

## **Winnipegjets.com**

<https://www.nhl.com/jets/news/three-things-jets-can-t-solve-wolf>

### ***Three things - Jets can't solve Wolf Dustin Wolf makes 38 saves as Flames beat Jets 3-1***

WINNIPEG – The Winnipeg Jets closed out their season-high eight game homestand with a 3-1 loss to the Calgary Flames. Adam Lowry scored the only goal for the Jets who went 4-2-2 on the homestand, Eric Comrie made 19 saves and took the loss. The Jets will head out on the road for a two-game road trip starting in Salt Lake City on Monday when they face the Utah Hockey Club.

#### ***PLENTY OF CHANCES***

Winnipeg faced early season Calder Trophy candidate Dustin Wolf on Saturday, and they had more than enough chances to score. Nikolaj Ehlers had two grade A scoring opportunities in the opening frame. The Danish forward set up Mark Scheifele in the second period and Scheifele couldn't beat Wolf who made a brilliant glove save.

Finally, the Jets solved Wolf when Colin Miller fired a shot from the point and that was redirected by Adam Lowry past the Flames netminder at 2:15 of the third to cut Calgary's lead to 2-1.

In the end, Wolf made 38 saves and was named the game's first star.

"Yeah, some goaltenders can have good nights but if we're playing the right way, attacking the way we need to be," said Kyle Connor.

"We got to find a way to get some more there."

#### ***COMS UNFORTUNATE RUN***

Eric Comrie was looking for his first win since mid-November and now is winless in his last nine starts. An unfortunate play led to the first goal of the game when Blake Coleman's shot hit Neal Pionk's shin pad and deflected past Comrie in the first period. A huge break for the Jets and Comrie came with the Flames up by a goal with just under six minutes gone in the third. Blake Coleman's shot went off both goal posts, Colin Miller came and swept the puck over to Comrie.

"Disappointed for Coms, it's eight in a row he's played unbelievable for us, and we haven't been able to score for him," said Adam Lowry.

"We got to find a way to get a win for him."

#### ***HOMESTAND OVER***

Winnipeg finished their eight-game homestand 4-2-2. The Jets are 18-5-3 at home this season which is the best home record in the league. They have points in 12 of their past 14 home games (9-2-3).

## **Canadian Press**

<https://www.chrisd.ca/2025/01/19/winnipeg-jets-calgary-flames-game-loss-recap/>

### ***Flames' Wolf Shows He Can Lead His Pack in 3-1 Win Over Jets***

By Judy Owen, The Canadian Press

Dustin Wolf agreed the Calgary Flames faced a big test against the Winnipeg Jets on Saturday.

They passed with flying colours.

Wolf made a season-high 38 saves and Blake Coleman scored once and had two assists to lead the Flames to a 3-1 victory over the NHL's Western Conference leaders.

"This is a great opportunity for us to kind of show what we're made of," Wolf said. "There's a lot of belief in this room.

"There's some games that maybe we're not super happy with our performance or start or not putting together a full 60 (minutes). I think today was a great example of we just hung around, scored (two) more than them."

Wolf's career-high for saves was last April, when he stopped 40 shots in a 5-2 loss in Winnipeg.

The Flames led 1-0 after the first period and 2-0 heading into the third.

"The third period was a tough period for us, but you can see why they're a good team," Calgary head coach Ryan Huska said of the Jets.

"They pushed in the third period, and when we needed him our goaltender was our best player tonight."

Matt Coronato and Andrei Kuzmenko, on the power play, also scored for the Flames (22-16-7). Coleman recorded an empty-net goal with 1:05 left.

The victory snapped Calgary's two-game losing skid and helped it end a four-game road trip on a winning note (2-2-0). The Flames are also 4-2-0 in their last six games.

Winnipeg (31-13-3) has scored the most goals in the league (165), but Adam Lowry was the only one who beat Wolf.

The loss halted the club's three-game winning streak and a five-game point run (4-0-1) in front of its eighth sellout of the season at Canada Life Centre.

"Some goaltenders can have good nights, but if we're playing the right way and attacking the way we need to be, we've got to find a way to get some more," Jets leading-scorer Kyle Connor said.

Eric Comrie made 19 stops for Winnipeg, which finished its season-long, eight-game homestand with a 4-2-2 record.

Comrie has lost his last eight starts (0-7-1). The Jets have only scored 12 goals during his losing streak.

"I feel for the guy," Lowry said of Comrie. "He's played amazing all year. He's great in the locker room, works so hard day-in-day-out. He's the first guy on the ice, last guy off."

"At some point, we've got to find a way: off shin pads, or bang in a few for him because he's battling his heart out for us. We are not getting the results for him that he deserves."

Jets head coach Scott Arniel said he's concerned about Comrie after another loss.

"Yeah, he is taking it hard on himself. And he shouldn't, because he's given us a chance every time he goes in there," he said.

It was the first time this season the Jets have outshot an opponent in regulation but lost (21-1-1).

Coronato one-timed a shot over the stick side of Comrie to make it 1-0 at 13:32 of the first period.

"It's an important game at the end of the road trip," Coronato said. "They're a good team. I thought Wolfie played really, really good and gave us a chance to win."

Kuzmenko's second goal of the season was a low shot on the power play at 15:14 of the second frame.

The Flames are now 13-1-1 when leading after two periods, while the Jets are 1-7-1 when trailing after the second.

Lowry made it 2-1 when his shot through traffic beat Wolf at 2:15 of the third.

"I think he played an exceptional game," Lowry said of Wolf. "He made some big saves — that one on (Connor) on the power play. I think in the third, we did a better job of getting bodies to the net, getting layers. I feel like he saw a lot of pucks."

"He's a great goalie. If he sees the puck, he's going to make the save. I know we threw up a lot of shots, but I think there were instances where those shots could have turned into more if we generated some more traffic."

**TSN.ca**

<https://www.tsn.ca/nhl/john-lu-winnipeg-jets-benefit-from-connor-hellebuyck-learning-to-have-more-fun-1.2238997>

***Jets benefit from Hellebuyck learning to have more fun***

By John Lu

At a Winnipeg Jets' morning skate earlier this month, David Gustafsson beat Connor Hellebuyck short side on a two-on-zero drill. Morgan Barron, standing at the edge of Hellebuyck's crease,

slapped the rebound off Gustafsson's goal into the empty net. Once, twice, three times Barron mischievously swatted the puck in as it bounced perfectly off the mesh right onto his stick blade.

Finally, Hellebuyck had enough.

"He got a little upset and shot the puck at me," Barron said with a laugh. "I take them as I can get them on him."

Such is life for Winnipeg Jets skaters for the past 10 years. While Hellebuyck has grown into arguably the best goalie on the planet, scoring on him in practice has become an increasingly tall order. In practice, shooters have time, space and no defenders converging on them; but Hellebuyck knows all his teammates' patterns and tendencies.

"At this point, it's more of can they fool me, rather than can they score on me," said Hellebuyck.

So, when shooters do get the better of him, they often let him know it.

At a practice midway through last season, Nino Niederreiter sniped bar down past Hellebuyck from the top of the left faceoff circle. The Swiss power forward leaned toward the all-star goalie and bellowed a villainous, ruthless, "Hahahahaha!!"

"Absolutely he doesn't like when he gets scored on. When he gets scored on, he always looks back. 'Did that really go in? What did I do wrong?'" said Niederreiter.

This type of exchange, however, is a two-way street.

"I would say I'm definitely leading in giving it to them, but every now and then they'll have their day. I gotta' let 'em have it," said Hellebuyck. "It's a good give and take. I just think it makes practice more fun when you have a little competitive edge and chirp each other a little bit."

According to Niederreiter, one of Hellebuyck's favourite digs is a confident statement of his abilities.

"There's that funny thing he always says: 'You hit the post. I made you hit the post,'" Niederreiter said.

Winger Nikolaj Ehlers recounts another of Hellebuyck's greatest hits.

"If I score, 'It was a lucky shot'. If I shoot it into his glove, he didn't make the save; I just shot it in there," Ehlers said. "So, there's a lot of back and forth like that."

