

Winnipeg Free Press

<https://www.winnipegfreepress.com/breakingnews/2025/02/21/jets-get-back-to-business-vs-blues>

Jets get back to business vs. Blues League-leading club looks to extend winning streak in St. Louis

By: Ken Wiebe

We now return to your regular scheduled programming.

With the 4 Nations Face-Off in the rear-view mirror, the Winnipeg Jets are ready to get back to business and the next item on the agenda is a date on Saturday with the St. Louis Blues.

Riding an eight-game winning streak — which matches a season and franchise-high — the Jets will be looking to get back to playing the type of game that has them first in the NHL in points and second to the Washington Capitals in points percentage.

“We enjoyed our break, we’ve enjoyed our time but we’ve got to get off on the right foot here just like how we ended going into the break,” said Jets defenceman Dylan DeMelo. “We were playing really well, it’s not going to just replicate itself.

“We need to try to get our mindset right and get things ready to go for a big game. We want to keep this thing going, we want to see how far we can take it and continue to improve on our game.”

Jets head coach Scott Arniel said Friday his club will have sniper Kyle Connor and Adam Lowry (who missed the past eight games with an upper-body injury) back in the lineup, while goalie Connor Hellebuyck and defenceman Josh Morrissey will be given the weekend to recharge their batteries.

Connor suited up in three games with the United States, but was a healthy scratch for the championship final against Canada and there were plenty of times during the tightly-contested contest where he might have made an impact.

While it’s true Connor wasn’t at his best at the event, recording one assist while starting the event with Jack Eichel and Matthew Tkachuk and shuffling around after the tournament opener, he has the type of game-breaking ability that could have come in handy.

“Tough for sure, I’m sure he was very disappointed,” said DeMelo.

“I like to think, selfishly, he could have helped that team. It’s a fantastic team, the coach had to make a tough decision and decided on the decision he made. I feel like it could have been a missed opportunity there.

Arniel spoke with Connor about the decision to suit up in St. Louis before he sat out the finale.

“I’ll talk to him once we get down to St. Louis. But he was the one right away wanting to play. He wanted to play in St. Louis,” said Arniel. “I don’t ever want to take that option away from the guys.”

There's little doubt Connor would have been frustrated by what transpired, but it will certainly serve as additional motivation as he returns to action with the Jets.

If Connor channels his energy the way linemate Mark Scheifele has since he wasn't among the players named to Team Canada in December, it could be a scary decision for opponents during the stretch run and into the Stanley Cup playoffs.

"It's disappointing. There's a lot of players, for all four teams, that had to sit out games," said Arniel.

"I was really hoping he could be a part of that. Like I mentioned, the biggest thing for me is not only that they're representing their country, but that they're getting to play in those high-pressure games and be around those elite players, much like themselves, and kind of absorb it all, take it all in and hopefully help us for the remainder of the year and into the playoffs, when those experiences are vital."

Although Hellebuyck mirrored the experience of Ryan Miller at the 2010 Olympics in Vancouver, he was the best goalie in the tournament, giving up only five goals in his three starts.

He handled being under the microscope exceptionally well and showed why he's the front-runner to win his third Vezina Trophy.

"I was thinking about it (Thursday) night, like who do I cheer for," said Jets goalie Eric Comrie, who is a dual citizen. "I didn't want Helly to get scored on, so I guess I was kind of cheering for the States I guess, in a way. But I am Canadian, I played for Team Canada, so I was very conflicted."

Considering Hellebuyck's workload with the Jets this season (he's started 43 of 56 games already) and his appearance in three more games with Team USA, giving Comrie the crease is a natural decision.

So you can understand why Hellebuyck is back in Winnipeg to spend a few days with his family before getting back between the pipes on Monday against the San Jose Sharks.

That means that Kappo Kahkonen will serve as Comrie's backup on Saturday night.

Morrissey woke up from his pre-game nap on Thursday and was violently ill, throwing up multiple times.

Ultimately, he had to watch the game at the team hotel and wasn't on the ice to collect his gold medal.

