

**Winnipegjets.com**

<https://www.nhl.com/jets/news/three-things-jets-first-team-to-20-wins>

***Three things - Jets first team to 20 wins  
Jets sweep two-game road trip with 4-2 win in Chicago***

By Jamie Thomas

The Winnipeg Jets became the first team this season to reach the 20-win mark beating the Chicago Blackhawks 4-2 at the United Center. Gabe Vilardi, Nino Niederreiter, Mark Scheifele and Mason Appleton scored for Winnipeg, Appleton (1G, 1A) and Kyle Connor (2A) recorded multi-point games. Josh Morrissey also played in his 610th game surpassing Dustin Byfuglien (609 GP) for the second-most by a defenceman in Jets/Thrashers history, Toby Enstrom leads the way with 719. Connor Hellebuyck made 12 saves for his league leading 17th win of the season. Winnipeg will host Columbus Sunday for the third game in four days.

***1. VILARDI TIP DRILL***

After holding the Blackhawks without a shot for almost half the first period, the Jets gave up a power play goal at 0:00. Alex Vlasic one-timed a Teuvo Terravainen shot past a screened Connor Hellebuyck, Tyler Bertuzzi providing the screen for a 1-0 Chicago lead.

But for the second straight contest, the Jets tied the game courtesy of Gabe Vilardi. The Jets forward is now up to 11 goals after redirecting Logan Stanley's shot past Arvid Soderblom, who had replaced starting netminder Petr Mrazek earlier.

Chicago would restore their one goal lead with 13 seconds left in the first, Alec Martinez had all kinds of time to rip a quick shot past Hellebuyck for his first goal in 51 games and that would mark his first goal as a Blackhawk.

***2. PATIENCE PAYS OFF***

The Jets would smother the Blackhawks in the second period only giving up three shots and having numerous scoring opportunities as Winnipeg didn't surrender one high danger scoring chance while generating three of their own. Brad Lambert came within inches of scoring his first NHL goal just over five minutes into the period, Vladislav Namestnikov spotted the rookie centre and Lambert had a wide open net but fired his shot wide right. Winnipeg continued to put the pressure on and it was the third line that evened the score at two. At 13:10, Mason Appleton hit Nino Niederreiter coming towards the front of the net and Niederreiter backhanded in his 10th of the season. The Swiss forward is the fourth Jet to hit double digits in goals this season, the only team with more are the Lightning (5).

"I had a couple close looks especially early on. I wish I could have put that one in already," said Niederreiter.

"But I knew just got to stay with it, and it's going to come and go to the dirty areas, I guess. Very fortunate I was able to finish that."

### 3. SCHEIFELE WINS DRAW, SCORES WINNER

A lot of attention was being paid to Mark Scheifele and the fact that he was not taking face-offs. The Jets centreman started taking draws consistently in the third period on Tuesday night against St. Louis. On Thursday in Buffalo, Scheifele won 56% of the 25 face-offs he took. In the third period, Scheifele won a face-off in the offensive zone and went to the front of the net and was in the right place to pounce on a Kyle Connor shot and slide home his 14th of the season to make it 3-2. Mason Appleton would score an empty net goal at 18:19 to close out the scoring.

"KC was just trying to get it to the net," said Scheifele.

"Just happy to be in the right place at the right time."

### **NHL.com**

<https://www.nhl.com/news/winnipeg-jets-chicago-blackhawks-game-recap-december-7>

### ***Jets spoil Sorensen's 1st game as Blackhawks coach Scheifele breaks tie in 3rd, Winnipeg 1st to 20 wins; Chicago loses 5th straight***

By Bruce Miles

CHICAGO -- Mark Scheifele scored the tiebreaking goal at 10:18 of the third period, and the Winnipeg Jets spoiled Anders Sorensen's NHL coaching debut with a 4-2 victory against the Chicago Blackhawks at United Center on Saturday.

The game was the first for Sorensen as interim coach after he replaced Luke Richardson on Thursday.

