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<https://www.nhl.com/jets/news/three-things-hellebuyck-steals-the-show>

***Three things - Hellebuyck steals the show
Connor Hellebuyck makes 35 saves for 40th career shutout***

By Jamie Thomas

WINNIPEG – The Winnipeg Jets played another low scoring game against a Central Division opponent, this time beating the Colorado Avalanche 1-0 to improve to 13-1-0 on the season. The Jets are the second team in NHL history to earn 13 wins through its first 14 games in a season, joining the 2007-08 Senators (13-1-0). Gabe Vilardi scored the only goal of the game and Connor Hellebuyck recorded his 40th career shutout for Winnipeg. The Jets and Avalanche are first and second in the NHL in power play efficiency but went a combined 0-for-3 tonight. Winnipeg will wrap up their four game homestand Saturday afternoon against the Dallas Stars.

WASTING NO TIME

Avalanche goaltender Alexandar Georgiev was off to a tough start to the season with a 1-4 record, 4.62 goals against average and an .822 save percentage. The Jets got to him early in the first, when Mark Scheifele and Gabe Vilardi broke out on an odd man rush, Scheifele slid a pass over to Vilardi who scored for the fifth time in the last six games giving Winnipeg a 1-0 lead 1:06 into the contest. That goal turned out to be the eventual game winner.

“Yeah, I think on the on the 2-on-1’s, I’m expecting to get that puck every time from him. I’ve seen him do it in practice so many times,” said Vilardi.

He always finds the triangles under the stick, whether it’s through the legs, whatever it is, he’ll wait a guy out and find the seam and that’s on 2-on-1’s, that’s on power play.”

HELLEBUYCK TIME

The Jets were facing the Avalanche for the first time since Colorado knocked them out in five games in the first round of the 2024 Stanley Cup Playoffs. Jets forward Mason Appleton said before the game tonight that “To say this game is just another game would be a lie”. Winnipeg had a solid opening period, but Colorado took over in the second and third periods with 10 high danger scoring chances over the final 40 minutes. Hellebuyck made a brilliant stop on Cale Makar in the third period as one of his 35 saves to register his second straight shutout. His shutout streak is now up to 133:09 going back to his start against the Tampa Bay Lightning.

“We didn’t give up at all. We battled right to the end and like I said they were clearing rebounds, giving me lanes, boxing out,” said Hellebuyck.

“Puck was hitting me. We had a perfect combination for a game like that.”

CONTAINING NHL’S LEADING SCORER

Nathan MacKinnon had a career high five assists on Tuesday in Denver against the Seattle Kraken that put him on top of the scoring race. MacKinnon’s line with Mikko Rantanen and

Artturi Lehkonen combined for nine shots but like the rest of their teammates, could not beat Connor Hellebuyck. Adam Lowry, Nino Niederreiter and Mason Appleton were the primary match against the MacKinnon line and shut them down. The trio have only given up one goal at five-on-five so far this season continuing their impressive play from last season.

NHL.com

<https://www.nhl.com/news/colorado-avalanche-winnipeg-jets-game-recap-november-7>

Hellebuyck gets 2nd straight shutout, Jets top Avalanche for 13th win in 14 games Goalie has 35 saves, Winnipeg becomes 2nd team in NHL history to open season winning 13 of 14

By Darrin Bauming

WINNIPEG -- Connor Hellebuyck made 35 saves for his second straight shutout, and the Winnipeg Jets defeated the Colorado Avalanche 1-0 at Canada Life Centre on Thursday.

"I thought the guys played really hard in front of me," Hellebuyck said. "They let me see pucks, cleared rebounds, scored. We really committed to our game in our defensive zone. It might not have been pretty but that's why every game is a team effort."

Winnipeg (13-1-0) is the second team in NHL history to earn 13 wins through its first 14 games in a season, joining the 2007-08 Senators (13-1-0).

"For him to come out and to play like he played, really frustrating them, he made some great stops and some fantastic stops," Winnipeg coach Scott Arniel said. "I really liked our start, but it was one of those games where we just let it go. We kind of handed it back to them, more than anything."

"We didn't give up at all. We battled right to the end," Hellebuyck said. "Like I said, they were cleaning up, they weren't giving up any rebounds, they were boxing out, puck was hitting me. We had a perfect combination for a game like that."

Gabriel Vilardi scored for the Jets, who have won five straight since suffering their only loss of the season on Oct. 28 against the Toronto Maple Leafs.

"There's no sugar coating, it wasn't our best game," Vilardi said. "I mean, [Hellebuyck] won that game for us. It's that simple. I think we had a good first period, and then after that we kind of lost it somewhere in the middle of the second. It's just, we got the best goalie in the world. But we can't play like that and expect to win very many games."

Alexandar Georgiev made 27 saves for the Avalanche (6-8-0), who have lost four of five (1-4-0). Nathan MacKinnon and Cale Makar each had their season-opening 13-game point streak snapped.

"We had a chance to win," Georgiev said. "The other goalie played awesome. That happens sometimes. I feel if we keep playing like that it's going to be a lot of good results."

