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<https://www.nhl.com/jets/news/it-s-going-to-be-unreal>

"It's going to be unreal."

Jets defenceman Josh Morrissey is ready for epic Canada - USA showdown

By Jamie Thomas

BROSSARD QC – For anyone that watched Wednesday's opener of the 4 Nations Face-Off between Canada and Sweden and thought it couldn't get any better, buckle up.

Canada and the United States will be the main show on rivalry Saturday at the Bell Centre and Jets defenceman Josh Morrissey, who last played against the Americans at the 2015 World Junior Hockey Championships is ready.

"You can't really draw it up any better obviously. Saturday night, Montreal, U.S., Canada," said Morrissey after Canada's practice at the Canadiens practice facility.

"So, it's going to be unreal, I think everyone's just absolutely jacked for it. So, gotta try and get as much rest as possible and enjoy it."

Morrissey and his teammate took it easy on Thursday and will be rested and ready to go after the Americans played last night beating Finland 6-1.

"It was a good off day. Just try to get some rest, recovery and some treatment and all those things," said Morrissey.

"It was an intense, emotional game on Wednesday night. Nice to get some recovery and get ready for practice today and obviously huge game tomorrow."

The Canadians already lost Shea Theodore for the rest of the tournament and then this morning, Cale Makar, who played over 28 minutes in the win over Sweden, missed today's skate with an illness. Canada head coach Jon Cooper was asked if he expects Makar to be available to play against the Americans.

"Expect is a big word, but I'm confident," said Cooper.

"I'm confident he'll be there."

Travis Konecny went back on the blueline (just as a fill in) for Canada's practice and Morrissey remained with Colton Parayko, the two started the night together against Sweden before Theodore went down.

"I think our games suit each other well, (we) kind of play off one another. I thought we did a good job," said Morrissey.

"There's always something we can work on, communication, get used to the reads for one another as well. It was a good start, he's an easy guy to play with. Just want to keep building."

In the event that Makar doesn't play tomorrow, Dallas Stars defenceman Thomas Harley should get into Montreal this evening. He will not be able to skate with Canada unless Makar cannot play Saturday night.

Morrissey will be going up against his Jets teammates Kyle Connor and Connor Hellebuyck on Saturday. Since the three of them arrived in Montreal on Monday, the conversation has been minimal.

"Just a little bit of texting here and there, everyone's super busy right now. Wishing each other good luck in the tournament and stuff like that," said Morrissey.

"We're at different hotels and everyone's been so busy, between media, different team events and stuff like that. It's been busy, haven't a chance to see those guys."

POINT ON MORRISSEY

Canadian forward Brayden Point is another one of Morrissey's former teammates from the 2015 World Juniors that he's been reunited with on this 4 Nations squad. While it's been 10 years since the two won gold together, Point says that not much has changed about the Jets defenceman.

"He's still humble, great guy. I get to see him quite a bit actually in the summer. So, yeah, he's an awesome guy and obviously, one heck of a player," said Point.

"He's obviously a great defenceman and people get to watch him here (at 4 Nations) and see that, then that's great. I think it's pretty well known how good Josh is."

The 28-year-old will play on a line with Tampa Bay teammates Brandon Hagel and Anthony Cirelli and will centre Canada's second power play unit. Point is also expecting the atmosphere at the Bell Centre to be electric, much like it was on Wednesday against Sweden.

"That was incredible to be a part of and play in front of," said Point.

"And I think it's going to be the same tomorrow night, if not even more."

<https://www.nhl.com/jets/news/three-things-tkachuk-s-hellebuyck-lead-u-s-over-finns>

Three things - Tkachuks, Hellebuyck lead U.S. over Finns Hellebuyck makes 20 saves, Tkachuk brothers combine for four goals

By Jamie Thomas

MONTREAL, QC – The United States scored six unanswered goals including three in a 2:45 span to start the third period on route to a 6-1 win over Finland at the 4 Nations Face-Off. Brady Tkachuk and Matthew Tkachuk scored twice, Matt Boldy and Jake Guentzel had the other goals for the Americans who get three points with the win and sit on top of the standings. Kyle Connor had an assist and Connor Hellebuyck made 20 saves for the U.S. who will face Canada at 7 CT on Saturday at the Bell Centre.

