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<https://www.nhl.com/jets/news/three-things-300-wins-for-hellebuyck>

***Three things - 300 wins for Hellebuyck
Hellebuyck third fastest goaltender in NHL history to reach 300 wins***

By Jamie Thomas

WINNIPEG – It wasn't easy, but the Winnipeg Jets ended their three-game winless slide with a 5-2 win over the Nashville Predators at Canada Life Centre. Connor Hellebuyck recorded the 300th win of his incredible career making 26 saves. Morgan Barron, Josh Morrissey, Kyle Connor, Gabriel Vilardi and Nino Niederreiter scored for Winnipeg (28-12-2) who will host Los Angeles on Friday.

HISTORY FOR HELLE

Connor Hellebuyck set some goals for this season to get to 500 career games played, 40 shutouts and 300 wins. The 31-year-old reached all of those milestones here in Winnipeg and tonight he became the League's third-fastest netminder overall behind Andrei Vasilevskiy (490 GP on Nov. 14, 2024) and Jacques Plante (521 GP on Dec. 25, 1962). He also became the fastest U.S. born goaltender to get to 300 and afterwards during the three-star ceremony showed his appreciation for the fans in the building.

"Going through what the city has gone through the last couple of years and going through it with them and seeing how big we are in the community," said Hellebuyck.

"And how much people care about us, I think it's hard not to start to feel connected and as time grows it just grows stronger."

BACK-TO-BACK GOALS EARLY

There was a lot of conversation this morning about the Jets getting off to a good start against the Preds especially after having the last two days off. The players rewarded the coaching staff with two goals in 14 seconds in the opening period. First, Morgan Barron got his fifth of the season off a goal mouth scramble where he tapped in a loose puck behind Juuse Saros at 6:30.

Josh Morrissey made it 2-0 at 6:46, Dylan DeMelo went cross ice to Morrissey who had lots of time to load up and beat Saros with a slap shot for his fifth of the campaign.

PK ANSWERS THE BELL

Adam Lowry had said Tuesday morning that one of the things the Jets could improve in the second half of the season was their penalty kill. Tonight, one of the big reasons the Jets helped Connor Hellebuyck get his 300th win was the PK that killed six of seven Predator power plays and most of that was without Josh Morrissey who left the game with a lower body injury. Winnipeg had to kill four of those power plays in the third period including a five-on-three advantage.

NHL.com

<https://www.nhl.com/news/nashville-predators-winnipeg-jets-game-recap-january-7>

Hellebuyck gets 300th NHL win, Jets defeat Predators to end 3-game skid Goalie makes 26 saves for Winnipeg; Stamkos, Evangelista injured for Nashville

By Darrin Bauming

WINNIPEG -- Connor Hellebuyck made 26 saves for his 300th NHL win, and the Winnipeg Jets defeated the Nashville Predators 5-2 at Canada Life Centre on Tuesday.

"It feels good. The anticipation was killing me a little bit," said Hellebuyck, who lost his previous two starts (0-1-1). "That's not how I played it out this week, but the guys played so hard in front of me and the crowd was incredible tonight. That's a very memorable one."

Hellebuyck became the fastest U.S.-born goaltender in NHL history to reach the milestone (538 games), and the League's third-fastest overall, behind Andrei Vasilevskiy (490 games) and Jacques Plante (521 games).

"You know, for the longest time I was just playing, taking it day by day, having fun, working hard and trying to get better," Hellebuyck said. "As you get a little older in this League and things start to happen and you start to achieve some things, that kind of sets in and you start to realize that you're doing some great things. I've been grateful to be part of this great organization and have had a lot of these guys around me the entire time. It's been a good team the entire time I've been here, so I'm very grateful for everything that's been going on around me. I know it's not just me, it's a whole team and a whole organization that helps."

Morgan Barron, Josh Morrissey, Kyle Connor, and Gabriel Vilardi scored for the Jets (28-12-2), who had lost three straight (0-2-1). Mark Scheifele had two assists.

"The biggest thing for me is that he [Hellebuyck] signed that eight-year deal last summer," Winnipeg coach Scott Arniel said. "That just proved that he loves being here. He loves a lot of what Winnipeg brings, what Manitoba brings, especially the outdoors stuff. His love for the fans is based on how they cheer his name and how they give him standing ovations. He loves to show it back like that. For him, he's earned it all. Three hundred is a heck of a milestone. You got to tip your hat to greatness that way. You always love to see it when guys want to be here and how the fans reciprocate that back."

Roman Josi had a goal and an assist, and Filip Forsberg also scored for the Predators (13-21-7), who had won two straight. Juuse Saros made 25 saves.

"[Hellebuyck's] been great," Forsberg said. "He's been probably their best player since he came into this League. They have a good system in front of him, too. It makes it somewhat easy -- I wouldn't call it easy, he's obviously made some great saves -- but I think the combination of those two obviously is a winning factor for these guys. He keeps showing up."

Winnipeg scored twice in a span of 16 seconds early in the first period.

"To give up the first one kind of stung us a bit," Nashville coach Andrew Brunette said. "To give up one 16 seconds later, which is never a recipe for success, and (we) let it go a little bit. You

know, we battled back. We were resilient and tried. Their goalie was really good and we weren't able to get one through."

Barron made it 1-0 at 6:30, jamming the puck under Saros. Morrissey followed that with a slap shot from the top of the left circle that went off the post and in to make it 2-0 at 6:46.

"[Rasmus Kupari] made a really good play, obviously, a ton of patience," Barron said. "Then it was a scramble there, and somewhere or other it ended up in the back of the net. Those are the hard areas to go to and it worked out for us."

Connor pushed it to 3-0 when Scheifele found him for a quick shot in the high slot at 18:36.

Forsberg cut it to 3-1 with a power-play goal at 16:45 of the second, scoring with a wrist shot from the top of the right circle.

"I think there's little stretches there where we got a little bit, I guess, sloppy with the puck," Brunette said. "We were a little bit slow to move it. We probably left plays out there. That's always frustrating when you're on the power play, watching the power play, when that happens. But it's been that kind of stretch for us."

Vilardi scored nine seconds into Winnipeg's only power play to make it 4-1 at 7:51 of the third. Nikolaj Ehlers took Scheifele's pass from behind the net and one-touched it from the left face-off dot to the edge of the crease for Vilardi to tap in.

"They get two quick goals and then another one, and you feel like you had a decent first and you can't do nothing," Josi said. "But we stuck with it, won the second (period), and even in third we were kind of right there. Our power play has just got to find a way to score on that 5-on-3 and make it a one goal game."

Josi scored with a slap shot from the point that deflected in off the leg of Jets defenseman Logan Stanley to make it 4-2 at 9:25.

"I think you always look at yourselves when you go 1-for-7 and especially a 5-on-3 late in the game, which is a huge opportunity just to get one and make it a tighter game," Josi said. "I think as a power play, when you go 1-for-7 you always look at yourself and how to make some plays and capitalize."

