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<https://www.nhl.com/jets/news/three-things-morrissey-scores-twice-including-ot-winner>

***Three things - Morrissey scores twice including OT winner
The Jets have won six straight games after 5-4 victory in Washington***

By Jamie Thomas

The Winnipeg Jets won their sixth game in a row beating the Washington Capitals 5-4 in overtime to finish their road trip 3-0. Josh Morrissey scored twice, Cole Perfetti, Dylan Samberg and Alex Lafallo had the other goals for the Jets (37-14-3), who are now two points clear of the Capitals for first overall. Mark Scheifele secured his 10th consecutive 60-point season with an assist on Morrissey's game winning goal, which is the most by an active player. The Jets ended an 11-game winless streak in Washington dating back to April 23, 2013. Connor Hellebuyck won his 33rd game of the season for the Jets who will now head home to face Carolina on Tuesday.

J-MO THE HERO

The Jets and Capitals came into action Saturday as the first and second ranked team in the NHL. Winnipeg led the league in goal differential (+63), Washington was second (+54), Winnipeg was also first in goals per game (3.58) and Washington second (3.49), Washington did have the edge in goals against per game (2.39) with Winnipeg right behind them (2.40). The game lived up to the hype with Winnipeg taking a 4-2 lead at 1:10 of the third period blasting a shot high blocker side on Logan Thompson.

Washington would tie the game with goals from Tom Wilson and Alex Ovechkin which would send the game to overtime. Morrissey closed out the game playing give-and-go with Mark Scheifele and the Jets defenceman went to the front of the net and one-timed Scheifele's pass for his fourth career overtime goal.

"Scheif did a good job driving through and just tried to slip my check and go to the net," said Morrissey.

"He made an amazing pass and had half the net to shoot at, so it was nice play by him."

PIONK AND SAMBERG

Since Dylan Samberg returned to the Jets lineup on January 10, Winnipeg has gone 9-2-1. Samberg and his defence partner Neal Pionk give the Jets two solid defence pairings to go up against the other team's best forwards. The duo combined for a goal and three assists as both had multi-point games on Saturday. Pionk had a couple of assists and is now at 28 assists in just 54 games, he had the same amount in 82 last season. Samberg scored a big goal in the first period helping Winnipeg get out to a 2-0 lead and now has a career high four goals this season.

OVI WATCH

Alex Ovechkin came into the night with 876 career goals meaning the Capitals captain need just 19 goals to pass Wayne Gretzky to become the NHL's all-time leading goal scorer. Ovechkin

has recorded 100 points (55g, 45a) in 73 career games against Winnipeg/Atlanta, the most goals he has scored against a single franchise. Winnipeg had held Ovechkin in check until the third period when the Caps captain blasted home his 24th of the season and 56th career marker against the Jets to tie the contest at four at the 12:21 mark. Ovechkin is now 18 goals away from standing alone atop the all-time goal scoring list.

NHL.com

<https://www.nhl.com/news/winnipeg-jets-prevail-against-washington-capitals-in-battle-of-nhl-best>

Jets prevail in battle of NHL's best, win OT thriller against Capitals League's top 2 teams deliver in possible Cup Final preview

By Tom Gulitti

ARLINGTON, Va. – The Winnipeg Jets and the Washington Capitals weren't battling for the Stanley Cup at Capital One Arena on Saturday.

Each team has a long road ahead and many challenges to overcome to get that far.

It was clear, though, that there was some extra meaning to the matchup between these top two teams in the NHL standings. And neither wanted to back down.

The Capitals overcame a two-goal, third-period deficit, with Alex Ovechkin scoring the tying goal at 12:21, before the Jets prevailed 5-4 in overtime for their sixth straight win. Defenseman Josh Morrissey, who will represent Canada in the 4 Nations Face-Off from Feb. 12-20, scored the game-winning goal at 1:57.

"It was good, back and forth, two best teams in the League going at it," Jets forward Cole Perfetti said. "Kind of fitting the game went to overtime."

Winnipeg (37-14-3) took the extra point from the overtime victory to move two ahead of Washington (34-11-7), which has played two fewer games. They'll meet again on March 25 in Winnipeg.

Whether they'll play again after that remains to be seen, but each demonstrated why they might be able to get that far.

It would be entertaining if they did.

"Two best teams playing, and it was a battle," said Ovechkin, who scored his 877th goal to move within 18 of breaking Wayne Gretzky's NHL record of 894. "It was a hard game at both ends. It was a good game."

The Jets came into the game first in the NHL in goals per game (3.58) and second in goals against (2.40) with Connor Hellebuyck, the favorite for the Vezina Trophy as the League's top goalie, in net. The Capitals entered the night second in the NHL in goals per game (3.49) and

first in the NHL in goals against (2.39) with Logan Thompson, perhaps Hellebuyck's top challenger for the Vezina, in net.

For this game at least, the offenses won out over the defenses and goalies. Thompson, who was named NHL's second star for January after going 8-0-1 with a 1.48 goals-against average, .947 save percentage and two shutouts in nine appearances, allowed more than two goals for the first time in eight starts.

Hellebuyck, who will represent the United States in the 4 Nations Face-Off, won his fifth straight to increase his League-leading win total (33-7-2) despite giving up more than two goals for only the second time in his past 10 starts.

"There was a lot of weird stuff going on, a lot of goals," Morrissey said. "Obviously both teams are known for scoring, but also their defensive game. So, I think both teams would probably want to clean some of those things up.

"But for just one game, a lot of swings."

The Jets jumped out to a 2-0 lead in the first period with Perfetti scoring on a rebound for a power-play goal at 9:13 and Dylan Samberg scoring from the high slot at 12:41. Winnipeg controlled play throughout the opening period, outshooting Washington 13-6 and holding a 33-10 advantage in shot attempts.

