

## **Winnipegjets.com**

<https://www.nhl.com/jets/news/three-things-jets-play-complete-game-in-win-over-wild>

### ***Three things - Jets play complete game in win over Wild Perfetti has three points, Hellebuyck records shut out in 5-0 win***

By Jamie Thomas

WINNIPEG – Cole Perfetti recorded three points and Connor Hellebuyck made 19 saves for his 41st career shutout to lead the Winnipeg Jets past the Minnesota Wild 5-0 on Saturday at Canada Life Centre. Hellebuyck passed John Vanbiesbrouck and Frank Brimsek (both w/ 40) for the fourth most shutouts by an American goaltender in NHL history. On top of Perfetti, Nikolaj Ehlers, Morgan Barron, Neal Pionk and Vladislav Namestnikov scored for Winnipeg who are now five points up on the Wild for first place in the Central Division. The Jets went 2-for-5 on the power play and the Wild went 0-for-4. The Jets will close out their pre-holiday schedule Monday afternoon in Toronto against the Maple Leafs.

#### ***TAKE ADVANTAGE***

The Jets wanted to take advantage of a Wild team that had played last night at home against Utah HC. A bunch of Minnesota's top players logged a lot of ice time Friday night as Kirill Kaprizov (26:37), Marco Rossi (24:15) and Mats Zuccarello (24:13) all played over 24 minutes. Winnipeg got on the board first and the goal came courtesy of the power play with Nikolaj Ehlers scoring at 6:51.

Winnipeg added to their lead on an odd-man rush, Morgan Barron scored his third of the season putting a loose puck into the net at 17:54 behind Jesper Wallstedt for a 2-0 lead. Winnipeg outshot Minnesota 10-6 in the opening 20 minutes.

"We knew that they were on a back-to-back, they're obviously going to be a little bit tired. We wanted to have a good start, we haven't had that as of late, so I think our first period was huge," said Cole Perfetti.

"We wanted to take them out of the game and I think we did that."

#### ***POWER PLAY***

The Jets power play continued to thrive in the second period, when Neal Pionk one-timed a pass from Cole Perfetti past a screened Wallstedt for a 3-0 lead. The 2024-25 campaign is just the second in franchise history to feature the club score 35 or more power-play goals through their first 35 games of a season. The other: 2005-06 (52 w/ ATL).

#### ***CONTAINING KAPRIZOV***

Coming into Saturday's game, Wild leading scorer and early candidate for the Hart Trophy Kirill Kaprizov had not recorded a point against the Jets in the 2024-25 season. In fact, the Jets have never kept Kaprizov off the scoresheet in three seasons prior to this one. The Russian forward was held to just three shots tonight even with the Wild having four power plays.

**NHL.com**

<https://www.nhl.com/news/minnesota-wild-winnipeg-jets-game-recap-december-21>

***Hellebuyck gets 4th shutout, Jets defeat Wild  
Makes 19 saves, Perfetti has 3 points for Winnipeg***

By Darrin Bauming

WINNIPEG -- Connor Hellebuyck made 19 saves for his NHL-leading fourth shutout of the season, and the Winnipeg Jets won 5-0 against the Minnesota Wild at Canada Life Centre on Saturday.

"It's probably one of our better efforts in the last few games here," Winnipeg coach Scott Arniel said. "We knew they were coming in after playing last night, went after them in the first period and kind of continued that through the three periods. Liked a lot of our compete, sort of our little details. A lot of good things that happened tonight."

Cole Perfetti had a goal and two assists and Neal Pionk had a goal and an assist for the Jets (24-10-1), who have points in five of six (4-1-1).

"We wanted to have a good start. We haven't had that as of late." Perfetti said. "Our first period was huge, and we really wanted to take them out of the game. And I think we did that. We really didn't give them anything. [We were] hard on the puck, hard on the forecheck. We really suffocated them all over the ice."