Hellebuyck says he started leaning into the playful back and forth in practice with his teammates during the shortened 2019-20 season when he won his first Vezina Trophy.

"I realized I was so hard on myself the year before [in 2018-19], that I had so much expectations," he said. "Then I realized: just have fun. Just go out there and stop the puck."

"When I was younger I was more just, I had to stop everything, I had to be perfect. Whereas now, perfect has a different meaning. It's more detail-oriented, more feel-oriented and how much fun you're having. Especially the older you get, you gotta continue to have fun."

Fun for Hellebuyck regularly involves brandishing the windmill trapper save, which Barron describes as “Very exaggerated. Swings it and then swings it back down and swings it again.”

Safe to say that every Jets skater, regardless of tenure, has endured Hellebuyck flashing the leather at him.

“He loves doing that one and rubbing it in your face,” said forward Dominic Toninato, who has suited up for just over 100 games as a Jet, but wears a unique badge of honour among his teammates, carried forward from his Colorado Avalanche days in 2019.

“My first-ever NHL goal was versus Helle. I can hang that over him. It was definitely a greasy one – rebound out front that I banged home. Not a whole lot on him, but I like to have that one over him.”

Indeed, greasy goals are one of the few reliable ways to score on Hellebuyck. According to IcyData Hockey, 46 per cent of Hellebuyck’s career goals allowed have come from the high-danger zone between the circles and below the hashmarks; and 29 per cent from the goalmouth area.

That’s why rockets, snipes and beauties from mid to long range that beat Hellebuyck in practice are celebrated. Perhaps none more than by Ehlers, who broke into the league with Hellebuyck in the 2015-16 season. Ehlers loves scoring on Hellebuyck. And celebrating. Sometimes flamboyantly.

“I think it’s more of a funny celly than a good celly,” said Ehlers, who explained that the extra mustard in his goal celebration was directed at teammates who had wagered against him to score during a training camp competition in October 2023.”

“I thought he was going to hit me right in the face,” said Hellebuyck, chuckling at the memory of Ehlers’ high, stick-side clapper.

Fun and hijinks aside, facing Hellebuyck daily has helped his teammates become better shooters, and not just because of his competitiveness, talent and attention to detail.

“Shooting on him, he basically gives you something that he thinks that can help you. In my case, releasing the puck quicker, keeping the puck in front of my feet. If you’re pulling it back it’s easier to read the release. Obviously, that’s super helpful coming from a goalie like that,” said Barron about an observation made to him by Hellebuyck.

But the two-time Vezina Trophy-winner doesn’t offer unsolicited advice.

“If it comes freely in conversation, then it comes. If a guy says, ‘How can I hit my spot? I’m not beating you, what can I do?’ It comes out naturally and they come to me and say, ‘Why am I not hitting that shot anymore?’, and that’s when things open up. Conversations start to grow,” said Hellebuyck.

“Any of those tidbits he gives us is kind of like the cherry on top of shooting at such a great goalie every day,” said Barron.

A grateful teammate, even if repayment is made with mischievous empty net goals in practice.

**NHL.com**

<https://www.nhl.com/news/calgary-flames-winnipeg-jets-game-recap-january-18>

***Wolf makes 38 saves to lift Flames past Jets  
Coleman has goal, 2 assists for Calgary; Winnipeg snaps 3-game win streak***

By Darrin Bauming

WINNIPEG — Dustin Wolf made 38 saves, including 15 in the third period, for the Calgary Flames in a 3-1 win against the Winnipeg Jets at Canada Life Centre on Saturday.

“To get an opportunity to go right back in there and beat the team that’s scoring a lot of goals, and they’ve put up a lot of points in the standings so far to start, this one feels good,” Wolf said. “It was fun. They threw a lot of pucks at the net and gladly I was able to see most of them. It doesn’t matter how many shots they put on, it’s if we score one more goal than them (and) the whole team is going to probably be happy and have a happy flight home.”

Blake Coleman had a goal and two assists, and Matt Coronato and Andrei Kuzmenko also scored for the Flames (22-16-7), who had lost two straight.

“(Winnipeg) pushed in the third period, and when we needed him our goaltender was our best player tonight,” Calgary coach Ryan Huska said. “This is probably the best team in the League right now, and you can see why. They have good depth through their lineup and they play the game at pace. I thought after we got through that first penalty (and Jets) power play, we started to settle down a little bit and I thought our second period was better. And as I said, I thought they pushed in the third and we found a way to hold on.”

Adam Lowry scored for the Jets (31-13-3), who had won three straight. Eric Comrie made 19 saves.

“I think [Wolf] played an exceptional game,” Lowry said. “He made some big saves — that one on [Kyle Connor] on the power play. I think in the third we did a better job of getting bodies to the net, getting layers. I feel like he saw a lot of pucks. He’s a great goalie. If he sees the puck, he’s going to make the save. I know we threw up a lot of shots, but I think there was instances where those shots could have turned into more if we generated some more traffic.”

Coronato made it 1-0 Flames at 13:32 of the first period when he took Coleman’s pass from the sideboards and went post-and-in with a one-timer from outside the top of the slot.

“I think [Mikael Backlund] and Blake [Coleman] do such a great job on the forecheck,” Coronato said. “I think the three of us as a line want to get on the forecheck, want to turn pucks over. So I think when we can turn a puck over we all know we want to get it to the net as quick as we can... I thought we were hard in our battles. We had some good O-zone shifts.”

Kuzmenko made it 2-0 on the power play at 15:14 of the second. Coleman’s cross-ice pass set up Kuzmenko to score with a wrist shot from just inside the right circle.

It was Kuzmenko’s first goal in 29 games.

"I mean, look at the shot, right?" Huska said. "He's a smart player, so sometimes he likes to have people around the net when he shoots the puck because he feels like there's a greater chance for it to go in, which totally makes sense. But I look at his shot as a bit of a weapon that could create some second opportunities as well, if it doesn't happen to go in. But he scored a big goal for us tonight."

Lowry cut it to 2-1 when his redirection of Colin Miller's rising point shot bounced off the ice and went between Wolf's pads at 2:15 of the third.

"They did a good job of protecting the middle," Jets forward Kyle Connor said. "You see Adam's goal, get a guy net-front, get a high tip. Third period, we made it a focal point to try to get some more guys to the net. That being said, they weren't giving us the Grade-As, but they were really packing it in and that's why you see the shot volume that way. We were taking a lot from the outside."

Coleman nearly scored to extend Calgary's lead at 6:36 when his shot hit both posts before momentarily rolling along the goal line.

Coleman lifted a backhander into the empty net at 18:55 for the 3-1 final.

"We hung in there," Huska said. "One; we got a power play goal from [Kuzmenko], which I think was an important thing for us as a team, but also him as a player. I think the other thing that we can build on is; we had a night where we had a clean sheet on the penalty kill (2-for-2), and we haven't had that in a little while. So there's a positive."

Comrie lost an eighth-straight start (0-7-1), while the Jets, who lead the NHL with 165 goals this season, have scored just 12 in those eight contests.

"It's a broken record, I have no idea why we can't score when he's in the net," Winnipeg coach Scott Arniel said. "We're the highest-scoring team and it just seems like we can't get him any run support. He gives us a chance every night, I don't know what it is... [Comrie] is taking it hard on himself. And he shouldn't, because he's given us a chance every time he goes in there."

*NOTES:* Calgary improved to 10-1-1 this season when holding a lead after the first period, and 13-1-1 when leading after two periods. ... Flames defenseman Rasmus Andersson skated in his 500th NHL game. ... Flames forward Ryan Lomberg skated in his 300th NHL game. ... Winnipeg is 1-7-1 this season when trailing after two periods. ... The Jets dropped to 18-5-3 on home ice, which remains the best home record in the NHL this season. ... Winnipeg outshot Calgary 39-22, and lost in regulation for the first time this season when outshooting its opponent (21-1-1).

### **Winnipeg Free Press**

<https://www.winnipegfreepress.com/breakingnews/2025/01/18/jets-run-into-hot-goaltender-lose-to-flames-3-1>

### ***Jets run into hot goaltender, lose to Flames 3-1***

By: Ken Wiebe

It will go down as a good homestand that had the potential to be great.

