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Anderson-Dolan thankful for his path to NHL

"There are so many sacrifices that parents make for the kids to play any sport, but for hockey in particular."

By Mitchell Clinton

Jaret Anderson-Dolan remembers an Instagram message he received in 2017 like it was yesterday.

The makers of Pride Tape reached out to the 17-year-old Calgary, AB product, who at the time was a member of the Western Hockey League's Spokane Chiefs.

"By the time the draft was coming around, the story about my moms had come out, and they reached out and said 'If we send some tape, do you want to use it?'"

His moms are Fran and Nancy, and like many parents in Canada, the United States, or anywhere in the world, they had sacrificed a lot for Anderson-Dolan to live out his hockey dream.

So the reply to the Instagram message was an easy one.

"Obviously I did and was lucky that my teammates supported it," Anderson-Dolan recalled. "I think the first year we did it, every guy had the pride tape on their stick. I remember Kailer Yamamoto - he's one of my good buddies in junior - he taped his whole stick, top to bottom, in pride tape. I was lucky to have that support from teammates and the organization, and the city of Spokane as well."

And it wasn't just his own team taking part, either.

"I remember one of the games we did the pride tape we were playing the Tri-City Americans," he said. "I had a couple of other buddies - Michael Rasmussen and other guys I knew through the same agency and grew up playing against them - I messaged them before and said 'hey we're doing this tonight, are you guys interested?' I think pretty much their whole team put the tape on as well."

Fran and Nancy's impact on Anderson-Dolan's career began long before 2017, obviously. Now 25-years-old, the second-round pick of the Los Angeles Kings vividly remembers the backyard rink they had in Calgary when he was young.

"Even though we had one right down the street, they made one in the backyard," said Anderson-Dolan. "I remember my brother (Dorian) and I being out there for hours with him until it got dark - and even after it got dark. That's where the love for the game grows. There are so many sacrifices that parents make for the kids to play any sport, but for hockey in particular. My moms definitely did that for us."

They didn't just provide a playing surface for their boys, they also provided the instruction - on and off the ice - especially early on.

“Fran played at a high level, so it was mostly her doing the teaching of the hockey side,” said Anderson-Dolan. “Nancy was hands-off in that sense, but they both played when they were younger and I remember going to their games as a kid and hanging out at the rink a lot.”

Nancy was hands-off when it came to things on the ice, but off the ice she applied her skills as a nutritionist to instill good eating habits for her boys at a young age.

“When you grow up doing that, you don’t really know anything else and it builds good habits. I’m definitely grateful for that,” he said. “When you’re younger you don’t appreciate it. You think that you want junk food here and there. Now looking back on it, it’s a habit that’s good for overall health and especially if you go along playing a high level of sports like hockey.”

Anderson-Dolan took all those lessons and has earned his way into 127 National Hockey League games and another 115 at the American Hockey League level. He’s represented his country, suiting up for Canada at the Under-17s, Under-18s, and the World Junior championship – and was part of the leadership group in all those tournaments.

He won gold with Canada at the 2021 IIHF World Hockey Championship (on a team that also included Winnipeg Jets forward Cole Perfetti), and his NHL resume includes stops in Los Angeles and Nashville before signing with Winnipeg on July 2, 2024.

It’s tough to point out a favourite memory from that type of resume, but his first NHL game with the Kings in October of 2018 is tough to beat.

“Both my moms were there, my brother was well,” Anderson-Dolan said. “Once you crack in and play an NHL game, it’s so exciting for myself obviously, but rewarding for my moms to see after the sacrifice that parents go through to put their kids through sports. I remember seeing a video of them after and tearing up. It makes you emotional.”

His moms still live in Calgary, and look forward to making a trip to Winnipeg to see their son play once he heals up from the broken foot he sustained in the preseason.

And that will be another special night, just like the first time he used Pride Tape back in 2017.

“When you have the spotlight we have as professionals, or even as a junior hockey player, you have young kids looking to you as role models,” Anderson-Dolan said. “That’s something that hits home for me with my moms. It’s kind of a no-brainer in both those senses. I’ve had boys and girls come up to me and say ‘I have two moms’ or ‘I was adopted and have two dads.’ They look up to me and that’s pretty cool, just to know they have someone else that had the same upbringing and obviously it turned out good for me.

“It’s pretty cool to be that role model for kids.”

Global Winnipeg

<https://globalnews.ca/news/10849728/winnipeg-jets-platform-years/>

ANALYSIS: Ehlers, Pionk among Jets playing for next contracts

By Kelly Moore Global News

ANALYSIS: Ehlers, Pionk among Jets playing for next contracts - imageView image in full screen

There are many reasons the Winnipeg Jets are off to an 11-1 start, a majority of which can be found in various statistical categories.

But more evidence could also be discovered on a different kind of spreadsheet.

Of the 23 players currently on the Jets' active roster, almost half are in what is now referred to as a "platform" year. In simpler terms, those 11 individuals are on expiring contracts.

And while most pending unrestricted or restricted free agents will say publicly their contract status is a non-factor, they're just focused on the current season — that is not entirely true.

The future matters, and at this very moment I would say the Winnipeg Jets are benefitting greatly from the likes of Nikolaj Ehlers, Neil Pionk, Dylan Samberg, and Gabriel Vilardi — in particular — playing for their next contracts.

