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<https://www.nhl.com/jets/news/three-things-jets-lose-samberg-and-game-in-nashville>

***Three things - Jets lose Samberg and game in Nashville  
Samberg suffers broken foot, Jets lose 4-1 to Preds***

By Jamie Thomas

The Winnipeg Jets lost for the first time this season to a Central Division rival as they lost 4-1 to the Nashville Predators at Bridgestone Arena. Adam Lowry scored the only goal of the game for Winnipeg who was outshot 36-24. Eric Comrie played excellent in a losing effort making 32 saves and saw his record fall to 3-2. The bad news on top of that is that Dylan Samberg suffered a broken foot and will fly home to Winnipeg tomorrow. The Jets (17-4-0) head to St. Paul and will face the Minnesota Wild on Monday night.

***FAMILIAR FOE OPENS SCORING***

After a couple of glorious scoring chances for the Jets in the first period, Nashville got on the board courtesy of Roman Josi. The Preds defenceman blasted a slap shot past Eric Comrie for his third of the season, Josi now has eight points (2G, 6A) in his last four games against Winnipeg. Winnipeg would press towards the end of the period and Juuse Saros would deny both Cole Perfetti and Nikolaj Ehlers with acrobatic stops back-to-back.

***LOWRY AND COMS***

With the way Saros was playing, you got the feeling it wasn't going to be a pretty goal that beat him. The midway point of the second period, the jets tied the game, and it came from a goal mouth scramble. Saros made a couple of saves before Adam Lowry found a loose puck and finally slammed in the rebound to tie the contest at 1-1 at 9:58. The rest of the period was the Eric Comrie show, the Jets netminder turned aside all 18 shots fired at him by the Predators.

“Obviously, go into the first intermission down one, but I think kind of the style of game was right, the game plan was there, I think come out in the second period, and there's a lot of shooting ourselves in the foot, turning pucks over in the neutral zone, turn the pucks over the high zone in our end,” said Lowry.

“And if it weren't for Coms, it wouldn't have been very close after the second. So obviously, on the road, tied one, one you don't love how your second period is.”

***BAD BOUNCES***

The Jets lost Dylan Samberg in the second period after he blocked a Steven Stamkos slap shot during a Predator power play. So, the combination of playing on back-to-back nights and down a defenceman led to Winnipeg giving up goals 1:44 apart. First, Nashville scored on the power play, Haydn Fleury blocked a shot that went right onto the stick of Stamkos who fired in the go-ahead goal at 3:20 of the third. Then the Jets gave up a two-on-one, Comrie would stop the initial shot but when the Jets tried to clear the zone it went right to Jonathan Marchessault, and he made it 3-1.

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<https://www.nhl.com/news/winnipeg-jets-nashville-predators-game-recap-november-23>

***Predators pull away in 3rd to defeat Jets  
Josi scores twice, Marchessault has goal, assist for Nashville***

By Robby Stanley

NASHVILLE -- Roman Josi scored twice, and Jonathan Marchessault had a goal and an assist for the Nashville Predators in a 4-1 win against the Winnipeg Jets at Bridgestone Arena on Saturday.

Steven Stamkos also scored for the Predators (7-11-3), who have won two of three. Juuse Saros made 23 saves.

"I thought that was a pretty good recipe of what we have to do and understand we've got to continue this," Stamkos said. "The story of this year has been we have efforts like this and then we don't follow it up. So, let's follow it up and get on a little roll here."

Adam Lowry scored for the Jets (17-4-0), who were coming off a 4-1 win at the Pittsburgh Penguins on Friday. Eric Comrie made 32 saves.

"I don't think it was energy that was the issue, I think it was just execution," Lowry said. "For the most part, I liked our first period. We had some chances. Obviously, we go into the first intermission down one, but I think the style of game was right. The game plan was there. Come out in the [third] period and there was a lot of shooting ourselves in the foot."

Stamkos gave the Predators a 2-1 lead at 3:20 of the third period, slapping home a big rebound in the left circle for a power-play goal.

Marchessault pushed the lead to 3-1 at 5:04. Haydn Fleury tried to clear a rebound in front, but the puck instead went right to Marchessault, who scored glove side with a wrist shot from the right hash marks.

Josi scored an empty-net goal at 18:40 for the 4-1 final.

"Obviously, it's not been going well for us and we had to change some things," Marchessault said. "I think you've got to give credit to the coaching staff. They realized a couple things that we weren't doing in the past 20 games that we started doing tonight. We saw results, so I think it's on us to go with the game plan and execute. Tonight, we did."

Josi gave the Predators a 1-0 lead at 9:55 of the first period on a slap shot from the left point through a screen.

