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'Unbelievable experience' in best-on-best battle for Jets stars Morrissey, Hellebuyck reflect on 4 Nations Face-Off

By: Ken Wiebe

End result and circumstances surrounding the championship final notwithstanding, there was one thing above all else that Josh Morrissey and Connor Hellebuyck could agree on after sharing their respective experiences from the 4 Nations Face-Off.

Two of the Winnipeg Jets star players can't wait to do it all over again — and on an even grander stage — at the 2026 Olympics in Italy.

But before that, both players can't wait to apply some of the lessons they've learned during the stretch run, which includes 25 more games before the Stanley Cup playoffs arrive — including Monday's tilt with the San Jose Sharks at Canada Life Centre.

"It was an unbelievable experience," said Morrissey. "Better, probably, than I could have even expected, in terms of fan engagement, the hockey, calibre of play, all-around experience and of course, being on a team that came out on top, it was awesome.

"When you go to those tournaments, you just want to embrace whatever role is available to you. You're on a team of all-stars, so I was excited that the coaches believed in me and it felt like they gave me a lot of opportunity to play and I felt I handled that well."

To say Morrissey handled the spotlight well is an understatement — and the same goes for Hellebuyck, who allowed only five goals in the three starts that he made for Team USA.

Given how competitive he is, it wasn't a surprise that Hellebuyck isn't quite over getting so close to winning it all but ultimately coming out on the wrong side of a 3-2 overtime loss — though he was able to identify plenty of positives as well.

"It was a goal short, really," said Hellebuyck. "A lot of good things, had a lot of fun and met a lot of good people along the way. I would imagine a lot of them are going to be together next year.

"It is kind of a heartbreak and I am still getting over it, but I am looking forward to the rest of our season and a big playoff push. It was fun to play emotional games, heavy emotional games and get into it. I am looking forward to what we have for the rest of the season."

Hellebuyck will be back between the pipes for his 44th start of the campaign on Monday, while Morrissey returns to the lineup after coming down with a nasty flu virus that prevented him from suiting up in the gold medal game.

Morrissey was feeling mostly fine at the morning skate, but after consuming his pre-game meal and going down for a nap, things took a considerable turn for the worse and he didn't get close enough to recovering until it was too late.

"I was beyond disappointed, couldn't put into words, the feeling of things happening the way it did before the final. Just bad timing, I suppose," said Morrissey. "To me, that was the biggest game of my life and I didn't want to miss that game. It was crushing, but at the same time, when we were at the rink sitting there and things weren't improving, it would have been selfish of me to go out there and hurt the team.

"They played amazing in that final game. I was so proud of them and so proud to be part of that team. Even though I wasn't out there, I felt a part of it. A lot of great memories that probably haven't even sunk in yet. The biggest takeaway probably is that I want to do it again. It's an adrenaline rush that I've never experienced in my career. The beginning of the (Western) Conference final in my second year was probably the closest I could say, but that was on another level, so it makes you that much hungrier to be able to experience that again."

The growth in Morrissey's game during the past several seasons has been evident to anyone that's been around him during his tenure with the Jets, but he took another important step forward during the past several weeks, as he was one of the most effective players in the tournament.

Shining on a pairing with Colton Paryako of the St. Louis Blues, Morrissey was also tasked with running Canada's top power play unit against the United States when Cale Makar was out due to illness.

Not that he required validation, but Morrissey showed the world that he's one of the best defencemen in the NHL and that's something that should provide an additional confidence boost as he returns to the Jets.

"Every guy was saying it was the fastest, most skilled and intense hockey they'd played," said Morrissey. "I'm always thinking about how I can improve as a player. And definitely being around those guys, being in that environment, playing on that stage in those pressure moments, I think I tried to soak it all in, learn a ton, and bring those things back with me to help me become a better player and be a better player here with the Jets and hopefully be able to play in big moments like that with our team."

Those big moments could be just around the corner.

"Hopefully as soon as this year, in a few months. And also in the future if I get that opportunity to represent Canada again on that stage," said Morrissey. "Still probably unpacking all of the things. But throughout the tournament, I tried to just make notes on things that I was thinking about and learning or seeing what other guys were doing. So just an amazing environment with the elite of the elite of hockey, to soak that in and learn and also compete with.