Jesper Wallstedt made 19 saves for the Wild (20-10-4), who were shut out for the first time this season and have lost four straight, including a 2-1 loss at home to the Utah Hockey Club on Friday.

"It's about having the right mindset and playing the game the right way," Minnesota coach John Hynes said. "We have capable players, and we've got to get back to playing a certain style of game and being consistent with that. We have it in pockets, we don't have it enough."

Nikolaj Ehlers made it 1-0 Jets with a power play goal at 6:51 of the first period, sweeping the puck under Wallstedt from the net.

"When you see his speed like that, when [Ehlers] puts it on display, it's nerve-wracking for the opposition and especially the defenders who have to play that side of the ice," Arniel said. "It just creates offensive zone time for that group. I thought those three [Ehlers, Perfetti, and Vladislav Namestnikov] did a really good job and spent a lot of time down in that end of the rink, and they got rewarded for it."

Morgan Barron scored at 17:54 to make it 2-0. Alex Iafallo's one-timer on a 2-on-1 rush beat Wallstedt, leaving Barron to jam in the loose puck in the crease.

"I saw him get the shot off and then I kind of lost it," Barron said. "Then it popped out. Honestly, I thought I could have done a better job stopping at the net before -- I almost kind of swung behind, but stopped just in time."

Pionk pushed it to 3-0 on the power play with a one-timer from the point at 5:19 of the second period.

"I knew coming in that they were going to be a very skilled power play," Wallstedt said. "They have a lot of options and a lot of stuff that they can do, and I felt like I had good knowledge, but I just didn't execute the whole when it was needed. [They have] very, very good players on the power play and knew what they were doing."

Perfetti made it 4-0 at 2:07 into the third period, scoring unassisted with a shot from the high slot after Wild defenseman Jonas Brodin turned it over in his own zone.

"We've got to stick to what gives us the best chance to win," Hynes said. "I thought we went a little bit off script and made plays and went east-west and passed up shots. To me, that's the bigger thing. It's more the process of the game than it is anything about the mindset. The mindset needs to be to play the game the right way and play the game that gives us the best chance to win, gives us the best chance to produce offense, the best way to check."

Namestnikov tipped Pionk's point shot at 7:36 for the 5-0 final.

"A 5-0 loss, it happens in a season," Wild forward Frederick Gaudreau said. "We're going through one of those moments right now and when you look at things with perspectives, it happens to everybody. You just have to stay positive and dig yourselves out of what we're into right now all together."

*NOTES:* Jets forward Adam Lowry left the game midway through the third period. "He was just banged up a little bit there," Arniel said. "He got banged up on one of his shifts. He should be fine." ... The Jets swept the three-game season series, winning 2-1 in overtime Oct. 13 in Winnipeg, and 4-1 on Nov. 25 in Minnesota. ... Winnipeg has won eight straight against Minnesota. ... Hellebuyck is 6-0-1 in his past seven starts. ... With 41 shutouts, Hellebuyck passed John Vanbiesbrouck and Frank Brimsek (both with 40) for the fourth-most by a United States-born goalie in NHL history.

### **Canadian Press**

<https://www.chrisd.ca/2024/12/22/winnipeg-jets-minnesota-wild-game-recap/>

### ***Jets Soar Out of the Gates, Whip Wild 5-0***

By Judy Owen, The Canadian Press

Cole Perfetti and Morgan Barron knew it was time the Winnipeg Jets stopped coming slow out of the gate.

The team accomplished that with a pair of first-period goals on its way to a 5-0 victory over the Minnesota Wild on Saturday.

"We knew they were on a back-to-back and they were obviously going to be a little tired," said Perfetti, who had a goal and two assists. "We wanted to have a good start. We haven't had that as of late.

“Our first period was huge, and we really wanted to take them out of the game. And I think we did that. We really didn’t give them anything. Hard on the puck, hard on the forecheck. We really suffocated them all over the ice, and then got a couple goals and really take them out of it.”