"Every game is huge," Josi said. "It's early in the season, but every game matters a lot for us. Obviously, we dug ourselves a little bit of a hole here. We'll definitely enjoy this one tonight, but

once tomorrow hits we're going to New Jersey and playing another great team (on Monday). We need to keep building and play even better."

Lowry tied it 1-1 at 9:58 of the second period, jamming in a loose puck in the crease.

"Saros played great," Lowry said. "The style of play we expect from them, especially when they're at home. They're a hard forechecking team and they create a lot of turnovers off of that forecheck. They get a lot of pucks to the slot. They've got some guys on the back end that are real active. I think when we look at their roster, obviously they've had a disappointing start to the season, but they're a team that's a lot better than their record shows."

Jets defenseman Dylan Samberg left the game in the second period with a broken foot after blocking a shot from Stamkos.

"He's got a broken foot, so it's not good," Winnipeg coach Scott Arniel said. "We're going to send him home tomorrow when we get to [Minnesota], and we'll get it looked at when he gets home."

*NOTES:* Jets forward Mark Scheifele was minus-3 and was assessed three minor penalties. ... The Jets have four games remaining on their season-long six-game road trip. ... It was the first time this season that Stamkos and Marchessault have scored in the same game. ... Predators forward Fedor Svechkov played 7:34 in his NHL debut.

### **Winnipeg Free Press**

<https://www.winnipegfreepress.com/breakingnews/2024/11/23/jets-knocked-off-by-preds-lose-samberg-to-broken-foot>

#### ***Jets knocked off by Preds, lose Samberg to broken foot***

By: Mike McIntyre

NASHVILLE — The sight of Dylan Samberg making his way down the Bridgestone Arena hallway on crutches Saturday night, his left leg in a walking boot, told the whole story outside a subdued Winnipeg Jets locker room.

This loss was going to leave a mark.

A 4-1 defeat to the Nashville Predators came with a bigger price than just two lost points to a Central Division rival, as one of the team's top defencemen suffered a broken foot stepping in front of a Steven Stamkos slapshot and is out indefinitely.

"It's not good," head coach Scott Arniel told the Free Press. "He got up and tried to finish the (penalty) kill and got himself off. But I've seen him go down before. He blocks a lot of shots. Actually, he's got the shot blockers on the side, but this one got him on the top of the laces. He's a warrior. That's a big hole for us."

The Jets were already running low on fuel after playing 24 hours earlier in Pittsburgh, where they opened up a season-long six-game road trip by beating the Penguins 4-1. Losing Samberg early in the second period really stung, forcing them to go with five tired defencemen the rest of the night.

“He does so much for us in that regard, with not just shot blocking, but having a good stick and breaking up a lot of plays. So we missed him out there tonight,” said defenceman Dylan DeMelo.

Not surprisingly, the Predators stepped on the gas in the final frame, breaking a 1-1 tie with three tallies including an empty-netter.

“I don’t think it was energy that was the issue. I think it was just the execution for the most part,” said Jets captain Adam Lowry, who scored the lone goal in the second period during a goal-mouth scramble.

Winnipeg falls to 17-4-0, which remains the best record in the NHL. Nashville, which hadn’t played since Wednesday, improves to 7-11-3.

*TIP YOUR CAP TO COMRIE:* It’s not easy being a backup goaltender, where you often get thrown to the proverbial wolves as a result of scheduling.

Granted, the Predators are off to a putrid start, but they still have plenty of talent and were a desperate bunch. Eric Comrie, making just his fifth start of the year, did everything he could to keep his team in the game with spectacular save after spectacular save until the dam eventually broke in the final frame.

He was, in a sense, hung out to dry.

“There was a lot of shooting ourselves in the foot, turning pucks over in the neutral zone, turn the pucks over the high zone in our end. And if it weren’t for Coms, it wouldn’t have been very close after the second,” said Lowry.

Comrie, who is now 3-2-0, finished the night with 32 saves on 35 shots. You can’t ask for much more from Connor Hellebuyck’s understudy.

“He was fantastic. He made some huge stops,” said Arniel. “We know that they have some high-end talent, some high-end offence. They were throwing a lot of pucks at the net-front with bodies there. Coms was outstanding.”

*ANOTHER BLOCKED SHOT HAD A PAINFUL RESULT:* Yes, the Jets were clearly the second best team on the ice in this one.

But they still had a chance to salvage something as they entered the third period deadlocked.

It quickly fall apart. Josh Morrissey was called for hooking just 86 seconds into the final frame, the result of his team’s inability to cleanly get the puck of out their zone.

On the ensuing power play, Filip Forsberg took a wrist shot that was blocked by Jets defenceman Haydn Fleury — and the puck went directly to a waiting Stamkos, who one-timed it past a surprised Comrie for the go-ahead goal which turned out to be the game-winner.