Winnipeg went 6-for-7 on the penalty kill, including for 1:26 at 5-on-3 in the third period.

"That's just a gritty, character room right there," Hellebuyck said. "Our PK was fantastic tonight. [Nashville] got buzzing a little bit, but it felt like we kept them to the outside and allowed my sightlines and blocked some really big shots. And the few shots they got I was able to get in front of. It took everyone tonight, that's for sure."

Nino Niederreiter scored into an empty net at 17:55 for the 5-2 final.

Morrissey left the game early in the second period after crashing into the Winnipeg goal post. He returned for one shift late in the period before heading to the locker room.

"We needed everyone, and they were great," Hellebuyck said of playing the majority of the game without Morrissey available. "They were fantastic. It's never easy... going in and having to

jump around between lines and linemates. You never like seeing anyone get hurt. Let's hope he has as speedy recovery and back in the next one.

Predators forward Steven Stamkos left early in the second period and did not return. Forward Luke Evangelista also left in the first period due to a lower-body injury, returned briefly in the second, but did not come out for the third period.

NOTES: Arniel says Morrissey will be reassessed on Wednesday for a lower-body injury. ... Brunette had no postgame update on either Stamkos or Evangelista. ... Hellebuyck became the seventh U.S.-born goaltender to record 300 NHL wins, and the second active (Jonathan Quick: 399). ... Connor's goal is his 23rd of the season, which is tied with Scheifele and two others for third in the NHL. ... Forsberg's goal is his first since Nov. 25, ending an 18-game drought. He has 10 goals in 41 games season. He scored 48 goals in 82 games in 2023-24.

Canadian Press

<https://www.chrisd.ca/2025/01/08/winnipeg-jets-nashville-predators-game-win-story/>

Emotional Hellebuyck Shares 300-Win Milestone with Fans, Teammates

By Judy Owen, The Canadian Press

'Not how I played out this week': Hellebuyck reflects on 300-win mark

Connor Hellebuyck admitted it was difficult to stay patient as he was reaching a milestone of 300 NHL career wins.

After being in net for a pair of losses, the Winnipeg Jets goalie finally accomplished that feat in Tuesday's 5-2 victory over the Nashville Predators.

"It feels good," said Hellebuyck, who had 26 saves in the victory. "The anticipation was killing me a little bit.

"That's not how I played it out this week, but the guys played so hard in front of me and the crowd was incredible tonight. That's a very memorable one."

Hellebuyck became the third-fastest NHL netminder to reach 300 wins (300-179-43) in 538 regular-season games. The only other goaltenders to accomplish the milestone faster are Andrei Vasilevskiy (490 games played) and Jacques Plante (521).

The Michigan product is also the fastest U.S.-born netminder in NHL history to reach the 300-win mark, the 41st goalie overall to notch 300 victories and the 30th to have 300 victories and at least 40 shutouts (he has 42).

Plante is the only netminder to tally 300 wins and 40-plus shutouts at a faster pace.

"You know, for the longest time I was just playing. Taking it day-by-day, having fun, working hard and trying to get better," Hellebuyck said.

"As you get a little older in this league and things start to happen and you start to achieve some things, that kind of sets in and you start to realize that you're doing some great things."

The 10-year veteran was Winnipeg's fifth-round selection in the 2015 draft (130th overall).

Hellebuyck leads the league with 25 wins (25-6-2) and has five shutouts this season.

When he was selected the game's first star, he grabbed the Jets' logo on the front of his jersey as 13,105 fans at Canada Life Centre cheered.

"I was trying to share the moment with the fans," Hellebuyck said. "At the heart of our game, we're kind of entertainers. They've been with us through the start of this. Everyone that was in the crowd tonight, I was trying to give them a piece of that emotion that I was feeling."

The two-time and reigning Vezina Trophy winner also thanked the organization and his teammates.

Hellebuyck led a team effort Tuesday in downing the Predators, who were 1-for-7 on the power play. Winnipeg scored on its lone man advantage.

Morgan Barron and Josh Morrissey scored 16 seconds apart in the first period to get the Jets on their way.

Kyle Connor, Gabriel Vilardi and Nino Niederreiter also had goals for Winnipeg (28-12-2), which halted a three-game losing skid (0-2-1). Mark Scheifele added a pair of assists.

"He very much embraces Winnipeg, and I think Winnipeg embraces him," Barron said of Hellebuyck. "That's really cool to see, the connection that such a great player has with such a great city."

He was also glad Hellebuyck didn't have to keep waiting for the milestone.

"I know we kind of let him down to get that 300th win for him a few times, but it was really cool for him to get it, especially in that fashion," Barron said. "He made some huge saves for us at the end there."

Filip Forsberg ended an 18-game scoring drought with his 10th of the season for the Predators (13-21-7), who finished a season-high six-game road trip (2-4-0). Juuse Saros made 25 saves for Nashville and Roman Josi also scored.

Forsberg has seen plenty of Hellebuyck during his career.

"He's been great," the veteran forward said of Hellebuyck. "He's been probably their best player since he came into this league."

"They have a good system in front of him, too. It makes it somewhat easy. I wouldn't call it easy, he's obviously made some great saves, but I think the combination of those two obviously is a winning factor for these guys. He keeps showing up."

Morrissey left the game limping early in the second period after crashing into a goalpost when he was clipped by Scheifele. Coach Scott Arniel said he'll be assessed Wednesday.

Nashville's Steven Stamkos and Luke Evangelista left the game during the second period and didn't return. Coach Andrew Brunette had no update.

Global Winnipeg

<https://globalnews.ca/news/10947678/hellebuyck-picks-up-300th-win-as-winnipeg-jets-survive-morrissey-injury-to-beat-predators-5-2/>

Hellebuyck picks up 300th win as Winnipeg Jets survive Morrissey injury to beat Predators 5-2

By Christian Aumell & Russ Hobson Global News

It wasn't a pretty game but it will be one that Connor Hellebuyck will never forget.

The reigning Vezina Trophy winner made 26 saves to pick up his 300th career victory as the Winnipeg Jets downed the Nashville Predators 5-2 Tuesday night to end a three-game losing streak.

The Jets struck for three goals in the first period and Hellebuyck took care of the rest with a number of highlight reel saves as the Jets started the second half of their schedule with their first win of 2025.

With the victory Hellebuyck became the third-fastest goalie in NHL history to reach the milestone, doing it in only 538 games.

"Feels good," said Hellebuyck. "The anticipation was killing me a little bit. It's not how I played out this week, but I thought the guys played so hard in front of me and the crowd was incredible tonight, so that's a very memorable one."

But the win came with a price as Josh Morrissey had to leave the game in the second period after he appeared to injure his knee crashing into the goal post. He returned for one shift but then left the game for good.

"Lower-body – we'll see how he is tomorrow," Jets head coach Scott Arniel said after the game. "Obviously he couldn't play the rest of the game there, fell into the goal post.

