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<https://www.nhl.com/jets/news/three-things-big-offensive-night-for-jets>

Three things - Big offensive night for Jets Winnipeg had six different goal scorers in 6-1 win over Edmonton

By Jamie Thomas

WINNIPEG – It was all Winnipeg, all the time at Canada Life Centre tonight during a 6-1 Jets win over the Edmonton Oilers. The Jets (1-1-1) got goals from Nikolaj Ehlers, Kyle Connor, Colin Miller, Neal Pionk, Brad Lambert and Adam Lowry. Winnipeg went 2-for-3 on the power play and went 5-for-5 on the penalty kill. Kaapo Kahkonen got his first win as a Jet making 26 saves

1. GOOD START

The Jets dressed a veteran heavy lineup this evening against the Oilers, and they came out flying in the first period. Winnipeg generated five high danger scoring chances according to Natural Stat Trick and if not for Edmonton goaltender Stuart Skinner, it could have been 3-0 after the opening 20. Nikolaj Ehlers was the only one to beat Skinner finishing off a nice passing play with Vlad Namestnikov.

2. MORE OF THE SAME IN THE SECOND

Winnipeg really took over in the middle frame with some highlight reel goals. Kyle Connor was sent in on a breakaway by Mark Scheifele and Connor went five hole on Skinner at 4:14. Around seven minutes later, Colin Miller wisted home a power play goal for a three goal Jets lead. Neal Pionk closed out the scoring in the middle frame skating in from the point and scored on his backhand to make it 4-0.

3. HUGE NIGHT FOR PIONK

The Jets top two defensive pairs were on display tonight with Pionk and Dylan Samberg, Josh Morrissey and Dylan DeMelo. Not only did Pionk score a beautiful goal, but he also added three assists. When talking about his goal, Pionk touched on the great set up by Rasmus Kupari.

“Yeah, it was a great play by Kuups. I knew he saw me. It was a matter of him using a skill set to get it to me, and he did,” said Pionk.

“Underrated part of that play is Parker Ford parked out in front of the net. So, he probably, that's probably only reason the goal goes in. So that's the way I saw it.”

Winnipeg Free Press

<https://www.winnipegfreepress.com/breakingnews/2024/09/25/jets-light-up-oilers>

Jets' big win nothing to get worked up over

By: Mike McIntyre

It's the type of performance that makes you think the sky could be the limit for these Winnipeg Jets.

But at the risk of raining on any potential parade, a dominating 6-1 preseason victory over the Edmonton Oilers on Wednesday night at Canada Life Centre should be taken with a significant grain of salt given the quality of opposition.

No Connor McDavid, Leon Draisaitl, Zach Hyman or Ryan Nugent-Hopkins. No Evan Bouchard, Darnell Nurse or Mattias Ekholm on the back-end. And, as it turned out, no chance against a stronger Jets squad that included plenty of star power.

Still, give the home side credit for taking full advantage of the situation. They flexed their muscles in all facets of the game and showed why, when firing on all cylinders, they can be a real handful.

"It's all about good habits," said defenceman Neal Pionk, who led the way with a goal and three assists. "So doesn't matter who you're playing in preseason, roster wise, doesn't matter who you're playing with. Got to create good habits and get into shape for the year."

Nikolaj Ehlers, Kyle Connor, Colin Miller, Brad Lambert and Adam Lowry had the other goals, while Kaapo Kahkonen stopped 26 of 27 shots he faced as Winnipeg improved to 1-1-1 in exhibition play.

Here's a look at some of the key developments from this one:

1) *Not bad for Brad*: How do you keep Lambert off the opening-night roster if he continues to perform like this? It wasn't his goal and an assist that stood out, although offensive production is expected when you're skating in a top-six role and given power play time, as the 20-year-old was on this night.

But how about the nifty net-front drive that opened up all kinds of space for Ehlers to put Winnipeg on the board in the first period. By taking an Oilers defenceman to the side of the crease with him, Ehlers had nothing but time to convert on a terrific feed from Vlad Namestnikov. He also had a speedy chip-and-chase play that drew a penalty.