“You just line up at centre and move on. Not much you can do on that one,” DeMelo said of the bad puck luck.

Any hopes of a comeback were dashed less than two minutes later when Jonathan Marchessault buried a rebound off an odd-man rush against a weary looking Jets group that repeatedly — and uncharacteristically — were getting burned through the neutral zone.

Defenceman Roman Josi, who had opened the scoring near the midway mark of the first period, then sealed it from long distance with Comrie pulled for an extra attacker late in the game.

“You hope that kind of turn the page and come out with better third. And we didn’t do that,” said Lowry.

“Just disappointed with kind of how the game unfolded. I think even if you don’t have energy, it’s the reads, it’s kind of the battle level. So yeah, I think there’s just another level that we got to get to, and we expect to get to.”

*SURLY SCHEIFELE:* Winnipeg’s top centre was in a growly mood, as Mark Scheifele took three different minor penalties during the game and tried to get Gustav Nyquist to fight after the Nashville forward appeared to catch Morrissey with a head shot during a puck race.

No infraction was called on the play, including Scheifele who delivered three hard chops to Nyquist.

He also seemed out of sorts, registering just one shot on net, going minus three and only taking two faceoffs for the second straight night. Linemate Gabe Vilardi once again handled primary dot duties. Arniel won’t say if Scheifele is battling some type of hand or wrist injury, but it’s clear he’s not in peak form right now.

Scheifele had plenty of company in this game. Everyone in the top six was eerily quiet, and you have to wonder when Cole Perfetti might snap out of a prolonged funk? (No goals in the last nine games, just three assists).

“The biggest thing is that the forwards needed to do some heavy lifting and we kind of put more pressure on (ourselves) by not gaining zones and not moving the puck to the next spot,” said Arniel.

“We lost some battles, turned some pucks over, had a few extended, long shifts in our end of the rink. You could tell that they got a little wind behind their sails and they came after us.”

Juuse Saros was solid for Nashville, especially early in the game, but the Jets only threw 24 pucks his way. That’s not nearly enough.

*EXTRA, EXTRA:* The Jets went 0-for-3 on the power play, while Nashville went 1-for-3.

After Josi opened the scoring in the first period, Alex Carrier appeared to give the home team a 2-0 lead just seconds later when he converted on a rebound. However, the Jets successfully challenged that the zone entry was offside and it came off the board.

Winnipeg began the night a perfect 6-0-0 against the Central Division, having beaten Chicago, Minnesota, St. Louis, Utah, Colorado and Dallas. The only rival they had yet to face was Nashville, who now have handed them their only blemish so far.

Winnipeg flew to St. Paul following the game and will take Sunday off. They'll return to action on Monday when they face the Wild, which currently owns the second-best record in the NHL.

Ville Heinola is expected to join the club after playing two games with the Manitoba Moose on a conditioning assignment following ankle surgery in September. After being held off the scoresheet in Thursday's season debut, he had the primary assist on Saturday's game-winning goal against the Rockford IceHogs at Canada Life Centre.

Logan Stanley (abdominal) is not ready to return, so Heinola would be the likely candidate to step right in for Samberg. The Jets also have defenceman Dylan Coghlan, who has been a healthy scratch for the first 21 games of the year.

**KEY PLAY:** The Stamkos power-play goal early in the third period was the break Nashville had been looking for and propelled them to victory.

**THREE STARS:** 1. Nashville right-winger Jonathan Marchessault: one goal, one assist; 2. Winnipeg goaltender Eric Comrie: 32 saves; 3. Nashville defenceman Roman Josi: two goals

<https://www.winnipegfreepress.com/breakingnews/2024/11/24/mailbag-why-are-the-jets-looking-like-cup-contenders>

### ***Mailbag: Why are the Jets looking like Cup contenders?***

By: Ken Wiebe and Mike McIntyre

ST. PAUL – The Stanley Cup playoffs are still five months away, but you can't blame Winnipeg Jets fans from already thinking about what the spring might bring.

A sizzling start to the season has them looking like a legitimate championship contender even if there are still miles to go before they sleep.

Still, it's no surprise that our monthly mailbag was filled with questions looking ahead to what the club needs to do to reach its ultimate goal.

Free Press hockey writers Ken Wiebe and Mike McIntyre weigh in with their answers on that and other subjects:

*1. At the first quarter mark of the season, what are the key reasons for Winnipeg's early season success? Ed*

WIEBE: This list is a lengthy one and the entire league has taken notice. First and foremost, the Jets haven't strayed from the structure that helped them capture the Jennings Trophy for allowing the fewest goals in the NHL last season. In fact, it's becoming second nature for them and having that as a foundation has allowed the Jets to increase their offensive production without actually cheating for it.