"And to your point, this is a long-winded answer but proving to yourself that you belong on that stage and belong with those players and can play with and against those guys in those moments is definitely something I take a lot of confidence in coming back."

Hellebuyck is someone who exudes confidence, but you can expect the experience – including the gut-wrenching ending – to serve him well when the Stanley Cup playoffs arrive.

"When you put the best on best on the ice, it slightly changes the game and makes it a little bit easier as well, especially being the goalie behind a really good defensive system. I thought the guys were exactly where you wanted them to be and you did your part and they did their part

and it was a lot of fun to play a game like that,” said Hellebuyck. “The best thing about it was the game didn’t feel too different than our system here. We have been playing really good here in Winnipeg and it was a smooth transition into that game. With that being said, everything was where it was expected or what I saw is what I got.”

Having the opportunity to be part of the first best-on-best tournament in nearly a decade is something Morrissey will cherish forever.

“Listen, when you put on your country’s colours and flag, it just means something more. It’s not about you. It’s about the team and it’s about something even bigger than the team. It’s about your country,” said Morrissey. “Obviously, we felt that pride and we felt that need to go out there and represent our country in the best way we possibly could. I mean, we haven’t had best-on-best in a long time. There were so many elements that made this tournament the perfect build-up for international hockey again.”

<https://www.winnipegfreepress.com/breakingnews/2025/02/23/jets-mailbag-trade-deadline-targets-a-hot-topic-your-questions-answered>

Jets mailbag: Trade deadline targets a hot topic — your questions answered

By: Mike McIntyre and Ken Wiebe

The fantastic 4 Nations Face-Off is behind us, the sprint to the start of the Stanley Cup playoffs is underway and the Winnipeg Jets sit on top of the standings having just set a new franchise record winning streak.

Now trade winds are starting to blow, with the March 7 deadline for league-wide wheeling and dealing quickly coming up. Just how brisk they might be headed in the direction of True North remains to be seen, but it’s not a surprise the topic was a popular one in our monthly mailbag.

Free Press hockey writers Mike McIntyre and Ken Wiebe have the answers to your burning questions.

1. Hypothetically, what’s a HUGE swing that you could see Chevy making this deadline? By HUGE, I mean the biggest he’s ever made. RYAN

MCINTYRE: There’s one player who might (shockingly!) find himself on the market (again!) that I’d say fits the bill: Mikko Rantanen.

I think we all assumed he was going to be a member of the Carolina Hurricanes for at least the rest of the year, but with no guarantee he signs a long-term extension, there are rumblings he could be on the move one more time prior to the deadline (and that the Jets would be one of the teams sniffing around).

Rantanen would check off so many boxes for the Jets and, in my opinion, make them a strong Cup favourite. What would it cost? I’d have to think that conversation begins with fellow pending UFA Nikolaj Ehlers. And I don’t know if Cheveldayoff would be comfortable making that kind of swing without assurance Rantanen would sign here long term.

An even bigger name would be Sidney Crosby, but everything we’re hearing out of Pittsburgh suggests he’s not going anywhere.

Elias Pettersson would also qualify as a massive acquisition, but there's a lot — a LOT — of risk associated with that given the hefty price that would need to be paid, as well as his play over not just this season but big chunks of last year, which would be my concern over his mega-contract.

In conclusion: Rantanen.

2. Do you think Colton Parayko would look good with the Jets? CHARLES

WIEBE: Look good? The St. Louis Blues defenceman would be an outstanding fit for the Jets, especially when you consider how well he clicked with Josh Morrissey on Team Canada at the 4 Nations Face-Off.

I've long been an advocate of the Jets pursuing Parayko in a trade and while not everyone shared my evaluation of the player, he's having an excellent season and would provide many of the elements the Jets are looking for when trying to bolster the back end. Parayko has size, mobility, a booming shot and can be used on the penalty kill.

There are two big impediments to any potential deal, though. First, he's on the Blues top pairing and is under team control for five more years after this one at \$6.5 million (which takes him to the age of 37). The second is that he has a full no-trade clause through the 2027-28 season, at which point it moves to a modified no-trade clause.