HELLEBUYCK STEADY

Connor Hellebuyck came into the opening game of the 4 Nations having won his last six starts with the Winnipeg Jets and having allowed three goals or less in five of those starts. Finland

beat Hellebuyck at the 7:31 mark of the first period when defenceman Henri Jokiharju snapped a shot to the far side on the Finn's second shot of the night. From there, Hellebuyck stopped the next 19 shots he faced to record the win. The Jets goaltender admitted to being a little nervous at the start of the game.

"This was a feeling that I haven't felt in awhile, kind of a playoff feeling. A tingle, butterflies and all the things that really excite you in a game. I embraced it. It took me, I don't know, maybe a couple of minutes, just a couple of saves, just to get your feet wet," said Hellebuyck.

"We haven't played a game in a while, that I'm also not used too. Once I get my feet wet I felt pretty good."

CONNOR MOVED AROUND

Kyle Connor began the night with Jack Eichel and Matthew Tkachuk but by the early part of the second period, U.S. head coach Mike Sullivan moved Connor with J.T. Miller and Matt Boldy and Brady Tkachuk to the Eichel line.

"I'm not going to lie when I when I was thinking about the line combinations and having the discussions with our coaching staff, the conversation did come up about putting Brady and Matthew together," said Sullivan.

"You know, I think those two players, not only are they great players, but they're great teammates."

After the change, Connor had a part of the eventual game winning goal at 17:04 of the second period. The Jets forward dug the puck off the boards and sent it to the blueline where Brock Faber sent a shot towards that front of the net and Matt Boldy redirected past Juuse Saros. Connor finished the night with one assist, one blocked shot, two hits and 14:23 of ice time.

TKACHUK'S TOO MUCH FOR THE FINNS

In the end, the Tkachuk's combined for four goals and five points and looked very good together and will be a handful for Canada on Saturday when the two rivals meet at the Bell Centre.

"It's going to be the biggest game that I've ever played in my career." said the Ottawa captain.

<https://www.nhl.com/jets/news/three-things-crosby-puts-on-a-show-in-montreal>

Three things - Crosby puts on a show in Montreal

By Jamie Thomas

MONTREAL, QC – Mitch Marner scored at 6:06 of overtime lifting Canada to a 4-3 win over Sweden to kick off the 4 Nations Face-Off at the Bell Centre. Sidney Crosby had three assists including the helper on the game winning goal, Nathan MacKinnon, Brad Marchand and Mark Stone had the other goals. Jordan Binnington made 23 saves for Canada who will face the United States on Saturday. Canada gets two points for the overtime win, Sweden gets one point in the loss. Connor Hellebuyck, Kyle Connor and the Americans play their first game on Thursday against Finland.

ABSOLUTE LEGEND

Last weekend, Jets centre Mark Scheifele was put on alert in case Sidney Crosby couldn't play or another injury to a Canadian forward. Crosby ended up making the trip to Montreal and announced on Tuesday he was good to go. It didn't take him long to make an impact in the game with the vaunted Canadian power play taking all of 12 seconds to score with William Nylander in the penalty box.

In the second period, with Canada leading 2-1, Crosby went to work again. Off a Swedish turnover, Crosby skated into the Swedish zone, fought off Gustav Forsling and found Mark Stone in the slot and he fired a one-timer past Filip Gustavsson to restore Canada's two goal lead.

In overtime, the Canadian captain dropped the puck back to Marner before he hit the Swedish blue line and Marner did the rest. Morrissey had said on Tuesday that Crosby was an absolute legend, and he lived up to that reputation.

"Special players do special things, and obviously there's a lot of special players on this team," said Morrissey.

"Sid's proven time in and time out throughout his career, in big moments, those guys on the biggest stage rise to the occasion. So, just unreal by him."

CANADA LOSES THEODORE

Playing in his first game for Canada since the 2017 World Championships, Josh Morrissey made his presence felt early in the first period when he laid out Swedish forward Joel Erickson Ek with a huge hit that got the crowd buzzing.

In the second period, Shea Theodore was hit cleanly by Filip Forsberg and did not return to the game and Canada's coach Jon Cooper announced after the game that Theodore is out for the tournament. Canada played with five defencemen for close to 43 minutes and that meant Morrissey ended up with 23:17 of ice time, two blocked shots, and one hit.

"Going down to five was not ideal. You feel for Theo as well. It's tough situation. But you know, all of us are used to playing a lot of minutes on our NHL teams," said Morrissey.