The Winnipeg Jets closed out the season-long eight-game homestand on Saturday with an effort they could be more than comfortable with, but they ran into a hot goaltender and fell 3-1 to the Calgary Flames at Canada Life Centre.

Despite the defeat, the Jets finished the homestand with a record of 4-2-2 and are now 31-13-2 for the season as they prepare to open up a two-game road trip on Monday against Utah HC.

“That’s definitely a place we want to take pride in, 4-2-2 is a winning record but we want to make teams fear coming into here and hopefully have home-ice advantage,” said Jets left-winger Kyle Connor.

“We’ll definitely work on that throughout the year. It’s always awesome coming in to play for these fans.”

After a road-heavy schedule, the Jets spent nearly three weeks at home in January and some of the biggest benefits won’t be fully apparent until later in the season.

But you can be sure that some of the practice time and work in the weight room, combined with sleeping in their own beds, could provide a bit of additional energy during what will be a sprint to the break for the 4 Nations Face-Off in early February — which includes seven games over a 13-day span.

Along with the results, the Jets also played a patient game and didn’t stray from their structure on multiple occasions.

“I liked the way we played here, I really do,” said Jets head coach Scott Arniel.

“I thought the Detroit game was the one that kind of bothers me, the Anaheim game a little bit. But at the end of the day, all the other ones, there were games where our effort was great, we played well.

“All the different areas, whether it was our PK, the power play, defending, our forecheck, were rolling for us.”

That’s one of the reasons the Jets were able to take advantage of the extended time at home and expand their lead in the Central Division to six points over the Dallas Stars, who hold one game in hand.

Let’s look a little closer at what transpired:

### *THE RECURRING THEME*

Despite another rock-solid effort from Jets backup Eric Comrie, he suffered an eighth consecutive loss between the pipes.

Comrie finished with 19 saves and lowered his goals-against average to 2.87 and his save percentage sits at .904 through his 11 starts.

This is not a recording, but the biggest issue for Comrie once again was the lack of offensive support.



With only one goal on Saturday, the Jets have scored a grand total of 12 goals during the past eight starts for Comrie.

"It's a broken record. I have no idea why we can't score when he's in the net," said Arniel. "We're the highest-scoring team and it just seems like we can't get him any run support.

"That was one where it wasn't a back-to-back, it wasn't a tough game for us in the sense of travel or anything like that. That was one there where you'd like to see us capitalize on all those chances that we had."

It's not like Comrie is allowing a bunch of softies either.

The one-timer by Matt Coronato that opened the scoring changed direction off Jets defenceman Neal Pionk and the second was a clear shot on the power play from Andrei Kuzmenko.

Comrie won his first three starts of the season but has now run into an extended period of tough luck.

"Yeah, he is taking it hard on himself. And he shouldn't because he's given us a chance every time he goes in there," said Arniel.

"Guys are great with him. They really are and they know that they've got to get him some run support. Hopefully, we have one of those ones where we break out big time where we can get him that win by supporting him with some goals."

Captain Adam Lowry echoed those sentiments.

"I feel for the guy," said Lowry.

"He's played amazing all year, he's great in the locker room, works so hard day-in-day-out, he's the first guy on the ice, last guy off. At some point, we've got to find a way: off shin pads, or bang in a few for him because he's battling his heart out for us. We are not getting the results for him that he deserves."

### *THE GOAL*

Arniel made a subtle turn of the line blender during the third period, moving Gabe Vilardi onto the line with Lowry and Nikolaj Ehlers, while Alex Iafallo shifted to a trio with Mark Scheifele and Connor.

The move paid dividends as Lowry tipped home a point shot from Colin Miller that made it a one-goal deficit.

That was the only shot to beat Flames goalie Dustin Wolf.

"I don't want to take anything away from Dustin. I think he played an exceptional game. He made some big saves," said Lowry. "In the third, we did a better job of getting bodies to the net, getting layers. I feel like he saw a lot of pucks.

"He's a great goalie. If he sees the puck, he's going to make the save. I know we threw up a lot of shots, but I think there were instances where those shots could have turned into more if we generated some more traffic."

As for Ehlers, he was one of the most dangerous players on the ice, using his speed effectively and explosively as he finished with five shots on goal and 11 shot attempts.

“Certainly, he’s dynamic and creative,” said Lowry.

“You look at the first period of play, he could have had two or three goals. The one off of the post on that breakaway... I just think it’s working on both sides of the puck. We preach that our offence comes from good defensive play. And that’s reloading, getting above it, those effort plays, they make the difference.”

#### *THE SAVE*

Connor showed fantastic hustle on a backcheck in the third period and after sliding into the net, the Jets left-winger made a quality save on Flames centre Nazem Kadri, as the shot caromed off his back and then hit the post.

“I lost my balance trying to backcheck there and ran into (Comrie). I thought Kadri was actually going to shoot. I saw that and I was just trying to get out of (Comrie’s) way,” said Connor.

“It was kind of a scramble. I didn’t even know that it was coming. It hit me in the back and I saw the replay quick. I guess it was lucky.”

#### *KEY PLAY*

Andrei Kuzmenko buried a shot on the power play at 15:14 of the second period for what turned out to be the game-winner.

#### *THE THREE STARS*

Dustin Wolf, Flames, 38 saves.

Blake Coleman, Flames, one goal, three points.

Nikolaj Ehlers, Jets, five shots on goal, 11 shot attempts.

#### *EXTRA, EXTRA*

Miller made his return to the lineup after suffering a fractured larynx in a game against the Detroit Red Wings on Jan. 4. The veteran defenceman chipped in an assist and took 18 shifts for 15:57 of ice time. Miller’s return meant that Ville Heinola was a healthy scratch.

Scheifele led all skaters with seven shots on goal and 12 shot attempts in the contest.

<https://www.winnipegfreepress.com/breakingnews/2025/01/19/hope-and-inspiration>

#### ***Hope and inspiration***

#### ***Winnipegger brought the house down with stirring renditions of national anthems***

By: Mike McIntyre

Music has always been a way for Olivia Steadman to process what can be a strange and scary world around her.

Blind at birth as the result of a stroke she suffered in the womb, the 22-year-old Winnipegger also lives with cerebral palsy and other intellectual challenges that have made the routine tasks and luxuries of life most of us take for granted seem impossible at times.

“There’s a lot of isolation for people who are perceived as different or have disabilities,” said her mother, Barbro Dick.

And that’s why what went down last Thursday night at Canada Life Centre prior to the NHL game between the Winnipeg Jets and Seattle Kraken was bigger than a young woman being given the opportunity to achieve her dream of belting out the Canadian and American anthems on a big stage.

It was community and connection. Hope and inspiration.

“I just can’t believe the number of people who have been touched by this,” said Olivia’s father, Tim Steadman, noting the family phones have been “blowing up” over the past several days with thousands of messages from as far away as Australia.

Olivia, to borrow a popular showbiz term, brought the house down with her stirring renditions of The Star-Spangled Banner and O Canada.

“It is not easy to sing in front of thousands of people and she performed with such joy and grace. I was struck by the power and the clarity of her voice,” said Jets regular anthem singer Stacey Natrass.

“She got me right in the heart. Everyone has a voice and their voices deserve to be heard. We can learn so much from listening to the under-heard voices in our communities. We all had a front row seat to watch Olivia’s dream come true. What an inspiration she is to all of us.”

Although Olivia may not have been able to see the nearly 14,000 people in attendance at Canada Life Centre, she heard and felt their presence.

“I was excited and happy,” she told the Free Press. “There were tears of happiness.”

Olivia was hardly alone in that department, with near-universal praise for what was clearly a special moment that her village of supporters believes can be a movement.

“It’s been a long journey for her to reach what was she able to do there,” said Dick.

“She went from literally having to be supported to stand to what you saw Thursday where she’s got the physical stamina to do it, she has the emotional and social regulation to manage it. It just gives her so much confidence. She just loves it. It makes her feel so good, and she senses how good it makes other people feel.”

