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<https://www.winnipegfreepress.com/breakingnews/2024/10/31/ten-games-in-jets-are-the-class-of-the-nhl>

Ten games in, Jets are the class of the NHL Early returns impressive with plenty of hockey and plenty of challenges ahead

By: Mike McIntyre

COLUMBUS — A perfect 10? Not quite, but you have to give the Winnipeg Jets extremely high marks for the way they have rushed to the head of the hockey class so far this season.

They are not only the top team in terms of wins (nine) and points (18) as the calendar flips to November, but they also have the league's most potent power play (44.8 per cent), are scoring more goals-per-game than anyone else (4.6) and have the best goal differential (+22) heading into action Thursday night.

They are also among the stingiest defensive clubs (2.4 goals against per game, fourth-overall) and the penalty kill has become an asset, not an anchor (81 per cent, 13th-best).

In other words, there's not a whole lot to complain about.

"We're appreciative of what we're doing and what we've done but there's so much hockey ahead of us," Jets coach Scott Arniel said following Wednesday's 6-2 victory in Detroit to kick off a two-game road trip that ends Friday evening in Ohio.

With both the quantity of games (14) and quality of opponents (Florida twice, Tampa twice, Dallas, Minnesota, Vegas, New York Rangers, Los Angeles, Colorado, Nashville, Utah, Pittsburgh, Columbus) set to pick up in November, here's 10 takeaways from the best October in franchise history:

1) *Kyle Connor is a man on a mission.* He has seven points this week alone and is among the top offensive producers in the game right now. With a team-leading nine goals and 17 points, there's no reason to think Connor, who has one more year left on his contract, can't challenge for 50 goals and 100 points this year.

"He's an elite player in this league. We like to keep him as our little hidden secret, but I don't think that's going to happen anymore," Arniel told the Free Press after Connor registered career point No. 500 (along with 501 and 502) in his home state of Michigan Wednesday.

2) *The Jets are once again getting production from everyone.* There are already 12 skaters with at least two goals, which is impressive. Winnipeg also have five players averaging at least a point-per-game, and six more who are close (between 7-9 points). They come at you in waves, and there are no shifts off against this extremely balanced lineup. Winnipeg had a dozen players hit double-digits in goals last year, and they're on track to match, or maybe even better that this year.

3) *Neal Pionk has shaken off a nightmarish 2023-24 season and is off to a strong start with 12 points (three goals, nine assists).* Only the great Cale Makar of the Colorado Avalanche has more production from the blue-line so far. Save for one ugly game against Toronto, in which he

had plenty of company, the pending unrestricted free agent has been fantastic. Which begs the obvious questions of what his next contract looks like — and is it with the Jets or another club?

4) *Offence from the defence.* The Jets have 34 points so far from defenceman, which is the best in the NHL. All-Star Josh Morrissey (11 points) is right behind Pionk, while Colin Miller (two goals, three assists) and Dylan Samberg (two goals, one assist) have chipped in more than most expected.

“It is something we’ve been stressing, that offence has to come from these three and four-man rushes and those guys (on D) being a part of it,” said Arniel.

5) *Connor Hellebuyck has his Vezina form once again.* We likely take the netminder for granted around here, with the expectation level set at “greatness” every season. Hellebuyck is on track for the best year of his incredible career, with a 7-1-0 record, a 2.12 goals-against-average and a .923 save percentage. Spelling Hellebuyck off and not burning him out will be key, and so far backup Eric Comrie has two wins in two appearances, with a third coming as early as Friday.

6) *Gabe Vilardi is coming on strong.* It was a sleepy start for the young forward, but all three of his goals have now come in the past four games, and he seems to really be finding chemistry with linemates Connor and Mark Scheifele.

“He was stressing a little bit, trying to get himself going and now he seems to be up and running,” Arniel said Wednesday night. “That line looks fast, they’re cohesive and they’re doing things together. When you have chemistry like that, they’re going to create the offence. They’re a line we look to every night to score goals.”

7) *The second line isn’t quite clicking.* Cole Perfetti, Nikolaj Ehlers and Vlad Namestnikov have all had fine moments, but that trio is still a work-in-progress. Perhaps Namestnikov isn’t ultimately the best fit as 2C and general manager Kevin Cheveldayoff (once again) looks for an upgrade around the trade deadline. Given Winnipeg’s great start the organization can preach patience and let things continue to play out.

