all night, skated, had a couple great back checks,” said coach Mark Morrison.

“Thought he was physical; I think he had a great game.”

***2. SOME BAD BOUNCES***

After the Jets jumped out to that 2-0 lead, Vancouver responded with back-to-back goals from Josh Bloom and Elias Pettersson to close out the second period. Bloom’s goal went off his body and in behind Dom DiVincentiis after Elias Salomonsson took away the Canucks forward stick. The Pettersson shot went through some traffic and looked to hit something in front of DiVincentiis who had no chance to make the save.

***3. RAN OUT OF GAS***

In the third period, the shots were tied at eight apiece, but Vancouver had a couple of grade A scoring chances before Anthony Romani made it 3-2. His first attempt was blocked by Dawson Barteaux, however the puck bounced right back to the Canuck forward for the first lead of the game for Vancouver. Vilmer Alriksson closed out the scoring with just under seven minutes remaining.

“We weren’t getting on them as much, we weren’t playing as fast, we weren’t getting pucks behind them, we weren’t getting zone time,” said Lambert.

“They kind of did that to us and as a result we kind of spent the whole period in our end. Can’t expect to win playing in your own zone.”

<https://www.nhl.com/jets/news/three-things-kuzmin-scores-ot-winner>

### ***Three things - Kuzmin scores OT winner Jets open 2024 Young Stars Classic with 4-3 win over Calgary***

By Jamie Thomas

PENTICTON – The Winnipeg Jets opened the 2024 Young Stars Classic with a 4-3 overtime win over the Calgary Flames. Dmitry Kuzmin scored the overtime winner with 1:37 left in the extra frame. Thomas Milic made 20 saves for the Jets who will play Vancouver on Sunday at 4 pm CT.

#### ***1. GREAT START***

The Jets have an experienced group in Penticton this year and it showed in the first period. Winnipeg opened the scoring at the 4:43 mark when Nikita Chibrikov grabbed a loose puck from the right side and walked in and beat Connor Murphy. 1:19 later, Connor Levis made it 2-0 after he one-timed a Markus Loponen shot behind Murphy.

“We had some energy in the first period, and I thought we got it taken away from us in the second and I think we found it again in the third,” said Mark Morrison.

“So, some ups and downs but I thought we got a good start.”

#### ***2. POWER PLAY***

Usually there is a parade to the penalty box in the opening games for all four teams at this event as players try to do too much in their effort to impress. However, there were only four penalties all night with the Jets having three power plays. Jacob Julien tapped in a Brad Lambert pass to make it 3-2 in the third. But Calgary managed to score a shorthanded marker to tie it 3-3 courtesy of Jaden Lipinski on Winnipeg’s third power play of the second frame.

“Scored one but I thought we created some chances. I mean, power plays they need high execution,” said Morrison.

“It still looks a little but rusty, but they had the right idea.”

#### ***3. THE OT WINNER***

Kuzmin’s game winning goal started at the Jets blue line when Henri Nikkanen forced a turnover that allowed Colby Barlow to break out with the Jets defenceman on a 2-on-0. Barlow used a head fake before sending it across to Kuzmin who made no mistake.

“Colby and I were kind of going out 2-on-0 so I just tried to keep up with his speed,” said Kuzmin.

“Yeah, great pass by Colby. I just had to hit the net.”

**Winnipeg Free Press**

<https://www.winnipegfreepress.com/breakingnews/2024/09/15/poise-patience-on-display-at-latest-young-stars-classic>

## ***Poise, patience on display at latest Young Stars Classic***

By: Mike McIntyre

Brad Lambert looks ready to go camping.

The prized Winnipeg Jets prospect, coming off an impressive rookie pro season, put on a show Sunday at the latest Young Stars Classic game in Penticton, B.C.

Lambert scored the opening goal for his club, then made a beautiful set-up to linemate Nikita Chibrikov to give Winnipeg a 2-0 lead. However, that was all the offence for the Jets club, which saw the Vancouver Canucks claw all the way back for a 4-2 victory.