"It just was hurting."

The Jets were already without injured blueliners Dylan Samberg, Colin Miller and Haydn Fleury and once again had to finish the game with only five defencemen.

"What's this the fourth time, I believe it's happened," Arniel said. "Fourth or fifth time. Kudos to those guys. They did a heck of a job while everybody else (was) stepping up. Ville (Heinola), Cogs (Dylan Coghlan) going in there, kinda playing as a pair. I thought they did a really good job."

The Jets had five different scorers as Morrissey, Morgan Barron, Kyle Connor, Gabriel Vilardi and Nino Niederreiter all found the scoresheet.

The Jets gave the Predators seven power plays, but they only scored once with the man advantage. And the Jets had a key kill on a 5-on-3 late in the game.

“I think that’s just a gritty character room right there,” said Hellebuyck. “I thought our PK (penalty kill) was fantastic tonight. They got buzzing a little bit, but I felt like we kept them to the outside and allowed my sightlines and blocked some really big shots.

“It took everyone tonight that’s for sure.”

After Nashville got a flurry of shots on goal in the first few minutes, the Jets got on the board first thanks to their fourth line.

Rasmus Kupari attempted to jam home a wraparound, setting off a scramble at the side of the net. Barron squeezed the puck through Juuse Saros and into the crease before Nick Blankenburg accidentally nudged it over the goal line at the 6:30 mark of the first.

They had barely stopped playing Barron’s goal song before the horn sounded again for another Jets goal, this one off the stick of Morrissey. Just 16 seconds after Barron’s opener, Morrissey walked in from the left point and wired a perfect slapshot top-corner to make it 2-0 Winnipeg.

The Jets weren’t done there. With 1:24 to go in the first, Connor got loose in the slot, took a feed from Mark Scheifele and wired it through Saros to make it 3-0 after 20 minutes. Heinola picked up an assist on Connor’s goal for his first NHL point since Jan. 3, 2023.

Winnipeg outshot the Predators 11-10 in the opening 20 minutes despite Nashville having the game’s only power play to that point.

The Predators got two more power play chances late in the second and that helped them get on the board with 3:15 left.

With Neal Pionk in the box for delay of game, Logan Stanley failed to clear the puck after a faceoff win, giving Nashville the chance to cycle the puck before Filip Forsberg ripped a shot high over the shoulder of Hellebuyck to make it 3-1.

Winnipeg finally got a power play look in the third and made quick work of it. Scheifele found Nikolaj Ehlers at the left faceoff dot, who slap-passed it in front to Vilardi, who steered it past Saros to make it 4-1 at the 7:51 mark of the third.

From there, the Jets held on for dear life. Roman Josi cut the lead to two when his point shot redirected off the skate of Stanley and in at the 9:25 mark.

Just over a minute later, Stanley was sent off for a high-sticking double minor, followed shortly thereafter by a soft hooking call on Connor. The Jets managed to kill it off thanks to some hard work by Pionk and Dylan DeMelo and great goaltending from Hellebuyck, earning them a loud ovation once the kill was over.

With 2:50 to go, the Predators pulled Saros for an extra attacker but Niederreiter scored into the empty net with a long-range lob with 2:05 to seal the win.

The Jets will have a couple days to heal up before hosting the Kings on Friday.’

<https://globalnews.ca/news/10948138/connor-hellebuyck-winnipeg-jets-career-milestone/>

ANALYSIS: Jets' Hellebuyck reaches another milestone in stellar career

By Paul Edmonds CJOB

Over the course of his 10-year NHL career, there haven't been too many easy nights for Connor Hellebuyck in goal.

The Winnipeg Jets goaltender's accumulation of two Vezina Trophies — and perhaps a third this year — in unanimous fashion, and the statistical receipts to go with them, has been anything but a casual saunter down the mountain.

Moreover, in the parlance of ice fishing, one of Hellebuyck's favourite pastimes, let's just say victories, like walleyes, over his career haven't exactly been jumping out of the hole.

So, it was fitting that on a night where the 31-year-old turned aside 26 of 28 shots in his club's second straight victory over the plucky Nashville Predators to post his 300th career victory, Hellebuyck undoubtedly was challenged to earn it.

In fact, were it not for his stellar performance on Tuesday, the result could have been different, and win number 300 might have had to wait, yet again, for another night.

To this point, Hellebuyck has earned everything he's received, and the Jets have been the prime beneficiary in what is unfolding as a Hall of Fame career right before our eyes. His 300th win Tuesday night was only the latest of his passing milestones in his goaltending career, including 500-plus appearances and more than 40 shutouts.

And in leading the league this year in every significant goaltending category, including wins, goals-against average, save percentage and shutouts, there is no telling what is still to come for the Michigan product — other than, with six years remaining on his contract, whatever does comes next will assuredly be in a Winnipeg Jets jersey and with a 50 per cent chance of it happening before a home crowd.

Tuesday night, Hellebuyck earned the golden stick — emblematic of a goaltender's 300th win in backstopping his team with another fine performance — but it didn't come easy, just like most of the nights that led to Hellebuyck's 299 previous victories.

Sportsnet.ca

<https://www.sportsnet.ca/nhl/article/nothing-fishy-about-hellebuycks-dominance-as-he-hits-300th-win-for-jets/>

Nothing fishy about Hellebuyck's dominance as he hits 300th win for Jets

By Jacob Stoller

WINNIPEG — On a night that was supposed to be all about him, Connor Hellebuyck made it about them.

Fresh off recording his 300th career win, the 31-year-old Winnipeg Jets goalie came out for a victory lap after being named the first star in Wednesday's 5-2 win over the Nashville Predators. He walked out of the Jets tunnel, holding a wooden signed stick that he'd later give to a fan, and held his hands up high while gliding around.

Then, Hellebuyck grabbed the crest of his jersey and flailed the Jets logo around as he skated around the ice. It was a tribute to a fanbase that holds him dear. And a community he's become firmly cemented in.

"They've been with us through the start of this," Hellebuyck said. "Everyone that was in the crowd tonight, I was trying to give them a piece of that emotion that I was feeling."

Hellebuyck's love for the NHL's smallest market is old news around these parts.

He appreciates the franchise's unwavering loyalty to its core, something that many view as a detriment. He's a simple man, one who is more concerned with ice fishing and hunting than he is with the glitz and glamour that other cities offer. In other places, Hellebuyck may not be the most "marketable" player. But his personality is one that the city of Winnipeg can (and has) gotten behind. How many other franchises would flash a walleye — on the electric advertising panel that splits the upper and lower bowl — when their goalie makes a big save?

"He very much embraces Winnipeg, and I think Winnipeg embraces him," Jets forward Morgan Barron said. "That's really cool to see, the connection that such a great player has with such a great city."

Similar to how this city fell in love with Teemu Selanne in the 1990s, Hellebuyck is starting to hold a special place in the hearts of Jets fans. We're not just talking about a star player who's keeping the franchise relevant. We're talking about a player who could very well bring a parade down to Portage and Main.