Hellebuyck, who leads the NHL with three shutouts this season, made 21 saves in a 3-0 win against the Utah Hockey Club on Tuesday.

"Both goalies played great, they really did," Colorado coach Jared Bednar said. "But I think both teams played great. They played hard, both teams. So, it's a matter of one mistake here or there that costs us the game tonight. They earned that victory, but it was a disciplined hockey game. There wasn't many power plays or penalty kills. It was 5-on-5, and you could see how hard both teams were working."

"So, yeah, I think it's too simple to say it was goaltending because they're just another one of the 20 that played their butts off tonight."

NOTES: Hellebuyck has 40 career shutouts and became the fifth goalie in franchise history to record back-to-back shutouts. ... Vilardi has eight points (five goals, three assists) over a six-game point streak, which is the longest of his career. ... Mark Scheifele has eight points (two goals, six assists) over a six-game point streak. ... MacKinnon and Makar each had their 13-game season-opening point streak end. MacKinnon became the second player in NHL history with multiple season-opening point streaks of at least 13 games (13 games in 2019-20), joining Wayne Gretzky. ... MacKinnon and Makar became the third set of teammates in NHL history with simultaneous season-opening point streaks of at least 13 games, joining Bobby Orr and Phil Esposito (15 games with the Bruins in 1973-74), and Dmitri Kvartalnov and Joe Juneau (14 games with the Bruins in 1992-93).

Canadian Press

<https://www.chrisd.ca/2024/11/08/winnipeg-jets-colorado-avalanche-game-story/>

Winnipeg Jets Goaltender Connor Hellebuyck Back to Vezina Trophy Form

By Jim Bender, The Canadian Press

They call him 'Vezina-Buyck' in Winnipeg.

Jets goaltender Connor Hellebuyck, who won his second Vezina Trophy last season, made 35 saves in his third shutout this NHL season as the Jets blanked the visiting Colorado Avalanche 1-0 on Thursday.

Hellebuyck produced the 40th shutout of his career in front of 12,918 fans at Canada Life Centre.

"Number 40 feels really good," the goalie said. "That's one of those milestones. One more (milestone) is just the 300 wins. I'm really looking forward to that this season."

"Hopefully I can achieve it, but this one feels really good."

It was also the first time that Hellebuyck recorded back-to-back shutouts in the NHL after a 21-save performance in Tuesday's 3-0 win over Utah.

The 31-year-old believes he might have had two in a row in college when he played for the University of Massachusetts.

"I had a good amount of shutouts in college," said Hellebuyck, who picked up his 10th win in 11 starts this season.

"I've been waiting for an opportunity like this. Just a perfect storm."

Hellebuyck's work Thursday including outstanding saves in the third period when Colorado outshot Winnipeg 17-4.

"Once you are in a rhythm, it just kind of clicks and you see the game, and you kind of get ahead of the game," Hellebuyck said. "The more and more shots you get, the better you get of getting ahead of that game."

"That's why I like to play a lot. Once you get your rhythm, you can just kind of maintain it. But then all you've got to look for is the maintenance, and making sure you are not overdoing it in-between games."

It was the first meeting of the two NHL clubs since Colorado eliminated Winnipeg in the first round of last season's playoffs four games to one.

"It's always good to beat a divisional opponent, especially with them beating us last year," said Gabe Vilardi, who scored the game's only goal.

He credited Hellebuyck for the victory, especially when Colorado had momentum.

"There's no sugar coating, it wasn't our best game," Vilardi said. "(Hellebuyck) won that game for us. It's that simple. Think we had a good first period, and then after that, it just kind of, we kind of lost it somewhere in the middle of the second."

"We've got the best goalie in the world, but we can't play like that and expect to win very many games."

Jets coach Scott Arniel downplayed the revenge factor of last season's playoff loss, but felt Hellebuyck made a statement.

"For him to come out and to play like he played, really frustrating them, he made some great stops and some fantastic stops," he said. "But, we weren't going into this game thinking of retribution from last year. It wasn't that. It was another opponent here in November, in a very busy schedule."

But Avalanche coach Jared Bednar believes the Jets were motivated by revenge.

“There is a little history,” he said. “I’m sure those guys were frustrated at last year’s exit, and it was a big game for them, a big game for us. It definitely felt like (a playoff game).”

Both Vilardi and Mark Scheifele, who assisted on the goal, extended their point streaks to six games.

Hellebuyck admired Vilardi’s goal just 66 seconds into the contest.

“I believe it started in our end on a turnover,” the goalie said. “Mark’s got just unbelievable vision and Gabe has got unbelievable hands, so it was just a beautiful pass and a beautiful finish.”

NOTES – The Jets saluted massage therapist Al Pritchard, a cancer survivor, who celebrated his 1,000th game with the team ... Both Colorado’s Nathan MacKinnon and Cale Makar had 13-game point streaks halted.

Global Winnipeg

<https://globalnews.ca/news/10859689/hellebuyck-steals-the-show-with-second-straight-shutout-as-winnipeg-jets-edge-colorado-1-0/>

Hellebuyck steals the show with second straight shutout as Winnipeg Jets edge Colorado 1-0

By Christian Aumell Global News

When the Winnipeg Jets lost to Colorado in the playoffs in the spring, they had a ton of trouble keeping the puck out of their own net.