Minnesota, which lost 2-1 at home to the Utah Hockey Club on Friday, is now on a four-game losing skid after recording its first shutout of the season.

Nikolaj Ehlers and Neal Pionk each scored a power-play goal in front of a capacity crowd at Canada Life Centre. Pionk added an assist.

Barron and Vladislav Namestnikov also scored for the Jets (24-10-1), who are 4-1-1 in their last six games.

Connor Hellebuyck made 19 saves for his NHL-leading fourth shutout of the season and 41st of his career. He also tops his counterparts in net with 21 wins.

Jesper Wallstedt stopped 19 shots for Minnesota, which is 1-5-0 in its last five games and five points behind the Jets for first place in the Central Division.

“The emphasis was kind of (on) the start and, obviously, that was a much better start,” Barron said. “Those last few starts we’ve had haven’t been good enough.

“The shot clock shows you that, but also just the play and watching the film. Special teams was a big part of it and also, the start were the two big points of emphasis.”

The Jets went 2-for-5 on the power play and are now 11-for-28 in the past seven games.

Minnesota was 0-for-4 and only had a total of five shots during the man advantage.

“I thought we went a little bit off script and made plays and went east-west and passed up shots,” Wild head coach John Hynes said.

“To me, that’s the bigger thing. It’s more the process of the game than it is anything about the mindset.”

Ehlers scored his 10th goal of the season six seconds after Minnesota took its first penalty at 6:45 of the first period.

Barron made it 2-0 with 2:06 left in the period when he banged in a puck that had gone behind Wallstedt after an Alex Iafallo shot.

Pionk’s one-timer from the point beat Wallstedt 14 seconds into the man advantage to make it 3-0 at 5:19.

A Minnesota turnover gave Perfetti the puck in the slot and he fired it by Wallstedt at 2:07 of the third.

Seven seconds after a Winnipeg power play ended, Namestnikov tipped in a Pionk shot to go up 5-0 at 7:36.

“It goes to show you our depth,” Perfetti said of the goals from the second and fourth lines. “That’s when we’re at our best, when all four lines are playing like that and able to contribute, top to bottom, defensively and on offence.”

Jets head coach Scott Arniel agreed it was close to a complete game.

“I wouldn’t say (in) quite some time, but I would say it’s probably one of our better efforts in the last few games here,” he said.

Jets captain Adam Lowry left the game in the third period, but Arniel said he was just banged up and should be able to play Monday in Toronto when Winnipeg takes on the Maple Leafs.

*NOTES:* The victory was Winnipeg’s eighth consecutive against Minnesota. ... Hellebuyck passed John Vanbiesbrouck and Frank Brimsek for fourth-most shutouts by an American goaltender (41).

### **TSN.ca**

<https://www.tsn.ca/nhl/video/leafs-fall-to-7-3-without-matthews-could-we-see-a-jets-oilers-west-final-this-year%7E3051669>

### ***Leafs fall to 7-3 without Matthews; Could we see a Jets-Oilers West final this year? (VIDEO)***

The Leafs went 7-2 without Auston Matthews earlier this season, but can they replicate that success if he misses extended time once again? Is this the year we could see an all-Canadian Western Conference final between the Jets and Oilers? TSN Hockey's Frankie Corrado joins Jermain Franklin to discuss.

### **Winnipeg Free Press**

<https://www.winnipegfreepress.com/breakingnews/2024/12/21/jets-blank-wild-to-sweep-season-series>

### ***Jets blank Wild to sweep season series***

By: Ken Wiebe

Quick start? Check.

Strong special teams? Check.

Sound structure and solid netminding? Check.

Secondary scoring? Check.

Quality finish? Check.

When it comes to checking the boxes head coach Scott Arniel was looking for, the Winnipeg Jets left little room for interpretation as they smoked the Minnesota Wild 5-0 on Saturday before a sold-out crowd of 15,225 at Canada Life Centre.