"I think the energy was good," Sorensen said. "There were some nerves but good, nervous energy. I think the guys did a great job of just bringing me in, and the staff was great. So it wasn't too bad. It was exciting at the same time but not the result we wanted, right? So that's the biggest thing."

Alex Vlasic and Alec Martinez scored for the Blackhawks (8-17-2), who have lost five straight. Petr Mrazek made four saves before leaving the game with a lower-body injury at 10:46 of the first period. Mrazek fell awkwardly while making a save. Arvid Soderblom replaced him and made 21 saves on 24 shots.

"He'll be out for a little bit, lower body there," Sorensen said. "Yeah, obviously not the optimal way to start the game. I thought 'Sody' came in and played well but Petr's been such a big part of what's going on here. Hopefully it's not too long."

Mason Appleton had a goal and an assist, and Kyle Connor had two assists for the Jets (20-8-0), who became the first team this season to 20 wins. Connor Hellebuyck made 12 saves.

"I thought we came out well," Scheifele said. "We got behind their 'D,' we got it deep, we made them play defense. Second period we kind of got away from it a little bit, especially our line. And then the third period, just played well and that was about it."

Vlasic scored a power-play goal at 9:01 of the first period to put the Blackhawks ahead 1-0. He took a drop pass from Teuvo Teravainen and scored on a slap shot from the high slot with Ryan Donato and Tyler Bertuzzi providing screens in front of the net.

Gabriel Vilardi tied it 1-1 at 13:31, when he tipped in Logan Stanley's shot from the left point.

Martinez's first goal of the season gave Chicago a 2-1 lead at 19:47. Ilya Mikheyev passed from the right point across to Martinez, who skated into the left face-off circle and put a wrist shot over Hellebuyck's left shoulder.

Nino Niederreiter tied the game 2-2 at 13:10 of the second period. He skated along the goal line on the left side and lifted a backhand over Soderblom's right shoulder.

"Yeah, definitely it was huge, obviously," Niederreiter said of his goal. "I mean, we had a couple of looks, especially early on, which I obviously wish I could have put that one in already. But I knew I've just got to stay with it, and it's going to come and go to the dirty areas, I guess. Very fortunate I was able to finish that."

Scheifele scored on a rebound of Connor's shot to put the Jets ahead 3-2 in the third, and Appleton scored an empty-net goal at 18:19 for the 4-2 final.

Winnipeg coach Scott Arniel said his team was aware that Chicago could have benefited from the coaching change.

"It always happens when there's a change," he said. "The players are looking for maybe a second opportunity or more ice, different roles. There's also the guilt that they're a part of it, especially a good coach like Luke getting let go."

"But honestly, we didn't look there. We just had to focus on our game, and we're not worried too much about what's happening across the hall. We have to make sure we play Jet hockey, and I thought we did a good job with that tonight."

Chicago, which has been outscored 21-10 during its losing streak, begins a three-game road trip at the New York Rangers on Monday.

"We obviously understand the urgency," Blackhawks captain Nick Foligno said. "Maybe it's good that we get on the road and get to know Anders a little bit better by being around him and being around each other. Yeah, we're going to have to keep working at this. It's not just going to turn around in one day. Obviously we'd like it to. It would have been nice to get him that first win. But we're going to find a way to get it in New York."

*NOTES:* Sorensen became the first Sweden-born coach in NHL history. ... The 14 shots on goal were the fewest of the season for the Blackhawks. ... Martinez left the game at 1:15 of the third

period after a shot by Adam Lowry deflected off his stick and hit him on the right side of the face. Sorensen said he was being evaluated and "might miss some time." ... Josh Morrissey played his 610th game with the Jets/Atlanta Thrashers, passing Dustin Byfuglien for sole possession of second place among defensemen in franchise history. Toby Enstrom is first with 719.

