

Winnipeg Free Press

<https://www.winnipegfreepress.com/sports/2025/02/03/scheifele-on-the-verge-of-jets-history>

Scheifele on the verge of Jets history Centre's next goal will give him all-time franchise lead

By: Mike McIntyre

They first booed the Star-Spangled Banner in Ottawa on Saturday afternoon, just prior to the Senators game against the Minnesota Wild. A few hours later, fans in Calgary made their voices heard loud and clear as the Flames hosted the Detroit Red Wings.

On Sunday, it was Toronto's turn as the American anthem was jeered prior to the Raptors NBA game against the Los Angeles Clippers. Later that evening, the faithful at Rogers Arena in Vancouver got in on the act just before puck drop against Detroit.

Now all eyes (and ears) are on Winnipeg, where the Jets will open a two-game homestand on Tuesday by hosting the Carolina Hurricanes. It remains to be seen whether similar sentiments will follow, although Monday's announcement that proposed U.S. tariffs on Canada will be paused for at least 30 days might cool the situation off a degree or two.

For those wondering, no Canadian teams (including the Jets) have plans at this point to alter their pre-game presentations. There will be no messaging or announcements made to fans, nor will anthems be removed to avoid what might be seen as an embarrassing situation.

Not surprisingly, players are also being careful to stickhandle around the situation. Maple Leafs captain Auston Matthews, who will wear the C for Team USA at the upcoming 4 Nations Face-Off said Monday "I'm not going to get into politics" when asked for his thoughts.

That's probably a wise move, especially since well-compensated hockey players probably wouldn't have a lot of meaningful insight or analysis to provide about economic sanctions and how they might impact the typical citizen regardless of what their birth certificate says.

Still, no doubt hearing the song of their homeland get drowned out with booing has to be a bit jarring.

We'll see how long that continues — especially with Canada and the U.S. set to clash on ice next week at the best-on-best NHL tournament being held in Montreal and Boston.

FROM JEERS TO CHEERS? There will definitely not be any booing Tuesday if Mark Scheifele can find the back of the net.

Winnipeg's veteran centre is currently tied with Ilya Kovalchuk for No. 1 on the all-time career goals list for the Jets 2.0/Atlanta Thrashers franchise with 328.

His next tally will put him on top.

"That would be really cool. It will be really special for him and obviously all the guys that have been here over a long tenure," Jets winger Gabe Vilardi said Monday.

“I’ve only gotten to know Mark over the last year and a half but it’s been really cool for me to see, I’ve mentioned so many times, how I look up to him and how he approaches every day with his work ethic. It’s a good reminder for me if I’m out there make sure I’m getting him the puck.”

Scheifele had two assists Saturday night in Washington — including a perfect set-up of Josh Morrissey’s overtime winner — and has now surpassed 60 points for a 10th consecutive year which leads all active NHL players.

“I think when you look at the best players obviously they have all their attributes, whether it’s speed, skill, whatever. But I think the most important thing is consistency,” Vilardi said of his linemate.

“He’s done that over 10 years. It just goes to show his preparation coming into the season, during the season, to be able to take care of his body to play the games to get to 60 points. It doesn’t surprise me, knowing him.”

Scheifele has only had one year in which he scored more goals than assists — the 2022-23 campaign when he had a career-high 42, along with 26 helpers. So far this season, he’s at 31 goals and 30 assists and recently joked he needs to pick up the pace when it comes to helpers.

“When I think of Mark I think of him as a playmaker first, so I’m not surprised he’d say that,” said Vilardi.

“I think that’s what we’ve come to see from him over the years. And obviously playing with KC (Kyle Connor) who’s such a shooter, they’re a great tandem and they’ve been playing together for a long time before I came here. I think what makes him so deadly is his ability to read the play and know if there’s a shooting threat around or if he thinks holding on to the puck longer and waiting for a passing lane to open is better. He makes the right reads more often than not out there.”

