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<https://www.nhl.com/jets/news/three-things-jets-drop-preseason-opener>

Three things - Jets drop preseason opener Miller and Barlow score in Jets loss to Wild

By Jamie Thomas

WINNIPEG – A tough start to the preseason schedule for the Winnipeg Jets as they ran into a hot goaltender at Canada Life Centre in a 5-2 loss to the Minnesota Wild.

The Wild's goaltender of the future, Jesper Wallstedt, was outstanding from start to finish making 38 saves. Colin Miller and Colby Barlow scored for the Jets. Kaapo Kahkonen made 23 saves for the Jets who will travel to Edmonton Sunday to face the Oilers.

1. BRAD LAMBERT

The Jets first round pick from 2022 centred a line that featured two veteran forwards in Gabe Vilardi and Alex Iafallo. Lambert also received plenty of power play time and looked very comfortable out on the ice. The Finnish forward made his NHL debut last April and ended up recording his first NHL point (assist). Lambert made the choice to attend the Young Stars Classic in Penticton to get a head start before main camp began and it showed.

2. FLEURY FAMILY GROWING

One of the new members of the Jets organization is defenceman Haydn Fleury who made his Winnipeg debut tonight. The Saskatchewan product became a father for the second time this morning and still found a way to come to the rink tonight to play. Scott Arniel gave Fleury the option to make his debut tomorrow in Edmonton, but he chose to get it out of the way. The 28-year-old said he wanted to play on the same day that his son was born.

3. SLOPPY AFFAIR

The Jets dressed a younger lineup tonight because the preseason started a little bit earlier than usual and the Wild also went the route of giving younger players opportunities. Because of that the game looked like each teams first game in quite some time but there were some positives to take from the loss.

"There was systematic stuff that we did that I liked, some pretty good reads defending. At times we hemmed them in with some good forecheck and some offence," said Jets head coach Scott Arniel.

"They got the two quick power play goals (in the first), there is some sloppiness in execution which you are going to see at this time of year."

Canadian Press

<https://www.tsn.ca/nhl/jesper-wallstedt-helps-minnesota-wild-knock-off-winnipeg-jets-in-pre-season-test-1.2177655>

Wallstedt helps Wild knock off Jets in pre-season test

By The Canadian Press

WINNIPEG — Jesper Wallstedt left a lot of Jets hopefuls shaking their heads on Saturday night.

The Minnesota goalie stopped 38 of 40 shots as the Wild whipped Winnipeg 5-2 in an NHL pre-season game.

"I felt good," Wallstedt said. "It was fun to be back playing games. I felt confident and I felt committed to the job. It's been a long summer. We finished a little early last year.

"... It's good to be back playing games and I thought the team played really good as well and took care of our chances at forward."

Ben Jones, Jakub Lauko, Graeme Clarke, Daemon Hunt and Caeden Bankier scored for Minnesota.

Wallstedt stopped 28 of 29 shots through the first 40 minutes, 18 in the second period.

"Yeah, I think it just kept me in the game and kept me awake," he said. "I think I got a lot to do, especially in the second period. It just kept my head in the game and it kept me focused on the job. I felt confident and I felt comfortable in this scenario."

Colby Barlow and Colin Miller replied for Winnipeg.

"I thought Jesper was really solid," said Wild coach John Hynes. "He looked pretty calm in the net. I thought he made some saves when we had some breakdowns, and he came up with some big ones.

"In the NHL, you have to be able to fight through traffic, you have to be able to find tips and rebounds and things like that. When he was called upon in those situations, he did a good job."

Kaapo Kahkonen made 23 saves on 28 shots for Winnipeg at the Canada Life Centre.

"I liked a lot of things we did tonight," Hynes said. "I thought we played a pretty fast, direct game, a lot of the components that we implemented in the first couple of days of training camp. I thought the guys did a good job of that and the other parts of the game that we didn't cover, I felt that they were able to use their instincts and play well.

