

## **Winnipegjets.com**

<https://www.nhl.com/jets/news/three-things-connor-returns-scores-shootout-winner>

### ***Three things - Connor returns, scores shootout winner Connor scores shootout winning goal, Vilardi scores twice in 4-3 win***

The Winnipeg Jets came out of the 4 Nations Face-Off break on an eight-game winning streak and extended it to a franchise record nine straight with a 4-3 shootout victory in St. Louis tonight. Kyle Connor scored the winning goal, Eric Comrie stopped all three shots he faced in the shootout to extend his personal win streak to three games. Gabe Vilardi scored twice and Nikolaj Ehlers had the other goal in regulation for the Jets who are the first team in the NHL to reach 40 wins and remain first overall with 83 points. Connor (30-40—70 in 57 GP) hit the 70-point mark for the fourth time in his career. Only four other players in Jets/Thrashers history have as many 70-point seasons: Mark Scheifele (5x), Ilya Kovalchuk (5x) Blake Wheeler (4x) and Vyacheslav Kozlov (4x). Winnipeg will host the San Jose Sharks on Monday night at Canada Life Centre.

#### ***CRAZY THIRD PERIOD***

Winnipeg entered the third period with a 2-1 lead and were 30-0-1 when leading after 40 minute, the best record in the NHL in that situation. St. Louis tied the score thanks to Robert Thomas 16 seconds in the period and then Pavel Buchnevich scored a power play goal with 2:50 remaining. After the Jets killed off the second Neal Pionk minor penalty, they pulled Comrie to get an extra attacker on the ice and Gabe Vilardi would redirect a Kyle Connor shot behind Joel Hofer with just 28 seconds on the clock to send the game to overtime.

#### ***CONNOR SHOOTOUT HERO***

Kyle Connor made the trip to St. Louis after playing for the United States at the 4 Nations Face-Off and missing out on the championship game. The 28-year-old was everywhere on Saturday night leading everyone with 10 shots on goal, and after Eric Comrie stopped Robert Thomas and Pavel Buchnevich in the shootout, Connor skated in on Joel Hofer and ripped a shot over the Blues goaltenders shoulder for the eventual shootout winning goal.

"I just mentioned to the team afterwards, those are the type of games where a lot of different things went on," said Scott Arniel.

"And it's those games that, late in the year that you need to get the two points, find a way to win. It might be a playoff game."

#### ***NO MORRISSEY OR HELLEBUYCK***

Josh Morrissey and Connor Hellebuyck were given the night off after playing for Canada and the United States respectively at the 4 Nations Face-Off. Eric Comrie was given the start in goal for Winnipeg, and he was coming off a shutout in his last start. Ville Heinola filled in for Morrissey and skated with Colin Miller on the Jets third defence pairing, Dylan Samberg stayed with Neal Pionk and Logan Stanley paired with Dylan DeMelo. Samberg ended the night with a career high in ice time (26:40).

<https://www.nhl.com/jets/news/namestnikov-thrilled-to-sign-extension>

## ***Namestnikov thrilled to sign extension***

***"Ever since I got here I've loved every second of it." -Namestnikov***

By Mitchell Clinton

ST. LOUIS – Vladislav Namestnikov was untying his skates after the morning skate like he's done 760 times in his National Hockey League career, but he was hiding some news that quickly made its way around the Winnipeg Jets dressing room.

The forward had signed a two-year extension (with a \$3 million average annual value) with the Jets, a deal that was announced just before the Jets took to the ice at Enterprise Center.

Amidst all the playful jabs from his teammates about buying a team dinner, Namestnikov could only grin when talking about putting pen to paper with the organization he's been with since March of 2023.

"It feels good. I love Winnipeg. Ever since I got here I've loved every second of it," said Namestnikov. "I wanted to get something done and it was fairly quick, so I'm happy we could get something done."

The 32-year-old has 10 goals and 29 points this season, giving him 327 total points in his NHL career that has seen him play in Tampa Bay, New York, Ottawa, Colorado, Detroit, Dallas, and Winnipeg.

When he came to the Jets, it was to help give the roster a versatile forward as the group pushed toward the 2023 Stanley Cup Playoffs. Along the way, Namestnikov has found a home.

"The guys, the way they treat you here in Winnipeg, everyone is so nice to you," he said. "It just feels like a family. It's a very special group that can do some very special things."

