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<https://www.nhl.com/jets/news/three-things-scheifele-the-ot-hero>

Three things - Scheifele the OT hero Mark Scheifele scored twice leading the Jets to 2-1 win over Chicago

WINNIPEG – The Winnipeg Jets improved to 2-0 on the season winning their home opener 2-1 in overtime over the Chicago Blackhawks. Mark Scheifele scored both goals for the Jets, Nikolaj Ehlers, Kyle Connor and Josh Morrissey added assists. Connor Hellebuyck made 26 saves for the Jets who will host Minnesota on Sunday.

PERSISTENCE

After such an impressive performance in Edmonton on Wednesday, all eyes were watching to see if the Jets could do it all over again. Winnipeg carried the play for the majority of the opening period and Kyle Connor rang a shot off the post that would have made it 1-0. The Jets had numerous scoring chances to start the second period, but Chicago slowed things down a bit. Ryan Donato would open the scoring at with 3:08 left in the middle period beating Connor Hellebuyck to the stick side, the Blackhawks took a 1-0 lead into the third. The Jets didn't go away in the third and finally on the 17th shot of the period, Mark Scheifele jumped on a Nikolaj Ehlers rebound and slid a backhand past Arvid Soderblom to tie it with 1:04 left.

"I think looking at the 60 we didn't play the way we wanted to. We started the game really well, got a lot of chances but didn't score. Then we stopped doing the right things and they were clogging up the middle really well and we were trying to force it through," said Ehlers.

"I think if we keep going the way we did in the first ten, the game looks a lot different but that's also credit to them. We got some things to work on, but we stuck with it and got the two points."

SCHEIFELE'S 300TH

After Scheifele tied the game, he went to work right away in the overtime. Winning another faceoff, Scheifele eventually would play give and go with Kyle Connor and his one-timer went over Soderblom's glove for his 300th career goal.

"Me and KC and JMo have played together a long time, just kind of know the feeling of what coverage is," said Scheifele.

"Bring me back to my basketball days, the old pick-and-roll. Felt good."

MORE FROM HELLEBUYCK

Connor Hellebuyck was coming off an elite performance in Edmonton recording his 38th career shutout. He followed up that performance with 25 saves on 26 shots to win his seventh straight regular season start going back to last season. Hellebuyck's best save came in the third period with Chicago leading 1-0 and Nick Foligno thought he was about to make it 2-0 but the Jets goaltender made a highlight reel glove save to keep it a one goal game.

NHL.com

<https://www.nhl.com/news/chicago-blackhawks-winnipeg-jets-game-recap-october-11>

Scheifele's 2 goals rally Jets past Blackhawks in OT

Wins it at 38 seconds after tying it with 1:04 left; Soderblom makes 33 saves for Chicago

By Wes Crosby

Mark Scheifele scored 38 seconds into overtime after tying the game with 1:04 remaining, and the Winnipeg Jets rallied for a 2-1 win against the Chicago Blackhawks at Canada Life Centre in Winnipeg on Friday.

Scheifele tipped in a pass from Kyle Connor in the slot to win it and become the second player to score 300 goals for the Jets/Atlanta Thrashers franchise, joining Ilya Kovalchuk (328 goals in 594 games). He tied it at 18:56 of the third period by scoring 6-on-5 with a backhand from just outside the crease on the rebound of a sharp-angled shot by Nikolaj Ehlers.

"It's pretty humbling to think about," said Scheifele, who reached the milestone in 799 games. "It's pretty wild. I'm very thankful for the guys that I've played with. I'm lucky enough to play with some really good players. It's all thanks to them."

Connor Hellebuyck made 25 saves for the Jets (2-0-0) in their home opener. They won 6-0 at the Edmonton Oilers on Wednesday to begin the regular season.

Ryan Donato scored for the Blackhawks (0-2-0), who lost their season opener 5-2 at the Utah Hockey Club on Tuesday. Arvid Soderblom made 33 saves.

"I think we played 59 great minutes," Chicago defenseman Seth Jones said. "They got one 6-on-5 on us. It's not going to be good enough for us. We expect to play a 60-minute game and that's what it's going to take for us to win.

"We're tired of taking moral victories at this point. We've got to win hockey games."

Donato put the Blackhawks ahead 1-0 at 16:52 of the second period. Patrick Maroon chipped a pass off the left wall through the neutral zone to Donato, who carried it to the left face-off circle for a wrist shot to the short side.

It ended Hellebuyck's shutout streak at 96:51 with 45 straight saves to begin the regular season, including 30 on Wednesday.

"We played a solid game," Donato said. "[Soderblom] played great. But it's just, you've got to play 60 minutes of good hockey, not 59. At the end of the day, we did some good things but it's just not good enough."

Before Scheifele's tying goal, Alex Iafallo had a chance for Winnipeg at 14:06 of the third. He took a centering pass from Haydn Fleury for a backhand shot from the slot but was turned away by Soderblom.

Soderblom then denied Mason Appleton twice in nine seconds, first on a wrist shot from the far wall with Nino Niederreiter charging to the crease at 16:34, then on a diving wraparound attempt at 16:43.

"Our whole group, actually, our execution wasn't very good on the whole," Jets coach Scott Arniel said. "We had 10-foot passes, we were missing guys. Just our execution, all together, wasn't very good for 60 minutes."

