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<https://www.nhl.com/jets/news/three-things-blues-play-solid-road-game>

***Three things - Blues play solid road game
Scheifele scores goal in third period in 4-1 loss to Blues***

By Jamie Thomas

WINNIPEG – The Winnipeg Jets losing streak is now at four games following a 4-1 loss to the St. Louis Blues at Canada Life Centre. The Jets saw their record fall to 18-8-0 and now are two points back of Minnesota for first place in the Central. Connor Hellebuyck made 28 saves and has dropped three in a row for the first time in 2024-25. Winnipeg heads out for a two-game road trip starting Thursday in Buffalo.

BLUES OWN THE SECOND

The game was scoreless until the 18:04 mark of the second period when Jordan Kyrou took a Brayden Schenn pass and slid a backhand past Connor Hellebuyck to make it 1-0. The Blues made it 2-0 just 39 seconds later, Dylan Holloway shoveled a loose puck into the net. They almost made it 3-0 but they hit the crossbar at the end of the period, the Blues outshot the Jets 19-3 in the middle frame.

“We weren’t bad in the first weren’t bad and then in the second, we just got away from our game a little bit. And them getting two four on four goals was tough,” said Mark Scheifele.

“And they clogged it up, they played good D, and it made it tough for us to get to the net. And we just didn’t play our game.”

HOFER ALMOST DOES IT AGAIN

The last time Winnipeg product Joel Hofer came to his hometown he stopped all 33 shots he faced in a 3-0 Blues win. Hofer wasn’t that busy Tuesday night but with his team up 3-0, he made a save on an Adam Lowry shorthanded breakaway chance. Gabe Vilardi had a great chance as well, but it wasn’t until the 15:45 mark that the Jets finally beat Hofer. Mark Scheifele pounced on a huge rebound and slammed in his 13th goal of the season to make it 3-1. Hofer finished the night with 22 saves and improved to 2-1 against his hometown team.

LAMBO

The Jets recalled Lambert Tuesday morning after they announced that Nikolaj Ehlers was going on injured reserve. Lambert has 11 points in 16 games with the Manitoba Moose of the American Hockey League this season. The 21-year-old centred a line with Gabe Vilardi and Cole Perfetti for two periods and went to the wing in the third with Vladislav Namestnikov and Perfetti. Lambert played 15:07, had three blocked shots and one hit.

NHL.com

<https://www.nhl.com/news/st-louis-blues-winnipeg-jets-game-recap-december-3>

***Blues defeat Jets, extend point streak to 4 under Montgomery
Kyrrou scores twice; Winnipeg drops 4th in row***

By Darrin Bauming

WINNIPEG — Jordan Kyrrou scored two goals for the St. Louis Blues in a 4-1 win against the Winnipeg Jets at Canada Life Centre on Tuesday.

“I thought a five-guys-go mentality from our D-zone to their net was really good from the start of the game,” St. Louis coach Jim Montgomery said. “I liked how it was wave after wave. Everybody was a huge part of that win.”

Dylan Holloway and Robert Thomas each had a goal and an assist for the Blues (12-12-2), who extended their point streak to four games (3-0-1) since Montgomery was hired as coach Nov. 24. Joel Hofer made 22 saves, and Scott Perunovich had two assists.

“[Hofer] was unbelievable,” Kyrrou said. “Hometown game for him and I’m sure he was fired up. He made some huge saves early in the first and in the second to keep it 0-0. That really helped us get the lead there. He was great the rest of the game as well.”

Mark Scheifele scored for the Jets (18-8-0), who have lost four straight and five of six (1-5-0). Connor Hellebuyck made 28 saves.

“We weren’t bad in the first, and then in the second we just got away from our game a little bit.” Scheifele said. “Them getting two 4-on-4 goals was tough. And they clogged it up, they played good D and it made it tough for us to get to the net. We just didn’t play our game.”

St. Louis scored twice in the second period, when it outshot Winnipeg 19-3.

“I loved our second period, but I thought our first period led to the second period,” Montgomery said. “I thought our defensive game, the entire game, I thought we were above people. We weren’t giving up odd-man rushes and our checking skills were really good.”

Hofer said: “[My teammates] were great. [Winnipeg] had two or three shots, maybe. We were in their zone the whole time. We were working the goal line, getting good changes in. It was great to watch.”

Kyrrou gave the Blues a 1-0 lead at 18:04 of the second. Brayden Schenn’s saucer pass found Kyrrou in the slot, and although his initial shot was stopped by Hellebuyck, the rebound went in off of Scheifele’s foot.

Holloway made it 2-0 at 18:43, scoring on his own rebound following a give-and-go with Perunovich.

“That whole period we were kind of dominating them,” Kyrrou said. “We had tons of chances, and chances just kept coming and coming and [Montgomery] was like, ‘We’re going to get one here the last four minutes,’ and we got two there. So it was good.”

Kyrou pushed it to 3-0 at 6:38 of the third, spinning and shooting from the high slot after Holloway passed it while sitting on the ice.

“The puck was kind of coming down the wall and I just tried to spin out off my D-man, and I kind of just fell, got tangled up,” Holloway said. “But I was just on my butt and the puck is right there and I saw sticks in there, so I was trying to kind of get it free. And then [Kyrou] made a great play kind of taking it back and then ripping it in the net.”

Scheifele cut it to 3-1 at 15:45, ending Hofer’s shutout bid in the goaltender’s hometown.

“It’s special. It’s great,” Hofer said. “The guys played so good in front of me. It’s a big game for us. We were ready to go and we’re going to try to keep this going on the road trip.”

Thomas scored into an empty net at 16:21 for the 4-1 final.

“We just really didn’t get pucks in deep until the third,” Jets defenseman Haydn Fleury said. “I thought we made the game harder on ourselves then we needed it to be and we paid for it.”

Blues defenseman Justin Faulk did not take part in warmups and was a late scratch from the lineup due to an upper-body injury. Perunovich was in the lineup in Faulk’s place.

“[Faulk] was close,” Montgomery said. “Like I said this morning, I thought he was playing. And then after the morning skate when he went in, talked to the trainers, it was, ‘He’s not going to play.’”

NOTES: The Blues won their first game against a Central Division opponent this season (1-4-0). ... St. Louis has outscored its opponents 14-5 in regulation and is 9-for-9 on the penalty kill under Montgomery. ... Since starting the season 15-1-0, Winnipeg is 3-7-0 and has scored one goal or fewer in six games during that span.