Winnipeg, which opened the event with a 4-3 overtime win over the Calgary Flames on Friday night, will wrap things up on Monday with a matinee against the Edmonton Oilers.

Lambert, the 30th-overall pick in the 2022 draft, had 21 goals and 34 assists in 64 games with the Manitoba Moose last season. He also added an assist in his NHL debut during the final game of the Jets regular season.

There's a good chance more big-league games are just around the corner. Lambert will be one of the key players to watch when the Jets open training camp with on-ice sessions starting Thursday. You can expect to see him dress for a majority of Winnipeg's six pre-season games as well.

"I've got my opinion on it, but I don't want to throw it out there," Moose head coach Mark Morrison said last week when asked if Lambert is ready to make the full-time jump to the NHL. "I think that will happen with Arnie (Jets coach Scott Arniel) and Chevy (GM Kevin Cheveldayoff) and the group there. But Brad's come a long ways."

Lambert, who had a nifty assist in Friday's game, certainly showed that on Sunday. On his goal, he gained the offensive zone with speed, slowed up around a Canucks defender, toe dragged the puck and then ripped a hard wrister through a screen he essentially created. It takes poise and patience to make such a play.

On the Chibrikov tally a few minutes later, Lambert displayed his creativity with a backhand, cross-ice feed that had plenty of zip on it. Chibrikov, who also had a solid rookie year with the Moose and made his NHL debut in Game 82, scoring a goal, leaned into the one-timer for his second snipe in as many games.

Kevin He, drafted in the fourth round by the Jets this past summer, assisted on both goals.

Winnipeg was controlling play at that point and looked to be in cruise control at the midway mark of the game. But two goals by the Canucks in the span of 71 seconds — one a bank shot off a shin pad and another through a maze of traffic — evened it up before the intermission.

Vancouver was the better team in the final frame, taking the lead for the first time with just under 14 minutes to play and then adding an insurance tally.

The Jets made six lineup changes, as Game 1 starting goalie Thomas Milic took a seat on the bench in favour of Domenic DiVincentiis, who stopped 20 of 24 shots.

Defenceman Ben Zloty and forwards Carson Golder, Ben King, Mark Liwski and Luke Mistelbacher all drew in after being healthy scratches in the opener. Defenceman Graham Sward and forwards Henri Nikkanen, Daniel Torgersson, Danny Zhilkin and Connor Levis came out.

Chaz Lucius, the 18th-overall pick in 2021, remains out as he works his way back from ankle surgery, but he did shed his non-contact jersey during Saturday's practice and should be ready to go by Jets camp.

<https://www.winnipegfreepress.com/breakingnews/2024/09/13/jets-win-clash-of-prospects-with-ot-win-over-flames>

### ***Jets win clash of prospects with OT win over Flames***

By: Mike McIntyre

Yeah, the kids are alright.

A team full of Winnipeg Jets prospects kicked off the annual Young Stars Classic on Friday evening with a 4-3 overtime victory over Calgary Flames rookies in Penticton, B.C.,

Defenceman Dmitry Kuzmin scored the winner on a two-on-none rush with teammate Colby Barlow, who set him up perfectly. Nikita Chibrikov, Connor Levis and Jacob Julien had the regulation goals for Winnipeg.

It's a fool's game to spend much time breaking down a game of this nature, which comes right out of the summer break after one team practice and one morning skate. Plenty of mistakes were made, and systems and structure are in short supply.

However, there were some individual players who stood out and deserve mention.

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Kuzmin had an up-and-down first pro year, splitting last season between the Manitoba Moose and the Norfolk Admirals of the ECHL. The 21-year-old, selected in the third round in 2021, was very noticeable in this game, jumping up into the play at times and making some nice reads.