After being sluggish at the start of their first game following a five-game road trip in which they went 3-1-1, the Capitals regrouped during the first intermission and played much better. Pierre-Luc Dubois scored on a rebound 1:12 into the second period to cut the Jets' lead to 2-1.

Although Alex Iafallo put Winnipeg back up by two at 3-1 with his deflection goal 4:03, Taylor Raddysh answered 51 seconds later for Washington to make it 3-2 at 4:54.

"I think once we got our feet under us and we started playing the right way, it was a heck of a hockey game," Capitals forward Tom Wilson said. "I think we kind of gave them the first period, but after that it was two of the best teams, I think, just kind of going toe to toe."

Morrissey increased the Jets' lead to 4-2 by beating Thompson from the high slot at 1:10. But Wilson got the Capitals back within 4-3 with his rebound goal at 7:26.

Then, Ovechkin took a pass from Wilson as the trailer on a rush and stepped into a slap shot from near the right point that went in off Hellebuyck's glove for his 24th goal in 36 games this season.

"In the third, we got the lead back, got out in front [by two goals] and then we got back on our heels, and they had a big push," Jets coach Scott Arniel said. "And at the end of the day, when it gets to overtime, you're hoping for that opportunity, that chance to get those odd-man situations and nice play, big goal by 'J-Mo'."

On his winning goal, Morrissey worked a give-and-go with Mark Scheifele, going to the net to receive his return pass out of the right corner and snap a shot in past Thompson's glove.

"Both teams have a lot of pride and want to show that they're the better team, I suppose," Morrissey said. "So, there was solid intensity out there. ... We found a way to be resilient in the game and definitely you can see why they're such a great team."

Capitals coach Spencer Carbery bemoaned his team's mental mistakes that led to goals, including Morrissey's winner. Even with those breakdowns, the Capitals believe they showed they could hold their own against the best the Western Conference has to offer.

Washington, which has a seven-point lead on the Carolina Hurricanes for first in the Eastern Conference and Metropolitan Division, will face another test when the defending Stanley Cup champion Florida Panthers visit on Tuesday.

"We played some good teams out West, but to come back home and have this Winnipeg team come in, I thought we did a good job in the second two periods," Wilson said. "It was good hockey. I'm sure it was a fun game to watch and guys working extremely hard and trying to get it done. Just a little short, and I think it's nice to prove to ourselves that we can play with the top [team] in the League, and we belong."

Associated Press

<https://www.sportsnet.ca/nhl/article/morrisseys-second-goal-lifts-jets-over-capitals-ovechkin-in-overtime/>

Morrissey's second goal lifts Jets over Capitals, Ovechkin in overtime

By Associated Press

WASHINGTON — The top two teams in the NHL facing off in front of a fired-up sellout crowd of over 18,500 fans on an early February Saturday night in the U.S. capital did not disappoint.

The Washington Capitals and Winnipeg Jets delivered in a thrilling midseason matchup with a combined nine goals, including the 877th of Alex Ovechkin's career to put him 18 back of breaking Wayne Gretzky's record. That tied the score, the Jets pulled it out in overtime and just about everyone involved got their money's worth out of the 5-4 game.

"We knew how we were both sitting in the standings and both having real good years," Winnipeg coach Scott Arniel said after his team won its sixth game in a row. "You know you're going against some elite players on the opposite side, and we've been watching what they've been doing. You're following them in the standings, watching them on the highlights and when you have a game like that, exciting for the fans, not so much for the coaches."

Maybe the goalie coaches because even with all the scoring, Connor Hellebuyck and Logan Thompson had some big saves throughout at either end of the ice. Each had 25 saves, or this could have been a double-digit vintage throwback to hockey from the 1980s.

“Both teams obviously have a goalie — goalies — that every time they’re playing you expect to win, they give you a chance to win,” said Capitals winger Tom Wilson, who scored his 21st goal of the season. “The caliber of hockey tonight was high, and they were all over us.

“It was good hockey. I’m sure it was a fun game to watch and guys working extremely hard and trying to get it done. Just (came up) a little short, and I think it’s nice to prove to ourselves that we can play with the top in the league and we belong.”

Washington erased a two-goal third-period deficit when Ovechkin scored with 7:39 left in regulation and set off “Ovi! Ovi!” chants. The moment may have been the loudest Capital One Arena has seen all season.

“Two best teams playing, and it was a battle,” Ovechkin said. “It was a hard game at both ends.”

Arniel, who coached Ovechkin for four seasons as an assistant from 2018-22, has seen that kind of shot up close plenty of times before.

“That came off in a hurry,” Arniel said, “And obviously ‘Helley’ didn’t have time to react to that one.”

Hellebuyck has won the Vezina Trophy as the league’s best goaltender twice and is an overwhelming favourite to make it a third. Thompson has excellence since joining the Capitals in a trade from Vegas last summer and earlier this week was rewarded with a new six-year contract that begins next season worth \$35.1 million.

But the goalies weren’t the focus of this one.

“It was a crazy game,” said Jets defenceman Josh Morrissey, who scored twice, including the OT winner. “There was a lot of weird stuff going on, a lot of goals. Obviously both teams are known for scoring, but also their defensive game. So I think both teams would probably want to clean some of those things up. But for just one game, a lot of swings. Great energy in the arena, and it was nice to be able to stick it out and get the two points.”

If Washington can get through the Eastern Conference playoffs and Winnipeg through the West, the game certainly showed what a potential Stanley Cup Final might look like. These teams play again north of the border in March, but a best-of-seven series in June could be electrifying.

“Both teams have a lot of pride and want to show that they’re the better team,” Morrissey said. “We found a way to be resilient in the game, and definitely you can see why they’re such a great team.”