"Every time he steps on the ice, it's a learning curve for him," said coach Scott Arniel. "I really liked a lot of what he did. When he has the puck, he can be dynamic with it."

There's a good chance Cole Perfetti, fresh off signing his two-year contract extension on Monday, is going to get a shot playing with Ehlers and Namestnikov. But imagine a scenario where the versatile Namestnikov moves down the lineup and Perfetti, Ehlers and Lambert are given some runway.

2) *Top line shines*: The No. 1 trio of Connor, Mark Scheifele and Gabe Vilardi were excellent in this one, controlling possession and zone time.

According to NaturalStatTrick, the trio had a Corsi share of 69.57 per cent to lead all lines. That's really good.

Injuries to Vilardi and Connor last year meant limited playing time together, but Arniel obviously wants to see more.

Scheifele sprung Connor for a breakaway goal that made it 2-0, and they generated plenty of other quality looks and chances. Scheifele also went 15-for-19 in faceoffs, which meant they were almost always starting with the puck when he was on the ice.

“Puck possession. It’s one thing about them is they’ve got chemistry. When they have the puck, they’re hard to get it away from,” said Arniel. “They read off each other really well. Obviously that was the first game for them being together and you see that chemistry pretty quick.”

3) *Offence from the defence*: We all know Josh Morrissey can drive play from the back-end, as proven by his last two seasons (76 and 69 points). But the Jets will be a much more dangerous group if he can have a little help in that department.

Pionk, playing in his first preseason game of the year (along with Morrissey, Scheifele, Connor, Ehlers, Lowry and Dylan DeMelo), was a force in this one. After setting up Miller on the power play for the 3-0 goal midway through the second period, he scored one of his own on a nifty deke set up by Rasmus Kupari’s backhand pass.

Pionk, who had the secondary helper on Connor’s tally, then fed Lambert — again on the power play — to make it 5-0 early in the third. Add it all up and that’s a four-point effort from the veteran defenceman who is entering the final year of his contract and should have no shortage of motivation because of that.

Speaking of Miller, that’s now two goals in two preseason games for last year’s trade deadline addition who never seemed to gain the confidence of former bench boss Rick Bowness and barely played. It’s a different story under Arniel, and Miller seems poised for a big year with his big shot and mobility on that third-pairing.

4) *Kaapo’s Crease*: It wasn’t the best debut last Saturday as Kahkonen was beaten five times on 28 shots as the Jets lost 5-2 to the Minnesota Wild. When Eric Comrie followed that up with a 25-save effort the next night in a 3-2 overtime loss in Edmonton, you wondered if the competition for the backup goalie spot had taken a bit of a turn?

The fact Kahkonen got a second start in three games tells you the Jets are high on him, and he certainly showed plenty of poise and confidence in this one. He was 3:28 from a shutout before Connor Brown — one of the few regulars in Edmonton’s lineup — tipped a point shot past him.

With Vezina Trophy winner Connor Hellebuyck set to play at least two of the final preseason games — and maybe more — it would seem like Kahkonen has likely locked up the No. 2 spot, with Comrie most likely destined for waivers and the Manitoba Moose.

5) *Extra, extra*: It was a great night for new assistant coaches Davis Payne and Dean Chynoweth, as the re-tooled special teams units they are in charge of both looked excellent. Payne’s power play went 2-for-3, with plenty of crisp puck movement and player rotation. And Chynoweth’s penalty kill not only went 5-for-5, but Lowry’s goal came shorthanded after a giveaway by Oilers goaltender Collin Delia (who had relieved Stuart Skinner after 40 minutes of play).

After drawing 13,787 for Saturday’s first home preseason game, a crowd of 12,367 took this one in. Winnipeg has one more home date, next Wednesday against Calgary, sandwiched in between road games against the Wild (this Friday) and Flames (next Friday).

