

**Winnipegjets.com**

<https://www.nhl.com/jets/news/three-things-jets-clinch-playoff-berth-beat-caps-in-ot>

***Three things - Jets clinch playoff berth, beat Caps in OT  
Jets are first team in the Western Conference to clinch a playoff berth***

By Jamie Thomas

WINNIPEG - In front of a sold-out crowd at Canada Life Centre, the Winnipeg Jets clinched a playoff berth with a 3-2 overtime win over the Washington Capitals. Nikolaj Ehlers scored the game winning goal, Mason Appleton and Josh Morrissey also scored for Winnipeg who are now 49-19-4. The Jets are one point behind Washington for first in the NHL and opened an eight-point lead on Dallas for first in the Central, the Stars have two games in hand. Connor Hellebuyck made 27 saves for his league leading 41st win of the season, Winnipeg will host New Jersey on Friday.

***HEAVYWEIGHT TILT GOES TO OT***

The top two teams met once again in a rematch of the 5-4 overtime win by Winnipeg back on February 1. Josh Morrissey ended the game that night and Tuesday evening, it was Nikolaj Ehlers turn. Washington controlled most of the play through overtime and Aliaksei Protas rang a shot off the goal post but while the Caps were on a line change, Dylan Samberg hit Ehlers with a perfect pass and the Danish forward finished off the game. Winnipeg (72 GP) required its fewest games in franchise history to secure a playoff spot during an 82-game season, eclipsing its previous best of 75 games set in 2017-18 and matched in 2018-19.

"Perfect pass. At first, I was thinking, 'What are you doing putting that on the wall?'," said Ehlers.

"But when you put it that perfectly on the wall and off the wall, yeah, it couldn't have worked out better."

***PK GETS JOB DONE***

The jets penalty kill came up huge in the second period with the game tied at one, Cole Perfetti went to the box for tripping and Winnipeg shut down the Capitals power play. Then at 14:32, Luke Schenn took an unsportsmanlike penalty, despite two good looks from Alex Ovechkin, Winnipeg killed off that minor as well. That opened the door for some late heroics from Mason Appleton, Nino Niederreiter spotted Appleton wide open on the right side and the 29-year-old beat Thompson high on the glove side for a 2-1 Jets lead.

***THE GR8 CHASE***

The script Tuesday night was similar to the first meeting between these two teams, Alex Ovechkin tied the game at 4-4 and Winnipeg went on to win in overtime. This evening, the Jets led 2-1 until the 16-minute mark of the third when Ovechkin fired home goal

number 889 and is now six goals away from becoming the all-time goal scoring leader in NHL history. It was his 150th game-tying goal — already the most in NHL history and 11 more than Wayne Gretzky (139) who has the second-most.

## **NHL.com**

<https://www.nhl.com/news/washington-capitals-winnipeg-jets-game-recap-march-25>

### ***Ovechkin scores No. 889, Jets clinch playoff berth with OT win against Capitals***

By Darrin Bauming

WINNIPEG -- Alex Ovechkin scored his 889th goal to move closer to passing Wayne Gretzky for the most in NHL history, but the Winnipeg Jets recovered for a 3-2 overtime win to clinch a berth in the Stanley Cup Playoffs at Canada Life Centre on Tuesday.

"I'm glad he got the goal, in the sense of getting closer to his goal," Winnipeg coach Scott Arniel said of Ovechkin's chase for the NHL record. "I'm not glad he got the goal, I'm glad he's getting close to whatever that number is. End of the day, that's him. It doesn't take much. The puck is on his stick, off his stick. I thought we did a really good job for most of the game of kind of limiting him, not a lot of chances, even on the power play. But I thought we did a really good job of staying over top of him. He doesn't need much time and space. At the end of the day, we got the two points. It is what it is. I was kind of hoping we could finish that one off in a 2-1 game, but we did a pretty good job on him."

Ovechkin tied the game 2-2 with 4:00 remaining in the third period, scoring with a wrist shot from the left circle to move within six goals of passing Gretzky (894).