Canadian Press

<https://www.chrisd.ca/2024/12/04/winnipeg-jets-st-louis-blues-game-recap-loss/>

Jets Confident They Have the Skill to Pull Out of Nosedive

By Judy Owen, The Canadian Press

Mark Scheifele didn’t have an answer for why the Winnipeg Jets’ losing streak now sits at four games.

Scheifele scored Winnipeg’s only goal in a 4-1 loss to the St. Louis Blues Tuesday, rolling the Jets’ record to 1-5-0 in their past six games and dropping them out of first place in the NHL standings.

During the four-game skid, the Jets (18-8-0) have only scored six goals. They went into the game sitting third in the league with 94 goals.

“I don’t know if I can pinpoint it right now,” Scheifele said when asked where the team’s offence has gone.

"I think it's just a matter of wearing teams down. Obviously, everyone's gunning for us and they know they got to play us hard. So, I think it's just a matter of getting back to looking at the blueprint that we were doing earlier and just try to get back to that."

Connor Hellebuyck stopped 28 of the 31 shots he faced for Winnipeg.

Jordan Kyrour scored twice and Dylan Holloway had a goal and assist for St. Louis. Robert Thomas recorded an empty-net goal.

Winnipegger Joel Hofer made 22 saves for St. Louis (12-12-2), which is on a four-game point streak (3-0-1).

The four-game run coincides with the hiring of Jim Montgomery as Blues head coach on Nov. 24.

Winnipeg head coach Scott Arniel said two things stand out to him during his team's losing streak.

"We have opportunities to attack the net and we've looked for one more play," he said. "And the other side of it is that, when we get inside, when we get bodies and numbers inside, that creates those second and third opportunities.

"Sometimes it's the opposition trying to keep you out of there, but sometimes it's your will to go inside there and go get those second chances. For me, the attack mindset is something that we've had for most of the year but now we're deferring."

Winnipeg entered the match tied in points for first place in the league, a spot they had been in since Oct. 22 but no longer.

"We don't look where we're sitting," Arniel said. "We look at, like we talked about when we beat teams, it's the next opponent and moving on."

He and his assistants will stress what's needed to have success.

"We need to be better as a group. That's the biggest thing," Arniel said. "We won all those games as a team and this isn't going to change here. Everybody's had a little bit of fault (with) these losses and now it's a case of us sticking together and going on to the next game on the road here and finding a way to win that hockey game."

After Winnipeg had an 8-6 shot advantage in the first period, St. Louis outshot the Jets 19-3 in second period.

During four-on-four play, Kyrour and Holloway gave the Blues a 2-0 lead after scoring 39 seconds apart.

Kyrour scored at 18:04 after his rebound went off Scheifele's skate. Holloway notched his eighth of the season when he put in his own rebound past Hellebuyck at 18:43.

“That whole period, we were kind of dominating them,” Kyrour said. “We had tons of chances, and chances just kept coming and coming and (Montgomery) was like, ‘We’re going to get one here the last four minutes’ and we got two there so it was good.”

Kyrour registered his second goal of the game at 6:38 of the third, followed by Scheifele’s goal with 4:15 remaining and Thomas’s goal with 3:39 left.

The Jets head out for a two-game road trip, beginning Thursday in Buffalo against the Sabres. The Blues travel to Calgary to play the Flames.

NOTES

The Jets have scored one or fewer goals in six of their past 10 games. ... Winnipeg was without winger Nikolaj Ehlers, who was placed on injured reserve this week (lower body) and might be out seven to 10 days. ... Injured St. Louis forward Pavel Buchnevich skated with the team in the morning but didn’t play.

The Athletic

<https://www.nytimes.com/athletic/5963873/2024/12/04/winnipeg-jets-losses-nhl/>

What I’m seeing as the Winnipeg Jets lose 7 of their last 10 games

By Murat Ates

The Winnipeg Jets have lost four games in a row and seven out of their last 10, losing their grip on first place in the NHL.

It would be awfully Winnipeg of the Jets to dominate the standings until actually getting some recognition for it. We’ve seen past editions of the team start brilliantly in recent seasons — so much so that we referred to second-half slumps as the most important obstacle for this edition to overcome.

I still believe the Jets are a good team, despite the extent of their recent struggles. But why are they struggling quite this badly after a record-setting start? What’s actually happening on the ice to drive such trouble — and what can Winnipeg do about it?

First, a clue from Scott Arniel’s response to my question about Winnipeg’s coverage on the two four-on-four goals it gave up against St. Louis on Tuesday.

“First one, we have a guy fall down and we’ve got two guys on the wrong side of the puck. The next one, we duplicate and had another guy come right down the middle,” Arniel said. “Those are the things, for me — and this is the last time I’ll say this on the schedule and the games that we’re playing — there’s some mental things that are happening and you go ‘Wow, where did that come from?’”

Let’s talk about it, then.

Here’s what I’m seeing as the Jets experience their first major struggles of the 2024-25 season.

Scheifele is hurting and so is the top line

We're not used to seeing Mark Scheifele struggle like this. He has one goal, two assists and 11 shots in seven games since his hat trick against Florida last month. He's been outscored 5-2 at five-on-five in that time and was a step behind Jordan Kyrou on St. Louis' first four-on-four goal on Tuesday.

Scheifele's upper-body injury has been speculated upon at length; Gabriel Vilardi took faceoffs for him on the road trip despite some ensuing defensive complications. Vilardi has won 56.6 percent of his faceoffs but didn't feel confident about Winnipeg's defending on the faceoffs he lost.

"If I lost the faceoff, (there were) different responsibilities for me and Mark. You saw a lot of times, I kind of got caught low just because the timing of switches just wasn't there," Vilardi said on Tuesday. "I think it was definitely an adjustment for our line."

Winnipeg has given up eight rush goals in four straight losses, including the one Kyrou beat Scheifele for on Tuesday. This isn't a problem unique to the Jets' top line but Scheifele's injury has exacerbated things. Winnipeg's centers are tasked with playing above (on the safe side of) opposing centres. Vilardi plays a power game on the boards, particularly excelling below the goal line, but lacks Scheifele's footspeed to get back into plays. That's part of the reason neither Arniel nor Rick Bowness before him committed to Vilardi (or Cole Perfetti) at centre: The Jets want their middlemen to play with pace, excelling in transition on offence and defence alike.

Some of the top line's struggles are about a lack of offence: Scheifele and Vilardi have one goal each through the Jets' losing streak, while Kyle Connor has none. At the end of Winnipeg's game against Dallas on Sunday, Scheifele found Connor for a high slot chance that he fanned on. Later, Scheifele got a one-time pass at the bottom of the circle that he put wide.

Scheifele said on Tuesday that Winnipeg's offensive struggles are about a lack of execution. Arniel put it a different way.