There was no such issue Thursday night as Connor Hellebuyck stopped all 35 shots he faced in a 1-0 Jets win to improve to 13-1 on the season.

It took just over a minute for the Jets to get on the board. Mark Scheifele stole the puck from Josh Manson at the Winnipeg blue line and sprung himself on a 2-on-1 with Gabriel Vilardi.

Scheifele carried the puck into the Colorado end before laying a perfect pass on the stick of Vilardi who roofed it past a helpless Alexandar Georgiev to make it 1-0 after 66 seconds of play.

Winnipeg nearly made it 2-0 shortly thereafter when Kyle Connor found himself in alone on Georgiev but he was turned aside.

Both sides had multiple decent chances as the period went along including two for Colorado’s Nathan MacKinnon that Hellebuyck turned aside.

With 1:38 remaining in the first, Winnipeg’s league-best power play got their first chance of the game thanks to an Artturi Lehkonen slashing penalty but Colorado got to the end of the period safely.

The Jets outshot the Avalanche 14-9 in the opening frame and continued to carry play as the second period got going but couldn't find an insurance goal.

Colorado started to wrestle control away as the period rolled along with MacKinnon's line looking especially dangerous but they also couldn't find the back of the net, missing the net on the majority of their shot attempts.

With 4:26 left in the period, the Jets earned their second power play of the night when Devon Toews went to the box for tripping but again Winnipeg could not convert as the score stayed 1-0 heading to the third.

The Jets outshot the Avalanche 10-9 in the second but it was Colorado who was the stronger team early in the third, hemming the Jets in their own end for long stretches at a time.

Cale Makar had a great chance to level the score a few minutes into the third off a rebound but Hellebuyck made a fantastic right pad save to keep the slate clean.

The Jets came extremely close to padding their lead with less than six minutes to go when Mason Appleton set up Nikolaj Ehlers at the side of the net but Georgiev slid across to rob Ehlers with the glove.

With just under three minutes left, Colorado pulled Georgiev for an extra attacker and with 70 seconds remaining, Josh Morrissey took a holding penalty, giving the Avalanche an excellent opportunity to tie the score late.

But Hellebuyck and the four penalty killers locked it down to secure the victory as the Jets became the second team in NHL history to win 13 of its first 14 games in a season.

Colorado outshot the Jets 17-4 in the final frame and 35-28 for the game.

Winnipeg will look to keep piling up wins when they host the Dallas Stars Saturday at 2 p.m. Pregame coverage on Power 97 starts at noon.

Winnipeg Free Press

<https://www.winnipegfreepress.com/breakingnews/2024/11/07/cant-beat-hellebuyck>

Can't beat Hellebuyck

Goalie makes 35 saves for second consecutive shutout as Jets hold off feisty Avalanche after Vilardi pots early winner

By: Mike McIntyre

Connor Hellebuyck seemingly can't be beat. And his Winnipeg Jets simply can't be stopped.

A 1-0 victory over the Colorado Avalanche on Thursday night at Canada Life Centre is just the latest in a rapidly growing list of stellar results from the NHL's No. 1 team and the planet's best puck-stopper.

The reigning Vezina Trophy winner turned aside all 35 shots he faced for his second consecutive shutout, third of the season and 40th of a career that is very much looking Hall of Fame worthy.

Meanwhile, Winnipeg is now an incredible 13-1-0 on the year, even if they weren't particularly happy with parts of this latest performance.

"We got two points. I mean we're here in November. If we're sitting in February, March, April, we're probably not very happy about it," said head coach Scott Arniel.

"We found a way to win the hockey game. We had a good first period. After that, we were downhill. Those guys all know that. I didn't have to say much. They all knew that. Helle put on a performance and got the two points. On to the next one."

1. A HOCKEY EXORCISM? Although they won't really admit it publicly, you have to imagine this latest triumph tastes sweeter than the others.

The Jets were staring their most recent playoff demons right in the face, as the Avalanche quickly put an end to their Stanley Cup aspirations last spring in a five-game playoff series victory.

That painful defeat led to some serious offseason soul searching by the squad. Given how they've come sprinting out of the gate, it would appear some valuable lessons have been learned.

"We weren't going into this game thinking of retribution from last year. It wasn't that. It was another opponent here in November, in a very busy schedule," said Arniel.

Sure, the Avalanche are a bit depleted these days due to some key injuries and absences, but they still had the league's No. 1 and No. 2 scorers entering play in Nathan MacKinnon and Cale Makar. Both had their season-opening 13 game point streaks snapped.

The Jets spent a bit more time than they'd like defending in their own zone in the second and third periods but ultimately were able to bend, but not break.

"It's always good to beat a divisional opponent, especially with them beating us last year, so it feels good to get the win," said forward Gabe Vilardi.

"There's no sugar coating, it wasn't our best game. I mean, Bucky won that game for us. It's that simple. Think we had a good first period, and then after that, it just kind of, we kind of lost it somewhere in the middle of the second. We've got the best goalie in the world, but we can't play like that and expect to win very many games."