Scheifele is quickly closing in on Blake Wheeler’s franchise record for points (812), needing just 35 more to pass it. At his current rate, that could happen near the end of this current season. He’s also just 46 games played behind Wheeler for No. 1 on that list, which will have to wait until early next year.

Scheifele is also 100 assists behind Wheeler for top spot in that category.

“He has really turned into an all-around player,” said Jets head coach Scott Arniel.

“We have asked a lot about his buy-in without the puck and I think that has been exceptional. The other side for me is that he always likes to pass the puck and he likes to do that first. But he realizes now he is getting himself into some Grade A positions and he has a great shot. He can score goals and he has proven that.”

<https://www.winnipegfreepress.com/breakingnews/2025/02/03/jets-welcome-upcoming-extended-break>

***Jets welcome upcoming extended break
4 Nations Face-Off hiatus gives players chance to rest, relax and heal***

By: Mike McIntyre

Turns out there is at least one opponent who can slow down the surging Winnipeg Jets: The NHL schedule-maker.

Hockey's hottest team is about to be forced into an extended hiatus, thanks to the upcoming 4 Nations Face-Off which means playing just two games over a 20-day span.

Winnipeg will host the Carolina Hurricanes on Tuesday night at Canada Life Centre, entertain the New York Islanders on Friday night and then not hit the ice again until Feb. 22 in St. Louis.

One school of thought is this pause couldn't come at a worse time, with the Jets having reeled off six victories in a row and wanting to keep building off that momentum. Head coach Scott Arniel and several players are taking a "never look a gift horse in the mouth" approach.

"I think the break is very important for everyone. It's been a crazy, hectic schedule," said veteran forward Vlad Namestnikov, who is among a number of players who have been fighting through bumps and bruises to stay in the lineup.

Not everyone has been as fortunate. Captain Adam Lowry has missed the last six games with an upper-body injury and won't return until later in the month at the earliest. Morgan Barron has been sidelined for two in a row and isn't expected back this week, either.

There have also been numerous close calls in recent weeks, that saw the Jets play a stretch of 10 games in 19 days (going 8-2-0) to get them up to 54 games already this year. No other NHL club has played more, with some teams still at 50 (Los Angeles) and 51 (Nashville and Tampa Bay) prior to Monday night.

"We have done a good job. We are ahead of teams in games played, and we have won those, which is a bonus. I am OK with this," Arniel said of the workload getting a lot lighter, which will hopefully allow for some physical healing to occur.

Indeed, the Jets have made hay despite their busy schedule as they currently enjoy an eight-point lead in the Central Division (Dallas has two games in hand). In the Western Conference, the Stars are also the closest team to Winnipeg, which has a nine-point buffer over Edmonton (two games in hand) and Vegas (one game in hand).

In a perfect world, the Jets will be able to weaponize the calendar down the stretch while most of their rivals are playing catch-up to the point of exhaustion.

"Every day off in a season like this with the 4 Nations going on, every day off is valuable to try and get your rest," said forward Gabe Vilardi.

"Or even a day like (Monday), where you actually get to practice and have a work day and feel like you got something out of coming to the rink as opposed to more recovery."

The Jets are coming off a perfect three-game road trip punctuated by Saturday's thrilling 5-4 overtime victory over the Washington Capitals, who are the only NHL team with a better winning percentage. (Winnipeg leads by two points overall, but Washington has two games in hand).

Monday's practice lines suggest no changes are coming with forward Brad Lambert and defencemen Ville Heinola and Haydn Fleury again being the healthy scratches.

This recent run would be impressive enough if it was happening with a full lineup. The fact they've done it without their on and off-ice leader in Lowry takes it to another level.

"We said it was going to be by committee," said Arniel.

"We don't have anybody in the organization that is a clone of Adam Lowry and does what he does and what he brings both on and off the ice. People have stepped up."