Kuzmin started the play that led to Daniel Torgersson finding iron in the first, then just missed on a rebound chance late in the second which would have given Winnipeg the lead.

On his goal, he showed off solid instincts to join Barlow on the rush during three-on-three play.

The former member of the Flint Firebirds had 59 points (14 goals, 45 assists) in his final season of junior, so you know the offensive talent is there.

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Barlow, Brad Lambert and Brayden Yager all have one thing in common — they are first-round picks. That will bring about some added scrutiny, along with expectations.

The trio all made solid contributions.

Barlow, as noted, was the playmaker on the game-winner and had some good looks of his own on net.

Lambert, who made his NHL debut in the final regular-season Jets game last April, seemed to always have the puck on his stick. On his first shift, he blew through the Calgary defence and appeared to hit the post on a partial breakaway. In the second period, Lambert set Barlow up for a nifty one-timer that came close to going in. In the third, he made a great backdoor feed to Julien with the Jets on the power-play which led to the goal.

As for Yager, who was making his Winnipeg debut after being traded by the Pittsburgh Penguins in exchange for Rutger McGroarty, there was a lot to like. His aggressive forecheck in the first period led to a Calgary turnover which resulted in Chibrikov's goal seconds later. He then made a heads-up defensive play late in the third period of a tie game, lifting a Calgary player's stick on the backcheck to take away what would have been a golden chance.

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Thomas Milic had a dream rookie pro season, as the 2023 Western Hockey League goaltender of the year began the 2023-24 campaign in the ECHL, made the All-Star team there, then got called up to the Moose where he quickly earned the No. 1 netminding spot and essentially saved the season for the AHL club.

He looked calm, cool and collected in this one, stopping 20 of 23 shots he faced and having no chance on any of the goals that got by him. The 21-year-old British Columbia product might just be the future backup to Vezina Trophy winner Connor Hellebuyck if he continues to develop.

He'll carry a big share of the work with the Moose this year, with one of Eric Comrie or Kaapo Kahkonen expected to join him (with the other serving as Hellebuyck's understudy).

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It's safe to say Daniel Torgersson has become a bit of forgotten prospect around here.

The 40th-overall pick from the 2020 draft burst on to the scene in 2022, joining the Manitoba Moose after finishing up with his club team back in Sweden and scoring two goals in his first three games with the AHL club.

The 6-3, 199-pound winger then had a promising rookie season in 2022-23 with 11 goals and nine assists in 69 games. However, last year represented a big step back, as he had just one goal and eight helpers in 52 games, at times watching from the press box as a healthy scratch.

Now 22, Torgersson would be considered a “veteran” at this Young Stars event. He, along with Lambert and fellow Finnish forward Henri Nikkanen, are the only players at this event for a third time.

Torgersson looked like one of the best players on the ice Friday with no less than four great scoring chances.

He hit a crossbar in the first period, just missed on an in-tight deke in the second and then was thwarted on two solid shots later in the frame — the latter coming after making a great defensive play while penalty killing, then stealing the puck in the offensive zone to create a chance.

No doubt the Jets organization liked what it saw, and will be hoping he can carry that type of play over into the coming season.

## **The Hockey News**

<https://thehockeynews.com/news/nhls-top-issues-facing-winnipeg-jets-ehlers-playoffs-and-point-per-game-players-on-radar>

### ***NHL's Top Issues Facing Winnipeg Jets: Ehlers, Playoffs And Point-Per-Game Players On Radar***

By Adam Proteau

This is the final file in THN's series looking at important issues facing each NHL team.

In this edition, we're examining three issues facing the Winnipeg Jets.

#### ***1. Will Nikolaj Ehlers be with the Jets in 2025?***

Winnipeg GM Kevin Cheveldayoff locked up star center Mark Scheifele and Connor Hellebuyck to contract extensions last summer, making most of their players long-term Jets. But one veteran will be a UFA at the end of this coming season – 28-year-old winger Ehlers, who currently is working on a contract that pays him \$6-million per season.