"He was devastated. He felt awful," said Comrie. "He was extremely, extremely sick."

Morrissey was leaned on heavily by Team Canada during the tournament, logging big minutes alongside Blues defenceman Colton Parayko, and his presence in the final was definitely missed.

"I know he's pretty shook about it and rightfully so. It was a huge game and obviously a huge stage," said DeMelo. "I'm sure he is going to get another chance at it this time next year and I'm hoping he will get that shot to play in a big game like that."

Although Arniel was disappointed a nasty flu bug prevented Morrissey from playing, he received plenty of feedback from Canada's coaching staff about the job he did in the previous three games — which included running the top power play last Saturday when Cale Makar was out with an illness.

"They're raving about him and how he played, and the big role he had to play," said Arniel, who spoke with Morrissey when he was in an Uber on the way back to the hotel Thursday.

With Morrissey out until Monday, it opens the door for Ville Heinola or Haydn Fleury to skate alongside Colin Miller on the Jets' third pairing.

Arniel said he hadn't made his final decision yet, so that won't be clear until after the morning skate on Saturday.

Jets forward Morgan Barron rejoined the main group in a non-contact jersey on Friday and continues to progress, though he won't be an option to return to game action until next week.

What is clear is the Jets are about to embark on a sprint to the regular-season finish line that includes 26 games during a span of 54 days.

"It'll be a grind. The good news is that all the other teams in the league are going through the same thing, so we're going to have to buckle down and play some good hockey," said Jets defenceman Neal Pionk. "Sure, there are going to be nights where we're going to be tired, so we'll have to rely on each other and rely on our structure."

<https://www.winnipegfreepress.com/breakingnews/2025/02/21/4-nations-face-off-exceeds-expectations>

4 Nations Face-Off exceeds expectations High standard for future best-on-best tourneys

By: Mike McIntyre and Ken Wiebe

It began with a boardroom discussion 18 months ago about ways the NHL could freshen up the stale old all-star game format. It ended Thursday night with the sports equivalent of Mary Shelley's Frankenstein — a massive, imposing product that produced monster ratings and interest.

Everyone involved in the 4 Nations Face-Off should take a well-deserved bow. Canada's thrilling 3-2 overtime victory over the United States, courtesy of Connor McDavid, capped an incredible nine-day, seven-game event that quickly became the talk of the entire sports world and even entered the political arena.

"We got a lot more eyeballs on the game," Winnipeg Jets defenceman Dylan DeMelo said Friday.

“Obviously, we’ve missed this, it’s been a decade since we’ve seen anything remotely close to the best on best, so this was huge for our sport.”

Any thoughts this would be a glorified exhibition were quickly put to rest from the moment the puck was dropped.

“I think the biggest thing that I took away from it was the response from everybody else in the community. You got ESPN: First Take talking about it. You got P.K. Subban vouching for not just the sport but for the athletes and the mindset on what (the event) meant to these guys,” said DeMelo.

“At the same time as the NBA All-Star Game, you see two ends of the spectrum. You see a pickup basketball game with guys doing half-court shots and you see three fights in nine seconds (in the round-robin game between Canada and the U.S.). It’s a huge difference.”

The good news is we won’t have to wait too long for another helping of this tasty dish. NHL players are going back to the Olympics starting next February in Italy, and the World Cup concept will be re-introduced beginning in 2028 and happening every four years.

To quote the late, great Bob Cole: Oh baby!

“I think it was unbelievable for the game of hockey,” said Jets goaltender Eric Comrie, who had a very thoughtful take on where things might go from here.

“If I think about growing the game, it’s a hard game to grow. In the sense that unfortunately it’s a very expensive game to play for kids, and it shouldn’t be. I feel bad for people because it can be hard to afford. Goalie equipment these days, it’s ridiculous how expensive it is and it kind of grosses me out thinking about how hard it is for kids to play this game.”

To that extent, Comrie hopes more grassroots efforts are made to bring costs down.

