

**Winnipegjets.com**

<https://www.nhl.com/jets/news/three-things-lots-of-chances-in-loss-to-sabres>

***Three things - Lots of chances in loss to Sabres  
James Reimer made 33 saves as Jets lose 5-3 to the Sabres.***

By Jamie Thomas

WINNIPEG – The Winnipeg Jets opened a four-game homestand with a 5-3 loss to the Buffalo Sabres at Canada Life Centre. Nino Niederreiter, Colin Miller and Nikolaj Ehlers scored for the Jets who saw their record fall to 48-19-4 and remain eight points up on Dallas for first in the Central, the Stars now have two games in hand. Eric Comrie made 12 saves and is now 8-9-1, Winnipeg will face the league leading Washington Capitals on Tuesday.

***REIMER STEALS THE SHOW***

James Reimer has had some of his best games against the Jets over his career and had made 261 saves on 284 shots against Winnipeg, a save percentage of .919. The Jets had two glorious chances with the game tied at one to take the lead in the second, Mark Scheifele had what looked to be a wide-open net but Owen Power dove over and stopped Scheifele with his stick. Moments later, Adam Lowry cut in front but couldn't get the puck up high enough and Reimer made a glove save.

Reimer made a few more stunning saves in the third period, one where he was actually lying on the ground and reached up with his glove to rob Nikolaj Ehlers. Reimer finished the day with 33 saves.

"Yeah, I think we had our fair share of chances. Maybe hit a couple of posts, we would like the puck to go in and the goalie made some big saves," said Brandon Tanev.

"At the end of the day, it's harping on the little details, the things we know we're good at and we'll get back to that at practice tomorrow."

***POWER PLAY SHOWS LIFE***

After a solid first period where the Jets outshot the Sabres 10-3 but trailed 1-0, Winnipeg's power play got them on the board at 2:05 of the middle frame. Nino Niederreiter tapped in a Cole Perfetti pass behind James Reimer for his 15th of the season and first goal since February 4, a span of 16 games. It was also the Jets first goal on the power play since March 11, they were 0-for-9 the previous four games. Winnipeg finished the day 1-for-3 on the man advantage and generated nine shots.

***CHANCE TO CLINCH***

The Jets could have booked their ticket to the 2025 Stanley Cup Playoffs with a single point this afternoon and St. Louis beat Nashville so the Jets will have to wait another day.

"Of course. But I mean, any way that it happens," said Colin Miller about the Jets clinching a playoff berth.

"Obviously, it was a big goal for this team throughout the year, so hopefully that happens."

## **NHL.com**

<https://www.nhl.com/news/buffalo-sabres-winnipeg-jets-game-recap-march-23>

### ***McLeod has goal, 3 assists for Sabres in win against Jets Winnipeg could have clinched playoff berth with 1 point; Reimer makes 33 saves for Buffalo***

By Darrin Bauming

WINNIPEG -- Ryan McLeod had a goal and three assists for the Buffalo Sabres, who prevented the Winnipeg Jets from clinching a berth in the Stanley Cup Playoffs with a 5-3 win at Canada Life Centre on Sunday.

Winnipeg would have been the first team from the Western Conference to clinch a playoff berth with a point. It also could have clinched with a St. Louis Blues loss to the Nashville Predators in any fashion Sunday, but the Blues won 4-1.

"Of course, but I mean, any way that it happens," Jets defenseman Colin Miller said of making the playoffs. "Obviously it was a big goal for this team throughout the year, so hopefully that happens."

James Reimer made 33 saves for the Sabres (28-35-6), who lost their previous two games, including 4-1 at the Minnesota Wild on Saturday. Jacob Bernard-Docker had two assists.

"We were working hard the whole game," Reimer said. "We're on the back end of the back-to-back. They've been resting for two days, so you kind of figured it'd be one of those games where you just had to hold the fort down. And credit the guys that come out in the third; they made some plays and I thought played really good in the third. So, that ended up being the difference."

Nino Niederreiter, Nikolaj Ehlers and Miller scored for the Jets (48-19-4), who had won four of five (4-1-0). Logan Stanley had two assists, and Eric Comrie made 12 saves.

"(We had) triple the amount of scoring chances," Winnipeg coach Scott Arniel said. "Their goaltender was great. Played great."