<https://www.winnipegfreepress.com/sports/hockey/jets/2025/02/01/despite-alex-ovechkin-scoring-his-877th-goal-the-capitals-lose-to-the-jets-5-4-in-overtime>

Morrissey lifts Jets to 5-4 OT win, overshadowing Ovechkin's goal

By: Stephen Whyno, The Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Alex Ovechkin scored the 877th goal of his career to move 18 away from breaking the NHL record, but the Washington Capitals lost 5-4 in overtime to the Winnipeg Jets on Saturday night in a showdown of the top two teams in the NHL that lived up to that billing.

Ovechkin tied the score with 7:39 left, setting off “Ovi! Ovi!” chants from a sellout crowd. His 24th goal of the season keeps him on pace to challenge Wayne Gretzky’s mark of 894 this spring.

Josh Morrissey scored his second goal of the game 1:57 into overtime to extend the Jets’ winning streak to six games.

Cole Perfetti, Dylan Samberg and Alex Iafallo also scored in regulation for the Jets. Connor Hellebuyck stopped 25 of the 29 shots he faced to pick up his 33rd win and stay on pace to break the single-season record of 48 shared by Hall of Famer Martin Brodeur and Capitals Stanley Cup champion Braden Holtby.

Washington lost back-to-back games for the first time since Dec. 16 and 17, despite the goals from Ovechkin, Pierre-Luc Dubois, Taylor Raddysh and Tom Wilson. Logan Thompson made 25 saves.

TAKEAWAYS

Jets: First-year coach Scott Arniel won’t be happy about blowing a two-goal, third-period lead, but his team found a way to get things done.

Capitals: They hung with the best in the Western Conference by responding each time it looked like the game was getting out of reach.

KEY MOMENT

A give-and-go between Mark Scheifele and Morrissey made it almost impossible for Thompson to stop the overtime winner.

KEY STAT

Ovechkin has scored 56 goals in 74 games against the Jets/Atlanta Thrashers, the most of any opponent.

UP NEXT

Jets: Host the Carolina Hurricanes on Tuesday.

Capitals: Host the Florida Panthers on Tuesday.

Sportsnet.ca

<https://www.sportsnet.ca/nhl/article/they-were-dangerous-jets-second-line-drives-offensive-attack-in-overtime-win/>

'They were dangerous': Jets' second line drives offensive attack in overtime win

By Jacob Stoller

Is the Winnipeg Jets' second line evolving from a glaring weakness to, dare we say... a strength?

It's certainly trending that way.

All year long, Mark Scheifele's line has been exceptional, Adam Lowry's line has remained rock solid and the rotating cast of fourth-liners have won their minutes. But that second line of Nikolaj Ehlers, Vladislav Namestnikov and Cole Perfetti? It's been a black hole offensively.

Until now.

Since being reunited in the wake of Lowry's injury, that trio has out-chanced opponents 35-22 and registered three five-on-five goals through five games.

But of all their eye-popping shifts and sequences lately, nothing compares to what they did during Saturday's 5-4 overtime win over the Washington Capitals. On a night when Scheifele's line was relatively cold (by their standards), the Jets' second line drove the team's offensive attack.

"I thought Vladdy's line was outstanding," Scott Arniel told reporters post-game. "I thought that him, Fetts and Fly did a great job. Every time they were out there, they were dangerous. They had O-zone time, they hounded pucks."

In the first period — where they out-chanced the opposition 7-0 — Perfetti drew a hooking penalty at the 12:12 mark following a prolonged stretch of effective cycling. A beautiful cross-crease pass by Perfetti, amidst the hold, led to two wide-open chances for Namestnikov and Ehlers. At the 7:19 mark, a zone entry from Perfetti and Ehlers — followed by a subsequent scoring chance that Namestnikov fanned on — laid the groundwork for Dylan Samberg's goal, which put the Jets up 2-0.

All game long, that trio was able to generate rush chances, convert defensive stops into offensive chances and outplay whichever line the best team in the East matched them up against.

It was the type of performance that ought to make Jets personnel exhale and say 'Finally.'

"That line, they have to give us that kind of offensive output so we're a lot more dangerous than just Scheif's line," Arniel told reporters after Thursday's 6-2 win over the Bruins.

This is why Arniel has been so set on these three playing together. And while we've made the argument that a more balanced middle-six would best suit this team's personnel, Arniel's logic isn't hard to grasp.

The Jets need Ehlers and Perfetti to be their second wave of attack.

Theoretically, the best way for each of them to do that is by playing together and not subdividing the second line minutes among two lines. As great as Ehlers was alongside Lowry, Arniel's going to want to have the luxury of being able to deploy Lowry as a true shutdown centre, rather than a player tasked with creating offence alongside Ehlers. As effective as Perfetti was with Nino Niederreiter and Rasmus Kupari, neither of those two are going to be able to get the most out of Perfetti.

In the past, Ehlers and Perfetti weren't jiving, with the latter struggling to make plays at top speed (a huge red flag if you're playing with the Danish speedster). But things are clicking now. Since those two were reunited, Perfetti has looked more engaged in all areas of the ice — being more of a “prick” to play against, as he coined it — and he's recorded seven points in his last five games. They've been more direct in the neutral zone, making a conscious effort to go north-south rather than east-west. And they're finding one another in the offensive zone — Perfetti has been able to set up Ehlers for some high-end chances.

Now, all Winnipeg needs is a bona fide second-line centre to get even more out of those two.

That said, the options out there are scarce. Over the last few days, we've seen Mikael Granlund shipped to Dallas, Yanni Gourde injured and Brock Nelson's deadline day availability come into question, given that the Isles have won six straight. .

Namestnikov may be far from an ideal '2C,' but if the Jets are forced to deploy him there — it may not be that much of an issue.

That is, assuming Ehlers and Perfetti can continue to build off this chemistry.