In a league where workhorse goaltenders are few and far between and tandems have become more prevalent, Hellebuyck is an outlier. A generational talent.

"These guys, they only come around every so often," Jets head coach Scott Arniel said, citing the likes of Martin Brodeur, Patrick Roy and Henrik Lundqvist as other goalies who have dominated their respective eras. "He's one of those guys."

Wednesday was yet another instance, with Hellebuyck shutting the door on several Grade-A chances while backstopping a Jets blueline that lost Josh Morrissey mid-game and was already without Dylan Samberg and Haydn Fleury. Ten of his 26 saves came on the penalty kill.

"That's the greatness that you see," Arniel said.

When you zoom out, Hellebuyck's brilliance is even more eyebrow-raising.

Take this into account: Hellebuyck reached the 300-win and 40-shutout mark in just 529 starts. The only goalie to achieve that milestone quicker was Jacques Plante, who reached it after 521 starts.

And although he may be 10 years into his career, it almost feels like Hellebuyck's best days are ahead of him. That may be hard to believe when looking at a 31-year-old goaltender, but Hellebuyck isn't cut from the same cloth as most.

He's stubborn in the best of ways. After posting a dreadful statline in last year's playoffs — registering an .870 save percentage and a 5.23 goals-against average — Hellebuyck infamously proclaimed that he felt like he had played some of the best hockey in his career during that series. He went on to explain how a lot of those goals were a byproduct of breakdowns in front of him. He wasn't wrong. And he didn't backpedal from those comments when he arrived at training camp this year, reaffirming his belief in his own process.

"That's just his drive. How he prepares. I think that he looked at a lot of what happened last year. I know he's talked to lots of people — (goaltending coach Wade Flaherty), myself — and there's been lots of conversations and that's what he's talked about. There's things that he knows, when he's doing well, he's unbeatable," Arniel said.

Regular-season success may not convince many that Hellebuyck could propel the Jets to a championship, but what he's doing this year is unlike anything we've seen from a goalie in the modern NHL.

Not only does he lead the league in wins (25), save percentage (.926) and goals-against average (2.08), but according to NaturalStatTrick.com, Hellebuyck ranks first in goals saved above expected per 60 minutes (0.85), goals saved above average per 60 (0.73) and high-danger save percentage (.858) among goalies who have played at least 20 games.

That's Hart Trophy-worthy. And when you have a Hart Trophy-calibre talent in net, you've got a chance to hoist Lord Stanley.

Regardless, it's safe to say that the Jets will be adding another statue in True North Square one day.

The Stanley Situation

Injuries may leave the Jets with little choice to play Logan Stanley, but they certainly shouldn't be playing him 20-plus minutes a night.

While logging a career-high 23:26 minutes, Stanley struggled mightily on the Jets second pair alongside Neal Pionk. And that's putting it lightly.

When the six-foot-seven defender was on the ice, the five-on-five shot attempt share was 34-17 (!) in Nashville's favour. He directly contributed to both goals scored against when he was on the ice. The first came moments after he made a weak clear-out attempt on the penalty kill. The second goal deflected off the back of his skate and in. It was a preventable play. While focusing on Gustav Nyquist, who was situated to the left of Hellebuyck, Stanley turned his back to his goaltender and Roman Josi, who ultimately scored off the point shot.

He also took a double high-sticking minor midway through the third period.

Even if Morrissey misses Friday's matchup against the Los Angeles Kings and Samberg isn't ready by then, the Jets would be making a grave mistake if they kept Stanley in the top four. What kind of message does that send to someone like Ville Heinola — an imperfect player, too,

although he played well alongside Dylan Coghlan — if he continues to receive heavy minutes, after a performance like last game?

Aside from those mistakes, even the simplest of sequences — be it a routine retrieval, a breakout pass or a net-front box out — have been a struggle for Stanley. And for what it's worth, he hasn't been nearly physical enough to offset his shortcomings.

Once Winnipeg is at full health, Haydn Fleury should get an extended look as the sixth defenceman. He's above and beyond the most reliable option over both Heinola and Stanley. And although Arniel has talked about how Stanley won't get any better by sitting in the press box, the same could be said for Fleury, a player that — barring any deadline additions — this team is going to need in the playoffs.

The Athletic

<https://www.nytimes.com/athletic/6042151/2025/01/08/winnipeg-jets-nhl-grades-scheifele-connor/>

Winnipeg Jets midseason report cards: Kyle Connor, Mark Scheifele top forward class

By Murat Ates

The Winnipeg Jets started the second half of their season with a 5-2 win against Nashville on Tuesday, which means it's time to grade their midterms.

Winnipeg's dominant power play has given this season an enormous boost, helping multiple forwards score at rates that will set new career highs if they keep it up. But who's leading the way?

Let's break it all down.

(These grades are based on a combination of analytics, eye-test and good old-fashioned results. I won't penalize a player for expected regression; if he's shooting the lights out now, he gets credit for the goals, not dinged for the unsustainable shooting percentage. And yes, there will be a lot of good marks — the Jets are second in the NHL.)

Kyle Connor: A+

Kyle Connor has been the class of Winnipeg's forward group this season. He leads all Jets in points, points per minute, even-strength points and power-play points. He's on pace to cross the 100-point plateau for the first time in his career and to score over 40 goals for the second time. He's also spectacular to watch, routinely making offensive plays that other star players can't make, and the envy of his teammates: Multiple teammates told me earlier this season that, if they could, they would steal Connor's explosive first few strides, or his speed out of a cutback, or his finishing ability.

The stunning thing is Connor has made all of these additions to what was already a brilliant offensive resume while improving his defensive game. While opposing teams continue to run their elite players against Winnipeg's top line — as they've done in the past to great success — Connor has created more quality chances than he's given up.

His defensive impact can be found on highlight reels:

And in charts, like this one from HockeyViz:

Mark Scheifele: A

Mark Scheifele has as many goals as Connor; the Jets are one of only two teams with multiple players on pace to score 40. He has accomplished this while playing through an upper-body injury for a portion of his season, finding a way to shoot a career-best 25 percent through 42 games. He's also winning the expected goals battle despite Winnipeg being outshot while he's on the ice. He's adapted his game to help the Jets' league-leading power play score goals in a variety of new ways. Not every play has to reset back to Scheifele anymore — creating more options and more goals — and the new looks have led to Scheifele scoring more often, not less.

Admittedly, some of Scheifele's most entertaining goals have required the stars to align:

But there's more to his success, even if some regression is expected. Scheifele excels at creating scoring chances from the middle of the ice, using his patience, puck protection and vision to make passes into dangerous areas. His sense of timing is excellent; he moves the puck to his linemates, especially Connor when he has time and space to shoot, and consistently lands among the NHL's shot assist leaders. Like Connor, Scheifele has found himself on the ice for fewer shots against from prime real estate than in recent seasons. Winnipeg's shooters, Scheifele included, have taken care of the rest, and the team has reaped the rewards.

