

The Athletic

<https://www.nytimes.com/athletic/6107499/2025/02/03/jets-trade-deadline-plans-cheveldayoff/>

What boxes do the Jets need to check at the trade deadline? Catching up with Kevin Cheveldayoff

By Pierre LeBrun

When Adam Lowry went down with an injury two weeks ago, it was fair to wonder what kind of impact it would have on the Winnipeg Jets.

He's their heart-and-soul captain — an important two-way center.

How have the Jets responded? Try six wins in a row, their most recent a thrilling 5-4 overtime decision Saturday over the East-leading Washington Capitals in D.C.

Of course they miss their captain, but it points to the Jets' depth and resiliency that the train just keeps chugging.

"Kudos to the guys that have stepped in and moved around," Jets general manager Kevin Cheveldayoff told The Athletic on Sunday. "One thing that is prevalent in this game is that everybody kind of wants a little bit more. When you're talking to players, it's, 'How can I get more ice time or more responsibility?' And I guess these are the times when something like this happens to Adam or to Morgan Barron, who's out now for a period of time, as well — someone else who's been asking for more, it's their turn, it's their chance."

As Cheveldayoff pointed out, players like Rasmus Kupari have seen increased roles and have responded.

"It's also good to see a guy like Cole Perfetti step up last night and have such an impact in the game," Cheveldayoff said. "Even on the fourth line, (David) Gustafsson steps in and plays more."

As for the injured Lowry, he went on the road trip with the Jets because he wanted to be around the team.

"His leadership is evident in a lot of different ways," Cheveldayoff said.

The team's performance without Lowry in the lineup certainly took some pressure off them from needing to force an early trade ahead of March 7.

A year ago Sunday, Cheveldayoff went out and acquired Sean Monahan from Montreal — one of the early, significant trades way ahead of the deadline.

"All I can predict is that if I did a trade today, everybody would still be asking me on trade deadline day, 'What are you going to do? What are you going to do? What are you going to do?'" Cheveldayoff said with a laugh. "Because I've been there, done that last year. We made the trade for Monahan and everyone was like, 'What are you going to do at the deadline?'"

Well, he went out and traded for Tyler Toffoli on deadline day.

All kidding aside, my sense is the Jets would eventually look to add a center and perhaps also a defenseman, but that will depend on what the market reveals to be available.

Whether a trade happens soon or waits until after the 4 Nations break closer to March 7, that's undetermined.

"I'm going to see what's available on a daily basis," Cheveldayoff said coyly. "But I don't want to undersell how this group has done and what they've done together. It's not about who's at the trade deadline or whatever. It's about who's been a part of it for these 54-odd games."

And we're certainly not here to nitpick a team that sits atop the NHL standings, first in goals per game, first in goals against per game and first on the power play. Yeesh.

The early-season spin on the Jets for some was that two-time Vezina Trophy winner Connor Hellebuyck was covering up for a team that wasn't as good as its record.

While Hellebuyck continues to be sensational, and absolutely should be in the Hart Trophy conversation, that narrative of the goalie being the only reason is just not reflective of everything else that's going on.

This team is real for many reasons.

From The Athletic's stats guru Dom Luszczyszyn on Sunday:

"My model is a big fan of the Jets right now, giving them the third-best odds of winning it all behind only Edmonton and Carolina. Winnipeg looks like the real deal this year, and that goes beyond Hellebuyck. With the Jets, the question has always been about how their best skaters stack up, and this year they've all raised the bar. Josh Morrissey continues to look like a franchise defenseman while Kyle Connor and Mark Scheifele have seriously stepped up. They've played like superstars, and that's turned the Jets into a legitimate threat in the West."

So going back to the trade deadline, I'm not suggesting the Jets have glaring holes. But being a legitimate Stanley Cup contender actually does emphasize the need to have as much depth as possible for what the Jets hope will be a deep, grueling run.

"There's no question, depth is probably the most important thing right behind chemistry," Cheveldayoff said. "It's an important thing and that's when you talk about fit and you talk about different things within a team. But depth is important."

So yes, the Jets will look to add. But depth also shows itself like last Thursday night in Boston when call-up Parker Ford scored in his NHL debut.

"You look at him on the fourth line and you say, 'Well that's a different dimension than we've had before' — someone with some energy that takes the body and goes to the net," Cheveldayoff said. "It's a different kind of player that we've had there."

"So you say, 'There's a box that we've kind of checked.'"

Would the Jets trade a first-rounder again to check more boxes? They gave one up for Monahan last year. But for a team like Winnipeg that needs the draft because it's not a free-

agent haven't come July 1, trading away a first-round pick is not a simple decision. And this is where I feel for Cheveldayoff because it's a real dilemma picking between how much that first-round pick means to his scouts versus having a real chance to win a Stanley Cup.