"I think the beginning of the second we generate pretty good chances, and in the third you can see after when we're down by one we're kind of trying to make a push and we got rewarded," Ovechkin said. "But it was a playoff game, like playoff mentality, physicality was there as well. So, yeah, it was a good one."

Nikolaj Ehlers scored on a breakaway 1:28 into overtime to secure the win for Winnipeg, which had become the first team from the Western Conference to clinch a playoff berth once it earned one point for taking the game to overtime.

"This was a big challenge for us, and I believe they felt the same way in the other room," Ehlers said. "And we played really well, I thought. When we got the pucks deep and worked down there, we got some zone time and kept them out of our zone. So, that's something that we want to keep doing against the rest of the teams that we've got coming up here because that's going to help us in the playoffs."

Josh Morrissey and Mason Appleton also scored for the Jets (49-19-4), who had lost two of three (1-2-0). Connor Hellebuyck made 27 saves.

Washington remains the leader in the battle for the Presidents' Trophy with 103 points, one ahead of Winnipeg.

"That was a heavyweight battle right there. It really was," Arniel said. "Even though one team's from the East, one's from the West, it was like we play each other eight times a year. There was a lot of trash talking going on, there were some big hits, there was a lot happening. Both teams recognized that they wanna be No. 1. It was a great game. Punch, counterpunch going on all night."

Andrew Mangiapane also scored for the Capitals (47-15-9), who had won nine of 10 (9-1-0). Logan Thompson made 22 saves.

"I was happy with the way we performed for the most part," Washington coach Spencer Carbery said. "I thought it was a good hockey game. But they had us back on our heels early, which is somewhat to be expected coming on the road in this building. But felt like we pushed back in the second. Unfortunate to give that one up late after the kill at the end of the second, but (we) fought in the third. It was a little bit of a chess match, but we continued to push and found the equalizer."

Morrissey gave the Jets a 1-0 lead at 6:50 of the first period with a one-timer from the point.

Mangiapane tied it 1-1 at 19:20. Skating in on a 3-on-2 rush, he beat Hellebuyck blocker side with a quick catch and release shot off a give-and-go with Jakob Chychrun.

"When you play against good teams that are structured and don't give you much, what it comes down to is, a team is going to crack at certain moments," Carbery said. "If you want to win this time of year you can't crack... Our team has done a tremendous job all year. We don't crack often and we force other teams to because we just stay with it and stay with it. I felt like that was tonight what we saw from both teams."

Appleton put the Jets back in front 2-1 at 19:48 of the second period. Nino Niederreiter sent a cross-ice pass on the rush to Appleton, who scored glove side on Thompson with a wrist shot from the face-off dot.

"Sometimes those can be real deflating but I didn't feel that (the tying goal) deflated our group at all," Appleton said. "We had that 2-1 lead and sometimes you sit back and protect it a little too much and I didn't feel we did that at all. I thought we played a really good third, so when they got that one our mindset didn't really change. Then obviously for [Ehlers] to get that one in OT, it was huge to get the two points there."

*NOTES:* Ovechkin has 102 points (57 goals, 45 assists) in 75 games against the Jets/Atlanta Thrashers, the most goals and points by any player against the franchise. His 57 goals are the most by an active player against one franchise. ... Mangiapane extended his goal streak to three games (three goals). ... Winnipeg became the second

team with 30 wins when scoring first this season (30-3-3), joining the Florida Panthers (31). ... Appleton scored his first goal in 13 games and ended a nine-game point skid.

## **Canadian Press**

<https://www.chrisd.ca/2025/03/26/winnipeg-jets-washington-capitals-game-win-recap/>

### ***Jets Thrilled to KO the Caps 3-2 in OT, Despite Ovechkin's Late Goal***

By Judy Owen, The Canadian Press

Scott Arniel was proud the Winnipeg Jets got a takedown in a marquee bout with the Washington Capitals on Tuesday.

Nikolaj Ehlers scored on a breakaway 1:28 into overtime to help the Jets clinch a playoff spot by downing the Capitals 3-2 in a showdown between the NHL's top two teams.

