

Winnipegjets.com

<https://www.nhl.com/jets/news/three-things-bounce-back-win-for-jets>

Three things: Bounce back win for Jets Pionk the overtime hero in Denver in a 3-2 victory

By Jamie Thomas

The Winnipeg Jets captured a huge two points with a 3-2 overtime win over the Colorado Avalanche at Ball Arena. Neal Pionk scored the game winner, Morgan Barron and Gabe Vilardi also scored for Winnipeg who improved to 32-14-3. Josh Morrissey and Vladislav Namestnikov had multi-point nights, Connor Hellebuyck made 25 saves and went a perfect 3-0 against the Avalanche this season. Winnipeg will host Utah on Friday at Canada Life Centre.

PIONK DEJA-VU

Neal Pionk's bounce back season continues as the Jets defenceman was the hero Wednesday when fired a slap shot past Mackenzie Blackwood, 17 seconds into the extra period. If you felt like you had seen Pionk score a goal like that before, you were right. Back on October 19, 2022, Pionk grabbed a loose puck in the Jets end and raced up the ice and fired a slap shot over Alexandar Georgiev in overtime. The big story though was a bounce back effort from the Jets from Monday nights performance in Utah.

"I thought overall, as a team, we were patient tonight," said Neal Pionk.

"We allowed the game to come to us, and then took advantage of the opportunities when we could."

*****NO LOWRY, NEW LINE COMBOS*****

Scott Arniel announced today that Adam Lowry will be out week-to-week and Mason Appleton returned after an 11-game absence. The lines looked like this:

Connor-Scheifele-Iafallo
Ehlers-Namestnikov-Vilardi
Niederreiter-Kupari-Perfetti
Barron-Gustafsson-Appleton

In the second period with the Avalanche leading 1-0, the fourth line went to work. Morgan Barron skated to the front of the net and tapped in a perfect backhand pass from David Gustafsson for his fifth of the season.

ANOTHER BIG NIGHT FOR MORRISSEY

The Jets top defenceman played 23:15 and had a couple of assists on the night, giving him 75 career multi-point games, moving him into a tie with Marian Hossa for the ninth most in Jets/Thrashers history. Morrissey's best helper came in the second period when he wristed a perfect shot that hit Gabe Vilardi and past Mackenzie Blackwood to give the Jets their first lead of the night. Vilardi also reached a career high in points with his 42nd of the season.

<https://www.nhl.com/jets/news/cheveldayoff-assesses-jets-at-the-midway-point>

***Cheveldayoff assesses Jets at the midway point
"It's all about trying to win right now."***

By Mitchell Clinton

Despite his team's historic start to the 2024-25 season, the milestones achieved, and the fact the Winnipeg Jets are a top team in the Western Conference, general manager Kevin Cheveldayoff knows one of the most stressful parts of the regular season is coming up.

'It is some of the most sleepless nights, the couple days before the trade deadline,' said Cheveldayoff on Tuesday. 'It's training camp and trade deadline time that you're sitting there sweating bullets.'

The 2025 trade deadline arrives on March 7. No two deadlines are ever the same and the strategies going into them differ depending on cap space and where each team is at.

In 2018, Winnipeg acquired Paul Stastny in an under-the-radar move (until it was announced) that helped push the Jets into the Western Conference Final. Last season, Sean Monahan became a Jet over a month before the actual deadline, with the Jets also adding Tyler Toffoli on deadline day.

What will this year's edition look like? Cheveldayoff said it's tough to predict, especially with the 4 Nations Face-Off on the calendar. The other challenge is the fact that teams are bound by the 23-player roster rule until deadline day.

'Last year, we felt that Monahan fit exactly what we were looking for and Montreal was willing to do it on any time frame, they were just ready to go and we were able to make it happen then. Not every team is in that mentality when it comes to having players available,' said Cheveldayoff. 'The bigger question is the assessment of the market. Are there the right plugs to fill those holes? I think every team is going to have some holes and I think every team is going to have some desires and hopes.'

'There is still a lot of dancing going around. There are a lot of conversations that are at 30,000 feet right now.'

In a sense, every NHL general manager is having to deal with what's best for their team at the current moment – with current information – while also having an eye on what's coming up.

While he's assessing his team's current needs, Cheveldayoff also knows that he has a number of key free agents – both unrestricted and restricted – at the end of the season.

Players like Nikolaj Ehlers and Gabriel Vilardi are on career-year paces, Alex Lafallo continues to show his versatility, and Dylan Samberg's handling of top-four minutes on the blue line are all things that Cheveldayoff has to factor in.

'I've had conversations with them but I wouldn't categorize them as negotiations,' said Cheveldayoff. 'That's the tough side of the business side too. Say you have multiple guys in the same position, it's like your kids, do I have to pick which one is my favourite?'

Of course, how the UFAs are handled also impacts the RFAs. Cheveldayoff knows the importance of making sure the Jets don't open themselves up to offer sheets, so there is a tight rope to walk – with the final salary cap number not formally announced at this time.

"We kind of know where the number might go, but we don't really know where that number might go yet," said Cheveldayoff. "The good part is it looks to be going up as opposed to stagnant for those four years.

"The biggest thing, and every conversation I have with any one of the agents, is we're trying to win. You don't want to upset the apple cart, it's all about trying to win right now."

His commitment to that goal hasn't changed. He likes the group that's in the room and how they play for each other on a nightly basis.

"It's a group you want to win so badly for," said Cheveldayoff. "When I walk through the room, I feel indebted to them for what they've given the community, the organization. I feel it's my obligation to try and help them achieve their goals of winning the Stanley Cup, and the fans as well."

There is a long way to go, and a lot of decisions to be made. But while a lot of the focus is on the final destination, it's important to enjoy the process along the way.

"We're at chapter 48 right now. Every one is a book," said Cheveldayoff on his team through 48 games. "You're trying to set a standard and set the expectations of the group, of the players, the belief, and the values of what it's going to take to win."

NHL.com

<https://www.nhl.com/news/winnipeg-jets-colorado-avalanche-game-recap-january-22>

Pionk propels Jets past Avalanche in OT Wins it at 17 seconds; MacKinnon scores to extend home point streak to 12 for Colorado

By Ryan Boulding

DENVER -- Neal Pionk scored 17 seconds into overtime, giving the Winnipeg Jets a 3-2 victory against the Colorado Avalanche at Ball Arena on Wednesday.

Pionk carried the puck into the offensive zone and won it with a slap shot from the top of the right face-off circle to the far post.

"We saw a very similar goal here in this building, I think two years ago. Neal's going down that wing and taking a slapper far side," Winnipeg defenseman Josh Morrissey said. "A few of us were talking after, when he picked the puck up and had the room. We kind of had flashbacks, and I think he even outdid that last shot with this one. It was a perfect shot. Had a good angle at it, and huge win."

Pionk said of the shot, "Puck must go a little faster in the altitude. I don't know what it is. Just made a good shot."

Morgan Barron and Gabriel Vilardi scored, and Morrissey and Vladislav Namestnikov each had two assists for the Jets (32-14-3), who had lost two straight. Connor Hellebuyck made 25 saves and had the secondary assist on the winning goal.