"We were trying to play cute hockey," Arniel said of Winnipeg's struggles against St. Louis. "We were trying to make highlight-reel plays."

Let's note Scheifele's line with Connor and Vilardi has outscored opponents 15-14 at five-on-five over the full course of this season. Before Scheifele's injury, they looked to have turned a corner in controlling the game and still have a 52 percent expected goals percentage at five-on-five. There are reasons for optimism but they need to find their game in all three zones — and on the power play, too.

Outlook: It depends on the speed of Scheifele's turn toward good health. Scheifele was back taking faceoffs on Tuesday in Winnipeg, implying a turn back toward good health, although he managed to win just six of his 15 attempts. The line depends on him playing down low, freeing Vilardi to spend more time on the attack.

Samberg's importance cannot be overstated

When Dylan Samberg was a high school sophomore, he hurt his ankle playing hockey.

When his dad, Mike, picked him up to take him home, Samberg was given the option to get it checked out by a doctor.

“Dad, It’s hunting season,” said the younger Samberg. He then remained stubborn about it overnight and into the next day when he couldn’t fit his foot into his winter boot. Undeterred, he took the felt liner out of his boot and got his dad to tape a plastic bag around it to keep his foot from getting soaked. There’s a whole story to it — a father and son having a great weekend together before noticing the pain isn’t going away, going for an X-ray and realizing Samberg’s foot was broken the whole time.

It shouldn’t be a surprise then that Samberg got right back up and tried to block another shot after Steven Stamkos’ slap shot broke his foot last week. His pain tolerance is exceptional — so much so that he’s already been spotted walking around Canada Life Centre without his walking boot. Arniel is estimating four weeks for Samberg’s recovery and it seems reasonable that Samberg will play the moment he gets medical clearance.

In the meantime, his absence has caused a ripple effect throughout the Jets’ defence corps. His minutes are now being taken by offseason depth signing Haydn Fleury while the Jets rotate Logan Stanley, Colin Miller and Ville Heinola through their third pair. Fleury has worked hard, even saving a goal against the Blues on Tuesday (while blaming himself for being out of position first) but he’s not as well suited to the rigours of top-four competition as Samberg.

He gets his wires crossed as Adam Lowry releases Blues forward Dylan Holloway on this rush.

Outlook: I don’t think this one is getting better quickly — but Samberg might. I think Winnipeg could get away with sheltering a Stanley-Heinola third pairing if the top two pairs were healthy and dominating. That’s not the case; Samberg and Neal Pionk kept a clean defensive zone, enjoying almost 60 percent of shots at five-on-five, while Winnipeg gets closer to 40 percent of the shots with Fleury and Pionk on the ice.

On Stanley and Heinola

Stanley has taken seven minor penalties this season, including three during Sunday’s loss to Dallas — one of which after he was burned by a particularly slow pivot in his attempt to keep up with the Stars’ Jason Robertson. He’s also drawn two minor penalties, meaning Stanley has put the Jets short-handed five extra times this season. This ties him with Josh Morrissey for the worst penalty differential on the Jets, though Morrissey has played over three times as many minutes.

This is the norm for Stanley. No Jets skater has put his team short-handed more often per minute of ice time over the past three seasons than Stanley. His lack of footspeed puts him in bad positions. His size may make him a target for referees. He also tries to play with a physical edge — something coaches have asked of the 6-foot-7 defender for his entire career.

Here, Stanley looks slow on a play that most defencemen would struggle with.

It is important to put Stanley’s struggles into context. His extra five penalties this season are worth roughly one extra goal against — not a catastrophic figure.

This Jets coaching staff has also done a good job of keeping Stanley away from top competition. Winnipeg’s top-four defencemen play the most minutes — and the highest percentage of their minutes — against elite competition. The third pair, whether Stanley is a part of it or not, plays a disproportionate amount of its limited ice time against third and fourth lines. It has been outshot but has won those minutes 8-3 in real goals with Stanley on the ice.

This isn't to say Heinola is automatically the answer. The Jets tried Heinola and Stanley together on Tuesday, with Arniel cautioning before the game that the key would be for each defenceman to keep things simple and play to their strengths. Heinola and Stanley took turns covering for each other as the other got caught up ice on aggressive plays, and Heinola took a third-period penalty.

There were bright moments, too, but it looks like Winnipeg's third pair is going to be a work in progress until Samberg returns.

At 26, Stanley's career arc looks more like that of Nathan Beaulieu or Tucker Poolman than Jamie Oleksiak. Oleksiak delivered second-pairing results as young as 25, did it again at 26, and then continued to get even better than that. Heinola's career arc is too spotted by injury and AHL time to be sure about. At 23, he is still in a key developmental window. Stanley is at an age many analysts consider a player's peak. (I tend to think improved reads, consistency and experience help some players get better beyond their peak athletic years.)

Arniel's goal is to gather more information about each player and put them in the best position to succeed.

Outlook: Inefficient. I think Stanley will continue to get minutes in what's become an unofficial rotation. I think he'll continue to struggle while providing physicality that other Jets defencemen don't. It's a position that likely requires a substantial upgrade between now and the playoffs.

But DeMelo's struggles are a more impactful concern

Dylan DeMelo has far more potential to help or hurt the Jets than Stanley. He's used as a top-pairing defenceman, regularly playing against other team's top talent, and has had strong underlying numbers throughout his career. Last season, the Jets outscored their opponents 81-44 when DeMelo was on the ice while creating many quality chances and giving up relatively few.

This has not been the case so far this season.

DeMelo has been beaten in open ice with startling frequency this season. Here's one from the Jets' most recent road trip, with Connor Hellebuyck putting the play on his own highlight reel instead of Ryan Hartman's.

DeMelo isn't the biggest or fastest Jets defenceman but has a long and excellent defensive track record in Winnipeg. His positioning is usually sound. DeMelo tends to read the play quickly and has such a strong history of calm, perfectly placed breakout passes that Paul Maurice once referred to his play as "coaches' porn."

The Jets have been outscored 14-13 with DeMelo (and Morrissey) on the ice this season. They have also been outshot and outchanced from the middle of the ice. Recall that this pairing plays against elite competition — difficulty is expected — but it's been much better in past seasons than it is right now.

Outlook: Mixed. In the short term, it seems clear that DeMelo is struggling. A multiyear track record of quality offers long-term confidence.

Aggressive, pinching defencemen are getting beat

The credit for this observation goes to Troy Smith, former Kitchener Rangers head coach, and to Jeff Marek, who included it in his blog. There is one way in which teams have started to attack Winnipeg from a tactical perspective.