JJ Peterka gave the Sabres a 1-0 lead at 9:15 of the first period, circling in from the right corner and scoring with a wrist shot from the top of the circle.

"You play back-to-back and you're playing in this building against a team that didn't play yesterday." Ruff said. "We knew we'd have to manage the puck pretty well, and we really didn't pass that test early. But I thought that second half and third period we showed we could play with them, and we played well."

Niederreiter tied it 1-1 on the power play at 2:05 of the second when his attempt from in close went in off the skate of Sabres forward Beck Malenstyn.

"That's a team with some good players," Jets forward Brandon Tanev said. "Their goaltender played great tonight. I think we can challenge his eyes a bit more, get into the crease a bit more, make some dirty pucks a little bit tougher for him to play against. But I think at the end of the day, we're focusing on our game each night, shift by shift, practice by practice. We'll get back to that tomorrow, but there's some positives to take out of that game. I think we will get back to practice and be ready for the next one here soon."

Rasmus Dahlin put Buffalo ahead 2-1 when Bernard-Docker circled back and set him up for a one-timer from the point at 18:46.

Tyson Kozak pushed it to 3-1 on the power play at 7:13 of the third when he stuffed in the rebound from Mattias Samuelsson's point shot.

"[Samuelsson] just got it to the net and hit my shin pad (and) I think it might have bounced off the goalie and then right back to me, and then just kind of had a wide-open net," Kozak said. "Kind of unreal. I couldn't believe it actually happened. I was able to score in front of a bunch of friends and family, so it's kind of a surreal moment for me."

Kozak, who is from Souris, Manitoba, a three-hour drive west of Winnipeg, played an NHL game in his home province for the first time.

"(My grandfather's) first game and just happened to score," Kozak said. "It's pretty cool. He's seen me play in Rochester here and there, but for him to see me play in the NHL, it's special and it means a lot."

Miller responded 28 seconds later to cut it to 3-2. He took a pass at the blue line and skated around Sabres forward Tage Thompson before tucking a wrist shot under the crossbar from the bottom of the right circle at 7:41.

"It's one of those things where we almost had so many chances, but the puck just wouldn't find the back of the net sometimes," Tanev said. "It's sticking with it, staying positive and committing to playing the right way and the puck will get there."

Alex Tuch scored short-handed on a breakaway to make it 4-2 at 13:21.

"You look at the desperation on the short-handed goal, yeah, those guys are all tired," Ruff said. "But just the desperation; we had a blocked shot, diving to get it out of the zone — that's the type of desperation that puts a smile on your face."

Ehlers brought Winnipeg back within one goal, skating up the left side and beating Reimer with a slap shot from the top of the left circle to make it 4-3 at 16:32.

"Power play, short-handed, face-off, and then a line rush -- so we made some mistakes in some of those situations," Arniel said. "You watch those games, they happen, when you get all those chances we had, all of a sudden it goes the other way and it's in the net. Haven't had one of those in a while, where we dominate like that and not come out on the wrong end of it. Their goaltender played really, really well."

Reimer made a windmill glove save from his backside on Niederreiter's shot from the left circle to keep the Sabres in front at 17:03, then McLeod scored an empty-net goal for the 5-3 final at 19:13.

"Well, we're paid to entertain, so I thought it would look a little better if I was on my backside," Reimer joked. "No, I mean, there's I think a little contact or something. I went down and then I was just kind of scrambling. They had a couple of opportunities to shoot the puck, so I didn't feel like I could get up. And so I just kind of swung around, so at least I was covering most of the net, and then I was able just to see the puck and catch it."

"[Reimer] gave us a heck of a game," Buffalo coach Lindy Ruff said. "You need that. We've been four (games) in six (days), back-to-back (against a) fresh team, hard building; we knew that there was [going to] be nothing easy about trying to win the game. Got short-handed when we lost [Jordan] Greenway early and I thought that first 40 minutes, [Reimer] was a guy that put a lot of confidence in our guys to keep at it and try to get a win. And some of the saves were the reason we ended up with the victory."