Ehlers, who became the all-time scoring leader among Danish-born players with his 474th career point Sunday, and Pionk are excelling in the early stages as potential UFAs next July 1, accepting pressure as a privilege, so to speak.

Vilardi and Samberg have begun to build strong portfolios towards enhancing their bids for long-term deals, with significant raises.

That's where things get tricky from the perspective of "keeping the band together."

That's because, next year, it will be Kyle Connor, Cole Perfetti, and Captain Adam Lowry "stepping up to the platform."

If Ehlers and Pionk are able to remain relatively healthy and maintain the high level of play they've established over the final 70 games, there is the possibility they "could" price themselves beyond the Jets' budget.

But that's a conversation for down the road.

The Athletic

<https://www.nhl.com/news/sydney-daniels-relishing-role-mentoring-indigenous-youth>

Why Connor Hellebuyck is still frustrated with NHL's goaltender interference rules

By Murat Ates

WINNIPEG — The play before the controversy was simple enough.

Six and a half minutes into Sunday's game between the Tampa Bay Lightning and Winnipeg Jets, Brandon Hagel picked up a stretch pass from Erik Cernak, gained the Jets zone, doubled back and fired a shot toward Connor Hellebuyck.

Conor Geekie, a rookie from Strathclair, Man., with tons of family in the stands, deflected Hagel's shot off the crossbar — and that's when the chaos began.

The deflection had been so sudden and the bounce off the crossbar so surprising that Geekie, linemate Anthony Cirelli, Jets defensemen Josh Morrissey and Dylan DeMelo and Hellebuyck froze for a moment as they tried to find the puck. Cirelli got to it first, chopping a shot off Morrissey's stick that bounced into the crease. Then, on a play that saw seven skaters pile into the low slot — and four of them in the crease — Geekie swiped at the rebound, missed the puck and pushed his stick into Hellebuyck's pads.

The puck lay in the crease, untouched, until DeMelo swiped it into the slot with his hand. Morrissey and Geekie battled, with Morrissey cross-checking Geekie once and Geekie swiping at and missing the puck twice before Geekie fell down, pushing Hellebuyck deep into his net with his stick as he fell. Then, with Geekie on Hellebuyck's lap, Morrissey falling at one post, Mark Scheifele standing at the other and DeMelo on the ice, Hagel finished the play with a goal.

"Watch Connor Hellebuyck's right pad," Brian Engblom said on Tampa Bay's broadcast. "You can't push the goaltender back into the net in order to score a goal, so (the Jets) are going to argue that yes, they interfered with him, pushed him back into the net, and then the puck came loose. How much do you allow here? How much do you allow a guy to fight?"

Winnipeg challenged the play for goaltender interference — a play Jets head coach Scott Arniel later said he'd challenge every time — but the challenge wasn't successful.

The on-ice officials hadn't indicated an interference call and the NHL's video review upheld their call. Their ruling was that Geekie had made a play on the loose puck in the crease prior to Hagel's goal. To the situation room, this constituted sufficient grounds to interpret the goal based on Rule 69.7: "In a rebound situation, or where a goalkeeper and attacking player(s) are simultaneously attempting to play a loose puck, whether inside or outside the crease, incidental contact will be permitted, and any goal that is scored as a result thereof will be allowed." Winnipeg was penalized for delay of game for its unsuccessful challenge.

The Lightning made quick work of their power play. Just 97 seconds after Cernak's breakout pass sent Hagel into the Jets zone, Brayden Point finished off a clever play by Nikita Kucherov to make it 2-0 Tampa Bay.

Arniel was incensed on the bench. Winnipeg's players showed their frustration, too. Unsurprisingly, it was Hellebuyck himself — a longtime member of the NHL's competition committee — who was the most upset.

"Just when I thought we were getting somewhere, they go and make that decision," Hellebuyck said on Monday. "That was clearly goalie interference, and everyone I know and, I think, the majority of the people in the hockey world, know that was goalie interference. The only guys that didn't think so were the guys in charge of making the call, which is unfortunate."

Hellebuyck's frustration is natural. Whether or not you agree with the NHL's situation room, Hellebuyck allowed a goal with a player on his lap. Whether or not Geekie made a legal play, Hellebuyck was unable to make a play on the puck.

His biggest argument with the league ruling is with how the NHL handled the definition of incidental contact.

"Incidental contact is going for the puck and maybe pushing the pad or hitting the glove that's maybe around the puck," he said. "When you miss the puck and drive the goalie three feet into the back of the net, that's no longer incidental contact. That's, 'Oh, I missed the puck. This is the only thing I can do to affect the play is goalie interference.' I've tried to describe this to them. If they want to make puck-first contact, so be it. I'm good if that puck is loose and you're making puck-first contact and you make that a battle, I'm good with that if you drive us into the net. I'm good with that."

There's another key reason Hellebuyck is so frustrated by Hagel's goal.

As a member of the NHL's competition committee, Hellebuyck has spent years trying to prevent goals just like it. He and his agent Ray Petkau have "tackled this issue in various ways over a number of years," per Petkau.

Hellebuyck has spoken to the players, coaches, managers and owners on the competition committee at great length. Two years ago, he made a 45-minute presentation to the committee in an effort to clarify what should and shouldn't constitute goaltender interference. He said he presented his case in great detail.