Winnipeg Free Press

<https://www.winnipegfreepress.com/breakingnews/2025/02/01/morrissey-scores-in-overtime-against-the-capitals-to-secure-a-sixth-consecutive-win-for-the-jets>

Morrissey scores in overtime against the Capitals to secure a sixth consecutive win for the Jets

By: Ken Wiebe

WASHINGTON — This was a game that lived up to its billing and the Winnipeg Jets showed that they most definitely measure up with the Washington Capitals.

In a game that featured the best team in the Western Conference and the best team in the East, the Jets had a dominant opening period to build a lead, then went back and forth before earning the extra point when Josh Morrissey scored at 1:57 of overtime to propel his team to a 5-4 triumph.

This was the latest example of resilience from a Jets team that has won six consecutive games — including three on this road trip against opponents from the Eastern Conference.

“I mean, it was a crazy game. There was a lot of weird stuff going on, a lot of goals,” said Morrissey, who scored twice and played just under 25 minutes.

“Obviously both teams are known for scoring, but also their defensive game. So I think both teams would probably want to clean some of those things up. But for just one game, a lot of swings. Great energy in the arena, and it was nice to be able to stick it out and get the two points.

“Both teams have a lot of pride and want to show that they’re the better team, I suppose. So there was solid intensity out there. I really liked our first. I thought they kind of took over in the second and third, and went back and forth. But we found a way to be resilient in the game.”

This game had some additional juice to it and the rematch on March 25 in Winnipeg figures to be another doozy.

“Back and forth, two best teams in the league going at it. Kind of fitting the game went to overtime,” said Jets forward Cole Perfetti, who had a goal and an assist.

“There’s a couple things, we always say that, that you can clean up — and we want to hold that lead when we have it, but that’s a tough building to come in and play. They’re a great team, so we’re happy with that.

“We only play these guys twice a year, and we (hadn’t) played them yet. They’re obviously doing really well, and we’re doing well, too. So I think it was a little bit of a measuring stick, you want to see how you stack up against teams you don’t see often and teams in the East. But at the end of the day, we’re just worrying about ourselves, worrying about our day-to-day process and how we can become the best team we can be.”

The Jets, who improved to 37-14-3 overall, have two games remaining before the break for the 4 Nations Face-Off and host Mikko Rantanen and the Carolina Hurricanes on Tuesday.

“We really liked our first. We came out great. The second period looked a little too casual,” said Jets head coach Scott Arniel.

“They got the momentum back and kind of got after us there a bit. But in the third, it was kind of we got the lead back, got out in front and then we got back on our heels and they had a big push.

“We haven’t won here in 11 tries, so that had a lot to do with it, too. Finally getting a win in here was nice. But you know you’re going against some elite players on the opposite side, and we’ve been watching what they’ve been doing. You’re following them in the standings, watching them on the highlights and when you have a game like that, exciting for the fans, not so much for the coaches.”

Let’s take a closer look at what transpired:

HEATING UP

Jets forward Perfetti has found another gear.

The winger scored a power play and set up Dylan Samberg for another on Saturday, moving him to 11 goals and 32 points.

Perfetti went through a bit of an offensive drought, but he emphasized the need to find other ways to impact the game when he isn’t producing as much. These days, he’s playing with a lot of confidence and getting back to chipping in the way he’s expected to.

Perfetti is riding a three-game point streak and has chipped in four goals and seven points during his past four outings – which included his first career hat trick.

“He’s played great all year. And obviously guys get hot and cold ... and whether he’s been scoring or not he’s been contributing every single night in ways that maybe go unnoticed,” said Morrissey.

“He’s such a smart player and plays great at both ends of the ice in whatever role he’s asked to play. So you see what kind of hockey sense he has and skill. And when maybe it’s not going in for him you know that it’s right around the corner.”

Perfetti’s goal was the result of him getting to the net and burying a rebound after an initial shot by Vladislav Namestnikov was stopped.

That gave the Jets second power play unit goals in consecutive games. Their ability to augment the output from the top unit is a big reason the Jets have managed to remain the top-ranked power play in the NHL.

“We’re just being direct and taking what’s being given. We’re not really picking and choosing what we’re doing,” said Perfetti. “If they’re giving us something, then we’re going to take that and do it with intent and authority. It’s been working.

“Today, we got one off the rush, they give us a little break in off the rush, and Vladdy instead of him curling and trying to set it up he takes it right to the net. That’s kind of our mindset. Shots towards the net, and then recoveries and rebounds and try to get them out of sorts. Whether it’s off the rush or what we set up, it doesn’t really matter. We have that same mindset. Our unit has been playing well.”

THE GREAT EIGHT

Capitals captain Alex Ovechkin is 18 goals away from passing Wayne Gretzky for the all-time record for NHL goals.

Ovechkin had a relatively quiet outing until the third period, when he wired home a one-timer, burying a pass from Tom Wilson, to tie the score 4-4 at 12:21 of the third period.

It was the 24th goal of the season for Ovechkin, who is up to 877.

“That shot, I’ve seen that shot before,” said Arniel. “That came off in a hurry and obviously ‘Helly’ didn’t have time to react to that one.”

This was one of the records most people thought was untouchable, but now it seems like a matter of when, not if.

“There are certain ones that you just look at and you shake your head. You think it’s unachievable, but they’re meant to be broken,” said Jets left-winger Kyle Connor, who knows a thing or two about finding the net with regularity.

“You look at his career and he scores in so many different ways. It’s awesome to watch. The thing I like about him is the passion he has for when he scores, you can just tell that he loves the game and you have to when you play for this long.”

Jets defenceman Morrissey said that Ovechkin was a guy he enjoyed watching growing up and you can understand why.

“It was the whole aura about him. Obviously he’s big, powerful, the way he plays the game with such excitement,” said Morrissey. “You think of the goal celebrations, the passion, the physicality, his style as a kid – the chrome visor and yellow laces and all that kind of stuff. All those things that kids get really excited about.

“He had that X-factor that made people excited to watch him play. That’s what he’s done at an insane level throughout his whole career. He’s definitely one of the greats to play the game.”