Winnipeg had a 16-8 shot advantage in the third.

"It was a good game, but it's a new page this year for us," Chicago coach Luke Richardson said. "We've got to find a way to lock those down. I thought the goalie played excellent. We've got to find a way to get the regulation win for him.

"That last minute, just somehow. A little bit tired at the end, but so are they and they're pushing to try to score a goal. You've got to find a way to stop it. I just thought it's unfortunate."

The Blackhawks were outshot 7-2 until late in the first period when Andreas Athanasiou's backhand on a breakaway was stopped by Hellebuyck with a glove save at 17:04.

"It's how we wanted to play," Ehlers said. "I think the look of our defensive system is something that has helped us over the last couple years and that's something that we're going to keep working on because we're a pretty good team when we play the right way."

NOTES: Scheifele became the first player in Jets/Thrashers history to score a tying goal in the final two minutes of regulation and the winner in the first minute of overtime. Patrik Laine is the only other player in franchise history to tie it in the final two minutes of regulation and win it at any point in overtime. ... Scheifele is the second player from the 2011 NHL Draft to score 300 goals, joining Tampa Bay Lightning forward Nikita Kucherov (323). ... Goalie Kaapo Kahkonen was claimed by the Colorado Avalanche on Friday, one day after Winnipeg placed him on waivers.

Canadian Press

<https://www.chrisd.ca/2024/10/12/winnipeg-jets-chicago-blackhawks-home-opener/>

Scheifele Scores Late in Third, Adds OT Winner in Jets' 2-1 Win Over Blackhawks

By Jim Bender, The Canadian Press

Not only did Mark Scheifele win the game for the Winnipeg Jets, he recorded a significant milestone in doing so.

The Winnipeg Jets assistant captain scored his 299th career NHL goal with 1:04 left in regulation to tie the game 1-1. Scheifele added his 300th goal just 38 seconds into overtime to give the Jets a hard-fought 2-1 victory over the Chicago Blackhawks in their home-opener on Friday night.

Scheifele's face lit up after scoring No. 300, admitting it was pretty satisfying.

"It's pretty wild," he said. "I'm just very thankful for the guys I've played with. I've been lucky enough to play with some really good players. It's all thanks to them."

Kyle Connor set up the game-winner by passing to Scheifele in front of the net. Scheifele knocked in a Nikolaj Ehlers rebound to tie the game.

“Those are big milestones,” said Jets coach Scott Arniel. “300 goals is a lot of goals in this league. To see that enthusiasm, he’d probably forgotten about it. He probably knew he was close.”

“But at the end of the day, any time those guys can do that and do that in that fashion, when it’s a tie game late and then winning it in overtime, he’ll remember those goals, 299 and 300, for sure.”

Scheifele scored the tying goal on a backhand from his knees, finally beating Chicago netminder Arvid Soderblom.

“Obviously, getting that puck while he’s falling down and getting a good whack, that’s pretty good,” Ehlers said. “He scored two goals, two pretty important goals. So he had a good last two, three shifts. But he’s a pretty good player and has shown that over the last many years.”

“So I don’t think it surprises any of us in this room. We’ve got a lot of guys that can chip in and did tonight. But obviously, it was huge for Scheif to get in where he needed to be to bury those two.”

Defenceman Neal Pionk made a big play on the tying goal as he checked a Chicago forward carrying the puck into the Jets’ end with the net empty, not allowing him to get a shot off.

“The biggest thing is, he attacked the puck,” Arniel said. “He didn’t back up. Because their guy had to get to the red line. If he waits and backs up, they might make another play, or the guy takes a shot at the net. The kid didn’t want to ice the puck and (Pionk) did a great job of attacking him.”

“He stopped that there and gave us a chance to get it back and get in and get the faceoff.”

The Blackhawks had held the Jets scoreless for almost 59 minutes.

“We are a resilient group,” Scheifele said. “There were times in the second (period) where we got away from it a little bit. But we buckled down.”

Scheifele also credited goalie Connor Hellebuyck for stopping 25 of 26 shots to keep Winnipeg in the game.

“They (Blackhawks) played solid,” he said. “They made some good plays. They played with speed and tried to get us in a little bit of a track meet. Bucky (Hellebuyck), we needed him to make some saves, and he made them.”

“From there we just needed to get back to our game and we did.”

Global Winnipeg

<https://globalnews.ca/news/10808469/scheifele-ties-it-late-wins-it-in-ot-as-jets-beat-hawks-2-1/>

Scheifele ties it late, wins it in OT as Winnipeg Jets beat Hawks 2-1

By Russ Hobson & Kevin Hirschfield Global News

In their first regular season game in front of home fans, the Winnipeg Jets gave the crowd very little to cheer about for almost 59 minutes.

And then Mark Scheifele took over.

Down 1-0 to the Chicago Blackhawks late in the third period, Scheifele tied it with 1:04 left and then scored again 38 seconds into overtime to give Winnipeg a 2-1 win over Chicago Friday night.

"You need your best players to come up big at the right times and they did," said Jets head coach Scott Arniel.

Scheifele's OT winner was the 300th goal of his career and he now has three goals in the first two games of the season.

"That's the way hockey goes, sometimes it takes 59 minutes to get one home and bring it to overtime," Scheifele said. "It's never over until it's over."