### **Winnipeg Free Press**

<https://www.winnipegfreepress.com/breakingnews/2024/12/07/scheifeles-comes-up-clutch-for-jets>

#### ***Scheifele comes up clutch for Jets Star centre scores game-winner to beat hometown Hawks***

By: Ken Wiebe

CHICAGO — Mark Scheifele wasn't going to pretend that he wasn't disappointed that his country didn't come calling earlier this week.

But the Winnipeg Jets centre put on a brave face and said all the right things.

His actions on the ice have reinforced that Scheifele fully recognizes what is necessary for him to remain on Team Canada's radar, either as an injury replacement in February or to leave an early impression for the 2026 Olympic team.

The latest contribution was delivering the game-winning goal on Saturday afternoon as the Jets defeated the Chicago Blackhawks 4-2 at United Center.

"Obviously it's tough, but my main focus is with the Winnipeg Jets. I just want to play my best," said Scheifele, who has 14 goals and 30 points in 28 games.

"It's disappointing. But being in Canada, there's a lot of fantastic players to pick from. Obviously you want to be picked, but that's just the way she goes. There's a reason for everything. Really, really happy for Josh (Morrissey). He deserved it."

Since the rest of the roster for the 4 Nations Face-Off was unveiled publicly, Scheifele has contributed a goal and two assists as the Jets posted consecutive victories on the heels of four straight losses.

Earlier this week, Jets head coach Scott Arniel spoke about the importance of getting back to having an attack mentality and getting to the net and the Scheifele goal at 10:18 of the third period was a prime example of that.

Scheifele won an offensive zone draw, Kyle Connor got the puck to the net from a sharp angle, Gabe Vilardi drove to the net, creating some additional chaos as Scheifele got to the front and banged home the rebound.

“K.C. fires one from the bad angle. Now it becomes a scramble,” said Arniel. “Nobody knows where the puck is and Scheif did a good job of getting there. (In) games like this, when they’re tight. You need your top people to score goals.”

The Jets flew home on Saturday night and will open a four-game homestand Sunday at 5 p.m. against Sean Monahan and the Columbus Blue Jackets.

*CLAMPING DOWN:* The Jets gave up a power-play marker to Alex Vlasic after Tyler Bertuzzi provided a good screen inside the blue paint but didn’t make contact with goalie Connor Hellebuyck. Winnipeg then had a lapse with 13 seconds in the first period when they didn’t pick up Blackhawks defenceman Alec Martinez off the rush to fall behind 2-1.

But during the final two periods, the Jets stuck to their structure and gave up a total of six shots on goal (three in the second and three in the third) and limited the number of high-danger chances to one in what was a sound defensive effort.

“That’s the first time in a while where I feel like we outworked the other team,” said Jets winger Nino Niederreiter. “We were, for the most part, very smart with the puck. We didn’t give them any room on the inside. I think that’s something which helped us a lot.

“(In) the other games, we tried to do it the other way, and the other way didn’t work for us. We’ve got to stay with it. We’ve just got to believe and trust in our system. If we do what we’re supposed to do, usually good things happen.”

*DOUBLE DIGITS:* Niederreiter evened the score at 2-2 at 13:10 of the second period after an excellent shift for the Adam Lowry line.

Appleton had the puck down low and found Niederreiter at the side of the net before Niederreiter buried his backhand for the lone goal of the middle frame.

For Niederreiter, it was his 10th goal of the season in just his 27th game.

The eight-time 20-goal scorer is well on his way to reaching the mark again.

“Obviously, it’s great to contribute and get some goals, but in the end, nothing is more fun than winning hockey games,” said Niederreiter.

The Lowry line got an insurance marker from Appleton on an afternoon they also held Blackhawks phenom Connor Bedard off the scoresheet at even strength.

“They could have had five (goals),” said Arniel, when asked about the Lowry line. “They were really good. They’re heavy. They’re hard to play against when they do that and they get that cycle game going. There were a number of plays where I thought they had some really good looks because first and foremost, they got the puck in and they went to work.”