Gabriel Vilardi: A

What do you get when a hockey player has Scheifele's size and Connor's quick hands?

Gabriel Vilardi has scored or set up a disproportionate number of Winnipeg's most exciting goals this season. His power-play goal against Nashville on Tuesday was his 10th — a new career high — and his 37th point, surpassing his total from last season in five fewer games. He also pulled off this mid-air stickhandle against New York, turning it into a give-and-go with Nikolaj Ehlers:

Vilardi's lack of footspeed clearly hasn't kept him from producing points at an elite rate — particularly on the power play. (It should be noted that his five-on-five scoring rate is merely above average, trailing Connor, Ehlers and Scheifele by a lot and Adam Lowry by a little.) He's on pace to set new career highs in goals, assists and points and he's doing so while playing with a defensive conscience that's helped contribute to Connor and Scheifele's two-way improvements.

Nikolaj Ehlers: A

Ehlers is the fourth of four game-breakers on this list and deserves his spot in Winnipeg's top tier, all of whom are set to establish new career highs in points. He's once again an elite five-on-five scorer despite chemistry issues on his line with Vladislav Namestnikov and Cole Perfetti. He's first among all Jets in power-play points per minute — which should not be a surprise but still comes as a shock. He's fit in brilliantly on the top unit, helping it pick opponents apart with quick decisions, an attacking mentality and a wealth of set plays via Davis Payne.

The true surprise? Ehlers' power-play impact hasn't been about zone entries — Connor and Scheifele handle most of those — but about quick decisions with the puck and a commitment to puck recoveries off rebounds and missed shots. An overlooked part of the Jets' success is how fast they recover pucks and get right back on the attack after they miss; Ehlers isn't known for

his wall battles but has been effective. He also established a new career high in power-play points with an assist on Vilardi's goal on Tuesday.

Nino Niederreiter: B+

Nino Niederreiter is a crease-crashing, battle-winning winger. He scores half a point per game each season, generating offence inches from the opponents' goal while backtracking all the way to his goal line to defend. Some of his offence is sporadic, coming in bursts, and he ranks last among Jets forwards in power-play points per minute, but those are nitpicks, not complaints. Overall, he's managing a five-on-five scoring rate (1.57 points per 60 minutes) that would fit in on most NHL teams' second lines and puts him a hair below Vilardi for fifth-best on the team.

Adam Lowry: B+

If Vilardi is scoring the fifth-most points per minute and Connor, Ehlers and Scheifele have the top three spots locked up, who could be No. 4?

Lowry has cooled off of late but has scored like a second-line player at even strength and is on pace for what would be a career high of 47 points as a result. He's also been a cornerstone of Winnipeg's cultural change between its 2022 playoffs miss and today, while occasionally displaying PK heroics that make Winnipeg's 19th-ranked PK unit look better than it's been.

Lowry's line with Niederreiter and Mason Appleton has won its minutes 17-7 this season. Combine that with the Namestnikov-Ehlers-Perfetti line winning its minutes 14-6 and the Jets' middle six has been an outstanding source of strength over Winnipeg's first 42 games.

Cole Perfetti: B

Perfetti has yet to join Winnipeg's game-breaking group of elite scorers, but he's having a solid if up-and-down season in a support role. He's on pace for 45 points in 82 games, which puts him on track with Bryan Little's numbers in 2017-18 and 2018-19. Of course, the Jets went shopping for upgrades to Little in those seasons when they thought they were on the verge of a Stanley Cup run. I think the Jets' second line needs a boost now that Perfetti and Namestnikov are on cold streaks, even as Perfetti's follows big games against tough opponents in Vegas, Tampa Bay and Minnesota. In the short term, Perfetti's grade reflects the distance between Winnipeg's offensive stars and supporting cast. In the long run, he needs a more productive second half than he had last season to maintain this grade by season's end.

This power-play finish is a reminder of Perfetti's puck skill:

Mason Appleton: B

Appleton is the least-often heralded member of Winnipeg's shutdown line. This is a fair outcome given who he plays with, but Appleton has gone to the net hard enough and finished plays often enough to march in lockstep with Niederreiter, close behind Vilardi for fifth on the team. He's week to week with a lower-body injury, perhaps putting a strain on his ability to consolidate what had been a quality start.

Vladislav Namestnikov: C+

Namestnikov has gone ice cold since December, adding a roller-coaster element to a season that started strong. Sure, it took three or four games for him and his linemates to get going, but all three were productive from Winnipeg's 8-3 October win in San Jose through most of its difficult November. Namestnikov had multipoint games against the Sharks, Lightning and Stars, providing the tenacious, Energizer Bunny style of two-way play that made him a smart acquisition for the Jets two seasons ago. But he's scored just five points in 18 games since Dec.

1 — not good enough for a second-line centre on a contending team. Whether it's fading chemistry, banged-up bodies or otherwise, the second line has been less than the sum of its parts for most of the last month.

Alex Iafallo: C+

Alex Iafallo is a player the Jets market would brag about if he carried a cap hit smaller than \$4 million. He's an excellent forechecker, taking smart angles and using a quick stick to knock pucks down. His defensive impact is positive from an analytical point of view and he scores often enough on Winnipeg's second power play to be worthy of his spot on that unit. He doesn't create enough offence on his own to help the Jets make the most out of his defensive strength, relying on crashing the net for tips and rebounds, but that tends to be the type of third- or fourth-line player fans love. He's the logical player to get a boost with Appleton out of the lineup and a helpful bottom-six player overall.

Morgan Barron: C+

Morgan Barron will occasionally turn the corner on a defender, dropping his shoulder and barrelling his way to the front of the net the way Appleton likes to. Barron is bigger, so it creates a ton of chaos when it works, and it works just often enough to make you wonder how he's stuck on eight points in 42 games. Some of it is about total minutes — Winnipeg's fourth line averages between eight and nine minutes of five-on-five time each night — and some is about their secondary shutdown role. Some of it is also just about poor finishing — he's getting his chances from close to the net but is scoring on fewer of his shots than he did in his first two seasons as a Jet. He has a positive defensive impact, despite being unable to stem the flow of the tide on the penalty kill, and most teams' fourth-line players wouldn't grade out this well.

Rasmus Kupari: C

Rasmus Kupari is a fast skater and hardworking player but hasn't followed his highlight-reel preseason with similar impact on the Jets' fourth line. The effort he showed on Barron's goal against Nashville is always there; the efficacy often isn't, with Kupari forechecking and backchecking with plenty of verve and little impact. On the PK, it's more of the same: plenty of hustle but seams open up because his reads don't match the pace of his feet. Kupari is stuck on four points in 38 games; for comparison, Matt Hendricks put up 13 points in 60 games during a heavily criticized 2017-18 season.