Former Jets head coach Rick Bowness was adamant his team would have won the Presidents' Trophy last season with even average special teams and lo and behold, the Jets' lead the league in power-play efficiency and have moved from the bottom third to the middle third on the penalty kill.

The Jets' depth up front continues to shine and the star players are off to an exceptional start.

Jets goalie Connor Hellebuyck currently boasts a record of 14-2, a goals-against average of 2.13 and a save percentage of .924. He's been awesome, though the Jets haven't been nearly as reliant on him as in season's past. The Jets went 9-1 and 8-2 in their first two 10-game segments and having an excellent record within the Central Division has also been an important element of the early-season success.

*2. What specifically did Coach Bones do with the club to see that big bump in results? Better defensive play, tighter gaps, working together as a group? Did Scott Arniel add something to it? (PP and PK aside). CHRIS*

MCINTYRE: You've certainly identified many of the key fundamentals, with an emphasis on tightening up things in their own end a top priority. More than anything, Rick Bowness, and now Arniel, have shown this group that good defence really can lead to more offence.

To the credit of the players, they've (finally) bought what their coaches have been selling, and the proof is in the pudding. Coaching is as much about relationship building as it is Xs and Os — maybe even moreso, quite honestly — and you have to tip your cap to how Bowness was able to start repairing major cracks in the foundation of how this team played.

Arniel has stepped in and not missed a beat, either. But it ultimately comes down to giving the players the information and the tools they need, then putting them in a position to succeed.

And what we are now seeing is a core group that, as Arniel likes to say, has developed some callouses as a result of previous playoff disappointments and has doubled down this year on its commitment to solid structure. Even though it's largely the same group of players, you can't help but notice how much faster they seem to play. That's also about pace and tempo, which Bowness and now Arniel have repeatedly preached. It's a lot of fun to watch, unless you are one of Winnipeg's opponents these days.

*3. Where are the predicted wild-card Jets and what have you done with them? Not that I'm complaining. Sheldon*

WIEBE: Whether it's in this space in our monthly mailbags or our predictions for the paper, my prediction was that the Jets would be among the top three teams in the Central Division and not just a wild-card team. Plenty of other pundits viewed the Jets as a wild-card club (or worse).

The prediction game can be a tough racket and sometimes it's virtually impossible to tell how off-season changes are going to work out — see the Nashville Predators, who were expected to take a significant step forward after adding all of Steven Stamkos, Jonathan Marchessault and Brady Skjei in free agency and retaining defenceman Alexandre Carrier, who was drawing interest before deciding to stick around. That none of Marchessault's 10 points have come during five-on-five play is a serious head-scratcher.

Back to the question at hand, it's clear the Jets went home during the off-season with a serious sense of purpose. The core group isn't happy about consecutive early exits and they put in the work to ensure those 10 per cent gains that were a prominent talking point on exit interview day were going to eventually come to fruition.

Through the first quarter of the season, not only do the Jets lead the Central Division, they also lead the Western Conference and have accumulated the most points in the entire league.

It's been an impressive start, but now it's up to the Jets to continue to show improvement as things get tougher and the intensity ratchets up.

*4. How much of this historic start comes from players like Mark Scheifele, Kyle Connor, Cole Perfetti, Neal Pionk, etc. looking internally and deciding to make fundamental changes to the way they play the game? How much comes from the group dynamics and how specifically do they hold each other accountable? How does this work? Are they confronting each other? Is there much discussion at this point about the way they want to play or do the players fully understand and accept their roles and responsibilities? What role does clarity around each player's understanding of what they need to bring night in and night out and what they should NOT do and is NOT their responsibility as it falls outside their core strengths. CARL*

MCINTYRE: These are terrific questions, Carl, and I think you've really hit on the crux of why this is working so well. Not to take any credit away from management or coaches, but it really boils down to the players at the end of the day. And this is a group that, quite frankly, was humbled and embarrassed at crashing out of the playoffs so quickly last spring.

They said as much publicly, and no doubt were even more vocal about it behind closed doors. Talk is ultimately cheap, but they've come out and "walked the walk" so to speak with their play. The bar has been raised internally and this really appears to be a cohesive group that is all pulling together in the right direction, led by their leaders. When you see the likes of Scheifele and Connor dropping the gloves to fight, that's a sign of a complete buy-in.



5. *What do the Jets need in order to prevent another first-round collapse? I don't know how Chevy can pull it off, but I believe they need a top-pairing, big, fast, puck-moving, right-handed defenceman. @Oaktree65472824*

6. *What position do you think the Jets should bolster to help move them into a deep playoff run? @CanadianKen*

7. *If it's not broke don't fix it, but do the Jets still need to upgrade their defence and second-line centre positions? @204Joey*

WIEBE: Every team in the NHL would like to add a big, fast, puck-moving defenceman for its top pairing. The player you describe sounds like Colton Parayko of the St. Louis Blues, but he has a no-movement clause and five seasons left on his contract (after this one) that carries an AAV of US\$6.5 million.