The Swiss forward became the fourth member of the Jets to hit double digits this season, joining Connor (14), Scheifele (14) and Gabe Vilardi, who scored his 11th of the campaign in the first period on another excellent tip after a point shot by Logan Stanley.

It was the second time in as many games Vilardi has shown off his hand-eye coordination.

“He’s really special around that net. He’s probably one of the best I’ve ever seen,” said Scheifele. “He gets a touch on everything and has a knack around that net to put it in the right spots. He’s a special player down there.”

*THE WHIFF:* Jets rookie forward Brad Lambert had a couple of glorious opportunities to find the back of the net for his first NHL goal in this one.

Lambert’s first chance came in the first period when a rebound kicked out to him at the side of the net, but the puck was rolling, so he wasn’t able to get much on his shot.

The even better chance came in the second period when Vladislav Namestnikov made a slick feed to Lambert in the slot.

But once again, the puck rolled a bit and Lambert appeared to rush his shot ever so slightly and the puck sailed wide, causing the Finnish centre to look to the sky in disbelief.

“He missed a gigantic one. He’ll be having nightmares about that one, that wide open net,” said Arniel. “It’s hard for young players. It wasn’t like he got to start the season with us from Game 1 and gradually grow. He’s kind of grown while the water’s running fast. And he’s been doing a pretty good job of that.”

If Lambert, who had 12:06 of ice time, keeps playing with pace and getting to the right spots on the ice, it won’t likely be long before he finds that memorable marker.

“He looked like he was more comfortable. That’s the biggest thing. It takes time,” said Scheifele. “It’s a different speed than the AHL, timing and stuff like that. I thought he played fantastic. I thought he was in the right spot, he used his speed, he did the right things. That was a good showing by him. The more experience he gets, the better he’s going to get.”

*THE KEY PLAY:* Scheifele buries a rebound at 10:18 of the third period to put the Jets ahead for good.

*THE THREE STARS:* 1. Mason Appleton, Jets, scored one goal, added one assist, three shots on goal; 2. Mark Scheifele, Jets, scored the game-winning goal, had three shots on goal, six shot attempts; 3. Kyle Connor, Jets, two assists and two shots on goal.

*EXTRA, EXTRA:* Hellebuyck finished with 12 saves in what was the 22nd start of the season for the reigning Vezina Trophy winner. Hellebuyck will get a well-deserved rest on Sunday as Eric Comrie makes his seventh start of the season against the Blue Jackets...

The Blackhawks had to call Arvid Soderblom out of the bullpen at 10:46 of the first period when Petr Mrazek suffered a lower-body injury during a scramble around the crease...

The healthy scratches for the Jets included forward David Gustafsson and defencemen Colin Miller and Dylan Coghlan. Miller has been a healthy scratch in four of the past five games, but it's not because the coaching staff has lost confidence in him.

Miller needs to stay patient as the Jets try and find out what they have in Ville Heinola and Logan Stanley, who had an assist on Vilardi's goal but was unable to clear Bertuzzi out of the front before the power-play goal by Alex Vlasic.

### **Associated Press**

<https://winnipeg.sun.com/sports/hockey/nhl/winnipeg-jets/scheifele-scores-as-the-jets-beat-blackhawks-4-2>

### ***Scheifele scores as the Jets beat Blackhawks 4-2***

By Associated Press

CHICAGO — Mark Scheifele snapped a third-period tie and Kyle Connor had two assists, helping the Winnipeg Jets beat Chicago 4-2 on Saturday in the first game for interim Blackhawks coach Anders Sorensen.

Mason Appleton had a goal and an assist as the Jets picked up their second straight win after a four-game losing streak. Nino Niederreiter and Gabriel Vilardi also scored, and Connor Hellebuyck made 12 saves.

Sorensen was promoted from the team's top minor league affiliate when Luke Richardson was fired on Thursday.

Alex Vlasic scored for the second straight game for Chicago, which has dropped five in a row. Alec Martinez added his first goal of the season.

The Blackhawks had a 2-1 lead before Niederreiter converted a backhander 13:10 into the second, beating Arvid Soderblom. It was Niederreiter's 10th of the season.

