

Winnipegjets.com

<https://www.nhl.com/jets/news/three-things-lowry-scores-winner-late-in-third>

***Three things - Lowry scores winner late in third
Kyle Connor scored twice in 4-3 win in San Jose***

By Jamie Thomas

The Winnipeg Jets gave their moms a huge effort in San Jose on Tuesday as Adam Lowry scored the game winner in a 4-3 victory over the Sharks. The Jets are now 5-1-1 in their last seven games and are now 23-9-1, Winnipeg's top line combined for eight points on the night. Connor Hellebuyck (20-5-1 in 26 GP) became the fastest U.S.-born goaltender to 20 wins in a season. The mark was held by Frank Brimsek (27 GP in 1938-39). The Jets will close out the road trip Wednesday in Anaheim.

SHARKS PRESS EARLY BUT...

The Sharks have been playing much better as of late and looked pretty good in the first period outshooting the Jets 8-2 at one point. Winnipeg ended up scoring the first goal of the game when the top line went to work at 12:18, Mark Scheifele and Kyle Connor came in on a 2-on-1 with Connor scoring his team leading 18th goal. The Jets would end up blocking 10 shots in the opening period, Logan Stanley blocked half of those. Some temporary bad news, Nikita Chibrikov blocked a shot and had to be helped off the ice leaving Winnipeg short a forward. He would return in the second period.

NUMBER ONE POWER PLAY SAVES THE DAY

With the score tied at one in the second period, the Jets power play would restore their one goal lead at 7:28. Winnipeg would whip the puck around quickly with Cole Perfetti spotting Scheifele alone in front and his one-timer would beat Alexandar Georgiev for his 17th.

Off to the third period with San Jose holding a 3-2 lead, Gabe Vilardi sent a seeing eye pass to Connor and the Michigan product would rip a shot just under the cross bar to even the score at three. The Jets power play finished the night a perfect two-for-two.

"We've had some good looks on the power play there. And we talked about a certain play, we had a little extra time reviewing their goal there, and just came up with a good game plan," said Connor.

"And everybody was on their toes. And they got the puck over to me, Gabe made a great pass across the seam, and yeah, just put one in, put a shot on net there."

THE CAPTAIN CLOSES OUT THE SHARKS

While the top line did a lot of the offensive work on Tuesday, it was the Jets third line that scored the game winner. At 18:47, Adam Lowry redirected a Dylan DeMelo shot from the point past Georgiev. The Jets captain is now up to nine goals on the season and is on pace for 22 goals this season, Lowry's career best is 15 set back in 2016-17.

NHL.com

<https://www.nhl.com/news/winnipeg-jets-san-jose-sharks-game-recap-december-17>

***Lowry's late goal lifts Jets past Sharks
Breaks tie with 1:13 remaining, Connor scores twice for Winnipeg***

By Max Miller

SAN JOSE -- Adam Lowry scored the go-ahead goal with 1:13 remaining in the third period, and the Winnipeg Jets rallied for a 4-3 win against the San Jose Sharks at SAP Center on Tuesday.

Lowry deflected Dylan DeMelo's shot from the right point past Sharks goalie Alexandar Georgiev.

"It always feels like I go through hot and cold streaks, and the puck is going in right now," Lowry said. "I did my best to get in Georgiev's eyes and got my stick on it."

Kyle Connor scored twice, Mark Scheifele had a goal and two assists, and Gabriel Vilardi had three assists for the Jets (23-9-1), who are 3-0-1 in their past four games and 5-1-1 in their past seven. Connor Hellebuyck made 32 saves.

"They are a young, quick team. We really tried to get away from letting them get to their rush game. We clogged up the middle as much as we can," Winnipeg coach Scott Arniel said. "Our power play stepped up big time."

Macklin Celebrini and Tyler Toffoli each had a goal and an assist, and Jake Walman had two assists for the Sharks (11-18-5), who have lost two straight and five of six. Georgiev made 29 saves.

"It was better, but we still lost the game. Still a lot of work to do," San Jose coach Ryan Warsofsky said. "We had a power play when they made it 3-3 and had some opportunities on that power play. They pushed. You could kind of feel it coming with their execution on some breakouts. They got us hemmed in and they jumped on us."

Connor gave the Jets a 1-0 lead at 12:18 of the first period. He took a pass from Scheifele on a 2-on-1, cut back across the slot, and slid a backhand past Georgiev's left pad.

Toffoli tied it 1-1 at 1:52 of the second period, beating Hellebuyck blocker side with a one-timer after Nikolai Kovalenko sent him a backhand pass from behind the net.