"I thought both special teams were effective tonight — something we know that we need to be good at in the pre-season going into the regular season."

The Wild scored two power-play goals and killed five penalties.

Barlow scored with 46 seconds left to make the score look respectable.

Jones gave the Wild a 5-1 lead early in the third period. He intercepted a Mason Shaw pass behind the net and slipped the puck past Kahkonen for an unassisted marker.

"I'm not going to lie, it wasn't the prettiest effort on my part by any means," said Shaw, a former Wild defenceman. "Obviously, I'd like some things back. I'd rather not pass the puck to their team when they score a goal. We move forward and get back to work tomorrow."

Jets coach Scott Arniel was expecting some sloppy play.

“The two power-play goals, there’s some sloppiness on execution, which you are going to see at this time of year,” he said. “Pretty much told the young guys just learn from it.”

The Wild took a 4-0 lead when Lauko blocked a Miller shot at the Minnesota blue line, then scored on the breakaway.

Minnesota boosted the score to 3-1 almost midway through the middle frame. Clarke’s shot deflected off a Jet near the front of the net and past Kahkonen.

Miller beat Wallstedt with a cannon from the point with 1:03 left in the opening frame to pull within 2-1. Vladislav Namestnikov assisted.

The Wild had taken a 2-0 first-period lead, converting a pair of power plays. With Hayden Fleury off for tripping, Hunt beat Kahkonen with a slapshot from the blue line. Luke Toporowski and Ryder Ritchie assisted.

Minnesota had opened the scoring on the power play. With Alex Lafallo off for slashing, Bankier pounced on a puck that had bounced off Elias Salomonsson’s skate and beat Kahkonen from in front of the net for an unassisted goal.

NOTES

Finnish defenceman Ville Heinola suffered a setback when it was discovered that an infection had set in where he had had surgery on an ankle fractured during last season’s pre-season. He may require another surgery. That will be updated next week. ... Winnipeg’s Fleury reportedly played despite his wife giving birth to a son on Friday night. The defenceman who played for the Tampa Bay Lightning last season, was signed as a free agent the past summer. ... The Jets held a moment of silence for Johnny and Matthew Gaudreau, who were killed by a reportedly drunken driver while cycling.

NEXT UP

Jets: Visit the Edmonton Oilers on Sunday afternoon.

Wild: Visit the Dallas Stars on Wednesday.

The Hockey News

<https://thehockeynews.com/nhl/winnipeg-jets/game-day/jets-defensive-miscues-lead-to-5-2-loss-against-wild-in-preseason-opener>

Jets' Defensive Miscues lead to 5-2 Loss Against Wild in Preseason Opener Winnipeg Jets drop preseason opener 5-2 to the Minnesota Wild

By Jake Tye

The Jets have a history of getting out of starting off slow with just two wins over their past six preseason openers heading into Saturday's game. The game was close to start but an early miscommunication on a loose puck between three Jets players in front of starter Kaapo Kahkonen gave 21-year-old Wild prospect Caedan Bankier an easy open look with the goalie scrambling for a 1-0 lead, that set the tone for the remainder of the game.

It is the preseason, which means players need to be reminded of the fundamentals like breaking up screens in front of your goaltender. Three of the seven goals scored were because of netfront screens including the Wild's second goal scored by Manitoba native Daemon Hunt.

Jets prospect Nikita Chibrikov responded with a screen of his own that helped blueliner Colin Miller let loose a slapshot for the Jets first goal. The Wild quickly responded with a flukey shot on net that made it past the goaltender due to another screen and gave the Wild a 3-1 lead.

If not for the goal, it would have been a much worse night for Miller as he followed up his goal by making costly turnovers in key situations and failing to read an incoming Wild player in forward Jakub Lauko near the blueline, who blocked his shot attempt and took it the other way for the Wild's fourth goal.

Things started to feel hopeless when 25-year-old forward Mason Shaw made a turnover directly to Minnesota's Ben Jones, that was taken in front and put past Kahkonen for the fifth time and extended to lead to 5-1. All five goals were scored off low shots and although some weren't entirely his fault, Kahkonen has to work on this before the start of the season.

