

## **Winnipegjets.com**

<https://www.nhl.com/jets/news/three-things-jets-reward-hellebuyck-with-big-win>

### ***Three things - Jets reward Hellebuyck with big win Jets score a season high eight goals to improve to 4-0***

By Jamie Thomas

WINNIPEG – The Winnipeg Jets improved their record to 4-0 after an 8-3 win over the San Jose Sharks on Friday night. The Jets extend their regular season win streak to 12 games going back to last season. It was a huge night for the members of the Jets line of Vladislav Namestnikov (1G, 3A), Nikolaj Ehlers (2G, 1A) and Cole Perfetti (2G, 2A) as they combined for 11 points. Neal Pionk (1G, 3A) had a four-point night as well for the Jets who now host Pittsburgh on Sunday at Canada Life Centre.

#### ***EHLERS ELITE FIRST PERIOD***

Scott Arniel said after the morning skate that the Jets had to take the game away from San Jose since the Sharks played last night in Chicago. Nikolaj Ehlers took that to heart as the Danish forward scored twice and added an assist before the game was 14 minutes old. Ehlers had a secondary assist on Josh Morrissey's goal at 1:59, scored on the power play at 9:25 and added his second goal of the frame at 13:31.

#### ***HELLEBUYCK NIGHT***

The Jets star goaltender made his 500th career start on Conner Hellebuyck night. Hellebuyck improved to 11-6-2 lifetime against the Sharks by making 19 saves. The 31-year-old was the primary reason that the Jets won the first two games of the homestand in overtime. His teammates were glad that they could provide a lot of offence and give Hellebuyck an easier night between the pipes.

"We gave him a gift this morning (jet ski) and everyone was kind of happy for him," said Namestnikov.

"The main thing is we got the win today for him and celebrated him tonight."

#### ***BUSY NIGHT FOR THE POWER PLAY***

The Jets came into Friday night 3-for-7 on the power play in the first three games of the season. San Jose presented seven more opportunities to Winnipeg tonight and the Jets took advantage scoring four times with the man advantage.

"It's been a work in progress, and we've been slowly, obviously with the new PP coaches, you are going to have to grow and learn some new things," said Perfetti.

"We've been getting better every game and practice and tonight it paid off."

## **Canadian Press**

<https://www.chrisd.ca/2024/10/19/winnipeg-jets-san-jose-sharks-game-story/>

### ***Jets Gift Hellebuyck with Eight Goals of Run Support on Night of His 500th Start***

By Jim Bender, The Canadian Press

First, they gave their most prized netminder an unspecified gift in the morning.

Then, they gifted Connor Hellebuyck eight goals and a win on “Hellebuyck Night” at the Canada Life Centre on Friday night.

The line of Vlad Namestnikov, Cole Perfetti and Nikolaj Ehlers had their best game of the season, accounting for five Winnipeg Jets goals in an 8-3 triumph over the San Jose Sharks.

“It’s great,” said Perfetti, who broke out with two goals and two assists. “He’s the best goalie in the league. It’s a treat to have him on your team and it’s a lot of help for us. It’s nice to put up a large number for him on his night.

“We were due for that to help him out and score for him. He’s bailed us out multiple times, so it was nice to do that for him in tonight’s game.”

Jets fans were given the opportunity to take pictures with the Vezina and Jennings Trophies, which Hellebuyck won last season, on the arena concourse.

“Whenever it’s a day like that, you’re happy,” said Namestnikov, who had one goal and three helpers. “We gave him a gift this morning and everyone was happy for him. The main thing is, we got the win today for him, and we celebrated.”

When it was announced that Hellebuyck had started his 500th NHL game, the fans gave him a standing ovation and chanted ‘Helle! Helle! Helle!’ He gratefully saluted them in response.

“It’s his 500th start, they wanted to make sure that everybody was at their best,” said Jets coach Scott Arniel. “We’ve got some good things going here and whenever you have those nights like that, when one of the guys is being honoured like he was, you want to be at your best. Tonight guys tried to do whatever they could.

“We haven’t scored a lot of goals but there’s been a lot of really good looks and I thought we were rewarded tonight.”

Ehlers added two goals and an assist while defenceman Neal Pionk produced one goal and three assists.

“The guys were obviously (motivated) — a nice little gift he got from the players,” Arniel said. “All he’s done for this organization and what he means to this hockey team, for them to give him a lot of run support — four in the first period. Then obviously, he can settle in and do what he needs to do.

“At the end of the day, we want to give him some nights off and maybe give him the opportunity not to see a ton of shots and a ton of pressure against him. And we did enough obviously offensively.”

Kyle Connor and Josh Morrissey also scored for the Jets, who have started a season 4-0 for the first time in franchise history.

“Obviously, we only scored one goal the last couple (of games) and we’d gotten lots of chances,” Arniel said. “Each line had their share of opportunities, but didn’t go in. Tonight, it was kind of nice to see everybody getting a reward for it. It was great to see our Namestnikov line get rewarded the way they did.”

The Jets were also 4-for-7 on the power play.

“You chase games that way and, obviously, they have a good power play, so that’s one thing we need to correct,” said Sharks coach Ryan Warsofsky, whose team is winless in five outings.

*NOTES:* It was the first time this season that Hellebuyck allowed more than one goal in a game ... The Jets celebrated their 20 millionth fan during the game ... They have now won 12 straight regular-season games going back to last season.