"We had to use our whole bench to be strong tonight," Winnipeg coach Scott Arniel said. "Took longer than 60 minutes, but it was a battle.

"I really liked how we played, and there's a lot of good things off of that."

Nathan MacKinnon scored to extend his home point streak to 12 games (seven goals, 12 assists), and Cale Makar also had a goal for the Avalanche (28-19-2), who have lost three of four. Jonathan Drouin had two assists, and Mackenzie Blackwood made 22 saves.

"Way fewer mistakes than some of our previous losses," Colorado coach Jared Bednar said. "Competed hard. Yeah, I liked our game. You always want it to be better, but I can't fault our effort, our competitiveness tonight. Did a lot of good things. Hellebuyck was good again. I thought we generated enough to win the game."

MacKinnon gave Colorado a 1-0 lead at 6:09 of the second period when he scored on his own rebound past a sprawling Hellebuyck. His initial shot hit the right post and caromed to him in the right circle.

"The couple goals we did have were great plays," Avalanche defenseman Keaton Middleton said. "I thought we had a stride in the right direction, but it's still a bummer we lost, right? We come for two points, not one."

Barron tied it 1-1 at 10:56, redirecting David Gustafsson's backdoor pass at the left post.

"It's a hard league, and if you want to stay on the outside, you're not going to get much," Arniel said. "You have to get inside to find sometimes those greasy goals. We may take an extra shot, maybe get banged on a little bit, but at the end of the day, when you score goals like that, the reward's nice."

Vilardi put Winnipeg in front 2-1 at 18:44 when Morrissey's shot from above the left circle deflected off him at the left side of the net. It was Vilardi's 20th goal of the season.

"I saw him on the side of the net and tried to shoot it at him. He's got great hands," Morrissey said of Vilardi. "I was getting ribbed by a couple guys, specifically [MacKinnon] on that one. Just, 'You missed the net by four feet.' I was like, 'Hey, is what it is.'"

Makar tied it 2-2 at 7:05 of the third period. He took a pass from Mikko Rantanen on the rush, went backhand-to-forehand at the bottom of the left circle and scored high to the far side while falling down.

"He's an unbelievable player," Morrissey said. "Broke it out from one knee and came up the ice with a lot of speed. Obviously, he got outside and scored a nice goal. [I] skate a lot with him in the summer, see that kind of play happen a lot in 2-on-2 and 3-on-3. And obviously, he translates that and does it night in and night out in the NHL, so special player. Obviously would have liked to stop it."

NOTES: Morrissey had his 75th career multipoint game, moving him into a tie with Marian Hossa for the ninth most in Jets/Atlanta Thrashers history. ... Pionk tied Mathieu Perreault (Dec. 3, 2014, against the Edmonton Oilers) and Bryan Little (Dec. 3, 2016, against the St. Louis Blues) for the second-fastest goal to start overtime in Jets/Thrashers history, behind Andrew Ladd (16 seconds on March 30, 2012, against the Carolina Hurricanes). ... Winnipeg forward Mason Appleton had one shot on goal in 11:53 of ice time after missing the previous 11 games with a lower-body injury. ... MacKinnon is one goal shy of becoming the fifth player in Avalanche/Quebec Nordiques history with 10 or more 20-goal seasons (Joe Sakic, 17; Milan Hejduk, 11; Peter Stastny and Michel Goulet, 10).

Associated Press

<https://www.sportsnet.ca/nhl/article/pionk-scores-in-ot-to-lift-jets-over-avalanche/>

Pionk scores in OT to lift Jets over Avalanche

By Associated Press

DENVER— Neal Pionk scored 17 seconds into overtime, and the Winnipeg Jets beat the Colorado Avalanche 3-2 on Wednesday night.

Jets goalie Connor Hellebuyck started the winning play when he sent the puck to Vladislav Namestnikov, who fed Pionk skating down the right side. Pionk's slap shot beat Mackenzie Blackwood to end Winnipeg's two-game skid.

Morgan Barron and Gabriel Vilardi also scored for Winnipeg, and Hellebuyck stopped 25 shots.

Nathan MacKinnon and Cale Makar scored for Colorado, and Blackwood had 22 saves.

Colorado took a 1-0 lead in the second on MacKinnon's 19th goal of the season, but Barron and Vilardi scored before the second intermission to give the Jets the lead.

Makar tied it at 7:05 of the third when he got behind the Winnipeg defense and sent a shot over Hellebuyck's left shoulder as he was falling to the ice.

Linesman Jonny Murray left the game in the second period after a collision with Colorado defenseman Devon Toews. He returned to start the third but left again and didn't return.

Takeaways

Jets: Winnipeg rebounded from a loss at Utah that coach Scott Arniel called "embarrassing." The Jets limited Colorado's chances and killed off both power plays, including one late in the third period.

Avalanche: Colorado finished a five-game homestand 2-2-1 and dropped two division games. The Avalanche lost three of four games against Winnipeg and are 7-8-1 against Central Division opponents.

Key moment

With the score tied late in the third period, Winnipeg's Mark Scheifele got behind Colorado defenders and had a close-in chance that Blackwood saved. Scheifele tried to tap in the rebound but Blackwood stopped it with his left pad as he was sprawled in his crease.

Key stat

Hellebuyck had a shutout streak of 140 minutes against Colorado broken by MacKinnon's goal. Two of his six shutouts this season have come against the Avalanche.

Up next

Jets host Utah on Friday to begin a two-game homestand, and Avalanche visit Boston on Saturday to open a three-game trip.

TSN.ca

<https://www.tsn.ca/nhl/video/jets-respond-after-getting-called-out-by-arniel-following-loss-to-utah%7E3067090>

Jets respond after getting called out by Arniel following loss to Utah (VIDEO)

After head coach Scott Arniel called the Jets' loss to Utah on Monday 'embarrassing', how did the team respond in their win over the Avalanche? How was Adam Lowry's absence felt against Colorado? TSN Hockey analyst Martin Biron joins Jay Onrait to weigh in.

Sportsnet.ca

<https://www.sportsnet.ca/nhl/article/resilient-jets-show-their-mettle-in-ot-win-over-avalanche/>

Resilient Jets show their mettle in OT win over Avalanche

By Jacob Stoller

Call it whatever you want — pushback, response, resilience — these Winnipeg Jets have it.

Time and time again, this group finds a way to punch back following a disappointing effort.

After getting, as Jets coach Scott Arniel called it, "punched in the nose" by Toronto in late October — ending their eight-game win streak — they rattled off seven straight wins.

After the Panthers annihilated them 5-0 in the first leg of a home and home, the Jets responded with a 6-3 win against the defending Stanley Cup champs in their own barn.

So, the way they responded following Monday's 5-2 loss to Utah — a performance that Arniel coined as "embarrassing" and "horsesh—t" — shouldn't come as much of a surprise.

Wednesday's 3-2 OT win over the Colorado Avalanche was Exhibit C of this core's ability to answer the bell.

"We want to be pushed like an elite team," Josh Morrissey told reporters after his two-assist outing.