8) *The early returns on revamped special teams have been excellent.* Winnipeg’s power play under new assistant coach Davis Payne has 13 goals and looks like a legitimate threat to score every time, which is quite a refreshing change from a year ago. The PK under new assistant coach Dean Chynoweth is much more aggressive and effective in the early going.

9) *Five-on-five play needs to improve.* Winnipeg has largely just been treading water at even strength, with the majority of their offensive damage coming when they have a man advantage (power play, delayed penalty, goalie pull, overtime). At least until they faced the Red Wings, where they had a 5-0 advantage at five-on-five. That’s an encouraging development for a group that was elite in that department last season, yet struggled on special teams. Go figure.

10) *Arniel gets an A-plus so far, but more tests are coming.* We’re curious to see how the first-year bench boss handles the blue-line once Ville Heinola is back to full health, which seems to be just a couple weeks away. The Jets are going to face some NHL beasts this month, including two very tough upcoming road trips. So far, they’ve only had to navigate a single losing “streak” of one game, which was followed up with a terrific response.

“Everybody in that room knows that it’s not going to be easy. Just look at our division. Our division alone is going to be a mountain to climb here,” said Arniel.

Sure, the Jets are looking down on everyone else, but right behind them are the 7-2-0 Dallas Stars and the 6-1-2 Minnesota Wild, who have the second and third-best point percentages in the NHL so far.

“We’ve got to bank the points when we can. We want to make sure that we’ve got a style of play that we’re trying to build. The hockey’s going to get tougher and tougher every month.”

Global Winnipeg

<https://globalnews.ca/news/10842551/winnipeg-jets-elite-team-november-analysis/>

ANALYSIS: November could determine whether Jets are truly elite

By John Shannon CJOB

These are heady times if you’re a fan of the Winnipeg Jets. As November begins, Winnipeg sits atop the standings — not the Central Division, not the Western Conference, but the entire NHL — with that 9-1 record.

And it comes at a time when it’s difficult to identify the elite teams in the NHL. Remember last season, the talk around the league that 10 or 12 different teams could win the Cup. Well, I don’t think that’s the case right now. The list of teams that have sprinted to the top of the standings — the one the Jets lead — is small.

Dallas is there, the Devils too, perhaps Florida and Tampa. But that might be it. More teams have struggled than thrived. Call it parity, mediocrity; I choose to call it the “mushy middle” where teams with high expectation like Colorado, Toronto, Vancouver and more have migrated.

The reasons are pretty simple. If you have goaltending and special teams, you will thrive in this league. Connor Hellebuyck and the power play are at the top of the game, and that’s why the Jets had such an impressive October.

People around the NHL are noticing, and this team will have a target of its back. Teams will be checking Kyle Connor a little closer and pressing the team defence a little harder. That’s the reality of being at the top of the table in the NHL.

Heady times indeed. But this is a cautionary tale. This team has a ton of road games coming up: one stretch later this month and into December with 13 of 15 away from home. That might define whether or not this team really is elite.

Sportsnet.ca

<https://www.sportsnet.ca/nhl/video/should-jets-enter-uncomfortable-territory-to-extend-connor/>

Should Jets enter ‘uncomfortable territory’ to extend Connor? (VIDEO)

Elliott Friedman joins The FAN Hockey Show to discuss the red-hot start of Kyle Connor, and the challenges the Winnipeg Jets will face to extend his contract.

<https://www.sportsnet.ca/nhl/article/32-thoughts-trade-talk-beginning-to-pick-up-across-the-league/>

32 Thoughts: Trade talk beginning to pick up across the league

By Elliotte Friedman

7. Whenever Winnipeg thinks it has a chance, it adds. Watching the Jets' blazing 9-1 start, the one thing that stands out is the size of their defence. You have to be mobile, you have to be skilled, but you have to be big. The recent Stanley Cup champions had that in common: a long, agile, aggressive defence that always seemed to have a body, a stick, an arm or a leg in your way. A thicket for opposition to navigate. NHL heights and weights can be deceiving, but the Jets' sizes — minus Dylan Samberg, Logan Stanley and Haydn Fleury — are the smallest since the 2018 Washington Capitals. That doesn't mean you can't win, but it certainly flies in the face of what's recently worked.