## **NHL.com**

<https://www.nhl.com/news/san-jose-sharks-winnipeg-jets-game-recap-october-18>

### ***Jets score 8, ease past Sharks to remain undefeated Perfetti, Pionk, Namestnikov each gets 4 points; San Jose still searching for 1st win***

By Darrin Bauming

WINNIPEG -- Cole Perfetti, Neal Pionk and Vladislav Namestnikov each had four points, and the Winnipeg Jets remained undefeated with an 8-3 win against the San Jose Sharks at Canada Life Centre on Friday.

Perfetti had two goals and two assists, and Pionk and Namestnikov each had a goal and three assists. Each recorded his first four-point game in the NHL.

“Whenever you score, it gives you a boost of confidence,” Namestnikov said. “But in this league, you can’t get too high and you can’t get too low. We kind of enjoy the night tonight, but then move on to [the Pittsburgh Penguins on Sunday].”

The Jets (4-0-0) are among three NHL teams yet to lose this season, along with the Calgary Flames (4-0-0) and Tampa Bay Lightning (3-0-0).

“I thought the first three games weren’t the greatest for us,” Namestnikov said. “We really couldn’t get anything going. But tonight, we are all using our speed and our skill, getting those pucks on net, and it worked out today.”

Nikolaj Ehlers had two goals and an assist for Winnipeg, which scored four goals in the first period. Connor Hellebuyck made 19 saves in his 500th NHL start.

"We were due to help [Hellebuyck] out and score for him," Perfetti said. "He's bailed us out multiple times, so it was nice to do that for him in tonight's game."

Tyler Toffoli, Luke Kunin, and Fabian Zetterlund scored for the Sharks (0-3-2), who were coming off a 4-2 loss at the Chicago Blackhawks on Thursday. Mackenzie Blackwood was pulled at 1:46 of the second period after allowing five goals on 18 shots. Vitek Vanecek made 15 saves in relief.

"[Winnipeg] did a lot of things well," San Jose coach Ryan Warsofsky said. "They were faster than us. They skated with the puck more through the neutral zone. They were probably more connected in their own end, and in the offensive zone they gave us some trouble with some motion."

Josh Morrissey gave the Jets a 1-0 lead at 1:59 of the first period with a wrist shot through traffic.

Ehlers' three points came in the first period. With two Sharks in the penalty box and the Jets holding a 5-on-3 advantage, Ehlers' one-timer from below the face-off dot made it 2-0 at 9:25.

Following a turnover by Mikael Granlund in the neutral zone, Perfetti set Ehlers up for a shot from the high slot on the rush that made it 3-1 at 13:31.

"I thought tonight [linemates Namestnikov, Ehlers and Perfetti] were very cohesive," Winnipeg coach Scott Arniel said. "They worked together. Real good close support. They didn't have to try high-risk things; they just kept it simple and obviously got rewarded for it."

"All three of those guys have real good skill. They complement each other. ... There's been games where -- maybe it's a period -- one of them is going, two of them are going. It was never all three. And tonight, it was all three right from the start."

Winnipeg went 4-for-7 on the power play on Friday and is 7-for-14 on the season.

"We took a lot of penalties in Chicago and we took a lot of penalties here," said Vanecek, whose team was 5-for-7 on the penalty kill against the Blackhawks. "This is the best league in the world. They're good on the power play. [It's] not good."

Toffoli cut it to 2-1 on the power play at 11:43 of the first, scored in his first game against his former team.

After Ehlers made it 3-1, Pionk increased the lead to 4-1 at 18:48, scoring on the power play after Ehlers' second goal.

Kyle Connor extended it to 5-1 at 1:46 of the second, scoring with a shot from the high slot on the rush. Blackwood was then replaced by Vanecek.

Kunin cut it to 5-2 at 10:28 on a wrist shot in the slot that beat Hellebuyck five-hole.

"We've got to stay out of the box," Kunin said. "Our team has done a good job sometimes on the kill and getting momentum for our team. But I think we're a team when we're rolling four lines, on the power play, when we're not in the box playing short, we attack and play our game, and

that needs to be addressed as well. Just play that consistent hockey that we've been talking about."

Perfetti's first power-play goal of the third period at 9:50 pushed it to 6-2.

Zetterlund scored 19 seconds later to make it 6-3.

"We need to just put these two games behind [us]," Vanecek said. "Now we're coming back home. One game at home and then [we need] to step up and -- new game."

Perfetti scored his second power-play goal at 12:55, extending it to 7-3, before Namestnikov scored at 19:27 for the 8-3 final.

"[Penalties are] part of the problem, for sure," Warsofsky said. "That's too many two nights in a row. You chase games that way, and obviously [they have] a good power play, so that's one thing we need to correct."

*NOTES:* Toffoli (four goals, one assist) became the first player to score at least four goals in his first five games with the Sharks since Tomas Hertl had seven goals in 2013-14. Toffoli signed a four-year, \$24 million contract (\$6 million average annual value) with San Jose on July 1 after finishing last season with Winnipeg following a trade from the New Jersey Devils on March 8. ... Pionk tied the Jets/Atlanta Thrashers record for points in a game by a defenseman and became the fifth player at the position to hit the mark. ... Ehlers recorded the fifth three-point period of his NHL career. Only two other players have as many since the franchise relocated to Winnipeg for the 2011-12 season: Blake Wheeler (six) and Mark Scheifele (five).

### **Global Winnipeg**

<https://globalnews.ca/news/10819778/ehlers-perfetti-each-score-twice-as-winnipeg-jets-rout-sharks-8-3/>

### ***Ehlers, Perfetti each score twice as Winnipeg Jets rout Sharks 8-3***

By Russ Hobson & Christian Aumell Global News

After three straight days of practice, the Winnipeg Jets were raring to go.