*NOTES:* Greenway, a forward, left the game after he blocked a Miller shot with his foot early in the first period. "I have no idea, probably our docs will look at him tomorrow," Ruff said of Greenway's status. "I'm hoping not bad." ... Peterka extended his goal streak to three games. He has 13 points (seven goals, six assists) in his past 12 games. ... McLeod recorded his first career four-point game and became the fifth Sabres player to achieve the feat this season (Dahlin twice, Thompson, Peterka and Jason Zucker). ... Winnipeg failed to record a point for the first time in its past nine home games dating to Jan. 24 (7-1-1). ... Niederreiter scored for the first time in 16 games. ... Bernard-Docker had the primary assist on each of Buffalo's first two goals. It is the first multiassist game of his career, and his first points with the Sabres since he was acquired in a trade with the Ottawa Senators on March 7.

## **Canadian Press**

<https://www.chrisd.ca/2025/03/23/winnipeg-jets-buffalo-sabres-game-story/>

### ***Winnipeg Jets Foiled by Sabres' Reimer in 5-3 Loss at Home***

By Judy Owen, The Canadian Press

Sabres' Tuch buries shorthanded breakaway vs. Jets

Head coach Scott Arniel had no reason to criticize the scoring chances the Winnipeg Jets generated on Sunday.

Sometimes teams just run into a hot goalie.

That's what happened to the Jets when James Reimer made 33 saves to help the Buffalo Sabres upset the Western Conference-leading club 5-3 in front of a sold-out crowd at Canada Life Centre.

"Haven't had one of those in a while, where we dominate like that and come out on the wrong end of it," Arniel said. "Their goaltender played really, really well."

Backup netminder Eric Comrie stopped 12 of the 16 shots he faced for Winnipeg (48-19-4).

Ryan McLeod had a goal and three assists for the Sabres, (27-36-6), who sit at the bottom of the Eastern Conference and were coming off a 4-1 loss to the Minnesota Wild on Saturday afternoon.

J.J. Peterka, Rasmus Dahlin, Tyson Kozak and Alex Tuch also scored for Buffalo. Jacob Bernard-Docker had two assists.

Nino Niederreiter, Colin Miller and Nikolaj Ehlers scored for Winnipeg, which began a four-game homestand. Logan Stanley had two assists.

"We definitely had our chances," said Miller, who scored at 7:41 of the third period to squeeze Buffalo's lead to 3-2.

"Their goalie played well. They did a good job of clogging up the neutral zone and their own end. But, just one of those nights, a little bit snake-bitten. They played well defensively, so we'll look at it and move on."

The Jets needed one point to clinch an NHL playoff spot. They could still achieve that if the St. Louis Blues lose to the Nashville Predators in a later game on Sunday.

"It was a big goal for this team throughout the year, so hopefully that happens," Miller said.

The Sabres had some made-in-Manitoba moments.

Reimer, who hails from Morweena, Man., made a windmill glove save on Niederreiter with 2:57 remaining in the third and Buffalo holding a 4-3 lead.

"Well, we're paid to entertain, so I thought it would look a little better if I was on my backside," Reimer said with a laugh.

He added there was some contact on the play.

"I went down and then I was just kind of scrambling," Reimer said. "They had a couple of opportunities to shoot the puck, so I didn't feel like I could get up. And so I just kind of swung around, so at least I was covering most of the net and then I was able just to see the puck and catch it."

Peterka gave the Sabres a 1-0 lead when his shot beat Comrie on the glove side at 9:15 for his 22nd goal of the season, extending his goal streak to three in three games.

The Jets outshot the visitors 10-3 in the first period.

Niederreiter's tying power-play goal at 2:05 of the second period took some lucky bounces. The puck went off Reimer's pad right into the skate of Buffalo defenceman Beck Malenstyn and then into the net.

Dahlin's one-timer flew by Comrie with 1:14 remaining in the period to make it 2-1.

Winnipeg outshot Buffalo 13-6 in the second.

Kozak, a product of Souris, Man., scored his second career goal in his 16th career game with a backhand in the last second of a man advantage at 7:13 of the third, but Miller made it 3-2 just 28 seconds later.

"Roughly I'd say there's probably around 150 people waiting for me," Kozak said. "It's cool to have them all come out. A couple minor hockey teams from back home came, so it's pretty cool. I haven't played in this building before so it was a lot of fun."

After Reimer made a huge paddle save on Gabriel Vilardi, the Sabres went the other way for Tuch's 27th goal of the season at 13:21.

"We had our fair share of chances, maybe hit a couple posts where we would have liked the puck to have gone in, and their goalie made some big saves," said Jets forward Brandon Tanev.