Colorado falls to 6-8-0 on the year.

2. HELLY'S HIGHLIGHTS: A stone cold robbery of the incomparable Makar off a rebound chance around the midway mark of the third period was Hellebuyck's best save of the night, but there were plenty of others.

"I had my hands in front of me and my core was activated," Hellebuyck explained.

"When I made eye contact with that puck I had a really good jump and I had all my weight moving that way and was able to get my blocker down as well. When the puck hits you, it's hits you."

He was especially big and boring — that's when he's at his best — in the final 70 seconds with Josh Morrissey in the penalty box, Alexandar Georgiev pulled for an extra attacker and the Jets hanging on for dear life at a 6-on-4 disadvantage.

Looking at this season, Hellebuyck's numbers are other-worldly. He is 10-1-0 with a 1.91 goals-against-average and .932 save percentage. At this rate, he is well on his way to a fifth Vezina nomination and perhaps a third victory.

The Michigan product is now working his way into the conversation as best of all time from his country. Hellebuyck is now tied for fourth among American goaltenders in terms of career shutouts. Only Jonathan Quick (60), Ryan Miller (44) and Craig Anderson (43) are ahead of him. His 285 wins rank seventh among all goaltenders.

Keep in mind the 31-year-old is in the first year of a seven-year contract extension with the Jets.

"Once you get your rhythm, things just start to click. That's why I like to play a lot," said Hellebuyck. "No. 40 feels really good. That's one of those milestones. One more is just the 300 wins. I'm really looking forward to that this season. Hopefully, I can achieve it, but this one feels really good."

3. AN EARLY DANCE PARTY: Many of the 12,918 in attendance at the downtown rink were doing The Macarena just 66 seconds into the game as Winnipeg's top line came through.

Mark Scheifele made a nice defensive play in his own end, then went the other way on a two-on-one rush with Vilardi. He fed a perfect pass to his linemate, who waited out a sliding Georgiev to bury his sixth of the season.

Vilardi's earworm of a goal song had the place hopping, along with the "Georgiev, Georgiev" chants which rained down during Game 1 of the playoffs last April as the Jets put seven past the Bulgarian.

Scheifele and Vilardi both extended their team-high point streaks to six games on the play.

"I think on the on the 2-on-1s, I'm expecting to get that puck every time from him," said Vilardi.

“I’ve seen him do it in practice so many times. He always finds the triangles under the stick, whether it’s through the legs, whatever it is, he’ll wait a guy out and find the seam and that’s on 2-on-1s, that’s on power play. That’s all over the ice because he’s he just such a smart player.”

However, given Georgiev credit. After getting beat on the first shot of the night, he stopped the other 27 that came his way including a glorious glove grab off Jets winger Nikolaj Ehlers in the third period which kept his team within striking distance.

Georgiev came into the game with just one win in six starts and a bloated 4.62 GAA and .822 save percentage, so it felt like a bold move by head coach Jared Bednar to go with the veteran over young backup Justus Annunen, who was 5-2 with a 2.64 GAA.

4. LOVE FROM TEEMU: The Jets are turning plenty of heads with their play, and no doubt making some alumni proud. Take Teemu Selanne, for example, who took to social media on Thursday to sing Winnipeg’s praises.

“You guys rock. Keep it going boys. Stay hungry. Fun to watch. Friendly Manitoba deserves that,” the Finnish Flash wrote.

5. AFTERBURNER:

Key play: We’ll go with the Vilardi goal, which turned out to be the only offence on the night and the game-winner.

Three stars:

1. Jets G Connor Hellebuyck: 35 save shutout
2. Avs G Alexandar Georgiev: 27 saves
3. Jets RW Gabe Vilardi: 1 goal, 4 shots

6. EXTRA, EXTRA:

Winnipeg went 0-for-2 on the power play and 1-for-1 on the penalty kill.

Defencemen Haydn Fleury and Dylan Coghlan and forward David Gustafsson were once again the healthy scratches.

The Jets are now a perfect 5-0-0 against the Central Division this season after going 20-5-1 against their closest rivals last year. They’ll conclude this homestand by hosting the Dallas Stars on Saturday afternoon.

<https://www.winnipegfreepress.com/breakingnews/2024/11/07/jets-heap-praise-on-unsung-hero>

Jets heap praise on unsung hero

Team's massage therapist has beaten cancer twice en route to working 1,000 NHL games

By: Ken Wiebe

Al Pritchard had a goal in mind and he simply wasn't going to be deterred by anything that stood in his way.

Growing up in the community of Roland, roughly 100 km southwest of Winnipeg, Pritchard's sights were focused squarely on the NHL — though as a teenager he envisioned making it as a player.

After suffering a knee injury as a member of the Pembina Valley Hawks U18 team, Pritchard eventually turned his attention to athletic therapy as a way to keep his original dream alive.

"On the first day of massage school, I stood up and said I wanted to be a massage therapist in the NHL," Pritchard said before the Winnipeg Jets faced the Colorado Avalanche. "You chase that dream and you thought that dream might not come to fruition, but it did. To stick around for this many games and be here, it's really an achievement."