The Blues are battling for a playoff spot and Parayko's high level of play has him under consideration for Team Canada at the 4-Nations Face-Off, so he's probably not going to be available anyway. As of this moment, the Jets have \$3.433 million in cap space and project to have north of US\$11 million in room available at the trade deadline according to Puck Pedia, so there would be room available to take a big swing.

History has shown the Jets haven't been afraid to add at the deadline during the years where they've been near the top of the standings — but many of those moves have been related to the second-line centre position. Might the strategy shift more to the blue line this February or March? Only time will tell, but it wouldn't be a stretch to suggest it. But it's important to remember that not many No. 2 D-men are available on the trade market and the ones who are usually come at an enormous acquisition cost.

There's plenty of time before deadline deals move to the front-burner, so let's shift to the original query. What the Jets need to do to prevent another first-round exit is continue to be committed to the structure that's made them successful for the majority of each of the past 100-plus games in the regular season.

The Jets have elite-level goaltending, excellent depth and their willingness to defend in all three zones has bolstered the offensive attack. Successful special teams play would augment all of those things. Winning a playoff series requires a lot of things going well for any team, let alone winning four rounds and 16 games. Look back to the last Jets' series win for further proof.

Even in sweeping the Edmonton Oilers in the opening round of the Canadian (North) Division, the Jets required three consecutive overtime goals to do so, including a triple OT clincher from Kyle Connor. Stars need to shine, complementary players must step up and goaltending must be excellent for the Jets to try and advance past the opening round — and beyond.

MCINTYRE: The million-dollar question. Or, in the case of the Jets, multiple millions — as in, the accrued cap space they should have by the trade deadline next March to try and load up. One thing is clear: Kevin Cheveldayoff isn't afraid to make a big splash.

Whether it was Paul Stastny in 2018, Nino Niederreiter and Vlad Namestnikov in 2023, or Sean Monahan and Tyler Toffoli in 2024, Cheveldayoff likes to reward his group when he thinks they have a chance to do some damage. So what might this year bring?

A big, strong, physical defenceman would be a target. How about Jamie Oleksiak of the Seattle Kraken? I think the recent games against Tampa Bay and Florida showed that the Jets might be a bit on the light side on the back end, especially against heavy opponents.

And in planning for what they hope will be a lengthy, four round playoff run, some size (that also has some skill) should be on the shopping list. You can never have enough depth, so another forward who could play up or down the lineup would make some sense as well. Whether that would be to knock someone like Namestnikov or Cole Perfetti off the second line remains to be seen.

*8. What were the chances that Nikolaj Ehlers would have re-signed here before this season, and what are the chances now that he's being properly used this season? @WinnipegFirst*

WIEBE: I will tackle the second question first. The topic of Ehlers and his usage has been a source of discussion and debate for years around these parts and will continue to be long after he signs his next contract, whether that's here or elsewhere. Given Ehlers' strong start, the noise surrounding him hasn't been nearly as loud.

His promotion to the top power-play unit has been an important development and he's flourishing in the pop position. After going a full season without recording a single power play marker and chipping in with seven assists (while being used mostly on the second unit and getting limited time), Ehlers already has three goals and four assists with the man-advantage this season (will update after Saturday's game) with three-quarters of the season left to play. As for the issue of ice time, Ehlers is basically averaging the same amount as last season.

Ehlers is easily on pace for the most productive campaign of his career (his previous highs are 29 goals, 39 assists and 64 points). He's well on his way to earning a raise from the US\$6 million AAV he's currently making as he finishes up the seven-year deal he signed on Oct. 4 of 2017 and kicked in the following season. As for the chances of Ehlers re-signing during the off-season, those were always going to be low, given the aforementioned concerns about usage.

Ehlers needed to see how the coaching change was going to impact his role before making any long-term commitments. Ehlers hasn't wanted to discuss his future publicly and it seems doubtful that's going to change. That doesn't mean he isn't open to an extension, but it's likely he's going to wait it out and see how the situation plays out.

When a player is this close to unrestricted free agency for the first time in his career, often there is a curiosity to find out what he might be worth on the open market.

*9. Sometimes there seems to be no apparent reason for a player to be thrown out of the faceoff circle. No movement, no cheating lining up. Why? Any knowledgeable reasons for that happening? I may be the only Canadian-born male never to play hockey and I've always been curious. BOB*

MCINTYRE: A timely question Bob, considering what went down Friday in Pittsburgh. Incredibly, every Jets forward except Kyle Connor took at least one draw. I don't think I've ever seen that before.