"I brought in a chart of 'crease' and 'no crease', 'goal' and 'no goal' and just a couple of bullet points in each of the parts and tried to describe plays with clips," Hellebuyck said. "(I shared) what I thought should lie where. The no-goal chart had a couple of bullet points and said this clip would lie under this one because of this. We went through it a couple of times and said, 'This is bland, it needs to be updated and progressed forward, but this is a starting point.'"

Hellebuyck said the committee listened attentively to his presentation but wasn't willing to move forward with his approach.

"I know they have it, I don't know if they're doing anything with it," Hellebuyck said. "That being said, it's just a continued battle that I'm going to have to continue to fight if we really want this to be black and white. Or you guys can just talk about it for the remainder of our hockey careers, that would give you guys a talking point."

It seems likely that not everyone agreed with his views; goaltender interference is a hotly debated topic, even at the NHL's offices. Two league sources contacted on Monday offered

differing opinions. One viewed Hagel's goal as an obvious case of goaltender interference, while the other felt Morrissey knocked Hagel onto his own goaltender.

Ultimately, Hellebuyck said he wants a clear standard — not just for himself but for all goalies to understand and adhere to. He believes goalies will adapt to clear direction from the league. Hellebuyck feels burned by the Hagel goal but believes goaltender interference is a bigger problem than a single play.

Hellebuyck has also been scored on after being slashed in the helmet by James Neal in 2019 and after his helmet was knocked off his head against Dallas in 2022. He remains a member of the competition committee, but he said his days of presentation-making are over.

"I've tried to help. I've tried to make it more black and white. (Hagel's goal) for me was about as black and white as you can make it," he said. "I know it's sometimes going to be a tough call. But I've brought in clips very, very similar to that exact play, explained why I think it's goalie interference and I guess they just don't agree."

<https://www.nytimes.com/athletic/5898487/2024/11/05/nhl-playoff-report-month-one-analysis/>

NHL Playoff Report: Wild and Capitals on the rise, Predators and Bruins falling off

By Dom Luszczyszyn

Welcome to the NHL Playoff Report, a monthly look at the league through the eyes of each team's chances of making the playoffs: who's up, who's down and why.

After each night's slate of games, our playoff projections page is updated taking into account the results from those games and fresh new data to feed into the model. Every night, everything changes and those changes add up quickly, especially if a team goes on a heater (or cooler). Those changes can also be difficult to view at a glance and it's good practice to take stock regularly of what's been happening. That's what the Playoff Report is all about.

Here's how things currently shake out in the East and West.

On the rise

Minnesota Wild

Initial expectations for the Wild were mild. That immediately looks way off — no other team has seen a bigger change in their point projection (+11.6) and Net Rating (+20.1) to start the season. That's led to substantial movement in Minnesota's playoff chances and the Wild are now a near lock (93.4%) to make it.

What's driving the rise? For one, somehow the Wild are even better defensively than expected, allowing just 1.84 expected goals against per 60 so far compared to an already staunch 2.24 last season. The team's top pair of Brock Faber and Jake Middleton have been a key factor there, allowing just 1.55 xGA/60 in 137 minutes together. Faber is proving himself as an elite No. 1 and Middleton has bounced back splendidly. Both defenders have seen their Net Rating jump by over three goals. It helps, too, that Filip Gustavsson looks like himself again behind that strong defense after a tough season last year.

Most importantly, though, it's having early Hart trophy front-runner Kirill Kaprizov dominating every night. The model already thought very highly of him to start the season with a projected

plus-22.7 Net Rating, but his torrid start has him up to plus-26 now. That puts him in Kucherov country — firmly a Tier 1 player. That's a tide that's lifted a lot of boats with Marco Rossi and Mats Zuccarello looking even stronger too.

Kaprizov's Wild look like a wagon.

Washington Capitals

Usually, when an unexpected team starts red-hot, that start also comes with red flags. It is very difficult to find any with Washington right now — the Capitals look actually good. They have the second best expected goals rate in hockey, their penalty kill has been amazing and the power play has created a lot of looks so far.

The Capitals have deserved every bit of their 8-3-0 record, enough to see their Net Rating improve by 18.5 goals, all the way to plus-1.8. Average! That improvement, plus their actual results, has Washington in the playoff driver's seat with a 68 percent chance, way up from 19 percent to start the season. No team has seen a bigger jump in playoff odds.

To some, that still may feel too pessimistic given how good Washington looks so far. Dylan Strome is a legit No. 1 center, young players like Connor McMichael, Aliaksei Protas and Rasmus Sandin have leveled up, and the team's veteran core — Alex Ovechkin, Tom Wilson and John Carlson — has significantly turned back the clock. The Capitals seem like the real deal and deserve all the credit in the world for their start — especially managing it without prized free agent acquisition Matt Roy.

The pessimism, then, is due to questions of sustainability. How long can the Capitals keep playing at this level? The longer they do it, the more believable it becomes, obviously, but it still has only been 11 games. That small sample warrants some caution.

To wit, the last time the Capitals controlled play at this level (57.7 percent of expected goals) actually wasn't that long ago. It was late December 2022, fresh off a 9-1-0 stretch that gave the team a 20-13-4 record. They went 15-24-6 the rest of the way with 47 percent of the expected goals. That data point isn't meant to diminish what Washington has done so far, it's just to help explain why the Capitals aren't quite in playoff lock territory yet. It's important not to abandon your priors, but to adjust them at the right pace.