"And so, I think for us it was just about business as usual, kind of throw the pairings out the window and just play. So, it was a good battle by the guys back there."

HECK OF A START TO THE TOURNAMENT

Morrissey along with a lot of his Canadian teammates have been waiting for an opportunity to represent their respective countries and the opener of the 4 Nations Face-Off gave everybody a taste of what's to come over the next nine days.

"100 per cent. I mean, intense game, I thought both teams played well. We had a great first period. And I think kind of just so much energy, adrenaline in that first I think we sagged a little bit and they were able to tie it up," said Morrissey.

"But, yeah, we had a ton of fun. And I think to cap it off like that, what an experience, what a moment. You know, it's the stuff that gives you chills. So, keep that rolling and build some momentum for Saturday."

Winnipeg Sun

<https://winnipeg.sun.com/sports/jets-advise-younger-selves-you-have-no-idea-what-youre-in-for>

Jets advise younger selves: 'You have no idea what you're in for'

by Paul Friesen

The walk from the elevator to the press box for Winnipeg Jets games is down a narrow, meandering hallway lined with framed photographs.

The photos mark key points in the reborn franchise's history, like the first-round draft picks over the years.

It's those images of clean-cut, wide-eyed 18-year-olds in the starting blocks of their careers that caught my attention recently.

It got me wondering what those men, more than a decade later, would tell their younger selves, about life in the NHL, about Winnipeg, about contracts and money, about trying to win the Stanley Cup.

So I took photos of those pictures, sat down with three of the now grizzled vets and asked what advice they'd give that smiling teenager.

* * *

Josh Morrissey, sitting in his dressing room stall, looks at the photo on my phone and smiles right back.

"That goes back 12 years," says the Jets' first-round pick in 2013.

Coming off a 15-goal, 47-point junior season in the Western League, the younger Morrissey figured he belonged in the big leagues immediately.

"You want to make the NHL that first training camp, and it's disappointing when you don't," he says. "You want to make it the next year as a 19-year-old. Sent back to juniors. I was disappointed. End up playing a year in the minors."

At 29, Morrissey's advice to the kid: be patient and stick with the process.

"Find ways to be innovative," he says. "Work on your game, watch what the best players do. Grow. It's a hard thing to do, to be patient. Be patient, but also have urgency that you're trying to get better every day."

The Calgary native finally cracked the Jets lineup in his third try and never looked back. Today he's one of the NHL's top defencemen, playing for Canada in the 4 Nations tournament.

The journey to this moment brings out a different kind of advice for his younger self.

“Then just enjoy the ride,” Morrissey says. “It’s crazy to think that I’m in my ninth full season and 10th year living in Winnipeg. It goes by quickly. Enjoy every day. The pressures of the game can get to you.”

A year after they drafted Morrissey 17th overall, the Jets picked Nikolaj Ehlers in the ninth spot.

“The hair’s great there,” Ehlers says, laughing at the photo of his 18-year-old self. “That was one of the best days of my life.”

Having his family from Denmark at the draft in Philadelphia put Ehlers’ day over the top. He wouldn’t have been there without their sacrifices.

Sacrifice is a theme of Ehlers’ youth. At 11 he moved to Switzerland to chase his hockey dream. He barely watched the NHL, as the games were on in the middle of the night. He was focused on the Swiss leagues.

Guided by his dad, he worked like most teenagers wouldn’t.

“I definitely dreaded some of it,” Ehlers says. “It’s a hard one, because back then you only think about the things that you’re giving up.”

Like hanging out with friends at the lake in the summer as a 15-year-old.

“We were playing beach volley and going swimming, just having a good time,” Ehlers recalls. “And he (his dad) would pick me up on a Sunday afternoon and we’d go run. So my best friends would go out, have a good time, drinkin’ and doing stuff like that. I knew that if I wanted to get to where I wanted to go, I couldn’t do the same stuff.”

Wait, drinking beer at 15?

“We start early in Denmark,” Ehlers says, grinning.

By the time he left the Swiss junior loop for Halifax and the Quebec Major Junior League, Ehlers was draining goals at nearly a one-a-game pace.

When he poured in 49 and 104 points his first year in Canada, the Jets pounced in the draft.

On Friday, Ehlers turned 29. What he’d tell that 18-year-old: all the hard work and sacrifice is worth it.