"I think it's just disappointing," Toffoli said. "I thought we put together a pretty good game, and obviously [we had] some breakdowns and goals against, but at the end of the day, we got to keep moving forward and look at the positives here and try to continue to build and finish games off."

Scheifele put the Jets back in front 2-1 with a power-play goal at 7:28 of the second. He scored with a one-timer from the left face-off dot off a pass from Cole Perfetti from the right corner.

Celebrini tied it 2-2 at 17:11 with his own power-play goal. As he was skating through the left circle, he sent a backhand shot through the legs of Alexander Wennberg that surprised Hellebuyck five-hole.

Fabian Zetterlund gave the Sharks a 3-2 lead at 4:44 of the third period, beating Hellebuyck glove side after electing to shoot on a 2-on-1.

Connor's second of the game tied it 3-3 at 11:56. He roofed a shot short side over Georgiev's glove from the right circle on a power play.

"We had some good looks on the power play," Connor said. "We talked about a certain play, and we just came up with a good plan. We got the puck over to me, and I just put a shot on net."

NOTES: Hellebuyck is 20-5-1 this season, becoming the fastest U.S.-born goalie to win 20 games in a season in NHL history (26 games). The mark was previously held by Frank Brimsek (27 games in 1938-39). ... Celebrini has seven points (three goals, four assists) during a four-game point streak. He also has seven multipoint games this season, passing Jeff Friesen for the most by an 18-year-old in Sharks history. ... Connor has scored five goals in his past five games. ... Sharks backup goalie Vitek Vanecek was ruled out for the remainder of the game after he was hit by a puck on the bench during the second period. Warsofsky did not have an update on his status postgame.

<https://www.nhl.com/news/china-born-kevin-he-signs-entry-level-contract-with-winnipeg-jets>

***He makes NHL history, signs entry-level contract with Jets
Forward prospect becomes League's 1st China-born player to get pro deal***

By NHL.com

Kevin He made hockey history again Tuesday when the Winnipeg Jets prospect signed his entry-level contract, making him the first player born in China to sign a pro deal.

Born in Beijing, the 18-year-old forward became the highest China-born player drafted in the NHL when the Winnipeg Jets selected him in the fourth round (No. 109) at the 2024 NHL Draft.

"It's a dream come true," He said at Sphere Las Vegas after he was selected by the Jets. "It's incredible, a huge honor. I have a lot of fans texting me right before the draft, wishing me good luck and showing me support."

Winnipeg originally had the No. 123 pick in the fourth round, but it traded that and its seventh-round pick (No. 219) to the Buffalo Sabres to move up and select He.

"We felt strong enough that he wasn't going to be there if we waited much longer. Fortunately, we found an opportunity to jump up and grab them," Jets general manager Kevin Cheveldayoff said. "When someone takes so much pride in their heritage and so much pride in their craft in the sport they want to be involved in, it says a lot about the person and the individual."

"If it can turn out to be a great story, that's secondary. It is always nice to see the diversity in the game and help maybe grow the game more. It would be a great story if he can continue to make that next step."

He is currently playing for Niagara of the Ontario Hockey League, where he has 43 points (23 goals, 20 assists) in 29 games.

He said his father started taking him ice skating at small rinks in Beijing malls when he was 4 years old. He got his first taste of organized hockey after his family moved to Montreal when he was 6.

In addition to developing hockey skills, He said he had to learn two languages when he arrived in Canada because he mostly spoke Mandarin in Beijing. He learned French attending school in Montreal and English when he lived with relatives in Connecticut for several months.

When He was 12, his family moved to Toronto, where he began playing elite-level hockey in the North York AAA program.

Niagara chose He in the second round (No. 25) of the 2022 OHL Priority Selection Draft after he had 25 points (13 goals, 12 assists) in 16 games for North York's Under-16 AAA team.

Andong Song was the first China-born player selected in the NHL when the New York Islanders took him in the sixth round (No. 172) at the 2015 NHL Draft. Song never signed his entry-level deal.

Associated Press

<https://www.sportsnet.ca/nhl/article/lowry-scores-late-goal-to-help-jets-top-sharks/>

Lowry scores late goal to help Jets top Sharks

By Associated Press

SAN JOSE, Calif. — Adam Lowry scored the winning goal with just over a minute left in regulation, Kyle Connor had two goals, and the Winnipeg Jets rallied from a third-period deficit to beat the San Jose Sharks 4-3 on Tuesday night.

Gabriel Vilardi, with three assists, and Mark Scheifele, with a goal and two assists, each added three points for the NHL's top team.

Tyler Toffoli had a goal and an assist for San Jose, and Fabian Zetterlund and Macklin Celebrini each added a goal.

Lowry scored his ninth goal at 18:47 of the third period off assists from Dylan DeMelo and Mason Appleton.