And when you're striving to be the crème de la crème, you can't get complacent.

For example, one of the things Arniel was most frustrated about with that Utah game was his team's lack of in-tight chances. The same thing happened during Saturday's loss against

Calgary, where just 13 of the Jets' 67 shot attempts came from high-danger areas. There have been other nights this season where Arniel has walked away feeling like his team didn't position itself properly to pot a greasy goal, or two.

Both of Winnipeg's regulation goals, again, were scored right in the blue paint. The first came at the 9:04 mark of the second period from Morgan Barron, who tapped in a cross-ice pass from David Gustafsson right in the blue paint to tie the game later. At the tail-end of that frame, a point shot from Morrissey deflected off Gabriel Vilardi and in.

"It's a hard league and if you want to stay on the outside, you're not going to get much," Arniel told reporters postgame. "You have to get inside to find those greasy goals and we hadn't scored many as of late."

High-danger goals are an important metric for the Jets. While they may have star talents in Mark Scheifele, Kyle Connor and Josh Morrissey — they don't have superstars like Nathan MacKinnon, Cale Makar and Mikko Rantanen. Which is fine, assuming they're staying true to their identity.

"When we are on our game, we are aggressive, each guy is on his toes and playing with pace and competitiveness and that is something we can control every night," Morrissey said.

The Jets may not have recorded highlight reel goals like Colorado — MacKinnon's (unintentional) 'pass' off the post to himself was ridiculous, as was Makar's Bobby Orr-esque goal — but they finally exemplified Winnipeg Jets hockey.

Colorado's 'Big Three' got their looks, as to be expected, finishing with 30 shot attempts and 12 shots on goal during five-on-five play. But the Jets were able to mitigate second and third chances and it wasn't just thanks to Connor Hellebuyck.

"You try to keep them out of the middle of the ice. Keep them to the outside as much as possible. It's hard, you saw Makar come through there. Both goals, actually, it was because we gave up the middle," Arniel told reporters. "But all in all, I thought we did a pretty good job of keeping them to the outside of the ice and taking away the guts."

Pionk OT Winner = Déjà Vu

If you thought Neal Pionk's OT winner looked familiar, you're not wrong.

He scored virtually the same goal, at a similar part of overtime, on Oct. 19, 2022, in Colorado.

"It was almost the exact same thing. Coming down the wing, I don't think he went top shelf that time.... but yeah, this must be his barn," Arniel said.

His most recent Colorado Clap Bomb clocked in at 94 MPH.

"Must go a little fast from the altitude," Pionk said, tongue-in-cheek, to reporters.

No love for Hip Checks

Since when are hip checks illegal?

With 4:13 to go in the third period, Nikolaj Ehlers was called for tripping on Nathan MacKinnon after delivering what is, undoubtedly, a textbook hip check. It also came as Ehlers was finishing a block attempt, which is why he was so low down to the ground.

Trademarked hip check expert Neal Pionk — who was fined \$5,000 for “clipping” back in November — didn’t take the bait when reporters asked him for his thoughts on the call.

“I’ll let you answer that one,” Pionk said. “I think you know my thoughts.”

Global Winnipeg

<https://globalnews.ca/news/10973323/pionk-scores-the-ot-winner-as-winnipeg-jets-edge-avalanche-3-2/>

Pionk scores OT winner as Winnipeg Jets edge Avalanche 3-2

By Christian Aumell & Russ Hobson Global News

Now that’s the kind of performance a coach will be pleased with.

Coming off a rough loss in Utah that head coach Scott Arniel described with an expletive, the Winnipeg Jets bounced back with a hard-earned 3-2 overtime win in Denver Wednesday night over the division rival Colorado Avalanche.

Neal Pionk ended a thriller with a slapper from the top of the circle just 17 seconds into the O.T. period to give the Jets the victory. It was almost identical to another overtime goal he scored in the same building back in 2022.

“The puck must go a little faster in the altitude,” Pionk joked. “I don’t know what it is. Yeah no, just made a good shot.”

Morgan Barron and Gabriel Vilardi scored the other goals for Winnipeg.

The Jets played without their captain with Adam Lowry out week-to-week after suffering an upper-body injury. But Winnipeg had two players back from injury as Mason Appleton returned from an 11-game absence, while Haydn Fleury was back in the lineup after sitting out the last 12 games.

The Jets beat the Avs for the third this season in their fourth and final meeting of the campaign.

“It was a battle,” said Arniel. “We had lots of zone time against them. They certainly got lots against us. We had to use our whole bench to be strong tonight.

“But I really liked how we played. There was a lot of good things off of that.”

Arniel called their last effort embarrassing in the loss to Utah and his team responded with a big two points.

“I think it’s good coach challenges us,” said Josh Morrissey. “We’ve asked for that. We want to be pushed like an elite team and we have been an elite team this year. So, we’ve responded well when we haven’t had our best games this year so far.

"I thought we battled hard and it wasn't perfect but that's the game of hockey, and found a way to get two points."

The Jets had a key penalty kill in the final four minutes of regulation just to get the game to overtime.

"We had some good sticks," Arniel said. "There was a couple where they did get into the middle with it or tried to make plays.

"We just did a good job of kind of packing it in, but when we had a chance to flare out and go get the loose pucks, we did."

Both teams failed to find the back of the net in the first. Both failing on a power play chance but the best opportunity belonged to Colorado's Nathan MacKinnon. With the Avs on a power play, he zoomed up the ice, undressed Pionk and tossed a backhand on net. It went through Connor Hellebuyck but it hit the post and wound up sitting behind Hellebuyck in the crease before he froze it for a whistle.

MacKinnon would not be denied in the second, however. With a few Jets stuck out at the end of a long shift, the dynamic forward took advantage, collecting a pass at the Winnipeg blueline and darting around Nino Niederreiter and into a ton of open ice in the slot. His initial shot hit the post but he was first to the rebound and fired it into an open net to open the scoring at the 6:09 mark.

It stayed 1-0 until the 10:56 mark when Winnipeg's fourth line got a rare tally. David Gustafsson skated the puck into the Colorado end along the right-hand wall before sliding a perfect backhand pass across the ice to Barron for a net-front tap-in, drawing the Jets level. It was Gustafsson's first point of the season.

Winnipeg grabbed their first lead of the night after the Avalanche iced the puck with less than two minutes to go in the second. The Jets won the faceoff, cycled the puck and got a few shots on net before a Morrissey point shot went off Vilardi's leg and past Mackenzie Blackwood with 1:16 to go in the period.

The Jets entered the night with a 22-0-1 record when leading after two but that would be put to the test by the Avalanche, who tied the game just over seven minutes into the third.

Mikko Rantanen carried the puck into the Winnipeg end before dropping it off to Cale Makar. The speedy blueliner skated towards the net and as he was being tripped by Dylan DeMelo, he lifted the puck over Hellebuyck's glove to tie the game.

The game stayed tied deep into the third when Colorado was given a questionable power play with just over four minutes left. Nikolaj Ehlers caught MacKinnon with a hip check in the Winnipeg zone but was assessed a tripping penalty on the play. Controversy was avoided when the Jets killed it off, setting the stage for overtime.