Ehlers posted 25 goals and 61 points in 82 games last season – the fifth time he's generated 25 goals or more in his nine-year NHL career. He'll be playing on the Jets' second line this season, but Winnipeg has approximately \$47.7 million committed to players in 2025-26 – and the Jets

have youngsters including Cole Perfetti and Gabriel Vilardi to sign to new deals either this summer or next summer, so there may not be enough cap space to retain Ehlers beyond this season.

The Jets could get an exceptional haul if they do choose to trade Ehlers, and depending on the way the 2024-25 campaign goes, Winnipeg brass may want to extensively change the lineup. If that's the case, Ehlers could be dealt at the trade deadline. But it's also possible Cheveldayoff doubles down on his roster and finds a way to keep Ehlers around. If we had to guess, we'd say this is Ehlers' final season as a Jet, but there's still time for Ehlers to author his own destiny.

## *2. Can the Jets meet expectations after last season's fourth-place finish in the standings?*

We're going to be honest – we don't have a lot of faith in this Jets core to take the next competitive step and evolve into a first-rate Stanley Cup contender. This isn't to say Winnipeg can't win more regular-season games than they lose, but rather, we're arguing the type of generational talents that power their team to Cup glory aren't to be found on the Jets' roster.

The exception is Hellebuyck, but even then, Hellebuyck failed to steal games for Winnipeg in the playoffs, posting a .886 save percentage in the 2023 post-season, and an .870 save percentage in the 2024 playoffs. The Jets' defense corps also took a hit this summer with the departure of veteran blueliner Brenden Dillon, and although Winnipeg still has capable defenders, their depth on 'D', and on all positions really, has taken a notable hit.

In the improved Central Division, the Jets could wind up fighting for a wild-card berth. There's no guarantee they'll make the playoffs, and if they don't make it, major changes should be in order. If we had to guess, we'd say Winnipeg just barely makes it into the post-season and gets drubbed in the first round for the third straight year. We could be wrong, but the Jets look like a seriously flawed group, and that should be reflected in their results.

## *3. Will Winnipeg have a point-per-game player this season?*

The Jets came close to having a point-per-game player last season, as Scheifele put up 72 points in 74 games. And star winger Kyle Connor posted 61 points in 65 games last year, and the season prior, he had 80 points in 82 games. But other than that, Winnipeg's roster doesn't have the high-end talent that can regularly produce one point per night.

That may change when youngsters including Perfetti reach their peak years, but at the moment, the Jets don't have nearly enough elite point producers who can generate at least a point per game. They win the majority of their games via defense – the Jets finished the past season tied with Florida for the lowest goals-allowed-per-game average (2.41) – but their offense was simply mediocre, finishing 15th overall with a 3.16 goals-for-per-game average.

Winnipeg's defense-first approach should, in theory, serve them well, but if they can develop point-per-game players, they could finally unlock the door to playoff success. If not, they're going to have a disappointing season yet again. It can't be all about the 'D', but if they can improve their all-around game, they might be able to surprise people this year.

## **The Athletic**

<https://www.nytimes.com/athletic/5766205/2024/09/15/winnipeg-jets-gm-kevin-cheveldayoff/>

### ***One-on-one with Jets GM Kevin Cheveldayoff: 'We still have some work to get done'***

By Thomas Drance

PENTICTON, B.C. — It's been an eventful summer for Winnipeg Jets general manager Kevin Cheveldayoff.

Speculation has raged around extension-eligible star winger Nikolaj Ehlers, a pending unrestricted free agent on the other side of this season. One of the club's most promising young players, Cole Perfetti, is a restricted free agent and remains unsigned. The club swung a significant mid-summer trade involving Rutger McGroarty, an NCAA standout who had no intention of signing in Winnipeg, to acquire Brayden Yager from the Pittsburgh Penguins.