Winnipeg's defencemen attack other team's breakouts when the Jets are in the offensive zone. They do this by pinching up the boards, taking time and space away from wingers who are trying to get the puck moving north for the other team. It's a play that takes great timing, aggression and trust in Winnipeg's forwards to get back on defence and sort out the next play.

Smith put together this highlight package of other teams "counter-pinching" against the Jets. In it, he shows four plays in which Winnipeg's defencemen jump up to stop the breakout pass but find that their opponents have a plan for what comes next.

"We gave up a lot of rush chances in our last three games and, for me, there's a lot of mental (aspects) to that," Arniel said on Tuesday. "That's usually not us. Whether it's our D's gap, whether it's our F3 or F4 always pouring back, whether maybe in the offensive zone, we get three guys caught."

As far as I can tell, that last part is the key. Watch Winnipeg's forwards in the clips Smith put together. Winnipeg's F3 gets back into the play in three out of four clips but, when teams counter-pinch against the Jets like that, one backchecking forward isn't helpful enough. A Jets defenceman has been caught high up the ice and the only way for Winnipeg to avoid an odd-man rush is if its F4 wins his race, too.

Outlook: This is a tough ask — the read and the speed alike — because Winnipeg wants to be aggressive in the offensive zone. It's also an ask that a contending-tier team would make, and that's how these Jets want to be seen.

TSN.ca

<https://www.tsn.ca/nhl/video/stumbling-home-from-a-long-road-trip-jets-land-with-a-thud-in-loss-to-blues%7E3034584>

Stumbling home from a long road trip, Jets land with a thud in loss to Blues (VIDEO)

After dropping their fourth straight game, TSN's Dan Robertson and Kevin Sawyer discuss the Jets' defensive miscues in their loss to the Blues.

Global Winnipeg

<https://globalnews.ca/news/10900432/slumping-winnipeg-jets-fall-to-blues-4-1-for-4th-straight-loss/>

Slumping Winnipeg Jets fall to Blues 4-1 for 4th straight loss

By Christian Aumell & Russ Hobson Global News

After getting off to one of the hottest starts in NHL history, the Winnipeg Jets are crashing back to earth.

Returning home from a six-game road trip, Winnipeg looked lifeless in a 4-1 loss to the St. Louis Blues Tuesday night, their fourth loss in a row and seventh in their last ten games.

The Jets had only 23 shots on goal, including just three in the middle frame where the Blues struck twice at four-on-four to take the lead for good.

“In the second, we just got away from our game a little bit,” said forward Mark Scheifele who scored their lone goal in the final five minutes. “And them getting two four-on-four goals was tough. They clogged it up, they played good ‘D’ and made it tough for us to get to the net. Yeah, we just didn’t play our game.”

Jordan Kyrou scored twice for the Blues in the win.

It was just the Jets second loss on home ice this season and it was the first time the Blues have won in Winnipeg in more than three full years. The Jets were outshot 19-3 in the second period.

“The second period – we got cute,” said Jets head coach Scott Arniel. “We missed assignments on the four-on-four twice, but the second period, it was just we were trying to play cute hockey. We were trying to make highlight reel plays.

“We’ll just continue to get guys to realize that there’s certain ways that we need to do things to have success. We’ll talk about it but we can’t dwell on it, but at the end of the day we need to be better as a group.”

Winnipeg won just 38 per cent of the faceoffs, while their power play was 0-for-2 with the extra attacker.

The Jets have only scored 11 times in their last six games and Kyle Connor is in the midst of a six-game goal scoring slump. After leading the NHL in goals not that long ago, the offence has suddenly all dried up for the Jets.

“We have opportunities to attack the net and we look for one more play,” Arniel said. “The attack mindset is kinda been something that we’ve had for most of the year and right now we’re kinda deferring. We’re trying to maybe make one more play, our ‘D’ aren’t getting pucks down from the top to the net front. But also we don’t have that second chance.”

The Jets made two lineup changes after placing Nikolaj Ehlers on injured reserve earlier in the day with a lower-body injury. Brad Lambert skated on their second line after being recalled from the AHL’s Manitoba Moose earlier on Tuesday. Ville Heinola replaced Colin Miller on the blueline.

Not much happened in the opening 20 minutes with neither team scoring or taking a penalty. Winnipeg outshot the Blues 8-6 in the first.

Just over two and a half minutes into the second, St. Louis came within a few inches of opening the scoring when Kyrou’s shot squeezed through the pads of Connor Hellebuyck and skittered toward the net but Haydn Fleury cleared it away before it crossed the goal line.

St. Louis was given the game’s first power play just under seven minutes into the second when Dylan DeMelo was called for holding the stick but the Blues and their 27th-ranked power play failed to convert.

With 8:30 left in the second, Winnipeg was put on the man advantage when Nathan Walker went to the box for slashing but the Jets' 2nd-ranked power play struggled as well, failing to register a shot on goal.

The Jets very briefly had a second power play of the night when Jake Neighbours tripped Adam Lowry but on the ensuing faceoff, Gabriel Vilardi was called for interference, setting up 1:56 of 4-on-4 hockey that the Blues took full advantage of.

With player battling for the puck at the Blues' blueline, the puck squirted out into the neutral zone where it was collected by Brayden Schenn. He carried it into the Winnipeg end before saucing a pass to Jordan Kyrour in the slot. Kyrour tried to toe-drag it around Hellebuyck who got a piece of it but the loose puck bounced off the skate of a backchecking Mark Scheifele and into the open net at the 18:04 mark.

39 seconds later, it was 2-0 St. Louis. Dylan Holloway and Robert Thomas ran a give-and-go inside the Winnipeg blueline, leaving Holloway with the puck in the slot. His initial shot was denied by Hellebuyck but he banged home the rebound to double the Blues' lead.

St. Louis outshot the Jets by a whopping 19-3 margin in the middle 20 minutes, giving them a two-period advantage of 25-11.

It didn't get much better for Winnipeg in the third.

Kyrour made it 3-0 at the 6:38 mark when he collected a loose puck in the Winnipeg end, spun and fired a shot from the slot that beat Hellebuyck through a maze of bodies.

With Winnipeg shorthanded later in the period, Lowry had a great chance to get the Jets on the board but he was denied by Winnipegger Joel Hofer on a partial breakaway. It was Winnipeg's 14th shot of the night just shy of the halfway point of the third.

Facing a three-goal deficit with 5:01 to go, Arniel decided to pull Hellebuyck for an extra attacker, hoping to jump-start a miracle rally and with 4:15 to go, Scheifele buried a juicy rebound past Hofer to make it 3-1 with his first goal in seven games.