The event may now be in the rearview mirror, but we aren’t quite finished with it. Here are 10 takeaways from Mike and Ken.

Mike says:

1. I admit to having my doubts about Jordan Binnington, but the embattled Canadian goaltender certainly made (and many other critics) look foolish with his outstanding performance in the final.

His style can be erratic at times and the polar opposite of Connor Hellebuyck’s “big and boring,” but he sure came through in the clutch.

I’ll gladly eat some crow on this one. Imagine if Binnington can now lead a late-season St. Louis Blues surge — just like he did in 2019 — and get them into the final wild-card playoff spot where their likely opponent would be none other than Hellebuyck and the Jets.

That would be quite a storyline.

2. I watch a lot of hockey, including as much as possible involving the other 31 teams that I don’t cover for a living.

Admittedly, I don't see a ton of the Carolina Hurricanes. My goodness, did Jaccob Slavin ever impress me.

I'm not sure if he'll ever win a Norris Trophy — he doesn't produce as much offence as some of his blue-line brethren — but I'm here to declare him the best defensive defenceman in the league, and by quite a margin.

He never seems to be out of position or make a wrong read or bad play.

He's the real deal, no doubt.

3. Kyle Connor may not have been at his best in the first three round-robin games, but the decision to healthy scratch him for the final was absolutely mystifying.

I want as many game-breakers with elite speed and shooting ability on my roster, and keeping that kind of weapon in the holster just struck me as a self-inflicted wound.

One positive for the Jets — I suspect Connor is going to have a little extra fire in his belly over how this ended for him.

4. Matthew and Brady Tkachuk may be the ultimate shift disturbers, but they can play on my team. I would say their stock rose significantly as a result of this tournament, where they both thrived.

We'd already seen that from Matthew in the Stanley Cup Final last year, but Brady showed the apple doesn't fall far from the tree.

He has yet to experience NHL playoff hockey, but once he does, I'd say look out to whoever is lining up against him.

He's built for the big stage.

Other players who really popped off the page for me include D Josh Morrissey, D Thomas Harley, F Sam Bennett and the ageless wonder, Sidney Crosby for Canada.

On the American side there was D Jake Sanderson, D Zach Werenski, D Brock Faber and F Matt Boldy.

5. Based on what I saw (or didn't see) and looking ahead to the Olympics, I would leave the following Canadian players off the squad to make room for some fresh faces: D Drew Doughty. D Colton Parayko. C Brad Marchand. F Mark Stone. F Anthony Cirelli. G Sam Montembeault.

On the American side, I'd say thanks for your service to: F Vincent Trocheck. F Chris Kreider. F Brock Nelson. D Noah Hanifin.

Ken says:

1. A Golden Goal for the best player in the game?

The same player who lost in Game 7 of the Stanley Cup final last June after orchestrating an incredible comeback from 0-3 down?

The scriptwriters probably couldn't have come up with a more fitting ending, at least from a Canadian perspective.

McDavid had been mostly contained throughout the championship final, but his ability to find a quiet zone in the high slot is another example of his hockey sense.

His ability to do things with the puck at top speed is exceptional, but finding some quiet ice during a game when there was very little of it available throughout the four periods was impressive — as was his perfect shot to end it.

2. Speaking of McDavid, I loved how quickly he shot down the suggestion that scoring an OT winner 15 years after Crosby did the same thing in Vancouver in the 2010 Olympics represented some sort of passing of the torch.

While it's impossible to ignore the parallels, Crosby showed throughout the tournament that he's got plenty of gas left in the tank — which is why McDavid pointed to that as a reason Crosby will not only be suiting up in Italy in 2026 but he'll once again be wearing the C for Canada.

Although he wasn't at full health, Crosby finished second in the tournament in scoring and delivered for his country like he has throughout his career.

The passing of the torch isn't that far down the road, but let's enjoy the rest of the ride rather than push fast-forward on Crosby's storied career.

3. It was a wild event for Toronto Maple Leafs forward Mitch Marner, who rode the roller-coaster of emotions from starting on the top line and delivering an OT winner of his own in the tournament opener before being moved down the lineup onto more of a checking line.