Jets head coach Scott Arniel spent time with Namestnikov with the New York Rangers in 2018 and has seen the 6'0, 181-pound forward evolve as a player since then.

"I'm real happy for Vladdy," said Arniel. "He's just a real pro that comes to play every night. He's a guy that has a lot of experience. He's filled some big holes for us in the last couple years."

Even during his time with the Jets, Namestnikov has played a number of roles. Currently, he's the second line centre between Cole Perfetti and Nikolaj Ehlers and has a role on the second power play unit. In 150 games with the Jets, he's played on every forward line at some point and on both special teams.

"He's played a lot of different roles. He's gone from a top line guy to a bottom six guy, he's been a penalty killer, he's been on the checking side of it," Arniel said. "He's got a real good 200-foot game. You can rely on him in a lot of situations. He's brave, he's going to get in front of and block shots. He's got a little bite to him. He can ruffle the feathers of the opposition."

Since Namestnikov arrived in Winnipeg on March 3, 2023, his 76 points are tied with Nino Niederreiter for the seventh most on the team.

Talk to any player in the Jets room, and each one will tell you about Namestnikov's consistency on both sides of the puck. Colin Miller, who is often looking for Namestnikov as an outlet in the defensive zone for breakouts, says Namestnikov's contributions are numerous.

"He's just steady. Obviously our team is very focused on defence first, and Vlad does a great job of that," said Miller. "He can play the power play and do all those things as well. But his attention to detail down low and helping us out as defenders has always been a solid part of this game."

Shortly after he spoke about his deal, Namestnikov got back to preparing for the game against the St. Louis Blues. A victory over a division rival would be a perfect way to end a special day for Namestnikov.

"We had a good break, everyone is fresh, so back to the grind," said Namestnikov. "We have 26 games left. We have to take it one game at a time and do our thing."

And when Arniel looks down the bench and sees number seven, he knows exactly what he's going to get. It's a comforting feeling to have that type of player locked up for another couple seasons.

"He's been consistent this year with his game. Anytime you look down the bench as a coach that's what you're hoping - you know what you're going to get every shift," said Arniel. "That's Vladdy. Vladdy, you know what's coming each and every night."

## **NHL.com**

<https://www.nhl.com/news/winnipeg-jets-st-louis-blues-game-recap-february-22>

### ***Vilardi scores twice, Jets edge Blues in shootout for 9th straight win Forward ties game with 28 seconds remaining; Thomas has 3 points for St. Louis***

By Lou Korac

ST. LOUIS -- Gabriel Vilardi scored twice for the Winnipeg Jets, who extended their winning streak to a season-high nine games with a 4-3 shootout win against the St. Louis Blues at Enterprise Center on Saturday.

Nikolaj Ehlers scored for the Jets (40-14-3), who are the first team in the NHL this season to reach 40 wins. Eric Comrie made 21 saves with Connor Hellebuyck not on the trip after playing for the United States at the 4 Nations Face-Off. Jets defenseman Josh Morrissey also missed the game with an illness after playing for Canada at the 4 Nations.

"I really liked our effort," Winnipeg coach Scott Arniel said. "We knew St. Louis, they're in a hunt themselves. I liked the way we came out. It was a great first period and did a lot of the right things. Even the start of the second.

"I just mentioned to the team that was a game where a lot of different things went on and it's those games late in the year that you need to get the two points, find a way to win. It might be a playoff game, same type of thing. We were down and found a way to come back. We were up at times. That had a lot to it in that game, pretty entertaining. Just happy we came out on the right side of it."

Kyle Connor scored the lone goal of the shootout in the second round, and Cole Perfetti had two assists.

"I always like to check out how the goalie's playing it," Connor said. "Whether he's back, coming out, taking away the angle. It seemed like [Hofer] was playing a little deep. I just took what was there and saw a spot and just tried to react and took it."

Robert Thomas scored twice and had an assist to extend his point streak to five games and Pavel Buchnevich had a goal and two assists for the Blues (25-26-6), who are 2-1-2 the past five games. Joel Hofer made 25 saves.

"It was frustrating," Thomas said. "Going up against one of the best teams in the League and making a statement coming out of the break, we had a chance, multiple chances even in overtime to close it out. Got to look at the positives. We got two great teams tonight and tomorrow night (Colorado Avalanche). We needed to come out with a good start and something to build on tonight."