With a faceoff coming in the offensive zone with 3:46 remaining, Hellebuyck went to the bench again but Thomas found the empty net just seven seconds later to put the game on ice and send fans flocking to the exits.

Hellebuyck turned aside 28 shots in defeat, while Hofer stopped 22 shots for St. Louis.

The Jets head right back on the road for a date with the Buffalo Sabres Thursday. Pregame coverage on 680 CJOB begins at 4 p.m. with the puck dropping just after 6 p.m.

<https://globalnews.ca/news/10900932/analysis-winnipeg-jets-brad-lambert/>

ANALYSIS: Addition of Brad Lambert a glimpse into Jets' future?

By Paul Edmonds CJOB

In addition to a frustrating loss Wednesday night, what Winnipeg Jets fans witnessed was perhaps a glimpse into the future — a future with Brad Lambert as a full-time member of the team and a lineup without Nikolaj Ehlers.

After being recalled from the Manitoba Moose on Tuesday morning, Lambert skated in place of Ehlers, who is out with a lower-body injury. As one might expect, Lambert didn't look out of place at all.

His speed, vision and offensive skills were certainly on display, but he also was responsible defensively — and in the Jets' fourth consecutive loss on Tuesday, where blame and responsibility could be shouldered by many on the team, Lambert was not one of them.

Since the start of the season there have been many discussions about the contract situation of Ehlers. His expiring deal has led to much speculation and, to date, it doesn't appear like the two sides are aggressively trying to get an extension done.

In fact, it seems far from that and the prospect of Ehlers playing elsewhere next year more likely as this season progresses. As such, it was easy to see the irony last night in Lambert being inserted into Winnipeg's top six forward group, assuming a role on the power play and soaking up 15 minutes of ice time — all in Ehlers' absence.

Now, how long the soon-to-be 21-year-old Lambert remains up with the Jets will probably depend on how long Ehlers is out, but in the business of hockey, replacing one dynamic forward with another — albeit a younger and significantly cheaper one — does appear to be what might be at play here for next season.

And what last night provided was possibly an early glimpse into what the Jets might look like in the not-too-distant future, one with Brad Lambert on the roster full-time, while at the same time a future without Nikolaj Ehlers on the roster at all.

Sportsnet.ca

<https://www.sportsnet.ca/nhl/article/jets-struggle-with-simple-mistakes-as-losing-streak-hits-four/>

Jets struggle with simple mistakes as losing streak hits four

By Jacob Stoller

WINNIPEG — Mark Scheifele's demeanour in the Winnipeg Jets locker room said it all.

From the moment the Jets star centre approached the reporters and cameras awaiting him, up until the end of his nearly three-minute-long scrum, his eyes remained glued to the floor. His dejection was palpable.

The way Winnipeg played throughout its 4-1 loss to the St. Louis Blues on Tuesday — its fourth straight defeat — made the result sting even more.

“We just didn’t play our game,” Scheifele said.

Bit by bit, the Jets have slowly veered away from the style of game that propelled them to a record-setting 15-1-0 start to the season. Prolonged stretches of offensive zone time have been few and far between, while mistakes have continued to pile up. Throughout these last four games, the Jets have averaged just 1.5 goals per game, capitalized on just one of seven power play opportunities and shot themselves in the foot with numerous defensive breakdowns.

But that game against St. Louis was the tipping point.

It all came crashing down in the second period, where the Blues outchanced the Jets 11-3 during even-strength play and scored two 4-on-4 goals late in the middle frame. The team was flat-footed on the first goal against and neither Dylan DeMelo nor Scheifele were able to nullify Jordan Kyrrou, who crept right in front of Connor Hellebuyck, even as they stood within arms reach. Less than a minute later, Neal Pionk was out of position and Dylan Holloway capitalized.

Part of it has to be attributed to fatigue. The Jets' fourth straight loss comes on the heels of a six-game road trip that was spread throughout three different time zones. But publicly, no Jets player is leaning into that narrative.

“Everybody in the league is going through it,” Haydn Fleury deadpanned when asked about fatigue by a reporter, later citing how with the 4 Nations Face-Off coming up, the condensed schedule is impacting everyone.

But the amount of lapses against St. Louis was jarring, with players struggling to execute something as simple as a tape-to-tape pass on a consistent basis.

“There's some mental things that are happening and you go 'wow, where did that come from?’” head coach Scott Arniel said. “It's happening and it's happening at the wrong time for us now.”

The Jets finished the game with just six even-strength high-danger shot attempts and over the last four games, they’ve generated just 17.05 5-on-5 scoring chances per 60 minutes — the lowest mark in the league through that span.

“The attack mindset is something that we've had for most of the year but now we're deferring,” Arniel said. “We're trying to maybe make one more play. Our D aren't getting pucks down from the top to the net front but also we (aren't creating) that second chance or getting into that battle to get that second chance.”

In other words, they’re playing “cute.”

“You're not going to just get those one-timer situations with nobody standing around you. It's going to take greasy goals, getting inside, deflections, those type of things,” Arniel said. “Right now... we haven't been able to score as of late, so it's probably going to take greasy ones. It isn't going to take highlight-reel ones.”

Especially for a team that'll be without Nikolaj Ehlers for the next few games. And when it comes to exhibiting simplicity, the loss of sturdy defencemen like Dylan Samberg doesn't help.

From the start of training camp — after an off-season where Sean Monahan, Tyler Toffoli and Brenden Dillon walked as free agents — the Jets have prided themselves on a next-man-up mentality. Now, more than ever, that'll be put to the test as they look to stop the bleeding.

“We have to look ourselves in the mirror and really dig deep because this isn't going to get any easier,” Fleury said.

OTHER TAKEAWAYS

- I'm struggling to wrap my head around Arniel healthy scratching Colin Miller. Miller has been a stabilizing force on the team's bottom pairing and while it's great to see Ville Heinola get an opportunity, not dressing Miller and putting both Heinola and Logan Stanley in the lineup is a head-scratcher. Especially with Heinola playing on his off-side. Unsurprisingly, that pairing really struggled tonight.

- All things considered, Brad Lambert looked pretty decent in his season debut. The 20-year-old, who was recalled Tuesday after Ehlers was placed on injured reserve, leveraged his speed on the forecheck and held his own in physical one-on-one battles. But alongside Gabriel Vilardi and Cole Perfetti — two players that aren't lauded for their foot-speed — Lambert wasn't in the best position to generate offence in transition. Given that Ehlers is on the shelf and the Jets have been hard-pressed for offence, it wouldn't surprise me at all to see Arniel shuffle the top six up even more, in an effort to maximize Lambert's talent. Now, that's not to say Lambert has the potential to be a saviour, but the reality is the Jets are in desperate need of a spark and the 20-year-old has the toolkit to potentially provide them that — if put in the right situation.