"That was a heavyweight battle right there. It really was," said Arniel, who's in his first year as Winnipeg's head coach.

"Even though one team's from the East, one's from the West, it was like we play each other eight times a year. There was a lot of trash talking going on, there were some big hits, there was a lot happening.

"Both teams recognized that they want to be Number 1. It was a great game. Punch, counterpunch going on all night."

The Eastern Conference-leading Capitals gained a point in the loss, keeping them first overall in the NHL with 103 points (47-15-9). They also have a game in hand on Winnipeg.

The Jets top the Western Conference with 102 points (49-19-4) and clinched a playoff spot for the third consecutive season and seventh time in the past eight.

Washington was on a line change when Ehlers got the puck after Dylan Samberg banked it off the wall and then fired wrist shot past goalie Logan Thompson for his 24th goal of the season.

"This was a big challenge for us, and I believe they felt the same way in the other room," Ehlers said. "And we played really well, I thought.

"When we got the pucks deep and worked down there, we got some zone time and kept them out of our zone. So, that's something that we want to keep doing against the rest of the teams that we've got coming up here because that's going to help us in the playoffs."

Arniel said the Capitals actually had four players on the ice.

“If (Ehlers) missed the net and it went around, we were probably going to get a power play because they had four guys,” Arniel said. “Ahh, I guess he had a little bit in the tank left over. Burned down. And what a great shot.”

Washington star Alex Ovechkin had tied the game 2-2 with a one-timer that went through Connor Hellebuyck’s pads with four minutes remaining in the third period.

Ovechkin now has 889 career goals, six away from breaking Wayne Gretzky’s all-time goals record of 894.

Josh Morrissey and Mason Appleton also scored for the Jets, who swept the two-game season series against Washington after taking the first game 5-4 in overtime.

Hellebuyck made 27 saves in front of the team’s third straight sellout and 11th of the season at Canada Life Centre.

The Jets were coming off a 5-3 loss to the lowly Buffalo Sabres on Sunday.

“I’ve seen our response all year long when we get challenged like this against real good hockey teams and we’ve responded in the right way,” Arniel said.

“Just like we always talk about — leave the last one behind us and move on to the next one. If we weren’t ready tonight, we would have got run over. I thought we did a fantastic job.”

Appleton broke the 1-1 tie with 12 seconds remaining in the second period with a wrist shot over Thompson’s glove. His ninth goal of the season came 11 seconds after Winnipeg’s first man advantage expired.

It was his first goal in 13 games and first point in nine.

He was more happy about pulling out a win after Ovechkin tied it up.

“Sometimes those can be real deflating, but I didn’t feel that goal deflated our group at all,” Appleton said. “We had that 2-1 lead and sometimes you sit back and protect it a little too much and I didn’t feel we did that at all.

“I thought we played a really good third so when they got that one, our mindset didn’t really change. Then obviously for (Ehlers) to get that one in OT, it was huge to get the two points there.”

Thompson stopped 22 shots and Andrew Mangiapane also scored for the Capitals, extending his goal streak to three games with three goals.

Before overtime got underway, the rink announcer told the 15,225 cheering fans that Winnipeg had clinched a playoff spot with the one point they would at least receive.

The news didn't rattle the Jets heading into the extra session.

"You have to be appreciative of what we've done," Arniel said

<https://www.stalbertgazette.com/national-sports/ovechkin-scores-goal-no-889-to-move-within-six-of-topping-gretzkys-all-time-mark-10429262>

### ***Ovechkin scores goal No. 889 to move within six of topping Gretzky's all-time mark***

By Joshua Clipperton, The Canadian Press

WINNIPEG — Alex Ovechkin pumped consecutive one-timers on a power play.

Winnipeg Jets goaltender Connor Hellebuyck was there to deny both second-period efforts from a spot where the Washington Capitals winger has made a living the last two decades.

Ovechkin got another chance with the puck on his stick from a similar position in the third.

He didn't miss.

The 39-year-old scored on a bullet shot to inch closer to hockey immortality with the 889th goal of his NHL career — just six from passing Wayne Gretzky's all-time mark — in Washington's 3-2 overtime loss Tuesday.