Arniel spent four seasons with the Capitals as an assistant coach and has an appreciation of what Ovechkin has done during his career.

“It was a thrill to work with a guy like that, who was so professional and first class,” said Arniel.

“Just to watch what he does on a nightly basis at his stage, being so consistent over the years, I don’t think anybody was expecting him to be this close at this time of year. But that’s Ovi. He likes to prove people wrong.”

HELLO OLD FRIEND

Former Jets forward Pierre-Luc Dubois seems to have settled in with his new team.

Dubois had a little extra spring in his step on Saturday and his enthusiastic celebration showed you that it was special for him to deliver a goal against the team that sent him to the Los Angeles Kings in June of 2023.

Dubois went hard to the net and found a rebound after an initial shot from John Carlson.

That moved Dubois to 12 goals and 42 points in 51 games this season.

"It's great," said Connor, asked what it was like to see his old linemate back in fine form after struggling last season. "For whatever reason, in LA it didn't work out. He was a great teammate. I have nothing but great things to say about him. I loved playing with him.

"You can see that when he's on, he just flips that switch and he's unstoppable."

Dubois had five shots on goal and six shot attempts to go along with one hit in 18:45 of ice time.

THE KEY PLAY

Mark Scheifele found Morrissey alone in front at 1:57 of overtime to secure a sixth consecutive win for the Jets.

THE THREE STARS

- 1) Josh Morrissey, Jets, scored two goals, including the OT winner.
- 2) Matt Roy, Capitals, chipped in three assists.
- 3) Neal Pionk, Jets, contributed two assists in 23:44 of ice time.

EXTRA, EXTRA

Jets goalie Connor Hellebuyck made his 42nd start of the season and finished with 25 saves. Former Brandon Wheat Kings netminder Logan Thompson made 25 saves for the Capitals.

Samberg and Alex Lafallo also scored for the Jets.

Jets defenceman Colin Miller stayed in the lineup on the third pairing, which meant the healthy scratches were forward Brad Lambert and blue-liners Haydn Fleury and Ville Heinola.

Winnipeg Sun

<https://winnipeg.sun.com/sports/hockey/nhl/winnipeg-jets/jets-blow-lead-but-escape-d-c-with-overtime-win>

Jets blow lead but escape D.C. with overtime win

By Paul Friesen

Somebody once said the worst lead in hockey is a two-goal lead.

The Winnipeg Jets lived that mantra but survived it in Washington on Saturday night, holding the edge three times but needing overtime to beat the Washington Capitals, 5-4.

Mark Scheifele set up Josh Morrissey for the winner, the defenceman's second goal of the game coming 1:57 into OT, as the Jets won their first game in D.C. in more than a decade. They also extended their winning streak to six games and their lead atop the overall NHL standings to two points over the Capitals.

"A crazy game," Morrissey told reporters in Washington. "There was a lot of weird stuff going on, a lot of goals. Obviously both teams are known for scoring, but also their defensive game. For just one game, a lot of swings. Great energy in the arena, and it was nice to be able to stick it out and get the two points."

Cole Perfetti, Dylan Samberg and Alex Lafallo scored the other Jets goals, as they took a 3-2 lead into the third period.

Morrissey made it 4-2 with his sixth of the year just 1:10 into the third.

But the Jets allowed Tom Wilson to close the gap and Alex Ovechkin to erase it with 7:39 to go, moving Ovechkin to within 17 goals of Wayne Gretzky's all-time NHL record.

The Jets shook that off to improve their record in overtime this year to 6-3, their overall mark to 37-14-3.

"We talk about it all the time," Morrissey said of his team's resilience. "Sometimes it takes 60 minutes, 65, whatever it is, especially against a great team like that. We bent but didn't break in the third. Once they tied it up the building was electric and they had the momentum. We did a pretty good job of calming down after that."

"It was good, back and forth, two best teams in the league going at it," Perfetti added. "Kind of fitting the game went to overtime."

With all the firepower on both sides, these are also the two stingiest teams in the NHL.

The league's No. 1 power play broke the ice in the first, Perfetti burying a rebound for his 11th of the year.

Minutes later Samberg made it 2-0 with a wrist shot from the point.

The Jets were all over the Caps at that point.

"We took it to them," Perfetti said. "We knew our start was going to be key."

They kept it up through the end of the first period, dominating the shot clock, 13-6. Shot attempts were even more telling: 31-10, Jets.

Pierre-Luc Dubois cut the lead to one early in the second, Lafallo made it two again and not a minute later Taylor Raddysh beat Connor Hellebuyck to keep his team in it, making it three goals in four minutes from the two highest-scoring teams in hockey.

“It opened up the floodgate,” is how Jets head coach Scott Arniel put it. “Sometimes it happens. There was a lot of pressure going both ways. We had pressure on them for an extended period of time and then they pushed hard at us. It was a race to the end.”

Arniel acknowledged his team was geared up for this one, and not just because these were the top two outfits in the league.

“We haven’t won here in 11 tries, so that had a lot to do with it, too,” the coach said. “Finally getting a win in here was nice. But you know you’re going against some elite players on the opposite side, and we’ve been watching what they’ve been doing. You’re following them in the standings, watching them on the highlights.

“And when you have a game like that, exciting for the fans. Not so much for the coaches.”

The shot that sent the game to overtime was an Ovechkin blast from just inside the blue line that rocketed over an unobstructed Hellebuyck’s shoulder.

“I’ve seen that shot before,” Arniel said. “That came off in a hurry and obviously Helle didn’t have time to react.”

Arniel praised the work of his second line – Vlad Namestnikov between Perfetti and Nik Ehlers – which was buzzing much of the night.

“Outstanding,” he said. “Every time, they were dangerous, they had O-zone time, they hounded pucks.”