Winnipeg Sun

<https://winnipeg.sun.com/sports/hockey/nhl/winnipeg-jets/lackluster-jets-drop-fourth-straight-topple-from-top-spot>

Lackluster Jets drop fourth straight, topple from top spot

By Paul Friesen

The Winnipeg Jets' first three-game skid of the season quickly became a four-game slide on Tuesday night – on home ice, no less.

Two sleeps in their own beds for a change didn't take the sleep out of a team that's now lost seven of their last 10 games, the latest a lackluster 4-1 defeat at the hands of the sub-.500 St. Louis Blues.

Check that – the win dragged the Blues, somewhat rejuvenated under new coach Jim Montgomery, to 12-12-2.

The Jets? Now 18-8 and out of top spot, behind Minnesota, in the NHL's Western Conference.

“There's some mental things that are happening and you go ‘Wow, where did that come from?’” head coach Scott Arniel said, citing his team's difficult schedule of late for what he said would be the last time.

That lofty, 15-1 start seems ancient history now, a combination of road weariness, game unawareness, perhaps an injury or two and an offence gone quiet humbling hockey's surprise team of the first month and a half.

Passing too often and not getting into the dirty areas are what Arniel pointed to as his team has scored just six times in the last four games.

"Sometimes it's the opposition trying to keep you out of there," the coach said. "But sometimes it's your will to go inside there and go get those second chances. The attack mindset is something that we've had for most of the year but now we're deferring."

Centre Mark Scheifele, hampered by an undisclosed injury that kept him out of the faceoff circle for several games and forced him to start this one on the wing, scored his team's only goal with Connor Hellebuyck out of the net and some four minutes left.

But any thoughts of a miracle finish were dashed with an empty-net goal by Robert Thomas less than a minute later.

"Everyone's gunning for us," Scheifele said. "And they know they've got to play us hard. It's just a matter of getting back to looking at the blueprint that we were doing earlier, and just try to get back to that."

The Jets played a shuffled lineup, inserting 20-year-old rookie Brad Lambert onto the roster with Nik Ehlers facing at least a week on the sidelines with a foot injury.

They needed much more than youthful exuberance on this night.

Final shots were 32-21, St. Louis.

Some in the crowd of 13,100 went home happy: Winnipegger Joel Hofer got the win for the Blues, in front of what he estimated to be 15 to 20 family and friends.

St. Louis has been a punching bag for the Jets in recent years, losing the last four and Winnipeg holding a 12-1-1 mark in their last 14 meetings.

Neither team tossed many punches in the first period.

That gave way to a high-contact second, although virtually everything was landed by the visiting team in the Winnipeg zone, the Blue turning a scoreless game into their own, scoring twice and out-shooting the home side, 19-3, in the process.

"We were trying to play cute hockey," Arniel said. "We were trying to make highlight-reel plays. We weren't playing north-south and forcing them to defend like we did in the first. They spent pretty much the whole period in our end of the rink."

The goals came within 39 seconds of each other, both in the final two minutes of the period, both four-on-four, as Hellebuyck could only hold them at bay for so long.

Jordan Kyrou got credit for the first one, his rebound going off Scheifele's skate and in.

They'd barely announced that one when Dylan Holloway was left untouched to deposit his own rebound, as the Jets defence sprung leak after leak, Hellebuyck with not enough fingers to plug them all.

That second St. Louis marker brought out some boo-birds who expected more from a team finally back home after a grueling, six-game road trip.

"We started to make 50-foot passes and 100-foot passes coming through the neutral zone," Arniel said.

Kyrou all but put the Jets out of their misery in the third period, given all kinds of time to collect a loose puck, spin around in the deep slot and fire his second past Hellebuyck as five players in blue simply watched.

The Jets' stay at home will be brief: on Wednesday they leave for Buffalo and a Thursday tilt with the Sabres, followed by a Saturday afternoon game in Chicago.

After that it's four in a row at home, beginning Sunday against Columbus.

What the home team will look like by then is anybody's guess.

"We had a lot of good fortune here long before these four games," Arniel said. "It's swung the other way now. It's sticking together and making sure that we go out and do what we do best, and that's defend first and play a simple game."

Haydn Fleury put it another way.

"The first little bit of adversity we've had this year," the defenceman said. "Nobody likes to deal with it, but the only way to get through it is as a team... we have to look ourselves in the mirror and really dig deep, because this isn't going to get any easier."

<https://winnipeg.sun.com/sports/hockey/nhl/winnipeg-jets/jets-logan-stanley-a-marked-man-and-he-knows-it>

Jets' Logan Stanley a marked man, and he knows it

By Paul Friesen

Logan Stanley knows he can't take three minor penalties every game and stay in the Winnipeg Jets lineup.

But the towering defenceman does think the officials were a little hard on him in Dallas the other day.

"Three minors is unacceptable," Stanley, sitting at his locker, said on Tuesday morning. "You let your teammates down. You make them go on the kill and it obviously hurts the team. But yeah, the first one is a little soft. The second one... if he doesn't go down it's not a penalty. Third one I'll take responsibility for. I got my stick caught up in him.

"I don't agree with maybe two of them. But it is what it is."

That'll probably always be life in the NHL for someone who's 6-foot-7, 230 pounds of trouble at the best of times.

Playing on the edge is Stanley's game. It's what his coaches want.

That line, though, tends to bend a little when it comes to known heavyweights, encircling them like a snare that leads straight to the penalty box.

"There's certain guys they for sure have their eye on more than others, whether that's right or not," Stanley said. "And then being a big guy you stick out with everything. You have to find that balance. You want to take the right penalties, and not the wrong ones, if that makes sense. It is a hard line to walk."

In just his second game back from injury on Sunday, Stanley was flagged for slashing and cross-checking minors in the first period, hooking in the second.

Teammates killed them all off, but it was a long six minutes of being forced to sit down and watch them do it.

"We talk a lot about being there for the guy beside you in the room," Stanley said. "You feel a little guilty letting the team down like that. They did kill them off. That feels nice. Nice when they pick you up like that. And the PK can be a huge momentum swing for the team. We're rolling right now."

Going into Tuesday's game against St. Louis, the Jets had killed off their last seven minors and 11 of their last 12.

Stanley was to get a shot at helping against the Blues on Tuesday night, as head coach Scott Arniel keeps playing him, saying he won't get better by watching from up in the press box.