Colorado won the draw but a missed pass gave Winnipeg the puck, allowing Pionk to skate the puck into the Avalanche zone where he wound up and ripped a slapshot past Blackwood to end the game just 17 seconds into the extra frame. It was Pionk's third career overtime winner.

The Jets return home to host Utah on Friday. The action begins just after 7 p.m. with pregame coverage on 680 CJOB starting at 5 p.m.

The Athletic

<https://www.nytimes.com/athletic/6079595/2025/01/22/winnipeg-jets-nhl-ehlers-cheveldayoff/>

Jets' trade deadline plans, interest in Jonathan Toews: 5 takeaways from GM Kevin Cheveldayoff

By Murat Ates

DENVER — Winnipeg Jets GM Kevin Cheveldayoff gave a midseason address on Tuesday.

For 65 minutes, Cheveldayoff spoke about his trade deadline plans; interest in signing Jonathan Toews; Logan Stanley's role; plans for Nikolaj Ehlers, Neal Pionk and the rest of its free agents and more.

Here are the five most important takeaways from a deep, wide-ranging and often passionate conversation.

Winnipeg is interested in UFA centre Toews

Cheveldayoff said Winnipeg would love to sign Jonathan Toews if Toews deems himself ready to return to NHL hockey.

"It would be a real welcome conversation to see if there's a fit both ways," Cheveldayoff said. "I think it would be a great story for his career, too. Not that he needs another story to his career. But I think he's proud of his roots and would be an interesting fit."

Cheveldayoff and Toews know each other well, having won the 2010 Stanley Cup together in Chicago. It was the first of three Cup wins for Toews — the one in which Toews was at his most productive and won the Conn Smythe Trophy as playoffs MVP.

"From my understanding, what went on with his body is very difficult," Cheveldayoff said. "I think he's going to have to push himself to get his body to respond and see how it responds."

Toews turns 37 in April. He missed the 2020-21 season with Chronic Immune Response Syndrome, plus six weeks in February and March of 2023 to deal with the effects of long COVID-19. He has not played in the NHL in either of the two seasons since then. Toews spent the healthy portions of his career winning things: an incomplete list includes three Cups, a Conn Smythe, a Selke, a Mark Messier Leadership Award, two Olympics gold medals, and a championship at the 2016 World Cup of Hockey.

Cheveldayoff says Toews' journey to full health is a unique one. He's in touch with Toews' representatives and says he'd likely be just as interested in Toews if his NHL return can't be managed until next season.

"Knowing Jonathan and knowing what standard he holds himself to as an athlete, and what impact he wants to have in games when he plays, I think it will be an interesting journey to watch how things unfold with him. ... He's going to want to play to win."

Cheveldayoff may hate the term, but he's 'all in' this season. Winnipeg is projected to have approximately \$11 million to work with on deadline day. Cheveldayoff will use as much of it as the market allows.

This season's Jets are uniquely power-play dependent but also one of the best teams we've ever seen in Winnipeg. They're playing with Connor Hellebuyck at his peak. It makes sense, then, that there's urgency to compete for the Cup here and now. Cup contention was part of the pitch that helped Cheveldayoff retain Hellebuyck and Mark Scheifele.

Cheveldayoff spoke to that urgency, although he bristled at how the media talks about it.

"The headline, 'The Jets are all in,' those are wacky headlines. We've been all in since Day 1," Cheveldayoff said. "Whether you have to make a tough decision to trade somebody ... that's all in. You don't just pick and choose when you have to make tough decisions."

His point is that adding players at the deadline is not the only time he's doing everything in his power to help his team win. He spoke to the pain of trading Andrew Copp, despite the way it yielded Morgan Barron, Brad Lambert, Elias Salomonsson and Thomas Milic because it took an integral piece of the 2022 team out of the dressing room. He also shared that the year Winnipeg acquired the trade deadline fit that's set the standard for all of the moves since, Paul Stastny in 2018, the Washington Capitals won the Cup after adding depth players.

"That being said, we have been as aggressive as we've needed to be or wanted to be and we'll see how things unfold," he said.

To that effect, I asked Cheveldayoff if he sees the same second-line and top-four defence holes that I do. He said the bigger question is whether the market can provide the players that fit those holes.

"Right now there's still a lot of dancing going around, a lot of conversations that are (still) at 30,000 feet," he said. "Everyone might have these guys out there in trade rumours or trade talks and stuff like that, but that doesn't necessarily mean that's what's happening behind the scenes on the phone calls. Some teams might extend some players, some teams might decide to keep their own rentals because that's where they're at."

Timing will be big for the Jets as they look to maximize their additions. The Jets are building cap space by the day so the sooner they strike, the less cap space they'll have to work with when they shop.

Winnipeg's early acquisition of Sean Monahan last season was a unique situation. Not only was Monahan available early — the Montreal Canadiens weren't waiting until the deadline to move him — but the move came with a cost. The Jets benefited from striking early, then suffered because Declan Chisholm was waived and claimed by Minnesota. The 23-player roster limit binds teams until deadline day, so a follow-up move was necessary; Cheveldayoff doesn't sound like he's going to strike early this time around.

Ehlers? Pionk? Not all UFAs will be back

When Cheveldayoff referenced teams keeping their own rentals, Ehlers, Pionk, Mason Appleton, Alex Iafallo and Vladislav Namestnikov came to mind. Cheveldayoff has been in contact with all of their agents, although he was clear that communication isn't the same as negotiation.

“The newsflash is we probably won’t get all of these guys signed, from a UFA standpoint,” he said. “We’ve got, obviously, some RFAs that are performing very well and are in various different stages of their years before unrestricted free agency. We’ll tend to that.”

Ehlers is the biggest star of the UFA crop. The Jets drafted him No. 9 in 2014 and watched the speedster develop into a top five-on-five scorer; now he’s on the top power play, it’s cooking and he’s on pace for the most productive season of his career — just in time to hit free agency.

“Nik’s someone that, obviously when you watch them grow up, they do kind of become like your kids, so to speak. It’s great to see the career that he’s had and having. At the end of the day, there’s nothing more that I’d love to do than raise a Cup with him,” Cheveldayoff said. “The business side will be the business side. Where that goes ... that story’s still unfolding.”

I asked Cheveldayoff about the idea of a self-rental, wondering if he felt it would be dangerous for team chemistry to trade Ehlers — or any UFA — before the trade deadline, even if it was clear they were on their way out.

“You know, I guess it depends on the situation that you’re in. I think that, as a manager, you’re always trying to be prepared for everything. That preparedness doesn’t necessarily mean at the trade deadline.”

I can’t say I know exactly what he meant by that but it sounded as though Cheveldayoff might — might — have some other contingencies in place. He went on to talk about the number of moving parts and factors that his management team is currently discussing in meetings.

What kinds of factors?

“(Factors that) pertain to the individual. And that pertain to the team. And that pertain to the locker room. And that pertain to, you know, style, pertain to ... some other things that I’m not even going to tell you.”