Despite the win, the coach said it was a far cry from their 6-0 season-opening win in Edmonton Wednesday night.

"Our whole group, our execution wasn't very good. We had 10-foot passes and we were missing guys, just our execution altogether wasn't very good for 60 minutes," Arniel said.

It was the seventh straight time Winnipeg won their home opener and the Jets have now won 10 straight regular season games dating back to last season.

Connor Hellebuyck got his second straight start in net, making 25 saves as he's allowed just one goal in two games.

It took until the 16:52 mark of the second period for the game's first goal as Chicago's Ryan Donato beat Hellebuyck short side to give Chicago a 1-0 lead which they held until the waning moments of the third period.

"There were times in that second period, where we got away from it a bit and Bucky made some big saves," Scheifele said. "From there, I think we kinda buckled down, we got the puck deep, we made their D work and kinda hemmed them in a couple times and got some chances and we just got back to our game."

Josh Morrissey helped set up the OT winner, giving him three assists in the first two games of the season.

The announced attendance was 14,564.

This was the first of four straight games at Canada Life Centre for the Jets, who continue the homestand Sunday when they take on another Central Division rival, the Minnesota Wild.

The pregame show will begin on 680 CJOB at 3 p.m., with puck drop just after 5 p.m.

Sportsnet.ca

<https://www.sportsnet.ca/nhl/article/jets-takeaways-scheifele-off-to-strong-start-while-ehlers-line-struggles/>

Jets Takeaways: Scheifele off to strong start while Ehlers' line struggles

By Jacob Stoller

WINNIPEG — The way Mark Scheifele reached the 300th goal plateau was as clutch as it was classic.

The Winnipeg Jets' top line of Scheifele, Kyle Connor and Gabriel Vilardi had been snake-bitten for the first 59 minutes of Friday night's game against the Chicago Blackhawks. They had no shortage of chances — generating 12 scoring chances before the final minute of regulation — but Chicago's netminder Arvid Soderblom and a couple of rings off the crossbar prevented them from converting.

"Sometimes it takes 59 minutes to put one home and bring it to overtime," Scheifele said.

During a six-on-five sequence with just 1:06 remaining in the third period, Scheifele opened the floodgates.

After Nikolaj Ehlers wheeled around the bottom of the right faceoff circle and shot the puck off Soderblom's pad, Scheifele, situated in the slot, pounced on the rebound on his backend as he was falling, tying the game 1-1. It was a trademark sequence for the 31-year-old, who often feasts off being in the right place at the right time. Scheifele, a long-time client of Hall-of-Famer turned skill-guru Adam Oates, is a student of the game. You'd be hard-pressed to pinpoint a time when he's not staying out after practice to work tirelessly on an incredibly specific, game-related drill that the naked eye oftentimes can't appreciate.

His subsequent overtime winner was a prime example of his calculated approach.

30 seconds into overtime, he won a faceoff cleanly back to Josh Morrissey. Morrissey dished it back to Scheifele, who had crept over to the left side of the ice. He carried the puck to the top of the faceoff circle, drawing both Alex Vlasic and Philipp Kurashev towards him before dishing it back to Connor. In turn, he essentially set a pick on Kurashev, creating a breakdown in Chicago's defensive coverage.

"It brought me back to my basketball days — a little pick and roll," Scheifele said.

He peeled off to the slot and re-directed a Connor pass into the net.

Game. Set. Match.

"Oatesy will be pumped about that one, for sure," he said before cracking a smile.

Scheifele has been excellent through Winnipeg's first two games, registering team-highs in points (four), faceoff percentage (55.2) and five-on-five scoring chances (eight).

Ehlers Needs Help

Winnipeg's second line of Ehlers, Vladislav Namestnikov and Cole Perfetti struggled for a second straight game. It'll be interesting to see how long Arniel keeps that trio together. So far, it just hasn't worked.

Ehlers, the driver of that line, is at his best when open space is created for him.

But it's hard to do that when your two linemates are on different wavelengths. Perfetti isn't a fast skater and can't play at Ehlers' pace, whether in transition or the offensive zone. Namestnikov is a beautiful skater who can do some heavy lifting along the walls, but his offensive acumen isn't up to par with Ehlers.

Arniel brought out the line blender near the midway mark of the third period, placing Ehlers alongside Adam Lowry and Mason Appleton and then Nino Niederreiter alongside Perfetti and Namestnikov.

"I did it for what, two shifts?" Arniel said. "All I was trying was I wanted to get Nino to get out to get to the net front with (Namestnikov and Perfetti). I was trying to get (Ehlers) some space because it was (Connor Bedard) a lot of the times against (Lowry), and I was just trying to open (Ehlers) up a little bit — (Appleton) and (Lowry) kind of open up some space."

The 28-year-old Danish winger pushed back when Sportsnet.ca pointed out the line's struggles.

"I don't totally agree with your view on our line to start," Ehlers said. "We had a lot of good chances. We're trying to find our way. Our last couple of games together haven't been good but we took a step in the right direction."

It may be a little while before we see Arniel totally change the lines permanently. He likes the configuration of his first and third lines while also expressing, right from the get-go of camp, that he wants to see the Perfetti-Namestnikov-Ehlers trio together.