"I wouldn't say quite some time, but I would say it's probably one of our better efforts in the last few games here," said Jets head coach Scott Arniel.

"We went after them in the first period and kind of continued that through the three periods. Liked a lot of our compete, our little details. A lot of good things that happened."

The slow starts that hampered the Jets in California were nothing but a memory in this one as the Jets scored twice in the first period and essentially cruised from there.

With the win, the Jets improved to 24-10-1 and extended their lead in the Central Division standings to five points over the Wild, who hold a game in hand.

"We knew they were on a back-to-back and they were obviously going to be a little tired. We wanted to have a good start," said Jets forward Cole Perfetti, who scored a goal and had three points.

"Our first period was huge, and we really wanted to take them out of the game. And I think we did that. We really didn't give them anything. Hard on the puck, hard on the forecheck. We really suffocated them all over the ice, and then got a couple goals and really (took) them out of it."

The Jets also completed a three-game series sweep and have now won eight consecutive regular season meetings against their fiercest rival.

"Is it? I didn't even know. I don't know (why)," said Jets forward Morgan Barron, who scored his third goal of the season. "They're obviously a good team. You can see where they are in the standings. I'm surprised that you said eight in a row because it feels like a battle every time that we play them."

Winnipeg will play its final game before the holiday break on Monday afternoon against the Toronto Maple Leafs.

"Another game like that, exactly," said Perfetti. "I have noticed we've had a tough time against Toronto the last few years. A lot of skill over there, and hopefully we can get one more on the road and hopefully head into Christmas feeling good."

Let's take a closer look at this one:

#### *Powerful stuff*

This is not a recording, but the Jets' top-ranked power play produced a pair of goals in short order on Saturday.

They needed only six seconds before Nikolaj Ehlers found the back of the net to make it 1-0 and then only 14 seconds before Neal Pionk extended the lead to 2-0 during the second period.

Both goals came after the Jets' won an offensive zone draw.

The Jets nearly got a third power-play marker in the third period when a redirection from Vladislav Namestnikov came seven seconds after a minor penalty to Jared Spurgeon had expired.

The Jets have now scored at least one power play goal in 23 games and at least two with the man-advantage eight times, which is one of the reasons they lead the NHL in power-play efficiency.

The power play has gone 11-for-28 during the past seven games.

Earlier in the day, Arniel was discussing the strides that have been taken under the guidance of assistant coach Davis Payne.

“They’re extremely confident going out on the ice. That started at the very beginning of the year and it’s built,” said Arniel. “Our work ethic and our ability to get pucks back if we happen to not have it on our stick. Our movement and our attack mindset, all of those things have been pretty consistent.

“There have been nights where our power play has had to get us into a game or win us a hockey game and really, that’s what the best power plays do around the league.”

Speaking of special teams, the Jets penalty kill was a perfect five-for-five.

“It doesn’t feel like we got caved in a lot of games,” said Barron. “Most of the games it just seems like we let in a squeaker here or there, and it’s one or two mistakes and it’s in the back of the net.

“To kind of get a clean sheet, I think that’s good, and we want to ride that momentum into what’s a good power play in Toronto.”

#### *Barron delivers*

There’s been plenty of chatter about the Jets needing a bit more secondary scoring and the fourth line did its part as Barron snapped a 15-game drought.

Barron was on a two-on-one rush with Alex Iafallo, whose shot was stopped by Jesper Wallstedt.

Barron’s two previous goals were empty-netters on the same shift back on Nov. 15 against the Florida Panthers.

“No, everyone has been pretty polite about it — until you,” said Barron, asked if his teammates had been giving him any grief about not scoring on an actual goalie.

“I’ll take any of them. I obviously saw (Iafallo) get the shot off and then I kind of lost it – and then it popped out. Honestly, I thought I could have done a better job stopping at the net before. I almost kind of swung behind, but stopped just in time.”

The Jets also got a pair of goals from the second line after the top trio had done a lot of the heavy lifting of late – along with the power play contributions from both units.