Parayko also loves St. Louis, so while I think he'd enjoy potentially having Morrissey as a D partner, it seems unlikely the Blues have any interest in moving him right now — even if the Jets made a big offer.

3. If there's such a thing as an ideal playoff opponent, who do you think would make for a good first round match-up for the Jets? BLAIR

MCINTYRE: At the risk of sounding like I'm avoiding the question, let me start by saying who I feel is NOT a good first-round match-up. The list basically starts with Colorado and ends with Dallas. Avoid! Avoid Avoid! Yes, at some point the Jets will likely have to face at least one if they are to get to the promised land, but kicking that down the road as long as possible would be optimal.

All of which is saying it would be imperative of Winnipeg to maintain their current perch on top of the Central AND on top of the Western Conference, which basically guarantees they don't see either of those tough division rivals right off the hop.

I'd also add Vegas and Edmonton to that list, but I don't see a scenario where they will fall out of the top three in the Pacific Division to even make that a possibility.

I think Winnipeg currently matches up well against Minnesota, maybe a bit less so against Los Angeles, and I think they would be heavy favourites against either of Vancouver, Calgary, and Utah (and, if we want to get really silly, Anaheim, St. Louis and Seattle, all of whom are still in the turtle derby for the second wildcard spot).

I believe the Jets will end up as the No. 1 seed and face WC2 in the opening round, which I'd bank on being one of Los Angeles, Calgary or Vancouver at this point. Of those, I'd say Calgary, then Vancouver, then Los Angeles would be the ideal opponent.

4. When it comes to making decisions around Nik Ehlers and re-signing him, how much does the Kyle Connor pending UFA status affect this, and do GMs reach out that far in advance to get a read on what to do? Basically, I don't think these decisions are made in isolation, there are so many variables and moving parts. Your thoughts? BRAD

WIEBE: There's no doubt that the decisions are not made in isolation, but that's not to suggest the Jets couldn't find the salary-cap space to sign both players either — especially when you consider the cap projections for the next three seasons.

Connor isn't eligible for an extension until July 1, while Ehlers can become an unrestricted free agent on the same day. Ehlers is into his 10th season with the Jets and has been very productive, including 18 goals and 49 points in 48 games. Connor is firmly established as a mainstay on the top line alongside Mark Scheifele, so he's going to be due a raise from the \$7.143 million AAV he currently is earning. Ehlers will also be looking for a raise from his \$6 million AAV.

Pending restricted free agent Gabe Vilardi is also a consideration here, as he's likely heading toward a contract that could be north of \$6 million. On defence, the Jets have a decision coming on pending UFA Neal Pionk, whose next deal could also be north of \$6 million, while pending RFA Dylan Samberg is also due a significant raise from the \$1.4 million he's making.

The salary cap is a complex puzzle and every contract, big or small, is a consideration. But if you're wondering if it's a foregone conclusion that the Jets will have to choose between Connor and Ehlers, I don't think that's necessarily the case.

5. With a significantly increasing 2025-26 salary cap balanced with continued attendance issues, do you expect the Jets to be a cap team in the next two seasons?

MCINTYRE: Based on everything general manager Kevin Cheveldayoff and co-owner Mark Chipman have said — a resounding “Yes.”

This comes down to promises made to core players such as Connor Hellebuyck and Mark Scheifele when they opted to sign long term in Winnipeg and the desire to avoid any kind of tear down or re-build and instead opt for a re-load.

They say the goal is to win a Stanley Cup, and I truly do take them at their word. In order to achieve that, some significant spending is required especially with players such as Nikolaj Ehlers and Neal Pionk pending UFAs, Kyle Connor joining them in a year, and Gabe Vilardi and Dylan Samberg in need of new deals as RFAs.

That's going to get increasingly pricey, of course, and it's one of the big reasons True North has been pushing hard when it comes to getting attendance back up. The early returns on an aggressive season ticket campaign are encouraging, and obviously the strong play of the team this season has helped matters as well.