Ehlers gave the Jets a 1-0 lead at 4:58 of the first period, converting a saucer pass from Perfetti on a 2-on-1 over Hofer's left shoulder from the bottom of the right circle after a Blues turnover at the offensive zone blue line.

Thomas scored his 100th NHL goal to tie the game 1-1 at 15:34 on a wrist shot from the right circle.

Vilardi restored the Jets lead at 2-1 at 11:01 of the second period when he split two St. Louis defensemen and finished Mark Scheifele's pass from the slot.

Thomas tied the game again 16 seconds into the third period when he recovered a loose puck and put a backhand wraparound off Comrie and into the net.

Buchnevich gave the Blues a 3-2 lead at 17:10 with a slap shot power-play goal from the slot, but Vilardi tied the game 3-3 at 19:32 with a tip of Connor's shot after the Jets pulled Comrie for an extra skater.

"The game isn't over until that last buzzer goes," Arniel said. "We've done this before late getting that one to tie it up. It's all part of the hockey game, it's all part of the stuff that you prep for. We worked on some 6-on-5 yesterday kind of for this reason, but I didn't think it was going to have to come in that quick. Great play by the guys to get up ice fast and obviously Gabe getting to the net."

St. Louis coach Jim Montgomery wanted to see his team close the game out after scoring a big power-play goal.

"You get a big goal on the power-play, you've got to close it out," Montgomery said. "It's frustrating. We got a point. We were behind going into the third. There's a lot of positives to build out of this game, so I don't to dwell on the negative that we didn't close it out."

"But the breakdown was we didn't get in the shot lane going out at the point. We've got to force that puck to go down to the wall and obviously there was a shot lane and a guy that tipped it. That high tip is going to be available off a low to high if we don't get in the shot lane."

*NOTES:* The Jets have outscored their opponents 39-19 during their winning streak. ... Scheifele has 44 points (17 goals, 27 assists) in 43 games against St. Louis. ... Connor has 32 points (14 goals, 18 assists) in 26 games against the Blues. ... Thomas has eight points (three goals, five assists) during his point streak. ... Buchnevich has six points (one goal, five assists) the past five games.

## **Sportsnet.ca**

<https://www.sportsnet.ca/nhl/article/jets-eric-comrie-proves-he-can-be-trusted-down-stretch/>

### ***Jets' Eric Comrie proves he can be trusted down stretch***

By Jacob Stoller

Once again, Eric Comrie delivered.

His stats weren't eye-popping — with the backup netminder saving 21 of the 24 shots he faced during the Winnipeg Jets' 4-3 shootout win over the St. Louis Blues on Saturday — but for a second-stringer? It was an A+ effort, helping the Jets win a team-record ninth game in a row.

The 29-year-old made key saves at key times, starting with a high-danger stop on Pavel Buchnevich, who was left all alone net front, less than a minute into the game. Comrie bailed the Jets' top line out late in the second period, making three saves during a minute-long stretch where Winnipeg was hemmed in its own zone. And he was brilliant in the shootout, appearing calm, cool and collected while going mano a mano vs. Robert Thomas and Buchnevich — shutting the door on each of them with a pad save after the two Blues forwards attempted to undress him with dekes. He didn't give Brayden Schenn any openings on the game-winning save, with the Blues captain shooting the puck off the post after being forced wide.

Boasting a .910 save percentage and a 2.59 goals-against average through 14 starts, Comrie has solidified himself as one of the league's most efficient backups. And Winnipeg will need more from Comrie — who has shouldered just 25 per cent of the goalie workload — through their remaining 25 regular-season games.

All year long, Jets coach Scott Arniel has talked about managing Connor Hellebuyck's workload in a year where the 4 Nations Face-off was squeezed into the regular season. Hellebuyck is the last of a dying breed — a goaltender who can perform at a world-class level while playing nearly 80 per cent of his team's games. But he's also flamed out in each of his last two post-seasons, sporting an abysmal .878 save percentage.

From here on out, it'd be worthwhile to dial Hellebuyck's workload down.

At this point, there's no benefit to Hellebuyck playing 75 per cent of the team's games. The only thing Winnipeg has left to play for is home-ice advantage in playoffs, and that's already looking like a very good bet (according to MoneyPuck.com, the Jets have an 84.7 per-cent chance of finishing first in the Central).

Given what we've seen from Comrie, there's no reason the Jets shouldn't be comfortable giving him another eight to 10 starts to finish the season.