“There’s a lot of things I thought I was giving up back then,” he says. “But now I’m sitting here and I can say that extra night out, would it have really been worth it for what I’m doing here? No.”

While Ehlers was tearing up the QMJHL, Kyle Connor was doing similar things with Youngstown in the U.S. junior league.

He became a Jet in 2015 – first round, 17th overall – a year after Ehlers.

One year at the University of Michigan produced 35 goals and 71 points in 38 games, hinting at what was to come.

Connor spent less than a year in the minors before getting called up for good. The next season he was a 30-goal scorer in the NHL, and today he's on Team USA with the best players in the world.

Looking at the fresh-faced 18-year-old in his Jets sweater for the first time, the 28-year-old's advice wouldn't be about how to pile up more points, but to gather and treasure the friendships.

"That's probably what you're going to remember most about playing in this league, is the relationships," Connor says. "If you're having fun, having that good chemistry with your teammates, your game's going to the next level. That's something I'd stress, for sure."

* * *

From Shelby Township, Mich., a suburb of Detroit, Connor's knowledge of Winnipeg on the day he was drafted wasn't exactly encyclopedic.

"Nothin' – I remember in one of my interviews I had to double-check where it was," he says.

Nine years later, there's something Connor would want that kid to know about the Manitoba capital.

"Extremely passionate fan base," he says. "You hear that a lot, but it's so true. You go out to places around here, the grocery store, and people are wanting to talk hockey. You don't really get that where I grew up. Obviously Detroit's Hockey Town, but there's so many other sports, a lot of other things going on. Here it's hockey, hockey, hockey."

"A great place... really community driven and passionate about giving back. I'd just tell him to lean into that and embrace that culture."

An 18-year-old Ehlers wasn't much better versed about his new hockey home.

"I had been watching NHL hockey the year before, but I didn't know much," Ehlers said. "Once I started to get the feeling that Winnipeg was a possibility – and they liked me – you go on Google and you start searching around a little bit. Compared to back home, it's a pretty big city."

Aalborg, Denmark, boasts a little more than 100,000 people.

Ehlers would quickly learn Winnipeg is actually the smallest city in the NHL. But he'd tell his younger self something else about it.

"Bring your frickin' jackets."

Of course. But there's more.

"The most fun market to play in," Ehlers says. "These people just want you to do well, succeed. That's a lot of fun for us. That would probably be the biggest part. Just appreciate the people you've got here in Winnipeg."

Morrissey puts it another way.

“The license plates here describe the general culture,” the defenceman says. “Friendly Manitoba. People are kind. I’d say do what I did. I tried to embrace the community, and the community responded and embraced me back. Winnipeg and Manitoba respond to hard work and good people, people that give back to the community.

“Those are the things that I have tried to do as a player here, and it’s been great.”

* * *

The next topic for our grizzled vets: contracts and money.

Ehlers looks at the photo of himself from a decade ago and sighs.

“You have no idea what you’re in for,” he tells the kid.

That’s a loaded statement for Ehlers, on a few levels.

For starters, he’s in the last year of a seven-year deal paying him \$6 million per season. A potential free agent in July, he’s become really good at bolting the uncertainty to the back of his mind and focusing on the here and now: helping the Jets win.

“In the beginning... you’re not thinking about money,” Ehlers says. “You’re not thinking about anything but ‘I’ve gotta make the NHL.’ I believed I had the abilities to do that. And the rest will follow, depending on how hard you work. And obviously how well you do, yourself and as a team.”

Ehlers has done well for himself. But even that can get complicated. Because then you are tradeable.

Ehlers saw one of his best friends, Patrik Laine, dealt by the Jets four years ago.

That’s what he meant, too, when he said the 18-year-old in that photo had no idea what he was in for.

“The whole business side of it. I had a lot of good friends moving away from Winnipeg. So it’s not how it was when you were growing up, following the same guys every single year. You knew they weren’t going anywhere.”

Morrissey would also have plenty to tell his younger self when it comes to contracts. He’s on Year 5 of an eight-year deal, but things weren’t nearly as set for him in 2018.

“I wanted to sign a long-term deal and have the financial security,” he says. “But also, honestly, I wanted nothing more than to be a Jet and have that long-term commitment. And because of the way the situation was, where my career was, where the team was at with contracts, it just didn’t work out.”

Morrissey missed a few days of training camp as negotiations dragged on, finally signing a bridge deal.