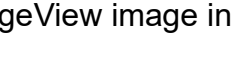
Ehlers made it 4-3 with 3:28 remaining, but McLeod scored into an empty net with 47 seconds left.

## **Global Winnipeg**

<https://globalnews.ca/news/11094934/winnipeg-jets-analysis-one-game-at-a-time/>

### ***ANALYSIS: Jets need to maintain 'one game at a time' mindset***

By Kelly Moore CJOB

ANALYSIS: Jets need to maintain 'one game at a time' mindset - 

It's an interesting bit of scheduling to kick off a four-game homestand for the Winnipeg Jets.

Even Scott Arniel and his players understand how cliché or boring it can sometimes get for fans, sometimes bordering on apologetic, for the responses that have been agonizingly consistent for 70-plus straight games: "We're focused on us, how we play the next game."

That tunnel-visioned approach has worked pretty well to this point. And it certainly comes in handy for situations like the one the Jets are currently dealing with.

On Sunday, Winnipeg began this homestand facing a Buffalo team dead last in the Eastern Conference who hadn't won a game on the road in more than two months and had lost the day before to Minnesota in St. Paul.

It was the quintessential "trap game." And while a 5-3 loss to the lowly Sabres would certainly lend itself to the narrative the Jets were guilty of looking past Buffalo — and ahead to Tuesday night's showdown of conference leaders versus Washington — the game simply wasn't played that way.

Winnipeg got goalied in a matchup they dominated. Was there disappointment over the final result? Yes.

Are there certain elements they need to be better at in order to beat the Capitals? Definitely.

But by applying the calm and composed response to wins (or losses) they've maintained to a fault this season, the Jets will now get ready for the arrival of the Great Eight Circus and attempt to deliver a performance similar to the one seven-and-a-half weeks ago in D.C., when they outlasted the Capitals in overtime.

Two visiting teams — in consecutive games — who could not be on two more different levels than Washington and Buffalo are.

So go ahead, Arnie's Army. Maintain the "one game at a time" mantra ... perhaps all the way to the top.

### **Winnipeg Free Press**

<https://www.winnipegfreepress.com/breakingnews/2025/03/23/sabres-goaltender-reimer-robs-jets>

### ***Sabres goaltender Reimer robs Jets Winnipeg struggles despite outshooting Buffalo 36-17***

By: Mike McIntyre

It had all the makings of a perfect afternoon for the Winnipeg Jets.

A sold-out Canada Life Centre, a chance to clinch a playoff spot with a single point and the worst team in the Eastern Conference rolling into town having played a day earlier.

And yet...

"We haven't had one of those in a while, where we dominate like that (and) come out on the wrong end of it," a clearly frustrated head coach Scott Arniel said Sunday afternoon following a perplexing 5-3 loss to the Buffalo Sabres that had to be seen to be believed.

Dominate might be putting it lightly. The Jets outshot the Sabres 36-17, with shot attempts an even more lopsided 71-32. If you're into advanced statistics, Winnipeg had a 32-9 advantage in scoring chances and a 13-2 lead in high-danger chances. That's a game you'd not only expect to win every time, but probably in a rout.

And yet...

"Just one of those nights. A little bit snake-bitten," said defenceman Colin Miller, who was one of three Winnipeg players to get a puck past Sabres goaltender James Reimer. The pride of Morweena, Manitoba, was sensational, making 33 saves including several of the "how did he do that?" variety.

"It's one of those things where we almost had so many chances but the puck just wouldn't find the back of the net sometimes," added Jets forward Brandon Tanev.

At the other end of the ice, Jets backup Eric Comrie stopped just 12 of the 16 pucks that came his way, with the final Buffalo goal into an empty-net as Winnipeg pressed late for the equalizer.



Winnipeg falls to 48-19-4 as an eight-game point streak at home (7-0-1) came to a painful end. The Jets had also been a perfect 7-0-0 at the downtown rink this year when facing an opponent that had played the day before, as Buffalo did on Saturday afternoon in a 4-1 loss to the Minnesota Wild.

The Sabres, who certainly made the most of their very limited opportunities, improved to 28-35-6.

*THE PLAYOFF PICTURE:* No doubt Dallas was pleased with this result, as they remain eight points back of Winnipeg for top spot in both the Central Division and the Western Conference. The Stars have two games in hand (13 remaining games compared to 11 for Winnipeg) and they'll also meet head-to-head on April 10 in Texas.