The Athletic

<https://www.nytimes.com/athletic/5889317/2024/11/01/scott-arniel-head-coach-jets-blue-jackets/>

Winnipeg Jets' Scott Arniel learned tough lessons in Columbus: 'I thought I had all the answers'

By Aaron Portzline

COLUMBUS, Ohio — When Scott Arniel was hired as associate coach of the New York Rangers in 2013, there were already three familiar faces in the dressing room. That's always helpful, of course, for Arniel it turned out to be crucial.

Rick Nash, Derick Brassard and Derek Dorsett had played for Arniel when he was a first-time NHL head coach with the Columbus Blue Jackets in 2010-11 and half of 2011-12. He lasted only 123 games behind the Blue Jackets bench, and they were two of the longest seasons in franchise history.

When Arniel was fired midway through the 2011-12 season, few in Columbus were sorry to see him go. But it didn't make much sense that Arniel, considered a rising coaching star in the American Hockey League, could flop so badly — and seem so overwhelmed — in the NHL.

There were public fights with players. There were nasty public exchanges with the media. A veteran player publicly savaged Arniel for not running practices that were challenging enough.

Arniel went back to the AHL for one season, then landed the associate's job with the Rangers. By then, he was no longer angry with the Blue Jackets for firing him. He was ready to get back to work on earning a second chance as an NHL head coach.

"The biggest thing is, I thought I had all the answers," Arniel told The Athletic. "The NHL is a tough league, and some of those relationships ... I think I had too much of a hard-nosed way of approaching them."

The biggest thing I learned is that you have to build those relationships. You have to get the players believing in you, and you have to believe in them. That's how you get results."

And who helped Arniel see the errors of his way?

“Well, we had a lot of Columbus guys come through New York,” Arniel said. “It was like half the team came over to New York.”

Nash was traded to the Rangers in a blockbuster trade during the summer of 2012. Brassard, Dorsett and defenseman John Moore were all traded to New York in a trade deadline deal in 2013 for speedy winger Marián Gáborík.

By then, Nash was a well-respected veteran in the NHL. Brassard and Dorsett were NHL lineup regulars, and Moore was a young blueliner finding his way. For Arniel, they all became resources.

“I had a chance to have some long talks with those guys,” Arniel said. “I asked them what they thought, what I didn’t do right in Columbus and what I could have done differently. I talked to a couple of my assistant coaches, Brad Berry and Todd Richards. I talked to (former Blue Jackets assistant general manager) Chris MacFarland.

“There were a lot of things I could look back (on) now and see what I would have done differently. They helped me prepare for my next opportunity, and they helped me really find my way back. The hardest part of talking to those guys was the feeling that I’d let them down, too.”

Arniel has been back to Nationwide scores of times after his firing as an assistant with the Rangers (2013-14 to 2017-18), Washington Capitals (2018-19 to 2021-22) and Winnipeg Jets (last two seasons).

But he returns tonight as head coach of the Jets, having been hired to replace Rick Bowness over the summer. Winnipeg (9-1-0) is the NHL’s top team so far this season, including a 6-2 win over the Detroit Red Wings on Wednesday.

In addition to the heart-to-hearts he had with former Blue Jackets, Arniel said he grew exponentially over the last decade-plus working under Alain Vigneault, Todd Reirden, Peter Laviolette and Bowness.

But over the course of those 11 seasons, he did wonder if he’d ever get another chance to be a head coach in the NHL.

“I wasn’t sure,” he said. “I always trained hard for it. That’s the lesson sports teaches you — life teaches you — if you fail at something, you want a second chance. All I ever wanted was to get another opportunity.

“When I got let go, (to me) it wasn’t my fault. But at the end of the day, you look back and realize, I didn’t do a very good job. And so you have to find some answers. If I had to get a second chance, I had to find out the reasons why my first one didn’t go so well.”

It would be entirely unfair to put all of the Blue Jackets’ struggles in 2010-11 and 2011-12 on Arniel.

On Nov. 26, 2010, the Blue Jackets opened a weekend home-and-home series with Detroit that would determine first place in the Central Division. This was ho-hum for the Red Wings, who were still seen as Stanley Cup contenders. It was rare air for the Jackets.

The Red Wings won both games and the Blue Jackets' spiral to the abyss was underway. They won only 20 of their final 62 games that season, finishing with the third-worst record (34-35-13) in the Western Conference. When they started 11-24-5 the following season (last in the NHL), Arniel was fired in the middle of Columbus' road trip in California.