That has included David Gustafsson becoming a regular in the lineup and producing at both ends of the ice, Rasmus Kupari taking on an increased role, Kyle Connor and Mark Scheifele killing penalties, a call-up such as Parker Ford scoring in his NHL debut and the likes of Namestnikov and his line with Cole Perfetti and Nikolaj Ehlers finding another gear.

"I think we're supporting each other. We're three around the puck, and one kind of bumps the other guy with the puck, the other guy picks it up, and we start cycling, and I think we've been skating better as a line," Namestnikov said of what's been working well.

Perfetti (4G, 3A) and Ehlers (2G, 5A) both have seven points in the last five games, while Namestnikov has seven over his last six games (1G, 6A).

Although most players will be scattering this weekend for some vacation time — save for Connor, Josh Morrissey and Connor Hellebuyck who will be competing in the 4 Nations tournament — nobody is looking past this brief homestand which begins with a tough Hurricanes team that is currently tied for fifth in the NHL in points percentage.

"They're very well structured, aggressive team. They don't give you much space," said Namestnikov.

"I'd say all their forwards are very quick. They're always on you, and they don't give you much space to regroup and break out. So as I said, we gotta be prepared. We know what to do and move the puck just as fast, and we can get out of our zone."

One thing we are learning about these Jets — they don't appear to get overly comfortable or satisfied with success. The plan is to keep the foot on the gas, even if the season is about to take a two-week detour.

"At the end of the day we're all winners in here. I think we all have that competitive drive to win every game," said Vilardi.

"So I don't think anybody has that mindset of just lets chill for this one. We're going to go out there trying to win. Obviously some nights you have it more than others, depending on travel, sleep and whatnot. But yeah, we have a winner's mindset. I think that's huge down the stretch because every point is valuable and you want to win every game."

Global Winnipeg

<https://globalnews.ca/news/10995640/analysis-winnipeg-jets-regular-season-playoffs/>

ANALYSIS: Can regular-season wins translate to playoff success for Jets?

By Kelly Moore Global News

ANALYSIS: Can regular-season wins translate to playoff success for Jets? - imageView image in full screen

Saturday's showdown of NHL conference leaders in Washington lived up to the hype, and then some, of a best-on-best appetizer before next week's 4 Nations Face-Off.

But history would also suggest it's highly unlikely that the entertaining battle between the Winnipeg Jets and Washington Capitals will be a Stanley Cup preview — assuming both teams continue to hold their lofty positions through to the end of the season.

I am not here to say the Jets and Capitals won't be the last two teams standing come mid-June. But you do have to go back 24 years for the last time a pair of conference champions met in the Stanley Cup final.

That was in 2001 when Ray Bourque and the Colorado Avalanche outlasted the defending champion New Jersey Devils in a series that went the distance.

It was rare also in that the Avs were one of just three President's Trophy winners over almost a quarter of a century to also survive the playoff grind.

Detroit did in 2008, and Chicago five years later in 2013 — albeit during a lockout-shortened 48-game schedule.

The point we're making here is the degree of difficulty involved in finishing ahead of the rest of the pack over 82 games, and then another 25 or so gruelling matchups in the post-season.

Trade deadline acquisitions, injuries, getting hot at the right time, even the hockey gods can play a role in determining that fine line between the one team that survives the Stanley Cup tournament and the 15 who don't.

The Capitals are zero for three as President's Trophy winners. Washington was a three-seed when they won it all in 2018, after being a Columbus crossbar away from going down 3-0 to the upstart Blue Jackets in Round 1.

Now, Jets Nation, take heart. Vegas was the No. 1 seed out of the west in 2023, as was Colorado the year before. So it's not impossible for regular-season success to be duplicated in the playoffs.

As the record shows, it is just incredibly difficult to achieve.

Winnipeg Sun

<https://winnipeg.sun.com/sports/hockey/nhl/winnipeg-jets/one-goal-away-scheifele-can-set-a-record-on-tuesday-night-vs-the-canines>

One goal away: Scheifele can set a record on Tuesday night vs. the 'Canes

By Gordon Anderson, Winnipeg Sun

Consistency, excellency and longevity, thy name is Mark Scheifele.