Her introduction to music came during childhood, at a time when there was still grave concern about whether Olivia would ever be able to even walk or talk.

“Things were very unclear around what her prognosis would be. And so we saw that as a way to stimulate brain development and her language,” said Dick.

It worked, with slow but steady progression that eventually had Olivia — who would often wake up singing — being invited to get the morning started at school.

“She would sing the anthem over the PA system,” said Dick.

With ongoing therapy and respite work — the Movement Centre of Manitoba has played a major role in that since she was five— Olivia and her circle began to think big. During a planning meeting in 2016, the subject of a performance at Jets game was first raised.

“Wouldn’t that be an amazing accomplishment for her?” read a written report, which her family still has. The process really gained momentum last year thanks to one of those “Winnipeg is just a big small town” stories.

Tim Steadman and Jets co-owner and chairman Mark Chipman have known each other for many years, even playing beer league hockey together. Tim also grew up with Doug Ploen, the son of Blue Bombers legend Ken Ploen who passed away last February at the age of 88.

Olivia had previously sung in front of the Ploen family — they loved hearing her do the U.S. anthem to pay homage to their roots — and she was invited to perform at his celebration of life. Chipman was among the 400 people in attendance that day and was wowed by what he heard.

When the family later mentioned Olivia’s anthem dream, Chipman was fully on board and joked that “I know a guy” to make it a reality.

Was she nervous when the day finally arrived?

“She knows she can sing. And when she sings, people cheer and she gets a big smile on her face. It’s as simple as that,” said her father.

“I’ve never seen her in a singing setting being nervous. The only time she shows nerves is when we have medical appointments. She would have sensed it was a bigger audience, but it wouldn’t have affected her at all.”

Hundreds of family members and friends and people who are part of her circle came out in support.

“Olivia may have captivated the hearts of Manitobans on Thursday night, but she’s been captivating our hearts at the Movement Centre for 17 years,” said executive director Jennifer Wojcik, who described her as a shining light who always makes life better for those around her.

“Thursday night was about giving people with disabilities an opportunity to live to their fullest potential, allowing them to fulfill their dreams and share their gifts with the world. It was about ensuring individuals living with disabilities have the same opportunities as everyone else, are equally valued, and fully integrated into the community.”

Chipman noted to the family how Jets captain Adam Lowry was beaming on the bench the whole time, and it turns out he has a connection as well. Lowry and his girlfriend are friends with Olivia’s cousin and attended her wedding, where Olivia also sung.

“(Chipman) told me after, ‘Steady, I want her back next year and I want to put it on a Saturday night game so it’s a national audience,’” said Steadman.

The family, along with all of those involved in Olivia’s life, repeatedly praised Chipman and True North for providing this opportunity and sending a powerful message.

“I think the Jets have gone above and beyond other NHL teams and I hope there is a message for those other teams. Winnipeg is an amazing city and we are seeing an increased effort into ensuring the inclusion of everyone,” said Janet Forbes, the executive director of Inclusion Winnipeg which has also worked close with Olivia and her family.

“This shows that everyone has different gifts and talents, and all they need is the support of the people in their immediate circle as well as the community members in general.”

Olivia isn’t done dreaming big. She’d love to one day perform with the Tenors, having met them in 2021 when she got a backstage VIP pass.

For now, she’ll keep practicing with some of her favourites which include various Christmas carols like Silent Night, Frank Sinatra’s classics My Way and New York, New York, Lady Gaga’s Born This Way Josh Groban’s Believe and Somewhere Over The Rainbow. You can follow along on her Instagram account.

“She has been a bit of a beacon for this whole value of inclusion and that everybody deserves to feel like they belong and play a purposeful role in community,” said her mother.

“The Jets are playing a role in helping us get that idea out there. A lot of work has gone into Olivia becoming the person she is. It’s not an easy road, but I’m hoping that for those that aren’t heard or aren’t seen, this will help the broader community.”

To assist families like the Steadmans, the Movement Centre of Manitoba — in partnership with the Winnipeg Foundation — has established an endowment fund with a goal of reaching \$20 million in charitable donations. If you’d like to contribute or wish to learn more, you can visit their website here.

## **Winnipeg Sun**

<https://winnipeg.sun.com/sports/hockey/nhl/winnipeg-jets/points-arent-awarded-for-style-or-substance-just-for-positive-results>

### ***ENGINE NOISE: Points aren’t awarded for style or substance, just positive results***

By Gordon Anderson, Winnipeg Sun

“It’s another one of those shoulda could [games], we didn’t [win] though,” said Jets head coach Scott Arniel after his team lost 3-1 to the Calgary Flames on Saturday night. “We have to find a way, in those types of games maybe you get some greasy goals, kinda what we got on Lows’ goal on the deflection. I liked a lot of what we did. We did a lot of really good things.”

Adam Lowry scored the lone goal for the Jets at 2:15 of the third period when he redirected a Colin Miller shot behind Dustin Wolf for his 11th goal of the campaign. Logan Stanley picked up the secondary assist.

There was plenty to like about the team’s performance in front of 15,225. Their robust forecheck created plenty of turnovers and high-quality chances, but it was either Dustin Wolf standing in the way or wayward shots finding the end boards or the glass instead of the back of the net. Behind the puck Arniel says they gave up five legitimate chances and didn’t spend too much time defending in the d-zone.

In the competitive Western Conference, however, two points was probably the bare minimum against a team holding down the second wild card position heading into league action on Sunday. The Jets remain four points up on the Golden Knights and the Oilers for top spot in the conference, both teams losing in regulation on Saturday.

The shot totals in this Saturday night special were almost two to one, 39-22 in favour of the home side. The Jets registering 85 total shot attempts and out chanced the Flames 27-8 during five-on-five play.

“But a loss is a loss, at the end of the day,” Kyle Connor said. “You may have those games going forward, going into the playoffs, and you can’t just chalk it up to, “We thought we played well.” I know you look at the overall theme of the season, we play that way you say more times you’re going to win. But I like to think we can come on top of that.”

Connor played 22 shifts for 22:03 of ice time. He was limited to one shot on net.

Eric Comrie stopped 19 pucks in the loss. The Edmonton resident is on an eight-game losing streak. His last victory was Nov. 1 against Columbus.

#### *16 days in the can*

The Jets finished their eight-game homestand with a 4-2-2 record.

The Jets defeated Nashville, Colorado, Vancouver and Seattle. The club lost in regulation to Detroit and Calgary and lost in overtime to Los Angeles and Anaheim.

Connor seemed pleased with the outcome of the 16-day stand, but hinted the team needs to make home ice a more daunting proposition for the opposition.

“That’s definitely a place we want to take pride in, 4-2-2 is a winning record but we want to make teams fear coming into here and hopefully have home-ice advantage,” Connor said. “We’ll definitely work on that throughout the year. It’s always awesome coming in to play for these fans. Every single game they were behind us, you could really feel it. It’s always amazing playing in front of those (fans).”

The Jets scored 23 goals and gave up 17, earning 10 of a possible 16 points.

Two games left the coach with a sour disposition.

“I thought the Detroit game was the one that kind of bothers me, the Anaheim game a little bit,” Arniel said. “But at the end of the day, all the other ones, like (Saturday night against Calgary) there were games where our effort was great, we played well.”

#### *Mr. Wolf*

Lowry praised Wolf’s performance, saying the netminder was ‘exceptional.’ However, Lowry felt the team didn’t make life difficult enough for the 23-year-old from Gilroy, Calif.

“I feel like he saw a lot of pucks,” Lowry said. “He’s a great goalie. If he sees the puck, he’s going to make the save. I know we threw up a lot of shots, but I think there was instances where those shots could have turned into more if we generated some more traffic.”

Wolf turned aside 38 pucks to earn the win. He was named the game's first star.

"We were taking a lot of shots from the outside," Connor said. "When that's the case, you've got to find ways to get inside positioning, find those rebounds and that's definitely something we can work on. When that slot's not there and the cycle game, we're not finding those plays, we've got to find ways to generate more."

#### *Perfect save percentage*

Connor's save percentage remains perfect, as he turned away Nazim Kadry with a save at 1:15 of the final period.