The Capitals have looked excellent to start and it is notable they look this good right out of the gate given all the changes made in the offseason. They're a team to watch, one that looks like a very solid playoff bet.

Carolina Hurricanes

Despite what many wanted to believe this offseason, the Hurricanes are still a Stanley Cup contender. The core is still good, the depth is still deep, and the system still works. But even the most optimistic probably would've had a hard time believing they'd start 8-2-0 and improving their five-on-five numbers. Carolina is currently sporting 62.6 percent of expected goals, up from 56.7 percent last season. Carolina: still good.

While the team's playoff odds didn't jump much (can't go much higher starting at 89 percent), the Hurricanes did see some of the biggest jumps everywhere else. Their projected point total is up 7.4 points, their odds of winning the division have doubled and most crucially their Stanley Cup odds have gone up significantly to 17.3 percent. They're the new favourites, surpassing the Oilers.

We'll see if this is the year Carolina actually makes good on that promise, but for now one big strength is the shuffle on defense. Dmitry Orlov and Jalen Chatfield have earned high marks stepping in as the new second pair, while the new third pair of Shayne Gostisbehere and Sean Walker have absolutely crushed their sheltered minutes. That blue-line depth is a big thing driving the team's early success.

Winnipeg Jets

The Jets are off to an incredible 11-1-0 start and while that's done great things for their playoff odds (+21 percent), their jump in Net Rating has been a little more modest. They get credit for a hot power play, but under the hood there hasn't been substantial movement in actual chances created there. At five-on-five, they actually have a lower goals and expected goals ratio compared to last year. Banking points is great and the Jets should once again be a threat to win the division, but there's a lot more room for regression here compared to the three teams above.

Columbus Blue Jackets

Columbus's playoff odds didn't materially change, but the underlying foundation looks stronger — enough to see a plus-20 improvement in Net Rating. A lot of credit here goes to the top line, all of whom have significantly levelled up thanks to earning 66 percent of expected goals together while scoring at near point-per-game paces. The other noteworthy thing: Elvis Merzlikins looks like himself again with 1.1 goals saved above expected. That helps his rating, as does the model slowly decreasing the weight of his challenging 2022-23 season as we move further into this season.

Honorable mentions: Calgary Flames, Ottawa Senators, Vegas Golden Knights

Falling off

Nashville Predators

An 0-5-0 start is a tough hole to dig out of and to their credit, the Predators have already almost erased that deficit with a 4-1-1 stretch since. Still, we all expected a lot more after Nashville's epic free agency splash that saw the team add Steven Stamkos, Jonathan Marchessault and Brady Skjei.

It can take time for a new team to gel and perhaps that's what we're seeing here, but to start the Predators are struggling to generate as much offense as last season. That's been especially felt down the depth chart where Nashville's lack of quality centers after Ryan O'Reilly has been a notable problem. Tommy Novak struggling to step up in a bigger role has been a big factor. Skjei was supposed to help with that from the back end, too, but his underlying numbers have been rough.

No team has seen their playoff chances drop more than Nashville, who have gone from 75 percent to start to 41 percent now. Pedestrian work at five-on-five is the biggest culprit within their control and that may change as the season progresses. But the biggest obstacle standing in Nashville's way may be entirely outside the team's control: the rise of both Minnesota and Winnipeg.

That leaves a stacked roster of teams ahead of the Predators in the Central (especially once Colorado gets healthy) which limits some of Nashville's playoff paths. The Predators entered the season relatively safe and likely in a battle for third with Winnipeg. They now look closer to a wildcard team with the model ranking them as the West's eighth best team.

Pittsburgh Penguins

While there wasn't much expectation for Pittsburgh to make the playoffs (the Penguins started the season at 37 percent), the early returns are even worse than imagined. After a 5-7-1 start that featured a six-game winless streak, the Penguins' odds are already down to just 11.6 percent.

No team has seen a bigger fall according to the model than the Penguins, whose Net Rating dropped 12.7 goals with most of the drop coming on the defensive side of the puck. Pittsburgh was already a wreck in that regard, but look even worse now going from 2.77 expected goals against per 60 last season to 3.25 in the early going. The team's worst offenders being their best players is especially concerning. Sidney Crosby, Bryan Rust and Erik Karlsson came into the season with below average Defensive Rating and those marks have only cratered further.

The biggest issue on the roster right now, though, might be Michael Bunting. Acquired in the Jake Guentzel deal, Bunting looked like a perfect fit in Pittsburgh with 19 points in 21 games last year. This season he has just one assist in 12 games. No player has seen a bigger one-month drop in projected Net Rating than Bunting who fell by 6.2 goals.

Utah HC

I expected Utah to be a featured player in the playoff race this season, but that's looking less likely now. A strong 4-1-1 start has been completely undone by a tough stretch where the Hockey Club has won just one of their last six games.

Utah's playoff chances have subsequently dropped from 54 percent to 29 percent with key injuries being a driving force. The loss of Sean Durzi was major, especially with how he was playing on the top pair next to Mikhail Sergachev (who has been as good as advertised). Not having John Marino for a while stings too and it leaves Utah with a fairly thin blue line after Sergachev. Michael Kesselring is a nice player, but if he's your team's second-best defenseman you may be in trouble.