A big reason was the linesmen appeared to believe the fans were there to see them, waving players out left and right all night long. The home team is supposed to have an advantage, with the visiting team forced to put their stick down first in the dot. But, to your point, it's hard to discern exactly what the foul is when someone is tossed.

According to the NHL, these are the rules: 1. Players taking the face-off must have their shoulders square to their opponent; 2. The players taking the face-off will be approximately one stick-length apart; 3. The toe of the player's stick blade must be set flat on the ice; 4. All other players participating in the face-off (such as wingers) must be at least 15 feet away from the players taking the draw.

Per the league, any violations of the above are grounds for dismissal, with a second violation on the same draw leading to a delay of game penalty (which you almost never see). The old saying "if you're not cheating, you're not trying" comes to mind, but it does seem lately like more enforcement than ever is happening. Presumably, the men in stripes see something amiss, even if it's not always apparent. Just drop the damn puck, I say!

*10. Scott Arniel's pre-season proactive and public support for Nikolaj Ehlers has led to improved usage and performance. Do you anticipate that his recent public support for Ville Heinola will lead to Heinola being a permanent fixture in the top-6 D-men? How about PP2? Craig*

WIEBE: Arniel has been transparent on multiple subjects since he took the job and his support for Ehlers has been unwavering, even if it didn't include a promotion to the top line with Mark Scheifele and either Kyle Connor or Gabe Vilardi. As for Heinola, Arniel believes in the player, which was reinforced by the comment about "being Ville's biggest fan" but the situation is a bit of an apples to oranges comparison.

Whereas Ehlers is already an established NHLer, Heinola is still waiting to become one and hasn't suited up in an NHL regular season game since Jan. 23, 2023, when he played 10 minutes against the Toronto Maple Leafs. Of course, injuries have been a massive factor and the story of Heinola making the team out of training camp before fracturing his ankle in the fall of 2023 has been well documented.

The infection in the same ankle and subsequent surgery occurred during training camp provided the latest road block, but Heinola has two games under his belt during a conditioning stint with the AHL's Manitoba Moose and he could make his NHL season debut as early as Monday against the Minnesota Wild. The expectation is that Heinola will be given plenty of runway to show that he can win the job on the third pairing alongside Colin Miller.

The nature of the injury makes it difficult to determine how long the runway will be or if there will be time on the sidelines required, even with Heinola having a clean bill of health. Logan Stanley remains injured, while Haydn Fleury has done a solid job in the 10 games he's played.

However, the first-round pick of the Jets in 2019 has the zone-exit ability and offensive instincts to make an impact, provided he can stay healthy. Although the Jets' power play units have done a nice job so far, it wouldn't be surprising to see Heinola quarterback that second unit, with Neal Pionk moving over to the shooter position on the left-wing side — a job that's currently being shared by Vladislav Namestnikov and Miller, depending on the situation.

If Heinola shows he can handle the defensive side of the game, the rest should take care of itself. It's easy to forget that Heinola is still only 23 years old and his timeline has been skewed by him making the team out of camp in 2019 as an 18 year old and playing those five games before being assigned to the Moose and eventually returning to Finland. As far as becoming a permanent fixture, that's a relative term.

Heinola has the skillset to be an NHL regular, but how impactful he's going to be is up to him. He's missed a lot of development time, but it's not out of the realm of possibility that there will come a time somewhere down the road when Heinola could work his way up to a second pairing role that includes power-play time. Regular work on the third pairing is the first hurdle to clear though.

### **Associated Press**

<https://www.sportsnet.ca/nhl/article/josi-scores-twice-predators-snap-jets-two-game-winning-streak/>

### ***Josi scores twice, Predators snap Jets' two-game winning streak***

By Associated Press

NASHVILLE, Tenn. — Roman Josi scored twice and Jonathan Marchessault scored a goal and assisted on another to lead the Nashville Predators to a 4-1 victory over the Winnipeg Jets on Saturday night.

Steven Stamkos also scored and Juuse Saros made 22 saves for the Predators, winners of two of three.

Adam Lowry scored and Eric Comrie made 32 saves for Winnipeg, which had a two-game winning streak snapped.

Nashville played their first home game after returning from a two-week, five-game road trip where it went 1-2-2.

Stamkos' third-period goal came on a Nashville power play. Six of his seven goals on the season have come with the man-advantage, and he has three power-play goals over the last three games.

### *Takeaways*

**Jets:** Winnipeg split their first back-to-back set of games this season. Even though their win at Pittsburgh on Friday night was over an Eastern Conference team and Saturday's loss came to a fellow Central Division team, the Jets entered Saturday 19 points ahead of the Predators in the standings.

**Predators:** After a disastrous start to the season, getting a victory against the best team in the NHL so far this season could provide some confidence for a team that entered Saturday with a league-low 15 standings points.