6. Thinking about Nikolaj Ehlers, do you think that a deep Stanley Cup playoff run would help to change his mind about re-signing here? Is he chasing better weather in your opinion? KIM

WIEBE: It's tough to get a gauge on what Ehlers is going to be looking for in his next deal, since he made it clear during training camp that he doesn't really want to talk about his contract situation.

Ehlers has always spoken highly of his time with the Jets, but that doesn't mean he's not at least curious about what he might be able to earn on the open market. He's earned that right and this is his best chance to cash in.

I suspect a big consideration for his next deal will come down to opportunity and while he's encouraged by being added to the Jets' top power play unit, there isn't really a pathway for him to become a first-line player unless one of Kyle Connor or Gabe Vilardi moves on – and neither one of those things seems likely, given how well the top line has played this season.

Ehlers is someone that is motivated to win, so I don't think better weather is a top priority. A deep playoff run could bolster the chances of Ehlers being interested in sticking around, but opportunity and money will also be massive factors.

7. Rapid fire, yes/no. Which players will be on the Jets roster for opening night 2025-26? Nik Ehlers. Neal Pionk. Alex Iafallo. Vlad Namestnikov. Mason Appleton. Cole Perfetti. Ville Heinola. Logan Stanley. Brad Lambert. CHARLES

MCINTYRE: Ehlers – Yes. I think the two sides ultimately find a way.

Pionk – Yes. In a perfect world he'd slide into a third-pairing at some point in his next contract. The Jets love him. Pionk loves Winnipeg. I see this relationship continuing.

Iafallo – No. A very good, versatile player, but one I think who will probably move on as the Jets look to fill his spot from within.

Namestnikov – Yes (I'm cheating on this one since he re-signed on Saturday for two more years).

Appleton – No. Similar to Iafallo. And Namestnikov re-signing makes it more likely one, or both, of he and Iafallo might not be brought back.

Perfetti – Yes. Now, I'll concede that if Cheveldayoff were to take a big swing, he could be all or part of what's going the other way.

Heinola – No. It's time for everyone to move on. The fact he wasn't even used on Saturday night in three-on-three overtime despite Josh Morrissey being out of the lineup tells you how much his stock has fallen.

Stanley – Yes. They can't quit each other.

Lambert – Yes. His entry-level contract will be a big asset, especially if some job openings are created by a couple forwards not being re-signed.

8. Do you see potential for Seth Jones to be a top 4 D-man in the league (five years left on \$9-M contract) if playing alongside Josh Morrissey or Dylan Samberg? Is there a salary retention or salary dump that would make him worth considering for the Jets? CRAIG

WIEBE: Jones is an interesting study, especially since it's been quite some time since he played on a good team — which obviously can impact both the traditional statistics and underlying numbers.

Do I think a mobile blue-liner that is 6-foot-4 and 213 pounds can be an impact player and Top-40 D-man again? Absolutely, provided he's put in a position to play with a steady D partner.

I would have to do a deeper dive on his play, but at first blush, trying to unlock his offensive skill with a partner like Samberg would make a lot of sense. Jones has eclipsed 50 points on two occasions (including his career-high 57 points in 78 games with the Columbus Blue Jackets in 2017-18) and has been a double-digit goal scorer three times, so the offensive talent is there.

Jones is 30, so the five-year term wouldn't scare contending teams away, but the \$9 million AAV would require at least some retention for most clubs at this stage. What the Blackhawks are willing to eat is likely going to play a role in where Jones is moved if he gets his wish.

Does the fact that his father, former NBA centre Popeye Jones played for the Toronto Raptors, mean he'd be open to a move to Winnipeg? That's tough to say right now. I would say it's more likely he'd prefer to go to the Dallas Stars, but the Jets' situation would probably have plenty of appeal if he wants to go to a team that's competing for a Stanley Cup.

9. Why does Connor Hellebuyck not sit on the bench when he's the backup? Does he watch from the dressing room? In full equipment? Is this just a superstition thing? RANDY

MCINTYRE: If I had a nickel for every time I'm on the road covering the Jets and a writer for the home team has asked me "Where's Hellebuyck? Is something up with him" I'd have...a lot of nickels! But that's one of the little quirks the two-time (soon to be three-time) Vezina Trophy winner has.