He was credited with a shot block in the official NHL stat book, but in actuality it was a no-look save, no reaction time needed.

"I think it got me on the side," Connor said. "I lost my balance trying to backcheck there and ran into Comrie. I thought Kadri was actually going to shoot. I saw that and I was just trying to get out of (Comrie's) way. It was kind of a scramble. I didn't even know that it was coming. It hit me in the back, and I saw the replay quick. I guess it was lucky."

#### *What's next*

The Jets head out on the road for a couple of games. They're in Utah on Monday and Colorado two nights later.

"Now we've got a few here, big Central Division, three in a row here, so we've got to make sure we get out on the road and continue (our strong play)," Arniel said.

The Jets are back home Friday night for a return engagement against the team without a brand identity.

<https://winnipeg.sun.com/sports/hockey/nhl/winnipeg-jets/jets-guns-shootin-blanks-in-hurtin-loss-to-flames>

### ***Jets' guns shootin' blanks in hurtin' loss to Flames***

By Paul Friesen

It was billed as Country Night, with cowboy hat giveaways, twangy tunes and a full barn welcoming the Calgary Flames on a night cold enough to freeze a flask of rotgut whisky.

The trouble is the Winnipeg Jets forgot to load their pistols.

They looked mighty fine twirling them and made all kinds of noise firing them, but wound up capping their home stand with a hurtin' 3-1 loss.

The Jets had enough chances to choke a horse, the shots and fancy stats all on their side.

But missed nets and some good, old-fashioned stagecoach robbery from Calgary goalie Dustin Wolf tipped the scales to the out-of-towners.

"We look at us," Jets winger Kyle Connor said. "Yeah, some goaltenders can have good nights. But if we're playing the right way and attacking the way we need to be, we've got to find a way to get some more."

Down 2-zip after two periods, Adam Lowry's tip cut the deficit in half less than three minutes into the third.

"Third period we made it a focal point to try to get some more guys to the net," Connor said. "That being said, they weren't giving us the Grade As. We were taking a lot from the outside."

A Calgary empty-netter allowed the Flames to saddle up and head back to Cowtown after a four-game road swing.

The Jets had been riding a three-game win streak, but instead of capping an eight-game home stand with a fourth, they finish it 4-2-2 and fall to 31-13-3 overall.

"A winning record," Connor said. "But we want to make teams fear coming in here."

Final shots favoured the Jets, 39-22.

One theme has become as tiresome as an overplayed country song: With backup goalie Eric Comrie in the saddle, the Jets can't seem to score more than two goals.

As a result, Comrie still hasn't notched a win since the first day of November, a run of eight losing starts, one of them in overtime.

The guy is the happiest cowboy around, but not even he can be enjoying this tune.

"It's a broken record," Jets coach Scott Arniel said. "I have no idea why we can't score when he's in the net. We're the highest scoring team and it just seems like we can't get him any run support.

"He is taking it hard. And he shouldn't, because he's given us a chance every time he goes in there. They know that they've got to get him some run support."

Nobody would argue that.

"At some point, we've got to find a way – off shin pads, or bang in a few for him," Lowry said. "Because he's battling his heart out for us. We are not getting the results for him that he deserves."

The two goals Comrie gave up were on Grade-A chances, Matt Coronato pulling the trigger on a first-period one-timer, Andrei Kuzmenko snapping one past him, short-side, on a Flames power play in the second.

At the other end, Wolf was dodging bullets left and right, getting all 166 pounds of him in the way of nearly everything, including a Nik Ehlers breakaway chance.

Shots on goal through two periods were 23-16, Winnipeg, but Calgary rode the 2-0 lead into the third behind the two-time AHL goalie-of-the-year.



“You can take some positives from it,” Connor concluded. “But a loss is a loss, at the end of the day. You may have those games going forward, going into the playoffs, and you can’t just chalk it up to, ‘We thought we played well.’”

Up next, road games in Utah on Monday, Denver on Wednesday.

<https://winnipeg.sun.com/sports/hockey/nhl/winnipeg-jets/itll-be-tricky-jets-d-men-vie-to-be-arniels-flavour-of-the-day>

### ***'It'll be tricky': Jets D-men vie to be Arniel's flavour of the day***

By Paul Friesen

Scott Arniel had a bit of that kid-in-a-candy-store look to him on Saturday morning.

The reason: his blue line was bursting with healthy bodies.

“They’re all available, for the first time this year,” the Winnipeg Jets head coach said. “All eight D are available.”

Beginning in training camp, there was always somebody on the shelf, right through Game 46.

Not anymore.

Whether or not this candy-store luxury was going to continue past Saturday night’s tilt with Calgary is another story.

But for one game, at least, Arniel could grab a bag and choose, unfettered by concerns over health.

At the front of the store are the easy choices, Josh Morrissey and Dylan DeMelo, a pairing that’s become as natural as peanut butter and chocolate, the former providing the point protein, the latter a more subtle sweetness, something Paul Maurice once called “coach’s porn.”

Together, the pair not only spice up the Jets’ attack, but gum up the opposition’s, often matched against its top players.

Neal Pionk and Dylan Samberg make up a tasty second choice, using similar ingredients – Pionk a little more peppery than Morrissey, Samberg a bigger, younger version of DeMelo with still plenty of mouthwatering potential.

After that, it gets a little more dicey for Arniel. A little like the chocolate-bar aisle, where what’s under the wrapper can be very different.

It’s also the area few agree on. One man’s Snickers may be another man’s Big Turk. Also, some can eat more minutes.

And then you have to pair them.

Arniel’s four options for a third defence pair are Colin Miller, back from a fractured larynx, Haydn Fleury, fresh off a lower-body ailment of his own, Ville Heinola and Mr. Big, Logan Stanley.

All bring their own unique flavour to the blue line.

“Stan’s obviously big, big size, physical, heavy,” the coach said. “Ville is smaller and skilled, more offensive tilt. Millsy, a veteran guy... been used in a lot of different areas over his career, whether that’s power play, PK or having to play a physical game. And then Fleury... he’s got raw talent, his ability to skate, jump in and be physical. He has a little bit of everything.”

Like any self-respecting candy-bar connoisseur, the coach wanted no part of a regular rotation, set out in advance.

“No. I’m just going to go game-to-game here,” Arniel said. “You don’t ever want to say that to the players and then you just change your mind, and they’re expecting things.”

In other words, somebody may play so well one night it would be crazy to pull him from the lineup.

The other major factor in Arniel’s decision: the opponent.

For the rugged Flames on Saturday, the coach chose Miller and Stanley.

That noise you hear at the back of the store is the nerds wondering why Stanley keeps coming out of the dispenser instead of Heinola. Those smarties think they know more than the coach. Go figure.

Arniel knows he can’t please everyone, let alone the four men affected every game.

Ideally he’d have just one extra D-man instead of two, but the Jets don’t want to risk losing one by sending him down to the minors. None of the eight here now are exempt from a waiver claim.

And just because one person might pass over a certain bar doesn’t mean everybody in the store will.

When it comes to blue-line talent, coaches are like kids with candy: you can’t have too much.

“It’ll be tricky,” Arniel acknowledged. “But I’ve got to find a way to handle this. Having that D depth has been huge for us.”

### *Raking hay*

It started off a little shaky, but the Jets managed to make some winter hay on their longest home stand of the season.

After back-to-back losses to Anaheim (overtime) and Detroit, the Jets beat Nashville, lost to L.A. in overtime, then rattled off wins over Colorado, Vancouver and Seattle, out-scoring those three, 11-2.

Going into Saturday night’s finale against Calgary, they’d put up a 4-1-2 mark, raking in 10 of a possible 14 points.

“We had some great games, we had some not-so-good games,” forward Nino Niederreiter said. “But overall, we can be very happy with what we did. And then now we’ve got to go on the road and make some damage there as well.”

Five of the Jets’ next seven games will be away from home.

“We haven’t really seen anything like this in the last few years, where we’re here this long,” Arniel said. “You have to take advantage of it.”