With Canada struggling to generate enough offence in the final, Team Canada head coach Jon Cooper reunited Marner with McDavid and the duo combined for the clinching goal.

Marner also made an exceptional play to create the time and space for Bennett to deliver the equalizer, capping his best game of the event.

4. Morrissey opened up some eyes outside of the Manitoba market with his play in the event and remains a top candidate for the Norris Trophy and he should continue to play a valuable role on the second pairing next February at the Olympics.

Although I've long been an advocate of the Jets trying to make a deal to acquire Parayko from the Blues, seeing Morrissey line up alongside Alex Pietrangelo at the Olympics is something Cooper should also consider.

5. Doug Armstrong and his staff deserve credit for the roster decisions they made, but finding room for Jets centre Mark Scheifele with an expanded roster shouldn't be a difficult choice.

Adding Tom Wilson of the Washington Capitals also looks like it would be a wise move.

There will also be some movement within the defence, with Harley clearly establishing himself as someone deserving of additional ice time, despite jumping in under challenging circumstances.

The beauty of hockey in this country is before Canada had even secured victory, the debate over the 2026 Olympic roster was already taking place.

No matter where you stand on that front, it's hard to imagine the experience gained during this fantastic event should serve plenty of players well when the quest for the next Cup chase begins in April.

Winnipeg Sun

<https://winnipeg.sun.com/sports/jets-pack-up-streak-tans-but-no-josh-morrissey-for-trip-to-st-louis>

Jets pack up streak, tans, but no Josh Morrissey, for trip to St. Louis

By Paul Friesen

The Winnipeg Jets packed up their new sun tans along with their eight-game winning streak and hit the air for St. Louis on Friday.

A Saturday date with the division-rival Blues (25-26-5) seems as good a way as any for the NHL's front-runner (39-14-3) to get back in the saddle.

"We enjoyed our break," defenceman Dylan DeMelo said after a third straight day of practice on Friday. "But we've got to get off on the right foot here just like how we ended going into the break. It's not going to just replicate itself. We need to try to get our mindset right and get things ready to go for a big game. We want to keep this thing going.

"We want to see how far we can take it and continue to improve on our game."

Any rust accumulated over the 12-day, 4 Nations Face-Off tournament should be mostly scrubbed by three intense skates, four if you include a Tuesday optional that was attended by most.

The itch to get going again?

"Big-time," forward Mason Appleton said. "At first you're like, 'Oh, this break feels great.' You don't want it to end. And then all of a sudden you're a week into it and you're like, 'Alright, I feel like it's time to get back.'

"We've had some real hard days at work here and we're ready to hit the road and start playing games again."

Appleton says the timing might be a bit off, but that's about it.

There will be one big hole on the Jets blue line, as Josh Morrissey is getting an extra day to recover from the tournament – and an illness that kept him out of Team Canada's lineup for the final game.

Logan Stanley is expected to take his spot next to DeMelo, with either Haydn Fleury or Ville Heinola taking Stanley's spot on the third pair.

“He’s a guy that I like playing with, a guy that’s very steady,” DeMelo said of Stanley. “He makes good decisions with the puck. Obviously he’s a big body, uses it well, closes well and he’s got a very under-rated offensive game. So I’m looking forward to playing with him.”

Connor Hellebuyck is also getting a break after leading Team USA to the 4 Nations final, leaving Eric Comrie to mind the net.

Winger Kyle Connor, a healthy scratch for the U.S. in Thursday’s final, will join the Jets in St. Louis.

Adam Lowry also returns from an eight-game injury that just happened to coincide with his team’s streak.

“I’m surprised he got in the lineup with how much we’ve been winning,” Appleton said, chuckling. “Just kidding. We’re all thrilled to have our captain back.”

It’s just a one-game trip, with a home game against San Jose on tap Monday.