Namestnikov and defenceman Neal Pionk each picked up a pair of assists, as Winnipeg finished a perfect, 3-0 road trip.

“Huge,” Perfetti called it. “Tough trip, couple tough teams, tough buildings to play in. And we did a great job. It was a good test for our group and says a lot about how we’re playing right now, who we are.”

The Jets return home to face Carolina on Tuesday, the New York Islanders on Friday, their last games before the two-week break for the 4 Nations Faceoff.

<https://winnipeg.sun.com/sports/hockey/nhl/winnipeg-jets/jets-arniel-gets-back-up-defends-team-in-washington>

Jets' Arniel gets back up, defends team in Washington

By Paul Friesen

He may have a goalie making a strong case for a third Vezina Trophy, but Winnipeg Jets head coach Scott Arniel has no time for suggestions his team is a one-trick pony.

Arniel got his back up in Washington on Saturday morning, when he was asked about the Jets' reliance on Connor Hellebuyck between the pipes.

"You're being a little bit unfair to the rest of our team," Arniel began. "We've won hockey games in a lot of ways. I know it's a little perception that because we have a Vezina goalie that's the only thing that happens. That's not true. We defend as well as we did last year. We don't give teams a lot of room to work."

The first-year Jets boss was just getting started on a return shot that lasted a full 60 seconds.

"We have firepower," he continued. "We have our power play that's No. 1, but our five-on-five offence has been a big part of it. We've won games in many different ways. And yes, Helle has to be there nights where there's breakdowns. That's every team. Look at the Caps. Caps are getting awesome goaltending as well.

"We're not one-dimensional."

Arniel's Jets lead the NHL in goals and were in a dead-heat with the Capitals for the best goals-against-average going into a Saturday night meeting of the league's top two teams.

Winnipeg's 36 wins and 75 points topped the NHL (Washington had 34 and 74, with two games in hand), while the Caps had the better points percentage.

Hellebuyck's hand in the Jets' success is undeniable.

He topped all netminders in goals-against-average with a cool 2.00 going into Saturday's game, and was tied for the top saves percentage, at .927.

His 32 wins also led the loop and was six more than his nearest competitor, Jake Oettinger of Dallas.

Arniel's reaction mirrors that of players who've said Winnipeg doesn't get the credit or respect it deserves from around the league.

As defencemen Dylan DeMelo put it in a conversation with The Sun a few weeks back, it drives them to "stick it to everybody that thinks we can't do it."

At the time, Arniel agreed.

“Yeah, bugs me,” the coach 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. 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.”

Of course, the best way to prove that is to make some noise in the playoffs, something the Jets haven’t done since 2018.

Arniel is well aware of that.

“You have to build towards a style of hockey that’s going to win at playoff time,” he said on Saturday. “And that’s what we’re trying to do now. But it’s also having a competitive mindset that knows when that playoff comes, it’s not just turning something on. It’s being able to do it over the course of 82 games, so that you go into those playoffs confident that you’re going to win hockey games because of how you’re playing.”

Playing Washington now was a good measuring stick.

“To run into each other at this time just before the break, it’s a great high-watermark test,” is how Arniel put it.

Lauding the Great Eight

Arniel considers himself lucky to have worked with Capitals great Alex Ovechkin, who’s well on his way to eclipsing Wayne Gretzky’s career goal-scoring record.

The Jets boss was an assistant coach with Washington in the four years after they won the 2018 Stanley Cup

“It’s been fun to watch,” Arniel said. “It was a thrill to work with a guy like that, so professional and first-class. Just to watch him do what he does on a nightly basis at his age, being so consistent over the years. I don’t think anybody was expecting him to be this close at this time of the year, but that’s Ovie. He likes to prove people wrong.

“It’s great that I had a chance to be around him.”

Going into Saturday’s game, Ovechkin, 39, had 23 goals, leaving him 19 shy of breaking Gretzky’s record of 894.

“It’s incredible,” Jets defenceman Josh Morrissey said. “To be coming up on the NHL goal record like that, in the era he’s played in, where it’s been harder to score goals than any other point. I grew up when Ovi and Sid (Crosby) came into the league... those guys were idols. So having a chance to play against him throughout my career it’s always been exciting. A little nerve-wracking at times, too.

“You don’t want to be the one to give up any goal against him along his journey. But what an unbelievable chase.”

Who knows where Ovechkin will be when the Jets host Washington on March 25.

“Hopefully it’s just not against us,” Morrissey said.

The Athletic

<https://www.nytimes.com/athletic/6100767/2025/02/01/winnipeg-jets-trade-targets-defencemen/>

Winnipeg Jets trade targets: Which defencemen could cement Stanley Cup contender status?

By Murat Ates

The NHL’s upcoming salary cap increases are official now, based on a memo circulated by the league on Friday. The numbers are set to soar.

The upper limit is set to increase from \$88 million cap this season to \$95.5 million in 2025-26, followed by \$104 million in 2026-27 and \$113.5 million in 2027-28.

Winnipeg will be deeply affected by this. The UFA and RFA numbers we detailed for Nikolaj Ehlers, Dylan Samberg, Gabriel Vilardi and company are going to go even higher than our projections — while Winnipeg will have approximately \$40 million to work with this summer, according to PuckPedia.

The impact will be even more immediate. Trade targets with term left on their contracts are going to be even more valuable than we’ve projected — and the importance of term has been no secret. Kevin Cheveldayoff has been clear on that subject for years and never more direct about it than in his midseason address. That’s why players like Ryan O’Reilly — signed for an extra year at just \$4.5 million — were given so much extra value in our forward trade targets earlier this week.

That theme re-emerges as we shift toward Jets targets on defence.

A contract signed in the flat cap era that still has years on it? That’s artificially cheap compared to what comes next in the NHL — and it will be worth a premium as Cheveldayoff, Larry Simmons and company go to work between now and March 7.