David Gustafsson: D

David Gustafsson is the player whose job Kupari won in training camp. He's made it back into the lineup regularly via Appleton's injury but remains the only full-time Jets forward without a point. Gustafsson has enough size, strength and hockey sense to acquit himself well on the fourth line. For now, the good news is he's recovered from the concussion he suffered in a fight against Trent Frederic on Dec. 10. The inexperienced fighter should never have been put in that position against Frederic; the Jets were incensed and rightfully so.

Winnipeg Free Press

<https://www.winnipegfreepress.com/breakingnews/2025/01/07/helly-notches-win-300>

Helly notches win 300 Jets goaltender outstanding in reaching regular-season milestone

By: Ken Wiebe

The wait is finally over and Connor Hellebuyck has taken another step into the rarified air.

By turning aside 26 shots in Tuesday's 5-2 victory over the Nashville Predators, the Winnipeg Jets netminder became just the 30th goaltender in NHL history to record 300 wins and 40 shutouts.

This latest milestone is one that Hellebuyck identified earlier this season when he played in his 500th game.

"The anticipation was killing me a little bit," said Hellebuyck, who made 26 saves in his 538th NHL game and 529th start. "The guys played so hard in front of me and the crowd was incredible. That's a very memorable one."

It's memorable for good reason as Hellebuyck became the third-fastest goalie in NHL history to reach 300 wins (behind Andrei Vasilevskiy of the Tampa Bay Lightning and the great Jacques Plante).

"For the longest time I was just playing. Taking it day-by-day, having fun, working hard and trying to get better," said Hellebuyck. "As you get a little older in this league and things start to happen and you start to achieve some things, that kind of sets in and you start to realize that you're doing some great things. I've been grateful to be part of this great organization and have had a lot of these guys around me the entire time.

"I know it's not just me, it's a whole team and a whole organization that helps."

The Jets, who snapped a three-game losing streak, improved to 28-12-2 on the season and are back in action on Friday against the Los Angeles Kings.

After he was named the first star of the contest and came out to be serenaded by the fans inside Canada Life Centre, Hellebuyck expressed his jubilation by pointing to the crest on his jersey.

"I was trying to share the moment with the fans. At the heart of our game, we're kind of entertainers," said Hellebuyck. "Everyone that was in the crowd, I was trying to give them a piece of that emotion that I was feeling."

Hellebuyck delivered a first half that was Vezina-worthy and also has him in the discussion for the Hart Trophy. His 33rd start of the season was an impressive way to begin the second half.

"You can only say it so many times, he's the best goalie in the world," said Jets forward Cole Perfetti. "We're the only team that has the luxury of saying that, that we play in front of the best goalie in the world. We have his support and his play speaks for itself."

“It’s hard to come up with new ways to say it, other than he’s the best goalie in the world. Nothing rattles him.”

THE INJURY

While the Jets were more than happy to get back to their winning ways, the victory came at a cost as star defenceman Josh Morrissey left the game in the second period with a lower-body injury.

Just under seven minutes into the second period, Morrissey collided with teammate Mark Scheifele in the defensive zone and his leg crashed awkwardly into the post around the knee area.

Morrissey went down the tunnel for further examination after his shift ended and made his way back to the bench a few minutes later.

After taking a quick twirl during a broadcast timeout, Morrissey went out for one shift but was moving around a bit gingerly and went back down the tunnel.

This time he didn’t return.

Jets head coach Scott Arniel didn’t have much of an update after the game, but losing Morrissey for any length of time would be a big blow to a defence corps whose depth is being severely tested.

Morrissey, who finished with 14 shifts for 12:24 of ice time, is up to five goals and 38 points in 42 games this season after blasting home a slapper to give the Jets a 2-0 lead in the first period.

Fellow blue-liner Dylan Samberg shed his non-contact jersey for the morning skate on Tuesday, so there’s a chance he could be ready to return to the Jets’ lineup for one of the games this weekend.

The Jets are also without D-men Colin Miller, who is out for at least two weeks with a fractured larynx and Haydn Fleury, who remains week-to-week with a lower-body injury and just resumed skating in a non-contact jersey.

THE KILL

After Logan Stanley received a double minor for catching Jonathan Marchessault with a high stick and Kyle Connor was given a hooking minor, the Jets had to come through on the penalty kill, nullifying a five-on-three that lasted one minute and 26 seconds during the third period.

“Our PK was fantastic,” said Hellebuyck. “(The Predators) got buzzing a little bit, but it felt like we kept them to the outside and allowed my sightlines and (we) blocked some really big shots, and the few shots they got, I was able to get in front of.

“It took everyone, that’s for sure.”

The Jets went six-for-seven on the penalty kill in the contest and that’s an area the Jets have identified that requires improvement.

“There’s been stretches where it’s been really good, and there’s been stretches where we’ve given up goals at key times,” said Jets captain Adam Lowry. “There have been signs where it looks like it’s on the right track, and then we regress.”

GETTING A LEG UP

In the latest battle of the Barron brothers, Morgan got the Jets on the board after a persistent shift from the fourth line.

Rasmus Kupari got the puck to the net and Barron jammed away at it until it finally squirted loose and went into the net off the stick of Predators D-man Nick Blankenberg.

It was Barron’s fourth goal of the campaign.

Brother Justin took one minor penalty but didn’t have any points for the Predators.

THE KEY PLAY

After seeing their lead cut to 4-2, the Jets manage to kill off a lengthy five-on-three disadvantage with just over five minutes to go in regulation to seal the game.

THE THREE STARS

Connor Hellebuyck: Jets, 26 saves in his 300th NHL victory.

Dylan DeMelo: Jets, One assist, five hits, three blocked shots and a team-high 25:27 of ice time.

Roman Josi: Predators, One goal, two points, five shots on goal.

EXTRA, EXTRA

The Jets power play struck for the first time in three games as Nikolaj Ehlers made a perfect feed in front to Gabe Vilardi. That goal extended the Jets lead to 4-1 and was the 19th marker of the campaign for Vilardi, who has 10 with the man-advantage (which leads the team).

Kyle Connor (with his team-leading 23rd) and Nino Niederreiter (into the empty net) rounded out the scoring for the Jets, who got two assists from Mark Scheifele (which gave him 48 points in 42 games).

The Jets lone healthy scratch was forward Dominic Toninato.

<https://www.winnipegfreepress.com/breakingnews/2025/01/07/jets-miller-recovering-from-fractured-larynx-nhlers-remain-slow-to-adopt-neck-protectors>

Jets’ Miller recovering from fractured larynx; NHLers remain slow to adopt neck protectors

By: Mike McIntyre

Hockey’s latest scary neck injury is hitting home for the Winnipeg Jets. Just don’t hold your breath on it changing anything when it comes to player safety.

Veteran defenceman Colin Miller suffered a fractured larynx last Saturday night after getting struck in the throat with a deflected shot during a game against the Detroit Red Wings at Canada Life Centre.