The Jets struck for four goals in the first period as they manhandled the still-winless San Jose Sharks 8-3 on Friday night at the Canada Life Centre.

After a pair of tight-checking overtime wins, the Jets scored early and often to start the season with four straight wins for the first time in Jets history. The Jets are one of just three unbeaten teams left in the NHL.

"We obviously had only scored one goal the last couple and we had gotten lots of chances," said head coach Scott Arniel. "Each unit and each line seemed like they had their fair share of opportunities that didn't go in and tonight it's nice to see everybody kinda get rewarded for it."

Cole Perfetti and Nikolaj Ehlers each scored twice. And Perfetti and Vladislav Namestnikov both had a career-best four-point nights.

“We’re all using our speed, our skill,” said Namestnikov. “And just getting those pucks on net and it worked out today.”

The Jets second line had problems producing offensively in the first three games. But Ehlers, Perfetti, and Namestnikov broke out in a big way as they combined for 11 points in the victory.

“We believe in one another and we know what we can do,” Perfetti said. “I don’t think anything magically changed. I think we just had the mindset of the confidence and belief in what we can do as a line.

“We knew it was going to come. It just took a couple games and hopefully now the floodgates will open and I think that was a really good confidence game for our line.”

The Jets, with the NHL’s top-ranked power play, scored four goals on the man advantage in seven chances. It’s just the second time in Jets 2.0 history they’ve scored four power play goals in a game. They’ve now been successful on 50 per cent of their power play opportunities in the first four games.

The Jets wasted little time getting on the board. After Ehlers skated the puck into the Sharks’ end, he took it into the corner before he passed it back to Colin Miller, who then sent a cross-ice pass to Josh Morrissey. His wrister from the point eluded Mackenzie Blackwood to make it 1-0 just 1:59 into the contest.

Winnipeg continued to pour on the pressure during the first 10 minutes with San Jose barely getting a sniff of the puck, leading to a pair of Sharks penalties that put the Jets on a lengthy 5-on-3.

The Jets red-hot power play took full advantage. After cycling the puck around the San Jose end, Gabriel Vilardi found Ehlers for a one-timer that he buried to make it 2-0 at the 9:25 mark.

Winnipeg took a penalty shortly after Ehlers scored, putting the Sharks on the power play where they cut into the Jets’ lead. Former Jet Tyler Toffoli tipped a Jake Walman point shot past Connor Hellebuyck to make it 2-1.

But less than two minutes later, Winnipeg restored the two-goal lead. Perfetti made a great play, stealing the puck on a solid back-check before rifling the puck ahead to Ehlers in stride. He ripped a wrister past Blackwood to make it 3-1 at the 13:31 mark.

The Jets found themselves on another power play late in the first and their second unit cashed in. An innocent-looking wrist shot from Neal Pionk beat Blackwood through some traffic to make it 4-1 after 20 minutes.

The Sharks chose to leave Blackwood in for the second but he lasted just 1:46 before Kyle Connor roofed his third of the season past him, ending his night in favour of Vitek Vanecek who had played the night before in Chicago.

Winnipeg continued to dominate possession through much of the second but the only other goal in the period came from San Jose. Luke Kunin got loose in the slot and beat Hellebuyck five-hole from close range around the midway point of the period.

The Jets made it 6-2 at the 9:50 mark of the third when Perfetti took a pass from Alex Lafallo in the slot and ripped it past Vanecek.

Just 19 seconds later, San Jose made it 6-3 when Fabian Zetterlund beat Hellebuyck on a 2-on-1.

Winnipeg soon found themselves on yet another power play and again they took advantage with Perfetti scoring his second of the period on a slapshot that should have been stopped by Vanecek but beat him five-hole.

Not wanting to be left out of the goal-scoring barrage, Namestnikov buried one in transition with just over 30 seconds remaining to make it 8-3.

In making his 500th career start, Hellebuyck had to turn aside just 19 shots to earn the win on Hellebuyck night as the club celebrated his Vezina and Jennings Trophy award wins from last season.

The Jets return to action Sunday afternoon against Pittsburgh when they will honour Bryan Little. The pregame show is at 12 p.m. on 680 CJOB, with puck drop just after 2 p.m.

### **Winnipeg Free Press**

<https://www.winnipegfreepress.com/breakingnews/2024/10/18/second-line-sinks-sharks>

### ***Second line sinks Sharks Namestnikov, Ehlers and Perfetti light it up in lopsided victory***

By: Ken Wiebe

Nikolaj Ehlers was adamant things were bound to turn around.

As much as the Winnipeg Jets winger was encouraged by the small steps his line with Vladislav Namestnikov and Cole Perfetti had taken during the first three games of the regular season, Ehlers knew they had more to give.

When asked what he had seen during those early outings, Ehlers discussed subtle things such as spacing and puck support, noting the trio had some valuable video sessions during the four days between games and took advantage of the additional time to fine-tune a few things.

“We’re focused on getting this thing working. We’ve got the guys to do it,” Ehlers said following the morning skate. “We’re positive and I’m positive that we’ll get it going. We have to.”

Ehlers and company turned his words into action, delivering an excellent performance that included two goals and an assist in a convincing 8-3 victory over the San Jose Sharks on Friday night.

“We knew it was eventually going to come,” said Perfetti, who had two goals and two assists for the first four-point game of his NHL career. “Hopefully now the floodgates are open. That was a really good confidence game for our line.”