<https://www.winnipegfreepress.com/breakingnews/2024/09/25/vilardi-looking-to-change-the-narrative>

***Vilardi looking to change the narrative
Oft-injured forward sets sights on staying healthy, playing full season***

By: Ken Wiebe

Gabe Vilardi is well into a wide-ranging discussion with reporters when he delivers the money quote.

When it comes to the highly productive right winger with the Winnipeg Jets, there's a narrative he just can't seem to shake — though Vilardi is hopeful this is going to be the season that finally changes.

"I only played pretty much half the season and that's been my thing for the majority (of his career)," said Vilardi. "I really haven't been able to see what I can do in a full season. That's something that motivates me. It's exciting and it's also a challenge and I need to get over that."

The talent has never been in question for Vilardi, chosen 11th overall in the 2017 NHL Draft by the Los Angeles Kings.

It's the main reason Vilardi came to Winnipeg in the blockbuster Pierre-Luc Dubois deal, along with fellow forwards Alex Lafallo and Rasmus Kupari and a high second-round draft pick in 2024 that turned into defence prospect Alfons Freij.

When healthy last season, Vilardi was a force.

Playing top-line minutes for the first time in his fifth NHL season, Vilardi finished fifth on the Jets in goals (22) and seventh in points (36) despite being limited to 47 games.

It doesn't take a math major to project Vilardi could easily find himself in the 35-to-40 goal range and 65-to-75 point range should he stay healthy and play close to a full season.

"He's a super cerebral player. Great in front of the net, great hands. He's got great skill and a great feel for the game," said Jets defenceman Dylan DeMelo. "He's such a big part of the power play, too. When he was in, it changed the whole look of it. With that presence of being able to take pucks to the net, being able to tip pucks and be around there.

"He's a great player and I think he's got a lot more to give. He's still scratching the surface on the type of player he can be."

Vilardi's injury issues date back to junior hockey and his career high for games played at the professional level is 63, a number he hit during the 2022-23 season when he was still with the Kings.

After the June 2023 trade, Vilardi expressed his enthusiasm about the fresh opportunity to be a key contributor. After opening the 2023-24 campaign on the top line, he suffered a freak knee injury after former teammate Blake Lizotte fell on him in the third game of the season.

Vilardi didn't play again until Nov. 30. Eventually, he found his offensive groove but the early injury compounded the challenge of joining a new team.

"Obviously, a tough spot. You get traded and get injured in the third game of the year. It's not ideal coming to a new team," said Vilardi, who also had an issue with an enlarged spleen that kept him out for another month late in the season. "It's so long ago, that it is what it is and it's a whole new season."

Vilardi has been skating alongside Mark Scheifele and Kyle Connor for a good chunk of training camp on what is expected to be the Jets' top line.

Playing together last season for a high number of the 51 games he played in (including the five in the opening round of the Stanley Cup playoffs) gave Vilardi a good sense of how he can complement Scheifele and Connor — both of whom play at a high pace, given their strong skating ability.

"The best players, they bring it every night," said Vilardi. "To your point about dragging 55 (Scheifele) and 81 (Connor) around, sometimes I feel like I'm the one getting dragged around. Last year was my first year playing such top minutes like that. For this year, my goal would be to stay healthy and then try to be more consistent in my game."

When asked about what he worked on during his summer training, Vilardi discussed the importance of puck protection.

"Playing with (Scheifele) and watching him, he's so good in the corners at using his body. That's something I tried to work on a little bit," Vilardi said. "Then, I tried to work on my shot a bit more. I had a tough time scoring from more than 10 feet away from the net, so I've got to score a few more (from distance)."

His ability to go to the net and win battles along the wall is sure to serve Vilardi well this season.

"Gabe's good at that," said Jets head coach Scott Arniel. "He uses his leverage. He uses his size. He uses his butt. He uses his long reach. He uses all those things so that defenders don't get pucks from him. The biggest thing for him is that, hopefully, we're getting 82 of them (games) this year."