The Jets forward can set the career goal-scoring record for the Atlanta-Winnipeg franchise if he nets one against the Carolina Hurricanes on Tuesday night.

"I've mentioned so many times how I look up to him and how he approaches every day with his work ethic," Gabe Vilardi said. "It's a good reminder for me if I'm out there to make sure I'm getting him the puck."

Ilya Kovalchuk and Scheifele are tied with 328. Kovalchuk played eight seasons with the Thrashers.

Jets head coach Scott Arniel temporarily focused on Scheifele's ability on the defensive side of the puck, before jumping back to mention his skill with the rubber disc.

"Where Scheifele has gone with his game, he has really turned into an all-around player," Arniel said. "We have asked a lot about his buy in without the puck, and I think that has been exceptional. The other side for me is that he always likes to pass the puck, and he likes to do that first, but he realizes he is getting himself into some Grade A positions and he has a great shot. He can score goals, and he has proven that."

Scheifele's career high in goals is 42, the number reached two seasons ago. Currently, he leads the team with 31 markers in 54 games played.

AN ADDED BONUS

With his two helpers in the 5-4 overtime win over the Capitals on Saturday night, Scheifele has totaled at least 60 points in 10 consecutive seasons.

Heading into Tuesday's matchup with the Hurricanes, Scheifele has 61 points (31 goals and 30 assists).

"Yeah, it's really impressive," Vilardi said. "I think when you look at the best players, obviously, they have all their attributes, whether it's speed, skill, whatever. But I think the most important thing is consistency. He's done that over 10 years — I didn't know that stat, that's pretty cool — but it just goes to show his preparation coming into the season, during the season, to be able to take care of his body to play the games to get to 60 points. It doesn't surprise me, knowing him."

Since his consecutive race to 60 points began during the 2015-16 season, Scheifele has 395 assists and 299 goals. In franchise history the Kitchener, Ontario, resident is one unto himself for that achievement.

The #55 can be a primo goal hawk if he chooses, but he usually defers to setting up teammates with a crisp pass on the tape in open space. After the game in Montreal last Tuesday, Scheifele told reporters he gets more enjoyment watching teammates score, as opposed to scoring himself.

"Him saying that doesn't surprise anyone," Vilaridi said. "I think that's what we've come to see from him over the years. I think what makes him so deadly is his ability to read the play and know if there's a shooting threat around of if he thinks holding on to the puck longer and waiting for a passing lane to open is better. He makes the right reads more often than not."

DIFFERENTIAL MAKER

Heading into league action on Monday night the Jets had the league's best goal differential after the first period, at plus-20.

In their current six-game win streak they have outscored their opponents 7-2 in the first period. The last time they trailed after one period was eight games ago, down 1-0 to Calgary on Jan. 26, eventually losing 3-1.

On the three-city road trip they outscored the Canadiens, Bruins and Capitals 6-2 in first period action.

"Going into Montreal, Boston and Washington, all tough buildings to play in, all known for their good starts, and that is kind of what we have talked about: we had to be ready to go," Arniel said. "But it was about more about our compete, not being careless with the puck and playing fast and that is probably the area for me where we played really well. We played quick and the start of the games and it allowed us to play in the opposition zone and spend time down there. You have to come out and get after teams and get to your game as fast as possible."

HERE COME THE 'CANES

The Hurricanes (32-17-4) make their only regular-season appearance on Tuesday night.

Carolina is 6-2-2 in their last 10. Their two-game win streak was snapped in a 4-2 home loss to the Kings on Saturday night. Prior to that, Carolina had earned at least one point in seven consecutive games.

"They're very well structured, aggressive team," Vlad Namestnikov said. "They don't give you much space. So, we have to be the same way. We have to move the puck quick and kind of get away from them and put more pucks from, I think, the blue line, and get more pucks on net that way."