Ehlers set up the first goal from Josh Morrissey, scored the second on the power play to make it 2-0 and then buried a pass from Perfetti to cap a three-point night and help the Jets improve to 4-0 on the season.

The Jets wrap up this four-game homestand on Sunday afternoon against Sidney Crosby and the Pittsburgh Penguins.

The Namestnikov line was involved in three of the Jets' four goals that came at five-on-five and Ehlers nearly completed the hat trick just over six minutes into the third period.

"The first three games weren't the greatest for us, we couldn't get anything going," said Namestnikov, who had a goal and added three helpers. "We were all using our speed, our skill and just getting those pucks on net and it worked out.

"We've just got to build on this game."

*QUIETING SOME CRITICS* – With those four days between games, it left ample time to dissect the minute details in the Jets' hot start and that meant there was plenty of tongue-wagging on social media about the lack of five-on-five offence since the season opener against the Edmonton Oilers (when they scored four times in that scenario).

During the previous two games, the Jets scored twice at 6-on-5 with the goalie pulled in favour of the extra attacker and two more in overtime (including one on a four-on-three power play).

Did the Jets recognize they wanted to create a bit more offensively at five-on-five? Certainly, but not at the expense of cheating on the defensive side of the puck to do so.

The territorial play was one-sided in this one, as the Jets had 72 shot attempts compared to 45 for the Sharks.

By scoring four times at five-on-five, the Jets are up to eight goals at five-on-five in four games while allowing just four at even strength.

*KEEPING THE POWER TURNED UP* – The Jets' power play struck four times in seven opportunities, moving them to seven-for-14 on the season.

The 50 per cent efficiency rating will be nearly impossible to sustain, but the early returns on the man-advantage under Davis Payne have been impressive.

The motion and puck movement has been excellent, as has the willingness to shoot the puck quicker in the sequence to create chaos around the net.

The Jets got a pair of power-play markers from each unit and it's essential over the course of a season to spread out the production.

"It's a work in progress. With a new PP coach this year, you're going to have to learn to grow and learn some new things," said Perfetti. "We're getting better every game and every practice and tonight, it paid off."

*GOOSE EGG BROKEN* – The Jets penalty kill allowed its first goal of the season on what was the Sharks first power-play attempt.



Jake Walman unloaded a shot from the point that found the stick of former Jets winger Tyler Toffoli for a redirection.

Toffoli added an assist to move him to four goals and six points in five games after signing a lucrative contract as a free agent on July 1.

The Jets finished one-for-two while shorthanded, leaving them with an 85.7 per cent efficiency rating so far.

*HELLEBUYCK APPRECIATION* – With the Vezina Trophy and Jennings Trophy on the concourse and a commemorative pennant with his likeness handed out prior to the game, Jets goalie Connor Hellebuyck received a rousing standing ovation late in the first period during a broadcast timeout.

Morrissey couldn't help but recall the famous media session Hellebuyck delivered after being pulled on multiple occasions during his first season as a starter.

"I think he got pulled in a game and came out and said in the media something along the lines of his game was good enough to win a Vezina, and everyone laughed at him. And sure enough, here we are, two Vezina's later, and (there) could be more," said Morrissey. "So, I think he's just always had a confidence, but it's not an arrogance, because he has a plan behind it."

Hellebuyck finished with 19 saves in his 500th NHL start and picked up the 279th victory.

*EXTRA, EXTRA* – Three Jets finished with four points — Perfetti, Namestnikov and defenceman Neal Pionk (one goal, three assists) — while three others had multi-point games, including Ehlers, Gabe Vilardi (two assists) and Alex Iafallo (two assists).

The Jets iced the same lineup for a fourth consecutive game, which meant the healthy scratches were forward David Gustafsson and defenceman Dylan Coghlan. Arniel said earlier this week that he'd like to get both of those players into action shortly, along with a start for backup goalie Eric Comrie.

Following the morning skate, Arniel said he didn't think that Jets D-man Ville Heinola had been skating yet as he continues to work his way back from an ankle injury. There isn't a timetable for his potential return yet either. "Nope. Got to wait on that one," said Arniel.

<https://www.winnipegfreepress.com/breakingnews/2024/10/18/toffoli-enjoys-skating-with-the-sharks>

***Toffoli enjoys skating with the Sharks  
Veteran forward disappointed short-lived stint with Jets didn't end better***

By: Mike McIntyre and Ken Wiebe

Tyler Toffoli's time in Winnipeg ended up being short — and not so sweet.

The veteran winger, acquired by the Jets at last year's trade deadline, represented a big swing from general manager Kevin Cheveldayoff. A lack of sustained production combined with the team's hasty exit from the playoffs would likely put this transaction in the "miss" category.

“Obviously there was a lot of excitement when I first got here,” Toffoli told the Free Press on Friday as his new team, the San Jose Sharks, prepared to face his most-recent former employer.

“At the end of the day, a little disappointing.”

Winnipeg sent a third-round pick in the 2024 draft and a second-round pick in the 2025 draft to the New Jersey Devils for Toffoli, a pending unrestricted free agent who was meant to help fortify the top six. The 32-year-old had 11 points (seven goals, four assists) in 18 regular-season games, and two goals in five playoff contests.

The Jets never had any real interest in extending Toffoli, who couldn't turn down a lucrative four-year, US\$24 million contract offer on July 1 from the rebuilding Sharks. While that likely represents a significant overpay, San Jose was looking for some experience to surround promising young talent such as Macklin Celebrini and Will Smith.