I'm told it has nothing to do with bench space, but rather a preference to sit in the room with goaltender coach Wade Flaherty and break down what he's seeing off a TV monitor. He's also in there with video coach Matt Prefontaine — the "Connor McDavid of video coaches" as Eric Comrie recently dubbed him — and playing a vocal role at times in deciding whether to challenge certain things such as goaltender interference. You know Hellebuyck has a lot of opinions on that, as he's made various pitches to the NHL over the years about the subject.

I've jokingly suggested to the Jets they could make some good money having a live pay-per-view feed of that room, but I'm guessing Hellebuyck would swat down that idea as quickly as he does a routine wrist shot.

And yes, Hellebuyck is in his full gear while doing all this, at the ready in case Comrie got hurt or pulled and his presence was quickly required.

10. How do you see the Jets handling their goaltenders down the stretch? What's your prediction in terms of the number of games Connor Hellebuyck and Eric Comrie end up with? STEVE

WIEBE: After Saturday's start that ended with a 4-3 shootout victory, there are 25 games remaining in the regular season for the Jets and those games will be played in a 52-day span.

Hellebuyck has started 43 games so far and will be between the pipes on Monday against the San Jose Sharks, and in all likelihood, on Wednesday against the Ottawa Senators. Comrie is up to 14 and will likely hit 15 on Thursday against the Nashville Predators as the Jets play on consecutive days.

I see Comrie finishing with 20 starts (maybe 21), which would leave Hellebuyck around 62, plus his three at the 4 Nations Face-Off. That's a manageable number for a guy who thrives on being in a rhythm.

Winnipeg Sun

<https://winnipegsun.com/sports/hockey/nhl/winnipeg-jets/it-was-crushing-not-to-be-out-there-morrissey-misses-the-mark-vs-the-u-s>

'It was crushing not to be out there': Morrissey misses the mark vs. the U.S.

By Gordon Anderson

The Winnipeg Jets hope Josh Morrissey plays in several monumental games this spring, as part of an extended playoff run, but there will always be one game that got away.

Due to an illness, Morrissey was a spectator for the U.S. versus Canada 4 Nations finale at Boston Garden this past Thursday.

"I was beyond disappointed, couldn't put into words, the feeling of things happening the way it did before the final," Morrissey said after an optional skate on Sunday afternoon. "Just bad timing, I suppose. It was crushing not to be out there and fighting with the guys and obviously not being able to celebrate with the guys after."

Dallas Stars defenceman Thomas Harley replaced Morrissey in the lineup.

Connor McDavid scored the game-winner at 8:18 of overtime as Canada prevailed 3-2 over the Americans to win the inaugural best-on-best event.

Morrissey says he was ready to go Thursday morning, but his condition worsened as the day wore on.

"In the afternoon, I had my pre-game meal and sort of in the middle of the nap, it started to go sideways," Morrissey said. "I won't go into any more detail than that, but I tried to get things to subside. (Along with) the team doctor, we did everything possible."

Morrissey weighed his overwhelming desire to play versus the needs of the team. He didn't want Canada to suffer the consequences of a player not capable of performing in a high-stakes game that meant so much to the players, the fans in the stands and those watching on television.

"To me, that was the biggest game of my life, and I didn't want to miss that game," Morrissey said. "It was crushing, but at the same time, when we were at the rink sitting there and things weren't improving, it would have been selfish of me to go out there and hurt the team."

However, Morrissey did have a prime-time location for, perhaps, the most electric start to a hockey game in decades.

The scene was set on a Saturday night at a sold-out Bell Centre, the joint jumping, the patrons bellowing for blood and a pound of flesh.

They were obliged in record time.

Brandon Hagel and Matthew Tkachuk dropped the gloves just two seconds in, Brady Tkachuk and Sam Bennet dropping the mitts one second later, J.T. Miller and Colton Parayko tossing haymakers in front of the Canada net at the nine-second mark.

"I started that game," Morrissey said. "I wasn't aware there were going to be fights. All of a sudden, the puck dropped and away they went. It was, I mean, probably the greatest start to a hockey game I've ever seen and to have a front row seat was pretty cool. I commend those guys (for) that courage. It was a special moment."