That might be fine if Connor Ingram was holding things down behind a thin blue line, but he's regressed heavily to start. After saving 17.7 goals above expected last season and 8.9 the year before, Ingram has allowed 4.5 more than expected this year in 10 games. Hard to win being half a goal worse per game, and his .881 save percentage is far from enough. To get back on track with Durzi and Marino out long term, Utah desperately needs Ingram to find his game.

Boston Bruins

The Bruins have turned things around slightly with back-to-back shutouts over the weekend, but their playoff chances still only sit at roughly 50-50 right now. They've seen the third-biggest drop in Net Rating thanks to drops in play across the board. Their power play is worse than last year, their penalty kill is worse than last year and their work at five-on-five looks especially pedestrian with just 48 percent of the goals and expected goals.

The team is really struggling to score with the biggest drop in perception belonging to David Pastrňák. His projected Net Rating has gone from plus 22.4 to plus-19.7; still elite, but he hasn't looked anything close to a Tier 1 player.

Edmonton Oilers

The Oilers were the Stanley Cup front-runner to start the season, but have now seen their Cup odds drop by four percentage points with a six-point drop in projected points. The main reason is an offense that doesn't look nearly as potent as expected, scoring 2.12 goals per 60 at five-

on-five (down 0.77 from last season) and 5.2 goals per 60 on the power play (down 5.3). In both cases, they're generating fewer chances too — especially on the power play. The usually lethal unit currently sits 18th in power play xG per 60.

Honorable mentions: St. Louis Blues, Toronto Maple Leafs, Buffalo Sabres

TSN.ca

<https://www.tsn.ca/nhl/video/hot-or-not-ovechkin-will-break-gretzkys-goal-scoring-record-this~3023557>

Hot or Not: Ovechkin will break Gretzky's goal-scoring record this season (VIDEO)

The Jets own the best record in the NHL at 11-1, but are they as good as their record says they are? Did Jim Montgomery make the right move by benching David Pastrnak after a turnover against the Kraken? Will Alex Ovechkin break Wayne Gretzky's goal-scoring record this season? Jamie McLennan shares his takes in Hot or Not.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YzB_hJFJ7EE

'Rival GM says Jets are as legit as they get': LeBrun on Jets' early success being no fluke

TSN Hockey Insider Pierre LeBrun joins SC with Jay Onrait to discuss how great of a job Kevin Cheveldayoff and company have done in Winnipeg, how concerning the Jets modest attendance is, how he accounts for Auston Matthews' slower start to the season from a goals perspective, how Sweden's 4 Nations Face-Off blueline will look, how the Bruins are feeling about their first 13 games, and much more.

Winnipeg Free Press

<https://www.winnipegfreepress.com/breakingnews/2024/11/04/that-was-clearly-goalie-interference-hellebuyck-slams-ruling-on-coachs-challenge>

'That was clearly goalie interference': Hellebuyck slams ruling on coach's challenge

By: Ken Wiebe

Connor Hellebuyck wasn't interested in taking the high road.

Even after having the opportunity to sleep on it, the Winnipeg Jets' all-world goaltender voiced his frustration at the latest coach's challenge for goalie interference not going his way.

That frustration stemmed from the first goal scored by Tampa Bay Lightning forward Brandon Hagel on Sunday afternoon, one that came after winger Conor Geekie clearly pushed Hellebuyck's right pad into the net, preventing him from having the opportunity to reset and try to stop the rebound chance.

"That was clearly goalie interference," Hellebuyck said after Monday's on-ice session was complete.

“Everyone that I know and the majority of the people in the hockey world know that was goalie interference. The only guys that didn’t think so were the guys in charge of making the call, which is unfortunate.”

The explanation sent out by the NHL situation room said no goalie interference had occurred since Geekie was making a play on the loose puck in the crease and cited rule 69.7.

“Incidental contact is going for the puck and maybe pushing the pad or hitting the glove or something that is around the puck,” said Hellebuyck.

“When you miss the puck and drive the goalie three feet into the net, that’s no longer incidental contact. That’s, ‘Oh, I missed the puck and this is the only thing I can do to affect the play.’

“If they want to make puck-first contact, so be it. I’m good if that puck is loose and you’re making puck-first contact and you make that a battle, I’m good with that if you drive us into the net. If you put the puck on the pad and drive the pad into the net, it’s no goal,” said Hellebuyck.

“So why was that counted last night when he didn’t have the puck, regardless of where it is, it’s the same output... I’m kind of confused about what was missed on that play.”

The Jets continue a four-game homestand on Tuesday against Utah HC, opening a stretch of three consecutive games against Central Division opponents.

After Sunday’s game, Jets head coach Scott Arniel calmly expressed his surprise at the decision that was made after the video review.

“We’d challenge that every time. They made the decision. We have to live with it,” said Arniel. “We all saw what we saw. I just felt like Helly never had the chance to make the next save.

“I understand the first part, but the next part was that he didn’t have a chance to make the next save. That was the beef for us.”

The failed coach’s challenge left the Jets shorthanded for delay-of-game and the Lightning extended the lead to 2-0 when Brayden Point scored on a one-timer from the slot.