This was secondary scoring at its finest.

“That’s obviously important. There were times throughout this year when we probably haven’t produced as much as we would have liked to,” said Barron.

“At the start of the year, it was a little easier most nights, but as soon as we started losing a few more games, obviously we’ve been through a little bit of a tough stretch for our own standard, then it gets a little tougher. So it was good to contribute and hopefully we can kind of keep rolling.”

#### *No concern for Lowry*

Jets captain Adam Lowry left the game in the third period with an undisclosed injury, but Arniel said there was no real concern.

Lowry seemed to be labouring a bit as he left the ice with 11:37 to play, had a brief discussion with head athletic therapist Rob Milette on the bench before going down the tunnel for further evaluation.

“He was just banged up a little bit there,” said Arniel. “He should be fine.”

#### *Ehlers regroups*

In his second game back after an undisclosed lower-body injury, Ehlers was much more effective – which came as little surprise after his blunt assessment of his effort against the Anaheim Ducks.

Ehlers finished with three shots on goal and six shot-attempts and was much more noticeable as a play driver as he moved to 10 goals and 27 points in 26 games this season.

“Yeah, when you see his speed like that, when he puts it on display, it’s nerve-wracking for the opposition and especially the defenders who have to play that side of the ice,” said Arniel.

“It just creates offensive zone time for that group. I thought those three, they did a really good job and spent a lot of time down in that end of the rink and they got rewarded for it.”

#### **Winnipeg Sun**

<https://winnipegsun.com/sports/hockey/nhl/winnipeg-jets/make-it-eight-jets-get-standing-o-after-hammering-rival-wild>

#### ***Make it eight: Jets get standing O after hammering rival Wild***

By Paul Friesen

A sellout crowd on a Saturday night, an opponent playing on consecutive nights, with a goalie in just his fifth NHL start – and a team they just love to beat.

That recipe made for a tasty hockey eggnog as the Winnipeg Jets played their last home game before Christmas.

Bouncing back from a forgettable California road trip, the Jets hammered the Minnesota Wild, 5-0, increasing their lead atop the Central Division and the overall NHL standings.

Never mind this season’s three-game sweep of their Central Division rival in which they’ve outscored Minnesota, 11-2 – it was the eighth straight win for the Jets over the Wild.



“Is it? I didn’t even know,” forward Morgan Barron, one of the goal-scorers, said. “I can’t (explain it). They’re obviously a good team. You can see where they are in the standings. I’m surprised that you said eight in a row because it feels like a battle every time that we play them.”

Normally, no goals from the Jets’ top line would spell trouble. It had been carrying this team, after all.

But with second-liners clicking, a power-play still on fire and the fourth line (Barron) chipping in with its first in weeks, it was all bells and bobtails for the home side.

“There were times throughout this year when we probably haven’t produced as much as we would have liked to,” Barron said. “At the start of the year, it was a little easier most nights. But as soon as we started losing a few more games, obviously we’ve been through a little bit of a tough stretch for our own standard, then it gets a little tougher.”

Nik Ehlers and defenceman Neal Pionk had the power-play goals, while Vlad Namestnikov scored seconds after another power play expired.

Cole Perfetti and Barron were the others to beat Jesper Wallstedt, while Connor Hellebuyck had to stop just 19 shots for his fourth shutout of the season.

The win spikes the Jets’ record to 24-10-1 for a league-high 49 points, five up on the Wild.

While Winnipeg’s power play went 2-for-5, Minnesota’s was 0-for-4.

The only thing the Jets lost on this night was captain Adam Lowry to some kind of injury midway through the third period.

“He was just banged up a little bit,” head coach Scott Arniel said. “He should be fine.”

The Jets will play their last game before the holiday break Monday afternoon in Toronto, then take four days off before hosting Ottawa the following Saturday.

After sleepwalking through the first periods of their last two games, the Jets set a proper tone with their first two shifts on Saturday, playing them entirely in Minnesota’s end.