Ovechkin received a pass from Aliaksei Protas and took a breath after a long shift in the offensive zone before firing past Hellebuyck's blocker with four minutes left in regulation to tie the game 2-2 inside a crackling Canada Life Centre.

"I knew we were going to push," said Washington head coach Spencer Carbery, whose team earned a point and remains atop the overall standings. "It's a big play and a big moment."

Ovechkin started the season 41 goals shy of the Great One's record of 894. The Russian superstar has now scored 36 times in just 55 games in 2024-25 after missing 16 contests with a broken leg earlier in the schedule.

"I love to see it," Capitals forward Nic Dowd said. "He's our leader. Didn't surprise me one bit. I think (Ovechkin) is probably very concentrated on winning hockey games. The great thing about that is as he scores more goals, we probably win more games. I don't think he's thinking about (the record)."

"He's just trying to play his best hockey."

Ovechkin's teammates praised their captain earlier in the day for how he's navigated the chase with the Capitals humming along and the playoffs just over the horizon.

"It is what it is," said the No. 1 pick at the 2004 draft. "It's a fun time. You just have to enjoy it. It's a special moment. Everybody's watching, everybody's paying attention."

Gretzky has topped the goal heap since passing Gordie Howe's previous high bar of 801 in March 1994.

Ovechkin has 12 games left to unseat No. 99 this season.

"When you're on him, you're not even really on him," Jets forward Mason Appleton said. "You've got to be in his pocket or you've basically gotta be touching him because his release is so lethal. You can't just be fronting him because he can get pucks through, around, every which way through the guy. He's a heck of a goal-scorer."

"You give him just a little time and space and he can kill you."

Carbery said it's a constant conversation with Ovechkin when it comes to ice time late in games for a player in his 20th NHL season. That was no different Tuesday.

"He's good about that," said the second-year coach. "He obviously wants to be out there, and then I just manage it with certain matchups in certain situations."

Jets bench boss Scott Arniel, who was an assistant in Washington for four seasons, got some attention from the Great 8 after he tied Tuesday's game.

"He came by the bench and he gave me the biggest smirk," Arniel said. "I'm not glad he got the goal. I'm glad he's getting close ... end of the day, that's him. It doesn't take much."

"On his stick, off his stick."

And one shot closer to history.

## **Global Winnipeg**

<https://globalnews.ca/news/11098243/ovechkin-scores-but-winnipeg-jets-clinch-playoff-spot-with-3-2-ot-win-over-washington/>

### ***Ovechkin scores, but Winnipeg Jets clinch playoff spot with 3-2 OT win over Washington***

By Christian Aumell & Russ Hobson Global News

It's official: the Winnipeg whiteout will be making a return again in April.

Needing just a point to clinch a playoff spot, the Winnipeg Jets did one better Tuesday night, edging the Washington Capitals 3-2 in overtime in a battle of NHL heavyweights that lived up to the hype.

Alex Ovechkin tied the game in the final four minutes, but Nikolaj Ehlers scored the overtime winner 88 seconds into the extra period as the Jets won a showdown of the top two teams in the overall standings.

"That was a heavyweight battle right there," said Jets head coach Scott Arniel. "Even though one's from the east, one's from the west – it's like we play each other eight times a year. There was a lot of trash talking going on. There was some big hits. There was a lot happening and I think both teams recognize that you want to be number one. It was a great game. I just thought punch, counterpunch kinda going on all night."

Josh Morrissey and Mason Appleton also scored goals for the Jets in the win.

The Jets clinch a playoff spot for the third straight year and seventh time in the last eight seasons.

"At the start of the year our first goal, we have a few goals, but our first goal was to eliminate eight teams and we did that obviously after 60 minutes. So, you have to applaud our players for doing that and would have liked to have done it against Buffalo.

"To win the game and get that extra point is just sorta the cream on the top."

It's the first time the Jets have become the first team in the conference to clinch a playoff spot.