The Jets need Hellebuyck to be fresh for what looks to be a lengthy playoff run

### *Namestnikov re-signs*

Kevin Cheveldayoff got a head start on re-signing his pending free agents, inking Vladislav Namestnikov to a two-year, \$6-million contract on Saturday morning.

For all the (warranted) discourse regarding whether or not Namestnikov is an apt second-line centre on a Cup contender, we'd be remiss to overlook his value as a utility forward. Since joining the Jets — the seventh NHL team he's been on — the 32-year-old has played some of the best hockey of his career.

Recently, Namestnikov has been flourishing on that rejuvenated second line — his assist against St. Louis gives him 10 points in his last nine games. But while his offensive totals are under a microscope, given where he plays in the lineup, Namestnikov's value goes far beyond offence. He's the type of player coaches love — a two-way forward who plays a steady game night-in, night-out, can check and also possesses some offensive creativity.

Namestnikov's comments Saturday morning surely brought a smile to Jets fans' faces.

"I love Winnipeg," Namestnikov told Jets colour analyst Mitchell Clinton. "Ever since I got here I've loved every second of it. I wanted to get something done and it was fairly quick, so I'm happy we could get something done."

### *Connor snubbed*

It's somewhat mind-boggling that Team USA scratched Kyle Connor for the 4 Nations Face Off final.

'We have that mentality we can win every game': Vilardi on Jets win streak  
Winnipeg Jets' Gabriel Vilardi joins Sean Reynolds after a two-goal performance in a winning effort over the Blues, to discuss the chaotic end to the game, the team's nine-game winning streak and how the team fared after the long break.

Sure, Connor — who has the most goals of any American this season (30) — went scoreless throughout the tournament but hyper-fixating on that is a disservice to his all-around game. Saturday night was a prime example of that and no, it had nothing to do with the 10(!) shots he registered. Connor logged the second most penalty-kill ice-time of any Jet (2:36) and his impact was palpable on the PK — getting his stick in passing lanes and swiping away loose pucks on a handful of occasions.

For whatever reason, Connor didn't get a second of penalty-kill usage during the tournament.

It's a short tournament and any coaching staff in this situation is forced to make tough decisions — but after watching that final, didn't it seem like the Americans could've used a bit more pop in their bottom-six?

<https://www.sportsnet.ca/nhl/video/we-have-that-mentality-we-can-win-every-game-vilardi-on-jets-win-streak/>

**'We have that mentality we can win every game': Vilardi on Jets win streak (VIDEO)**

Winnipeg Jets' Gabriel Vilardi joins Sean Reynolds after a two-goal performance in a winning effort over the Blues, to discuss the chaotic end to the game, the team's nine-game winning streak and how the team fared after the long break.

**Associated Press**

<https://www.sportsnet.ca/nhl/article/jets-win-team-record-ninth-straight-beat-blues-in-shootout/>

***Jets win team-record ninth straight, beat Blues in shootout***

By Associated Press

ST. LOUIS — Gabriel Vilardi tied it with 28 seconds left with goalie Eric Comrie off for an extra attacker, Kyle Connor scored in a shootout and the Winnipeg Jets beat the St. Louis Blues 4-3 on Saturday night for their team-record ninth straight victory.

Vilardi also scored in the first period. Nikolaj Ehlers added a goal in regulation and Comrie made 21 saves. The Jets had won eight straight on two previous occasions, the last Oct. 9-26 this season.

Robert Thomas scored twice, Pavel Buchnevich also scored and Joel Hofer made 26 saves for St. Louis. The Blues have won just two of their past nine games.

**TAKEAWAYS**

Jets: Winnipeg won without star goalie Connor Hellebuyck and defenceman Josh Morrissey. They didn't join the team in St. Louis after the 4 Nations Face-Off.

Blues: St. Louis missed the net on several scoring chances early in the game.

**KEY MOMENT**

Jets defenceman Neal Pionk was assessed two penalties for holding with 4:28 remaining. Buchnevich scored his 12th goal of the season on a power play to put St. Louis ahead 3-2 with 2:50 remaining, but Vilardi answered his second goal of the game and 26th of the season with 28 seconds remaining with Comrie off for an extra attacker.

**KEY STAT**

Winnipeg is 15-5-0 against Central Division rivals.

**UP NEXT**

Jets: Host the San Jose Sharks on Monday.

Blues: Host the Colorado Avalanche on Sunday.