The Russian centre has four points in his last two games. He picked up two helpers in the win over the Caps and added one goal and one assist in the 6-2 victory against Boston last Thursday.

As always, speed and quick decision making is the recipe for success against the 'Canes.

"They're always on you, and they don't give you much space to regroup and break out," Namestnikov said. "We have got to be prepared. We know what to do and move the puck just as fast, so we can get out of our zone."

100% Hockey Podcast

<https://illegalcurve.com/100-hockey-with-millard-shannon-kevin-cheveldayoff-on-winnipeg-jets-success-trade-deadline-strategy/>

100% Hockey with Millard & Shannon | Kevin Cheveldayoff on Winnipeg Jets success & trade deadline strategy (AUDIO)

John Shannon and Daren Millard sat down with Winnipeg Jets GM Kevin Cheveldayoff to discuss the team's impressive season, currently leading the Central Division with a 37-14-3 record.

They delve into his approach to the upcoming trade deadline, his philosophy on rental players, and insights into potential deals, including plans for a specific player. A must-listen for Jets fans and hockey enthusiasts!

Starts at the 12:09 mark and runs until just shy of the 49 minute mark.

Notable quotes:

On Adam Lowry: "that's our hope is he's back after that. Obviously he's not on the ice or anything like that so there's lots of mile markers yet that he's gotta cross."

Asked if he ever asks players about potential moves: "It depends. If a player has a first-hand knowledge, if they've played with a guy or they know different guys, you try to tap into anything that you can.." Says lots of trades don't happen and you don't want to break a confidence with another GM. Ended his answer with: "...you take advantage of any opportunity that you have."

Regarding Paul Maurice 's comment on Wpg & Stanley Cup: "...I think it's a testament to the community just what, what impressions the fan base makes on people. Whether you're working here or not anymore. You just can't help but love the people of Winnipeg."

On Ehlers: "My plan is to hopefully lift a Cup with him at some point in time down the road here". Follow-up asked if it's a distraction having a UFA with the trade deadline approaching. Kevin Cheveldayoff: "No. Not really." Asked about moving Ehlers before 7th "No." Added: "...he's been part of our winning equation here this year and look to him to be a big part of it."

TSN.ca

<https://www.tsn.ca/nhl/countdown-to-tradecentre-red-hot-winnipeg-jets-cautious-of-changing-chemistry-1.2246313>

Countdown to TradeCentre: Red-hot Jets cautious of changing chemistry

By TSN.ca Staff

The NHL's March 7 Trade Deadline is approaching, and teams are making decisions on whether to buy or sell, and on which players can make the biggest difference and hold the greatest value. Check out today's trade rumours and speculation from around the NHL beat.

Wish list in Winnipeg

The red-hot Winnipeg Jets are pulling away from the rest of the Western Conference with an eight-point cushion ahead of the Dallas Stars, who have two less games played.

The streaking Jets, who have won six straight games, are shaping up as one of the most obvious buyers ahead of the trade deadline. TSN Hockey Insider Pierre LeBrun reports their wish list likely include a centre and a potentially a defenceman, based on market availability.

Jets general manager Kevin Cheveldayoff told LeBrun in *The Athletic* (opens in a new tab), however, that he's not looking to compromise the chemistry that has pushed the team to the top of the NHL standings.

"I'm going to see what's available on a daily basis," Cheveldayoff said. "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."

Cheveldayoff traded a first-round pick to acquire Sean Monahan well ahead of the deadline last year and then added Tyler Toffoli on deadline day for second- and third-round picks. The general manager said a firm decision hasn't - and won't - be made on whether to move a first-round pick until it becomes clear who is available on the market.

"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."

The Jets have just two games remaining before the 4 Nations Face-Off break, hosting the Carolina Hurricanes on Tuesday and the New York Islanders on Friday.