It's hard to look back on those seasons without wincing. Arniel had public run-ins with defenseman Mike Commodore and Brassard, and he was challenged by veteran Vinny Prospal for running practices that were too easy, in Prospal's opinion.

But some of the drama was beyond Arniel's control.

The Blue Jackets traded for Jeff Carter before the 2011-12 season, hoping he could be the long-sought center who could play with Nash and give them a bona fide No. 1 line. But Carter pouted from the moment the trade was announced and made it clear he never wanted to play in Columbus.

Meanwhile, behind the scenes, Nash's discontent was brewing after he learned the Blue Jackets had discussed trading him to facilitate a roster rebuild.

These were volatile times. Arniel was fired on Jan. 9. Carter was traded on Feb. 23. Nash was traded the following June. General manager Scott Howson — who hired Arniel, traded for Carter and traded Nash to the Rangers — was fired in February 2013.

Arniel stands on more stable ground these days. He's a wiser, more confident coach, he said, and the Winnipeg organization feels like home to him.

He began his NHL playing career with the Jets in the early 1980s, and finished his career with the Manitoba Moose of the old International Hockey League in the late 1990s. He was an assistant coach with the Moose when his playing career ended, and later was head coach of the franchise when they joined the AHL.

Now he has the Jets rolling. They'll likely be the biggest test so far this season for the Blue Jackets, who are 5-3-1 and playing better than most expected.

"As much as it didn't work out here for me or the team, I love coming back here," Arniel said. "There are some great people I got to work with and (got) to be around, so that's great.

"I don't have any hard feelings. I don't come back sour and upset. I always want to win, but ... hey, it's been a long time since all that happened here."

<https://www.nytimes.com/athletic/5885739/2024/10/31/winnipeg-jets-takeaways-nhl-best-standings/>

10 key takeaways from the Winnipeg Jets' NHL-best 9-1-0 start to 2024-25 season

By Murat Ates

The Winnipeg Jets are 9-1-0 and atop the NHL standings.

Connor Hellebuyck leads all goaltenders in wins. Kyle Connor is tied for second in the league in goals. What's even more impressive? The Jets have the league's top power play, the most points from their defencemen and five point-per-game players — including Connor, who is one point behind Mark Stone and Kirill Kaprizov for the league lead.

Winnipeg has a few obvious areas for improvement, too, but the Jets are off to a scorching hot start to their season. Here are 10 of the biggest stories to come out of those 10 games.

Power play is single biggest driver of wins

Winnipeg's power play has scored 13 goals in its first 10 games, running at a 43.3 percent efficiency while looking dangerous from every position on the ice. Assistant coach Davis Payne deserves plaudits here, giving Winnipeg's first and second units multiple options to attack, whether the Jets have possession at the top of the zone, below the goal line or on either flank.

Let's consider the scale of Winnipeg's improvement. Those 13 goals in 10 games to start the season? Winnipeg's highest output in any 10-game stretch last season was 10 goals and they averaged five. Winnipeg's scoring at more than twice that rate right now.

How, then? The answers are movement and options.

Take the top unit, for example, where every opponent knew the Jets' default option last year was to get Mark Scheifele on the half wall. He'd hold it and choose between three options: Gabriel Vilardi down low, Sean Monahan in the high slot or Josh Morrissey up top. The Jets were at their best when Vilardi had the puck beside the net because he had multiple options and most of them were dangerous — goals came from Monahan in the slot, Connor across the ice or Vilardi driving the net on his own.

Now, every Jets skater has as many weapons as Vilardi did. We've seen Nikolaj Ehlers make passes to Scheifele that are the mirror image of the Vilardi-to-Connor play. We've seen Connor tee up goals by finding Scheifele through the seam. And Winnipeg's players are moving. Ehlers is playing what Payne calls the "pop" position, meaning he gets a lot of chances from the high slot. He doesn't just sit there and wait, though — on one play, he might be playing a Vilardi-like role on the goalie's left, looking for Scheifele across the ice; on the very next play, Ehlers might find himself available for a high-slot one-timer. Movement on and off the puck creates decisions for PK units and space for elite scorers to find the net.

Winnipeg is getting the shots that it wants, too. Connor is shooting more than twice as often this year than last year — not because someone thought it would be a good idea for him to shoot but because he's getting the puck in better situations. The Jets' pace and movement help them manipulate opposing PK units so that Connor gets the puck with lanes open and opponents out of position.