Accomplishing that goal would be beneficial to both the Jets and Vilardi, who is entering the final year of his contract and will be a restricted free agent at the end of the season.

"If you've been injured over your career, or if you've had lots of times where it's knocked you out of lineups, you get very frustrated by it," said Arniel. "You get down on yourself at times. It's almost like it's your fault, but he's in a good spot now and he's excited and, like you said, he's someone we're talking about 82 games. That's his goal. He's not talking about 40 goals, he's talking about playing 82 games."

Winnipeg Sun

<https://winnipeg.sun.com/sports/veteran-heavy-jets-pummel-inexperienced-oilers>

Veteran-heavy Jets pummel inexperienced Oilers

By Scott Billeck

A veteran-heavy Winnipeg Jets squad feasted on inexperience on Wednesday night at Canada Life Centre.

Winnipeg scored six times, including twice on the power play, as they cruised to a 6-1 win over the visiting Edmonton Oilers.

Neal Pionk had a four-point night, scoring and adding three helpers, while Brad Lambert and Colin Miller potted power-play markers.

Kyle Connor, Adam Lowry and Nikolaj Ehlers also scored, while Kaapo Kahkonen had a strong night between the pipes, stopping 26 shots to stake his claim as Connor Hellebuyck's understudy this season.

Ehlers bookended a tic-tac-toe with Vladislav Namestnikov in the first period to give Winnipeg a 1-0 lead after 20 minutes.

Connor, Miller and Pionk increased Winnipeg's lead to 4-0 through two periods before Lambert sniped Winnipeg's second power-play marker, and Lowry scored on a shorthanded wraparound.

Kahkonen's shutout bid was halted late in the third when Connor Brown, one of Edmonton's few veterans, tipped home a point shot.

The Jets improved to 1-1-1 in preseason action, with Connor, Ehlers, Lowry, Pionk, Mark Scheifele, Josh Morrissey, and Dylan DeMelo all featuring for the first time.

Winnipeg travel to Minnesota on Friday to face the Central Division rival Wild.

Meanwhile, defenceman Simon Lundmark was a late inclusion in the lineup, replacing Logan Stanley, who was expected to play. The reason for Stanley's absence wasn't immediately known, and the team didn't offer much information after the game, only saying they'd have a better idea on Thursday.

Some thoughts from Wednesday's game:

- Ehlers and Namestnikov always seem to read off each other well. The chemistry is always there to draw upon. They did so on the game's opening goal, going tic-tac-toe as Ehlers fed Namestnikov before the latter turned the favour in front to make it 1-0. If Lambert doesn't win the job, Namestnikov will likely be the second-line centre to start the season. Whether or not that's the long-term solution is undetermined. The Jets got Sean Monahan for a reason last February, paying a first-round premium to get him out of Montreal. They tried hard to re-sign him on July 1 and quickly pivoted to veteran Adam Henrique when Monahan signed in Columbus.

- Lambert looked good. Just good. I still believe Lambert should get a healthy run of NHL action to start the season, but that's a decision for Arniel. There were flashes, and his decision to shoot on his goal is precisely what this team needs. He was knocked off the puck a little too quickly at times. But his instincts alongside season pros in Ehlers and Namestnikov were good. Arniel said Lambert will play again on Friday against what's expected to be a bigger, heavier lineup in Minnesota. "Every time he steps on the ice, it's a learning curve for him," Arniel said. "I really liked a lot of what he did. When he has the puck, he can be dynamic with it."