The Jets trailed 3-2 midway through the third when Connor scored his 19th goal on a power play.

Jets goalie Connor Hellebuyck had 32 saves and Alexandar Georgiev turned back 29 shots for San Jose.

Takeaways

Winnipeg came to life late, surviving a scare to win for the fifth time in seven games. The Jets lead the NHL with 33 wins and 47 points.

San Jose lost for the fifth time in six games, but the Sharks played inspired hockey against an elite team after coming out flat in the first period.

Key moment

San Jose appeared to be on its way to shocking the league's best team when Connor turned the momentum around with his second goal of the game at 11:56 of the third.

Key stat

500: Winnipeg defenceman Neal Pionk reached the 500-game plateau on Tuesday. The 29-year-old is in his eighth NHL season.

Up Next

Winnipeg plays at Anaheim on Wednesday night, and San Jose plays host to Colorado on Thursday night.

Winnipeg Free Press

<https://www.winnipegfreepress.com/breakingnews/2024/12/18/top-line-powers-jets-past-pesky-sharks-4-3>

Top line powers Jets past pesky Sharks 4-3

By: Mike McIntyre

Hello there, old friends. Welcome back to the NHL penthouse.

The Winnipeg Jets are once again all alone on top of the league standings — a spot they occupied through the first month of the season before their play began to take a bit of a nose-dive — following a dramatic 4-3 victory over the San Jose Sharks on Tuesday night at SAP Center.

Jets captain Adam Lowry broke the tie with just 73 seconds left in the third period as he made a perfect tip of a Dylan DeMelo point shot. It's already the ninth goal of the season for the veteran shutdown centre, whose career high of 15 was set over 82 games back in 2016-17.

"Just a pure sniper," a laughing Lowry told the team's social media about his offensive explosion. "I don't know. It always feels like I go through hot and cold streaks. It seems like the puck's going in for me right now."

The same could be said of Kyle Connor, who truly is a pure sniper. He scored twice, including the tying goal with just over eight minutes left to play, to increase his team-leading total to 19. Linemate Mark Scheifele had the other tally along with two assists, while the other member of their line, Gabe Vilardi, had three helpers.

Winnipeg improves to 23-9-1, including 5-1-1 in the past five games as they put an ugly stretch (three wins in 10 games) in the rear-view mirror. San Jose falls to 11-18-5 despite giving the visitors all they could handle.

"I thought San Jose played a real good game. They were fast, aggressive, good in the neutral zone. It was frustrating at times," said Lowry.

Despite their current lot in life, you won't see any victory laps at this point from the Jets. Championships aren't handed out in December, after all.

"We're not real concerned about our standing in the league right now," coach Scott Arniel told the team's social media.

"We're worried about our Central Division. We have three or four teams that aren't going away and it's going to be this way right until the end of the year. We've just got to take care of our business."

The Jets have all their mothers (and a few sisters) on this two-game swing through California, which ends on Wednesday night in Anaheim against the Ducks. This is the second-ever trip of its kind, with the first one in 2020 ending in three losses to the Carolina Hurricanes, Columbus Blue Jackets and Chicago Blackhawks.

"I'm real happy to get the first win for the moms and the sisters here," said Arniel. "To get that one, I know they're going to be feeling pretty good about it. We'll move into Anaheim and hopefully get two (wins for them)."

Let's break this one down further:

TOP LINE SHINES

Winnipeg's top line came to play, with Connor, Scheifele and Vilardi really tilting the ice at times while everyone else was still trying to find their legs.

"They generated some momentum and it seemed like in the first two periods they were our consistent line that had some O-zone pressure.," said Lowry.

"The rest of us struggled to kind of establish our forecheck and get in the zone consistently. For the most part we were better in the third, but I think start to finish clearly they were our best line."

Connor opened the scoring just past the midway mark of the first period, finishing off a terrific three-way play for his 18th of the year.

After the Sharks had tied it early in the second, Scheifele scored his 17th of the year, this time on the power play, to restore the lead.

Winnipeg then gave up two straight goals to the home side before Connor restored his personal two-goal cushion on Scheifele in the third, ripping a wicked wrister with the Jets once again enjoying a man advantage.

"Our power play has been unbelievable all year, but two power play goals again, KC, what a shot. That was able to get us back in the game and give us some life late in the third," said Lowry.

This was the eighth game of the year Scheifele and Connor have both scored at least once in the same contest. The Jets are now 7-1 when they both score.

“We’ve had some good looks on the power play there. And we talked about a certain play, we had a little extra time reviewing (a potential) goal there, and just came up with a good game plan,” Connor told the team’s social media.