Notwithstanding the small sample size, there's no denying that Ehlers' best moments from Friday were at times when he wasn't alongside Perfetti and Namestnikov. And you bet that's something the Jets are keeping an eye on.

Other Takeaways

- Scheifele's game-tying goal wouldn't have been made possible if Neal Pionk hadn't made a heads-up defensive play to prevent an empty-netter. With just over a minute remaining in regulation, Pionk checked Ilya Mikheyev into the boards after the Blackhawks forward picked off the puck and skated up the ice, allowing Ehlers to steal it back.

"The biggest thing is he attacked the puck," Arniel said. "He didn't back up because their guy had to get to the red line. If he waits and backs up, they might make another play or the guy takes a shot at the net. The kid didn't want to ice the puck, and (Pionk) did a great job of attacking him. He stopped that there and gave us a chance to get it back and get in and get the faceoff."

Pionk also had a highlight-reel-worthy hip check on Connor Bedard.

- Scheifele has joined Dale Hawerchuk as the only other player to have scored 300 goals in a Jets uniform.

Winnipeg Free Press

<https://www.winnipegfreepress.com/breakingnews/2024/10/11/scheifele-saves-the-day-with-late-goal-and-ot-winner-vs-hawks>

Scheifele saves the day with late goal and OT winner vs. Hawks

By: Mike McIntyre

Mark Scheifele saved the best for last.

With his Winnipeg Jets being blanked by the Chicago Blackhawks for the better part of 59 minutes on Friday night — 58:56 to be exact — the team's top centre took matters into his own hands.

A game-tying goal with 64 seconds left in regulation was quickly followed up by the game-winning goal 38 seconds into overtime as the Jets rallied for a 2-1 victory in their home opener at Canada Life Centre.

“Those are obviously two gigantic goals,” said Jets coach Scott Arniel. “At the end of the day, you need your best players to come up big at the right times — and they did. That group did.”

It was starting to look like revealing the goal songs for every member of the Jets prior to puck drop wasn't the wisest idea. Thanks to some sensational goaltending by Chicago's Arvid Soderblom, it appeared not a single note of the Macarena, Who Let The Dogs Out or Pour Me A Drink — among other player favourites — would be played at this homecoming party.

Scheifele — who has Shoot To Thrill by AC/DC as his celebratory tune — made sure the 14,564 in attendance went home happy.

“That's the way hockey goes. Sometimes it takes 59 minutes to put one home and bring it to overtime. It's never over until it's over,” he said.

Winnipeg improves to 2-0-0 on the young season, while Chicago falls to 0-1-1.

Let's break this one down further:

1) **BETTER LATE THAN NEVER**: It's not like the Jets hadn't generated chances. Kyle Connor and Gabe Vilardi both hit iron earlier in the game, while Nino Niederreiter was left looking skyward after the puck bounced at the last second, robbing him of what looked like an easy tap-in.

Mason Appleton also had a great wrap-around chance late in the third period. Soderblom, an undrafted netminder from Sweden with a career goals-against-average of 3.76 over 61 games, was looking like the second coming of Ken Dryden.

With Connor Hellebuyck pulled for an extra attacker, a Jets team that scored six times in Wednesday's season-opening win in Edmonton finally came to life. Nikolaj Ehlers, who had a miserable night up until that point, made a terrific feed to Scheifele who converted with a diving backhanded shot.

“That wasn’t exactly the play that we had set up,” said Ehlers. “Far pad, hopefully it jumps out like it did. Obviously, good on Scheifs to get on that puck.”

Then, during the three-on-three session, Scheifele won an offensive zone faceoff back to defenceman Josh Morrissey, who got the puck to Connor. A quick cycle session was followed by a perfectly-executed give-and-go as Connor fed Scheifele for the re-direct.

“Me and KC and J-Mo have played together for a long time. We just kind of know the feeling of what coverage is, and it just brought me back to my basketball day, a little pick and roll. It felt good,” said Scheifele.

It was the 300th goal of his career, Scheifele, who is in the first season of his seven-year, US\$59.5-million contract extension, has now scored three times in the first two games.

2) *NOT TO BE OVERLOOKED*: Hellebuyck was in Vezina Trophy form once again. After posting a 30-save shutout on Wednesday against Connor McDavid and company, the only puck to beat him on this night came off the stick of Chicago’s Ryan Donato late in the second period.

That snapped a streak of 96:52 to start the campaign and came after 43 consecutive saves.

His best stop of the night came midway through the third as he robbed Chicago captain Nick Foligno with his glove, keeping his team within striking distance.

Hellebuyck, who has the identical contract as Scheifele, drew the loudest cheer during pre-game player introductions. He appeared genuinely choked up, perhaps appreciating the support even moreso considering his family is currently dealing with a serious private health matter which caused him to take a brief personal leave earlier this week.

Winnipeg’s schedule is quite light to start the year, with no back-to-backs, and you can bet the Jets will ride their No. 1 in the early going.

3) *SECOND LINE STRUGGLES*: The line of Ehlers, Cole Perfetti and Vlad Namestnikov are not off to a flying start. For a second consecutive outing, they were Winnipeg’s worst trio which prompted Arniel to break them up for a span in the third period.

Ehlers moved to a line with Adam Lowry and Appleton, while Niederreiter took his spot with Perfetti and Namestnikov.