"It depends if there's players out there that we have access to and fit and warrant the first-rounder," Cheveldayoff said. "Yeah I think of those decisions ... you don't set out to say, 'I'm trading my first-round pick.' It's vice-versa. It's the opportunity to acquire or not on something that you feel you need."

As he pointed out, last year he traded first-, second-, third- and fourth-round picks before the deadline — not from all the same draft years, but still.

"You sit back and you evaluate what's in front of you," he said.

What I would read into that is, yes, they would trade a first-round pick again but only if the trade makes tremendous sense and the target is a very good fit. That player might not even be out there yet at this point.

"A month before the trade deadline last year, we weren't talking Tyler Toffoli," he said. Toffoli wasn't made available until the final few days before the deadline.

Regardless of what the deadline produces, the Jets have already answered a lot of questions.

Their first-round playoff exit to the Colorado Avalanche last spring — and the manner in which it went down — left a sour taste in Jets players' mouths. Cheveldayoff saw in season-ending exit meetings their desire to avoid that again.

"Our guys, you could tell then they wanted to challenge themselves, to say, 'We need to be better. We need to be X-amount percentage better next year. And we need to try to hold each other accountable to that,'" he said.

That has fueled the Jets' core players, from Hellebuyck to Lowry to Morrissey to Scheifele to Connor, to drag this team into another sphere this season.

By all accounts, this is also a close-knit team. Players enjoy hanging out on off days, taking advantage of the proximity to the outdoors that Winnipeg affords.

"Obviously we are one of the smallest markets in the league and some people may think of the challenges, but that also creates some opportunities," Cheveldayoff said. "When guys want to get together, it's a 10-minute drive to go do something. Some guys like to fish and camp and do outdoors stuff and different things like that. They've really kind of found their niche here."

To the point that some players are having fun negotiating with coach Scott Arniel.

"They'll say, 'If we win tonight, we're off tomorrow so we can go fishing, right?'" Cheveldayoff said with a laugh. "Stuff like that really bonds them together."

One last topic that came up with Cheveldayoff was the new salary cap projections for the next three years. That \$113.5 million cap number for 2027-28, which could even be higher once the numbers are recalculated down the line, was jarring for some teams, even though they had been advised for months that it was coming in one form or another.

What does it mean for the Jets?

“We’ve been preparing for that,” he said. “This isn’t like, ‘What just happened here?’ ... We know we’ve got our challenges. Like any team, you’ve got your set of realities. But our ownership group has been all in to try to win since they took the team over, and I don’t anticipate that’s going to change.”

What he can’t say, but I’ll say, is there’s got to be a hope of more meaningful revenue sharing to ensure that the league maintains its competitive balance.

The new NHL reality in three years’ time could be cap teams and budget teams, more so than we’ve seen in the cap era.

But before then, the Jets have unfinished business. They don’t get nearly as much love or attention as the other top Stanley Cup contenders in Canada, but they’re absolutely right there, knocking at the door.

Wouldn’t it be something, indeed, to see the Jets snap Canada’s 32-year Cup drought? It just might happen.

Associated Press

<https://www.winnipegfreepress.com/breakingnews/2025/01/31/dubois-finds-his-game-with-capitals>

Trades involving the Capitals, Kings and Jets have worked out for all three teams, an NHL rarity

By STEPHEN WHYNO

WASHINGTON (AP) — Rarely in the NHL does a significant trade work out for both teams involved. Even scarcer is a pair of high-profile moves made over back-to-back summers helping every team involved get better.

Saturday night crystallized that for the Washington Capitals, Los Angeles Kings and Winnipeg Jets, who shuffled players around and are thriving as a result.

Winnipeg got a goal from Alex Iafallo, part of the return for sending Pierre-Luc Dubois to Los Angeles in June 2023. Dubois scored for Washington to continue his excellent change of scenery since the Kings dealt him to the Capitals this past June for goaltender Darcy Kuemper, who made 26 saves to help LA win on the road at Carolina and keep his strong season going.

“It’s great to see that,” Iafallo told The Associated Press after his team’s 5-4 overtime win at Washington. “That’s the name of the game. Obviously everything changes so fast or whatever it may be. You find your success and be happy for everybody who has it.”

Iafallo, Gabriel Vilardi and Rasmus Kupari — acquired from the Kings for Dubois — are all playing key roles for the Jets, who are atop the league standings and look every bit like a serious Stanley Cup contender.