“And everybody was on their toes. And they got the puck over to me, Gabe made a great pass across the seam, and yeah, just put one in, put a shot on net there.”

That was also a bit of a milestone tally, as Connor tied former captain Blake Wheeler for third all-time in franchise goals (262).

“I wasn’t aware, but that’s obviously a pretty special player that I look up to,” said Connor. “I was lucky enough to get to play with him as well and learn a lot from. Yeah it’s a pretty cool milestone for sure.”

KIDS THESE DAYS

The injection of young talent in the NHL lately has been staggering, and Macklin Celebrini should be right at the very top of any list. The first-overall pick from this past summer already looks like a legitimate star and put on quite a show in his first game against Winnipeg.

The 18-year-old set up his team’s first goal early in the second period, scored by former Jets winger Tyler Toffoli, then lit the lamp later in the frame with his team on the power play — a tripping penalty he drew against Jets defenceman Colin Miller by using his speed.

Jets goalie Connor Hellebuyck would probably want that one back, although it was a backhander through a screen set up by Sharks forward Alex Wennberg.

Celebrini, who was out with an injury when the Sharks visited Winnipeg in October (and lost 8-3), is now up to 22 points (11G, 11A) in his first 22 games. The sky would seem to be the limit when it comes to his potential.

“Celebrini is dynamic. The thing you really notice about him is his compete. He doesn’t go to the outside or go away from where the battles are, he gets inside,” said Arniel.

“San Jose, they’re looking to obviously build around a player like that and you can understand why he was the first overall pick. He was noticeable, that’s for sure.”

No doubt Toffoli is loving his new linemate, as he’s now up to 13 goals already on the year to lead his club. The 32-year-old must feel like a senior citizen skating beside Celebrini and 25-year-old Nikolai Kovalenko, who drew the primary assist on his tally.

Another promising young Sharks player, Fabian Zetterlund, scored their third goal of the game off a three-on-one rush that came with a Neal Pionk pinch and none of Connor, Scheifele or Vildardi able to cover in time. It’s the 11th of the year for the 25-year-old.

CONFIDENT COLE AND COURAGEOUS CHIBRIKOV

Speaking of youthful players, Cole Perfetti had arguably his best game of the month and was flying around the ice all night.

He had the primary assist on Scheifele’s power play goal, threading a perfect pass, and is now up to three helpers in the last four games. You could see his confidence growing with every

shift, including a memorable one late in the second period when he was a one-man cycle in the offensive zone.

Nikita Chibrikov also continued to do things to get himself noticed, such as a great shot block in the first period that appeared to strike him in the knee area. He needed help getting off the ice, but returned in time for the second period.

“Yeah, that’s just the kind of kid he is. He got hit pretty hard,” said Arniel. “He came back in here and walked it off and kind of got some ice on it, got himself back. But it’s going to be pretty painful tomorrow, I’m sure.”

Arniel made one lineup change within the game, moving Chibrikov down to the fourth line beside Rasmus Kupari and Morgan Barron and promoting Alex Lafallo to the second line beside Perfetti and Vlad Namestnikov.

KEY PLAY

Adam Lowry’s deft deflection of Dylan Demelo’s point shot led to the dagger.

THREE STARS

1. Winnipeg LW Kyle Connor: 2 goals.
2. Winnipeg C Mark Scheifele: 1 goal, 2 assists.
3. Winnipeg RW Gabe Vilardi: 3 assists.

EXTRA, EXTRA

Hellebuyck finished the game with 32 saves on 35 shots, while Alexandar Georgiev stopped 29 of 33 pucks he faced.

Winnipeg’s power play went a perfect 2-for-2, and the penalty kill had a solid night going 2-for-3, including killing off a reckless Nino Niederreiter illegal check to the head infraction with just over six minutes left in the third period and the score tied 3-3.

The Jets flew to southern California following the game. Expect backup goalie Eric Comrie to make his eighth start of the year in the back-to-back against the Ducks. He’ll be looking to snap a personal four-game losing streak in the process.

As for other changes, it’s possible Nikolaj Ehlers could return. He suffered a lower-body injury against the Vegas Golden Knights on Nov. 29 and has missed the last nine games. However, he shed his non-contact jersey earlier this week and was a full participant in Monday’s practice and Tuesday’s morning skate in San Jose.’

<https://www.winnipegfreepress.com/breakingnews/2024/12/17/jets-make-hungry-he-first-china-born-player-to-sign-in-nhl>

Jets make ‘hungry’ He first China-born player to sign in NHL

By: Mike McIntyre

Kevin He described it as “every kid’s dream.”

Thing is, not a single young hockey player from China had ever proceeded past wishful thinking and signed an NHL contract — until Tuesday, that is, when He made history by inking a three-year entry-level deal with the Winnipeg Jets.