“We knew they were on a back-to-back and they were obviously going to be a little tired,” Perfetti said. “We wanted to have a good start. We haven’t had that as of late. Our first period was huge, and we really wanted to take them out of the game. We really didn’t give them anything.

“We really suffocated them all over the ice, and then got a couple goals and really took them out of it.”

The Wild got a few early looks, but Winnipeg struck first, its sizzling power play melting Minnesota’s 30th-ranked penalty kill.

Ehlers, in just his second game back from a nine-game injury absence, provided the snipe, his 10th of the season, just six seconds into the power play.

The Jets had chances to add to their lead, but it took the fourth line to finally do it, Barron banging in Alex Lafallo's rebound to give his team a 2-1 lead after one.

"It's probably the first time in a while we've had all four lines going one right after the other," Arniel said. "And that was that continued momentum, shift to shift."

Fourteen seconds into their next power play, Pionk's second-period one-timer blast from the point added to the Jets' lead.

By this time the Wild players were on their heels and generating zilch of their own, even on a power play of their own.

When Perfetti took advantage of a Minnesota giveaway to make it 4-0 early in the third, the rout was on.

Seconds after another power play expired, Namestnikov added a fifth goal, deflecting another Pionk shot and capping this team's first 60-minute effort in a while.

"It was exactly what we wanted," Perfetti said. "Now, we just need to follow that up."

A full house of 15,225 did the wave for the last couple of minutes and gave their team a standing ovation as the clock wound down, sending it off to Toronto for the last game before the holiday break.

"Another game like that, exactly," is what Barron was hoping for. "I have noticed we've had a tough time against Toronto the last few years. A lot of skill over there. Hopefully we can get one more on the road and head into Christmas feeling good."

### **The Athletic**

<https://www.nytimes.com/athletic/6011874/2024/12/21/wild-jets-takeaways-losing-streak/>

#### ***Skidding Wild go 'off script' as losing streak reaches 4 games: 3 takeaways vs. Jets***

By Michael Russo

The Minnesota Wild's blip is officially a stumble as the slumping, skidding team once again was a patsy against the Winnipeg Jets.

For the second year in a row, the Jets swept the season series against the Wild with an easy-as-can-be 5-0 win at Canada Life Centre to go 3-0 this season against their rival from the south.

In fact, it was the eighth consecutive victory by Winnipeg over Minnesota. The Jets have outscored the Wild 31-12 in those eight games.

The Wild, who a little more than a week ago had the best points percentage in the NHL, dropped their fourth game in a row and sixth in the past eight. It was the first time this season they were shut out.

Ravaged with five injuries, including to their No. 1 goalie, Filip Gustavsson, the Wild are 1-5 without defenseman Jake Middleton (he was hurt one shift into the Edmonton game on Dec. 12) and 3-6 without center Joel Eriksson Ek.

"It's not about who's out. It's about who's in and it's about having the right mindset and playing the game the right way," said coach John Hynes, perturbed by the Wild playing an east-west game and passing up shots. "We have capable players and we have to get back to playing a certain style of game and being consistent with it. We have it in pockets. We don't have it enough."

The Wild, who Friday night completed a 1-4 homestand, will take Sunday off for their annual family Christmas party and will host the Chicago Blackhawks on Monday night. They'll then enter the NHL's three-day holiday break before reconvening Friday morning at MSP for a 2 1/2-hour flight to Dallas to play that night against the Stars.

Wild's penalty kill kills 'em again

It's tiresome to even discuss anymore, but the league's 30th-ranked penalty kill finally dipped below 70 percent on the season by allowing two more goals on five Jets tries Saturday. They have given up 27 power-play goals on 85 chances this season (69.4 percent).

The goals? Six seconds and 14 seconds into two of their penalty kills.

"We'll be able to digest it tonight on the plane and then (Sunday) and make the necessary adjustments and continue to move forward," said Hynes, who was displeased by missed assignments after the Wild lost faceoffs on the PK.