We’re focusing on the NHL’s top available defencemen in today’s piece, using Chris Johnston’s latest trade board as our guide. What would Rasmus Ristolainen or Ivan Provorov look like on Winnipeg’s roster? What about less likely options like Seth Jones, if the timing isn’t right for him with Chicago’s rebuild?

Well in advance of the deadline, it’s time to explore all kinds of options to upgrade Winnipeg’s defence corps.

David Savard, RD, Canadiens

Age: 34

Contract: \$3.5 million cap hit, UFA 2025

Usage: Third pair at five-on-five, first unit penalty kill

Production: 1 goal, 9 assists, 10 points in 44 games played

David Savard isn't the most exciting name on this list. It's unlikely that he would be an upgrade to Colin Miller, who should already be getting more time on Winnipeg's third pair than he is on this iteration of the Jets defence. Savard's reputation, though, is that of a shot-blocking warrior, and his 2021 Stanley Cup win as a playoff rental for Tampa Bay increases his appeal. Savard played a third pairing role on that Cup-winning Lightning team and didn't win his minutes while averaging just 26 seconds per game on the penalty kill. He's not winning his third pairing minutes in Montreal, either, but has the veteran status and work ethic to garner interest as a No. 7 or No. 8 option.

Ivan Provorov, LD, Blue Jackets

Age: 28

Contract: \$4.7 million cap hit, UFA 2025

Usage: Second pair at five-on-five, second unit power play, first unit penalty kill

Production: 3 goals, 18 assists, 21 points in 50 games played

Ivan Provorov provides an option of a player whose on-ice impact might exceed the Jets' needs. The club should be familiar with Provorov, given his 2016 WHL championship with Brandon, and he's played some of his Blue Jackets minutes with Manitoban Denton Mateychuk. Beyond those trivia items, I don't believe he's a player of interest for Winnipeg.

Now, if Damon Severson were available, I think there would be interest. But Severson has a full-no-trade clause and five seasons left on his \$6.25 million contract after this one.

Seth Jones, RD, Blackhawks

Age: 30

Contract: \$9.5 million cap hit, full no-movement clause, UFA 2030

Usage: First pair at five-on-five, first unit power play, first unit penalty kill

Production: 5 goals, 18 assists, 23 points in 33 games played

I seem to be alternating less-than-ideal fits with moonshots. Seth Jones falls into the latter category — a player thought to be untouchable in Chicago and whose full no-movement clause lowers the odds of a Jets acquisition.

So why talk about him?

Jones' defensive game has improved in Chicago, helping turn his five-on-five and power play offensive prowess into quality all-around performance. He's been part of the solution when on the ice, despite the Blackhawks' years of struggles, and his special teams impacts have been legitimately good. There are five-on-five defensive lapses that bring pause and I think Jones'

impact in Winnipeg would be smaller than it is in Chicago — especially on a team with Josh Morrissey taking top power-play duties — but he can still help.

I don't think he's a \$9.5 million player under the current \$88 million cap ceiling, but Jones is signed for five seasons after this one. He would be an upgrade on Neal Pionk, whose contract is projected to approach \$7 million under the new cap, according to AFP Analytics. Jones' case is one where the rising cap changes my perception of player value, but even then: I think that \$9.5 million will be too much for what he brings. The ideal fit is probably not with Winnipeg but with a team that can give him No. 1 power-play time and let him run.

Rasmus Ristolainen, RD, Flyers

Age: 30

Contract: \$5.1 million cap hit, UFA 2027

Usage: Second pair at five-on-five, first unit penalty kill

Production: 2 goals, 13 assists, 15 points in 52 games played

Philadelphia has recently promoted Rasmus Ristolainen to its top power play, a move which makes me a bit cynical about his value. Isn't that something a team looking to inflate a player's production would do? He hasn't been a consistent top-unit guy since he played for Buffalo (and that version of Ristolainen was an overworked defensive liability).

The Ristolainen that's playing in Philadelphia right now has retooled his defensive game and that's what makes him a legitimate player of interest. Ristolainen doesn't abandon coverage to chase hits anymore and keeps a clean defensive zone as a result. He makes smarter use of his 6-foot-4 frame now, winning battles on the boards and in front of the net.

Here's Hockey Viz's heatmap, showing where teams get more — or less — shots through when Ristolainen is on the ice:

It may be that \$5.1 million was too much to pay Ristolainen with an \$82.5 million cap maximum. With the cap going up as much as it is, Ristolainen's two extra years' worth of contract is less of a liability: his \$5.1 million is the same percentage of a \$95.5 million cap that a \$4.7 million contract is of this season's \$88 million maximum.

Cody Ceci, RD, Sharks

Age: 31

Contract: \$3.25 million cap hit, UFA 2025

Usage: First pair at five-on-five, first unit penalty kill

Production: 4 goals, 11 assists, 15 points in 53 games played

Cody Ceci has never been an analytical darling. His most impressive years show a few years of adequate top-four impact surrounded by third pairing performance or worse — including for the Sharks right now.

But Ceci's best years aren't particularly far behind him. The 6-foot-3 right-shot played a much bigger role for the 2024 Cup finalist Oilers than Savard did for the 2021 Lightning. Ceci didn't win his five-on-five minutes, either, but he played them against top-six forward competition and

was a big part of the Oilers' successful penalty kill. It seems possible that Ceci could deliver value on the PK while succeeding in a third-pairing role at even strength.

I think his impact would be well clear of Savard's but behind that of Ristolainen. It's faint praise but still relevant: I see Miller as a viable third-pairing right-handed defenceman, but the Jets don't always use him as such. If they picked up a player like Ceci, I think he'd handle the third-pairing job just fine.