“It’s a huge honour for me and my family,” the 18-year-old told the Free Press in a telephone interview. “A really big day.”

The Jets drafted the Beijing-born He in the fourth-round, 109th-overall, last summer, and he has been turning heads ever since. He stood out at Jets development camp and the Young Stars tournament, then really impressed at main camp, not looking at all out of place on the same sheet of ice with established stars.

“Kevin was born to be a hockey player,” said Wes Consorti, general manager of the Niagara IceDogs of the Ontario Hockey League, where He currently is the captain.

“This further cements that. There’s a lot of layers to this. It’s a culmination of a lot of things in Kevin’s life. Where he’s coming from. What he’s had to go through.”

He is in his third OHL season and off to a sensational start with 43 points (23G, 20A) through his first 29 games. He is on pace to obliterate his career high of 53 points (31G, 22A) in 64 games last year.

“He’s always been hungry, but when he came back from Jets camp something changed in him,” said Consorti. “He finally had his epiphany. It was like, ‘I got a taste of something and I want some more, and now I know what I need to do.’ That was an immediate reaction from everyone in Niagara.”

He could compete for a roster spot with Winnipeg as early as next fall, although he will still have two more years of junior eligibility left. Under terms of his deal, he would make an average salary of US\$975,000 in the NHL.

“This is just the start of the journey. I have a lot more work to do,” said He. “I don’t try to put too much pressure on myself. Just stay in the moment and take it day by day.”

There should be no concerns he’s willing to do what it takes, considering the tireless work ethic and non-stop motor that is apparent every time he hits the ice. Consorti said everything about He is inspiring to those around him, which made him a logical choice to take over as captain this season.

“I always tell people to follow him around for a week to see what he’s all about,” said Consorti.

“When Kevin first came to Niagara he just put the work in. He was very professional on and off the ice and people took notice of that. There’s a lot of high-quality people involved, and it’s also a huge credit to the coaching staff. They’ve done a fabulous job getting him into a position to sign an NHL contract.”

The modest He was quick to dish out the assists — everyone from his family and friends to teammates, training staff and billet families for helping him get to this stage.

“I came back (from Jets camp) with a lot of confidence. And I learned a lot from my time over there, just to try to bring that with me to my every day,” said He.

“I think having more experience really helps. It’s also just how tight we are as a team, how everyone sticks up for each other. It’s been huge for my development.”

He clearly worked his way on to the Jets radar prior to last summer’s draft in Vegas, considering they traded up to get him by shipping the 123rd and 219th picks to Buffalo in exchange for the 109th selection.

“We just felt we had to be decisive there,” general manager Kevin Cheveldayoff said at the time. We didn’t think he was going to be around that much longer, so we just worked the phones to try and find somebody that we could partner up with to make that pick.”

That gamble appears to be paying off.

He, who stands six feet tall and weighs 180 pounds, was actually the second Chinese-born player to ever be drafted after Andong Song was picked by the New York Islanders in the sixth round (172nd overall) of the 2015 NHL Draft. Song never signed a contract.

The IceDogs are currently 20-9-2 and among the top OHL clubs under He’s leadership and production.

“(Being named captain) was a huge honour for me. But whether there was a letter or not, it was just about sticking to my values and my character,” said He.

“I just wanted to be there for the guys, and to help lead the younger ones like was done for me.”

Spoken like a bright young man who is wise beyond his years and appears to have a promising future, one that likely will include “trailblazer” on his resumé.

“His leadership qualities have skyrocketed,” said Consorti, adding He’s success has been “amazing” for the IceDogs organization.

Winnipeg Sun

<https://winnipeg.sun.com/sports/hockey/nhl/winnipeg-jets/connor-hot-power-play-allow-jets-to-escape-san-jose-with-two-points>

Connor, hot power play, allow Jets to escape San Jose with two points

By Paul Friesen

The Winnipeg Jets flirted with defeat against one of the NHL’s bottom teams on Tuesday, only to pull it out in the end.

Down 3-2 in the third period in San Jose, the Jets got a goal from their red-hot power play with eight minutes left and the winner from their captain with 1:13 to go, beating the Sharks, 4-3.

Kyle Connor’s second goal of the night and fifth in the last five games tied it, while Adam Lowry’s deflection won it for his team’s second straight win and fifth in their last seven games.

Lowry scored for the second straight game, this one his ninth of the season, putting him on pace to surpass his previous career high of 15.

Asked to explain it: “Just a pure sniper,” he joked. “I don’t know. It always feels like I go through hot and cold streaks. It seems like the puck’s going in for me right now. A lot of credit goes to my linemates and the D-pair that I’m out there with.”