Jets 2023 first round pick, Colby Barlow, sent fans home slightly more happy as he managed to get a quick shot off a face off and score Winnipeg second and final game in the game.

Some of the bright spots for the Jets in this one were Chibrikov, who made a clutch screen for the teams first goal and highly-touted prospect Brayden Yager, who was generating most of the teams scoring chances that lead to a last minue assist

The Jets will have until Wednesday to look over the tape and make adjustments before their next preseason game against the Oilers on Wednesday.

Sportsnet.ca

<https://www.sportsnet.ca/nhl/article/spotlight-hovers-over-lambert-with-open-opportunities-at-jets-camp/>

Spotlight hovers over Lambert with open opportunities at Jets camp

By Jacob Stoller

WINNIPEG — The spotlight is hovering over Brad Lambert at training camp.

“I know [media members] are talking to him lots about these situations that are available,” Winnipeg Jets head coach Scott Arniel said Saturday morning.

Ever since GM Kevin Cheveldayoff proclaimed on July 1 — after failing to re-sign Sean Monahan — that there was going to be an opportunity for young prospects to win spots at camp, fans have been buzzing about the possibility of Lambert becoming the team's second-line centre.

But Lambert attests that this year's training camp is no different than previous ones.

“Every time I’ve come to camp, I’ve believed in myself and you know, that hasn’t changed,” Lambert said in a one-on-one interview with Sportsnet.ca on Saturday. “So for me, it’s just about taking it one day at a time, working my ass off and trying to compete for a spot.”

By all accounts, Lambert, the 30th-overall pick at the 2022 draft, has an inside track to line up below Mark Scheifele on Winnipeg’s depth chart.

The 20-year-old is coming off an incredible 2023-24 campaign with the AHL’s Manitoba Moose, recording 55 points in 64 games en route to being named to the league’s All-Rookie team. Two years removed from seeing his draft stock plummet — after being initially pegged as a top-10 talent — Lambert recorded the most points of any U-20 AHL scorer, outscoring top-10 picks like Shane Wright and Marco Kasper. He capped off his draft-year-plus-two season by making his NHL debut on April 18 against the Vancouver Canucks, where he recorded an assist.

Having a talent like Lambert as a top-six fixture could be a difference-maker for a Jets team that saw Monahan and Tyler Toffoli depart in free agency. Lambert is an elite skater who possesses beautiful edgework, high-end puck skills and a quick release on his wrist shot.

“He’s so comfortable and confident with the puck on his stick,” Jets defenceman Dylan DeMelo told Sportsnet.ca. “He’s not afraid to make plays.”

However, as exciting as Lambert’s skillset is, his raw talent alone won’t secure him a second-line centre job in the NHL.

“One thing that everybody always has to remember — if you get put into that second line centre [spot], you know who you’re facing, you’re facing probably the other team’s top two lines. You’re playing against the elite defencemen on that team,” Arniel said. “So it’s a different game. It isn’t just going out and playing against your peers and [similar] experienced guys, you’re getting the best of the best from the opposition. That’s the next step for all young players to become regulars in the NHL. Can you handle that competition you’re running into?”

Lambert spent his entire summer focusing on just that while working out in Aurora Ont. with hockey-training guru Gary Roberts. On top of scrimmaging against the likes of Connor McDavid and Leon Draisaitl, Lambert focused on filling out his 6-foot-1 frame — he gained eight pounds this summer — to improve his strength in the faceoff circle and in board battles down low. Lambert’s raw tools may be NHL-ready, but he knows it’s about more than just that.

“I think I’ve improved on my attention to detail,” he said. “Being able to play on the defensive side of the puck, being reliable and being able to react quicker. I’ve tried to evolve every aspect of my game.”

Offensive production aside, Lambert’s biggest progression last year was his decision making.