## **The Athletic**

<https://www.nytimes.com/athletic/6071929/2025/01/20/winnipeg-jets-nhl-nikolaj-ehlers-eric-comrie/>

### ***Jets’ plan at centre, the stats behind Comrie’s record, Ehlers’ future: Mailbag, part 1***

By Murat Ates

The trade deadline is over a month away but Winnipeg Jets fans have turned their eyes to Stanley Cup contention.

You want to know about Winnipeg’s path to playoff readiness. You want to know more about Nikolaj Ehlers’ future: Will they trade him now, will he walk or could the Jets still re-sign him? You wonder if Cole Perfetti is big or strong enough for his first full playoffs. Some of you just want to get Eric Comrie some run support — and one of you asked a fun statistical question about the Jets’ performance in Comrie’s starts.

But we’re starting part 1 of this mailbag with a thought about the future. What is Winnipeg’s plan for when Mark Scheifele and Adam Lowry age out of their roles?

Note: Submitted questions have been edited for clarity and length.

*The Jets’ top two centers by TOI are Mark Scheifele and Adam Lowry. Both those players were drafted in 2011. Since then they haven’t really used any premium draft capital on any surefire center prospects. At some point in the near future they are going to have to figure out a succession plan. Brad Lambert might still be best suited to the wing. Brayden Yager does look like a good all-round player likely to be a C in the NHL but probably not a 1C. How do the Jets address their looming problem at C? — Aavcocup A.*

It’s been 14 years since Mark Chipman revealed Winnipeg’s NHL team would be called the Jets and Kevin Cheveldayoff called Mark Scheifele’s name shortly thereafter. Scheifele and Lowry are 31 years old now.

Vladislav Namestnikov is too old and too far down the depth chart to be a viable replacement. Rasmus Kupari’s recent emergence as a third-line option has been fun to watch but the top six is some distance away for him. Kupari also turns 25 this March, which is still young in NHL terms but older than most players who make major year-over-year leaps.

What are Winnipeg’s options, then?

The most NHL-ready solutions would require the Jets to change how they play. Gabriel Vilardi, 25, and Cole Perfetti, 23, were each raised as centres but neither is a plus-skater at the NHL level. Winnipeg wants its centres to be able to offer low support in the defensive zone and then help drive transition play. Clearly this requires speed; Scott Arniel (and Rick Bowness before him) has mostly kept Vilardi and Perfetti on the wing as a result. I think Perfetti is not given enough credit for the board battles he wins but some of the apprehension toward playing him in the middle would include concerns about his size.

Your question also references Lambert, of course, and he has speed to burn. I think the Jets will try to develop him as a centre (they've played him there in four NHL games so far this season) but might find, as you suggest, that they get more value from Lambert on the wing. I'm not sure how his play off the puck will go in the NHL; Winnipeg wouldn't have to worry about his speed as far as end-to-end, 200-foot play goes, but it's hard to see him winning defensive battles against elite NHL competition. (He's 21 and obviously not a finished product; perhaps he has more success than we're projecting.)

The scouts I've spoken to are divided on 20-year-old Brayden Yager's ceiling. Everyone seems to agree Yager is an NHL player; the division is about his ability to force his way into the top six. Some see his "jack of all trades, master of none" skill set as a sign he'll be able to solve a variety of problems in the NHL, finding utility on any line; others see a lack of the elite offensive talent that comes with top-six production.

Kieron Walton, 18, is one of the most exciting prospects in the Jets' prospect pool — and is tracking to crush his sixth-round draft position — but the trajectory from late-round gem to top-six NHL stalwart takes time in even the best-case scenario. Even Scheifele, a No. 7 pick, took five years from draft day to emerge as a top-line centre at 23 years old. Lowry's arrival didn't come until 2017-18 when he was 24.

The UFA market isn't traditionally kind to Winnipeg, so betting that free agency will give the Jets their Scheifele or Lowry replacements seems like a reach. It has to be about the draft or through trade and I think you'll see the Jets work toward that in coming seasons. They added Pierre-Luc Dubois to Scheifele when Patrik Laine and Jack Roslovic wanted out; I think the dream of two top centres is alive and well in Winnipeg, even if the solutions are not obvious.

I also think it's a good time to remember that top players with term, while difficult to procure, will always be at the top of Winnipeg's wish list via trade.

*What do you make of Cole Perfetti? Has he shown more motivation seeing Seth Jarvis being selected by Team Canada for the 4 Nations tournament? — John B.*

I think your reference to Jarvis is more of a trivia item for fans than it is the reason Perfetti strives to improve his play. Jarvis, the 22-year-old Winnipeg product, is a month younger than Perfetti and was taken 13th by the Carolina Hurricanes in 2020 when the Jets took Perfetti at No. 10.

Perfetti was the consensus best player available at the time. Bob McKenzie and Corey Pronman had him fifth in their final rankings, while Scott Wheeler had him fourth. I've spoken to two NHL executives whose teams drafted near where Winnipeg picked; both agreed that Perfetti was the right choice. Cheveldayoff certainly felt that way — he joked he'd have sprinted to the podium if the draft had been held in person that year.

I understand the idea of asking about Jarvis, but I don't think Perfetti needs the comparison for motivation. My understanding of Perfetti as a person is that he is unusually determined to improve his game and unusually hard on himself when he doesn't produce points. I believe that quality is innate. It doesn't come from Jarvis' or any other player's accomplishments, nor is it pressure put on Perfetti by his coaches or any outside factors. He is driven to become the best NHL player possible and can get hard on himself when the bounces aren't going his way. Winnipeg's veterans have been kind to him in terms of mentorship.

As for his play this season, I like his hockey sense, his competitiveness and his willingness to go to the net. He beat Anze Kopitar in three puck battles on the wall against L.A. last week, so I'm seeing tremendous progress in terms of his ability to win pucks in the dirty areas. I haven't seen him create as much space for himself at five-on-five as I would like, but his passing does create space for his linemates — and that's been true even when the Ehlers-Namestnikov-Perfetti line had grown cold. I think he's in a great spot right now with Nino Niederreiter and Kupari. It's a good mix of Niederreiter's physicality, Perfetti's vision and Kupari's speed that takes better advantage of each player's talents than the Ehlers line did. (Arniel has praised Ehlers in all sorts of ways lately, but most of the praise has also referenced his post-injury struggles.)

Perfetti's 44-point pace is adequate, although I thought he'd deliver more than that this season. It would be more than Bryan Little produced in either of his final two full seasons with the Jets — the years Winnipeg went out and got Paul Stastny and Kevin Hayes at consecutive deadlines. I make the Little comparison because I think people forget how good Little was and I think people sleep on Perfetti's quality, especially on nights he isn't scoring. There is also a certain critique in it: If Perfetti were the second-line centre on this Jets team, fans would clamour for a deadline day upgrade — ideally like Stastny — to ensure Winnipeg's Cup contention. I think that critique is fair.

I continue to project Perfetti as a top-six forward worthy of power-play time, although it's worth noting he has yet to make the leap to the 60-points-per-82-games rate Scheifele, Kyle Connor and Ehlers reached at his age.

*What do you think is the most likely outcome for Ehlers? (A – extend contract in-season; B – extend in offseason; C – trade before TDL; D – walks as a UFA.) — James B.*

I don't know what Ehlers' future holds but I have opinions and guesses. To that effect, I'd like to answer you in the form of a pie chart.

I'm going to have to ask you to imagine the pie, though.

- A: 5 percent
- B: 25 percent
- C: 25 percent
- D: 45 percent

I haven't expected Ehlers to sign in Winnipeg beyond this season, but Ehlers certainly hasn't told me that. He loves his teammates, appreciates the opportunity to win, and has certainly enjoyed being moved to the top power-play unit. He's on pace for a point-per-game season as a result and, as I wrote last week, he's doing himself favours concerning how much he gets paid this summer.

I think the Jets would consider trading Ehlers before the deadline — as always, depending on the return they would get. Whether it's a defenceman or centre, I think the keys to the Jets moving Ehlers would be:

1. Term on contract. If my guess is right and Ehlers is unlikely to sign here (or the Jets simply aren't prepared to pay Ehlers on his next deal) then Cheveldayoff will have to go back to the resourceful well that landed Vilarde, Alex Lafallo and Kupari for Dubois. The scale would be different but the principle is the same: The longer the player could help Winnipeg beyond Ehlers' 2025 UFA date, the better.