Toffoli, who won a Stanley Cup in his rookie season with the Los Angeles Kings and is now playing for his seventh NHL team, knows plenty of patience is likely required with his latest stop.

“A younger team, but a team that's looking to go in the right direction,” he said. “I think we've had some spurts here so far this season where we've played some good hockey and had chances to win games. But things haven't gone the way the way we envisioned.”

Celebrini, the first-overall pick from this summer's draft, scored in his NHL debut and then registered his first pro assist by setting up Toffoli later that night. Unfortunately, the 18-year-old suffered a hip injury near the end of the game and has been sidelined since.

“He's going to be a special player,” said Toffoli. “He's obviously extremely talented. Hopefully he can get healthy here soon and jump back in the lineup and jump back to where he started with the first game. He's definitely going to help our team and help lead the charge.”

Rookie Sharks head coach Ryan Warsofsky said Toffoli, who has 263 goals and 262 assists in 816 career games, has been a solid add for his squad.

“He obviously can score goals at this level. He's done it his whole career,” he said. “He's been a good influence for our younger players on how to be a pro, prepare, how to practice and how to play the game the right way. We've leaned on him quite a bit. Happy to have him on our team.”

Heading into play Friday night, Toffoli was leading the Sharks in scoring with four points (three goals, one assist) through the first four games.

“I don't think stats are everything,” he said. “Obviously, it's nice to score and all that, but at the end of the day, if you're losing hockey games, it's not that fun to show up to the rink.”

#### *Around the glass*

**HOFER SHINES:** Winnipegger Joel Hofer pitched a 34-save shutout and then made the breakout pass that led to the overtime winning goal from Jake Neighbours on Thursday.

Hofer is known for his puck-handling ability and actually scored a goalie goal in the American Hockey League during the Calder Cup playoffs as a member of the Springfield Thunderbirds in 2022.

Hofer, 24, is sharing the crease with Jordan Binnington and has won his first two starts of the season to go along with a 1.98 goals-against average and .937 save percentage.

The Blues made headlines for the two successful offer sheets they made during the offseason and the early returns have been excellent for defenceman Philip Broberg. Broberg had the primary assist on the Neighbours OT goal to extend his point streak to five games. In doing so, he became the first Blues D-man in franchise history to record at least a point in each of his first five games.

**STRONG START FOR KOVACEVIC:** Former Jets defence prospect Johnathan Kovacevic looks like he found a great landing spot with the New Jersey Devils.

Kovacevic, who spent the past two seasons with the Montreal Canadiens after he was claimed off waivers from the Jets, is up to one goal and five points in seven games, adding nine blocked shots and 11 hits while averaging 21:35 of ice time per game.

An injury to Brett Pesce opened up some additional playing time on the right side of the depth chart and Kovacevic has taken full advantage.

Kovacevic, 27, was originally chosen by the Jets in the third round (73rd overall) of the 2017 NHL Draft and suited up in four games with the organization during the 2021-22 campaign.

He's actually in the third year of the contract he signed with the Jets, one that featured a two-way deal in each of the first two seasons and a one-way deal during the final with an NHL salary of US\$766,667.

Kovacevic played the 150th NHL game of his career earlier this week.

**CROSBY JOINS 1,600 CLUB:** Pittsburgh Penguins captain Sidney Crosby became the 10th player in NHL history to hit 1,600 points with an assist against the Buffalo Sabres on Wednesday.

Now in his 20th NHL season, Crosby added another assist and scored the overtime winner to get him to 1,602. The next player he's chasing is former Colorado Avalanche captain Joe Sakic, who had 1,641 in 1,378 games. Former landlord and fellow Penguins great Mario Lemieux is eighth on the all-time points list with 1,723 (in just 915 games).

Speaking of milestones, Penguins centre Evgeni Malkin scored his 500th NHL goal against the Sabres, becoming the 48th player in NHL history to do so.

Both players are a shoo-in to be Hall of Famers and with just visit per regular season by Eastern Conference opponents, so there might not be that many more for this dynamic duo that just joined Wayne Gretzky and Jari Kurri as duos to score 500 times for a franchise.

Crosby and Malkin will be in Winnipeg on Sunday as the Jets close out this four-game homestand.

**STARS LOCK UP OETTINGER:** The Dallas Stars took care of another important piece of business on Thursday when they inked goalie Jake Oettinger to an eight-year contract extension.

The US\$8.25 million AAV represents the same value as Boston Bruins netminder Jeremy Swayman signed earlier this month and New York Islanders puckstopper Ilya Sorokin signed on July 1, 2023.

Oettinger is a homegrown talent, chosen by the Stars in the first round (17th-overall) of the 2017 NHL Draft. He's approaching his 200th NHL game and has another 47 playoff games on his resume. The 26-year-old joins Roope Hintz, Miro Heiskanen and Esa Lindell as core pieces who have been signed to long-term extensions by Stars GM Jim Nill in recent years.

In a lot of ways, the Jets helped reset the goalie market last October when they agreed on an eight-year extension with Connor Hellebuyck worth US\$59.5 million (US\$8.5 million AAV).

The New York Rangers are looking for a new deal for Igor Shesterkin and it will be interesting to see where that contract lands after he reportedly turned down an eight-year pact that would have paid him US\$88 million (US\$11 million AAV).

Although he remains on long term injured reserve, Carey Price is still the highest paid goalie in the NHL, with an AAV of US\$10.5 million on a deal he signed in 2017, with Sergei Bobrovsky of the Florida Panthers next at US\$10 million on the seven-year deal he signed in 2019.