“We’re trying to find our way,” said Ehlers. “Obviously, when the team isn’t scoring goals and you’re behind by one, you want to switch things up. And sometimes it works, sometimes it doesn’t. Our 6-on-5 tonight worked, so we’re happy with that.”

4) *BEDARD WATCH*: Connor Bedard is one of the players in the NHL that is worth the price of admission. The Calder Trophy winner and former Regina Pats sniper had three goals in three games against the Jets last season, including the overtime winner on Dec. 27.

He wasn’t quite as noticeable this time, with just one shot on goal in 18:44 of action. He also had a tough night in the faceoff circle, going just 5-of-16, and was sent flying through the air courtesy of a Neal Pionk hip check in the first period.

5) *EXTRA, EXTRA*: Winnipeg went 0-2 on the power play and 1-for-1 on the penalty kill. They also won 38 of 60 faceoffs on the night.

- The Jets lost some goaltending depth on Friday afternoon as Kaapo Kahkonen was claimed on waivers by the Colorado Avalanche. He had lost out on the backup job to Eric Comrie, and Winnipeg was hoping to send him to the Manitoba Moose as insurance. We'll see now if the Jets try to find a veteran backstop to partner with second-year pro Thomas Milic down on the farm. Old friend Michael Hutchinson is among the free agent names still out there.
- Defenceman Dylan Coghlan and forward David Gustafsson were the healthy scratches for a second game in a row, while defencemen Ville Heinola and Logan Stanley and forward Jaret Anderson-Dolan remain on injured reserve.
- Although they were about 700 fans short of a sellout, the Jets will be happy with the crowd count Friday considering more than 32,000 fans were across town watching the Winnipeg Blue Bombers play at the same time. To put it in perspective, the Jets drew just 13,410 for last year's home opener, and it was the only game in town.

The Athletic

<https://www.nytimes.com/athletic/5838127/2024/10/12/blackhawks-jets-nhl-observations/>

Blackhawks are weary of moral victories, but OT loss to Jets was a big one: Observations

By Mark Lazerus

WINNIPEG — Had this exact game been played in this exact fashion with this exact result a year ago, it might not have been any easier to swallow, but it would have been easier not to wallow.

For the last two seasons, the Blackhawks have been underwater night after night, frantically looking for something to grab onto — one good power play, one impressive goal, one strong period. And there was so much to like in this one. A team structure heretofore unseen in Luke Richardson's two-plus seasons. A penalty kill that was aggressive and ruthlessly efficient. An outstanding performance in goal from Arvid Söderblom. Pat Maroon making dynamic passes. Andreas Athanasiou backchecking with abandon to break up a two-on-one. Ilya Mikheyev making hustle plays along the boards. And sturdy defensemen clearing the crease.

It was a nearly perfect game by the Blackhawks. But only nearly.

"We played 59 great minutes of hockey," Seth Jones said "It's not going to be good enough. We expect to play a 60-minute game and that's what it's going to take for us to win."

No, the Blackhawks didn't win this one. Mark Scheifele muscled in a rebound with 64 seconds left with the goalie pulled and then got the game-winner 38 seconds into overtime after an ill-advised soft wrist shot by Teuvo Teräväinen yielded possession, giving the Winnipeg Jets a 2-1 victory. Another Blackhawks game. Another loss. The beats go on.

For a team that's not expected to contend for a playoff spot, the result shouldn't matter as much as the process. And the process was excellent.

But the era of silver linings is over. The Blackhawks want gold.

"We're tired of taking moral victories at this point," Jones said. "We need to win hockey games."

Here are five (mostly positive) observations as the Blackhawks head to Edmonton on Saturday night:

Richardson's 1-2-2 was working

This might have been the most structured game the Blackhawks have played since ...

"... since I've been here," Jones interrupted.

He was laughing. But he wasn't joking.

This is the season we get to see what a Richardson-coached team looks like. Or, at least, we'd better, for his job's sake. The last two years were both essentially tank seasons, and Richardson didn't have much to work with.

The proof was on the ice. That's no longer an excuse, not with a handful of veteran forwards and two veteran defensemen added to the mix. And since a sloppy first period in the opener in Utah, the Blackhawks have looked, well, quite competent for five straight periods.

They're not running around chasing the puck in all zones, running into each other, coughing up the puck and giving up odd-man rushes the other way. They're not abandoning their posts and making the wrong reads. They're not getting lost in coverage or failing to properly sort the oncoming forwards.

Richardson's 1-2-2 was working exactly as it was supposed to, as the Blackhawks repeatedly slowed the Jets up in the neutral zone. That more often than not either forced a turnover or prompted the Jets to dump the puck without any momentum, allowing Söderblom or a defenseman to easily retrieve the puck and exit the zone with speed.

It took an extra attacker for the Jets to finally solve Chicago's team defense.

"We were above the other team most of the night and frustrated them," Richardson said. "We were pretty much even on five-on-five chances against a really good team, and that's what we want."

Jones said that the Blackhawks "weren't on our own page," but instead were playing like a five-man unit.

"Every team's got a style that they can play to win," Jones said. "It's obviously (just) two games into the season, but we've maybe found something in our game that we want to stick with and get better at. We've got a lot of work to do but it's good to see that everyone's buying into one system."