Let's take Connor's first goal against Toronto as an example of a goal that would not have happened last season. Watch as the Jets turn Scheifele's entry into a scoring chance for Connor in a place on the ice he'd never have gotten to one year ago.

Would you believe that Connor's next power-play goal will equal his total from all of last season? Or that, despite his goal scoring genius, Connor has never scored more than 11 power-play goals in a season? Even the year he scored 47 goals, Connor managed just eight on the power play. He's on pace to obliterate that total this year and it's because the Jets aren't hoping he'll blast a one-timer after minimal power-play movement. They're getting him the puck in great contexts, with penalty killers on the move.

The second unit deserves more ink than it's getting in this section but Cole Perfetti has three power-play goals in limited minutes. I wouldn't expect Perfetti to keep scoring on 50 percent of his shots but his goals are worth acknowledging, too.

The PK, with a hat tip to team discipline

The Jets' PK has given up four goals through 10 games this season and scored a short-handed goal of its own, via Connor in Calgary. I don't want to be too quick to say that it's mission accomplished on that front, though, because part of Winnipeg's success has been its discipline. Winnipeg has put itself short-handed only 21 times — the fourth best number in the league — but a tough night in Detroit has dropped the Jets to the middle of the penalty killing table.

I think the high-pressure, challenge-every-uncertain-puck PK unit still has some fine-tuning to do.

Arniel and his staff are off to a hot start

The special teams improvement is a matter of coaching. The set plays are paying off, too: Think of Scheifele scoring with the goalie pulled at the end of the first period against Minnesota. There's also the matter of Arniel's early, aggressive goalie pull with four minutes and change against Toronto, a clear identity to each line and effective line matching, plus the Jets' pushback against Detroit after such a miserable game against the Maple Leafs. Winnipeg's coaching staff has its team's pulse early.

I also like Arniel's decision not to throw his top line under the bus when asked about its performance after that Toronto game.

Top line a bigger problem than sum of its parts

Connor, Scheifele and Vilardi have been outscored 9-5 at five-on-five, even with three goals to kick off Wednesday's game in Detroit. That is a rough stat line for three players who are much better than that and whose special teams exploits have helped Winnipeg win games. No line in the NHL has played together more often than Connor, Scheifele and Vilardi have. The one that comes closest — Jack Eichel, Mark Stone and Ivan Barbashev in Vegas — has outscored its opposition 13-6.

Blah blah blah. Five-on-five goals, you say. Winnipeg is 9-1-0. What's your point?

Bear with me here. I think there are a lot of people who watched last year's Jets and would have done anything to give them a power play as good as they've had so far this year. They wanted that team to be better, so as to have a better chance to beat Colorado or whomever in the playoffs. This year, the trouble spot is in a different place. The Jets' top line is costing Winnipeg

goals — and it's given back the advantage that those same players have helped build on the power play. Wouldn't it be nicer if both aspects of Winnipeg's game were strong?

Winnipeg's top line has been outshot 79-58, getting just 42 percent of the shots while they're on the ice. They've struggled to clear the zone, finding themselves on the wrong side of the puck following turnovers at the Jets line, and they've been beaten back into the Jets' zone while trying to play transition defence. These problems let the air out of their obvious scoring ability.

Early in the season, I asked Scheifele about his line's troubles getting the puck out of their zone.

"Any line that turns the puck over at their own blue line, they're going to be in trouble," Scheifele said. "It's not always about making the safe play, it's about making the right play — the play that's ahead of you — and just executing ... There's different pucks — whether it's a rimmed puck, whether it's a pass on the tape, whether it's coming out through the middle, it's just a matter of those details."

Winnipeg could get another dominant game from its top trio, just like the one it got in Detroit, and they'd still be outscored by a goal this season. Recent returns are splendid; the full 10-game stock watch is not.

Growing pains on second pair part of best-case scenario

Neal Pionk and Dylan Samberg have been on the ice for several goals allowed by the Jets' first line. They also had a particularly rough night against Toronto, leading to the worst "game score" of any Jets players this season, but I've been writing about growing pains since before the season started.

Even if Pionk, who scored two power-play goals in Detroit and is now up to 12 points, delivers a scorching bounce-back season, there are going to be games of chaos.

Even if Samberg steps into the top-four job he's playing for the first time in his career, there are going to be hard games along the way.