“There was no animosity, it just took a while to get things done.”

Today he has the long-term commitment and financial security he always wanted, at just north of \$6 million per season.

“Stick with it,” he would tell his younger self, again. “Be patient. The contract stuff, the opportunity, will come.”

Unlike Morrissey, Connor got his long-term deal immediately after his entry-level contract. He’s in Year 6, with one more to go, earning just over \$7 million – well beyond anything he ever dreamed about.

“The philosophy I stick by is let your play decide that,” Connor says. “It’s on everybody’s mind at some point. Come to the rink and don’t worry about it. This league has given us such an opportunity. Where I came from there was never an excess amount of it. It’s going to be more than you could ever wish in your life.

“So just focus on winning and all that stuff will take care of itself.”

* * *

If only winning took care of itself, too. It doesn’t, of course. Even if it did seem that way early in the careers of our three first-rounders.

Connor found himself in the conference final during his first full year in the NHL, Morrissey in his second, Ehlers in his third.

“And we haven’t been that far since,” Connor says. “You know what happens.”

Yeah, sh– happens. First-round face-plants. Missing the playoffs altogether. Good players leaving. A coach quitting.

That smiling kid with the perfect hair coming out of the University of Michigan had no idea.

“Opportunities are slim, and when you have it you’ve got to make the most of it,” is what Connor would tell him. “That’d be the biggest message.”

Ditto, Morrissey and Ehlers.

“The old cliché, the older guys sit around, ‘Hey guys, it goes by fast. You can’t waste those opportunities,’” Morrissey says. “And as a young guy it’s just impossible to have that perspective. But truly it is so hard to get there.”

These are the older guys now, spouting the clichés to whomever might listen. The old man shaking his fist at the cloud? More like the voice of experience yelling back at his past.

Ehlers would tell it not to take anything for granted.

“He didn’t realize how hard it was going to be,” he says, looking at his photo again. “There’s guys that haven’t gotten out of the first round. There’s guys that have been to the Stanley Cup four, five, six times.”

At 18, how could anyone know it would be that unfair?

“I’m turning 29... that’s 10 years where I’ve been to the conference finals once,” Ehlers says. “So just dig in. I’ve gotten to an age where I know what I need to do to give myself and the team the best shot. And it’s a grind. The regular season, you obviously set yourself up for the best possible opportunity. But the game changes in the playoffs.

“You’ve got to take the opportunity that you get. Because you might not get another one.”

That doesn’t mean there’s nothing they can do now, sitting on top of the NHL with 81 points. They’ve learned that the hard way.

But at least they’ve learned it.

“You don’t win anything in February,” Morrissey says. “But let’s keep that in mind: what can we do between now and whenever that playoff time comes, that we can be as ready as we can possibly be. To leave no stone unturned in that pursuit.

“And that’s all you can do.”

Morrissey allows himself to imagine that Cup-lifting moment. He wants it not just for himself, but for the city and for the people who drafted him, helped him become who he is.

“I’ve been given so much,” he says. “And I want to return the favour to those who believed in me.”

Perhaps most importantly, he wants it for his teammates. Particularly those 18-year-olds whose photographs hang on the wall along with his. Kids with so much promise, so much ahead of them. But still just kids who really didn’t have a clue, some who thought they might have won a championship by now, some who never thought that far ahead.

More than a decade later, the hockey seasons have come and gone like migrating geese. Any quacking over contracts has worked itself out. Manitoba’s fall-winter-spring ritual continues for our three kids, like the coming and going of facial hair.

What they’d really like to experience: shedding those jackets and playing into a Winnipeg summer.

“We’ve grown up together,” Morrissey says. “That’s the ultimate goal.”

<https://winnipeg.sun.com/sports/hockey/nhl/winnipeg-jets/selanne-so-excited-to-see-jets-make-a-deep-playoff-run>

Selanne 'so excited' to see Jets make a deep playoff run

By Gordon Anderson, Winnipeg Sun

The only thing Teemu Selanne doesn’t miss about Winnipeg is the -25 C weather, but he certainly enjoys tuning in from the warmth of his California home.

“I have been so excited to watch this year’s Winnipeg Jets,” Selanne told The Winnipeg Sun. “I think they have all the tools to go all the way and win the Stanley Cup. And I have always said

that I can't wait to see the day when you guys win the Stanley Cup because you guys deserve it."