Count Morrissey in should another tournament similar in nature occur and he gets the call to wear his country's colours.

"There were so many elements that made this tournament the perfect build-up for international hockey again," Morrissey said. "And as you said, Canada, U.S., 8 o'clock, Saturday night at the Bell Centre, first time in almost 10 years that the teams have played, and obviously with all of the different things going on politically and all of that stuff, it's a charged-up environment."

'A goal short'

Connor Hellebuyck's experience was just as vivid as Morrissey's, but not as memorable.

Hellebuyck was between the pipes when McDavid's shot zipped over his left shoulder and into the top of the net, silencing the majority of the 17,850 in attendance at the Garden.

"It was a goal short, really," Hellebuyck said when asked about his overall experience. "It is kind of a heartbreak, and I am still getting over it, but I am looking forward to the rest of our season and a big playoff push. It was fun to play emotional games, heavy emotional games and get into it. I am looking forward to what we have for the rest of the season."

The Jets netminder expected a wide-open brand of hockey, not the tough, heavy and systems-oriented grind it turned out to be for the majority of the games.

The players were dialed in to the details, says the netminder. Being a high IQ player, Hellebuyck was impressed the players were locked into the finer points of the game.

"When you put the best on best on the ice it slightly changes the game and makes it a little bit easier as well, especially being the goalie behind a good defensive system," the netminder said. "I thought the guys were exactly where you want them to be, and you did your part and they did their part, and it was a lot of fun to play a game like that."

And for the record, Hellebuyck didn't entertain the notion of engaging with Jordan Binnington when the gloves were dropped in Montreal.

"If a goalie fights, he loses a game," he said, with a laugh. "And in a small tournament like that it is just not worth it. That really doesn't cross the mind."

NHL.com

<https://www.nhl.com/news/topic/nhl-in-the-community/winnipeg-has-history-of-black-players-thriving-color-of-hockey>

Color of Hockey: Plenty of notable Black players have thrived in Winnipeg Byfuglien, Kane, Reddick, Riley among those with strong ties to city

By William Douglas

William Douglas has been writing The Color of Hockey blog since 2012. Douglas joined NHL.com in 2019 and writes about people of color in the sport. Today, as part of NHL.com's celebration of Black History Month, he explores Winnipeg's Black hockey history.

Tongue in cheek, Eddie Murphy's Axel Foley tells a surprised fellow detective in "Beverly Hills Cop: Axel F" that he became a hockey fan because his great-grandfather played in "the Negro leagues" for "the Winnipeg Black Guys."

"Axel is always kind of making stuff up as he goes along," said Kevin Etten, who co-wrote the "Beverly Hills Cop" action-comedy sequel that was released last July. "He's just making stuff up to (mess) with his buddy."

But Winnipeg's Black hockey history is no joke. The Manitoba provincial capital has a rich history of Black players who were born or raised there, played for the Winnipeg Jets or other NHL teams, or achieved success in minor leagues or internationally.

"It's cool to see the number of guys that have played in Winnipeg, but also guys who were from Winnipeg growing up," said Ray Neufeld, who played 249 games for the original Winnipeg Jets from 1985-89 and hails from nearby St. Boniface, Manitoba. "There's a great history of Black players, and I don't think people know that."

Toronto Maple Leafs forward Ryan Reaves and Madison Bowey, a defenseman for Cleveland of the American Hockey League who played in 158 NHL games, are Winnipeg natives.

So is retired New Jersey Devils defenseman Bryce Salvador, who was the third Black captain in NHL history. The late Paul Jerrard, a former NHL defenseman who became one of the few Black coaches in professional and NCAA Division I hockey, also called Winnipeg home.

Here's a look at some of the other Black players with a Winnipeg connection (in alphabetical order):

Dustin Byfuglien, D: A first-team member of the Jets' Quarter-Century Team, Byfuglien arrived in Winnipeg in 2011-12 when the Atlanta Thrashers relocated and became the second incarnation of the Jets. He had 416 points (122 goals, 294 assists) in 609 games with Winnipeg from 2011-19 and 525 points (177 goals, 348 assists) in 869 games with the Chicago Blackhawks, Thrashers and Jets. He won the Stanley Cup with Chicago in 2010.