Despite the 2-0 deficit, the Jets rallied to defeat the Lightning 7-4 to improve to 11-1 on the season.

Hellebuyck has expressed his frustration on multiple occasions during his NHL career with the grey area surrounding the rules surrounding goalie interference and even tried to help lend his thoughts on the matter.

Two years ago, Hellebuyck made a 45-minute presentation to the competition committee, laying the groundwork for changes he feels are necessary to make it more cut and dried, rather than a reliance on interpretation.

Hellebuyck fears the examples he raised have fallen on deaf ears.

“I’ve tried my best to help over the last four or five years, and I’m getting to a point in my career where I’m a little more family-oriented and if it’s not going to get anywhere, then I might move it on to the next guy and pass it on,” said Hellebuyck.

"I've tried to help and I've tried to make it more black and white. I know that sometimes it's going to be a tough call, but I've brought in clips similar to that exact play (on Sunday) and I've explained why I think that's goalie interference and I guess they just don't agree."

Hellebuyck explained that as part of his presentation, he created a chart with plays that happened inside and outside the crease and another with goal or no goal and he brought a number of clips he felt should fall into either category, augmenting his thoughts on each play with bullet points.

Although he figured his idea could use some refinement, he felt it represented a starting point that could lead to more clarity.

"I know they definitely listened, but I don't think they were willing to go in the direction I was trying to go," said Hellebuyck. "I know they have (the presentation). I don't know if they're doing anything with it."

"That being said, it's just a continued battle that I'm going to have to continue to fight if we really want this to be black and white. Or you guys can just talk about it for the remainder of our hockey careers, that would give you guys a talking point."

What didn't fall into the category of grey area was the way the Jets regrouped and responded to the early adversity related to the decision made by the referees, in consultation with the NHL situation room.

"There were a few things said by our captain and a few guys. We just knew we got screwed and you've got to keep playing," said Hellebuyck, who was asked if he shared any of his frustration in the room between the first and second periods.

"We came out with a lot of energy and we did what we needed to do."

Hellebuyck continues to do what he needs to do, though he hasn't been leaned on quite as heavily in the early going.

"There are some times where I'm needed more than others. This good stretch that we've been on, I've felt like I've had just a front row seat to everything that's been going on," said Hellebuyck.

"I've just got to make sure that I don't let anything easy go in and you don't let the game get out of hand around you. The guys have been playing so good in front of me and I'm able to see everything and control everything."

"We're not even giving up a whole lot of zone time right now. I've just got to be ready for when I'm needed. Right now, they're buzzing and doing everything right."

<https://www.winnipegfreepress.com/breakingnews/2024/11/04/jets-scoring-at-an-electrifying-pace>

***Jets scoring at an electrifying pace
NHL's top team leads league in goals on way to 11-1 record***

By: Ken Wiebe

The numbers themselves are downright ridiculous.

That the Winnipeg Jets lead the NHL in goals scored through 12 games is one of several revelations that have led to an incredibly impressive 11-1 start to the 2024-25 season.

Now, this isn't a knock against the talent or skill level of the team.

With a roster that closely resembles the one that finished 15th in the same category last season (3.16 goals per game), it's worth examining where the biggest gains are coming from thus far for a team averaging 4.92 goals per game.

Scoring depth was one of the calling cards for the Jets last season, with 11 forwards finishing the campaign in double digits (including Sean Monahan, who chipped in 13 goals in his 34 games after the trade with the Montreal Canadiens).

Josh Morrissey also scored 10 times, bringing the total number of players in double digits to 12 (13 if you include Tyler Toffoli, though only seven of his 33 goals came in Winnipeg).

The Jets are still scoring by committee, though there have been gains made by the top two scoring lines this season — with Kyle Connor already at nine goals, Nikolaj Ehlers at eight and Mark Scheifele at seven.

Seven of the 13 forwards to suit up in at least one game have scored at least four goals, with 11 of them scoring at least once.

The fourth line production hasn't been as prevalent to date, with just one goal generated at five-on-five by the trio of Rasmus Kupari, Morgan Barron and Alex Iafallo, who chipped in his first of the season on the power play on Sunday against the Tampa Bay Lightning.

Special teams has been an obvious area of improvement, with the Jets continuing to lead the NHL in power-play efficiency (44.1 per cent).

Moving from the bottom third of the league in that category to the top of the mountain has aided the increase in production, there's no doubt about that.

The fact the Jets are getting goals from both power-play units enhances those gains.

Offence from the defensive corps has also contributed, with Morrissey (two goals, 15 points) and Neal Pionk (three goals, 13 points) leading the way on that front.

The Jets have an unusually high number of goals coming at six-on-five in the early going, with five goals already recorded in that circumstance.

They've scored twice on delayed-penalty calls, once at the end of the first period when they pulled the goalie with just under three seconds remaining against the Minnesota Wild and another two times late in a game with the goalie pulled in favour of an extra attacker — forcing overtime against the Chicago Blackhawks and cutting the Toronto Maple Leafs lead to 5-4 before giving up an empty-netter.

The Jets are 3-0 in overtime this season, scoring once at three-on-three, once during a four-on-three power play and another time on a four-on-three situation with a delayed-penalty call coming and the goalie on the bench in favour of an extra attacker.

Since overtime reverts to five-on-five play when the Stanley Cup playoffs arrive, it's important to take those totals at face value and not inflate the stock placed in them.