It's also the first time in franchise history the Jets have swept a season series from the Capitals after also winning their first meeting back in February in overtime. The victory moves the Jets eight points up on the Dallas Stars for top spot in the Central Division and just one point back of the Capitals for first place overall.



“This was a big challenge for us,” said Ehlers. “And I believe they felt the same way in the other room and we played really well I thought. When we got the pucks deep and worked down there, we got some zone time.”

The Jets played without Gabriel Vilardi as he’s out week-to-week with an upper-body injury. All four of the Jets forward lines were switched up with Alex Iafallo getting promoted to the top line, while Rasmus Kupari appeared in his first game in three weeks.

Winnipeg got on the board first at the 6:50 mark of the first when Morrissey took a drop-pass from Mark Scheifele and one-timed it toward the goal. The shot glanced off Martin Fehervary and past Logan Thompson for Morrissey’s 12th of the season.

The game received a dash of spice with just under three minutes left in the first when Colin Miller sent Andrew Mangiapane hard into the boards, earning him a boarding penalty. But right after the whistle blew to stop the play, Mangiapane decked Miller in the chest with a cross-check, causing a skirmish.

After the offsetting minors expired, Mangiapane got the last laugh. With Washington on a 3-on-2 in transition, Mangiapane had a give-and-go with Jakob Chychrun that Mangiapane finished off with a bit of a knuckler that floated past Connor Hellebuyck to level the score after 20 minutes.

Washington controlled the play for the bulk of the second period, in part because of a pair of power plays but at even strength they were the better team for most of the 20 minutes. Winnipeg managed just two shots on goal through the first 17:30 of the second before a late-period power play helped to change their fortunes.

With just a handful of seconds left in the period, Cole Perfetti rushed the puck up the ice and into the Washington end, dropping it off to Nino Niederreiter near the point. Niederreiter sent a cross-ice pass to Appleton, who was promoted to the second PP unit because of the injury to Vilardi.

Appleton took a moment to settle the puck before roofing it over the glove of Thompson for his ninth of the season with just 12 seconds left in the period, a few moments after the power play expired.

The Capitals wound up outshooting the Jets 12-7 in the middle frame for a two-period total of 18-15 in Washington’s favour.

Where it mattered most, however, Winnipeg had the 2-1 lead, and the Jets entered the night with an NHL-best record of 36-0-1 when leading after two.

The Jets’ sputtering power play was given a chance to extend Winnipeg’s lead when Taylor Raddysh was called for interference with 13:31 left in regulation. Having gone

two-for-17 in their previous seven games, the PP needed a spark but they couldn't find it, managing just one shot on goal in two minutes.

Winnipeg held onto their 2-1 lead for most of the period before the many Washington fans in attendance got exactly what they wanted.

Aliaksei Protas won a puck battle along the wall in Winnipeg's end and sent a pass to the far faceoff dot, also known as the office of one Alexander Ovechkin. The sniper took the pass and ripped a wrister through Hellebuyck to tie the game with his 889th career goal.

When the horn sounded at the end of the third period, the Jets had officially punched their ticket to the playoffs. A short video played on the big screen showing the word 'clinched', prompting a big cheer from the sold-out crowd.

But there was still business to take care of, and it looked like Washington might find a way to steal the game as they held possession of the puck for over a minute to start overtime. Their best chance came early in OT when Protas rang a shot off the outside of the post.

The Jets finally gained possession of the puck when the Capitals mishandled a pass, prompting the Caps to make a line change. Dylan Samberg collected the puck behind Winnipeg's net and noticed Ehlers sprinting up the ice despite having been on since the start of OT. Samberg banked a pass off the boards right to the tape of Ehlers as he sped into the Washington end and wired a shot past Thompson, an electric end to a fantastic hockey game.

Hellebuyck made 27 saves to earn the win while most of the NHL will be more focused on the goal chase of Ovechkin, who now needs six more goals to pass Wayne Gretzky's record for most career goals all-time.

The Jets will look to make it two wins in a row when they host New Jersey Friday night. Puck drop is just after 7 p.m. with pregame coverage on 680 CJOB beginning at 5 p.m.