- Jets GM Kevin Cheveldayoff has said he believes the NHL is a difficult league to develop in. If Lambert's a quick study, it allows Namestnikov to centre the fourth line, and the Jets will remain a four-line team. Seems low-risk, high-reward. Consistency is the key for Lambert.
- Winnipeg's revamped power play showed some promise, going 2-for-3. An emphasis on snapping the puck around quicker was noticeable from the outset. If I am nitpicking, there was a little too much passing. Ehlers got the puck with enough space to shoot in the slot, but he tried to find Scheifele, who couldn't convert from a tight angle. Arniel wasn't afraid to pull off the top unit before they ate up the whole PP. They played just over a minute on the first PP attempt and then 47 seconds on the second. Both of Winnipeg's power-play goals came from their second unit. Miller's came off a laser of a wrist shot in the second period, and Lambert sniped one short side on former Jets goalie Collin Delia in the third.
- Arniel had this to say about his special teams: "There were lots of things, from sitting in the meetings and listening to (assistant coach) Davis (Payne) talk on the power play, emphasizing on some areas that he wanted to focus on tonight. I thought there were a lot of good things there and there are some things that he's already talked about wanting to improve on. PK, same thing. I liked them working in tandem, as four. There was some really good pressure. We gave up a couple of looks in the middle of the ice that (assistant coach) Dean (Chynoweth) wants to talk to them about. All in all, with what we did yesterday and for the first time throwing it in live, there were a lot of positives."
- Arniel said Ehlers and Cole Perfetti, who gets his first game after signing his two-year bridge deal on Monday, are expected to flank either Lambert or Namestnikov (or both) on Friday.
- Kahkonen ate all five goals against in Winnipeg's preseason opener last Saturday, but going back over those goals, it's hard to pin any of them on him. Either way, he came out on Wednesday and put together a quality start befitting a backup to Hellebuyck this season. The Finn had a relatively quiet night, but he stayed focused, especially early when fewer pucks were coming his way. Eric Comrie is also in the mix, but after the Jets signed Kakonen, it seemed to signal a plan where Comrie would mentor a young Thomas Milic down with the Moose while Kahkonen would handle backup duties with the big club.
- There's been a lot of discourse (on social media, at least) over Arniel's plan to keep Connor-Scheifele-Vilardi as the team's top line heading into the season. While it angers some, it makes sense for the new head coach. My short take: The trio was limited to just 27 games together last season and fewer than 200 minutes at 5-on-5. It's not a big sample size, owing mostly to Vilardi's early injury, then Connor's, and then Vilardi's for a second time. There's reason to give it some runway with everyone healthy. See what they can do with consistent playing time that is not broken up by repeated injuries.
- This is what Arniel had to say about his top line: "Puck possession. It's one thing about them is they've got chemistry. When they have the puck, they're hard to get it away from. They read off each other really well. Obviously, that was the first game for them being together, and you see that chemistry pretty quick."

Sportsnet.ca

<https://www.sportsnet.ca/nhl/article/takeaways-oilers-continue-to-leak-goals-midway-through-pre-season/>

Takeaways: Oilers continue to leak goals midway through pre-season

By Mark Spector

Don't look now, but for the third consecutive pre-season game the Edmonton Oilers surrendered six goals against, this time getting crushed 6-1 by the Winnipeg Jets.

In a game that featured probably 15 Jets regulars against about six for Edmonton, the Oilers' best scoring chances ended up on the sticks of Seth Griffith and Drake Caggiula, while the Jets got offence from the likes of veteran snipers Kyle Connor and Nikolaj Ehlers.

Still, Edmonton has lost their last three pre-season tilts by a combined score of 18-5. With four games left in the pre-season schedule, you can expect a focus on defensive play as the National Hockey League season approaches.

"It's very important that we shake that rust, find our game, and as we get closer to the end of the pre-season we'll have a lot closer of a roster to what we'll have (in the regular season)," said head coach Kris Knoblauch.

Connor Brown tipped home the only Oilers goal Wednesday, with Edmonton trailing 6-0 late in the game.

Jet lag

Brett Kulak was the veteran NHL defenceman on an Oilers squad that had two NHLers on its blue line — he and Ty Emberson. They played together for much of the night.

"First game in three months," said Kulak, who posted a minus-three in his pre-season debut. "It's awesome to play against pretty much a full roster of veteran NHL players. It was a perfect scenario."