Nigel Dawes, F: The Winnipeg native, who retired from professional hockey in 2023, had 84 points (39 goals, 45 assists) in 212 NHL games with the New York Rangers, Phoenix Coyotes, Calgary Flames, Thrashers and Montreal Canadiens from 2006-11. He became a star in the

Kontinental Hockey League, where he is the sixth all-time leading scorer with 505 points (267 goals, 238 assists) in 543 games.

Jason Doig, D: The Montreal native was selected by the Jets in the second round (No. 34) in the 1995 NHL Draft. He had two points (one goal, one assist) in 15 games as a 19-year-old for the Jets in 1995-96, their final season in Winnipeg before they relocated and became the Phoenix Coyotes. Doig had 24 points (six goals, 18 assists) in 158 NHL games with the Jets, Coyotes, Ranger and Washington Capitals.

Evander Kane, F: Another Thrashers transplant, Kane had 222 points (109 goals, 113 assists) in 361 games with the Jets. He has played 15 NHL seasons with 617 points (326 goals, 291 assists) in 930 games with Atlanta, Winnipeg, the Buffalo Sabres, San Jose Sharks and Edmonton Oilers.

Alf Lewsey, F: Lewsey was one of the first Black players from Winnipeg to gain notoriety. The Chicago Defender, a Black newspaper, wrote of the teenage Lewsey on Nov. 4, 1950: "It would not be a surprise to see him in the uniform of some team in the National Hockey League within the next two or three years. He can be to hockey what Jackie Robinson was to organized baseball -- the guy to break down the racial barriers." He never did reach the NHL, but went on to play for teams in six Canadian provinces, Scotland, England and the United States. He won a championship with New Haven of the old Eastern Hockey League in 1955-56 and had 57 points (20 goals, 37 assists) in 61 games that season.

Ray Neufeld, F: Selected by the Hartford Whalers in the fourth round (No. 81) of the 1979 NHL Draft, Neufeld had 127 points (61 goals, 66 assists) in 249 games for the original Jets, part of the 357 points (157 goals, 200 assists) he had in 595 games with the Whalers, Jets and Boston Bruins from 1979-90.

Johnny Oduya, D: The Stockholm native had 13 points (two goals, 11 assists) in 63 games with the Jets in 2011-12 following the Thrashers' move from Atlanta. He had 190 points (41 goals, 149 assists) in 850 games with the New Jersey Devils, Thrashers, Jets, Blackhawks, Dallas Stars, Ottawa Senators and Philadelphia Flyers. He won the Stanley Cup with Chicago in 2013 and 2015.

Eldon "Pokey" Reddick, G: Played 117 games (105 starts) for the original Jets from 1986-89. He went 41-51-14 for Winnipeg with 3.73 goals-against average and .872 save percentage. He finished his NHL career 46-15-6 with a 3.71 GAA and .873 save percentage in 132 games (116 starts) for the Jets, Oilers and Florida Panthers from 1986-94 and won the Stanley Cup with Edmonton in 1990.

Bill Riley, F: Became the NHL's third Black player when he made his debut for the Capitals at the Flyers on Dec. 26, 1974. He became the Jets' first Black player when they chose him in the 1979 NHL Expansion Draft after the merger with the World Hockey Association that brought Winnipeg, the Oilers, Whalers and Quebec Nordiques into the NHL. Riley had five points (three goals, two assists) in 14 games with the Jets in 1979-80, his final NHL season. He had 61 points (31 goals, 30 assists) in 139 games with Washington and Winnipeg.

Alton White, C: White was born in Amherst, Nova Scotia, but raised in Winnipeg. He was the first and only Black player in the WHA when he played with the New York Raiders, Los Angeles Sharks, Michigan Stags and Baltimore Blades from 1972-75. He was the first Black major

league hockey player to score 20 goals in a season (with Los Angeles in 1972-73) and finished his WHA career with 84 points (38 goals, 46 assists) in 145 games.