Dylan DeMelo took the shot that Lowry got his stick on, Tuesday.

Nobody’s stick has been hotter than Connor’s though.

His wrist shot over the short-side shoulder of San Jose goalie Alexandar Georgiev impressed even those who see him on the ice every day.

“What a shot,” Lowry said. “That was able to get us back in the game and give us some life late in the third. And then a big kill. That’s a huge momentum swing, too. You take a penalty with six or seven minutes left and you get the kill, you keep the game tied, you give yourself a chance to win.”

Winnipeg had to kill off a questionable penalty to Nino Niederreiter for a hit to the head with just over six minutes to go.

Connor Hellebuyck became the first NHL goalie to collect a 20th win this season, and the fastest American-born netminder to reach that mark.

The win was Winnipeg’s league-high 23rd of the season, improving the Jets to 23-9-1 and back into top spot, overall.

“We’re not real concerned about our standing in the league right now,” first-year head coach Scott Arniel said. “We’re worried about our Central Division. We have three or four teams that aren’t going away and it’s going to be this way right until the end of the year. We’ve just got to take care of our business.”

Minnesota is still hot on Winnipeg’s tail, three points back with two games in hand.

The Jets were flying south to Anaheim immediately after the game for a tilt with the Ducks on Wednesday.

Winnipeg’s top line of Connor, Mark Scheifele and Gabriel Vilardi went into Tuesday’s game with a combined dozen goals in the last seven games.

They made it 15 in the last eight – Scheifele scored the other goal – fueling a power play that’s scored eight times on 19 chances over the last five games.

“We see a lot of different kills in the league,” Connor said. “We make it a focal point to do something... adjust to how they’re killing and be dynamic and unpredictable. And we’ve done a great job of that this year, just scoring in different ways every single time.

“It’s everybody chipping in, a five-man unit scoring in different ways and taking whatever is available.”

Connor's two snipes tied him with Blake Wheeler at 262 goals, third-best in franchise history.

"I wasn't aware, but that's obviously a pretty special player that I look up to," he said. "I was lucky enough to get to play with him as well and learn a lot from. It's a pretty cool milestone, for sure."

It was Connor who got things going for the Jets in the first period, capping a two-on-one with Scheifele for his team-leading 18th goal of the season.

"He could have had four or five," Lowry said. "He was all over."

The Sharks got that one back early in the second, old friend Tyler Toffoli left unchecked in front to pot his team-leading 13th.

Winnipeg regained the lead on the power play, Scheifele finishing a tic-tac-toe play set up by Vilardi and Cole Perfetti for his 17th.

San Jose answered on their own power play before the second was over, super-rookie Macklin Celebrini fooling Hellebuyck with a surprise backhand through traffic. It was goal No. 11 for the 18-year-old.

The Jets' top line allowed the Sharks a two-on-one that produced the go-ahead goal early in the third.

"We gave up a rush goal, obviously we got caught," Arniel said. "But I liked the way we stayed in the game until the very end."

There was some doubt about whether or not Jets forward Nikita Chibrikov would finish the game, after he took a shot off his foot and had to be helped off the ice.

But he eventually came back.

"Yeah, that's just the kind of kid he is," Arniel said. "He got hit pretty hard. He came back in here and walked it off and got some ice on it, got himself back. But it's going to be pretty painful tomorrow, I'm sure."

If Chibrikov can't play in Anaheim, it could signal the return of Nik Ehlers, who's missed the last nine games with a foot injury.

"That's (Wednesday's) decision," Arniel said.

<https://winnipeg.sun.com/sports/hockey/nhl/winnipeg-jets/from-beijing-to-ka-ching-winnipeg-jets-kevin-he-makes-history>

From Beijing to ka-ching: Winnipeg Jets' Kevin He makes history

By Paul Friesen

The Winnipeg Jets and prospect Kevin He have made hockey history.

The 18-year-old He has become the first Chinese-born player to sign an NHL contract, inking a three-year, entry-level deal with Winnipeg worth \$975,000 per season at the NHL level.

"It means a lot," He told the Winnipeg Sun on Tuesday. "It's just the start of my journey, obviously. But it took me a lot of hard work and it's been quite the journey, for sure."

He's family moved from China to Canada when he was five years old, first to Montreal, his dad working as an accountant.

When He was 12, they moved to Toronto.

Last summer, in the fourth round of the NHL draft, the Jets made him the second Chinese-born player drafted and the one drafted highest, after Andong Song was taken by the New York Islanders in the sixth round in 2015.

On Monday He became the first to sign a contract.

"I'm really honoured," he said. "My family's really happy, everyone around me. I'm pretty proud of myself. Bounced around a lot, growing up. Moving to a new country, and to another new city. I had to have really good connections. My parents and my brother helped me a lot."