## **Canadian Press**

<https://www.winnipegfreepress.com/breakingnews/2025/02/22/winnipeg-jets-sign-forward-namestnikov-to-two-year-extension>

### ***Winnipeg Jets sign forward Namestnikov to two-year extension***

By: The Canadian Press

WINNIPEG – The Winnipeg Jets have signed veteran centre Vladislav Namestnikov to a two-year extension.

The team announced the move Saturday, saying the contract carries an average annual value of US\$3 million.

Namestnikov has 10 goals and 19 assists in 52 games for the Jets this season, and heads into Saturday's game against the St. Louis Blues riding a four-game point streak with one goal and four assists across the stretch.

The 32-year-old Russian forward was originally selected 27th overall by the Tampa Bay Lightning at the 2011 NHL draft.

He has spent parts of 12 seasons with the Jets, Lightning, Dallas Stars, Detroit Red Wings, Colorado Avalanche, Ottawa Senators and New York Rangers, playing 760 regular-season games and recording 327 points.

On Winnipeg Jets game days, hockey writers Mike McIntyre and Ken Wiebe send news, notes and quotes from the morning skate, as well as injury updates and lineup decisions. Arrives a few hours prior to puck drop.

The six-foot, 181-pound Namestnikov has also contributed seven goals and seven assists across 57 playoff games.

## **Winnipeg Free Press**

<https://www.winnipegfreepress.com/breakingnews/2025/02/22/jets-defeat-blues-in-shootout-extending-winning-streak-to-a-franchise-record-nine-games>

### ***Jets defeat Blues in shootout, extending winning streak to a franchise-record nine games***

By: Ken Wiebe

Kyle Connor provided another not-so-subtle reminder of just how dangerous he can be with the puck on his stick and the game on the line.

The Winnipeg Jets' sniper showed no signs of disappointment in being a healthy scratch for the championship final of the 4 Nations Face-Off for Team USA, producing 10 shots on goal and 11 shot attempts through 65 minutes of play.



Connor took another shot with just under 28 seconds to go in regulation time that was tipped home by Gabe Vilardi to tie the game with the goalie out in favour of an extra attacker to ultimately send the game to overtime.

In what was the first shootout for the Jets since October 28 of 2023 against the Montreal Canadiens, Connor buried his shot on Winnipegger Joel Hofer and Eric Comrie took care of the rest as his team secured a 4-3 victory over the St. Louis Blues in the penalty-shot contest on Saturday night at Enterprise Center.

"I thought I had some good looks. It was one of those nights when I just couldn't seem to get it past (Hofer)," Connor told CJOB after the game.

"At that point, you stick with it, you stay positive. I was glad I was able to contribute at the end."

The Jets, who extended a winning streak to a franchise-record nine games to improve to 40-14-3 on the season, are back in action on Monday against the San Jose Sharks.

"It was a good start to this last little stretch with a win," said Connor.

"It's a pretty cool record. It's tough to win in this league, no matter who you're playing every single night. To be able to rattle nine off, especially at this time of year, (where) it seems like the games ramp up and there's the trade deadline and the end of the season, it's only going to get tougher from here on out. So, we've got to continue this pace and continue striving and stay hungry here."

Although there were a few things to clean up coming out of the game, the Jets did a great job of shaking off the rust after the lengthy break and showed plenty of composure and gumption to put two more points in the bank.

"You know what? I really liked our effort," Jets head coach Scott Arniel told CJOB. "I like the way we came out, it was a great, great first period, and (we) did a lot of the right things. Even the start of the second was real good."

"I just mentioned to the team afterwards, those are the type of games where a lot of different things went on. And it's those games that, late in the year that you need to get the two points, find a way to win. We were down and found a way to come back."

Let's take a closer look at what unfolded:

### *The rally*

After taking leads of 1-0 and 2-1, the Blues evened the score 16 seconds into the third period when Robert Thomas scored on a wraparound.

Then with Jets defenceman Neal Pionk in the penalty box serving a rare double minor for holding after breaking his stick, the Blues took the lead when Pavel Buchenvich ripped home a slapshot with 2:50 to go in regulation and 22 seconds remaining in the initial penalty.

That meant the Jets had to kill off two more minutes before going back into attack mode and looking for the equalizer.

That's when Vilardi provided another example of his excellent hand-eye co-ordination, finding his way to the front of the net before redirecting the shot from the right point by Connor.