Yes, the Jets are still in the driver's seat. But this loss keeps their rival a little closer in the rear-view mirror with plenty of road still ahead and, perhaps, a few more twists and turns.

As for putting an "X" beside their name, Winnipeg could have still clinched a playoff spot on Sunday evening had St. Louis lost, but the Blues beat the Nashville Predators to remain in the second and final wild-card spot.

If the regular-season ended today rather than on April 17, Jets vs Blues would be the first-round matchup while the Stars would face the scorching hot Colorado Avalanche, who seem likely to finish third in the Central but will be a handful for any opponent given what they added at the trade deadline in Brock Nelson and Charlie Coyle.

Finally, the Jets remain two points back of Washington for first-overall in the NHL. The Capitals — who are coming to town on Tuesday — have one game in hand in the race for the Presidents' Trophy.

*GETTING GOALIED:* There aren't many games where you can say the Jets had the second-best goalie on the ice, but that was certainly the case here. While Reimer was standing tall time and time again, Comrie was struggling as he faced the team he'd spent the past two seasons with.

JJ Peterka opened the scoring at 9:15 on just Buffalo's third shot of the game — the Jets already had 10 at that point — and it was one Comrie would certainly expect to stop given that it was an unscreened wrist shot.

Sabres captain Rasmus Dahlin gave the visitors a 2-1 lead late in the second, once again beating Comrie from distance. It was just Buffalo's seventh shot on goal, with the Jets already firing 24 at Reimer.

Rookie Tyson Kozak, who is from Souris, made it 3-1 early in the third with his second-career goal, this time on a goal-mouth scramble on the power play. Then, after Miller

had cut the deficit back to one, Alex Tuch scored on a shorthanded breakaway to make it 4-2.

“You watch those games, they happen — when you get all those chances we had — all of the sudden (the puck) goes the other way and it’s in the net,” said Arniel.

Nikolaj Ehlers brought Winnipeg back within a goal with just over three minutes left, but that’s as close as the Jets would come. Reimer made a great blocker stop on Gabe Vilardi and a windmill glove save off Nino Niederreiter to preserve the victory.

“Their goaltender played great tonight. I think we can challenge his eyes a bit more, get into the crease a bit more, make some dirty pucks a little bit tougher for him to play against,” said Tanev.

Comrie’s numbers for a backup are still respectable — a 2.49 goals-against-average and a .909 save-percentage — but this was not a quality outing. He’s now 8-9-1 through 18 starts in relief of workhorse Connor Hellebuyck, who leads the NHL with 53 starts and 40 wins this year.

*INJURY SCARES:* The Jets are already without defenceman Neal Pionk, who missed a fifth-straight game Sunday with a lower-body injury. And they had a couple first-period scares as Vilardi took a puck to the face and needed repairs, and then Niederreiter was hit hard into the boards by Buffalo defenceman Connor Clifton and was wonky as he skated off the ice.

Niederreiter was pulled into concussion protocol and eventually cleared in time for the start of the second period. He then snapped a personal 15-game scoring drought during a Jets power play early in the middle frame which tied the game 1-1.

*KEY PLAY:* Tuch’s shorthanded breakaway goal with just under seven minutes left to play was the game-winner.

*THREE STARS:*

1. BUF G James Reimer: 33 saves
2. BUF C Ryan McLeod: 1 goal, 3 assists
3. BUF Jacob Bernard-Docker: 2 assists

*EXTRA, EXTRA:* This was the 10th sellout of the season for the Jets, who have six home games remaining.

Arniel made one lineup change, inserting defenceman Logan Stanley on the third-pairing with Miller and making Haydn Fleury a healthy scratch along with defenceman Ville Heinola and forwards David Gustafsson and Rasmus Kupari. Stanley had assists on the goals by Miller and Ehlers.

Both teams went 1-for-3 on the power play. Winnipeg is now 2-for-19 with the extra man over the last seven games.

## **Winnipeg Sun**

<https://winnipeg.sun.com/sports/hockey/nhl/winnipeg-jets/james-reimer-steals-the-show-jets-lose-5-3-to-the-buffalo-sabres>

### ***James Reimer steals the show: Jets lose 5-3 to the Buffalo Sabres***

By Gordon Anderson

Despite a rather healthy disparity in shot attempts and shots on goal, the Jets dropped a 5-3 decision to the Buffalo Sabres on Sunday afternoon at the downtown rink.