Incredibly, Dubois after a disappointing season with LA is one of the reasons the Capitals are leading the Eastern Conference and also have eyes on a long playoff run. With 42 points in 52 games, he already has more production than he did all last season.

Still, Dubois said: "I think there's another step. I think the beginning of the year I felt good. I just wasn't getting any bounces. I think there's still another step I can take. Obviously when you're seen on the stat sheet it feels good, but at the end of the day even if you score and the team loses, it still stings."

There was no sting for the Kings on Saturday night because Kuemper helped them beat the Hurricanes 4-2 to end a four-game losing streak. Kuemper is 11-4-3 since returning from injury in early December.

"Darcy's been outstanding for us," center Phillip Danault said. "He gives us a chance to win every single night. Some key saves at the right time. Yeah, I could speak about how good Darcy is the whole night. He's definitely outstanding for us."

Everything is going outstanding now for Winnipeg, which has won six in a row and the players are enjoying the ride.

"It's been a blast," Lafallo said. "Obviously different roles a lot of the time but just embrace it and have fun. But I've been loving it, especially this year winning so much and having fun with the guys."

Winnipeg Free Press

<https://www.winnipegfreepress.com/sports/2025/02/02/jets-prospects-lambert-sits-no-1-in-power-rankings>

Jets prospects: Lambert sits No. 1 in power rankings Moose sophomore has three goals and 13 assists so far this AHL season

By: Mike McIntyre

With the NHL trade deadline now just a month away — March 7 to be exact — there's likely to be increased scrutiny on the state of the Winnipeg Jets' prospects.

After all, the first-place club is in prime position to take a big swing or two, which could potentially come at the expense of some young players in the system.

The organization currently has 20 drafted and developing skaters in various leagues and levels who could one day work their way up to the big club. Nine of them are currently with the Manitoba Moose, one is in the ECHL while the other 10 are scattered around the Canadian Hockey League, college and European clubs.

To help you keep tabs, we are checking in on the kids each month over the course of the season.

For the longest time, Colby Barlow wasn't really looking like a first-round draft pick. The 19-year-old winger had a fairly forgettable training camp with the Jets last fall, then was sent back to junior with the message of tearing it up and making the Canadian World Junior club.

He did not. Not even close, actually.

However, this may be a case of better late than never, as Barlow was a different player during the month of January with the Oshawa Generals of the Ontario Hockey League. He put up 16 points (8G, 8A) in 10 games and is finally back to being a point-per-game player (27G, 18A in 45 games) after that miserable start to this season.

The 18th-overall pick from 2023 still has a long way to go — he had 79 points in 59 games two years ago, and 58 points in 50 games last season — but development isn't always a straight line.

Whether he's ultimately dangled as future trade bait by the Jets remains to be seen, but the organization is no doubt pleased to see him getting back on track.

OHL: (Players are listed in order of draft year)

-F Kevin He (4th round, 2024): He has cooled off after a sizzling start to his year with the Niagara IceDogs. The 18-year-old from Beijing had six points (1G, 5A) in eight games during the month. Still, there's lots to love about the energetic winger, who is now up to 55 points (26G, 29A) in 43 games. He's currently serving a three-game suspension for a massive (and illegal) hit he threw in a game last weekend.

-F Kieron Walton (6th round, 2024): It wasn't as explosive as a December to remember (19 points in eight games), but January was another solid month for the 6-6, 216 pound centre. Walton, 18, had nine points (4G, 5A) in 10 games with the Sudbury Wolves and is up to 71 points (27G, 44A) in 45 games.

-F Jacob Julien (5th round, 2023): It's been a disappointing overall year for Julien, who erupted for 78 points in 67 games with the London Knights last year. Julien, 20, has just 33 points (9G, 24A) in 46 games this year, although 10 of those (1G, 9A) came in nine January contests.

WHL:

-F Markus Lopenen (5th round, 2024): The 18-year-old Finn continues to adjust well to North American hockey during his rookie year with the Victoria Royals. He had 10 points (2G, 8A) in 11 January games and is up to 33 points (12G, 21A) through 47 games.

-F Brayden Yager (1st round, 2023): He's the only one on our list not actually drafted by the Jets, but we monitor his progress given that he was the return in the Rutger McGroarty trade. Yager, 20, took the disappointment of an early exit at the World Juniors — he was the captain of Canada — and put in a strong month with the Lethbridge Hurricanes with 13 points (2G, 11A) in 10 games. He's now up to 48 points (15G, 33A) in 34 games this year.

-F Connor Levis (7th round, 2023): We wonder how much longer Levis will remain a Jets prospect. He has yet to sign a contract and could become a free agent this summer. The 20-year-old had six points (4G, 2A) in nine January games. He has 39 points (18G, 21A) in 44 games this year with the Vancouver Giants.