Every team is busy in the offseason, but it's been especially loud this summer around a Jets team that racked up 110 points last season, only to be eliminated in the first round of the Stanley Cup playoffs in five games at the hands of the Colorado Avalanche.

The Athletic caught up with Cheveldayoff at the Penticton Young Stars tournament for a one-on-one interview to reflect on what the organization learned from last season, how the Jets' various high-end prospects factor into their short-term plans and what the future holds for Perfetti, Ehlers and other Jets stars — including superstar goal scorer Kyle Conner.

This interview has been edited for clarity and readability.

*It was a busy summer for you, maybe even an unusually busy summer in terms of some late-summer trades, the Cole Perfetti situation, and some of the speculation around your pending UFAs. With all of that, are you just looking forward to seeing the puck drop?*

I think every summer there's always some sort of speculation, some sort of "where are things going to go." Every year you have UFAs, and every year you have different things.

We had a unique situation to deal with when it came to Rutger McGroarty, but getting Brayden Yager, we're ecstatic. With where we're at, it was ultimately an opportunity to get a right-handed centreman into our organization here, and one who I think fits into our timeline with how we want to augment the group of guys that we have right now.

I'm excited to watch him play. I'm excited to watch Colby Barlow play. I'm excited to watch all the young guys play, and see the steps that Nikita Chibrikov and Brad Lambert have taken. Elias Salomonsson is finally here from over in Europe.

So those are the things that give this tournament that excitement level, you know? We have a new coaching staff with Scott Arniel and some new assistant coaches in Davis Payne and Dean Chynoweth and they're all here watching. They have a keen interest in seeing some of the



younger guys and that's important for us. It's important too for our young guys to know that that's out there in front of them.

So again, everybody has a busy summer when it comes to free agents, and UFAs and RFAs, and for us summer isn't over yet. We still have some work to get done.

*To pivot to those young players, it seems like Lambert and Chibrikov are players in particular with a real opportunity to factor into your organization's short-term plans at the NHL level. What do you look to see from players at that stage of their career at a prospect tournament like this?*

I think you're looking to see that they've taken some steps to add some layers to their game.

They both have high-end offensive instincts and those kind of things, and they came up and got a game in the NHL at the tail end of last year, which we were really excited about giving them that opportunity. But you need to gain the coaches' confidence. At the next level, that's the biggest thing. You need that to get the opportunity to let your God-given talent show and continue to grow.

So having layers to your game, getting the puck out, doing the smart things, being able to do the things that maybe don't get you the attention of a coach sometimes, that's sometimes the most important thing that young players need to learn.

That was the thought process at development camp. It wasn't an evaluation camp, but when Scott Arniel came in and talked to the guys, he said, "This is what we want to teach these guys: play on the boards, corner play, the stuff like that, which is going to help them make that leap to the next level."

*With the younger tier of high-end forward prospect at this tournament — and I'm talking about Brayden Yager and Colby Barlow in particular — what would you need to see from them over the next handful of weeks if they're going to force themselves into the conversation and make it a tough decision for you and your staff to cut them?*

They're going to get a great opportunity at the next level here with the exhibition schedule.

You want them to feel comfortable. You want them to know that there's opportunities in front of them. But you want them to know that they can go be themselves, go play their game and let it all unfold.

If they spend too much time in their own head wondering about what's next, that's not helpful either. At the end of the day we're going to take our time, and make sure we put them in the right situations to succeed.

That was our mantra. It's been like that right from Day 1 when we came into the organization. We had Mark Scheifele, who we drafted, and he came into main camp — we didn't have a rookie tournament that year — and he led our team in scoring, but you could just tell that he wasn't quite ready yet.

Those are the things you watch and you learn. You need to have a level of patience, even if you're excited about wanting to accelerate them, and they're certainly excited about accelerating too beyond their years. I always say though it's more important that a player gets there for a long time, as opposed to just getting their quickly.