Connor's backpressure worth noticing

Through 10 games, some of Connor's defensive issues have made themselves known. Not every puck that gets rimmed to him on the left wing boards gets out of the zone. Scheifele tends to anticipate the next play and can be caught above his man in these moments of error. Vilardi doesn't have the pace to compensate in those chaotic moments. We've harped on it hard enough, though — Connor has been spectacular in other areas of the game.

Let's also acknowledge that Connor is using his footspeed to make defensive plays. On occasion, he's eaten checks to send the Jets up ice successfully, and he's been on an incredible offensive tear. He's also been the best player on his line at five-on-five. Unless Winnipeg is willing to make Vilardi or Perfetti a centre, then there's only one top offensive centre on the team. If the Jets don't want to run Ehlers-Scheifele-Vilardi, the solution would be to attempt Connor-Scheifele-Ehlers, which slows down their secondary scoring line — or to wait and hope that games like Wednesday in Detroit become the new normal after several months of struggle.

That's why Vilardi's emergence Wednesday night was such a big deal. Connor has been the best player on that line by some margin; he's up to 17 points in 10 games and shows plenty of signs he's invested in team defence — even acknowledging the line's struggles.

Upgrade at centre a pressing item once again

Winnipeg has traded three of its last six first-round picks in search of a top-six centre, bringing Paul Stastny, Kevin Hayes and Sean Monahan onto playoff-bound teams. The Jets got one of those picks back via Jacob Trouba in the summer of 2019, and thought they had solved their second-line centre issue when Patrik Laine and Jack Roslovic were traded for PL Dubois and a third-round pick ... But Dubois wanted out, Vilardi is Winnipeg's first-line right winger and the problem persists.

Are they destined to move a first-round pick in search of a centre at this trade deadline, too? What about Ehlers, whose future is still up in the air?

At some point, the Jets are going to need to retain one of their rentals, develop their own centre or accept that Connor and Scheifele need prime Blake Wheeler to win their minutes at five-on-five. Maybe they're just treading water until Brad Lambert arrives in earnest, but it's too soon to put the weight of a line on Lambert's shoulders.

Perfetti is a top-six forward

Oh, neat. After a summer spent writing about Perfetti's offensive instincts, the number of passes he makes that lead directly to goals, and suggesting that Perfetti is a top-six forward with power-play production ... he's been exactly that.

Perfetti isn't dominating the flow of play — and I think it's important to note that the Perfetti-Namestnikov-Ehlers line gets sheltered a bit — but he is producing. Three goals, six assists, nine points and game-over-game improvement show a player on the cusp of a breakout season. We saw a similarly hot start last season; now it's on Perfetti to show he can sustain it and to keep pushing through any ups and downs.

I wonder what he'll cost on his next contract.

Stanley is still a hope play

Logan Stanley is big, mobile and a good presence in the Jets dressing room. The organization values him — and has since the Jets traded up in 2016 to draft him 18th. He's not an overly physical defenceman for his size — my read is that he's more of a puck mover than a bruiser at heart — but he has shown a willingness to stand up for his teammates in key moments.

I don't think he's a meaningful upgrade to Haydn Fleury on Winnipeg's third pair.

There's a best-case comparable for Stanley's career arc in the NHL, though; his name is Jamie Oleksiak and we've written about him before, way back in 2021 when discussing Stanley's ceiling as a player. Oleksiak is also 6-foot-7, he's also a mid-first-round pick and he also struggled to make a third pairing impact for the first several seasons of his career. By 25, though, Oleksiak had shown signs of top-four capability in Pittsburgh and Dallas. Stanley is 26 now, lagging behind Oleksiak's career arc and continues to find himself a step behind in the defensive zone.

He's also winning his sheltered minutes despite Monday's penalty problems, though, so let's not act as though he's cost Winnipeg a bunch of games.

Early cracks in the Morrissey/DeMelo foundation

Let's just file this one here for consideration as the season goes on. Morrissey and Dylan DeMelo have a longstanding track record of success, with Morrissey crediting DeMelo in part for

his surge up the scoring charts. DeMelo's exit passes haven't been perfect this season, though, while Morrissey has looked dominant in flashes as opposed to by way of routine.

Winnipeg is winning Morrissey/DeMelo's minutes but they've been stuck in their zone for long stretches and outshot 93-61. We've never seen that pair get buried like that so it's a story to watch as the season continues.