The shots were 37-27 for Winnipeg, with defenceman Noel Hoefenmayer (20:39) leading the Oilers in ice time, going plus-one and assisting on Brown's goal.

"No one has really played together much before," Kulak said. "You're just trying to keep it simple... take a step forward and get your game ready for the regular season."

Knoblauch put his lines in the blender in the third period. With four games left, Edmonton cleared out a few players Wednesday (below) and will let a bunch more go after Monday's home game against Vancouver.

"Obviously they were a much more veteran team," Knoblauch said of the Jets. "Almost their NHL lineup — which is a good test for our guys. In a situation like that you find out if you are NHL ready or not."

"Some guys, you can tell they just aren't quite ready. It's a good teaching opportunity for us."

Best of the rest

It's hard to find players who stood out in a 6-1 loss, but we'll give it the old college try:

- We're watching Emberson every night with his expected role on the Oilers defence this season, and he seems to have the tools to play as a regular. But he's a long way from the

finished product — he'll have to find some consistency shift to shift, an easier task once he lands a stable partner as the rosters get whittled down.

Emberson activated nicely on Winnipeg's second goal, but failed to get a puck deep past a Jets defenceman. The play turned around in the blink of an eye, and Connor ended up on a clear cut breakaway, sliding a puck through Stuart Skinner's legs on a nifty move.

- Noah Philp continues to show he has the elements of a solid fourth-line centre. We wouldn't keep him around as a 13th forward quite yet however — he needs to play every night in Bakersfield after taking a year away from the game. He fed Caggiula for a couple of Grade A's.
- Skinner saw his first work of the pre-season, played 40 minutes and allowed four goals on 27 shots. He made some very good saves but wasn't going to keep this Oilers roster in this one. With four pre-season games left Skinner will get at least two more appearances, we'd suspect. He got some good work in versus the Jets.
- Mike Hoffman is in camp on a PTO, as the 34-year-old one-time 30-goal man tries to extend his NHL career. He may find a way to do so, but it likely won't be in Edmonton. In a game where the Oilers were offensively challenged, Hoffman's stats line read zero shots, zero points, three giveaways and a minus-one on a Jets shorthanded goal that started with a poor Hoffman pass.

Here today, gone to Bako

The Oilers announced that the following players have been released from their PTOs and will report to AHL Bakersfield:

Jasper Weatherby (F)
Brett Brochu (G)
Connor Corcoran (D)
Alex Kannok-Leipert (D)
Cam Wright (F)

Also loaned to Bakersfield were:

Matvey Petrov (F)
Connor Ungar (F)
Jayden Grubbe (F)
James Stefan (F)

Healthy Viking

Training camp is enjoyable again for defenceman Mattias Ekholm, who nursed a hip injury through last year's camp and well into the season.

"Such a difference," he said. "Just to be able to feel really good physically, it's been amazing. It's nice to be part of things."

He went to a Cup Final and lost as a Nashville Predator in 2017, and did it again as an Oiler last spring. It's bittersweet, to say the least.

"The good thing about doing that, is you have a good feeling inside, of what you did as a team. We didn't make it all the way, but we got darn close, and that's something that (gives us)

momentum," he said Wednesday morning. "We were in that Game 7, and now we got to try to find that momentum right away as we go.

"The only experience I have of it, we had a really successful season the year after."

After going to the Final in 2016-17, the Predators won the Presidents Trophy the following season with 117 points. If Ekholm can repeat that success this season, it will be with his old buddy Viktor Arvidsson, a fellow Swede who joined Edmonton as a free agent.

"We played about eight years together in Nashville, and kind of grew up together. So to have them come here, it's been amazing," Ekholm said. "I know that they're both from northern Sweden. They love the snow and the cold, so they chose to come here.

"He's got two kids, and both of our daughters go to the same preschool. We live five blocks from each other, so it's been easy for us to help them out with the little things that you have to take care of when you move — especially when you move with kids."