COLLEGE:

-F Zach Nehring (3rd round, 2023): The 19-year-old from North Dakota continues to be a streaky offensive player in his first year with Western Michigan and had a fairly quiet January with just two points (1G, 1A) in six games. He's up to 14 points (6G, 8A) in 24 games.

-D *Garrett Brown* (4th round, 2022): After suffering a torn ACL last year with the University of Denver and being limited to just eight games, the 20-year-old shutdown defenceman has played all 24 this year and has one assist.

EUROPE:

-D *Alfons Freij* (2nd round, 2024): Unfortunately, an injury has kept Freij out of the lineup for all of January. He's the other piece from the Los Angeles Kings for Pierre-Luc Dubois (along with Gabe Vilardi, Alex Lafallo and Rasmus Kupari), and has eight points (2G, 6A) in 28 games with IF Bjorkloven of the top Swedish men's league.

-F *Dmitry Rashevsky* (5th round, 2021): Rashevsky picked it up in January with 10 points (5G, 5A) in 10 games with Moscow Dynamo of the KHL. He now has 28 points (16G, 12A) in 48 contests this year. The big question remains: Can the Jets lure the 24-year-old over to North America as early as this summer?

MANITOBA MOOSE:

It's been an ugly season for the AHL club, which sits 31st out of 32 teams with a 12-25-2 record through 39 games. Not surprisingly, individual performances haven't been too hot, either.

-G *Thomas Milic* (5th round, 2023): His sophomore slump has now led to a demotion to the ECHL, where he's made three starts and is 2-1-0 with a 2.02 goals-against-average and a .930 save percentage. With the Moose, last year's MVP struggled to just a 4-10-2 record, a 3.56 GAA and an .870 save percentage.

-F *Brad Lambert* (1st round, 2022): He's currently up with the Jets as a 13th forward (no points in four NHL games earlier this year) but he hasn't exactly lit it up with the Moose. Lambert had two assists in five AHL games in January, giving him 16 points (3G, 13A) in 30 games. That's a sharp drop from the 55 points (21G, 34A) in 64 games as an AHL rookie last year.

-D *Elias Salomonsson* (2nd round, 2022): Winnipeg's top blue-line prospect is finally back in action after missing approximately seven weeks with a shoulder injury. He's been held without a point through three games since his return, but still has 12 points (3G, 9A) in 20 contests this year.

-F *Danny Zhilkin* (3rd round, 2022): There's just nothing happening here for the young forward, who had no points in 10 January games and has but one assist this year in 21 matches.

-F *Fabian Wagner* (6th round, 2022): Wagner recorded his first AHL point, and then his second, during 11 games with the Moose in January after putting up nothing in his first nine games in December. The 20-year-old joined the Moose in late November after going 16 games without a point for Linkopings HC in the top Swedish men's league.

-G *Dom DiVincentiis* (7th round, 2022): With Milic being sent down, DiVincentiis got the call up after posting a 15-5-0 record with a 2.97 GAA and .896 save percentage with Norfolk of the ECHL. The rookie pro won his first game back with the Moose last week and is now 3-3-0 in six AHL games with a 2.43 GAA and .919 save percentage.

-F *Chaz Lucius* (1st round, 2021): The good news is he has remained healthy and in the lineup, at least until missing Saturday's game with what the team says is a minor ailment. The bad

news is his offensive production has dried up, with just three assists in 10 January games. Lucius has nine points (3G, 6A) through 24 games this year.

– *F Nikita Chibrikov* (2nd round, 2021): Unfortunately, the dynamic young Russian suffered a season-ending injury in January. This, after a nice stint with the Jets in December (2G, 1A in four games) and rock-solid production with the Moose (2G, 3A in six January games and 7G, 11A in 30 overall games).

–*D Tyrel Bauer* (6th round, 2020): Bauer always has his teammate's back, as shown by his propensity to drop the gloves. He has two assists in 33 games this year along with 70 penalty minutes.

–*D Simon Lundmark* (2nd round, 2019): The smooth-skating defencemen had two assists in 11 games in January and now has nine points (2G, 7A) in 36 games so far.

