

## **Winnipeg Free Press**

<https://www.winnipegfreepress.com/breakingnews/2025/01/17/miller-ready-for-action-after-recovering-from-fractured-larynx>

### ***Miller ready for action after recovering from fractured larynx***

By: Ken Wiebe

Colin Miller wasn't sure what all the fuss was about.

While the Winnipeg Jets defenceman is fully aware it's not every day a fractured larynx ends up on an injury report, he made it clear this wasn't nearly as ominous as it sounds.

"It honestly wasn't really that hard of a shot. It just caught me in a bad spot off my stick," Miller said Friday after seven skaters and Eric Comrie took part in an optional skate. "It was a little scary for a sec there, and then, (it) came back. So, all good now."

Miller was mostly nonchalant as he spoke to a group of reporters for the first time since taking a shot that rode up his own stick into the neck area in a game against the Detroit Red Wings on Jan. 4.

In real time, things looked serious, especially given the way Miller made his way to the Jets' bench and then went down on one knee while walking down the tunnel to the dressing room.

After the initial shock, things calmed down rather quickly, at least relatively speaking.

"My wind was taken away for a little bit there," said Miller, who has two goals and eight points in 34 games this season. "But 10 minutes after, it was pretty status quo. Unfortunate that there was a little break in there (the larynx).

"I don't know, stuff is going to happen in this game. And sometimes there are little things that you're not so used to. So, like I said, it was a little scary there.

Miller sounded like someone who may have been lobbying to step back onto the ice that night before he was ultimately ruled out.

"It was the right move by our staff," said Miller. "Those things you've just got to kind of slow down for a sec and realize that we're just trying to play it safe and smart."

As the Jets get set to close out an eight-game homestand against the Calgary Flames on Saturday, it's still unknown whether Miller or Haydn Fleury (lower body) will be ready to return to the lineup.

Jets assistant coach Marty Johnston said both players continue to progress, but it was apparent any decision won't be made until at least Saturday morning.

Johnston admitted that in real time, the nature of Miller's injury was cause for concern and provided flashbacks to a moment he recalled as a teenager.

"Yeah, it was a scary moment. We weren't really sure what happened," said Johnston. "And I remember years and years ago, there was Trent McCleary. I remember when he went down and you sort of, you hope that it's nothing like that, but there certainly was some worry on the bench and the players were very concerned, but we're happy to see that he's recovered well."

McCleary was a forward with the Montreal Canadiens when he was hit in the throat by a slapshot in a game against the Philadelphia Flyers in January of 2000 and required an emergency tracheotomy to survive.

Ultimately, it ended McCleary's career.

Fortunately, the injury to Miller wasn't nearly as severe.

Much like he was when speaking to reporters on Friday, Miller had a similar demeanour on the night of the injury after returning from his quick trip to the hospital for an X-ray.

"He was even in good spirits that night, trying to somewhat calm the rest of the guys down but you have to be careful with those types of injuries," said Johnston.

Miller was on the exercise bike the day after suffering the injury and didn't need much time before he was back on the ice, so he's managed to keep his conditioning up while taking some extra precautions. Now he's been cleared for contact and is eager to get back into the lineup for a Jets team that has gone 4-1-2 on this season-long homestand.

"We'll kind of see as we go. Obviously we've been rolling along pretty good, here. We have eight, nine strong defencemen back there that can all play. So help out whenever I can whenever I get that opportunity again," said Miller. "It's a privilege to play this game, a privilege to play in the NHL. We're professional athletes and there's going to be injuries. It's something you sign up for.

"I just have a little bit more padding up there, just protect it as much as you can. But I mean it's kind of those one in a thousand things that happens, right. Hopefully it's one of those weird ones where it hits you where it shouldn't ever really happen again."

Jets forwards Vladislav Namestnikov and Mason Appleton (both out with lower-body injuries) skated on Friday, but aren't expected to be ready to suit up in game action before the upcoming two-game road trip.

After Connor Hellebuyck started the past three games, don't be surprised if Eric Comrie gets the call in goal on Saturday against the Flames, who are coming off a 4-1 loss to the St. Louis Blues but are right in the thick of the race for the second wild-card spot in the Western Conference.

## **Winnipeg Sun**

<https://winnipeg.sun.com/sports/hockey/nhl/winnipeg-jets/one-in-a-thousand-jets-miller-recounts-scary-throat-injury>

### ***'One in a thousand': Jets' Miller recounts scary throat injury***

By Paul Friesen

It wasn't the same as taking a shot off the foot or hurting a shoulder along the boards.

When Winnipeg Jets defenceman Colin Miller took a puck to his throat in a game against Detroit two weeks ago, he knew this wasn't a run-of-the-mill hockey injury.

Immediately helped off the ice, he went down on a knee in the tunnel behind the Jets bench.

On Friday he left the ice and walked that same tunnel before meeting with the media for the first time since fracturing his larynx on Jan. 4.

"Sometimes there are little things that you're not so used to," Miller said. "It was a little scary there. But it was really all good 15 minutes after. My breath was taken away for a little bit. But it came back pretty quick."