Canadian Press

<https://www.sportsnet.ca/nhl/article/pionk-has-four-points-jets-hand-oilers-loss-in-pre-season/>

Pionk has four points, Jets hand Oilers loss in pre-season

By Canadian Press

The fact that Neal Pionk has come to camp feeling better about himself is already starting to pay off.

The veteran defenceman produced one goal and three assists to lead the Winnipeg Jets to a 6-1 whipping of the Edmonton Oilers in an NHL pre-season game on Wednesday night.

"You know, he's feeling really good about himself coming into this camp," said Jets coach Scott Arniel.

"He really wants to step out and really come back and be the player that he was here a couple years ago. I've got a lot of time for Neal. We go back to New York. He's a guy, to me, that just cares about being a Winnipeg Jet. He loves playing here. He's extremely popular with his teammates and that was a really good first step for him."

Arniel noted that last season Pionk lost his good friend, Adam Johnson, who suffered a fatal skate cut to the neck last year.

"One thing that gets overlooked is that was a pretty personal thing that happened to him over the course of last year, losing his best friend," Arniel said. "It hit him maybe a little harder than people thought.

"He had a summer where he got to spend a lot of time with the Johnson family, his wife, so he's now in a better place and he's pretty excited about this year."

Pionk also set up goals scored by Kyle Connor, Colin Miller and Brad Lambert.

"It's all about good habits," Pionk said. "(Arniel) preached that before the game, after the game, during the game. So, doesn't matter who you're playing in pre-season, roster-wise, doesn't matter who you're playing with. Got to create good habits and get into shape for the year."

Adam Lowry, with a short-handed goal, and Nikolaj Ehlers also scored for Winnipeg (1-1-1).

Connor Brown replied for Edmonton (1-3-0).

Kaapo Kahkonen made 26 saves on 27 shot shots for Winnipeg, which recorded its first win of the pre-season, before 12,367 fans at the Canada Life Centre.

"He bailed me out three-four times. Don't forget that. So, make that note," Pionk said. "No, he was really good. Played the puck well, handled rebounds really well, came up with a couple big saves."

Stuart Skinner, in his first start of the pre-season, stopped 23 of 27 shots for Edmonton before being replaced by Collin Delia to start the third.

Delia stopped eight of 10 shots.

"(Skinner) did make a lot of big saves in the first period," said Oilers coach Kris Knoblauch. "Often, you see a goaltender let in four and think he had a bad night — especially after two periods — but that wasn't the case at all. It was just the quality of chances that they had."

The Oilers left most of their regular starters at home.

"It's awesome that you get to play pretty much against a full roster of veteran NHL players," said Edmonton's Brett Kulak. In pre-season, you want the challenge, you want to get the feeling in the pace and the puck movement that those guys have at that level. So, it was a perfect scenario."

Brown deflected a point shot by Noel Hoefenmayer with 3:28 left in the game to get the Oilers on the scoreboard.

Lowry scored the short-handed goal midway through the third period to give the Jets a commanding 6-0 lead.

Lambert had greeted Delia by beating him with a wrist shot on the power play just 1:13 into the third.

"It's tougher battles here in the NHL and it's a step up from the American (Hockey) League, but that's what I work for all summer," said Lambert, who also had an assist. "So, I feel like I am doing pretty well, and obviously can and will still improve."

Rasmus Kupari sent Pionk towards the net. Pionk then beat Skinner on a screened backhand shot late in the second to give Winnipeg a 4-0 lead.

The Jets upped the score to 3-0 on the power play midway through the second when Miller whipped a wrist shot past Skinner from the point.

Winnipeg took a 2-0 lead early in the second when Mark Scheifele sent Connor in alone on a breakaway from the blue line. The speedster deked Skinner, then beat him with a backhand shot.

The Jets opened the scoring midway through the first period when Ehlers finished off a pretty, tick-tack-toe passing play with Vladislav Namestnikov.

NOTES: Defenceman Simon Lundmark was a last-minute replacement for Logan Stanley ... The Oilers left superstars Connor McDavid and Leon Draisaitl at home as the Jets dressed a star-laden lineup.