“When I was at [Jets training camp] the first time, I think I tried to go through too many guys by myself,” Lambert said. “You’ve got to do other things, like using little give-and-gos, or chipping it forward. It’s hard to beat five guys by yourself at the pro level. It’s pretty clear when you have some space to take a guy on and I obviously want to do that but there’s also times when you’ve got to just chip it in when there’s no room.”

While the Jets have typically been known to slow-cook their prospects in the minors — for better or worse — their need for a second-line centre spot may force them to pivot from the uber-

patient approach they typically take. If Lambert can prove that he can be an asset for the Jets offensively, should they still re-assign him to the minors if his defensive game still needs a bit of refining?

“If he makes this team out of camp and he’s a centre, it’s going to be a little trial by fire against some pretty good darn centres in this league, but you know what? That’s how I think you learn the most,” DeMelo said.

While the Jets’ pursuit of a playoff spot may deter them from giving Lambert so much leash, it’s a gamble that could pay off and put the team’s largely inactive free agency in the rear-view mirror.

But before the Jets can properly ponder how much runway they’ll give him in the regular season, Lambert needs to have a lights-out training camp. And the Jets are giving him ample opportunity to do so, placing two experienced NHLers — Gabriel Vilardi and Alex Iafallo — on his wing for the team’s first pre-season game Saturday against the Minnesota Wild.

“If he doesn’t make our team out of camp, it’s not like ‘oh no, Brad Lambert didn’t make the team.’ He’ll be with us up here, one way or another, one day,” DeMelo said.

Winnipeg Sun

<https://winnipeg.sun.com/sports/jets-fleury-wasnt-missing-saturdays-game-and-with-good-reason>

Jets' Fleury wasn't missing Saturday's game, and with good reason

By Scott Billeck

Hadyn Fleury was determined not to miss his first chance to make a first impression.

“I’d barely gotten the options out of my mouth, and he said, ‘I want to play (on Saturday night),” Winnipeg Jets head coach Scott Arniel said after Winnipeg’s 5-2 preseason loss to the Minnesota Wild at Canada Life Centre.

The veteran defenceman would have been forgiven if he had skipped out. In addition to playing Saturday, his options were to play Sunday in Edmonton instead or take the weekend off and get back into the lineup on Wednesday night.

Fleury wasn’t having any of it, and for good reason.

“Honestly, I thought it would be cool to play on the day my son was born,” Fleury said after playing 19:42 in his Jets debut.

Fleury’s whirlwind Saturday began at 10:45 on Friday night when his wife, Jaid, woke him up. She was in labour and the couple were off to the hospital.

At 1:07 a.m., Ledger Duke Fleury—the couple’s second child, named after the late Heath Ledger (Fleury is a big Dark Knight fan) and Duke University—was welcomed into the world.

“That was the start of the night,” Fleury said. “We got settled in our room by 3 a.m., got a couple hours of sleep. He woke up at 5:30 a.m., so I was up all day with him and then went home to have a pre-game meal and a two-hour nap and then came to the rink.”

Fighting for a job came secondary in his mind. It’s the memory the 28-year-old first-rounder will never forget.

And he hadn’t played in a while.

“The last game that I played, I ran into a ref accidentally and didn’t get to play the rest of the year,” Fleury said, referencing an incident in April, when playing for the Tampa Bay Lightning, where he and referee Steve Kozari collided, leading to the latter being stretchered off the ice.

Fleury’s injury was undisclosed.

“I was really anxious to get out there and get back to it,” he said. “So that was kind of my reasoning.”

Arniel congratulated Fleury, a Carlyle, Sask., product who’ll forever have a connection to Winnipeg now, by getting him to read out the starting lineup ahead of the game. His name was among the five who took the opening faceoff.

“For him to have a long night and then get in the game like that, you tip your hat to him,” Arniel said.