The Jets are passionate about Stanley

Logan Stanley is the subject of tremendous fan debate. His ice time and opportunity is the single most requested topic covered in this week’s mailbag — and rest assured, that’s coming soon. He was even booed — briefly, and by a minority of fans — after a giveaway led to Vancouver’s only goal in a 6-1 Jets romp last week.

Fans clearly want to know why Stanley is Winnipeg’s go-to depth defenceman.

“I’ve never told a coach who to put in the lineup,” Cheveldayoff said on Tuesday. “Obviously we sign players and there’s different development curves for players. Some get in early, some don’t. The coach’s job is, you have a roster of 23 and you try to make those decisions. We talk about all those things. Coaches make decisions. I’ve never seen a coach make a decision not with the best interest of trying to win.”

The Jets continue to prioritize Logan Stanley, the subject of much fan debate. (Bob Kupbens / Imagn Images)

Cheveldayoff was then asked about Stanley’s size and toughness — and whether or not Winnipeg would look to add more of it at the trade deadline.

“You look at what’s available out there on the marketplace,” he said. “If that’s something that you’re looking for, that’s something that you’ll certainly try to acquire. Sitting here today I can’t tell you who or what is really going to be on the market at this point yet.”

Cheveldayoff’s own assessment is that Stanley is a part of the 31-14-3 Jets, their highs and their lows.

“I’m not going to sit here and say the players are perfect, because they’re not. That’s part of the way the National Hockey League works. Sometimes you’ll have opportunities to maybe look at something different, but this is the group we have here right now,” he said. “It is interesting, because how many games did he play in the 15-1 run? He played quite a few. He played, and he’s part of a group of players that have gotten to this point. Whether he’s a bigger part or smaller part moving forward, we’ll see.”

It’s true that Stanley has played a role on a winning team. In grading Stanley a “D” in our recent report cards piece, I noted the Jets have won Stanley’s minutes — that, despite legitimate criticism of his game at five-on-five and on the penalty kill, it was important to keep things in context.

Scott Arniel and Dean Chynoweth run their bench such that their third pair doesn’t see elite NHL opposition nearly as often as the top four. Consider that Stanley’s giveaway to Nick Bjugstad against Utah led to a very different outcome than Dylan Samberg’s giveaway on Logan Cooley’s highlight-reel goal. It can simultaneously be true that Stanley occupies the most obvious position to upgrade, that he struggles defensively, and that the issues are not so big that they’ve tanked the conference-leading Jets.

Still, it’s clear Winnipeg has prioritized Stanley several times since trading up to draft him — including at the cost of other players I view as superior to Stanley. So I asked Cheveldayoff about his own role in Stanley’s opportunity. No, he doesn’t run the Jets’ bench but he did waive Chisholm and Johnathan Kovacevic instead of Stanley. He protected Stanley at the Seattle expansion draft, exposing Dylan DeMelo (while Appleton was ultimately claimed). I don’t view Ville Heinola as having an NHL breakthrough season but Stanley is taking minutes that could go to the 23-year-old defenceman. Heinola has previously asked for a trade — in the same, non-emergent “play me or trade me” way that Stanley did in 2023 — and one can easily imagine the Jets losing him at some point, too.

“If you go back to the playoffs series against Edmonton, everyone seems to forget the role that (Stanley) played there in winning four straight against Edmonton. He was a regular shift player, he played all the games. We go into Montreal, he’s the one that scores the two goals in Montreal. So he’s on a pretty good trajectory as a developing player at that point in time,” Cheveldayoff said. “Now he ends up having a bunch of injuries there. Does his development get changed? Or stalled or whatever? Just like Ville. Ville obviously had a very good camp last year and the unfortunate injury derailed him. And then the recurrence of the infection this year set him back again. Those are things you don’t know, you can’t prognosticate.”

Cheveldayoff then spoke about development.

“Do some players peak? Sure. Do some people stagnate? Sure. Do some people never develop? Sure. That’s the thing. One thing I do know for sure is developing in the National Hockey League is a very unforgiving thing. It’s either unforgiving for the player or the coach or the management. At the end of the day, the mindset is to win. And that’s what it’s always been

here. Sometimes there's collateral damage along the way and we wish things wouldn't have gone in certain directions or other directions."

Hellebuyck, Morrissey and Scheifele got to see Cheveldayoff's playbook. Connor is next

Do you remember the way Cheveldayoff opened up his playbook to Hellebuyck and Scheifele in the summer of 2023, selling them on his vision for Winnipeg's future and thus retaining his top centre and franchise goaltender?

"It was pretty unique. Behind the scenes, the biggest thing was there was a lot of transparency between their representatives and ourselves," Cheveldayoff said at the time. "It was unique in a sense that we probably shared some things with the other camp about what was going on more so than we have ever done with anything else."

Multiple players have expressed frustration to me about Cheveldayoff's tendency to keep his cards close to the vest — not just with media but in talks with their agents — so I've wondered if the GM's play with Scheifele and Hellebuyck represented a new way of doing business for the Jets GM.

I've asked Cheveldayoff about that concept a few times — on the day of those signings, at last year's trade deadline, and again this year. My takeaway from our conversations has been that Cheveldayoff's transparency, as effective as it was, is a play reserved for the team's franchise cornerstones.

On Tuesday, I asked him if Ehlers or Pionk were so integral to the Jets as to be on the Scheifele/Hellebuyck level of transparency. He responded with a story about Josh Morrissey.

"Josh Morrissey was on that level back when he signed his bridge deal (in 2018). If you remember, at that point in time there was a brief holdout from training camp. We were both very, very desirous of trying to get a long-term deal done but the math just didn't work ... I said, 'This is the problem. Two years from now, we're in good shape. Next year, the rules of the cap, I can sign you. It's got nothing to do with we don't believe in you or anything like that.'"

Morrissey took Cheveldayoff at his word, signed a two-year bridge deal, and then committed to the eight-year, \$6.25 million contract he's on now.

"Every situation and circumstance might be different," Cheveldayoff said.

It was clear to me in the moment that Ehlers and Pionk are not in the "here are my long-term plans and how you fit into them" echelon of GM-player transparency that Morrissey, Scheifele, and Hellebuyck were. That seems realistic; if the Jets didn't have those three players, they'd be rebuilding, while there are ways to stay competitive without Ehlers or Pionk.

In the end, I suspect the next player with whom Cheveldayoff shares longer-term planning will be Kyle Connor, UFA 2026.

Winnipeg Free Press

<https://www.winnipegfreepress.com/breakingnews/2025/01/23/pionk-pounds-ot-winner-against-avs>

Pionk pounds OT winner against Avs Desperate hockey club bounces back after lacklustre loss to UHC

By: Mike McIntyre

DENVER — There was certainly nothing embarrassing about this one.

The Winnipeg Jets limped into Denver licking their wounds after an ugly Monday night loss in Utah that had their coach, Scott Arniel, seeing red.

After taking a day away from the rink on Tuesday — cancelling a practice and spending time, as forward Alex Lafallo put it, to “look yourself in the mirror” — the Jets had to love what was staring back at them Wednesday night.