The belief is that Shesterkin, who won the Vezina Trophy in 2021-22, is looking to become the highest-paid goalie — especially with the salary cap set to rise. As a point of reference, Artemi Panarin is currently the highest-paid player on the Rangers with an AAV of US\$11.643 million.

### **Winnipeg Sun**

<https://winnipeg.sun.com/sports/perfetti-with-career-high-four-point-night-as-jets-thrash-finless-sharks>

### ***Cole Perfetti with career-high four-point night as Jets thrash finless Sharks***

By Scott Billeck

So much for those slow starts.

Cole Perfetti and Nikolaj Ehlers put a lid on that chit-chat on Friday night at the Canada Life Centre.

Perfetti logged a four-point night, the first of his career and one of three in the game for the Winnipeg Jets, and Ehlers scored twice and added an assist in an 8-3 thrashing of the San Jose Sharks.

Perfetti's first two of the season came in the third, and both on the power play as the Jets went 4-for-7 on the night. A sore spot of last season after finishing 22nd is no more, with the Jets now 7-for-14 (50 per cent) in four games.

Ehlers scored his first and second goals of the season, one at five-on-five and the other on the power play just 4:06 apart in the first period, kept their perfect start to the season intact, improving to 4-0-0.

“We knew that was eventually going to come,” Perfetti said. “It didn’t come the first three games and we were struggling a little bit with that stuff. We talked about it as a line. We were pretty positive that we found a lot of success last year and we knew it was going to come. It just took a couple games and, hopefully, now the floodgates are open. I think that was a really good confidence game for our line.”

Meanwhile, Vladislav Namestnikov and Neal Pionk had the two other four-point games, assisting three times and each scoring their first of the season.

Namestnikov, like Perfetti, established a career-high with his point total.

“I thought the first three games weren’t the greatest for us, we really couldn’t get anything going,” Namestnikov said. “But tonight, we are all using our speed and our skill, getting those pucks on net, and it worked out today.”

Josh Morrissey and Kyle Connor also scored, and six Jets recorded multi-point nights.

“It’s great to have guys up and down the lineup and every line contributing,” Perfetti said. “It’s great to have that. It’s always nice to get the first one out of the way for the year. I’m sure everyone is pretty happy with that. It was a good game for us.”

Connor Hellebuyck’s flawless opening also continued, making 19 saves to pick up his fourth win of the season in his 500th career start on ‘Hellebuyck Night’ in Winnipeg.

Both the Vezina Trophy, which Hellebuyck won for the second time this past June, and the William M. Jennings Trophy were in the house.

The Sharks landed in Winnipeg wounded, with young guns Macklin Celebrini, Will Smith and William Eklund all nursing injuries.

They also played to a 4-2 defeat on Thursday night in Chicago.

Former Jets forward Tyler Toffoli scored for San Jose, along with Luke Kunin and Fabian Zetterlund.

The Sharks were 1-for-2 with the man advantage.

Mackenzie Blackwood hit the showers early, lasting just 21:46 after surrendering five goals on 18 shots.

Vitek Vanecek fared a little better, stopping 14 straight before Perfetti bested him. He stopped 15 of the 18 shots he faced in relief.

Winnipeg wraps up their four-game homestand with the date with the Pittsburgh Penguins on Sunday.

The Jets will honour former centre Bryan Little before the game.

<https://winnipeg.sun.com/sports/jets-morrissey-ehlers-pay-tribute-to-connor-hellebuyck>

## ***Jet's Morrissey, Ehlers pay tribute to Connor Hellebuyck***

By Scott Billeck

Time flies. That's one of the first things Josh Morrissey thought about on Friday when asked about Connor Hellebuyck.

"It's been fun going up through the years with him," Morrissey said. "We kind of made the team at similar times, played together in the minors, went through development camps and then for basically our whole careers, obviously, have been together and in the pro ranks."

Friday was 'Hellebuyck Night' at the Canada Life Centre, with both the Vezina and William M. Jennings trophies in the house as the Winnipeg Jets hosted the San Jose Sharks.

Morrissey remembers two things about his first meeting with the 31-year-old reigning Vezina winner.

"He always had a plan and was very confident," Morrissey said. "I remember probably my rookie year. I think he got pulled in a game, and came out and said in the media something along the lines of his game was good enough to win a Vezina, and everyone laughed at him. And sure enough, here we are, two Vezina's later, and could be more."

Morrissey learned that Hellebuyck's confidence is interwoven with arrogance, referring to the plan behind it.

"So everything he does, he does with intention," the defenceman said. "And I think you've seen his development grow that way, year over year, his consistency in his habits. So, I'm just happy for him. And personally, I'm certainly very lucky to have the chance to play basically every game in front of a Vezina caliber goaltender throughout my career. I think it makes me look better, saves my bacon here and there."

Nikolaj Ehlers had fewer words. The truth is, he's been asked about Hellebuyck so many times over the years that he's run out of answers.

"I don't know what there is to say," Ehlers said. "You guys have seen what he's been able to do over the last nine years and starting this year again. He's a guy that's super competitive, a great guy in the locker room, wants to win. He's shown that. To have a guy like that in your net is pretty special. Obviously, he's a big part of this team, and he will be going forward. We're lucky to have them."

Asked if Hellebuyck needed to pick up the pace a little bit after allowing two goals through the first three games, Ehlers met a sarcastic question with a sarcastic answer.

"A little bit. Two is two too many," he said. "But we've talked about it. He's got some stuff to clean up, we've got some stuff to clean up."