Pritchard was recognized for reaching his 1,000th game on Thursday, surrounded by family and friends and feted for what he does behind the scenes.

"A lot of people probably don't see the hours these guys put in or the time away from their families. Late nights and early mornings getting everything ready," said Jets defenceman Josh Morrissey. "We joke around that Pritchard is the massage therapist by title, but he basically does everything. During the game, he's in the video room. He's always helping out with the equipment, loading the truck, unpacking the gear, you'll see him in the gym helping out the strength guys.

"Whatever needs to be done, he's always willing to be there to lend a helping hand."

Along with his work as a massage therapist, Pritchard is known for his ability to lift the spirits of those around him.

"He always brings the energy, the positivity and the smiles," said Jets forward Cole Perfetti.

"He's a great guy to be around. He's always making you laugh and he's always wired. He's a fantastic human being."

Morrissey remembers meeting Pritchard for the first time when he arrived for development camp in the summer of 2013 after he was drafted in the first round.

"He was one to break the ice and crack a bunch of jokes amongst the young guys and take you under his wing, if you needed to know where to go or anything like that," said Morrissey. "From Day 1, he makes people feel very comfortable and brings that positivity."

Pritchard isn't just the class clown who is around to loosen things up, he's got a good gauge on when to lighten the mood and when to simply provide a supportive ear to listen.

"He has a goofy side to him and an energetic side and when you think of Pritch, you just smile," said Jets centre Mark Scheifele. "He's one of those guys who understands the schedule, he understands the situation and understands what guys are going through. What makes him so special is that he has a good way of approaching people with the correct attitude for the day."

Pritchard joined the Jets for the inaugural season of the 2.0 Jets era and he's become part of the fabric of the organization.

"Those guys behind the scenes are what makes the team kind of tick. They do a lot of jobs to make our lives easy," said Jets captain Adam Lowry. "He's got this infectious energy. You've probably seen some of the videos of him reading the starting lineups and the handshakes he's got with guys going out before the game."

Pritchard's road to the NHL wasn't an easy one, as he dealt with an incredibly difficult personal loss at the age of 18 when his brother Mike (who was 28) lost his battle with sarcoma cancer in his back.

Al also has dealt with two forms of cancer himself, of the kidney in 2014 and thyroid in 2019.

He's got a clean bill of health, though his doctor continues to monitor things closely.

"I still go in for regular check-ups every year and twice a year for the kidney," said Pritchard. "It's good to know that you're in good hands."

Pritchard's ability to maintain a positive attitude through the challenging circumstances he's faced personally is a testament to his commitment to the craft and the gratitude he feels for having the ability to work in professional sports.

"You have the best job in the world. You're in the best league," he said, noting he did volunteer work with the Hawks in the Manitoba U18 AAA League, the Winkler Flyers of the Manitoba Junior Hockey League, for Team Manitoba and for the Manitoba Moose of the American Hockey League before eventually making his way to the NHL. "I came to Jets 1.0 games and you dreamed about just getting down to the bench and giving a high five to Dave Ellett and all these guys. Now, to look back and say 'I'm in the NHL and every day I get to go to work in the NHL.'"

"Sure, there are going to be days when there are some ups-and-downs, but I've fought cancer twice and beat it and I'm still here to talk about it."

As a memento to mark the occasion, the Jets' trainers had a Bauer goalie mask with a personalized paint job made for Pritchard and Jets head coach Scott Arniel said the players chipped in on another gift for him.

Pritchard is also thankful he's been able to go on this journey with fellow members of the Jets support staff, most of whom got their start with the Moose.

"You've seen four or five guys you work with that have gone through it and it was exciting for them and it was exciting for me because I did almost all 1,000 games with them," said Pritchard, referring to head athletic therapist Rob Milette, assistant athletic therapist Brad Shaw, equipment manager Jason McMaster and assistant equipment manager Mark Grehan, who hit the mark previously. "You knew the day would come hopefully. I didn't think it would be this exciting and this emotional.

"We were just talking about how many miles we've travelled in 14 years, how long you've been on a plane and how many beds you've slept in and you get a giggle out of it."

Pritchard went out of his way to thank his wife Rachel and kids, Nicholas and Addison, for their efforts.

"It takes a village, for sure," said Pritchard, who also appreciates the support of his parents. "You're not going to take this job unless you're married to someone who can handle this job. When I got offered this job, (Rachel) said 'I'm not going to stand in the way of your dream.' She's been an absolute rock for our family."

As the NHL looks to raise awareness during Hockey Fights Cancer month in November, Pritchard's story is one to be celebrated.

"He's had some major health challenges and shows amazing positivity as well, which is super inspiring," said Morrissey. "He's just one of the best people I've had the chance to work with in my time in the NHL."

Winnipeg Sun

<https://winnipeg.sun.com/sports/hockey/nhl/winnipeg-jets/hellebuyck-earns-40th-shutout-jets-win>

Connor Hellebuyck earns 40th career shutout in 1-0 Jets win over Avs

By Scott Billeck

The Winnipeg Jets can add hanging on for dear life to the list of ways they've won hockey games this season.

It helps when you boast the world's best goalie.