"That's a good vote of confidence," the defenceman said. "I agree with him. But you've got to play well and earn that ice time that you want to have."

Hearing his coach say he belongs on the playing roster is music to the big man's ears.

You don't learn anything from the press box, he says. You have to be in the game, in the fight.

On the other hand, there are lessons to be learned from the penalty box.

"It's getting trickier and trickier in the new NHL, too," Stanley said. "Things are getting called more.

"You don't want to make your team suffer."

<https://winnipeg.sun.com/sports/the-odd-couple-heinola-stanley-duo-among-jets-changes-for-blues-tilt>

The odd couple: Heinola-Stanley duo among Jets changes for Blues tilt

By Paul Friesen

With winger Nik Ehlers out a week to 10 days, it'll be a shuffled Winnipeg Jets lineup that returns to home ice on Tuesday night, trying to end a season-high, three-game losing streak.

The most notable change will see No. 1 centre Mark Scheifele, who's battling an undisclosed injury, move to the wing, with Vlad Namestnikov taking his spot in the middle against the St. Louis Blues.

Kyle Connor will be on the other side.

To fill the centre position on the second line, the Jets called up Brad Lambert from the Manitoba Moose.

The 20-year-old, a first-round draft pick two years ago, will play just his second career NHL game, the first coming at the end of last season.

"I'm just as excited as I was last year," Lambert said Tuesday morning. "I'm going to try to play like I do any other game. Do my thing with the puck and play responsible without it. "For sure there will be some nerves. Super pumped and excited."

Lambert has three goals, eight assists, in 16 American League games this season.

He'll have Gabe Vilardi and Cole Perfetti on his wings.

"Had a real good camp for us," Jets coach Scott Arniel said of Lambert. "One of the young guys on our organization that we have an opportunity here.. get him a chance to see what he can do. He's a skater, he's got great offensive instincts. There's stuff we'll go over about how we play without the puck, but this is the opportunity.

"We're missing a top-six player and this is a great look for Lambo to step in and show us what he has."

Arniel's other significant change comes on the blue line, where for the first time he'll pair the big and tough Logan Stanley with the slender and nifty Ville Heinola on the third unit.

Call them The Odd Couple, an idea the coach says he talked about back in the summer.

"And then after day one of training camp, I never got to see it," Arniel said, referring to injuries to both players early in training camp. "It's just something I want to get a look at."

Heinola came off his ankle injury to play two games during the Jets last road trip, then sat out the last two while Stanley got back into action.

Arniel says both need to play, so on Tuesday night the press box seats go to Dylan Coghlan, who's played just once this season, and Colin Miller, who's suited up for 24 of Winnipeg's 25 games.

"The biggest thing is don't chase the game," Arniel said of his message to Heinola and Stanley. "Don't force plays that aren't there... let the game come to you. Don't complicate the game by thinking you have to do more."

As for Scheifele, who's been hampered so much he hasn't been taking faceoffs the last several games, Arniel hopes the move to the wing helps his star centre.

"There's some things he can't do. So he's limited in some areas. I'm never going to tell a player, 'You can't play.' And these guys want to play. They may be banged up but we have a whole bunch of guys. Our list is big, as is every team's right now. Bumps and bruises. Guys want to play through them."

Winnipeg Free Press

<https://www.winnipegfreepress.com/breakingnews/2024/12/03/offence-missing-in-action>

Offence missing in action

Jets pay price for playing 'cute' as Blues score twice in 39 seconds

By: Ken Wiebe

The offensive well has gone more than a bit dry for the Winnipeg Jets.

After a 4-1 defeat to the St. Louis Blues on Tuesday at Canada Life Centre, the Jets have been held to just one goal in four of their past six outings.

On Tuesday, the Jets managed just four high-danger scoring chances at five-on-five compared to 10 generated by the Blues.

It was a season-high fourth-consecutive loss for the Jets, who slipped to 18-8 on the season and have gone 3-7 during the past 10 contests.

"I don't know if I can pinpoint it right now," said Jets alternate captain Mark Scheifele, who scored the lone goal for the home side, when asked about the recent offensive struggles. "It comes down to a little bit of execution. That's always a starting point.

"It's a matter of looking at the blueprint of what we were doing earlier."

After spending the bulk of the campaign in first place in the Central Division, the Jets find themselves looking up at the Minnesota Wild, who defeated the Vancouver Canucks 3-2 on Tuesday.

That gives the Wild a two-point lead on the Jets, while holding a game in hand.

"We made the game harder on ourselves than we needed it to be and we paid for it," said Jets defenceman Haydn Fleury. "This is kind of the first little bit of adversity that we've had this year. Nobody likes to deal with it, but the only way to get through it is as a team.

“At the end of the day, we’ve got to look at ourselves in the mirror and just really dig deep because this isn’t going to get any easier.”

The Jets open a two-game road trip on Thursday against the Buffalo Sabres.

“We know the right way to play, and we just got away from it,” said Jets head coach Scott Arniel. “We’ve just got to simplify how we play. Obviously, we had a lot of good fortune here long before these four games. Now it’s swung the other way. As a group, it’s sticking together and going out as a group and doing what we do best, which is defend first.”

Let’s take a closer at what happened:

THE SLEEPY SECOND – Things were relatively even after one period of play, with the Jets holding an 8-6 edge in shots on goal, but things took a sharp turn in the middle frame as the Blues took control by scoring twice at four-on-four in a span of 39 seconds.

Oddly enough, the Jets had a chance to open the scoring on a power play late in the second, but Gabe Vilardi was given a minor for interfering with Blues centre Radek Faksa after a faceoff in the offensive zone.

The Jets are normally a dangerous team with the additional space available at four-on-four, but rather than get on the board first, they gave up an odd-man rush that ended with Jordan Kyrrou scoring after his initial shot was stopped before going in off the skate of Scheifele.

On the ensuing shift, Dylan Holloway buried his own rebound and the Jets were quickly staring at a two-goal deficit.

“The second period we got cute. Missed assignments on the four-on-four twice,” said Arniel. “But in the second period we were trying to play cute hockey. We were trying to make highlight reel plays. Just play north-south. Force them to defend like we did in the first. Obviously, they scored those two goals but they spent pretty much the whole period in our end.”

The Blues finished the second outshooting the Jets 19-3 and nearly made it 3-0 in the waning moments, as Phillip Broberg had a shot graze off the crossbar.

THE SAVE – The score could have been more lopsided in the second had it not been for a goal-saving play by Fleury.

Kyrrou took a shot from the middle of the faceoff circle on the left-wing side of the ice and the puck squeezed behind Connor Hellebuyck and was about to cross the goal line before Fleury swept the puck away.