Brendan Gaunce, called up with the hope he could improve the Wild's hideous faceoff proficiency on the penalty kill, got beat, and four seconds later, Nikolaj Ehlers scored for the game's opening goal.

Then, in the second period, Jesper Wallstedt swatted a puck into the netting for a delay of game penalty and was beaten on an unscreened point shot by Hermantown's Neal Pionk for a 3-0 lead.

The Wild have allowed 10 power-play goals in the past seven games.

*Wallstedt shelled*

For a guy who admittedly lost confidence this season and admitted earlier in the week that he hasn't been playing up to his standards in Iowa, Wallstedt wasn't exactly put into the best position to succeed in his two starts with Gustavsson hurt.

'I was so lost in my own mind': Wild's Jesper Wallstedt opens up about his trying season

The Wild opted to play him on the back end of two back-to-backs.

He could hardly be blamed for the three goals he gave up in a one-goal, home loss to Vegas. Saturday, he wasn't very good and couldn't cover up the Wild's glaring blemishes, which included tired legs, wasted offensive opportunities and several examples where the Wild, especially their skilled players like slumping Matt Boldy, were soft on pucks and continually overpassing. He gave up five goals on 24 shots.

Winnipeg's second goal came after Wallstedt couldn't freeze a puck after the Wild pressured and Kirill Kaprizov was gassed on the backcheck. We mentioned the first and third goals above, but the fourth goal came on a Jonas Brodin-to-Marcus Johansson turnover and the fifth came after the Wild were running around and Zach Bogosian didn't tie up Vladislav Namestnikov's stick on a Pionk point shot.

"I thought he battled," Hynes said of the goalie.

But the Wild desperately need Wallstedt to prove to them why he was drafted in the first round in 2021 and why they awarded him a one-way contract extension before this season when there was plenty of time to sign him after this year. After a pedestrian year last season in the AHL, the 22-year-old is 5-6-1 in Iowa with a 3.77 goals-against average and .874 save percentage. He's now 0-2 this season in the NHL after going 2-1 last year.

#### *Wild have zero offensive depth*

The Wild have totaled two goals in the past three games and have two goals or fewer in five of their past six. It has now been 17 periods since the Wild scored a goal without Kaprizov on the ice.

Yes, they're severely banged up and playing a bunch of forwards who quite frankly should be in Iowa (it's beyond belief that Devin Shore and Ben Jones have each played 15 games without managing even an assist), but the underlying numbers have been sounding alarms all season that if Kaprizov slumped, the Wild would slump with him.

Even when the Wild were atop the league standings, they were near the bottom in expected goals and chances generated at five-on-five. Plus, their power play has scored four times since Nov. 23.

Well, Kaprizov can't be expected to be the lone guy to score.

Ryan Hartman has one goal in his past 22 games and no points in his past 15. Boldy has three goals in his past 18. Johansson has one goal in his past 14. Freddy Gaudreau has two goals and one assist in his past 15. Marcus Foligno has one goal in his past 20.

Hynes said the Wild went "off script" against the Jets by playing too cute, too east-west, too perimeter.

"The mindset needs to be to play the game the right way and play the game that gives us the best chance to win, gives us the best chance to produce offense, the best way to check," Hynes said.

## **Minneapolis Star Tribune**

<https://www.startribune.com/minnesota-wild-winnipeg-jets-jesper-wallstedt-connor-hellebuyck/601197987>

### ***Wild go through a Winnipeg wringer, falling 5-0 to the Jets Minnesota lost its fourth game in a row, this one to the league leader and a Central Division rival.***

By Sarah McLellan

The Wild won't be able to snap their skid against the Jets any time soon, but they have a different funk festering.

They're on a season-long four-game losing streak after the Wild were blitzed 5-0 by first-place Winnipeg on Saturday at Canada Life Centre, suffering their first shutout and getting swept by their Central Division rival in back-to-back seasons.