Connor Hellebuyck made 35 saves for his second straight shutout as the Jets rode Gabriel Vilardi's sixth of the season 66 seconds into the game to victory, 1-0, over the visiting Colorado Avalanche at Canada Life Centre.

The Michigan product hit a personal milestone with his 40th shutout of his career — and third of the season — as he helped the Jets improve to 13-1-0.

“Forty feels really good,” Hellebuyck said. “That’s one of those milestones. One more is just the 300 wins. I’m really looking forward to that this season. Hopefully, I can achieve it, but this one feels really good.”

The reigning Vezina winner now has 10 wins in 11 starts this season and moves 15 back of 300, which would give him the goaltending triple crown (500 games played, which he hit earlier this season, 300 wins and 40 shutouts).

He’s tied with Frank Brimsek and John Vanbiesbrouck for fourth on the NHL’s career shutout list among American-born goalies.

Hellebuyck, who now owns a 1.91 goals-against average and a .932 save percentage, put on a clinic in the third period, stopping 16 shots as Colorado took over the game.

“I thought the guys played really hard in front of me,” They let me see pucks, cleared rebounds, scored. We really committed to our game in our defensive zone. It might not have been pretty, but that’s why every game is a team effort.”

His crowning jewel came when he kicked his right pad out on Cale Makar around the midway mark of the final frame to preserve the lead.

“I had my hands in front of me, and my core was activated,” Hellebuyck said. “When I made eye contact with that puck, I had a really good jump, and I had all my weight moving that way and was able to get my blocker down as well. When the puck hits you, it hits you.”

Alexandar Georgiev was equally impressive at the other end, making 27 stops in a losing effort.

His leather larceny on Nikolaj Ehlers late in the third period ensured Colorado had a fighting chance.

Vilardi’s game-winner came early, with Mark Scheifele picking out his linemate with a sublime pass that Georgiev had no issue.

Vilardi has been red-hot as of late, scoring five goals in his past six games.

He and Scheifele each extended their respective point streak to six games.

“We got two points,” head coach Scott Arniel said. “I mean we’re here in November. If we’re sitting in February, March, April, we’re probably not very happy about it. We found a way to win the hockey game. We had a good first period. After that, we were downhill.

“Those guys all know that. I didn’t have to say much. They all knew that. Helle put on a performance and got the two points. On to the next one.”

The Jets killed off the last 70 seconds of the game shorthanded after Josh Morrissey was dinged with a holding call on Mikko Rantanen.

Nathan MacKinnon and Makar were held off the scoresheet for the first time this season, snapping 13-game streaks for both.

Winnipeg wraps up its four-game home stand with a matinee against the Dallas Stars on Saturday. The game was originally scheduled for an evening start but moved back to accommodate the CFL's West Final between the host Winnipeg Blue Bombers and Saskatchewan Roughriders.

<https://winnipeg.sun.com/sports/hockey/nhl/winnipeg-jets/jets-seeing-conviction-in-structure-as-wins-stack-up>

Jets seeing conviction in structure as wins stack up

By Scott Billeck

Just a little more conviction in their structure.

That's how Winnipeg Jets captain Adam Lowry described, in part, what has risen from the ashes of disappointment after the Jets lost swiftly to the Colorado Avalanche in last season's playoffs.

"When things aren't going our way, as opposed to getting loose and turning it into a transition game, (we're) doubling down on what we're good at, managing the puck, and if the chances are there, you take them," Lowry said Thursday morning ahead of his team's matchup with the Avs.

The Jets are doing just about everything better now than they did during that five-game series in the spring.

"Special teams, that's been critical," Lowry said. "Power play's been unbelievable to start. They're going at an incredible rate, scoring big goals.

"Penalty kill, it's still a work in progress. We've made some strides there. We were a little more aggressive. Not a lot has changed five-on-five. It's just more having that conviction in our five-on-five structure."

It's all part of being the 10 per cent better Josh Morrissey suggested each player needed to be after last season.

"We have our ways," head coach Scott Arniel said of measuring what that looks like. "We look at things. We have specific things. Whether it's a line and what they need to do, individually, what they need to do. Defencemen, breakouts ... we have areas we kind of keep an eye on. It's not hard to get the guys to recognize. Every night is a challenge. Every night you line up it's you winning your battles, you winning your situations.

"So far, we've liked what we've seen. We have to continue to do that."

JETS HONOUR 'PRITCHY'

Al Pritchard used to be laughed at in massage therapy school when he said he wanted to work for an NHL team one day.

The Roland, Man., product celebrated his 1,000th game with the club on Thursday night.

“Often, those guys behind the scenes are what makes the team kind of tick,” Lowry said. “They do a lot of jobs to make our lives easy. He’s got this infectious energy. You’ve probably seen some of the videos, him reading the starting lineups, the handshakes he’s got with guys going out before the game.

“Even days where you’re tired, on a losing streak, he’s so positive. He gets you to snap out of it quick. It’s little things like that that go a long way in a long season.”

A two-time cancer survivor (kidney in 2014, thyroid in 2019), Pritchard started his hockey career as a volunteer with the Manitoba Moose before eventually moving up to the Jets, hired in 2011 when the team relocated from Atlanta.