The former Jets legend is in Montreal this week for the 4 Nations event, and to lend his good name to an initiative called Sun Youth.

Sun Youth is a Montreal-based organization dedicated to removing financial barriers so kids can play hockey.

Selanne's best season with the locals was his 1992-93 rookie campaign where he scored 76 goals and tallied 56 assists for 132 points in 84 games played. In total, he scored 147 goals and added 159 assists in 231 games played with the Jets.

Who can forget his 54th goal celebration on March 2 in '93 against the Quebec Nordiques at the old Winnipeg Arena when he cocked his stick like a shotgun and blasted his right-hand glove out of the sky? That night, he broke Mike Bossy's rookie goals scoring record of 53. Bossy laid the gauntlet down during the 1977-78 season.

Selanne played three-plus seasons in Winnipeg before Jets general manager John Paddock shipped the Helsinki resident to the Anaheim Ducks 29 years ago this month for Chad Kilger and Oleg Tverdovsky. Marc Chouinard also went to the Ducks in the deal.

The Finnish Flash spent 14-plus seasons with the Ducks, but a warm place still resides in his heart for his first NHL home.

"I know how big hockey is there and I was always proud (Winnipeg) was part of my career. What a great (time) that was," Selanne said, quickly transitioning his thoughts to the current campaign. "I am so excited to see how far they can go this year."

Less than a month away from the March 7 NHL trade deadline, the 54-year-old was asked what type of reinforcements the Jets need to make to go the distance.

Selanne says the Jets don't need to do much tinkering, if anything at all.

"The good thing is that I don't think the Jets have to do anything, pretty much," Selanne said. "I always believed that when you don't make too many changes at the deadline, it is going to help the team dynamic and the team chemistry and everything (as the players know) this is the team, and we trust each other, and we don't need anything... I think they have all the tools to go all the way and win."

The all-time rookie goal scoring leader hopes the Jets won't peak too soon. Currently, the team is on an eight-game win streak. The team also opened the season with eight consecutive victories. The club opens the unofficial second half of the season Feb. 22 against the Blues in St. Louis.

Selanne says the key is to play your best in April.

"They have proved they are a very strong team and the main thing for them is to peak at the right time and try to build that momentum when the playoffs start and then you can start playing your best hockey of the season," Selanne said. "And that is why teams who get in (at the end of the season) can surprise people because they have to push themselves so hard weeks before

the playoffs start so they can build that momentum in the playoffs. I hope Winnipeg can play their best hockey in the playoffs.”

Is there any chance #8 can make a cameo appearance at the downtown arena if the Jets make the cup final?

“Absolutely, absolutely,” Selanne said with a laugh.

As previously mentioned, Selanne was in Montreal for the Sun Youth Initiative.

“Hockey has become such an expensive sport,” Selanne said. “I know exactly how important this is. The ice time, the equipment is so expensive these days and it is important that the people who need the help will get the help.”

Hockey has provided Selanne with a wonderful life. Whether in Finland or in Montreal, he shows his appreciation by returning the favour.

“The smile on (the kids) faces is the best feedback you can get,” Selanne said. “I am happy to be a part of that. It makes me feel great.”

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<https://www.winnipegfreepress.com/breakingnews/2025/02/14/to-deal-or-not-to-deal>

To deal or not to deal

Trade deadline acquisitions rarely the difference in a successful Stanley Cup run

By: Mike McIntyre

Go big or go home? When it comes to the NHL trade deadline and how it relates to a Stanley Cup championship, that isn't always the case.

There's never a shortage of chatter around this time of year about how teams currently in contention are looking to beef up their rosters and go all-in for what they hope will be long, successful playoff runs.

There's plenty of it in Winnipeg, where the Jets are currently enjoying the 4 Nations Face-Off break from their perch on top of the Central Division and Western Conference with a stellar 39-14-3 record. With plenty of cap space to weaponize, general manager Kevin Cheveldayoff could be busy between now and March 7.

Should he be? A Free Press analysis of the last 10 winners shows — more often than not — stepping up to the plate and trying to produce a solid single or double was a far better strategy than swinging for the fences. There are a few debatable exceptions, but there's a valid argument to be made that taking a “if it ain't broke, don't try and fix it (at least too much)” approach can be successful.

Allow us to show our work and give a score on both the size of the swing and the overall impact on the team.