“(We had) triple the amount of scoring chances,” head coach Scott Arniel said. “Their goaltender (James Reimer) was great. Played great.”

At the horn, the shot attempts favoured the Jets 71-32. The final shot total was 36-17 for the home team. The Jets dropped to 4-6-0 in games decided by two goals. The Sabres improved to 7-12-0 in the same category.

Reimer picked up his third win of the season, stopping 33 pucks as the Sabres snapped a two-game road losing streak. He was named the first star for his shot-stopping acrobatics.

“We definitely had our chances,” Colin Miller said. “Their goalie played well. They did a good job of clogging up the neutral zone and their own end. It was just one of those nights, a little bit snake bitten. They played well defensively, so we’ll look at it and move on.”

Miller scored his third of the season at 7:41 of the third period, trimming the deficit to 3-2 for the visitors at the time.

Eric Comrie was tagged with his ninth loss of the campaign, stopping 12 of 16 shots. The Jets had their two-game home winning streak stopped in its tracks. The club is 25-6-4 at home and 48-19-4 overall.

“We had our fair share of chances, maybe hit a couple posts where we would have liked the puck to have gone in, and their goalie made some big saves,” Jets winger Brandon Tanev said. “It was a game of chances.”

If there was one minor issue with the waves of consistent offensive chances throughout, Tanev felt they didn’t trouble Reimer enough.

"I think we can challenge his eyes a bit more, get into the crease a bit more, make some dirty pucks a little bit tougher for him to play against," Tanev said.

Logan Stanley made his way back into the lineup. He was on the third pairing with Colin Miller. The lanky d-man played 14:29. He picked up two third period helpers.

"It's not easy. We have a lot of defencemen on this team right now, but everybody can play," Miller said. "We need everybody because there is going to be stuff that happens throughout this stretch here. He was great."

Stanley's last appearance was on March 9, a 4-2 loss to the Carolina Hurricanes. In total, he sat for five games. With Luke Schenn now in the fold, minutes will be hard to come for those not considered in the top two pairings.

"I don't want these guys to sit too long," Arniel said. "I thought Stanley did a lot of good things."

Nino Niederreiter also scored for the Jets. His second-period marker at 2:05, which tied the game one each, was his 15th of the campaign. The goal snapped a 15-game goal-scoring drought. His previous marker was Feb. 4 vs. the Hurricanes. Niederreiter was named the third star.

He left the game in some discomfort after a painful tumble along the sideboards in the first period. He was called into concussion protocol but passed all the requisite tests.

"Nino, once he was cleared, was good to go," Arniel said.

Alex Tuch, JJ Peterka, Rasmus Dahlin, Tyson Kozak and Ryan McLeod scored for the Sabres (28-35-6). The Buffalo club is 11-21-3 in the visiting colours. Coming into the game, the Sabres were 0-7-0 in the second game of a back-to-back scenario. On Saturday Buffalo lost 4-1 to the Minnesota Wild.

Kozak is from Souris. He scored his second NHL goal in the third period. There was an audible cheer from the capacity crowd when the young pro swept the puck into the empty net at 7:13 of the third period.

"Roughly I'd say there's probably around 150 people waiting for me," Kozak said. "It's cool to have them all come out. A couple minor hockey teams from back home came, so it's pretty cool. I haven't played in this building before so it was a lot of fun."

Both teams went 1-3 with the man-advantage.

The Jets host the Washington Capitals (47-15-8) for a double feature on Tuesday night.

Not only do the Jets have a chance to tie the Capitals at the top of the NHL standings, but Alexander Ovechkin will make his only stop in town during the regular season.

Ovechkin has 888 career goals. He is six behind Wayne Gretzky's mark of 894. Puck drop is 7 p.m.

## **Sportsnet.ca**

<https://www.sportsnet.ca/nhl/article/arniel-hints-at-playoff-adjustments-with-line-swap-in-jets-loss-to-sabres/>

### ***Arniel hints at playoff adjustments with line swap in Jets' loss to Sabres***

By Jacob Stoller

WINNIPEG — Give credit where it's due, Scott Arniel makes some sound in-game adjustments.

Sure, the Winnipeg Jets coach has kept his forward lines intact all year, but he's also displayed a knack for making the right adjustments when the games call for it.