“He’s certainly overcome some challenges,” Lowry said. “We couldn’t be happier for him. It’s an incredible accomplishment. Super proud and super privileged to have been able to work alongside him for so long.”

Added Arniel: “He’s got a great personality, he’s extremely popular. We used him last year to read some of our lineups. He’s very colourful. He’s real popular in that room. The boys looked after him and got him a nice present. It’s great to see those guys get recognized by the team and by the players especially.”

TSN.ca

<https://www.tsn.ca/nhl/video/hellebuyck-i-think-we-re-showing-that-we-can-win-every-single-way%7E3025868>

Hellebuyck: 'I think we're showing that we can win every single way' (VIDEO)

After making 35 saves for his third shutout of the season and the 40th of his career, Jets goaltender Connor Hellebuyck joins Sara Orlesky to describe how good the win feels, and how important securing a 1-0 victory over the Avalanche is for the club.

<https://www.tsn.ca/nhl/video/jets-lock-down-on-defence-hellebuyck-shines-again-as-winnipeg-improves-to-13-1-0%7E3025867>

Jets lock down on defence, Hellebuyck shines again as Winnipeg improves to 13-1-0 (VIDEO)

TSN Hockey analyst Kevin Sawyer joins Dan Robertson to discuss the Jets' stout defensive effort against the Avalanche and praise the performance of Connor Hellebuyck, who made 35 saves to post back-to-back shutouts, and the 40th of his career.

<https://www.tsn.ca/nhl/video/button-they-say-jesus-saves-so-does-connor-hellebuyck%7E3026085>

Button: 'They say Jesus saves, so does Connor Hellebuyck' (VIDEO)

TSN Director of Scouting Craig Button joins SportsCentre to discuss another brilliant performance from Connor Hellebuyck and what's changed for the Jets since their first round loss to the Avalanche last year.

Sportsnet.ca

<https://www.sportsnet.ca/nhl/article/artem-zubs-return-not-enough-to-solve-senators-defensive-issues/>

Aside from Hellebuyck's shutout, Jets' victory fails to meet standards

By Jacob Stoller

WINNIPEG — Judging by Gabriel Vilardi's demeanour post-game, you wouldn't have known that the Winnipeg Jets had just upgraded to 13-1-0 on the year.

The bar is raised when you've got Stanley Cup aspirations. And despite defeating the Colorado Avalanche — who spanked them in the first round last spring — 1-0 on Thursday, it's hard to be happy about collecting two points after being severely outplayed and hanging Connor Hellebuyck out to dry.

"We got the best goalie in the world, but we can't play like that and expect to win very many games," Vilardi said.

In what felt like *deja vu* from last year's playoffs, the Jets had no answer once Colorado started building momentum. After a first period that was spearheaded by a commanding start — with Vilardi scoring the eventual game-winner just over a minute into the game and Winnipeg outshooting Colorado 5-0 through the first 7:26 of the period — everything crumbled in the second period. Colorado willed their style of play over the Jets'. Just like we saw in April.

In the final two periods, the Jets were out-chanced 29-9 during five-on-five play in what was a perfect storm of things gone wrong.

"We didn't break the puck out real well," Jets coach Scott Arniel said. "We didn't get through the neutral zone. We turned a lot of pucks over through the neutral zone, and then we didn't have that extended (offensive) zone time."

Time and time again, Colorado entered the offensive zone with ease — putting Winnipeg on their heels — and set up shop. The Jets botched zone exits, lost several key one-on-one battles and gave Nathan MacKinnon and Mikko Rantanen the type of real estate that superstars usually capitalize on. Their puck management shot them in the foot, too.

“It was a lot of areas on the ice. It wasn’t just in the offensive zone, or in the neutral zone,” Arniel said of the poor puck management. “We were making plays that ended up on their stick. And then, to compound it, how we defended against it wasn’t how we usually play with our structure.”

Sure, they’ve only lost one game, but let’s not pretend this is the first time we’ve seen Winnipeg look like a deer caught in headlights against playoff-caliber teams. They looked just as overwhelmed defending the rush throughout the majority of their 4-3 win over the Seattle Kraken on Oct. 24. And they were shelled in their own zone in a similar fashion when the Toronto Maple Leafs beat them 6-4 on Oct. 28.

For a team that has so much wiggle room in the standings (if they went .500 for the rest of the year, they’d still finish with 94 points), one could argue that process is far more important than results. And that type of showing against a potential playoff opponent in Colorado shouldn’t be taken with a grain of salt.

Other Takeaways

- Scott Arniel says the Jets weren’t looking for retribution against Colorado... although Hellebuyck sure looked like he was. The 31-year-old, who recorded his second straight shutout, robbed Nathan MacKinnon of several grade-A chances and appeared completely composed throughout. He stole the game.

- For all that went wrong in that game defensively, the Jets defencemen deserve credit for limiting the amount of net-front deflections and traffic in front of Hellebuyck. That was the crux of the two-time Vezina winner’s difficult playoff showing last spring (.870 save percentage).