Miller wasn't so quick to come back.

Tests showed a fracture in the cartilage, sidelining him for the last five games.

"I was fortunate that I was able to get right back into skating and all that stuff," he said. "Had to be a little bit careful with the contact. But was able to stay conditioned... so that's great."

The 32-year-old from Sault Ste. Marie, Ont., a potential lineup addition when the Jets host Calgary on Saturday, seemed pretty casual about the whole thing.

When it happened, his teammates and coaches were anything but.

Some immediately thought of Trent McCleary, who was with Montreal when, 25 years ago this month, he took a shot to his throat, crushing his larynx and threatening his life. He needed an emergency tracheotomy just to breathe.

"Yeah, it was a scary moment," assistant coach Marty Johnston said. "We weren't sure really what happened. And I remember years and years ago, there was Trent McCleary. I remember when he went down and you hope it's nothing like that. But there certainly was some worry on the bench. The players were very concerned.

"I was a teenager at the time, but it was quite a scary moment for any hockey player."

The major difference between the two incidents: McCleary took a direct slap shot to his throat, while in Miller's case a wrist shot deflected off his stick and up.

"It honestly wasn't really that hard of a shot," Miller said. "It just caught me in a bad spot off my stick."

Johnston says Miller was actually trying to calm some of his teammates down that night, which tells us all we need to know about his personality.

It seems Miller never comes to work carrying a sack of negativity on his back, a quality that might occasionally be as valuable as the ability to make a breakout pass.

"Very lighthearted," is how Johnston described him. "You always hear him in the morning, and you need players like that in your room. Everyone sees the product on the ice, but there's some intangibles that he's bringing to our group. And he's been on numerous teams, so he really helps us in terms of coming to the rink with a smile, appreciating the game, appreciating his health.

"And he does that on a daily basis."

He's hoping to be able to start making those breakout passes again soon, too.

"We'll see. I'm not sure what's happening (Saturday)," Miller said. "Obviously we've been rolling along pretty good, here. We have eight, nine strong defencemen back there that can all play. So help out whenever I can whenever I get that opportunity again."

When he does play game No. 35 of the season, he'll wear a little extra protection up there, at least for a while.

But worry about it?

Probably not.

"One in a thousand," Miller called it. "Hopefully it's one of those weird ones... where it shouldn't ever really happen again, right?"

### *No panic*

In this third season as a Jets assistant coach, Johnston says the way the team handles tight games, being tied or even trailing by a goal, has changed.

He used Thursday's 2-1 win over Seattle as an example.

"There was a sense of calm on the bench," Johnston said. "There wasn't any panic... there wasn't a sense of frustration. That's something that, over time, we've done a much better job at in my time here, sticking with the plan and believing in each other. It's not so much the coaches saying things on the bench, it's the players saying, 'Stick with it, keep going, keep sticking to the details.'

“It took us 59 minutes and 30 seconds to get the lead, but we did a great job of sticking with it.”

Johnston spent five seasons as a Manitoba Moose assistant before getting the promotion to the Jets.

He filled media duties for head coach Scott Arniel on Friday, as Arniel didn't attend the optional practice.

## **Sportsnet.ca**

<https://www.sportsnet.ca/nhl/article/wildest-nhl-stats-from-the-first-half-of-the-2024-25-season/>

### ***Wildest NHL stats from the first half of the 2024-25 season***

By Sonny Sachdeva

Three months in, we're starting to get a feel for how the 2024-25 campaign might just shake out in the end.

We've seen hot starts come back to earth, seen slow starters regain their footing. And here, as we move into the second half of the season, we're getting a true look — the expected contenders mired in the basement might not be turning it around after all; the high-flying surprises might just be the real deal. And halfway into this thing, there have been a fair few notable moments.

Just past the midway point of 2024-25, here's a closer look at a few of the most interesting stats we've seen through the first half of the NHL season.

#### ***Hellebuyck's historic shutout run***

Fresh off a Vezina-winning campaign, Connor Hellebuyck has somehow managed to reach an even higher level. The 31-year-old is flat out playing the best hockey of his career, throwing his name not only back into the Vezina chatter, but into the Hart Trophy conversation, too. With half the season still to play, Hellebuyck's sterling year has him sitting at six shutouts already. As has been discussed plenty, those six shutouts sit level with the number of regular-season games he's lost. But perhaps more interestingly, that total's also level with the most shutouts Hellebuyck's ever managed in a season (achieved twice, in 2017-18 and 2019-20 — both campaigns earning him Vezina nominations), and level with the most shutouts anyone in the league amassed last season (achieved by Sergei Bobrovsky, Tristan Jarry, Connor Ingram, and Charlie Lindgren).

The next shutout Hellebuyck puts up will mark a career high — playing the best hockey of that career right now, the wait likely won't be long. The real question might be just how high he can push that total by the year's end. The highest anyone in the league's managed in the past decade are the 10 shutouts Marc-Andre Fleury posted in 2014-15.

In the modern NHL, post-lockout, the record is 12, collected by Martin Brodeur in 2006-07, the most anyone's put up since the '60s. How close does the Jets' talisman get?