Late in the third period of Sunday's 5-3 loss to the Buffalo Sabres, Arniel's line-juggling — where he swapped Nikolaj Ehlers in for Nino Niederreiter alongside Adam Lowry and Mason Appleton — led to a crucial goal with 3:28 left in regulation.

Ehlers took the puck end-to-end and converted on his trademark slap shot from the left flank, making it a 4-3 game.

But the line blender wasn't brought out to get Ehlers going.

"I wanted Nino to stand on top of the goaltender with Fetts and Vladdy," Arniel explained.

For the first two and a half periods of a tight-checking affair where Buffalo clogged up the neutral zone, owned the middle of the ice and saw James Reimer put forth a vintage performance — the team's second line of Ehlers, Perfetti and Namestnikov struggled to create havoc net front. Of the nine shot attempts they generated, just one came from a high-danger area.

A few shifts before Ehlers' goal, Arniel's initial plan played out as intended — Namestnikov walked into the zone, curled around the net, and set Niederreiter up for a Grade-A net front chance.

Come playoff time, Ehlers, Perfetti and Namestnikov's effectiveness could dwindle — not just because rush chances decrease in the spring but because producing offence off the cycle or in front of the net is physically demanding. If and when — be it for a few periods, or even a few shifts — that trio of six-foot and under forwards starts to get outmatched in those situations, Arniel needs a backup plan.

What we saw against Buffalo could very well foreshadow how Arniel re-configures his playoff lines if that second line gets outmuscled. In that scenario, his plan 'B' lineup could look something like this:

Connor — Scheifele — Vilardi  
Ehlers — Lowry — Appleton  
Niederreiter — Namestnikov — Perfetti  
Tanev — Barron — Iafallo

Lowry and Ehlers, alongside Iafallo, posted stellar results during a four-game stretch when Namestnikov got hurt in mid-January — heavily outchancing (27-10) and outscoring (3-1) opponents during five-on-five play.

“He wins a lot of battles. And I think he wants to use my speed as much as possible,” Ehlers said of Lowry after the two first played together on Jan. 11. “He creates a lot of room for me to use that speed.”

If Arniel reunites Ehlers and Lowry, history suggests Appleton — who was injured the last time they played together — would round out the line, not Iafallo.

Niederreiter and Perfetti were paired together during Namestnikov's absence, with Rasmus Kupari centring them. The two read off each other well in the offensive zone and that was before these past few months, where Perfetti has elevated his board battle efficiency. While Namestnikov doesn't have Kupari's speed, his hockey sense and compete level would be a perfect complement to these two in this hypothetical scenario.

We're not going to draw some crazy conclusions from one game. But you can bet Sunday's in-game adjustment won't be forgotten about in the Jets' coaches room, even if it came against a lowly Sabres team.

Last spring, Winnipeg's downfall against Colorado was their lack of in-series adjustments.

This time around, you can count on Arniel not dragging his feet if his middle-six needs a shake-up.

### *Scheifele's Slump*

Mark Scheifele hasn't scored in eight games.

Arniel chalked it up to poor puck luck.

“Scheif had a couple of almost empty netters [that] hit a stick, hit a blade, or whatever,” Arniel said of his first-line centre's outing against Buffalo.

That said, the pass-first centre has slightly veered away from that 'attack mentality' he unlocked through the first 63 games of the year. There were a couple of sequences

against Buffalo where Scheifele entered the zone, peeled back and looked for a pass — a trademark move of his — rather than taking advantage of a clear lane to the net. It's understandable why a world-class passer would opt to make the extra pass in a game where you're getting stonewalled by a red-hot goalie. But sometimes you've got to take the shot, even if it's not perfect. Especially when you're tied for the fifth most goals in the league.

### *Self-Inflicted Wounds*

Eric Comrie had an off night, surrendering four goals on 16 shots faced. That said, let's not discount the mistakes made in front of him.

"Power play. Shorthanded. [A lost] Faceoff. And then a line rush," Arniel said, listing off the ways in which Buffalo scored. "So we made some mistakes in some of those situations. You watch those games, they happen — when you get all those chances we had — all of the sudden [the puck] goes the other way and it's in the net. Haven't had one of those in a while, where we dominate like that and not come out on the wrong end of it. Their goaltender played really, really well."