<https://winnipeg.sun.com/sports/hed-be-in-my-lineup-4-nations-final-an-emotional-blender-for-jets>

'He'd be in my lineup': 4-Nations final an emotional blender for Jets

By Paul Friesen

The latest chapter of the Canada-U.S. hockey rivalry may have had fans north of the border raising a glass in celebration, but for the Winnipeg Jets it served up a blender full of emotions.

The main ingredients: A sick Josh Morrissey, a scratched Kyle Connor, and a defeated Connor Hellebuyck.

Oh, and the overtime win for Canada in Thursday’s 4 Nations tournament final.

Jets goalie Eric Comrie tried to digest it all the next day.

“I didn’t want Helly to get scored on, so I guess I was kind of cheering for the States, in a way,” Comrie said. “But I am Canadian, I played for Team Canada, so I was very conflicted. It was like I can’t lose this game. And then when I saw the USA lost, Helly lost, I felt like I lost the game... he’s my close friend.

“But I wanted Josh to win it, too. And I felt really bad for him that he didn’t have the opportunity to play in that.”

Talking to Morrissey on Thursday night, Comrie could tell how crushed the defenceman was.

“He was devastated,” Comrie said. “He felt awful. He was extremely, extremely sick. I hope he gets better quick. You really don’t want him to be sick here.”

Jets head coach Scott Arniel touched base with Morrissey twice on Thursday: as he was leaving for the arena in Boston in the morning, hoping he’d feel well enough to play, and on his way back to his hotel room, knowing he couldn’t.

“He was throwing up all day,” Arniel said. “And he gave me a call when he was in an Uber going back to the hotel... which is so unfortunate. Was really hoping that he could be around that. Oh, man. It wasn’t too long of a conversation. Huge disappointment.

“But I got some text messages from the coaches, the Canadian coaches, and they’re raving about him and how he played, and the big role he had to play.”

Meanwhile, Connor’s role with Team USA never came close to resembling the role he holds with the Jets.

For Thursday’s final it evaporated altogether.

“It’s disappointing,” Arniel said. “I was really hoping he could be a part of that.”

While it’s hard to second-guess a professional coaching staff, nobody on the American team had more goals in the NHL going into the tournament than the Jets winger.

“I like to think, selfishly, he could have helped that team,” Jets defenceman Dylan DeMelo said. “It could have been a missed opportunity there.”

“He’s one of the best players in the world,” Mason Appleton added. “A coach has a puzzle to try to put together. The general public just thinks, ‘Wow, I can’t believe he’s not in the lineup.’ He’d be in my lineup, but I’m not the coach.

“I’m sure he wasn’t happy about that. But he’s a hell of a hockey player and we’re excited to have him back here.”

Connor will join the Jets for Saturday’s game in St. Louis, while Morrissey and Hellebuyck were flying to Winnipeg on Friday, where they’ll get some extra rest before the Jets host San Jose on Monday.

Overall, players seem pleasantly surprised the tournament was as intense as it was and got the attention that it got, on both sides of the border.

“I was very surprised,” Appleton said, calling the fight-filled start to the first Canada-U.S. game as a “wow moment.”

“I didn’t think it was going to be an all-star game feel. But I didn’t think it was going to be a Game 7 feel, either. But the intensity and the speed of the game really blew the doors off me.”

Appleton says while he wasn’t that emotionally invested in it, his buddies from back home in the States were.

Adding intrigue, and perhaps emotion, was all the political noise around it, sparked by the threats directed at Canada from the White House.

“At the end of the day it’s U.S. vs Canada and everybody wants to be the best in the world,” Appleton said. “That kind of trumps it.”

No pun intended.

“It was more just two of the best countries at the game going head-to-head on the biggest stage,” Appleton continued. “That was the driving factor.”

So was the long wait for an international event that included most of the best players on the planet.

“Obviously, we’ve missed this,” is how DeMelo put it. “It’s been a decade since we’ve seen anything remotely close to the best on best, so this was huge for our sport.”