Söderblom was solid

Söderblom was not auditioning for an NHL roster spot on Friday night. There isn't one available. As soon as Laurent Brossoit is ready — he's been skating back home while he and his wife await the birth of their child — Söderblom is headed for Rockford. Nothing he could do on Friday night, likely his only NHL start for a while, could change that.

But he surely left a good impression the next time an NHL opportunity arises. And he can bring some confidence with him to Rockford.

He was calm and square to the puck at all times, with none of the rebound issues that plagued him last season. And he came agonizingly close to his first NHL shutout. Jones said he played "unreal."

"He did everything that he should have to earn (a shutout), right?" Ryan Donato said. "Played a heck of a game and you feel sorry for him."

Söderblom started 32 games last year. In only five of them did he allow two or fewer goals. In only two of those, he allowed just one goal. In none of them did he have a shutout. Fifteen times, he gave up at least four goals.

Maroon flashes serious skills

Maroon was brought to Chicago for his net-front presence, physicality and veteran savvy. But he flashed some serious skill on Friday night. He found Athanasiou for a breakaway that Connor Hellebuyck stopped with a pretty pass in the first period and sprung Donato for the only Chicago goal with a crafty chip off the boards from his own end in the second period.

The Blackhawks had an expected goals percentage of more than 70 percent with Donato and Maroon on the ice together.

"Patty's definitely a guy that can make plays," Donato said. "Any time I'm out there with him, I'm trying to let him know where I am. He's pretty good at finding guys."

Those penalty kills

Perhaps the most impressive two minutes of the game for the Blackhawks was their first penalty kill, midway through the first period. They held Winnipeg without a shot and kept them out of the offensive zone nearly the entire time. The forward duos of Nick Foligno with Jason Dickinson and Mikheyev with Joey Anderson were hyper-aggressive, constantly going on the attack against the Jets and forcing turnovers in the neutral zone and high in the offensive zone.

The Blackhawks' other kill wasn't quite as dominant but was still quite effective.

"That was really good, good pressure," Jones said. "We've always had our aggressive cues. When they bobble pucks, when they're backspacing to us, when they don't have full possession, we always want to go. Off faceoffs (too), little things like that. Especially against good players, we don't want to give them time and space. ... The up-ice pressure was good from the forwards."

Logjam at forward

The Blackhawks added five forwards this offseason, and also bring back a healthy Taylor Hall and Athanasiou. That's good for giving Connor Bedard more experience and skill around him, but it certainly creates a logjam at forward. Even to get the veteran Athanasiou into the lineup on Friday night, Richardson had to scratch veteran Craig Smith, who had a solid camp and

preseason. And Lukas Reichel was a healthy scratch for the second straight game to open the season.

Barring injuries, if the Blackhawks are going to integrate younger players into the lineup at some point — think Frank Nazar, Colton Dach and Landon Slaggert, among others — it's going to mean scratching some proud veterans who didn't sign with Chicago just to sit in the press box. Richardson is ready for those hard conversations, though.

"I talked to (Smith) and he understands, he's a good veteran," Richardson said. "I told him we'll try to get him right back in, and that could be as fast as (Saturday in Edmonton). Things change quick. The veterans, they don't have to like it but they accept it in a professional manner. We're a big team here."

<https://www.nytimes.com/athletic/5837786/2024/10/12/eric-comrie-winnipeg-jets-kaapo-kahkonen/>

How Eric Comrie returned to Winnipeg and reclaimed Jets' backup goalie job

By Murat Ates

WINNIPEG — Eric Comrie left the Winnipeg Jets two seasons ago in search of opportunity — a starter's net, in an ideal world, or a time share if he couldn't manage that.

A torn MCL, a pulled groin and only 29 NHL games later, it's safe to say things didn't work out the way Comrie wanted. His two-year audition in Buffalo was meant to launch him into a bigger role. Instead, when Comrie picked up his agent's phone call in the middle of a workout on July 1, it was to fight for a backup job in Winnipeg — the place where he'd played the best hockey of his career.

On Friday, Comrie spoke to The Athletic shortly before it was announced that Colorado claimed Kaapo Kahkonen from waivers, effectively guaranteeing Comrie the backup role he'd excelled at before signing with the Sabres.

"It's still a job I have to earn every single day, Comrie said. "I have to make sure I work for it every single day. Just because I have it now, it doesn't mean I automatically keep it. You have to perform and succeed every single day and make sure you earn that spot every single day."

Kahkonen's departure leaves the Jets with a clear No. 1 — Connor Hellebuyck — and Comrie in the No. 2 job. The Jets might be forced into a follow-up move, perhaps adding a goaltender to insulate the youth of Thomas Milic, 21, and Domenic DiVincentiis, 20, in the AHL. I think Winnipeg's preference would be to add a veteran AHL netminder to support Milic, allowing DiVincentiis the opportunity to get a high volume of starts for ECHL Norfolk.

Comrie has played 214 AHL games, including four last season, and was picked by many observers as the odd man out of the Jets' net when training camp began. While Comrie is Manitoba's all-time leader in games played (203) and wins (86), Kahkonen has played more NHL games than Comrie has, posting a superior save percentage across 139 starts. Kahkonen also played more preseason minutes than Comrie did, although when the time came to choose a backup for Game 1 against Edmonton, the Jets picked Comrie for the role.