Soderblom entered 11 minutes into the game when Petr Mrazek appeared to aggravate a right groin pull.

Appleton had an empty-net goal with 1:41 to play.

### **TAKEAWAYS**

Jets: Winnipeg outplayed Chicago in the final 30 minutes, not only in shots but in puck possession.

Blackhawks: Chicago played with more pace but it still struggled to get the puck to the net. They had only 14 shots on goal.

#### *KEY MOMENT*

Scheifele beat Jason Dickinson on the face-off that led to Winnipeg's go-ahead goal. He slid the puck to Connor, then raced to the net for the rebound at 10:18.

#### *KEY STAT*

Blackhawks coaches, interim or full-time, are 6-7-1 in their first game behind the bench since the beginning of the 1995-96 season. Richardson lost his debut at the beginning of the 2022-23 season.

#### *UP NEXT*

The Jets begin a four-game home stand against Columbus on Sunday. The Blackhawks are in New York on Monday night to play the Rangers.

#### **Sportsnet.ca**

<https://www.sportsnet.ca/nhl/article/which-player-creates-the-most-dangerous-shots-from-each-canadian-team/>

#### ***Which player creates the most dangerous shots from each Canadian team?***

By Justin Bourne

Nathan MacKinnon's career shooting percentage is 10.5, and he's used that in concert with volume shooting to put up goal totals of 39, 41, 42, and 51. His shooting percentage trails just behind a guy like Jack Eichel, and both of those players trail repeat-40-goal-scorer William Nylander by a good amount, who scores on 12.6 per cent of his shots.

And all three of them are behind the guy who's set to become the greatest goal scorer in NHL history, Alex Ovechkin, who boasts a career shooting percentage of 13.

None of them, however, score as frequently on their shots as Zach Hyman, whose career shooting percentage is 13.5.

So, is Hyman a "better shooter" than Ovechkin?

Um, no. Absolutely, definitively, not even a debate here. No, he is not.

But Hyman has a higher "projected goal rate," because he's a player whose shot total probably doesn't do justice to how good he is at creating dangerous shot attempts. We know Hyman scores just about all his goals from about two feet in front of the net, often in the crease, and he's smart enough to get to places where Connor McDavid can lure in the defence and hit him for backdoor tap-ins.



On average, then, the types of shots Hyman attempts are more likely to go in. He primarily waits for shots from great spots, which is neither criticism nor praise. He just creates the type of shots that have a greater likelihood of going in, whether they actually do or not. This is to say, Hyman's shot attempts have a higher "projected goal rate."

AWS has used NHL EDGE technology (NHL Puck and Player Tracking) to dial in this concept of projected goal rate (PGR), which I've written about before in detail here. In that piece, you'll see some of the factors they consider when calculating a shot's PGR. Was it some floater from distance, or was it a backdoor one-timer? Was the goalie forced to move before the shot, did it come off a pass that crossed the centre of the ice, or was it redirected farther from the net?

You can check out that article for more details on what goes into PGR, but for our purposes today, I thought we'd look at which player on each Canadian NHL team has the highest PGR on average. They may not have the most goals or shots, but they're doing something right with the type of looks they're creating.

On average, 5.12 per cent of shot attempts go in (not shots on goal, but all shot attempts). Below features the PGR of each player featured, with some quick examples.

Let's start out west and move east.

#### *Winnipeg Jets*

##### *Mark Scheifele – 13.91% average PGR*

A lot of high PGR guys are like Hyman -- they bang in rebounds in the paint, or tip pucks on top of the goalie. That ain't Scheifele, though. This guy belongs to the collection of elite back-side shooters who get their shots off the pass, with the goalie moving and their angle off. Maybe you'd get more total shots jamming yourself into traffic, but everybody can use an outside gunner who finishes off passes when the goalie isn't set. Scheifele is elite at getting into these spots, as you can see here. He's a top-end finisher, too.