"Our six-on-five has been real good all year. We have that attack mindset, which kind of started with our power play. I just kind of saw a lane. Obviously, we know what Gabe (Vilardi) can do with his net presence and his hands in tight," said Connor.

"No set play. We talk about any chance you can get, you've got to get that puck to the net, especially six-on-five with numbers, there's not a lot of ice out there. They try to take away your time and space, so it was just kind of take what's available."

Vilardi scored twice and is up to 26 goals for the season.

### *The streaks*

The Jets struck first when Nikolai Ehlers ripped home a one-timer after a perfect pass from Cole Perfetti on a two-on-one rush.

As Ehlers delivered his 18th goal of the season, Perfetti extended his point streak to six games.

Perfetti also had an important puck retrieval and assist on Vilardi's game-tying goal and he's now produced eight points during the point streak.

Jets centre Vladislav Namestnikov also drew an assist on Ehlers' goal by making a smart play in the defensive zone.

That allowed Namestnikov to extend his point streak to five games (which includes seven points during that span).

### *The key play*

Jets goalie Eric Comrie turns aside all three shooters in the shootout, while Kyle Connor roofs his shot in the penalty-shot contest.

### *The three stars*

- 1) Kyle Connor, Jets, assisted on equalizer in the final minute, then scored in the shootout, finished with 10 shots on goal.
- 2) Robert Thomas, Blues, scores two goals, adds one assist.
- 3) Gabe Vilardi, scored two goals, including the one that sent the contest to overtime.

### *The extension*

Jets general manager Kevin Cheveldayoff took care of a tidy piece of business on Saturday morning, inking Namestnikov to a two-year extension that carries an average annual value of \$3 million.

That represents a raise of \$1 million per season over the two-year deal that expires on June 30.

The move ensures that Namestnikov will remain in the fold moving forward and provides some stability down the middle for the organization, no matter what happens during the weeks leading up to the NHL trade deadline.

Namestnikov, 32, has suited up for seven NHL teams (and been on the roster of an eighth, the San Jose Sharks, before he was acquired by the Jets in March of 2023).

So you can see the appeal for Namestnikov to ditch the nomadic lifestyle and put down some roots with a team that clearly values what he brings to the table.

### *Extra, extra*

Jets goalie Connor Hellebuyck and defenceman Josh Morrissey were back in Winnipeg this weekend to recharge after participating in the 4 Nations Face-Off. Arniel said on Friday that both Hellebuyck and Morrissey are expected to be back in the Jets' lineup for Monday's game.

Jets captain Adam Lowry was in the lineup for the first time since suffering an upper-body injury on Jan. 20 against Utah HC. He had three shots on goal, five shot attempts and two hits in 17:05 of ice time.

Jets defenceman Dylan Samberg was leaned on heavily with Morrissey out of the lineup, logging a career-high 26:40 of ice time. Samberg had two shots on goal, two hits and three blocked shots.

Comrie finished with 21 saves as he won a third consecutive start as he improved to 6-7-1 for the season. He's up to 14 starts this season and is on track to eclipse 20.

Ville Heinola suited up for the first time since Jan. 16 and skated on the third pairing alongside Colin Miller, which left Haydn Fleury as a healthy scratch. Heinola had one shot on goal, two giveaways and two blocked shots in 12:16 of ice time.

## **Winnipeg Sun**

<https://winnipeg.sun.com/sports/hockey/jets-set-franchise-record-with-ninth-consecutive-victory-in-shootout-win-at-st-louis>

### ***Jets set franchise record with ninth consecutive victory in shootout win at St. Louis***

By Gordon Anderson

The Winnipeg Jets set a record in a 4-3 shootout win over the Blues in St. Louis on Saturday night.

The contemporary Jets club set a franchise mark with their ninth consecutive win. Their most recent loss was a 5-2 setback to the Utah Hockey Club on Jan. 20.

"You're not going to like my answer, let's just worry about the next game," head coach Scott Arniel told CJOB after the game. "One at a time. No, you know, it's an awesome accomplishment. I do not want to take it away from the players."

"We had eight (game winning streak) a couple of times this year and it's different and awkward I guess," Kyle Connor added. "You win eight straight and then there's a break, so it doesn't really feel like you're rolling."

Connor scored the winner in the shootout, zipping the puck over the right shoulder of Blues netminder Joel Hofer in the second round. The Blues had a chance to tie the game with their third chance, but Brayden Schenn's shot hit the goal stick of Eric Comrie and bounced off the right post.