Comrie says he welcomed the fight for a job.

“Competition brings out the best in you,” Comrie said. “You don’t want to just be given anything. You want to earn everything in life. I think that’s a good way to look at things. Coming here with three guys, I think you want to go out there and do the best you can every single day. It drives you. It makes you better. It pushes you as an individual and as a team so I think for myself, it was a good thing.”

Comrie’s path to the NHL depended on his ability to outwork all competition. He skated 364 out of 365 days as a teenager, allowing himself a single day off on Christmas. He was known for being the first player on the ice and the last off it as a Jet and a Moose and was the last player off the ice before Friday’s interview. He manages the stress that comes with elite performance by controlling the things he can control — first and foremost, his work ethic.

When Comrie’s torn MCL derailed a strong start to his Sabres career, he was forced to play catchup in a difficult situation. When Comrie returned to Buffalo in January 2023, it was like trying to jump onto a speeding train. The midseason pace had picked up; Comrie was clawing at a job in a crowded crease. He struggled with the Buffalo’s goalie rotation and the lack of playing time that came with it. That cycle only repeated itself when he pulled his groin to start last season.

“As a player, it’s hard, but as a goalie, it’s even harder — especially when you have three or four goalies up at the time and you’re not getting the amount of reps in practice,” Comrie said. “I’m a guy who likes a lot of work and I wasn’t able to get that much work because we had a lot of guys cycling through nets. It was harder for me to get that rhythm or that swagger.”

“Honestly, it’s something I work on. I try and have a little more swagger because ... I believe in myself a lot, but I believe in the work that I do more than anything else,” Comrie said. “I’m not the kind of guy who can just show up and say, ‘I’m the best, I’m the greatest.’ I have to go out there and do the work I can do to be able to be comfortable. If I’ve outworked everyone I possibly can, I’ve given myself comfort. (With three goalies in Buffalo) I could never believe that I was doing enough work.”

Comrie picked Winnipeg in part because he saw it as a place where he could return to that hardworking identity. He changed his training this summer in an effort to stay durable, rebuilding his stance.

“My trainer and I really went through and broke some things down and got better at what we had to get better at. I’m very confident in what I have right now, what I’ve done, and where I’m at in my body,” he said. “I was putting more pressure on my hips and my groins and it was causing me to get injured a little bit more than I should have — instead of being in my core, being in my legs, and making the big muscles do the work.”

The other reason Comrie decided to come back to Winnipeg is because so many of his best friends are Jets players. He’s been close with Josh Morrissey for most of his life. Mark Scheifele officiated his wedding. Hellebuyck is a close friend who shares an agent and a workout coach. These are meaningful personal and professional advantages for Comrie — advantages he believes contribute directly to his performance.

“Every time I’ve gone to a new team, you’re kind of a little bit on edge. You have a little bit of extra anxiety. It can hold you back a little from being your best because you’re trying to perform to the top level you can and you’re just a little bit stuck. You have to get to know people. You

don't know their names. You don't know their tendencies. You don't know what they do," Comrie said.

"A lot of people just have that swagger to get to know people. Me, I'm more comfortable around people that I know more. Every human being is different. That's just the way I am."

Winnipeg Sun

<https://winnipeg.sun.com/sports/jets-scheifele-rescues-two-points-in-frantic-ot-win>

Jets' Scheifele rescues two points in frantic OT win

By Scott Billeck

For 58 minutes and 56 seconds, it appeared the Winnipeg Jets had left the Winnipeg Jets in Edmonton.

That's not a typo, either.

The team that crushed the Stanley Cup finalist Oilers on Wednesday were MIA in downtown Winnipeg on Friday night.

Well, at least until Mark Scheifele tied the game with 64 seconds left, sending it to overtime after Winnipeg switched into desperation mode.

Just 38 seconds into the extra frame and 1:42 after the tying goal crossed the goal line, Scheifele won a draw in the offensive zone and then won the game, redirecting Kyle Connor's centring pass to pull out an unlikely 2-1 win over a stingy Chicago Blackhawks squad.

"We just kind of know the feeling of what coverage is, and it just brought me back to my basketball days, a little pick and roll," Scheifele said. "It felt good."

The OT winner was Scheifele's 300th career goal.

"It's pretty humbling to think about, it's pretty wild," Scheifele said. "I'm just very thankful for the guys I've played with. I've been lucky enough to play with some really good players. It's all thanks to them."

His 299th—the equalizer—came during a frenzy with the Winnipeg net empty.

Nikolaj Ehlers shovelled a pass out front that Scheifele poked behind Arvid Soderblom, who deserved a better fate on the night.

"That wasn't exactly the play that we had set up," Ehlers said. "The play that we had set up was getting the puck to the net and that's what I tried to do. Far pad, hopefully it jumps out like it did. Obviously, good on Scheifs to get on that puck."

Scheifele nearly tied it at the beginning of the third, but Soderblom, who stopped 34 of the 36 shots he faced, flung out his right pad to deny a one-timer from the 31-year-old.

Winnipeg had 17 shots in the third period alone, just one more than their total from the first two periods combined.

Ryan Donato's first of the year off the rush at 16:52 of the second put Chicago up 1-0.

Connor Hellebuyck was outstanding, following up his 30-save shutout performance on Wednesday by stopping 25 more.