A 3-2 overtime victory over the Colorado Avalanche in front of a sold-out crowd at Ball Arena was just what the doctor ordered.

Defenceman Neal Pionk was the three-on-three hero, unloading a rocket of a slapshot just 17 seconds into the session to give the visitors two much-needed points. His seventh of the season sent the Jets into hockey heaven.

“Must go a little faster from the altitude,” Pionk joked of the 94 MPH heater that eerily resembled the overtime winner he scored in the very same building back on Oct. 19, 2022.

“From an individual effort, just everybody picking up their game a little bit. And I thought overall, as a team, we were patient. We allowed the game to come to us and then took advantage of the opportunities when we could.”

Winnipeg improves to 32-14-3 on the year, including 3-1-0 against Colorado this season, and remains on top of both the Central Division and Western Conference standings. The Avalanche are now 28-19-2.

“We want to be pushed like an elite team, and we have been an elite team this year, so we have responded well when we haven’t had our best games this year so far,” defenceman Josh Morrissey said of getting called out publicly (and, no doubt, privately) by Arniel.

This was a wildly entertaining, back-and-forth affair between two teams that would appear to be legitimate contenders. It passed the test for Arniel, who was looking for a return to the standard the Jets have set for themselves and not the type of loose “pond hockey” they played in the 5-2 setback in Salt Lake City, the second straight loss for his squad.

“That’s sort of the growth of our team, part of our leadership group, knowing that we had to be a lot better than we were,” Arniel said of the response he saw against the Avalanche.

“Nobody was happy with how we played in Utah. Just to come out like we did and play as strong as we did, to keep a real good hockey team, keep their offensive chances down and just kind of stick with the game plan, it was a strong effort by everybody.”

Even more impressive was doing so without captain and shutdown centre Adam Lowry, who is week-to-week with an upper-body injury suffered Monday in Utah.

Let’s break this one down further:

Nate the great

The Jets had done a stellar job of slowing Nathan MacKinnon down in their three previous meetings this season, holding him to just one assist in those games. That’s not an easy feat, considering he leads the NHL in scoring with 18 goals and 74 points entering play.

Make that 19 goals and 75 points now. MacKinnon opened the scoring at 6:09 of the second period, taking advantage of Winnipeg’s inability to get the puck deep after being trapped in their own zone for a prolonged stretch.

With the Jets finally getting past their own blue-line, forward Cole Perfetti could only get the puck just inside the Avalanche zone. Not every exhausted Winnipeg player could get in a much-needed line change, including Dylan Samberg who was no match for a streaking MacKinnon on the rush back up the ice.

MacKinnon hit the post with his first shot, then got his own rebound and buried it past Connor Hellebuyck.

Incredibly, that was the first regular-season goal Colorado has scored on Hellebuyck in a span of 215 minutes and 28 seconds — so nearly 11 full periods of hockey. The reigning Vezina Trophy winner had recorded three straight shutouts against Colorado — in both games he’s played against them this year, and in their final regular-season meeting last year.

Going to the net

It’s easier said than done, to be clear. But “get to the net” has been a mantra for the Jets, especially as of late when the offence has started to dry up.

Both of Winnipeg’s second period tallies were prime examples of that.

“It’s a hard league and if you want to stay on the outside, you’re not going to get much,” said Arniel.

“You have to get inside to find those greasy goals and we hadn’t scored many as of late. Just for us to go in there and you may take an extra shot and maybe get banged on a little bit but at the end of the day, when you score goals like that, the reward’s nice.”

The first, off the stick of Morgan Barron, came right on Mackenzie Blackwood’s doorstep as he re-directed a terrific David Gustafsson pass at 10:56 of the second period. Morrissey’s speedy puck carry through the neutral zone got things going in the right direction.

The second, off the body of Gabe Vilardi, came just to Blackwood’s right as Morrissey’s shot attempt deflected off him and into the Avalanche net. It’s the 20th goal of the year for Vilardi,

making him the third Jets skater (along with Mark Scheifele and Kyle Connor) to reach that milestone so far this season. It came with just 76 seconds left in the middle frame.

“It is not an overly high percentage play but with Gabe there, maybe it is because he is so good at tipping pucks,” said Morrissey.

“I was getting ripped by a couple of guys, specifically Nate (MacKinnon, who was tied up with Vilardi in front of the net) on that one, just you missed the net by four feet and I said, ‘Hey, it is what it is.’”

That was Vilardi’s 42nd point of the year, which is a new career-high for him. He previously had 41 in the 2022-23 season with Los Angeles, doing so in 63 games. Vilardi has now surpassed that in just 49 contests.

Give credit for the Jets for not sagging after giving up the opening goal — something they’ve now done in four straight games.

Hail Cale

Not only do they have the top-scoring forward in the league in MacKinnon, but the Avalanche also have the top-scoring defenceman in the league in Cale Makar.

Talk about a luxury of riches.

Makar showed why he’s so dangerous with a dazzling rush, set up by a great Mikko Rantanen pass, which tied the game 2-2 at 7:05 of the third period.

Sometimes, you just have to tip your hockey helmet.

“He is an unbelievable player,” said Morrissey, who will be teammates with Makar and MacKinnon on Team Canada at the upcoming 4 Nations Face-Off.

“He broke it out from one knee. They came up the ice with a lot of speed and they do a great job of finding the late man in the rush. He got to the outside and scored a nice goal. I skate a lot with him in the summer and that kind of play happened a lot on two-on-two and three-on-three and he translates that night in and night out in the NHL.”

Makar entered the game ice cold, at least by his standards, with no points in six of his previous eight games. You knew it was only a matter of time before that changed.

Praise from their rival

Jared Bednar has been behind the bench here in the Mile High City for nearly a decade and led the Avalanche to a Stanley Cup in 2022. He knows a good team when he sees one — and it’s clear he views the Jets in a very favourable light.

“They’re No. 1 in the league in suppressing scoring chances off the rush, off the D zone. They’re not giving you any space,” he said prior to puck drop.

“You’re going to have to go earn everything you get and then some. Because when you do earn some, then you’ve got to beat Hellebuyck. So they take a tremendous amount of pride in it, it’s where their game has improved, too, and why they’re a top team in the league at this point this year.”

Bednar also had a good take on Arniel's fiery post-game rant.

"From an outsider looking in and looking at the way they play, you're going to have games where you're bad. It's an 82-game season. It's a marathon. We've played multiple games in the last two weeks that were bad and we're still pushing," Bednar began.

"As coaches you hang on to the losses and the losses bug you. You expect to win every night and you expect your team to play well every night, and when they don't you get mad and players get mad."

The key, he explained, is to channel that anger in a positive fashion, which he was expecting to see from Winnipeg.

"Will they play hard? Yes, I expect them to bounce back to their best game again. It's up to us to go beat them."

Spoiler alert: They did not.

Key play

Pionk's overtime rocket was the difference.