Overall, the Jets have won eight in a row and nine of the past 12 matchups.

"We gotta stick to what gives us the best chance to win," coach John Hynes told reporters in Winnipeg. "I felt we went a little bit off-script."

Goaltender Connor Hellebuyck picked up his NHL-best 21st victory and league-leading fourth shutout with 19 saves, and Winnipeg's power play needed only a combined 20 seconds to establish a lead and later pad it with a pair of goals against Wild rookie netminder Jesper Wallstedt.

This was Wallstedt's second start since joining the Wild a week ago with No. 1 Filip Gustavsson sidelined with a lower-body injury.

Wallstedt, in his fifth NHL game, also made 19 stops.

"He battled," Hynes said.

Unlike the Wild, who were denied 2-1 by Utah Hockey Club the previous night at the end of a grim, one-win homestand, the Jets were rested and ready.

Just six seconds into their first power play, they converted after winning the faceoff and working the puck to Nikolaj Ehlers, who swooped in from the side of the net to jam a shot past Wallstedt at 6 minutes, 51 seconds of the first period.

That deficit doubled for the Wild with 2:06 left in the period after a marathon shift by Kirill Kaprizov and Marco Rossi culminated in a 2-on-1 for Winnipeg that Wallstedt saved initially before Morgan Barron buried the rebound as it sat in the crease; seconds earlier, Rossi had failed to connect on a Kaprizov pass as Rossi crashed the net.

Then 5:19 into the second, the Jets punished Wallstedt for whacking the puck over the boards when former Minnesota Duluth defenseman and Hermantown native Neal Pionk walked into a one-timer only 14 seconds into the delay-of-game penalty.

“You have to execute your assignments if you lose the faceoff,” Hynes said. “That’s really what it comes down to.”

Winnipeg and its NHL-leading power play finished 2-for-5, while the Wild blanked on four tries after going 0-for-5 Friday night vs. Utah. They have just two power-play goals over their past eight games.

“The mindset needs to be to play the game the right way and play the game that gives us the best chance to win,” Hynes said, “gives us the best chance to produce offense, the best way to check. When you look in those areas where you want to go east-west and pass up shots and play a perimeter game, then you’re not going to score.”

The Jets didn’t slow down in the third.

Cole Perfetti pounced on a Jonas Brodin turnover in Wild territory at 2:07 and then Vladislav Namestnikov tipped in a Pionk shot at 7:36 to hand the Wild their second five-goal loss of the week after the Panthers ran away 6-1 on Wednesday.

During their four-game slump, the Wild have been outscored 16-4 while playing mostly without Joel Eriksson Ek, Jake Middleton, Yakov Trenin, Jakub Lauko and Gustavsson; Kaprizov is responsible for two Wild goals, while Rossi and Mats Zuccarello have one apiece. That line accounted for more than a third of the shots against Hellebuyck, who continues to perform like Teflon against the Wild.

He was also in net for Winnipeg’s earlier wins, 2-1 in overtime on Oct. 13 and 4-1 on Nov. 25, and finished the season series fending off 88 of 90 shots. He passed John Vanbiesbrouck and Frank Brimsek for the fourth-most shutouts (41) by an American goalie in NHL history.

This victory also widened the Jets’ cushion over the Wild in the division and overall standings to five points.

While Winnipeg has cruised against the Central, going 9-3, the Wild are 5-4-2. They’ve dropped five of their past six games and six of the past eight but have another chance to wrap this rut before a three-day holiday hiatus when they take on the Blackhawks on Monday night at Xcel Energy Center.

“It’s not about who’s out,” Hynes said. “It’s about who’s in, and it’s about having the right mindset and playing the game the right way, and we have capable players. We’ve got to get back to playing a certain style of game and being consistent with that.

“We have it in pockets. We don’t have it enough, and it’s about the guys that whoever is going to be in the lineup, that’s what our focus is.”