His third-period leather larceny on Blackhawks captain Nick Foligno loomed large after Scheifele tied it.

"They transition quick and we left him there a few times where he really had to make some big stops for us," head coach Scott Arniel said. "That's what he does. He knows that when games are tight like that, he has to make that one more save to keep us in it and that's what he did tonight. Again."

Neal Pionk also made a heroic play/tackle along the boards to stop Chicago from getting a free look at an empty net later in the frame.

"The biggest thing is he attacked the puck, he didn't back up," Arniel said. "Because their guy had to get to the red line. If he waits and backs up, they might make another play or the guy takes a shot at the net. The kid didn't want to ice the puck and P did a great job of attacking him. He stopped that there and gave us a chance to get it back and get in and get the faceoff."

The Jets had their chances throughout the game, despite their sloppy play.

Kyle Connor hit the crossbar in the first period, and Gabriel Vilardi rang one off the post in the second.

The Jets practice Saturday before a Thanksgiving Sunday matchup with the Minnesota Wild, who will be playing the second half of a back-to-back.

<https://winnipeg.sun.com/sports/hockey/nhl/winnipeg-jets/jets-mason-appleton-feeling-back-to-normal>

Jets' Mason Appleton feeling back to normal

By Scott Billeck

Throughout training camp, something looked a little different with Mason Appleton.

There was a little more oomph on his shot and a little more comfort in his stick work. Confidence, if you will.

Entering a contract year, maybe it was just a bit of a placebo effect. He looked better because he needs to be better to get paid more next summer.

But that wasn't the case.

It was simply a matter of health, and the 28-year-old from Green Bay was finally back to feeling normal.

“My hand feels good right now,” Appleton said Friday morning before Winnipeg’s game against the visiting Chicago Blackhawks at Canada Life Centre.

The origin of that story dates back to Nov. 13, 2022, in Seattle.

The Jets were on the West Coast that night to face the Kraken when, late in the second period, Appleton’s stick got jammed into the glass at the penalty box, jolting his wrist.

The force of the freak accident broke Appleton’s wrist and required a surgeon’s touch and a three-month layoff to fix and heal.

“I’ve felt the best I’ve felt in two years,” Appleton said.

It explains what was noticed in camp. His shot looked harder and more accurate.

In Wednesday’s 6-0 win, Appleton wired one from the dot that beat Stuart Skinner before he could even get set. Appleton finished with a three-point night.

Linemate Adam Lowry gets it.

The captain had a similar injury to Appleton’s in his junior days with the Swift Current Broncos.

“It takes time... to get the feeling back, to get the range of motion back,” Lowry said, adding that it took him at least a year before his wrist felt normal again. “It affects your shooting, having a quicker release.”

Lowry feels Appleton is underappreciated for what he brings to the line.

“His forechecking ability, his playmaking ability and the element of speed he brings to our lineup,” Lowry said. “It’s one of those things where you don’t just hit a point in your career where you’re plateauing and not getting any better. He does a good job at looking at what we were able to do last year and try and find areas to improve.”
One person who hasn’t undervalued Appleton is his head coach.

Scott Arniel, who has the luxury of versatility with Lowry’s line, spoke glowingly of Appleton on Friday.

“When you can look down the bench and you can you know what you’re going to get, sort of night in, night out, shift in, shift out, that’s Apple,” Arniel said Friday. “And he’s one of those guys along with that line, his line mates, they’re pretty consistent. He’s pretty consistent on what he does on a nightly basis, whether that’s maybe last game he scored and made great plays, maybe other nights he doesn’t score, but he does some stuff, defensively, or defending, or PK, whatever.

“He’s one of those guys that you need a few of on your team, and you need that. They’re consistent game to game, and like any good pro, the guys that play in this league longest are the ones that are the most consistent. And that’s probably the best way you can just describe Apple.”

Kahkonen claimed by Colorado

A day after announcing that Eric Comrie would be Connor Hellebuyck's understudy, the man who competed with him for the gig is off to a division rival.

Kaapo Kahkonen was claimed off waivers by the Colorado Avalanche on Friday.

The Jets announced Comrie as their backup on Thursday without announcing it at all after putting the Finnish netminder on waivers.

"I know he's been here a couple of times, but his compete and just how he works in practice, how he works in games," Arniel said of Comrie winning the job. "He earned the opportunity just like everyone else."

Winnipeg had held off on making the move after Hellebuyck returned home to Michigan over the weekend to deal with a personal family matter, briefly jeopardizing his availability for Wednesday's game in Edmonton.

Colorado might not have put in the claim at all if they hadn't been blown out 8-4 by the Vegas Golden Knights on Wednesday, with starter Alexandar Georgiev getting the yank in the game and his backup, Justus Annunen, not fairsing much better in relief.

Kahkonen was signed just a couple hours after Comrie was brought back into the organization on July 1.

The hope for Winnipeg would have been for Kahkonen to mentor prospect Thomas Milic with the Manitoba Moose.

For now, fellow prospect Domenic DiVincentiis will be Milic's backup. DiVincentiis was expected to start with ECHL-affiliate Norfolk this season.

The Jets could look for a journeyman netminder in the meantime. Kahkonen could also end up back on waivers, allowing Winnipeg to reclaim him and even send him straight to Manitoba should they be the only team to put in a claim.