### *Key moment*

Just 1:44 after Stamkos scored for a 2-1 lead, Marchessault corralled a rebound in the slot and beat Comrie with a wrist shot on the glove side to give Nashville a two-goal lead.

### *Key stat*

Marchessault entered Saturday with zero points at 5-on-5 this season, but both his goal and assist came with the teams skating five aside. In the off-season, Marchessault signed a five-year, \$27,500,000 contract with the Predators in hopes of bolstering a team in search of added offensive punch.

### *Up next*

The Jets travel to Minnesota on Monday, while the Predators visit New Jersey, also on Monday.

## **Sportsnet.ca**

<https://www.sportsnet.ca/nhl/article/jets-quarter-mark-report-grades-encouraging-developments-concerns/>

### ***Jets' quarter-mark report: Grades, encouraging developments, concerns***

By Jacob Stoller

WINNIPEG – Scott Arniel has a reminder of his ultimate goal beside the computer monitor in his office.

A six-inch miniature replica of the Stanley Cup. One that he looks at all the time.

He's carried it around since joining the New York Rangers as an associate coach back in 2013-14, an idea that was inspired by one of his former players, Chris Drury. Drury, who Arniel coached with the Buffalo Sabres in the early 2000s, said that when he was with the Colorado Avalanche — who he won a Stanley Cup with in 2000-01 — they used to have pictures of the trophy around the locker room.

"I've been in this business now, professionally, since I was 18 years old. It's been about 40 years. I've got Memorial Cups, I've got world junior gold medals, I won in the IHL — but that's the one thing I don't have," Arniel told Sportsnet.ca in a one-on-one interview in his office on Wednesday. "I never miss a Stanley Cup final. To watch (Paul Maurice) hold that cup up,

players that I know from over the years being able to celebrate — that's a feeling I'd love to have."

As would the city of Winnipeg.

But even with a league-best 17-4-0 start to the year, nobody's planning a parade down Portage and Main just yet. This city's seen plenty of regular season success in the post-Maurice era — with the Jets posting the fifth-best winning percentage (.625) in the Western Conference over the last two years — but the dark cloud of consecutive first-round exits looms large.

"The big area for us now, because of the lack of playoff success, is that we have to want to learn how to win in those hard, heavy games," Arniel said. "Once the playoffs start, it's different hockey. We're trying to grow calluses and thicken our skin here."

This season feels different than years past.

And really, it's not so much about them being in the top three in goals for and goals against, along with having the best power play in the league. It's how they're winning games. And responding to adversity.

When their eight-game win streak came to a screeching halt when the Toronto Maple Leafs 'punched them in the nose', they followed it up with being night-and-day better during their ensuing seven-game win streak, which came against several high-caliber playoff opponents.

After getting shutout 5-0 by the Florida Panthers in Sunrise last Saturday, Arniel held a video session with his players to outline what went wrong ahead of a rematch against them.

"That session, without getting too deep into it, was about... we lost to the Stanley Cup Champions. They did things that showed us why they were the Stanley Cup champions. And all we did was look at it," Arniel said. "It was about how they defended. How they won puck battles, How they got into the inside of the ice. How they got through the neutral zone."

The Jets responded with a commanding 6-3 win over the Panthers on Tuesday. They were excellent on the forecheck, in the neutral zone and in one-on-one battles.

"Getting another crack at them, the next game, was the best thing for us. If we faced them again a month or two months later, it wouldn't have had the same impact," Arniel said. "Being able to get embarrassed one night, and then turn around and come back with that type of effort — that's growth."

And we've seen lots of that over the first quarter of the season.

***MOST ENCOURAGING DEVELOPMENT:*** The Core's Elevated Their Game

Many have wondered over the last few years if this team's core was good enough to be a legitimate Stanley Cup contender.

“I think there’s been a lot of mud slung at the guys that have been here the longest,” Arniel said. “They’ve taken a lot of heat. There’s guys here that are frustrated because of the lack of playoff success. Maybe they thought they had a chance in (2017-2018), but since then, there hasn’t been that opportunity. It gets frustrating answering the same questions about it. At the end of the day, you start to get to a certain point where it’s like ‘okay, it’s all about the team. It’s all about what I have to do to help our team in a Stanley Cup.’”

Winnipeg’s nucleus has reached that point.

We’ve seen players like Kyle Connor and Mark Scheifele demonstrate a higher compete level and play a more well-rounded 200-foot game. Josh Morrissey has quietly elevated his defensive play while continuing to be an elite offensive driver. Nikolaj Ehlers has been more consistent in all areas of the ice, too.