Still, you can't ignore the league-best plus-29 goal-differential (59 goals for, 30 goals against) the Jets are carrying into Tuesday's game against Utah HC.

Through nine games, the Jets had actually been outscored 19-17 (minus-2) at five-on-five, but they've swung the pendulum back considerably in their favour during the past three games — moving to 31-23 (plus-8), marking a 10-goal improvement.

The Jets were one of the best teams in the league at five-on-five goal differential and they're determined to do that again.

"I can see it every single day. With how hard they work and how skilled and talented they are and the chemistry they're building from line to line to line," said Jets goalie Connor Hellebuyck. "Being able to do it at both ends of the rink is not easy, it's hard work. Winning is hard work. You can tell the guys have really bought into it and I'm really excited for them."

Perhaps the most important part of the additional offence is it hasn't come at the expense of scribbling outside the lines and breaking away from the structure.

The Jets remain fully committed to playing defence first and they entered Monday's action fifth in goals against per game (2.50), just behind the Dallas Stars and Minnesota Wild (tied for third at 2.46) and not far behind the New York Rangers (2.18), who sit first.

The belief in the system has been reinforced by the results, with the lone blemish this season being a 6-4 loss to the Maple Leafs.

"Yeah, I think the guys have really bought into the fact that we're going to start from our end first and go from there," said Jets assistant coach Marty Johnston. "We're getting good production from our back end as well in terms of getting pucks through and pucks in the net and we'll continue to focus on that, making sure that it's a five-man offensive system. Again, we've done a good job of finding those loose-puck rebounds as well."

It's natural to wonder if this offensive surge is sustainable?

A look into some of the underlying numbers suggests while the Jets are benefitting from a higher shooting average (15.2 per cent compared to the league average of 10.9 per cent), there isn't necessarily going to be a sizable regression when you look at the quality opportunities that are being generated by the Jets.

According to NHL Edge, 89 of the 388 shots on goal this season fall into the high-danger category — which is equal to the league average — and the shooting percentage on those scoring chances is 2.3 per cent higher than the league average.

“Yeah, I think that we’re trying to make sure that we get to the areas of the ice that are impactful in terms of denying opportunities, but also getting opportunities on those second chances that we really try to have a focus on,” said Johnston. “We’ve done a good job of getting to that area and I think it’s going to be something that we focus on for the entire season. As much as we’re happy with what we’re doing, we have to keep doing it.”

ANOTHER STEP CLOSER: Although there is still no timetable for their respective returns to game action, defenceman Ville Heinola (ankle) and forward Jaret Anderson-Dolan skated with the team in non-contact jerseys on Monday, marking another step in their progression. The next step after that would be to shed the non-contact jersey after getting medical clearance.

Winnipeg Sun

<https://winnipeg.sun.com/sports/hockey/nhl/winnipeg-jets/tried-my-best-to-help-jets-hellebuyck-ready-to-give-up-on-interference-fight>

'Tried my best to help': Jets' Hellebuyck ready to give up on interference fight

By Scott Billeck

Connor Hellebuyck has long pushed to make goalie interference a black-and-white call.

The only thing he has received in return is his goalie pad forced into the back of his net.

The latest goaltender interference controversy in the NHL on Sunday was only shaded in grey after Strathclair’s Conor Geekie shoved Hellebuyck’s pad out of the way so Tampa Bay Lightning forward Brandon Hagel could score.

Winnipeg Jets head coach Scott Arniel saw what Hellebuyck said most of the hockey world saw — a clear infringement on a goalie’s ability to attempt a save. He challenged the obvious.

Apparently, it wasn’t.

“The only guys that didn’t think (it was goalie interference) were the guys in charge of making the call, which is unfortunate,” Hellebuyck said Monday.

“Just when I thought we were getting somewhere, they go and make that decision.”

The league’s ruling (Rule 69.7, if you’re interested) on the decision to quash Arniel’s challenge stated that “in a rebound situation, or where a goalkeeper and attacking player(s) are simultaneously attempting to play a loose puck, whether inside or outside the crease, incidental contact will be permitted, and any goal that is scored as a result thereof will be allowed.”

“Incidental contact is going for the puck and maybe pushing the pad or hitting the glove that’s maybe around the puck,” Hellebuyck said. “When you miss the puck and drive the goalie three feet into the back of the net, that’s no longer incidental contact.”

“That’s, ‘Oh, I missed the puck. This is the only thing I can do to affect the play is goalie interference.’ ”

Hellebuyck even said he’s in favour of amending the ruling to allow puck-first contact.

Think of a soccer play going for a tackle. As long as they get the ball before they tackle the player, it’s legal.

“I’m good if that puck is loose, and you’re making puck-first contact, and you make that a battle,” he said. “I’m good with that if you drive us into the net. I’m good with that.

“But that’s the other thing they say. If you put the puck on the pad and drive the pad into the net, it’s no goal.”

It made the decision by the NHL’s Situation Room on Sunday afternoon all the more confusing.

Hellebuyck said he didn’t know what was missed on the play, and trying to pry an answer from the league that isn’t a vaguely detailed email pointing to part of the rulebook is like asking a blind guy for directions.

Good luck.

As a member of the NHL’s competition committee, Hellebuyck said perhaps it’s time for him to hand his role off to a younger goalie.