2024: Florida Panthers

You won't find them listed anywhere on the "trade deadline winners" stories that were produced by plenty of publications, with GM Bill Zito adding a pair of veteran, past-their-prime depth forwards in Vladimir Tarasenko (for a fourth-round pick) and Kyle Okposo (for a fifth-round pick and a prospect).

Tarasenko played in all 24 playoff games and had nine points (5G, 4A) while Okposo dressed for 17 and produced just two assists. Neither was a significant needle-mover, yet the Panthers turned out just fine.

Swing: 4/10. Impact: 2/10

2023: Vegas Golden Knights

Ivan Barbashev wasn't the biggest name to be moved — not with stars like Patrick Kane, Ryan O'Reilly, Timo Meier and Jakob Chychrun all getting new hockey homes — but he certainly made a difference.

The power-winger bolstered the top line and had 18 points (7G, 11A) in 22 games which was good for fifth in team scoring, then ultimately re-signed with them.

The price was a forward prospect named Zach Dean who was drafted 30th overall in 2021. Vegas also added some depth in forward Teddy Blueger (2 points in 6 playoff games).

Swing: 7/10. Impact: 9/10

2022: Colorado Avalanche

Again, not the sexiest of adds in forwards Artturi Lehkonen (for a prospect and a second-round pick), Andrew Cogliano (for a fifth-round pick) and Nico Sturm (for Tyson Jost) and defenceman Josh Manson (for a prospect and a second-round pick), but ultimately effective.

Lehkonen provided some solid secondary scoring (20 games, 8G, 6A) while Manson bolstered the blue line (20 games, 3G, 5A). Cogliano had 3G, 3A in 16 games while Sturm was an afterthought, with two assists in 13 games.

Swing: 6/10. Impact: 8/10

2021: Tampa Bay Lightning

A strange year, for sure, with the global pandemic causing the shuffling of divisions and an abbreviated season.

The only add they made was defenceman David Savard, who was solid but far from spectacular (20 games, 5 assists) and cost them a first-round, second-round and fourth-round pick.

Their real add came in injured star forward Nikita Kucherov, who emerged from LTIR just in the nick of time (to much angst from fans of other teams who believed a conspiracy had taken place).

Swing: 4/10. Impact: 3/10

2020: Tampa Bay Lightning

A much more aggressive approach in this one, with forwards Blake Coleman and Barclay Goodrow coming on board and forming two-thirds of what ended up being an outstanding third line (along with Yanni Gourde).

Going the other way were a pair of first-round picks, a top young prospect and a third-round pick. A steep price, but one that paid off, big-time, in helping to produce two consecutive Cups.

Swing: 8/10. Impact: 9/10

2019: St. Louis Blues

A true outlier, in so many ways. They were dead and buried at Christmas, only to go on an incredible second-half run and carry it all the way to a championship.

With no guarantee of even making the playoffs at the deadline, GM Doug Armstrong stood pat and didn't acquire a single player who would appear in the post-season, which is the only example we could find in this span.

Turns out they didn't need any help.

Swing: 0/10. Impact: 0/10

2018: Washington Capitals

Not a ton to really see here, either.

They added two depth defencemen in Michal Kempny (for a 3rd-round pick, he played in all 24 playoff games and had 2G, 3A while solidifying the top-pair with John Carlson) and Jakub Jerabek (he dressed for two playoff games, with no points), but otherwise didn't mess with the success they were already having.

That turned out to be a good move.

Swing: 1/10. Impact: 3/10

2017: Pittsburgh Penguins

Like Washington the year after, they were in great shape at the deadline but opted to do very little, save for adding some depth defencemen in Ron Hainsey (second-round pick and a prospect), Mark Streit (fourth-round pick) and Frankie Corrado (fourth-round pick and Eric Fehr).

Only Hainsey made any real difference, with eight points (2G, 6A) and steady two-way play in 25 games.

Swing: 3/10. Impact: 4/10

2016: Pittsburgh Penguins

GM Jim Rutherford did the bulk of his wheeling and dealing in the preceding months by revamping his team's roster — adding the HBK line of Carl Hagelin, Nick Bonino and Phil Kessel which would pay off in the form of back-to-back Cup victories.

He was quiet around the actual deadline, with only defenceman Justin Schultz (for a third-round draft pick) joining the club. He would end up playing in 15 of 24 games, chipping in four assists.