“I was coming down and I always like to check out how the goalie is playing it, whether he’s back or coming out and taking away the angle,” Connor said. “It seemed like he was playing a little deep and I just kind of took what was there. I saw a spot and tried to react really quick and shoot that.”

The previous time the Jets played in a shootout was against the Montreal Canadiens in October of 2023.

With Neal Pionk in the penalty box for two holding minors at 15:32 of the third period, Pavel Buchnevich gave the Blues a 3-2 lead with a power-play goal at 17:10 as his shot from the top of the left faceoff circle beat Comrie to the blocker side for his 12th goal of the season.

On the second minor to Pionk, the Jets tied the game with a short-handed goal at 19:32 with Comrie on the bench. Gabe Vilardi tipped a Connor point shot beyond the glove hand of Hofer. The goal was Vilardi’s second of the game and 26th of the season.

“We worked on some six-on-five on Friday, kind of for this reason, but didn’t think it was going to come,” Arniel said. “Have to come in that quick, but great play by the guys to get up the ice fast, and then obviously Gabe getting to the net.”

The Jets improved to 31-0-1 when leading after 40 minutes.

Nikolaj Ehlers also scored for the Jets (40-14-3).

Connor Hellebuyck and Josh Morrissey were scratched. On Saturday the Jets activated forward Adam Lowry from the injured reserve list. The Jets captain missed eight games with an undisclosed upper body he picked up on Jan. 20 against Utah. Winnipeg was blanked on two power-play opportunities.

After a seven-game losing streak, Comrie (6-7-1) has now won three in row. The Edmonton resident stopped three shots in the shootout and 21 for the game.

“We’ve said before that we haven’t been giving him run support, but the last three games, he’s been good and we’ve scored goals for him,” Arniel said. “So tonight, I was really happy to see, after that performance, that we got him a win.”

Robert Thomas scored twice for the Blues (25-26-6). Thomas reached the 100-goal plateau with his first-period marker.

Hofer (10-7-2) stopped 25 of 28 shots, losing his fourth consecutive game. Blues starting netminder Jordan Binnington was scratched.

The Jets host the San Jose Sharks on Monday. Puck drop is 6:30 p.m.

The Jets opened the scoring at 4:58 of the first period when Ehlers beat Hofer over the left shoulder for his 18th of the season, converting on the back half of a two-on-one with Cole Perfetti. Perfetti extended his point game streak to six games, picking up the primary assist on the goal.

The Blues tied the game at 15:34 as Thomas beat Comrie over the right shoulder with a shot from inside the left face-off circle. The goal was his 14th of the season. The marker extended Thomas's point streak to five games.

The Jets regained their lead at 11:01 of the second period when Vilardi redirected a Mark Scheifele pass between the legs of Hofer for his 25th goal of the season.

Vilardi drove the net front and out-muscled Kyle Tucker and Ryan Suter before redirecting the pass into the back of the net.

St. Louis tied the game 16 seconds into the third period when Thomas beat Comrie to the left post on a wraparound for his 15th goal of the season.

<https://www.winnipegfreepress.com/breakingnews/2025/02/07/trade-deadline-chevys-time-to-shine>

### ***Jets re-sign Vladislav Namestnikov to a two-year contract***

By Gordon Anderson

On Saturday the Winnipeg Jets announced the signing of forward Vladislav Namestnikov to a two-year contract.

'We have that mentality we can win every game': Vilardi on Jets win streak

The average annual value of the contract is US\$3-million. The contract will begin in the 2025-26 season.

The 32-year-old forward has 10 goals and 19 assists in 52 games for Winnipeg this season. Namestnikov, who was in the last of a two-year contract US\$2 million AAV signed with the Jets on July 1 of 2023.

He was eligible to become a free agent on July 1.

Namestnikov was drafted by the Tampa Bay Lightning in the first round of the 2011 NHL Entry Draft.

Namestnikov has 136 goals and 191 assists in 760 regular-season games with the Lightning, New York Rangers, Ottawa Senators, Colorado Avalanche, Detroit Red Wings, Dallas Stars and Jets. He has 14 points (seven goals, seven assists) in 57 Stanley Cup playoff games.

The Jets acquired Namestnikov from the San Jose Sharks in March of 2023 for a fourth-round pick in this year's entry draft.