Sportsnet.ca

<https://www.sportsnet.ca/nhl/video/surprises-and-disappointments-in-first-half-of-2025-nhl-season/>

Surprises and disappointments in first half of 2025 NHL season (VIDEO)

Kevin Michie breaks down the most surprising and disappointing teams in the NHL before the second half of the season kicks off on Saturday.

TSN.ca

<https://www.tsn.ca/video/domino-s-that-s-hockey-trade-targets-for-jets-oilers-canucks-and-flames%7E3084284>

Domino's That's Hockey: Trade targets for Jets, Oilers, Canucks and Flames (VIDEO)

The trade deadline is two weeks away and three of the four Canadian teams in the Western Conference are currently in the playoffs. What should the Jets, Oilers, Canucks and Flames be looking to address on the trade market? TSN Director of Scouting Craig Button joins Domino's That's Hockey to discuss.

The Athletic

<https://www.nytimes.com/athletic/6150366/2025/02/21/seth-jones-blackhawks-nhl-trade-destinations/>

Seth Jones trade watch: Tiering potential destinations for the Blackhawks' defenseman

By Scott Powers, Mark Lazerus and Chris Johnston

Seth Jones wants to win. It's why he signed a long-term deal with the Chicago Blackhawks, and it's why he's now open to potentially departing the Blackhawks.

To be fair, the Blackhawks have gone 94-175-32 since he arrived. It's not exactly what he believed he was signing up for when he was acquired by the Blackhawks in 2021 and signed an eight-year extension.

The 30-year-old has appeared on Chris Johnston's trade board since version 4.0, which came out Jan. 24, so it hasn't been a secret that he could be available. Jones made that clear, though, to the Chicago Sun-Times on Wednesday.

League sources confirmed to The Athletic that the Blackhawks and Jones were exploring trade possibilities, but it was also described as unlikely anytime soon.

The biggest challenge is Jones' contract. Jones is in the third year of an eight-year deal that carries a \$9.5 million cap hit. Though the Blackhawks would be open to retaining some of Jones' cap hit, they don't want to take on a large percentage for the length of it. The Blackhawks hope they'll one day be spending to the cap ceiling again while competing for the Stanley Cup and don't want to be hamstrung by a significant amount of dead money on the books. When the San Jose Sharks traded Erik Karlsson to the Pittsburgh Penguins in August 2023, they retained 13.04 percent of his \$11.5 million cap hit, locking them into \$1.5 million in dead cap space for four seasons. Under the terms of the collective bargaining agreement, teams are required to retain the same percentage of cap space across all the remaining years of a contract.

The Blackhawks also have to be wary of the cap floor next season. Jones' salary has been financially beneficial to general manager Kyle Davidson in recent years. If Davidson moves Jones before next season, he might have to make a major splash in free agency simply to reach the floor. PuckPedia projects the Blackhawks around \$36 million in cap space next season, which includes Jones' contract. Davidson could make a play for a top-tier forward to complement Connor Bedard regardless of what happens with Jones, but there is no guarantee that caliber of player will hit the market.

The other major hurdle in trading Jones is that he has a full no-movement clause. He controls where he can go. Just like when Patrick Kane used the power of a no-movement clause to direct where the Blackhawks sent him at the trade deadline in 2023, it sounds as if Jones isn't willing to go to just any winning NHL team. He has his preferences, and that also limits the possibilities, although the parties are working together to find him a new home.

None of it means a trade is impossible. Jones' being open to the idea is more than before. It's just that the likelihood of it might not be realistic until the offseason or within the next few seasons as the league's cap ceiling rises and Jones' contract doesn't take up such a large percentage of a team's total cap space.

So, where could Jones end up? What are the realistic options? Let's explore that by going through all the teams in the playoff hunt.

Possibly

Calgary Flames: Outside of MacKenzie Weegar, the Flames don't have a ton of money invested in their defense. Only two defensemen signed beyond next season. On paper, Calgary could make sense. Whether it's Calgary or somewhere else, the question has to be whether Jones would be willing to play in Canada. He has total control of that.