*On that theme, you've got a guy in Elias Salomonsson who popped over in Europe. He's got professional experience, but on a different ice surface and there are nuances he'll need to adjust to. He's a player who is a little bit older but maybe isn't accustomed to the North American game. Is there benefit for a player in Elias' situation to the slow-cooking approach, or do you give a player like that a chance to open some eyes with some key offseason departures on your back end?*

Yeah, I think he'll have a chance.

He came over here last year and had a very good rookie camp and a great experience over here. But we all just felt, including when we talked with his agents, and with the world juniors being over in Sweden last year, and him being on a good team, that instead of trying to put a 19-year-old in the American Hockey League to learn, let's go let him be a big fish over there. And they ended up winning the championship and he played a big part of it.

He's coming in here with a high level of confidence in himself and his own game. Arniel was coaching the defense last year at development camp with the Jets, and he came up to me and said, "Are you sure we need to send him back?" And I had to tell him, yes, I'm sure that's what we're going to do.

So he's here now, that's an exciting thing and he's going to have a great opportunity.

Bigger picture, Ville Heinola had a great training camp last year, made the team, but broke his ankle in the last exhibition game and didn't get a chance to play until after Christmas really. We need him to take that next step. Logan Stanley, we need him to take that next step. Those are things we're looking forward to.

*This tournament has now been around long enough that you have an assistant coach on the bench on Sunday in Morgan Klimchuk, who played at this tournament as a player. What does the future hold for the Young Stars tournament from the Winnipeg Jets perspective?*

It's always good when you have enough prospects to field a team and you're not just filling out the roster with tryout players. In previous years sometimes, when we've traded a lot of picks, we haven't had that same level of prospect depth and had more tryout guys and free agents. This year we're excited we have some legitimate prospects here to watch and see.

We're a believer in this tournament. We always have been. It's a great opportunity for our young players to put the jersey on for the first time. There's some expectations and there's, I'm sure, some anxiousness and anxiety too. There's a head coach sitting in the stands watching them, an American League coach on the bench. It's that next level.

All of these players have been really good at their own level, but now it's that funnel up. It's the first time for some of them when they look around and realize, Everyone around me is as good as me.

*When you think about this summer, and how your season ended last year, what did you learn and how did you digest what we saw in the playoffs in the five-game loss to the Colorado Avalanche?*

Playoffs are a different animal, obviously. We certainly feel like we left something on the table.

Adam Lowry, I saw, said this summer was too long and that was unexpected. As a group we felt really proud of how we played, getting 110 points. But something that was always preached and talked about in that room was about the style of play, the way to play. And we got away from it against Colorado.

Whether it was because we'd gone in there and beaten them 7-2 or because we'd won the season series, those are questions everyone is asking themselves. To a man, everyone in the exit meetings talked about getting 5 to 10 percent better individually so that collectively as a group we can take that next step.

So there was a slow burn, so to speak, about how something was left on the table.

That was last year. You can have the same team, but you have to put in the work. First you have to eliminate eight teams in your conference to make the playoffs, and then it's a whole different ballgame.

*Cole Perfetti, it's a situation that's lingering. It's common for second-contract guys that these talks get into mid-September without an agreement, and the start of training camp is often a pressure point — player is anxious to play, team wants him with the group. Are you hopeful that will be the case in this instance too?*

You're always hopeful. RFAs are a different animal. And sometimes in the NHL you want those systemic pressure points, because you know when something is going to happen or not. In this case, with RFAs of Perfetti's calibre, there sort of isn't. It's one of those things where you just hope that both sides can grab hold of something, and then something can happen quickly. We'll see.

*There's been a lot of speculation around some of your pending 2025 UFAs, with the headliner being Nikolaj Ehlers. A lot of speculation around him, but if we were having this conversation 12 months ago, I would've framed a similar question in a similar way around Connor Hellebuyck and Mark Scheifele and we know how that played out. Can you provide an update on extension efforts in Ehlers' case?*

There's always constant communication with different agents and different situations. And every one of them is unique.