JETS PROSPECT POWER RANKINGS — TOP 10

1. Brad Lambert
2. Brayden Yager
3. Elias Salomonsson
4. Nikita Chibrikov
5. Colby Barlow
6. Chaz Lucius
7. Alfons Freij
8. Kevin He
9. Kieron Walton
- T10. Thomas Milic and Dom DiVincentiis

Winnipeg Sun

<https://winnipeg.sun.com/sports/hockey/nhl/winnipeg-jets/engine-noise-jets-beat-the-capitals-in-overtime>

JETS NOTES: Keeping an eye on Washington and first overall in the NHL

By Gordon Anderson, Winnipeg Sun

The international relationship between Ottawa and Washington is currently ice cold and taxing, but there was a hot border battle in D.C., on Saturday night between two of the National Hockey League's best teams.

A 5-4 overtime win gives the Winnipeg Jets a two-point lead over the Capitals for first overall in the overall standings.

“Obviously, we knew how we were both sitting in the standings and both having real good years,” said Jets’ head coach Scott Arniel. “But you know you’re going against some elite players on the opposite side, and we’ve been watching what they’ve been doing. You’re following them in the standings, watching them on the highlights and when you have a game like that, exciting for the fans, not so much for the coaches.”

The Caps have a better win percentage, a .721 to .713 advantage over the locals pucksters, but either way, both teams have performed exceedingly well through 50-plus games.

“They’re obviously doing really well, and we’re doing well, too,” said Jets forward Cole Perfetti. “So, I think it was a little bit of a measuring stick. You want to see how you stack up against teams you don’t see often and teams in the East.”

The return engagement is set for March 25 in Winnipeg.

Josh Morrissey scored twice. Perfetti, Dylan Samberg and Alex Lafallo also netted markers for the visitors. Connor Hellebuyck turned aside 26 pucks for his league-leading 33rd win of the season.

‘That is the maturity’

Perfetti had a two-point night in the American capitol, his third multi-point game in his last 10 outings.

Since Perfetti made his “little prick to play against” comments prior to the Jan. 24 game against the Utah Hockey Club, the Whitby, Ont., winger has had a minor renaissance with four goals and three assists in his past five games. Three goals came on that memorable evening vs. Utah.

On the downside, the 10th overall pick in the 2020 NHL draft has had goalless droughts of 10, 11 and 14 games. He also had a nine-game spell where he didn’t register even a point.

The coach says Perfetti’s dry spells haven’t translated into other areas of his game, where in previous seasons, maybe that wasn’t the case.

“I think that’s the maturity that we’ve seen from him over the last year and a half is last year he let that stuff bother him when he didn’t score, and he got away from how he had to play,” Arniel said. “And I think he’s doing a fantastic job of his puck battles. To me, it is the simplest thing that has helped him have success.”

The 5-foot-11 centreman broke the seal with a power-play goal at 9:13 of the first period, snapping home a rebound for his 11th. Perfetti also assisted on Samberg’s first-period goal. The ex-Saginaw Spirit forward now has 21 assists, one short of his career high of 22, set during the 2022-23 campaign.

“He’s played great all year,” Morrissey added. “And obviously guys get hot and cold ... and whether he’s been scoring or not he’s been contributing every single night in ways that maybe go unnoticed. He’s such a smart player and plays great at both ends of the ice, in whatever role he’s asked to play.”

Lucky #7 for #44

Morrissey and Mark Scheifele worked the give-and-go to perfection in the extra session.

The Jets D-man dished the puck to Scheifele and blew past Connor McMichael in the left faceoff circle before taking a pass below the goal line and redirected the puck to the glove side on Logan Thompson at 1:57.

“Scheif did a good job of driving through and I just tried to slip my check and go to the net. He made an amazing pass, and I had half the net to shoot at, so it was a nice play by him,” Morrissey said.

Following the game winner, the Morrissey tapped the side glass four times, threw in a quick fist pump — it's just a mid season win after all — and headed for the dressing with its bounty of hot water and fresh towels. If anybody deserved a hot shower, it was Morrissey as he logged 24:54 of ice time, the most of any player on the night.

“Great play by Scheif, great play by J-Mo to find that little hole,” Perfetti said. “That’s his skating ability that gets him there, and his hockey sense. Great play, and a great goal. We needed that.”

The Jets improved their record in overtime this year to 6-3, their overall mark to 37-14-3.

Listen up!

The coach publicly blasted his team with fiery comments in the aftermath of a sluggish 5-2 loss to Utah on Jan. 20, calling the effort “horse-bleep.”

The Jets are 6-for-6 since the three-goal stinker.

“Going back before the six games, obviously we got challenged by our coach and we responded well,” Morrissey said. “It’s something we’ve asked out of the staff this year, and as a group we want to push each other. Obviously, we’ve played well since and going on a tough road trip, three difficult buildings to play in and three little bit different games.”

The Jets host the Hurricanes on Tuesday and the Islanders on Friday before the 4 Nations Face-Off takes centre stage.