Ryan Lindgren, LD, Rangers

Age: 26

Contract: \$4.5 million cap hit, UFA 2025

Usage: Second pair at five-on-five, first unit penalty kill

Production: 2 goals, 10 assists, 12 points in 45 games played

Ryan Lindgren's decline in performance has been part of the problem in New York. Shayna Goldman broke down those struggles earlier this season, noting his injury history and ultimately concluding that Lindgren needed to simplify his play.

The reasons for his decline aren't clear, however, and the Rangers have been enough of a mess for me to think the problems go beyond one player. I'll put this one on the Jets' pro scouts. If they were able to identify the areas where Lindgren is struggling and make an accurate assessment of how his performance could translate to Winnipeg, they'd have a better instinct as to his diamond-in-the-rough potential than I do. In the meantime, Lindgren is one of many Rangers who have been playing better during a 6-2-2 run. It's easy for me to imagine the heart-and-soul, physical defenceman delivering a better impact on Winnipeg's third pair than he does while playing tougher minutes in New York. He's a pending UFA without trade protection.

K'Andre Miller, LD, Rangers

Age: 24

Contract: \$3.8 million cap hit, RFA 2025

Usage: First pair at five-on-five, second unit power play, second unit penalty kill

Production: 3 goals, 8 assists, 11 points in 44 games played

K'Andre Miller is the only pending restricted free agent on this list. If you ask me, the fact that he's under team control dramatically reduces the likelihood that he's moved. The Rangers have a lot of good players despite their struggles so, if there's a problem, why not trade the pending UFAs and retool with quality young players like the 24-year-old Miller?

That said, Miller is 6-foot-5, good in transition, and has played more of his minutes against elite competition than any other full-time Rangers defenceman. There's a lot to like if he could be pried free, although one wonders where his long-term fit would be on a team with Morrissey and Samberg on the left side.

Brian Dumoulin, LD, Ducks

Age: 33

Contract: \$3.15 million cap hit, UFA 2025

Usage: Second pair at five-on-five, second unit penalty kill

Production: 0 goals, 12 assists, 12 points in 50 games played

Brian Dumoulin is a two-time Stanley Cup champion who hasn't been able to help the Ducks stay afloat in his minutes this season. The appeal comes from size, mobility, two Cup rings from a long time ago and an analytical wrinkle: Anaheim has been bad with Dumoulin on the ice and a lot worse with him on the bench. If he's doing anything at all to stem the tide in heavy usage on a bad team, Dumoulin could be perfectly adequate on Winnipeg's third pair.

Mario Ferraro, LD, Sharks

Age: 26

Contract: \$3.25 million cap hit, UFA 2026

Usage: Second pair at five-on-five, first unit penalty kill

Production: 5 goals, 6 assists, 11 points in 53 games played

Mario Ferraro broke into the NHL on the Sharks team that traded Brenden Dillon to Washington and has blocked the 18th most shots in the league since that time.

This isn't automatically a good thing — in many cases, it's an indication that a player is spending too much — but Ferraro's a gamer who is willing to put himself on the line for his team. He's underwater as a top-four defenceman on the Sharks but a decent bet to upgrade Winnipeg's third pair, as are many players on this list. Ferraro's \$3.25 million contract has one year left after this one.

Connor Murphy, RD, Blackhawks

Age: 31

Contract: \$4.4 million cap hit, 10-team no-trade-clause, UFA 2026

Usage: Second pair at five-on-five, second unit penalty kill

Production: 1 goal, 12 assists, 13 points in 38 games played

Connor Murphy is about to return to action after missing 13 games this season — and 36 games in 2023-24 — due to a recurring injury condition called osteitis pubis.

Nothing about that sentence screams “must add” at the trade deadline, but Murphy has been a strong contributor in Chicago when healthy. His underlying numbers are the best among Blackhawks defencemen (when adjusted for usage). The difference between Chicago with Murphy on the ice and without him is enormous, implying he has been one of the few players who's worked out for the Blackhawks this year.

It's nice when big defencemen with stay-at-home reputations suppress shots and make big hits, too. Murphy threads that needle, making him and his \$4.4 million AAV contract an appealing right-shot defenceman who has experience playing either side.

Cheveldayoff has done a great job of avoiding UFA overpayment in his career. It's possible that I shouldn't be as worried about soaring contracts in the new cap era as I am. I still think that acquiring players with term remaining could be one way of making his life a lot easier, given raises due to Vilardi, Samberg, and others — perhaps including Ehlers, definitely including Kyle Connor — in the years to come.

That's one of the reasons I'd prefer a Ristolainen-type acquisition to patchwork like Savard or Ceci. Leaving MacKenzie Weegar off the list leaves a pang in the name of realism: Calgary seems to be all-in on him. Beyond that, the widely discussed names don't immediately appear to be rich in the "fit" that Cheveldayoff prioritizes so highly. The big names like Jones don't seem realistic (or ideal, given the amount of his value that comes from the power play.) Capable top-four options like Murphy (and once-capable options like Lindgen) come with injury concerns, while Miller seems like the player New York should keep.

If there's a big swing coming on defence — bigger than Ristolainen, that is — Cheveldayoff might have to deliver a surprise.

<https://www.nytimes.com/athletic/6103082/2025/02/02/nhl-trade-deadline-prospects-2025/>

NHL trade deadline 2025: 7 top prospects who could be on the move

By Corey Pronman

The trade deadline is just over a month away, although with the NHL's 4 Nations Face-Off approaching, we expect there could be a soft trade deadline in the coming days. Today I highlight some top prospects, including quite a few first-round picks in recent years, who I think contenders could move in the coming weeks.

Brad Lambert, C, Winnipeg

Lambert was excellent last season in the AHL, looking on the fast track to the NHL. This season he's taken a step back, with some of his old bad habits creeping in. He's a dynamic skater and puck handler who has clear NHL forward talent, but his effort is an issue at times and he often plays too much on the outside. Winnipeg is in win-now mode, and while Lambert's value is down, he could still be a valuable trade chip if someone believes he could benefit from a change in environment.