Where things are at with Nik, it's kind of wait-and-see. It may be something we address at the end of the year, it may be something that gets addressed (sooner).

For right now our biggest focus is on winning. There were tons of conversations out there about whether we'd trade him or not trade him, or different things like that, but my sole focus in the summer with regards to Nik — whether it's with an extension, or without an extension — was, "What is going to be best for the Winnipeg Jets right now?" That's still the case, and it's going to be the case going forward.

If there's not a miraculous Hellebuyck- and Schiefele-style extension, that's fine. It's whatever is going to be best for the Jets this upcoming year to try and put us in a position to win.

*The other 2025 UFA I want to drill down on is Neal Pionk. He's been a good top-four contributor for you. He worked through some inconsistency last season, but he's also had seasons in Winnipeg like in that 2021 campaign where he was the best defender in the North Division. What do you see as his Jets future?*

I think he had some tough situations. Last year, going through the death of his best friend hit him very hard. He's the last person to ever use anything as an excuse, but we have a good relationship and we have great conversations. When we did the deal we did with him, we did it at the last minute.

I don't have any worries about him with respect to being a Jet. If we can find a way and if he can get his play to where he feels it's good and we feel it's good, but he's one of the most consummate professional out there. He plays the game hard. Two years ago he played with a broken foot for almost the entire year. Those are things nobody knows, he doesn't tell you, he just goes out there and puts his heart on the line.

*You were aggressive a few years ago when you had that contention window, but for the most part, I think it's fair to say that your actions have been pretty focused on sustainable winning. Year-over-year, be in the playoffs, be in the mix. When you consider that model, how crucial is a unique talent like Kyler Conner — who becomes extension-eligible beyond this season — to your vision of a team that's in the mix every year?*

Very much so. If you look at how he came up through the system, he's the poster child for player development.

He went to college and had one of the most exceptional years that a freshman can have. He could've won the Hobey Baker that year, then turned pro and played in the American Hockey League. It wasn't a situation where he just immediately dropped into the NHL.

He got his chances, got his feet wet a little bit. Even the next year, I remember Paul Maurice and I were talking and Paul said, "I'd like to send him down." And I said, "Well Paul, I'm going to tell you something right now, for us to be successful, he's going to have to be in our mix at some point in time." By the end of the year he was in our mix and helped us become tremendously successful.

When I look at the long-term vision for the Jets, I'd like to see that long-term vision include Kyle Conner.

**Sportsnet.ca**

<https://www.sportsnet.ca/nhl/article/quick-shifts-overcrowded-maple-leafs-sets-up-fights-for-jobs/>

***Quick Shifts: Overcrowded Maple Leafs roster sets up fights for jobs***

By Luke Fox

A quick mix of the things we gleaned from the week of hockey, serious and less so, and rolling four lines deep. Guess who's back. Back again...

11. When he wasn't negotiating his extension with Jets GM Kevin Cheveldayoff or training for a hopeful breakout season under new coach Scott Arniel, Cole Perfetti spent the summer golfing.

Like, a lot.

Sixty rounds as one of about 20 NHL and AHLers — Vince Dunn, Brandon Tanev, Mason Marchment, Ty Dellandrea, and Wyatt Johnson among them — who walk the links of the highly rated and challenging Coppinwood course in Uxbridge, Ont.

"I started this summer at an 8 (handicap), and I got it down to a 2.5," Perfetti says proudly.

The 22-year-old forward could hardly break 80 last summer, but his driver started clicking and now he's posting 73 or 74 on a good day.

"Our course has a high rating, so you shoot 78, it's equivalent to shooting 74. So, my cap was going down like crazy. Threw a couple 74s in there. Am I really 2.5? I don't know. But it was a great summer. Played a lot of golf," he says with a smile.

If his hockey game improves that drastically, we could be talking about Perfetti threatening 30 goals.