Three stars

1. Jets D Josh Morrissey: 2A
2. Avs D Cale Makar: 1G.
3. Jets D Neal Pionk: Game-winning goal.

Extra, extra

Winnipeg killed off both minor penalties they took, including an iffy call late in the third period that no doubt had the culprit, Nikolaj Ehlers, sweating bullets in the sin bin. Ehlers appeared to throw a nice hip check on MacKinnon, who was knocked to the ice, but the referees ruled it was tripping.

"A lost art," Arniel said of the hip check.

The Jets went 0-for-1 on the power play. Incredibly, they didn't get any power plays in their previous two meetings this year against Colorado, who clearly are on their best behaviour when they face Winnipeg.

Hellebuyck finished with 25 saves, along with a secondary assist on Pionk's game-winner. Blackwood, who has helped turn Colorado's season around since coming over in a trade from San Jose, stopped 22 pucks.

Winnipeg's healthy scratches were defencemen Colin Miller and Ville Heinola and forward Dominic Toninato.

The Jets stay overnight in Denver and are set to fly home Thursday afternoon. They'll open a two-game homestand starting Friday night against Utah.

<https://www.winnipegfreepress.com/breakingnews/2025/01/22/jets-facing-life-without-lowry>

Jets facing life without Lowry Captain out week-to-week after getting injured in loss to UHC

By: Mike McIntyre

DENVER — The Winnipeg Jets aren't going to be able to follow their leader for the foreseeable future.

Captain Adam Lowry is out "week-to-week" after suffering an upper-body injury Monday night in Salt Lake City. The 31-year-old crashed heavily into the boards early in the first period after appearing to get tangled with Utah forward Lawson Crouse. After playing a few more shifts he did not come out for the middle frame.

"It really affected him in terms of what he was able to do," Jets coach Scott Arniel said Wednesday after his team's morning skate in Denver. "Obviously a big blow. Just like we've done with other injuries, other guys have to step up."

Lowry, 31, was on pace to have a career offensive year in addition to being an elite shutdown centre on one of the league's top teams. He has 26 points (11G, 15A) in 48 games while also being a significant presence on the penalty kill.

"A huge loss," said forward Mason Appleton.

"He's our captain, our backbone in a sense. He does a lot of things all over the ice. He's been scoring too and defending really hard. It's a huge loss for us and as soon as we can get him back, that would be great."

Arniel didn't specify exactly what the injury is but clarified it's not a concussion.

"It's going to be tough without him. He's a hell of a captain and does everything out there," said forward Alex Iafallo.

"However long he's out, it's going to be tough without him. But he's always around the room, today just talking with guys and stuff. He's awesome off the ice, too. He's still here and we'll just have to play hard for him and play hard for each other."

After facing Colorado on Wednesday, the Jets have seven games remaining over the next two weeks before the two-week break for the 4 Nations Face-Off. Whether Lowry can return prior to that pause remains to be seen.

In addition to being valuable, Lowry has also proven to be extremely durable despite his rugged playing style. He played 81 games last year, 82 the year prior and 79 the season before that.

Lowry has excelled this year on a line with Appleton and Nino Niederreiter, typically tilting the ice when out against the other's team's best offensive weapons. Appleton suffered an injury on Dec. 28 and Arniel was forced to juggle some things and appeared to find gold by playing Lowry with Nikolaj Ehlers and Alex Iafallo.

That trio had several excellent games together, but changes are once again necessary.

"It's by committee now," said Arniel.

As the Jets faced the Avalanche Wednesday, Arniel moved Lafallo to the top line with Mark Scheifele and Kyle Connor and had Ehlers on the second line with Gabe Vilardi and Vlad Namestnikov. Niederreiter remained on the third line, now with Cole Perfetti and Rasmus Kupari, while Appleton was on the fourth line with Morgan Barron and David Gustafsson.

"There's a little bit of everything kind of happening here. I had lots of time (Tuesday) to kind of think it over," said Arniel. "I wanted to put a net-front guy with each of the lines as well, but there's some faceoff things as well."

Lowry's injury comes just as the Jets were on the cusp of being fully healthy, with defenceman Haydn Fleury also returning to the lineup on Wednesday night for the first time since Dec. 23 and joining Appleton in making his return.

"I've been in this situation before and just try to build my game and get going. Excited to be back for sure."

—Mason Appleton

"It always feels kind of long. A month away is a decent amount of time where you've kind of got to ease back into it a little bit," Appleton said of missing the last 11 games (Fleury missed 12).

"You're not going to feel great right away. But I've been in this situation before and just try to build my game and get going. Excited to be back for sure."

Fleury's return gives the Jets eight healthy defencemen for the first time all season. On Wednesday, it was Ville Heinola and Colin Miller as the two healthy scratches.'

"We're going to need them, we're going to use them. I've talked to them all. I don't know what the batting order is going to be, but they're not going to sit for long periods of time," said Arniel.

"I'm going to try to get everybody going, because you never know what happens coming up to the 4 Nations. These injuries, we've seen too many of them already on our back-end. I just want to make sure everybody is up and running."

One curious development was Logan Stanley moving over to his off-side on Wednesday to skate beside Fleury, who is also a left-shot, on the third defence pairing.

"This has a lot to do with (Fleury). If I threw him in and he's never played the right side, he would be at a disadvantage," said Arniel.

"We need his skating ability, especially (Wednesday night). Some fresh legs, he's coming off an injury and he played real well for us, he was in our top-four for a long stretch (when Dylan Samberg was injured earlier this year)."

Miller is a right-shot, while Heinola is a left-shot who has spent plenty of time on the right side. Arniel said he elected to keep Stanley in the lineup and move him to the right side because he did so last year at times with Samberg and Nate Schmidt.

“Stan does feel comfortable over there, and I hope to see that one-timer that came a few times last year, where Sammy fed him and he got that shot off. We’ll see. Hopefully that can be a smooth transition,” said Arniel.

Winnipeg Sun

<https://winnipeg.sun.com/sports/hockey/nhl/winnipeg-jets/pionk-pots-the-winner-jets-beat-the-avalanche-3-2-in-overtime>

Pionk pots the winner: Jets beat the Avalanche 3-2 in overtime

By Gordon Anderson, Winnipeg Sun

Neal Pionk scored the game-winning goal 17 seconds into overtime and the Winnipeg Jets beat the Colorado Avalanche 3-2 on Wednesday night.

Pionk’s shot from inside the left face-off circle zipped over the right shoulder of Mackenzie Blackwood, before pinging off the crossbar. The goal was Pionk’s seventh of the season.

The snipe reminded Pionk of a goal he scored in similar circumstances a couple of seasons ago in Colorado.

“Yeah, two years ago. Yeah, about the same thing,” Pionk told reporters in Colorado.

“Yeah, I remember it,” head coach Scott Arniel added. “It was almost the exact same thing. Coming down the wing, I don’t think he went top shelf that time.... but yeah, this must be his barn. Helly made a nice goalie hand-off there and obviously we caught a guy deep, it’s nice to see us finish it off.”

Vladislav Namestnikov and Connor Hellebuyck picked up the assists on the winner. Namestnikov had two helpers on the night.

Prior to the Pionk blast, the Avalanche had a chance to take the lead late in the third when Nikolaj Ehlers was given a minor for tripping after he upended Nathan MacKinnon with a hip check at 15:47.