“When I was with the New York Rangers, I remember watching the Washington Capitals. They always had great regular seasons but never had success in the playoffs. All their best players — Alex Ovechkin, Nicklas Backstrom, TJ Oshie — changed their game and found a way to play playoff hockey. And then they won a cup,” Arniel said. “I’m not sitting here saying that we’re going to make the Stanley Cup Finals. But what I’m saying is, that’s an example of a team that bought into what it takes to play at that time of the year.”

*MOST CONCERNING DEVELOPMENT:* Dylan Samberg has a broken foot.

Before Saturday, you’d be hard-pressed to pinpoint legitimate concerns. But then Dylan Samberg broke his foot.

And boy, that’s a huge gut punch for this team.

Samberg has been excellent in his first year of top-four deployment, averaging 20:17 minutes a night while being a staple on the penalty kill. His 1.97 takeaways per 60 minutes rank him in the 92nd percentile among defencemen who have played at least 100 minutes this year, according to NaturalStatTrick.com.

While Ville Heinola is nearing a return, the 23-year-old puck-moving defenseman brings a different flavour than the meat-and-potatoes blue-liner. It’ll be interesting to see how the Jets divvy up Samberg’s minutes.

*TOP SIX FORWARDS GRADE: B+*

Winnipeg’s top-six has rebounded from their early season struggles.

The team’s first line of Connor, Scheifele and Gabriel Vilardi has tightened things up in the defensive zone and in transition, leading to more offensive zone time. After being heavily outshot, outchanced and outscored during five-on-five play through their first nine games, that line has outscored opponents 12-4 and controlled 61.8 percent of the high danger shot attempt share over their last 12 games.

Meanwhile, the second line of Cole Perfetti, Vladislav Namestnikov and Nikolaj Ehlers is finding its way, too. Similar to the first line, they struggled to get through the neutral zone and they were out of sync in the offensive zone. But over the last 12 games, they've outscored opponents 7-4 and have found a way to develop rush chances consistently.

#### ***BOTTOM SIX FORWARDS GRADE: A+***

Winnipeg has the best bottom-six in the entire league.

Honestly, the Nino Niederreiter, Adam Lowry, Mason Appleton line is one of the NHL's most efficient lines. Period. They're able to both shut down opponents' top weapons while also creating quality chances of their own. It's hard to disrupt them once they get cooking on the cycle.

The fourth line of Alex Iafallo, Rasmus Kupari and Morgan Barron is potent enough to be a third line on most teams. Kupari's elite speed as helped push the pace for Iafallo and Barron — two quick players in their own right who are excellent along the wall.

"If you go back and look at all the Stanley Cup champions, go look at their fourth lines and how important of a role they played," Arniel said.

#### ***DEFENCE GRADE: B+***

Entering the year as the team's biggest question mark, Winnipeg's defence has been rock solid so far.

Not only has the team's blue-line been one of the highest scoring in the league, the team's top-four, in particular, has become a driver for them.

"The Morrissey-Demelo pairing has quickness, great sticks and the ability to be really effective offensively, especially when playing with the top six forwards," Arniel said. "And then the pairing of Samberg and Pionk is a bit different. They've got a bit more bite to them and play with more sandpaper," Arniel said.

Colin Miller and his booming slapshot have provided some solid mileage on the bottom pair, too. Haydn Fleury has been serviceable when called upon and while Logan Stanley has some moments of promising play, the jury's still out on whether or not the 6-foot-7 defencemen can be a positive contributor on a consistent basis.

#### ***GOALTENDING GRADE: A+***

We're running out of superlatives to describe the impact Connor Hellebuyck has on this team. The 31-year-old has shown no signs of slowing down anytime soon, posting a .924 save percentage and three shutouts to go along with a 14-2-0 record. He's well-positioned to win his second straight Vezina Trophy.

Eric Comrie's been an excellent reliever, giving the Jets a chance to win in all five games. While Hellebuyck wants to play every single night, Arniel should consider increasing Comrie's workload before and after Hellebuyck departs for the 4 Nations Face-off. Winnipeg can't have Hellebuyck burning out in the postseason again.



## QUARTER MARK AWARDS

*MVP: Connor Hellebuyck*

*Most Improved Player: Neal Pionk*

*Best Defensive Player: Dylan Samberg*

### **TSN.ca**

<https://www.tsn.ca/nhl/video/corrado-discusses-comrie-s-very-difficult-task-as-the-jets-backup-goalie%7E3035045>

### ***Corrado discusses Comrie's 'very difficult' task as the Jets' backup goalie (VIDEO)***

Eric Comrie got the start for the Jets in the second game of a back-to-back, and only stopped 32 shots in Winnipeg's 4-1 loss to the Predators Saturday night. TSN's Hockey analyst Frank Corrado joins SportsCentre to discuss how tough a game like this is for a backup goalie.