2. Playoff readiness. I'm not sure that Jets management (and coaching) is as critical of Ehlers' lack of playoff offence as segments of the fan base have been but it's possible they point to his 14 points in 37 games and move him in search of a lesser player with greater playoff pedigree. At 33, Ryan O'Reilly may be on the downswing of his career but he remains effective, won the 2019 Stanley Cup, costs just \$4.5 million AAV and is signed for two seasons beyond this one. If the Jets could make a deal for O'Reilly or a player that matches that criteria, wouldn't they have to look long and hard at it?

All of that would be contingent upon Ehlers being uninterested in signing. Communication channels are open and I expect Ehlers' preferences are known. It's possible Ehlers has enjoyed his role on a Cup-contending team so much that I'm wrong and he signs a long-term deal despite this line of thinking. If the Jets feel there's a chance of that, there should be no reason to upset the existing chemistry of their club.

Chemistry may even be a reason to keep Ehlers as a self-rental, depending, of course, on the potential aforementioned trade return.

*Do you have any stats that explain why Comrie never gets run support? He always plays really well. — Bradford M.*

There are three ways I can think to answer this question. The first is to take a page out of Arniel's book.

"It's a broken record. I have no idea why we can't score when he's in the net," Arniel said after Saturday's 3-1 loss to Calgary. "We're the highest-scoring team and it just seems like we can't get (Comrie) any run support."

The second takes a bit of a thought exercise. I hope you're game.

Picture yourself on a basketball court, standing at a free-throw line with the ball. You've got 10 shots — how many do you think you'd make? (I think you're a great shooter but outside the NBA, so I'll say you hit seven — and, for argument's sake, let's say this is a perfect representation of your shooting ability.)

So you are a career 70 percent shooter from the free-throw line. Great! But you're not a robot. You don't make seven out of 10 shots every time we test you on this. Sometimes you hit six, sometimes you hit eight, sometimes you heat up like NBA Jam and go 10-for-10, etc. Over an infinite timeline, you're a 70 percent shooter, but some days you're better and other days you're worse.

Let's say I decide to track some random data about your shooting performance: time of day, day of the week, how much sleep you got, the last meal you ate, or the last song you listened to before shooting. Some of this stuff — sleep — probably matters. Some of it could theoretically matter: Let's say I do some digging as a reporter and it turns out you always used to practice free throws in your parents' driveway while blasting "Mr. Brightside" on your portable stereo and — all of these years later — "Mr. Brightside" still correlates with your best shooting days. Maybe you've developed some performance cues that go along with the song and if I'd only just asked you a question about you for once in your life, I'd have known.

And sometimes stuff happens randomly but we tell ourselves stories to make sense of it anyway. The Jets have a .691 points percentage, for example, but consider their performance sorted by days of the week:

Are the Jets Tuesday legends? Are they Wednesday wimps?

Or did Neal Pionk have the puck swiped off his stick after Haydn Fleury put him in a tough spot instead of reversing it to Niederreiter with 30 seconds left in Anaheim on the second half of a back-to-back on Wednesday, Dec. 18?

Maybe that's just dumb luck; a bad play at a bad time. Maybe there's something about the fact it was a back-to-back. We know teams tend to perform slightly worse on the second half of those situations — especially if they're also playing their third game in four nights. (The Jets were not playing their third game in four nights against Anaheim; I'm just adding that for context.)

That brings me to my third attempt at explaining the Jets managing just 12 goals during Comrie's eight-game losing streak. Four of those games were played on the second half a back-to-back. New Year's Eve in Colorado was also the Jets' third game in four nights, which gives us some legitimate outside reasons to think the Jets might be worse in those games. But Winnipeg changed its course; Comrie got the first half of last weekend's back-to-back, a stifling defensive game and a 2-1 overtime loss against Los Angeles. The Jets didn't manage much offence that game but the Kings are also the league's top defensive team by a lot of metrics.

Saturday's game against Calgary was Winnipeg's opportunity to make good. It wasn't a back-to-back. It wasn't against an elite defensive team. It was just a home game against the Flames, wherein the Jets fired 39 shots on goal — roughly four expected goals, according to Natural Stat Trick — and scored just once.

Dustin Wolf was tremendous in the opposing net but the Jets wanted to take responsibility for their own lack of goals.

"We were taking a lot from the outside," Connor said. "When that's the case, you've got to find ways to get inside positioning, find those rebounds, and that's definitely something we can work on on the offensive side of the game. When that slot's not there and the cycle game, we're not finding those plays, we've got to find ways to generate more."

In summary:

- There is a heaping element of "what in the world is going on?" that I can't fully explain.
- I think some of it is the back-to-back games Comrie has played.

- Beyond that, I'd be cautious about trying to come up with explanations because his 11-game season — and eight-game losing streak — is a small sample. As I hope I showed via Winnipeg's points percentage on Wednesdays and weekends, sometimes hockey just happens and trying to explain it too much is a dangerous game.

I hope that's a somewhat satisfying answer. I've really tried here. At one point I went through all of Comrie's goals against, too, and concluded that the number of deflections, sudden giveaways and moments beyond his control were disproportionately high.

Let's give Arniel the last word on Comrie.

"He is taking it hard on himself," Arniel said on Saturday. "And he shouldn't, because he's given us a chance every time he goes in there."

### **The Score**

<https://www.thescore.com/nhl/news/3194375>

#### ***Jets desperate to get Comrie a win: 'He's battling his heart out for us'***

By Kayla Douglas

The Winnipeg Jets aren't sure why they struggle so much when backup goaltender Eric Comrie is in net, but they're desperate to turn things around for their teammate.

"I feel for the guy," captain Adam Lowry said Saturday, according to The Hockey News' Carter Brooks. "He's played amazing all year, he's great in the locker room, works so hard day-in, day-out, he's the first guy on the ice, last guy off. ... He's battling his heart out for us. We are not getting the results for him that he deserves."

Comrie has lost his last eight starts, including Saturday's 3-1 loss to the Calgary Flames. The 29-year-old owns a .900 save percentage and 2.94 goals against average over that span.

He allowed two goals on 21 shots against Calgary, marking his fourth straight appearance with a save percentage above .900.

Winnipeg has mustered just 12 tallies in Comrie's eight losses, five of which were one-goal showings. It's an odd trend for the Jets, who rank third among all teams in goals per game (3.51).

"I have no idea why we can't score when he's in the net," head coach Scott Arniel said, per The Athletic's Murat Ates. "We're the highest-scoring team in the league and it just seems like we can't get him any run support. He gives us a chance every night."

Comrie's last win came on Nov. 1 against the Columbus Blue Jackets, when Winnipeg gave him tons of support in the form of six goals.

Arniel added that Comrie, who is "extremely popular" in the Jets' room, has taken this drought to heart.



"He's taking it hard on himself," the bench boss said, per Brooks. "And he shouldn't because he's given us a chance every time he goes in there. Guys are great with him. ... They really are and they know that they've got to get him some run support.

"Hopefully we have one of those ones where we break out big time, where we can get him that win by us supporting him with some goals."

Sniper Kyle Connor made it clear that the Jets believe in Comrie's ability even if the results aren't coming.

"He's played amazing the whole year," he said. "It's definitely unfortunate, but we don't look at that. We see the work he does and the goaltender that he is. We're not worried at all."

Next up for Winnipeg is a clash against Utah Hockey Club on Monday at 9:30 p.m. ET.

### **Sportsnet.ca**

<https://www.sportsnet.ca/nhl/article/jets-fail-to-support-comrie-once-again-in-loss-to-flames/>

### ***Jets fail to support Comrie once again in loss to Flames***

By Jacob Stoller

WINNIPEG — If it was any other game, the Winnipeg Jets could've held their heads high after the type of effort they showed Saturday.