Meanwhile, Ehlers was a lot more serious when asked about his line, which includes Vladislav Namestnikov and Cole Perfetti and has been held without a point this season.

Head coach Scott Arniel said after Sunday's 2-1 overtime win over the Minnesota Wild that he had seen some progression with the trio.

Don't expect a shuffling of the deck, either.

Arniel has liked the look of his three other lines and has basically told Ehlers' line to figure it out.

Ehlers agreed there's been some progression, but it's nowhere near where they want to be.

"Still not good, let me put it that way," he said. "But we've talked a lot, we're focused on getting this thing working. We've got the guys to do it. We've looked at a lot of video to try and see what we can do to create some more, to get the puck and put it in the right spots, where to support each other. Where to kind of give each other some space, focusing on shooting more to create the rebounds and maybe get them running around a little bit.

"Our D-zone has been good. Not great, but good. So, we've worked the last four days to create something that we can bring into the game (on Friday) and I like what I've seen. We're positive and I'm positive that we'll get it going. We have to. I love playing with those two guys, they're great players, so we've just got to figure it out."

#### *Heinola still yet to skate*

While Logan Stanley appears to be nearing a return after knee surgery last month, fellow rear guard Ville Heinola, who had a procedure on his ankle around the same time, seems to be further away from the same.

"He's not on the ice," Arniel said Friday. "If he is, he's quietly on the ice. Nothing heavy yet. I don't even think he is on yet."

Asked for a timeline on the young Finn, who needed to have a screw in his surgically repaired ankle from last year replaced after an infection, Arniel didn't have much to go with.

"Got to wait on that one," he said.

#### **TSN.ca**

<https://www.tsn.ca/video/domino-s-that-s-hockey-are-jets-proving-playoff-failures-are-a-thing-of-the-past%7E3013572>

#### ***Domino's That's Hockey: Are Jets proving playoff failures are a thing of the past? (VIDEO)***

After heading into last season's playoffs with high hopes, the Jets were eliminated in the first round by the Avalanche in only five games. But after starting this season 3-0 and outscoring their opposition 10-2 in the process, could their playoff failures be a thing of the past? Bruce Boudreau discusses.

<https://www.tsn.ca/nhl/video/ehlers-perfetti-break-out-in-a-big-way-to-keep-jets-undefeated%7E3012561>

### ***Ehlers, Perfetti break out in a big way to keep Jets undefeated (VIDEO)***

Nikolaj Ehlers and Cole Perfetti each scored two goals, each added two assists, and their centre Vladislav Namestnikov scored and netted three assists as the second line broke out in a big way for the Jets to keep them undefeated. TSN's Dan Robertson and Kevin Sawyer break it all down.

### **Sportsnet.ca**

<https://www.sportsnet.ca/nhl/article/what-to-make-of-the-five-nhl-teams-still-undefeated-in-regulation/>

### ***What to make of the five NHL teams still undefeated in regulation***

By Justin Bourne

Earlier this week I wrote an article that looked at the league's winless teams and tried to assess whether they were legitimately bad, or just off to bad starts. Most teams not named San Jose had pretty good excuses, and were likely to sort things out. (Just days later, it seems like the Edmonton Oilers have.)

Today we're going to look at the NHL teams that haven't lost in regulation yet. Given some of them weren't exactly world beaters last season, we'll assess whether these hot starts are potentially a sign of surprisingly good things to come, or not.

For reference on the below, here is my pre-season article "Two sentence expectations for every NHL team."

Let's start with the first of two Canadian surprises, the...

#### ***CALGARY FLAMES***

Pre-season expectations: A potential lottery team

Record to date: 4-0-0

Pre-season expectations quote: "They sent away Jacob Markstrom and Andrew Mangiapane for long-term gain, and in turn, they should be clearly out of the playoffs before the deadline."

Analysis: Sometimes things just go right for a stretch of games, and the Flames may well be in that pocket. Their combined save and shooting percentage (PDO) is third highest in the league, and they've counted Chicago and Philadelphia among their early season victims thus far, two pretty not-great teams.

But something has changed about the perception of this team. If their veteran guys happen to have good years at the same time, there are enough quality players here for Calgary to be a challenge most nights. Combine that with some good young talent to energize the group, and you could see them parlaying a good start into a season that's filled with positivity, rather than being some negative slog. They'll still miss the playoffs, but they're no pushover.

#### ***TAMPA BAY LIGHTNING***



Pre-season expectations: Fighting for anywhere from second to fifth in the Atlantic

Record to date: 3-0-0

Pre-season expectations quote: "Make no mistake, the Bolts are an analytics organization that's trying to win Stanley Cups."

Analysis: Early returns are that this team is good, very good. If they can figure out a way to upgrade their D-corps, they could be back among the tier of teams with a legitimate shot at the Cup. (But again, that hinges on a very particular positional upgrade.)

They've got too many threats up front, and too good of a goalie to think their start is a fluke. They're giving up more expected goals against than the average NHL team so far, so they've got some work to do. But they're fast, they work hard, and they're smart, which translates to a good team that could push for home ice in the post-season.

### *WINNIPEG JETS*

Pre-season expectations: Wild card playoff team

Record to date: 3-0-0

Pre-season expectations quote: "While this is a very good team, they fell short last post-season, and let several good players go without really replacing them, so it'll be a year-long battle for the playoffs."

Analysis: During the 2023-24 season, the Jets allowed 198 goals against, tied for fewest in the league -- a pretty significant accomplishment. Their goalie won the Vezina Trophy, they played team defence and built off it.