Swing: 2/10. Impact: 3/10

2015: Chicago Blackhawks

Star Patrick Kane broke his clavicle the day before the deadline, causing some panic in the Windy City. (He would miss two months but return for the start of the playoffs).

GM Stan Bowman was busy, bringing in forward Antoine Vermette (for a first-round pick and a prospect), depth forward Andrew Desjardins (for a seventh-round pick and a prospect) and defenceman Kimmo Timonen (for a second-round and fourth-round pick).

Vermette was a terrific add, scoring the winning goals in Game 4 of the Western Conference Final and Games 1 and 5 of the Stanley Cup Final. He may have had only seven points (4G, 3A) in 20 games, but they were all very important.

Desjardins (21 games, 1G, 3A) and Timonen (18 games, no points) played minor roles.

Swing: 6/10. Impact: 9/10

So what does this all mean for 2025?

Time will tell, but there's at least a bit of "buyer beware" in play. Recent hockey history is filled with examples of teams (and fan-bases) who thought they'd hit a home run at the trade deadline — only to go home much sooner than expected.

None of the last 10 Cup winners were involved in what scribes and pundits at the time felt were the biggest blockbusters.

For what it's worth, the Jets were on many "deadline winners" lists last March, after they acquired forwards Sean Monahan and Tyler Toffoli to surround a group that was in a similar position as they are this year. How did that turn out? A five-game exit in the first round of the playoffs, with Monahan and Toffoli quickly moving on as unrestricted free agents.

"It's obviously not up to me, I'm not the GM, but our team is in a really good spot and this is the group that was pre-deadline last year for the most part and at this same time, we found ourselves in first place as well," Jets forward Mason Appleton said recently. "So I think we've got a really good team in this room."

Human nature suggests teams will be tempted to try to keep up with their closest rivals, especially as deals start to go down, and a feeling something needs to be done at the risk of getting left in the dust.

As the above examples show, it's usually the work done well before the drop-dead date — free agent signings and trades in the off-season, drafting and developing young players to build a solid core — that seems to be the true recipe for success.

More often than not, it was the pieces already in place which have the real impact.

The Hockey News

<https://thehockeynews.com/nhl/winnipeg-jets/latest-news/jets-linked-to-a-pair-of-versatile-forwards-from-original-six-teams>

Jets Linked To A Pair Of Versatile Forwards From Original Six Teams

By Julian Gaudio

The Winnipeg Jets have been linked to Montreal Canadiens' Jake Evans and Chicago Blackhawks' Ryan Donato ahead of the trade deadline.

Although NHL games are paused due to the 4 Nations Face-Off, rumours continue to swirl about who might be moved and where they might go.

For the Jets, many insiders believe they have an interest in the most available players. They've been linked to a plethora of defensemen, and recently, insiders have begun to report that they are looking at forwards as well.

The Fourth Period reported that the Jets are among the six teams that could be looking to acquire Evans at the deadline. The 28-year-old centre is enjoying a career-year offensively, scoring 11 goals and 27 points in 56 games. With the Jets, Evans likely wouldn't play a top-six role but would be an efficient player in the bottom six.

Evans is in the final year of a very cost-efficient contract and will become a UFA following the conclusion of the season. TSN's Pierre LeBrun reported that the Canadiens and Evans have exchanged numbers on what an extension might look like, but they're not close.

Sportsnet's Elliotte Friedman also reported that the Canadiens would be looking to acquire a second-round pick for Evans.

Donato, a 28-year-old winger and centre, has also been made available by the Blackhawks and is valued around the same price as Evans. Donato isn't as potent defensively as Evans and doesn't kill penalties, but Donato has been an offensive force on a weak Blackhawks team.

In 53 games, he's scored 19 goals and 37 points, both career-highs. He currently leads the Blackhawks in goals and is third in points, trailing just Connor Bedard and Teuvo Teravainen.

Donato is in the final year of his contract that pays him \$2M annually and will become a UFA at the end of the season. The Los Angeles Kings, Toronto Maple Leafs, Ottawa Senators, New Jersey Devils and the Carolina Hurricanes are teams that reportedly have interest in Donato.

With the Jets, Donato would fit in nicely in their middle six, likely as a winger. He has the skill to play alongside Nikolaj Ehlers and also has the frame to play with Adam Lowry.

With the deadline quickly approaching, the Jets will be actively looking to improve their roster to go on a long playoff run.