He's not sure how much of a splash his signing is making back in China, where his grandparents on his mother's side still live.

"I'm not too big on social media and haven't been paying too much attention on what's going on back home," he said. "But obviously it's made the news here."

The Jets traded up to draft He, sending two picks to Buffalo in order to get an earlier selection.

"We just felt we had to be decisive there," GM Kevin Cheveldayoff said that day. "We didn't think he was going to be around that much longer, so we just worked the phones to try and find somebody that we could partner up with to make that pick."

Born in Beijing, the feisty, 6-foot-0, 180-pound winger is in his third season, his first as captain, with Niagara of the Ontario Hockey League.

Coming off his first training camp with the Jets, He ranks second on the IceDogs in scoring with 23 goals, 43 points, in 29 games this season. He's fourth in the OHL in goals.

Watching the Jets from afar, he tries not to think too far ahead about where he might fit into the lineup of one of the NHL's top teams, and when.

"Just trying to get better every single day," He said. "And try to stay in the moment as much as I can. Keep growing and keep taking things from everyone else and just learning and building that foundation that I have."

"I wouldn't say I'm glued to it, but I do pay attention and check up on the scores and see how they're doing. They're a hell of a team, aren't they?"

<https://winnipeg.sun.com/sports/hockey/nhl/winnipeg-jets/500-and-counting-neal-pionk>

That's 500 and counting: Ignore Jets' Neal Pionk at your own risk

By Paul Friesen

The NHL ignored Neal Pionk when he was an 18-year-old junior eligible for the draft, and ignored him again a year later.

And the year after that.

It wasn't until Pionk was nearing his 22nd birthday, after his second season with the University of Minnesota-Duluth, that the New York Rangers decided he was worth a look.

Scott Arniel was an associate coach on that Rangers team, and seven years later he was Pionk's head coach with the Winnipeg Jets as the defenceman played his 500th career NHL game in San Jose on Tuesday.

Asked about Pionk's milestone going into the game, Arniel wanted to start with the person he's come to know.

"He's just a great young man, and he's a leader in our room," Arniel said. "Loves being in Winnipeg. I know their daughter was born there this summer. He just takes a lot of pride in being a Winnipeg Jet."

Originally from Omaha, Neb., Pionk has defied the odds to become a mainstay in the top-four of one of the NHL's top teams.

"It's a good accomplishment," the defenceman said. "Makes you think about all the tough times you've been through. To get to this point is pretty special."

In his sixth season with the Jets, Pionk is on pace to surpass his career-high of 45 points in a season, which he reached in his first year in Winnipeg.

"He's a real good all-around defenceman," is how Arniel described him. "He can play an offensive game, he's a great first-pass defenceman. We use him on our second power play, he's a big part of that."

Then there's the rough edge, reflected in part by the career-high 63 minutes in penalties Pionk took last season, a pace he's not far off today.

"We love the fact he has a little bit of an edge to him, and has a tendency to disrupt the opposition, get under the skin of lots of players," Arniel said. "I just like his compete, and he's having a great start to the year and hopefully it continues."

One thing Pionk doesn't do well is talk about himself.

Teammates like fellow D-man Dylan DeMelo weren't even aware he was about to play his 500th game.

“That’s a great accomplishment,” DeMelo said. “A guy that (went) undrafted, he’s had to work hard to get himself in the position he’s in. He’s an amazing teammate, amazing player for our group, does a lot for us. Both ends of the ice, he’s having a great season so far. It’s great to see him reach that milestone.”

Reaching it on Tuesday was made more special by Pionk’s mother being there to see it. She and other mothers and sisters are taking part in the team’s second moms trip, travelling with the team for games in San Jose on Tuesday, Anaheim the next night.

“A week or so ahead I counted it up and figured it would be on the moms trip,” Pionk said. “It’s pretty cool, because she was there from Day 1 and brought me to a lot of practices, I’m sure tied my skates a few times. So pretty special to have her here.”

Global Winnipeg

<https://globalnews.ca/news/10923476/lowrys-late-goal-lifts-winnipeg-jets-to-4-3-win-in-san-jose/>

Lowry’s late goal lifts Winnipeg Jets to 4-3 win in San Jose

By Christian Aumell & Russ Hobson Global News

There’s something about a trip to the Shark Tank that makes life difficult for the Winnipeg Jets.

It wasn’t easy but the Jets got a late tally from captain Adam Lowry to propel them past the pesky Sharks 4-3 in San Jose Tuesday night.

The Jets tied the game on the power play with a little over eight minutes remaining, and Lowry tipped in a point shot for the game winner with just 1:13 left to give the Jets back-to-back wins.