Thoughts from the game:

- Winnipeg is Fleury’s fifth stop since breaking into the league in 2017-18. It’s not the normal path of a seventh-overall pick. But Fleury’s journeyman status meant he arrived in Winnipeg with a few familiar faces in the dressing room. “I played with Nino (Niederreiter) in Carolina, (Mason Appleton) in Seattle, (Vladislav Namestnikov) in Tampa. So I knew those three. And I knew (Adam Lowry) and (Josh Morrissey) just from being around Calgary in the summertime so familiar with those guys. After you’ve played in the NHL for a bit there’s not really a team you can go to where you don’t know somebody on the team. The guys have been great, my family’s felt really welcome by all the support in the city, so we’re really happy to be here.”

- Fleury, meanwhile, revealed one of the deciding factors of signing a one-year, two-way deal with the Jets was that both the big club and its AHL farm team reside in the same city. “I have two kids now, and I don’t want to be away from them,” Fleury said. “Family comes first to me. I really want to be around my kids as much as I can. That was a huge decision in it. Having friends and my wife having friends in this city, her just coming off a pregnancy, The support system is huge.”

- Fellow defenceman Colin Miller planted his flag in the ground on Saturday, scoring a goal using his booming slap shot, and anchoring the first-unit power play, showing off his quick decision-making skills to efficiently move the puck around and keep the penalty-killers guessing. Miller, paired with Fleury during the game, led all Jets in ice time with 22:57.

- With Ville Heinola’s unfortunate ankle infection, Fleury and Miller are the frontrunners to become Winnipeg’s third pairing to start the season. Miller should see some second-unit power-play time as well.

- Brad Lambert had a solid yet unspectacular night playing between veterans Alex Iafallo and Gabriel Vilardi.
- There's an interesting balance there to navigate. Lambert is looking to win Winnipeg's second-line centre job. Iafallo and Vilardi are roster mainstays looking to make it through camp unscathed. It could be viewed as two things unintentionally working against each other. "The reason why I put (Brad Lambert) with (Alex Iafallo) and (Gabriel Vilardi) was so that they're two veteran guys, situations that they can talk to him," Arniel said. "They were talking to him quite a bit, actually. I wanted him to be a little bit more comfortable. Same thing with (Nikita Chibrikov) playing with veterans. So they can go out and do what they do, show us what they can do. And both did, actually. I liked both of those guys. I thought they were both good. For a first game, that's pretty much what you expect."
- Lambert displayed a smooth first touch on a few pucks and was perhaps a tad indecisive on an early power play. He found moments to get his shot off and use his speed.
- Chibrikov isn't afraid to hold onto pucks and shoot, finding his way into space to get his shot off or working himself into some soft ice to receive a pass for a scoring chance. The kid's got a motor as well. Seeing what he can do against some stiffer competition as camp rolls on will be good. He could be an injury—or an elongated Cole Perfetti standoff—away from a roster spot.

<https://winnipeg.sun.com/sports/jets-bauer-inspired-by-friend-former-teammate-rempe-journey-to-nhl>

Jets' Bauer 'inspired' by friend, former teammate Rempe's journey to NHL

By Scott Billeck

They first became junior teammates and then best friends. Eventually, both realized the dream of being professional hockey players.

So, of course, Tyrel Bauer and Matt Rempe have both pondered the question.

What if?

When you're two big boys born to play hockey and made to fight for their jobs— quite literally, at times—it's only logical they've pondered whether they'd ever meet face-to-face, gloves off, sticks on the ground, squared up to one another.

"It's been discussed," Bauer said.

Tough guys are wired a little bit differently. And the two Alberta boys, Bauer from Cochrane and Rempe from Calgary, are cut from the same cloth.

Rempe burst onto the NHL scene last season with the New York Rangers and quickly made a name for himself as one of the league's toughest individuals.

At 6-foot-7, 241 pounds, he attracted the attention of some of the league's other heavyweights, including Nicholas Deslauriers, Matt Martin and perhaps the pound-for-pound king, Winnipegger Ryan Reaves.

Bauer sat back and enjoyed the show.