Carolina Hurricanes: The Hurricanes have more than \$13 million in defensemen coming off the books this summer between Brent Burns and Dmitry Orlov, and a Jaccob Slavin-Jones pairing could be enticing. But Carolina's No. 1 priority will be re-signing Mikko Rantanen.

Detroit Red Wings: The Wings are in the second wild-card spot in the Eastern Conference, and having a one-two punch of Moritz Seider and Jones on the right side certainly would help them hold off the field, this year and beyond.

Dallas Stars: Jones is from the Dallas area, and the Stars are among the league's best teams, so this would have to be appealing to him. And with Tyler Seguin on LTIR, the Stars could make the money work. Having Jones as a second-pairing guy behind Miro Heiskanen (who plays on his off side) on the right side would be quite a luxury for a team that's trying to win the Stanley Cup this season. But the Stars just acquired Cody Ceci in the Mikael Granlund trade, and making the math work beyond this season (especially with Thomas Harley due a big raise after next season) could be difficult. Chicago likely would have to eat a lot of money for a long time.

Florida Panthers: The Panthers have had a need on the right side since Brandon Montour left for the Seattle Kraken last summer, and Aaron Ekblad is a pending unrestricted free agent. GM Bill Zito also knows Jones well from their time together with the Columbus Blue Jackets. But Florida doesn't have much in the way of prospects or picks (it was ranked dead last in Scott Wheeler's pipeline rankings and doesn't have any picks in the first three rounds in this year's NHL Draft), and making the money work will be quite a challenge, even with the cap going up.

Tampa Bay Lightning: The Lightning could use another right-handed-shot defenseman as they continue to stay in their competitive window. The Lightning have the luxury of a lot of cost certainty, with a number of their top players already locked into deals. Jones would limit some of that future flexibility, but it's important to remember that a lot of GMs value what Jones can bring to their team, even if he hasn't lived up to his contract in Chicago.

Winnipeg Jets: Jones would be a nice upgrade on the right side for the Jets, who are among the league's best teams and should be for years to come, with Connor Hellebuyck locked up through 2030-31. But if you've ever read one of The Athletic's anonymous player polls, you know that — fair or not — no-trade clauses were basically invented because of Winnipeg's mere existence.

Maybe

Columbus Blue Jackets: You wouldn't think so considering Jones wanted out of Columbus. But things have changed since he was dealt to the Blackhawks. For one, Jarmo Kekäläinen is no longer the general manager. There is no denying the chemistry between Jones and Zach Werenski. The Blue Jackets aren't absolutely a playoff team, but they've been the surprise of the season and seem to be headed in a positive direction.

Utah Hockey Club: Utah is in good shape in terms of the cap, but Jones has a full no-movement clause. Utah HC isn't the old Arizona Coyotes, but it'll take some time for Salt Lake City to become a coveted destination for high-profile players.

Vegas Golden Knights: On one hand, the Knights are pretty well set for the long term on the blue line, with Alex Pietrangelo, Shea Theodore, Noah Hanifin, Brayden McNabb and Zach Whitecloud signed for multiple years to come. On the other hand, it's Vegas, and going after big names is just what Vegas does. David Copperfield isn't the most prominent magician in town; it's Kelly McCrimmon.

Unlikely

Boston Bruins: The Bruins have talent and a great culture and have been perennial contenders for most of the last 15 years. But they seem to be tottering on the brink of falling into the same post-contention abyss the Blackhawks fell in just as Jones arrived. Jones has a full no-movement clause, and he's seen this movie before.

Colorado Avalanche: Denver was home to Jones growing up, and his dad is an assistant coach for the Denver Nuggets. That said, the Avalanche have a lot of money invested in their defense already. It's probably unlikely.

Edmonton Oilers: When Stan Bowman was the Blackhawks GM, he loved Jones' game so much that he short-circuited a rebuild and gave up a recent top-10 pick (Adam Boqvist) and two first-round picks to get him. But Connor McDavid's about to threaten \$20 million a season with his next extension. Unless this becomes a one-for-one deal for Darnell Nurse — Edmonton's own good-but-frustrating \$9.25 million man — this feels unlikely.