“I’ll let you answer that one,” Pionk said when he was asked for his opinion on the hip check. “Listen, it is what it is. The game happens fast. The refs call it, they call it. I thought our penalty kill did a great job, whether you agree with it or not. We got to kill the penalty, and we did.”

The Avalanche went 0-3 on the man advantage. The Jets went 0-2.

Morgan Barron and Gabe Vilardi also scored for the Jets (32-14-3). Vilardi has reached the 20-goal mark for the third consecutive season. He has 42 points, a career high. Josh Morrissey’s two assists pushes his season total up to 37 helpers. He is even with Vilardi for third in team scoring with 42 points.

The Jets won three of four meetings against the Avalanche in the now completed season series between the division foes. The Jets won 1-0 on Nov. 7, lost 5-2 on Dec. 31, and won 3-0 on Jan 11.

Hellebuyck (29-7-2) stopped 25 of 27 shots in regulation. Hellebuyck's shutout streak against the Avalanche ended at 215:28 seconds when Nathan MacKinnon scored in the second period.

Cale Makar also scored for the Avalanche (28-19-2).

Blackwood (15-13-5) turned aside 22 of 24 shots in regulation.

The Avalanche opened the scoring at 6:09 of the second period when MacKinnon picked up his own rebound and shot the puck into the empty net.

MacKinnon ripped a shot off the left post from the mid-slot. The puck bounced back to the Avalanche forward, and he found the empty net to left of Hellebuyck. The goal was MacKinnon's 19th of the season.

The Jets tied the game at 10:56 when Barron went hard to the right post and deflected a David Gustafsson backhand pass behind Blackwood for his fifth of the season. The assist was Gustafsson's first point of the season in his 17th game.

The Jets took a 2-1 lead at 18:44 when Morrissey's shot hit Vilardi and deflected into the net for his 20th of the season.

Following a goal-mouth scramble, Vilardi passed the puck back to Morrissey near the top of the right face-off circle. Morrissey's shot deflected off the hand of Vilardi and into the net from an acute angle to the right of the Colorado net. Namestnikov picked up a secondary assist on the goal.

"On that play MacKinnon did a pretty good job of getting in the lane and I saw (Vilardi) at the side of the net and just tried to shoot it at him as he has pretty good hands," Morrissey said. "It is not an overly high percentage play but with Gabe there, maybe it is because he is so good at tipping pucks."

The legality of the goal held up the restart, as Arniel explained.

"The league looked at it because it hit [Vilardi's] hand, they wanted to see if there was a push motion and then it's obviously no goal. But it just deflected off his hand," Arniel said.

Colorado tied the game at 7:05 of the third period when Makar went in on goal and beat Hellebuyck high to the glove side.

Makar took a Mikko Rantanen pass and turned the corner on Dylan DeMelo, elevating the puck just before Morrissey could get back into the play and get his stick on the puck.

"He is an unbelievable player," Morrissey said of Makar. "He broke it out from one knee. They came up the ice with a lot of speed and they do a great job of finding the late man in the rush. He got to the outside and scored a nice goal."

<https://winnipeg.sun.com/sports/hockey/nhl/winnipeg-jets/jets-will-be-without-captain-lowry-out-week-to-week-against-avs>

Jets will be without captain Lowry, out week-to-week, against Avs

By Gordon Anderson, Mark Hamm

Jets captain Adam Lowry is out of the lineup as the Jets close out a two-game road trip against the Colorado Avalanche on Wednesday night.

Puck drop is 8: 30 p.m. CST at the Ball Arena.

“Obviously, a big blow,” head coach Scott Arniel told reporters after the morning skate in Colorado. “As you saw he didn’t play the second and third the other night (in Utah). It is kind of what we have done with other injuries. Other people have to step up.”

Arniel says the captain is listed as week-to-week with an upper-body injury.

“It is going to be tough without him,” forward Alex Lafallo said. “He is one hell of a captain and does everything out there. However long he is out, it is going to be tough without him.”

Lowry has 11 goals and 15 assists in 48 games this season.

“It is a huge loss,” forward Mason Appleton said. “He is our captain and our backbone, in a sense. He does a lot of things, all over the ice. He has been scoring and defending hard. He is a huge loss for us, and as soon as we get him back, that will be great.”

The injury to Lowry happened sometime during the first period. Lowry played 5:18 seconds before he was shut down.

“I think it started with that first shift where he fell behind the net,” Arniel said. “He played the rest of the period, and it affected a lot of what he had to do.”

Nearly 48 hours later

In the moments after the 5-2 loss to Utah a couple of days ago, Arniel had a number of choice words to describe the overall team effort.

“That was the most embarrassing game,” Arniel said at the time. “From top to bottom, we did a (expletive) job.”

Nearly 48 hours later, Arniel was able to reflect with a much clearer mindset as to why he was so incensed, where he is normally calm, measured and even erudite.

“Everybody was off and that was the one where we weren’t anywhere near our standards,” Arniel said. “We were loose, we were non-competitive, and we gave up breakaways and two-on-ones. It was pond hockey and that was more than anything why I was frustrated, and they were too. I am not big on that but, just at the time there was frustration from what I was watching.”

In, out and all around

Appleton is expected to make his return to the lineup against the Avalanche. He was placed on injury reserve, retroactive to Dec. 28.

"A month away is a decent amount of time," Appleton said. "You're not going to feel great right away, but I have been in a situation like this before and I am just trying to build my game and get going. I am excited to be back."

Haydn Fleury returns to the lineup and will skate on a pairing with Logan Stanley.

Stanley will slide over to the right side.

"Fleury has never played the right-side and I thought it would be a disadvantage," Arniel said. "We need his skating ability, especially against the Avalanche. With some fresh legs, coming off an injury."

The return of Fleury finally sees the Jets with a full complement of game-ready defenders. Arniel says his guys will get their ice time, he's not sure on how to allocate playing time.

"I don't know what the batting order is going to be, but they are not going to sit for long periods of time," Arniel said. "I am going to try and get everybody going because you never know what will happen. With these injuries, we've seen too many on our back end already and I want to make sure that everybody is up and running for the rest of the season."

lafallo will move onto the top line with Kyle Connor and Mark Scheifele.

'Look yourself in the mirror'

Originally, the Jets had a practice scheduled for 2 p.m. Tuesday at the Jay Burns Arena but that was axed following the three-goal loss.

"It was a look yourself in the mirror kind of day," lafallo said. "We have to get back to playing our way on the road. We have talked a lot about it over the last couple of days. We have to push the pace early, whether that is hitting guys off the first few shifts and creating that aggressive start."

"We can't do anything about Utah," Arniel added. "We have them Friday at home and we will worry about that (then). I didn't think there was anything that was going to help us on Tuesday. We need to be good against this Colorado team. They lost at home the other night and they are going to be angry. We have to be at our best and I just, we had another meeting this morning and we are back where we need to be for tonight."

The Avalanche lost 3-1 to the Minnesota Wild on Monday. The Avs are 2-2-0-0 going into the final game of a five-game homestand.