“A dangerous situation,” is how Jets head coach Scott Arniel described it Tuesday.

Miller, 32, was able to skate off the ice under his own steam but then went down in the tunnel behind the players' bench as team training staff rushed to his aid. There was immediate concern about his airway swelling up.

Fortunately, Miller never lost consciousness and is now on the road to recovery after getting checked out in hospital and seeing a specialist.

"He's doing a lot better," said Arniel, noting Miller was able to ride a stationary bike while his teammates skated before facing the Nashville Predators.

"He's around the guys. Talks a little quieter. But at the end of the day, he's upbeat. Just the biggest thing, it's precaution now. It has to heal."

Miller, who has eight points (2G, 6A) in 34 games with the Jets this season, is expected to miss at least two weeks.

"You never want to see that," said Miller's teammate and friend, Dylan Coghlan, who took his spot in the lineup. "We were worried about him, but he's in good spirits."

There have been several similar incidents this season, including one involving the Jets last month. Captain Adam Lowry took a wrist shot that Chicago Blackhawks defenceman Alec Martinez deflected into his own throat during a Dec. 7 game. He has yet to return to the lineup.

Coghlan, who was previously teammates with Martinez in Las Vegas, also noted St. Louis Blues forward Dylan Holloway had to be taken off the ice on a stretcher after being hit in the neck by a deflected shot in early November. Holloway was fortunate in that the puck only struck a nerve and didn't cause any other damage.

"You never want to see anybody leave the game like that," said Coghlan.

You'd think, given the recent close calls, players would be lining up to don protective gear that might help prevent future incidents.

You'd be wrong.

Vast majority of NHLers still choose to play without neck protection

According to the NHL, only 7.7 per cent of players are wearing neck guards this season despite the fact former NHLer Adam Johnson died in 2023 after suffering a skate cut to the throat during a pro game in England.

Numerous leagues made the protective equipment mandatory following the tragedy, including the English Ice Hockey Association, the Western Hockey League, the Canadian Junior Hockey League, the IIHF, USA Hockey and, last fall, the ECHL and American Hockey League.

However, the NHL has opted to leave the decision to individual players. Only 55 skaters are currently taking the initiative. There were many more in the weeks following Johnson's death, including several on the Jets where the tragedy resonated deeply considering defenceman Neal Pionk was his best friend.

It appears Pionk is one of the only players still wearing one.

“I’ve kind of seen it evolve through the no-helmet thing, visors,” Arniel told the Free Press on Tuesday when asked where he stands on the issue.

“Now, the situations that have happened over the last couple of years with the cuts. Just the socks, wrist bands, the gloves, all of these things that are changing. I don’t have a problem with it. Someday it’s probably going to be just a standard part of the equipment.”

Perhaps, but expect pushback from players. According to a poll of 181 NHL regulars conducted by The Athletic last year, 78 per cent stated they don’t want the league to mandate neck guards. Comfort is cited as the primary reason, even though technology has evolved to make them lighter and cooler than ever.

“At the end of the day, with players wearing visors, it’s taken a while and now it’s pretty much almost all there. I don’t think it’s going to be any different with the neck guard,” Arniel predicted.

Although absorbing a sharp blade would be the primary benefit of a neck guard, softening the blow of a speeding puck certainly couldn’t hurt.

One of the worst-case scenarios happened during a January 2000 game in which Montreal Canadiens forward Trent McLeary was hit with a slapshot from Philadelphia Flyers defenceman Chris Therien. McLeary required an immediate tracheotomy at the rink to save his life.

Now, 25 years later, players are shooting the puck harder than ever, which would seem to be increasing the risk.

Hockey is a game filled with danger, and a look at Winnipeg’s current injury list is a vivid reminder: Dylan Samberg is out with a broken foot, while Haydn Fleury and Mason Appleton are sidelined with hurts as well. But there’s a big difference between something that might knock you out of the lineup for a few weeks, and something that might end your life.

“I’ve seen some scary things over my years,” said Arniel, who was on the Buffalo Sabres in 1989 when goaltender Clint Malarchuk nearly bled to death after suffering a skate cut to his neck.

But the former player-turned-coach has also seen the marvels of prompt medical care, including how Jets trainers rushed to Miller’s aid on Saturday night.

“Having people in place that are ready to react to that, there’s a lot of things that have gone on in this game. Whether it’s our sport or football or some other sports, when you have those people in place that are ready to react — for the players, it certainly is comforting and you never take them for granted,” he said.

“These guys, they are specialists at what they do. We’re special at what we do, the players are — and then, those guys have something that is extremely important for us.”

Winnipeg Sun

<https://winnipeg.sun.com/sports/jets-end-slide-connor-hellebuyck-snags-milestone-in-win-over-preds>

Jets end slide, Connor Hellebuyck snags milestone, in win over Preds

By Paul Friesen

It took three games, but the Winnipeg Jets finally took advantage of some home cooking, winning their first game of the calendar year and adding another notch to the already impressive belt of goalie Connor Hellebuyck.

Facing the road-weary Nashville Predators and coming off a two-day break of their own, the Jets ended a three-game skid with a 5-2 win on Tuesday.

The win was No. 300 for Hellebuyck's career, a milestone reached in 538 games, the third-fastest clip in NHL history.

"The anticipation was killing me a little bit," he said. "And the crowd was incredible. That's a very memorable one."

It also gives him a triple-crown of sorts, to go along with 500 games and 40 shutouts.

The 31-year-old earned this one, as the Jets were whistled for seven penalties to just one against the Predators.

He and his team killed off six of them, including a five-on-three that lasted 1:26 as the third period wound down, the Jets protecting a two-goal lead.

When the kills were complete, the crowd gave their team a standing ovation.

"I did notice that," Hellebuyck said. "Our crowd got really into it and I think we got a lot of momentum from that moment... those little moments they give us a burst of energy, and it helps. It really does."

The Jets scored on their only power play, improving their Central Division-leading record to 28-12-2, Hellebuyck's to 25-6-2.

"There are times we're playing the other team," the Jets' Morgan Barron said. "And you just hear guys saying, 'What is going on? This guy is unbelievable,' just muttering to themselves on the ice. It's just fun. It seems like he hits one of these milestones every couple weeks.

"I am sure there will be another one coming down the pipeline."

Nashville's Filip Forsberg might have been one of those muttering on Tuesday, even if he did score a goal.

"He's been probably their best player since he came into this league," Forsberg said of the two-time Vezina Trophy winner. "They have a good system in front of him, too. It makes it somewhat

easy. I wouldn't call it easy. He's obviously made some great saves. But the combination of those two obviously is a winning factor for these guys. He keeps showing up."

Jets head coach Scott Arniel put it another way.

"You've got to tip your hat to greatness," he said.

Shots were 31-28, Winnipeg, despite the penalty disadvantage.

It was a battle of attrition, too, particularly for Nashville, which was playing the last of a six-game, 13-day road marathon.