Los Angeles Kings: Would Kings GM Rob Blake be willing to spend more than \$20 million for 30-year-old Jones and 35-year-old Drew Doughty, who's signed for two more seasons at \$11 million a pop?

Minnesota Wild: The Wild have invested a lot of long-term money into their defense already. It's unlikely they're looking for someone like Jones right now.

New Jersey Devils: The Devils are another team that is locked in with its defense. Jones wouldn't make much sense for them.

New York Islanders: The Isles have been ravaged by injuries on the back end, but James Mirtle ranked the Islanders' cap situation as the worst in the NHL. Adding another poor-value contract like Jones' would be very on-brand for the Islanders but not very logical.

New York Rangers: The Rangers already have one \$9.5 million defenseman in Adam Fox. Hard to see them squeezing in another.

Ottawa Senators: The Senators don't need another top-four defenseman for their group. They're pretty balanced. Jones wouldn't be a good fit there.

Toronto Maple Leafs: The Leafs will have some money to play with if they let captain John Tavares walk or fail to re-sign Mitch Marner. But could they commit to either of those possibilities before the trade deadline? Unlikely.

Vancouver Canucks: Defense isn't much of a concern for the Canucks, especially after extending Marcus Pettersson. Vancouver would be looking for upgrades at the forward position.

Washington Capitals: The Capitals appear pretty set with their defensemen for the coming years. It's also hard to imagine them bringing in someone who has a larger cap hit than John Carlson.

<https://www.nytimes.com/athletic/6145001/2025/02/21/olympic-hockey-stock-watch-4-nations/?onboarded=true>

Olympic hockey stock watch: Risers, fallers, lines that work and other learnings from 4 Nations

By Chris Johnston, Arpon Basu, Fluto Shinzawa and Michael Russo

The 4 Nations Face-Off is in the books, with Canada capping a wildly successful event in dramatic fashion Thursday night on Connor McDavid's overtime dagger to win 3-2 over the United States in the final.

The Canadian championship completes hockey's first foray into international best-on-best hockey since 2016. It won't be nearly so long until the next, which will come on an even bigger stage next February.

Can Canada carry over its 4 Nations success to Milan and win Olympic gold? Will the U.S. use its runner-up finish as inspiration to reach greater heights? Will Sweden build on its confidence after gaining at least a point in each game in 4 Nations? Will Finland find the right formula next time?

We'll have to wait a year to find out, but with notes in hand from 4 Nations, the roster-building is already underway for Olympic general managers.

After spending two weeks around the four 4 Nations teams — and their coaches and execs — here are five things we expect them to take away from this event as they look at the next, even bigger competition.

Hughes, Connor disappoint

The difference in the tournament? Nathan MacKinnon and Connor McDavid combined for seven goals. Jack Hughes, Kyle Connor, Auston Matthews, Jack Eichel and J.T. Miller combined for zero.

There's no doubt Hughes and Connor, in particular, left you wanting more.

Playing on the top line with Jake Guentzel and Matthews, something was up with Hughes all tournament. He fumbled the puck constantly, especially in prime shooting positions. Maybe not playing center — and thus not being in motion as much — was part of it. It was hard for him to get the puck on the wall. But also, the coaches clearly didn't want him to get overmatched defensively playing against the top centers in the tournament. That'll have to be resolved before Milan.

As for Connor, Sullivan called his tournament a "mixed bag," which was being kind. He didn't use his speed or shot or get to the inside before being scratched in the final.

This isn't to say Hughes is in danger of not making the Olympic roster, and that probably goes for the goal-scoring Connor, as well.

But there's no doubt Guerin and his staff left some great forwards off this roster — Tage Thompson, Jason Robertson, Clayton Keller, Cole Caufield — so there is pressure on underperformers to have good starts next season.

Younger players like Matthew Knies and Logan Cooley will be pushing to make the team, as well. Perhaps older guys like Brock Nelson and Chris Kreider will age out.