NEXT UP

Jets: Visit Minneapolis to face the Wild on Friday.

Oilers: Return home to host the Seattle Kraken on Saturday.

Global Winnipeg

<https://globalnews.ca/news/10775484/veteran-heavy-jets-squad-dominates-edmonton-6-1-for-first-preseason-win/>

Veteran-heavy Jets squad dominates Edmonton 6-1 for first preseason win

By Christian Aumell & Russ Hobson Global News

The Winnipeg Jets dressed most of their regular roster. The Edmonton Oilers did not.

You could tell.

The veteran-heavy Jets had little issue beating the Oilers 6-1 Wednesday night in the third of six preseason contests for Winnipeg.

The Jets had six different goal scorers as Neal Pionk had a four-point night with a goal and three helpers.

“A blind squirrel finds a nut once in awhile you know,” Pionk said. “We’ve enjoyed these moments. It doesn’t happen often.”

The Jets outshot the Oilers 37-27 and scored the first six goals of the game, including three in the second period alone. The Oilers spoiled Kaapo Kahkonen’s shutout in the dying minutes.

“It’s all about good habits,” said Pionk. “I think Arny (Scott Arniel) preached that before the game, after the game, during the game. So, it doesn’t matter who you’re playing in preseason. Roster wise – doesn’t matter who you’re playing with. Got to create good habits and get into shape for the year.”

Nikolaj Ehlers, Kyle Connor, Colin Miller, Brad Lambert and Adam Lowry also scored for Winnipeg. Lambert also had an assist playing centre on a line with Ehlers and Vladislav Namestnikov as he tries to earn his way onto the NHL roster.

“Obviously a great opportunity,” said Lambert. “It’s obviously a step up from the American (Hockey) League. But that’s what I worked for all summer, so I feel like I’m doing pretty well with

them. Obviously I still can improve and will improve, but for the start of it, every 50-50 puck is huge and the more of those you can win, the more you can have the puck.”

The Jets finished the night 2-for-3 on the power play and successfully killed off all five of their penalties.

The Jets had several good early chances and finally made good on one at the 7:49 mark of the first period.

Namestnikov skated the puck across the Edmonton blue line before dropping it to Ehlers. Ehlers returned it to Namestnikov on the left wing before sending it to the slot where Ehlers put it home to make it 1-0.

Winnipeg held a 12-8 edge in shots after one and the disparity grew as the second went along with the Jets dominating the middle frame.

A little over four minutes into the period, Pionk knocked down an attempted zone entry at his own blue line, sending the puck into the neutral zone. Mark Scheifele picked it up and fed a streaking Connor, who deftly deked out Stuart Skinner on a breakaway to make it 2-0 Jets.

Later in the period with the Jets on their second power play of the game, Miller beat a partially-screened Skinner with a wrist shot from the point to make it 3-0 Jets at the 11:08 mark.

Another blueliner got in on the fun with 3:30 left in the second. Rasmus Kupari had the puck in the slot and slid it over to a cutting Pionk, who skated in on goal and made a nice move before backhanding it into the net.

Winnipeg outshot the Oilers 15-5 in the middle frame and continued to pile on in the third.

Just 14 seconds after Edmonton took a penalty, Lambert ripped a wrist shot under the glove of former Manitoba Moose teammate Collin Delia to make it 5-0 73 seconds into the third.

Lowry made it 6-0 with 8:04 to go, capitalizing on a Delia mistake. With the Oilers on the power play, the puck was cleared down the ice. Delia came out to play it, fired it right into Lowry's shin pads and the Winnipeg captain collected the puck and scored on a wraparound.

The Oilers broke up Kahkonen's shutout bid with 3:28 to go in the game when Connor Brown redirected a point shot past him.

Kahkonen stopped 26 shots for the win.

Winnipeg will now head to Minnesota Friday for their next preseason contest where it is expected that Connor Hellebuyck will make his preseason debut.