The Preds lost two players, forwards Steven Stamkos and Luke Evangelista, while the Jets were without star defenceman Josh Morrissey after he slid into the goal post some seven minutes into the second.

Morrissey came back for one shift before calling it a night.

Arniel praised his five remaining blueliners, saying players like Dylan Coghlan, playing just his fourth game of the season, and Ville Heinola, in his 14th, are getting valuable experience under fire.

"For them to go through these situations and continue to improve... that's all growth we need from them," Arniel said.

After a couple of first-period shifts they'd rather forget, the Jets got on the board in a big way, scoring three straight goals, two of them 16 seconds apart, to all but settle things after just 20 minutes.

Morgan Barron on a scramble for his fourth of the year, Morrissey on a blast from the point on the next shift for his fifth and Kyle Connor's 23rd from the high slot left the Preds reeling.

Gabe Vilardi scored his 19th on the power play.

Nino Niederreiter added a late empty-netter for Winnipeg.

Next up, a visit by the L.A. Kings on Friday.

<https://winnipeg.sun.com/sports/hockey/nhl/winnipeg-jets/us-against-the-world-lack-of-respect-fuels-jets>

Us against the world: lack of respect fuels Jets

By Paul Friesen

They have one of the best goalies in hockey, one of the game's top lines, its most feared power play and a commitment to shutting teams down.

They're among the top three NHL teams in whatever way you want to measure them: wins, points or points-percentage.

Yet there's one category in which it seems the Winnipeg Jets are barely in the top-10 going into the second half of their season: respect.

That lack of respect extends not just to the team – the typical oddsmaker has the Jets ranked ninth in terms of their chances of winning the Stanley Cup – but to the city they play in.

And it's driving them to "stick it to everybody that thinks we can't do it," as Dylan DeMelo put it.

"Everybody likes an underdog, right?" the defenceman told me. "Everybody roots for the small guy. We don't see ourselves as a small guy, but we understand that perception. And we hear the outside noise a little bit.

"That's okay. Everybody has their own opinion. We'll just go about our business."

That business was booming through 41 games.

After Tuesday's slate of games the Jets and Vegas led the pack with 28 wins apiece.

Yet the Jets are no more a Cup talking point than Winnipeg is a destination city. The two seem to go hand-in-hand.

It doesn't go unnoticed, particularly for players who've put roots down and committed their careers to being Jets.

"Yeah, I feel a lot of pride in playing here," defenceman Josh Morrissey said. "I'm like most Winnipeggers, where you're defensive of where you live and play, because we take a lot of flak from friends in other places and people that you meet around Canada, around the world."

Morrissey says it sometimes feels like them against the world.

"We'll show you this is a great place to live or play or work or raise a family, all those things. I definitely have felt that."

Winnipeg is wildly popular for one thing: being on players' no-trade lists.

DeMelo got shipped here from Ottawa five years ago and wouldn't change a thing.

Well, aside from some playoff results.

"We've created a winning brand of hockey. Trying to get over that hump," the 31-year-old from London, Ont., said. "We understand we don't have necessarily some things compared to other cities, whether it's weather or nightlife or whatever it is. But this is one of the better places in the league to play hockey."

Nobody's played it any better this season, yet you wouldn't know it from listening to most of the pundits.

It's not just the players who notice.

“Yeah, bugs me,” head coach Scott Arniel said. “It’s been since the start of the year. Gotten used to it. It’s something that’s happened for years. We know our fan base is right behind us. Our support is awesome here.

“We’re the underdogs – if that’s the case, let’s run with it. You’ve just got to go out and prove people wrong.”

Use it, even.

“It’s something we can dig into as a team and use as motivation,” is how Kyle Connor put it. “At the same time, we have something to prove. We’ve had some good regular seasons, but we haven’t been able to get past that first round.”

Not since 2018, anyway.

Perhaps more recent playoff success would have changed the narrative.

It’s been nine years for Connor in the Jets organization, 10 for Morrissey.

Both first-round picks, they’re two of the cornerstones of the franchise.

They’ve no doubt been asked more than once why they’re still here.

It turns out they’ve talked about what the ultimate response would be.

“Yeah, I don’t allow my mind to drift too far,” Connor said. “But we’ve touched on that before, how special that would be to win a championship here. The city’s never seen something like that from their hockey team.”

Morrissey allows himself to go there.

What drives him is the thought of being driven down the most famous street of the NHL’s smallest city, past the NHL’s smallest arena – with the NHL’s biggest prize.

Not to mention the entire hockey world finally giving his team the credit it would be due.

“There’s nothing that would make me happier than to have a Stanley Cup parade down Portage,” Morrissey said. “Be able to have that for the people of Winnipeg and Manitoba. It would be a little extra special.”

TSN.ca

<https://www.tsn.ca/nhl/video/hellebuyck-s-300th-win-helps-jets-end-three-game-skid%7E3034582>

Hellebuyck’s 300th win helps Jets end three-game skid (VIDEO)

Connor Hellebuyck became the third-fastest NHL netminder to reach 300 wins. Dan Robertson and Kevin Sawyer breakdown Winnipeg’s win over Nashville that helped them end their three-game losing streak.

<https://www.tsn.ca/nhl/video/hellebuyck-on-becoming-third-fastest-goalie-to-reach-300-career-wins%7E3057100>

Hellebuyck on becoming third-fastest goalie to reach 300 career wins (VIDEO)

Connor Hellebuyck became the third-fastest NHL netminder to reach 300 wins, he discusses the feat and thanks the Jets' fans for supporting him every step of the way.

The Tennessean

<https://www.tennessean.com/story/sports/nhl/predators/2025/01/07/steven-stamkos-injury-update-nashville-predators-winnipeg-jets/77101241007/>

Steven Stamkos leaves in 2nd period with apparent injury in Predators' loss to Jets

By Alex Daugherty

The Nashville Predators lost to the Winnipeg Jets on Tuesday, but more worrisome is they may have lost star forward Steven Stamkos to an injury.

At the 12:19 mark of the second period, Stamkos finished a shift and then headed for the locker room. Earlier in the period, at around the 15:40 mark, it appeared Stamkos' left skate came in contact with a Jets skater as he fell to the ice.

Stamkos came off the ice, then skated in his next shift from 13:08 to 12:19 before leaving the game. He did not return and the team did not update his status after the game.

Stamkos, 34, has 12 goals and 13 assists in 41 games for the Predators after signing a four-year, \$32 million deal in the offseason. Though he started the season playing wing on the second line, in December he was bumped to the top line center role, playing with Filip Forsberg and Jonathan Marchessault.

With Stamkos out of the game, Fedor Svechkov and Ryan O'Reilly took turns as the team's top line center. The Predators had a chance to get within one goal late in the third period while on a 5-on-3 power play, but not having Stamkos weakened the unit. They were unable to score and eventually lost 5-2 to the Jets.

The Predators return home to face the Washington Capitals on Saturday (7 p.m., FanDuel Sports Network).