Kyle Connor notched a pair of markers for Winnipeg for his third multi-goal game of the campaign. Mark Scheifele also scored and had a three point effort, while Gabriel Vilardi recorded three assists in the win. The top line was buzzing for most of the night.

“It was a great play on KC’s first goal,” said Lowry. “He could have had four or five. He was all over it. They generated some momentum. It seemed like in the first two periods they were our consistent line that had some O-zone pressure. The rest of us struggled to kinda establish our forecheck and get in the zone consistently.”

The Jets were outshot in both the first two periods. It took them more than seven minutes to record their first shot of the period in the middle frame, but they took the game over in the final 10 minutes.

“We were trying to clog up the middle as much as we could,” said Jets head coach Scott Arniel. “Our power play stepped up big time and they weren’t going away. And then that third period there, we got back to kinda doing some things.

“I liked the way we stayed in the game til the very end and that was a big goal with about a minute and what 15 seconds left.”

The Jets were a perfect 2-for-2 on the power play and they’re now 5-1-1 in their last seven games.

Connor scored his 18th and 19th goals of the season, including his 262nd as a Jet to tie Blake Wheeler for the third most goals in franchise history.

“That’s obviously a pretty special player that I look up to,” said Connor. “I was obviously lucky enough to get to play with him as well, learned a lot from him. And yeah, it’s a pretty cool milestone for sure.”

Neal Pionk appeared in his 500th career NHL game.

The Sharks controlled play to start the night, aided in part by an unsuccessful power play. They had 18 shot attempts to just four for the Jets in the first 12 minutes, one of which felled rookie Nikita Chibrikov and forced him to leave the game for the remainder of the period.

But with 7:42 to go in the first, it was the Jets who got on the board first thanks to their top line.

A lead pass from Dylan DeMelo was chipped into the San Jose zone by Vilardi, resulting in a 2-on-1 for Scheifele and Connor. Scheifele collected the puck and held onto it as he skated through the faceoff circle before sending a pass in front to Connor, who deked past a helpless Alexandar Georgiev to open the scoring with his 18th of the season.

San Jose wound up outshooting the Jets 10-9 in the first but Winnipeg certainly played better after the Connor goal.

It didn’t take long in the second for the Sharks to draw level. After Macklin Celebrini won a puck battle in the corner, he got the puck to Nikolai Kovalenko, who skated behind the Winnipeg net before sending the puck to a wide open Tyler Toffoli in front. The one-time Jet buried it past Connor Hellebuyck to make it 1-1 just 1:52 into the period.

The Sharks continued to control the bulk of play as the period rolled along before Lowry drew a hooking call, sending Winnipeg’s red-hot power play to work and they made no mistake. The top unit exhibited some great puck movement as Vilardi in the bumper spot, sent it low to Cole Perfetti, who whipped a perfect seam pass to Scheifele for a one-timer that beat Georgiev to make it 2-1 Jets.

With just under four minutes to go in the period, Colin Miller went to the box and this time it was San Jose’s turn to cash in with the man advantage. Celebrini sent a no-look backhand on goal from the left faceoff dot and it skimmed along the ice and through the legs of a screened Hellebuyck to tie the game heading to the third.

San Jose grabbed their first lead of the game at the 4:44 mark of the third. With Pionk caught trying to get back to the blue line after a pinch in the Sharks’ zone, Jake Walman chipped the puck to centre where Fabian Zetterlund picked it up to create an eventual 3-on-1. He held onto it as he entered the Winnipeg end, drifted to the slot and wired a wicked wrist shot over the shoulder of Hellebuyck to make it 3-2 Sharks.

Just past the midway point of the third, the Jets earned their second power play of the night when Mason Appleton was tripped in San Jose’s end and once again, Winnipeg’s top unit made the Sharks pay.

A little over a minute into the power play chance, a cross-ice pass from Vilardi gave Connor time and space to walk in from the right faceoff dot and rip a hard wrist shot past Georgiev to tie the game at the 11:56 mark.

The Sharks were sent back to the power play with 6:20 left when Nino Niederreiter was called for an illegal check to the head but Winnipeg managed to kill it off.

Winnipeg ramped up the pressure as the period wound down, leading to the go-ahead goal with just 1:13 to go. A point shot from DeMelo was just barely tipped by Lowry but it was enough to fool Georgiev and put the Jets ahead for good as the Sharks couldn't generate much with the goalie pulled.

Hellebuyck made 32 saves to earn the win and keep the Jets in first place in the NHL standings.

Winnipeg is right back at it Wednesday night, taking on the Ducks in Anaheim at 9 p.m. Pregame coverage on 680 CJOB begins at 7 p.m.