“It was really special,” Bauer said. “We’re similar, we don’t play the same position, but we’re similar people, been through the same hardships almost coming up.”

The news that Rempe was getting his NHL shot came while he and Bauer were on the AHL’s all-star break together.

“Together” is a running theme for the duo.

Bauer and Rempe were drafted back-to-back in 2020, with the former going to the Jets 164th in the sixth round and Rempe to the Rangers at 165th.

“I knew that some fireworks were coming,” Bauer said. “He probably knew there might have been some fireworks coming.”

And they did.

Rempe’s debut last season came on the heels of former Jets captain Blake Wheeler’s season-ending leg injury.

Rempe made NHL history when he stepped onto the ice at MetLife Stadium in New Jersey, becoming the first player to make their debut at an outdoor game.

Facing the New York Islanders, Rempe dropped the gloves for the first time as an NHLer against Martin, a veteran of 955 games and more than 150 fights.

Rempe won. Handily, at that, earning a nod from Martin when the two separated.

The moment carried some emotional significance, too.

“A really special part to him and his family, and for me, too, was that it was the sixth anniversary of his father’s passing,” Bauer said.

Rom Rempe died from a heart attack on Feb. 18, 2018.

Bauer and Rempe became teammates with the Seattle Thunderbirds a year and a half later.

“That’s something we spent some time working on together,” Bauer said. “It was really emotional. I was just so happy for him (making it to the NHL), to see how far he’d come.

“He’s not the kind of guy that guys are going to bat for, or that is getting media attention (during his junior days) or stuff like that. So, to see him keep climbing, watching his work ethic every single day, and see him push through was an inspiration.”

Bauer has yet to realize his NHL dream.

After becoming captain of the Thunderbirds, Bauer has played two seasons with the Manitoba Moose. During that time, the 6-foot-3, 206-pound blue-liner has battled a couple of injuries and earned a reputation, like Rempe, as a hard-nosed customer who isn’t afraid to chuck his fists around.

Bauer looks up to Rempe, and not just because of the four-inch height difference.

“Just knowing that if you keep working, you keep breaking barriers... you know you’re going to make mistakes, there’s going to be growing pains along the way, but if you just believe in yourself and keep working, it’s going to happen,” Rempe said.

It’s become a motto for the duo, and they continually bounce ideas and advice off one another.

They don’t train at the same gym, but they do boxing together (including spending time together this summer with former NHL enforcer Georges Laraque), pilates, and some recovery work.

“I’m really fortunate to have Matt as a friend,” Bauer said.

So, to answer an obvious question, yes, they’d probably test each other’s craft if the opportunity presented itself in the NHL.

Who’d win?

“That’s the big question,” Bauer said.

And he had said enough—no need for bulletin board material.

But any future fisticuffs wouldn’t be to glorify the violent nature of fighting.

“We know what we’ve got to do,” Bauer said. “We’ve got a job to do, a role to play. We take a lot of pride in that, being that competitor, being willing to do stuff that other guys aren’t willing to do.”

Bauer doesn’t fit the stereotypical mould of a meathead fighter. He understands and has considered the risks.

“It’s a fair question and it comes up,” he said. “It’s risk versus reward. We have a window in front of us. We know we play a physical sport. Concussions and stuff like that can happen at any time. We might be putting ourselves at a higher risk in these situations, but it’s not at the top of our minds. We’re just going out there and competing, standing up for our teammates, doing it for the crest on our front and the love of the team.

“If things happen down the line, you address them then. The risk is fairly even for anybody stepping on the sheet at any time. We’re just doing as much as we can with what we’ve got.”

And Bauer is cognizant of his path to the NHL.

“I know my style of play and the role I play, it takes longer sometimes,” he said. “My goal is to improve every year, year on year, day after day, week after week, game after game. Just get better. Learn. Really be a sponge.”

And whatever happens in the future—on the ice or off of it—one thing remains true between Bauer and Rempe: “Nothing could take away our friendship.”