“I’ve tried my best to help over the past four or five years, and I’m getting to a point in my career where I’m a little more family-oriented, so if it’s not going to get anywhere, I’m going to move it on to the next guy and pass it on,” he said.

A couple of years ago, the 31-year-old, two-time Vezina winner prepared a 45-minute presentation for the committee, which a few players, player reps, coaches, GMs, and owners populate.

He brought notes, clips of previous calls and his experience between the pipes to the table.

Charts. Examples. Bullet points.

“I don’t think it got anywhere,” he said.

While Hellebuyck’s choice to be on the committee is his, you can understand his frustration at taking time out of his off-season to prepare and travel to the meeting, only for it to be brushed aside.

“I know they definitely listened, but I don’t think they were willing to go in the direction I was trying to go,” he said. “Maybe because we’re all biased and I’m a goalie, so they may think I’m very biased.”

The Michigan product has been involved in a few controversial moments throughout his career.

During the 2017-18 season, Vegas’s James Neal broke his stick across the chest of Hellebuyck, who was trying to make a save. Instead, Erik Haula scored.

Paul Maurice, Winnipeg's coach at the time, challenged the call but lost.

Two years ago in Dallas, Hellebuyck had his mask knocked off of his head during a collision.

The play was allowed to continue, and Jason Robertson eventually scored, with Hellebuyck prone and face-down on the ice.

That goal, too, survived a review, leaving everyone, including Jets general manager Kevin Cheveldayoff, incensed.

"It's just a continued battle that I'm going to have to continue to fight if we really want this to be black and white," Hellebuyck said. "Or you guys can just talk about it for the remainder of our hockey careers."

<https://winnipeg.sun.com/sports/hockey/nhl/winnipeg-jets/arniels-faith-in-logan-stanley-paying-off-for-jets>

Arniel's faith in Logan Stanley paying off for Jets

By Scott Billeck

We can argue whether it was the hit Logan Stanley laid, how it goaded Zemgus Girgensons into a costly instigator penalty or the goal that soon followed.

But what cannot be argued is the game-changing impact that sequence of plays in the third period had on the Winnipeg Jets' 7-4 win over the Tampa Bay Lightning on Sunday.

Head coach Scott Arniel said post-game that it was a big moment that sparked the crowd and galvanized the Jets' bench.

"And we knew what we had to do after that," he added.

This story has been written before, or at least a version of it.

The 2016 first-rounder has a big game, and there's renewed hope in his ability to produce impactful moments.

It hasn't always worked out that way. Over the years, injuries have limited Stanley, and his consistency when healthy has ebbed and flowed.

So, what's different this time around?

Arniel and his coaching staff believe that his performance Sunday can be replicated more regularly, so they have given Stanley a run of games here for him to land on what everyone saw on Sunday.

Before the fight, there was his first goal of the season. What stood out was the activation.

Stanley saw a soft bit of ice and moved into it, collecting a pass from Nikolaj Ehlers in the high slot before using a screen to bury his wrist shot.

His fight wasn't staged, either. No helmet was held high in the air to proclaim a moral victory.

He laid a solid, hard, clean open ice hit on Lightning forward Luke Glendening, then beat up on Girgensons, who took exception.

Stanley played the part of a bully. While that's frowned upon by societal standards, in hockey, it's an intangible thing with tangible benefits.

Think of menaces such as Matthew Tkachuk or Brad Marchand.

More importantly, Arniel wants that, and his team could use more of it.

"Get after the skill," Arniel said. "Get after their players. Make them retaliate, whether it's that penalty, or to get slashed or punched or something. In that case (on Sunday), we draw 17 minutes."

By the time Girgensons saw the ice again, the Jets had the game in the bag.

And in a game in which the Lightning were without the earlier-injured Brayden Point and landed in Winnipeg already thin on depth, the loss was felt all the more.

Stanley found the game his coaches knew was there. That style of play would be difficult for Arniel to overlook when making roster decisions.

This is where Winnipeg's new coaching staff needs to take over.

Paul Maurice and his regime couldn't sort it out. Rick Bowness didn't have much luck, either. Now, it's Arniel's turn at the helm.

"He just has to play that game where he intimidates the opposition and people don't want to go near his side of the ice, hopefully, and they want to maybe go somewhere else," Arniel said. "That's how you build that reputation and that sort of identity."

Stanley needs to figure out how to do that seven or eight times every 10 games rather than two or three. That's his role here.

For the 15:33 he's seeing each game on average this season, he needs to play bully ball, to borrow a term often used to describe how the Winnipeg Blue Bombers do it.

It doesn't mean he has to go hunting for an earth-shattering hit or a dance partner to chuck knuckles with every night.

Stanley just needs to play a clean defensive game and, as he said himself after the game, take advantage of those game-changing moments when they present themselves.

It's important to point out that for all the criticism Stanley garners — made easier this season due to Hadyn Fleury's solid play in the four games he played — he's played pretty tidy.

The Jets haven't been out-attempted with him on the ice and have only been marginally outshot. More importantly, the team is outscoring their opposition 6-1 when he's out there.

It's easy to argue that the Jets are simply victims of the sunk-cost fallacy, that they keep trying to make it work having invested so much.

Games like Sunday's show why Winnipeg has kept the faith.