Well, so far this season they have allowed just two goals against in three games and have the lowest expected goals against of any Western Conference team. I don't know that "best defensive team in the NHL" is sustainable this year, and it remains to be seen if they can score above league average, but any team that defends this well is going to win hockey games.

I now expect to see the Jets add some offence as they go, and becoming a stronger team than I felt they were a whopping 10 days ago.

### *NEW YORK RANGERS*

Pre-season expectations: Drop by 10 points (from 114) and be a tough out in the playoffs

Record to date: 3-0-1

Pre-season expectations quote: "But they did win (the Presidents' Trophy), and they didn't change much of anything, so I guess they'll be a 100-plus point team again this season, though it won't be another Presidents' Trophy."

Analysis: Sure they haven't won every game in regulation, but few teams have better underlying numbers thus far and they've shown the can maintain a strong pace over a full season before.

Artemi Panarin is en fuego, Alexis Lafreniere is a star, and Igor Shesterkin is going to be the highest paid goalie in league history before long. This is no mirage, and so all told, the Rangers may actually threaten for that Presidents' Trophy yet again. Shows what I know.

And finally...

### *MINNESOTA WILD*

Pre-season expectations: If healthy, be in the playoff hunt before falling just short in April

Record to date: 2-0-2

Pre-season expectations quote: "Their combined shooting and save percentage (PDO) last year was bottom-10 in the league, so I expect some bounce-back."

Analysis: It's probably a stretch to have them here, as they've lost twice beyond regulation, but hey! The Wild haven't lost outright yet!

They're a strange team, in that they've got six of eight possible points, but no team in the league has been worse at creating expected goals. They've done it on the backs of great goaltending (over .950 save percentage thus far), and the puck has gone in a bit more than they maybe deserve, so they look pretty good in the standings.

Positive vibes can snowball into something more lasting, but all told, I see an average team having a fortuitous run of hockey.

We always talk about how teams are reasonably well sorted just five or six weeks after the start of the season, and in some ways, we can see it happening. The teams in the wrong statistical cluster include the Sharks, Flyers, Canadiens, and Blackhawks. The good cluster has the Rangers, Lightning, Stars, and the...Flames?

Mostly, those clusters make sense.

But the drift will continue as more games get played, and it's a busy weekend of hockey ahead.

## **The Athletic**

<https://www.nytimes.com/athletic/5845806/2024/10/16/nhl-cap-court-scheifele-zibanejad/>

### ***Do Mark Scheifele or Mika Zibanejad have bad contracts? NHL Cap Court returns***

By Sean McIndoe

Welcome back to Cap Court, where we put the questionable deals of NHL stars on trial to find out whether they deserve the dreaded "bad contract" label.

As always, we're viewing "bad" contracts through the lens of the team that's stuck with them, since that's how fans are forced to do it, even though we'd never begrudge a player taking an offer that's put in front of him. Importantly, we're also only looking at contracts from this day forward; a deal could have made sense and even provided value for the first few years, but we're only looking at what's left on the books.

We've been doing this long enough that names like Jonathan Toews, Carey Price and Jakub Voracek have been on the docket. Heck, one of the early editions featured Ryan Suter and Oliver Ekman-Larsson, a combined five teams and three buyouts ago. Have all our calls been proven right? Look, we'll do the cross-examining around here, thank you very much.

This time around, we have five more names. We'll start with a big-market blueliner.

#### ***Mark Scheifele, Winnipeg Jets***

The details: Scheifele is in the first year of a seven-year extension he signed a year ago. The contract carries a cap hit of \$8.5 million.

The case that it's a bad contract: Scheifele is a first-line forward, but his lack of defensive impact means he's basically a one-way player in a league in which top centers are expected to be 200-foot contributors. Worse, his offensive impact hovers around a point per game and hasn't even reached that for the past few years. He's a good player but not an elite one, and though that might be just enough to make him worth his cap hit now, he's 31 and will be 38 by the time his deal expires. It's a great deal for Scheifele but not so great for the Jets, which is pretty much what everyone said at the time.

The case that it might be OK: Scheifele ranks just outside the top 10 in scoring among centers since 2018, and his "worst" season in terms of points per game was one in which he scored a career-high 42 goals. He's not Nathan MacKinnon, Leon Draisaitl or Auston Matthews. But those guys are resetting the market, and Scheifele is locked in a tier or two below. The contract might not age well, but that's life in the NHL, and a rising cap should mitigate a lot of that pain.

And yes, we have to mention the Winnipeg factor here. Scheifele was on the verge of a potential UFA departure when he signed his extension, and this team isn't exactly a top destination for stars when it comes to the trade or free-agency markets. Maybe his extension looks different if he signs it in Florida, but this isn't Florida. If the Jets slightly overpaid a longtime star to make sure he plays his whole career in Winnipeg, you can live with that.

Key witnesses: Scheifele's \$8.5 million is more than fellow centers Steven Stamkos and Elias Lindholm just got as UFAs and just behind what a younger Sam Reinhart got coming off a 57-goal season. But it puts him right in line with guys like Roope Hintz and Filip Forsberg. At the very least, you'd take him over fellow \$8.5 million man Pierre-Luc Dubois.

The verdict: Right now it's fine. It's the term that worries me, in addition to the potential for a steep drop-off for a player who doesn't contribute much if he's not driving offense. Given where the Jets are at these days, maybe Kevin Cheveldayoff isn't worried about Year 7. But at Cap Court, we have to be, and all that term nudges this one over to the bad side of the contract ledger.