Despite falling 3-1 to the Calgary Flames on Hockey Night in Canada — in front of a sold-out crowd at Canada Life Centre, where the first 7,500 patrons were given a Cowboy hat for 'Country Night' — Winnipeg undoubtedly outplayed their opponent. The Jets spent the majority of the game in the Flames end, registering 85 total shot attempts and outchancing them 27-8 during five-on-five play. But it was just one of those nights where they got 'goalied' by Dustin Wolf — one of the best young goalies on the planet — who stopped 37 of 38 shots.

And in turn, once again, the Jets weren't able to generate enough goal support for Eric Comrie.

Winnipeg's backup netminder hasn't recorded a 'W' since Nov. 1, which marks an eight-game win drought. Through Comrie's recent 0-7-1 stretch, the NHL's best offence has scored just 1.50 goals per game — a stark contrast from the 3.60 goals per game they've recorded during Hellebuyck's 28 starts since Nov. 1.

"It's a broken record. I have no idea why we can't score when he's in the net," Scott Arniel said post-game. "We're the highest-scoring team and it just seems like we can't get him any run support. He gives us a chance every night, I don't know what it is... we just don't seem to score."

It's a damn shame, really. Boasting a .904 save percentage and a 2.87 goals-against average through 11 games, Comrie's been as reliable of a backup as you could ask for and he's come at a bargain, making just \$825,000 until the end of the 2025-26 season.

"At some point, we've got to find a way, off shin pads, or bang in a few for him because he's battling his heart out for us," Adam Lowry said. "We are not getting the results for him that he deserves."

The Jets will tell you it's not an indictment on Comrie, a beloved teammate who is always a willing target practice participant long after practice ends.

"We see the work he does and the goaltender that he is," Kyle Connor said. "We're not worried at all."

The worry, though, lies in the impact that this type of stretch could have on Comrie. If you've ever played professional sports, you know that goalies usually wear a loss the hardest. Put yourself in Comrie's shoes — you're the backup goaltender of one of the best teams in the NHL and over the last two months you've been in the net for eight of their 12 losses. That wears on a guy.

"He is taking it hard on himself," Arniel said. "And he shouldn't, because he's given us a chance every time he goes in there. Guys are great with him. They really are. They really are and they know that they've got to get him some run support. Hopefully, we have one of those ones where we break out big time where we can get him that win by us supporting him with some goals."

The last thing the Jets can afford is to have this type of stretch send Comrie into a tail spin, over-analyzing every move and critiquing himself to no end. Comrie's importance to this team — in a year where Hellebuyck's already heavy regular workload is being supplemented by playing in the Four Nations Face-off, not to mention a potential lengthy playoff run — can't be understated.

### *Ehlers flying*

Nikolaj Ehlers was brilliant once again.

Especially in the first period.

"He could have had two or three goals," Lowry said of Ehlers' spectacular showing in the first frame.

Less than five minutes into the game, Ehlers drove through the middle of the ice — right between two defencemen within arms reach — and generated a chance in all alone on Dustin Wolf. He nearly scored on the rebound, which he rang off the post. On his next shift, Ehlers picked off a pass and generated another chance in-tight on Wolf. And near the midway point of the period, Ehlers skated end-to-end — eliciting cheers from the crowd as he began to gain steam — for another chance.

Every time he touched the puck, he was able to create something out of nothing.

"He's been doing it probably for the last... Oh, I think four or five games now," Arniel said. "He got slow coming out of the gate after his injury but now, the biggest thing for me: he puts his speed on display. It's a threat. Those defencemen don't like to see him when he's winding up like that. He pushes people back."

### *No Moral Victories*

What Connor said post-game tells you everything you need to know about the palpable culture shift this team has undergone.

Whether it was attributing a failure to “being a young team,” (even when they weren’t young at all), or rattling off a litany of reasons that almost was brought up to excuse the loss — this core used to deflect a lot of responsibility publicly.

That’s not the case anymore.

Sure, there was no shortage of positives from Saturday — nine out of 10 times the Jets play like that, they’re walking away with two points — but this group isn’t basking in moral victories.

“A loss is a loss, at the end of the day,” Connor said. “You may have those games going forward, going into the playoffs, and you can’t just chalk it up to, ‘We thought we played well.’”

A statement like that — as opposed to a ‘Eh, whatever... we played a good goalie’ type of response — speaks volumes.

“When you get that many chances and you get 15, 16 five-on-five chances, we usually get more than just one goal. That’s where they get frustrated. There’s frustration there. (Connor) is a goal scorer. He knows that tonight, he needs to get one of those to go in the net. And that’s what drives those guys. You love to see that. Nobody is happy about this. Yeah, we outplayed them, but it’s all about the two points, it really is.”

<https://www.sportsnet.ca/nhl/article/flames-takeaways-this-is-dustin-wolfs-team-now/>

### ***Flames Takeaways: This is Dustin Wolf's team now***

By Eric Francis

It was the type of assignment Dustin Wolf wasn’t generally given in the first half of the season.

Sheltered from many of the toughest starts by Dan Vladar, the Flames wanted to take a slow and steady approach as the 23-year-old Wolf acclimated to the NHL.

Well, the guard rails are off, and it’s his team now.

Thrust into a Saturday night road tilt in a hostile barn hosted by the west’s best Jets, Wolf stole the show and two points.

Facing a Winnipeg squad that leads the league in goals, home wins and had just two regulation losses in its last 12 outings, Wolf made a season-high 38 saves in a 3-1 win few saw coming.

Making his sixth start in the team’s last seven games, Wolf has done what he set out to do at the beginning of the season: prove he’s ready to take over as this franchise’s biggest building block.

Having passed every test thrown his way throughout his ascension from seventh-round pick to a Calder Trophy frontrunner, it’s clear he’s ready to be the one to spearhead the Flames’ improbable playoff chase.

He proved it Saturday in the stiffest test he’s faced to date.

Because of him, the Flames hold the final wild-card spot in the west.

At 16-7-2, he provides the best chance of staying there.

No more platooning – he'll now be the one they tap for the biggest games moving forward.

Rebounding from a start in St. Louis on Thursday where he let in one of the few questionable goals he's allowed this season, Wolf was spectacular in a first period that saw the Jets swarming. He made a key save on Mark Scheifele late in the second period of a 1-0 game and slammed the door on Kyle Connor and Alex Lafallo down the stretch of a 2-1 game the Flames sealed with an empty-netter.

"This one feels good," Wolf told Flames TV after the game.

"I got an opportunity to go right back in there and beat the team that's scoring a lot of goals and have been putting a lot of points up in the standings so far. The whole team is probably going to have a happy flight home."

Credit to the Flames, whose work ethic was spectacular, but this game was simply stolen by the 23-year-old Wolf.

More takeaways from a stunning win that helped the Flames salvage an otherwise disappointing road trip:

Kuzmenko shoots ... and scores

Climbing down from the press box for the first time in four games, Andrei Kuzmenko ended a 28-game scoring drought with a stellar power-play finish that put the Flames up 2-0 late in the second period.

It was just his second goal of the season.

It served as a reminder of just how frustrating it is that the former 39-goal scorer hasn't been able to use his sublime skill to help a low-scoring team that so desperately needs his scoring touch.

After Rory Kerins deftly gained the zone and dished off to Blake Coleman, the Russian winger took a crossing pass and promptly buried it past Eric Comrie with a low, short-side snapper that bounced in off the post.

A rocket.

A relief.

"Now I can smile," he said.

"This season is terrible for me, two goals is not my level. It's not easy, right. Keep smile, keep working, you play with good team, great people, good humans. I like this moment. One positive moment."

It was Kerins' fourth assist in four games since his call-up, and it was Coleman's second of three points, as he assisted on Matt Coronato's opener before scoring the empty-netter.

It remains to be seen what it might be able to do for Kuzmenko, who was mobbed by teammates well aware of his frustrating journey this season.

*Milestone night*

It was Rasmus Andersson's 500th NHL game, and Ryan Lomberg's 300th.

They played in the minors together, under the watchful eye of Ryan Huska, whom they both gave credit to for helping them along the way.

Andersson said he and the coach didn't always see eye to eye, but the fact that they celebrated his milestone night together is a testament to how mutually beneficial the relationship has been.