“It’s a part of the game you really can’t work on, as you just never know what’s going to happen out there,” Hellebuyck said when asked about combatting incoming tipped shots. “That’s what the guys in front of me did a really good job of: eliminating those high tips and eliminating those shots from the point, or at least giving me lanes to see the puck.”

- If there’s one thing we’ve learnt about Scott Arniel, it’s that he’s not afraid to make in-game adjustments. Last spring, Rick Bowness kept Kyle Connor, Mark Scheifele and Vilardi together, even though they couldn’t get out of the defensive zone to save their life. In the third period, Arniel swapped Connor for Nikolaj Ehlers on the top line. And this time, one could argue the move was more about getting Vladislav Namestnikov and Cole Perfetti going, rather than Scheifele and Vilardi. It worked. Namestnikov and Connor generated a two-on-one chance and Ehlers and Scheifele also produced a Grade-A chance of their own.

- Speaking of another small positive, Dylan Samberg really embodies the ‘bigger, faster, stronger’ cliché this year. He’s not getting beat off the rush — there was a second-period sequence where he kept up with MacKinnon while the star forward was streaking into the zone — and he’s playing with more ‘jam’ down low. His decision-making with the puck is a lot better, too. He knows he’s not the best puck handler, and instead of forcing plays, he’s displayed some poise by deferring to safer plays, be it a rim out along the wall or a chip.

- Samberg's team-high nine five-on-five takeaways is tied for ninth among all defencemen this season, according to NaturalStatTrick.

Denver Post

<https://www.denverpost.com/2024/11/07/avalanche-jets-score-alexandar-georgiev-loss/>

Alexandar Georgiev plays great, but Avalanche can't solve Winnipeg's Connor Hellebuyck in 1-0 defeat

By Corey Masisak

For about 58 minutes, the Colorado Avalanche played a fantastic game at Canada Life Center in Winnipeg.

The problem for the Avs? The best team in the NHL to date was the opponent, and Jets goaltender Connor Hellebuyck looked a lot more like a two-time Vezina Trophy winner than he did the last time the Avalanche saw him.

Gabriel Vilardi scored 66 seconds in, and that was enough for the Jets to fend off the Avs in a 1-0 game Thursday night. Alexandar Georgiev easily had his best game of the season. The offensive stars all played well, but couldn't beat Hellebuyck.

This was definitely Colorado's best performance in a loss this season, and arguably one of its two or three best overall. Still, the Avs are now 6-8, still haven't defeated a team that participated in the 2024 Stanley Cup Playoffs and will come home to face the second-best team in the NHL, the Carolina Hurricanes, on Saturday night at Ball Arena.

Here are some observations from one of the best games in the NHL this season:

1. The opening minutes of the game were kind of a mess for the Avs. Gabriel Vilardi scored on the first shot of the contest on a 2-on-1 pass from Mark Scheifele. Josh Manson tried to play the puck and keep it in the offensive zone near the right point, but he couldn't handle it, which led to Scheifele collecting it and blowing by him.

Samuel Girard was the lone guy back and it was definitely not the best 2-on-1 defense of his career. Scheifele got Georgiev to square up for a potential shot, then the goaltender lunged across and was on his stomach by the time Vilardi calmly flipped the puck past him. In hindsight, it looked like Georgiev might have had enough time to just slide across in his butterfly stance, which might have given him more of a chance to make the save.

The Avs also gave up a breakaway on the next shift, and it looked like an ugly night was brewing in The Peg.

2. Then it got better. Georgiev had the best game of his season from that point forward and finished with 27 saves. He had a couple of scramble-y moments, particularly near the end of the

first period while Winnipeg was on the power play. But overall, everything looked better. He made routine saves look routine. The Avs played pretty good defense in front of him.

Georgiev did make some progress after a terrible start before Thursday night, but it was tiny steps. This looked like real progress, after the opening sequence. The capper was a side-to-side save on Nikolaj Ehlers in the third period.

3. Speaking of progress, the Jets had the best power play (by percentage) in the NHL coming into this game. The Avs' penalty kill yielded a lot of shot attempts (10 in four minutes, but only one or two of them were dangerous). Given that Colorado began the night 29th on the PK at 68.6 percent and the competition, it's hard to argue with the results.

4. Cale Makar played 25:16, and it didn't look like whatever was bothering him two nights prior was an issue. He played 29 seconds in the final 30 minutes against Seattle and didn't skate Wednesday, but everything looked pretty normal. The Avs also tilted the ice at 5-on-5 when Makar was out there, and he killed a 2-on-1 for the Jets midway through the third period.

5. Colorado didn't earn a power play in the first 58:50, but did get one for the final 70 seconds and the Avs got their chances. Mikko Rantanen was furious that there wasn't a call in his favor on multiple occasions. Logan O'Connor appeared to get hauled down at one point early in the third period. Artturi Lehkonen got high-sticked and it wasn't called. It happens, but the Avs still probably are not going to be happy about it.

6. The Avs created 16 scoring chances, per Natural Stat Trick, when the top line was on the ice at 5-on-5. Every player on the roster was in the black when it came to scoring chances. Combine that with Georgiev's performance, and Colorado will take this effort eight days a week.