Hellebuyck then made a sensational paddle save on the second-chance opportunity.

“I was in the wrong spot, so I needed to pull that one out,” said Fleury. “I needed to bail my goalie out there because he bailed me out by getting a piece of that (Kyrrou shot). Not good enough by me.”

THIRD PAIRING TEST DRIVE – For the third time in as many games, the Jets rolled out a different third pairing.

Logan Stanley has been the constant on the pairing, but he was skating alongside Ville Heinola after having Colin Miller and Dylan Coghlan as a partner during the previous two outings.

For Heinola, it was his third game of the NHL season as he continues to work his way back from an ankle issue.

Stanley had 17 minutes of ice time after being whistled for three minors in Sunday's loss to the Dallas Stars.

It will be interesting to monitor what the Jets do on defence during the coming weeks, since Miller is off to a steady start to the campaign and Coghlan showed well in his Jets' debut.

STEADY SHOWING FOR HOFER – Winnipegger Joel Hofer made his third career start against his hometown team on Tuesday, giving Jordan Binnington a night off.

Hofer wasn't overworked by any stretch of the imagination, but he made a highlight-reel save with his left pad after a Kyle Connor one-timer during the first period and then closed the five-hole on a shorthanded breakaway for Jets captain Adam Lowry during the third period.

"What I love about (Hofer) is his mentality," said Blues head coach Jim Montgomery. "He wants the net and he works hard -arduously, every day to get prepared for his next start."

AFTERBURNER

The key play: Kyrrou scored the first of two goals on a four-on-four late in the second period and the Blues never looked back.

The three stars:

Blues F Jordan Kyrrou, two goals, seven shots on goal, nine shot-attempts.

Blues F Dylan Holloway, one goal, one assist, four shots on goal.

Blues G Joel Hofer, 22 saves, fourth win of season.

EXTRA, EXTRA – Hellebuyck made his 20th start of the season and finished with 28 saves.

By going zero-for-two on the power play, the man-advantage has now gone two-for-16 during the past six games. After spending a good chunk of the season with the top-ranked power play, the Jets have been passed by the New Jersey Devils in that department.

Jets forward prospect Brad Lambert made his season debut on Tuesday and skated in his second NHL game. Lambert was used at centre and saw time on the Jets' second power play unit on the half wall. He finished with 19 shifts for 15:07 of ice time and had one shot-attempt.

<https://www.winnipegfreepress.com/breakingnews/2024/12/03/lambert-gets-the-call-with-ehlers-on-injured-reserve>

Lambert gets the call with Ehlers on injured reserve

By: Ken Wiebe

Nikolaj Ehlers has moved past the day-to-day stage, but by all accounts, the Winnipeg Jets high-scoring winger isn't going to be out long term.

The Danish forward suffered a lower-body injury in the second period of Friday's game with the Vegas Golden Knights after a collision with Pavel Dorofeyev where he appeared to injure his left leg.

Ehlers was placed on injured reserve Tuesday morning, retroactive to Nov. 29, though he's likely to be out until at least the Jets return from the upcoming two-game road swing with games against the Buffalo Sabres and Chicago Blackhawks — though the timeline is fluid.

"A little bit worse than at first (suspected), but we'll just see," Jets head coach Scott Arniel said before his team took on the St. Louis Blues. "He'll probably be out a week to 10 days. But hopefully less than that. We'll just kind of monitor him every day."

Ehlers, who is a pending unrestricted free agent on July 1, is off to one of the strongest starts of his career and went into Tuesday's action with nine goals and 25 points in 24 games, which leaves him third in team scoring.

He's provided a boost to the Jets' top power-play unit, chipping in three goals and eight points with a man-advantage that has been the best in the NHL until recently, when it slipped to second behind the New Jersey Devils.

The loss of Ehlers opened the door for the Jets to recall forward Brad Lambert from the Manitoba Moose of the American Hockey League and he jumped into the lineup immediately, starting the game on a line with Gabe Vilardi and Cole Perfetti.

"Obviously it's nice to have one game under your belt," said Lambert, who had an assist and two shots on goal in his NHL debut in just under 14 minutes of ice time last April against the Vancouver Canucks. "When I got the call, I was just excited as I was coming into my first game last year. Super pumped and excited."

Lambert had a steady training camp, but didn't do enough to steal a job on the NHL roster, but he went down to the minors and got off to a steady start — recording three goals and 11 points in 16 games with the Moose.

"Just learning every day, getting better every day," said Lambert, who turns 21 on Dec. 19. "I think just being around the guys has helped a lot, just seeing how they do things. You can take a lot from that. Just maturing and developing every day. Trying to get better on and off the ice."

No matter how long Ehlers is sidelined, this is a massive opportunity for Lambert to take the next step in his development.

"Really skilled guy," said Vilardi, noting he skated with Lambert during his NHL debut in Game 82 last season against the Vancouver Canucks. "Really fast. He thinks the game at an elite level, and hopefully we can get some chemistry going."

Lambert was brought into the lineup at his natural position of centre, a spot he should be able to best utilize his speed and explosiveness.

"It's awesome, that's where I've been playing all year. So that's where I'm comfortable," said Lambert, who was chosen 30th overall by the Jets in the 2022 NHL Draft. "Obviously this team

has been great on the defensive side. Make sure I'm responsible back in my own end, and just with the puck try to play my game, chip in and try to create."

The Moose are off to a 6-11 start this season, though Lambert continues to make strides in his overall game.

"We're still trying to find that consistency. It's been kind of an up and down start. I've had some good games, some not so good games," said Lambert. "I feel strong, I feel fast, I'm feeling good in the corners. The puck battles, obviously second year pro here in North America, so a little more comfortable."

Arniel was expecting Lambert to feel some nerves in his second NHL game, though he's noticed ample growth in the Finnish forward's game since his first training camp in the fall of 2022.

"Get him in and get him a chance to see what he can do," said Arniel. "It's (about) him coming up and doing what he needs to do best. He's a skater, he's got great offensive instincts. There's stuff we'll go over about how we play without the puck, but this is the opportunity.

"He got a sniff last year at the end of the year. This is an opportunity for him again to go out and show the organization, his teammates, that he can help us."

Speaking of injuries, Arniel doesn't have an update on the timeline for defenceman Dylan Samberg, who missed his fourth consecutive game on Tuesday with a broken foot.

"The swelling's gone down quite a bit. But he has a broken bone. No idea (on the timeline), that just has to heal," said Arniel. "Usually on a broken bone you'll get to four weeks and then we'll kind of take it from there."