<https://globalnews.ca/news/11098750/analysis-winnipeg-jets-presidents-trophy/>

### ***ANALYSIS: President's Trophy could cap off outstanding regular season for Jets***

By Paul Edmonds CJOB

For as many days as the Winnipeg Jets have resided atop the Central Division, led the Western Conference and hovered around first place in the entire National Hockey League standings this season, there has been very little conversation about the President's Trophy — and that is likely by design.

Now, to be fair, finishing first overall is an outstanding achievement and one that truly should be recognized, respected and honoured.

After all, the 82-game NHL season is a grind, replete with long travel, inconsistent sleep and a cadence of games that offers few breaks. The team that powers through all of the schedule's rigours and finishes with the best record and most points should feel a sense of accomplishment – which is why they earn the President's Trophy.

But there is a stigma around the award, as only eight teams since its creation in the mid-1980s have won it and then gone on to win the Stanley Cup in the same season.

In fact, the last Canadian team to win the President's Trophy was the Vancouver Canucks, who did it in consecutive years in 2011 and 2012, no less. But as a franchise, they're still waiting to hang their first Stanley Cup banner.

And based on the Jets' overtime win over the Washington Capitals on Tuesday night to pull within a single point of first overall in the NHL, the President's Trophy discussion is likely going to continue or even heat up around the team's 10 remaining games — whether they like it or not.

It's a conflicting situation, for sure, but one the Jets need to embrace, knowing how unique a President's Trophy would be to cap off a potentially franchise-best regular season.

And if nothing else follows favourably into the spring and early summer, a President's Trophy banner draped from the rafters of Canada Life Centre in the years ahead would still make for a great conversation piece.

### **Sportsnet.ca**

<https://www.sportsnet.ca/nhl/article/ehlers-responds-when-stakes-are-high-which-is-a-good-sign-for-jets-playoff-hopes/>

### ***Ehlers responds when stakes are high, which is a good sign for Jets' playoff hopes***

By Jacob Stoller

WINNIPEG — All year long, coach Scott Arniel has evaluated his team's performance through the lens of one overarching question:

What does it mean for the Winnipeg Jets' playoff aspirations?

By now, you're probably sick of this narrative, and that's fair. No judgment if you're one of those in the "Wake me up when the regular season ends" camp.

But Tuesday's 3-2 OT win over the Washington Capitals was one of those "A-ha!" moments — proof that these Jets are far more dangerous than years past.

And few players embody the evolution of this group more than Nikolaj Ehlers, a player with an unflattering playoff track record.

Ehlers ended the game in overtime, sniping his 24th goal on a partial breakaway that ignited the loudest crowd pop we've heard at Canada Life Centre this year, on a night the Jets became the second team to clinch a playoff berth. This wasn't just another highlight-reel goal from The Great Dane. It was the cherry-on-top of a night where he was deployed on the team's shutdown line alongside Adam Lowry and Mason Appleton.

"I knew I wanted to go with Lowry and (Appleton) against (Tom Wilson) and (Pierre-Luc Dubois), some big bodies," Arniel said. "I didn't think we were going to have anybody that was going to line up against Tom Wilson. I just thought that maybe (Ehlers) would be the guy. I thought that maybe that's a situation (where) it's (putting) speed against Tom, who's a great player. Having the opportunity to make them defend and play in their end, I thought we did that with that line."

In addition to the game-winner, Ehlers finished the tight-checking matchup with seven scoring chances and two hits. One of the biggest knocks on the dynamic winger has been his ineffectiveness in the playoffs, where he's recorded just 14 points in 37 career post-season games (0.38 playoff points per game) — a stark contrast from his regular-season output (0.78).

Historically, Ehlers has struggled to have an impact when the stakes rise and the checking tightens.

But that wasn't the case Tuesday, where Ehlers was arguably Winnipeg's most dangerous forward in what was the Jets' most physical tilt of the year.

"He recognizes who he's playing with," Arniel said. "Guys with that kind of skill, if you're playing with maybe a couple other top-end skill guys, you're going to do some other things. You're playing with guys like Appleton and (Lowry), they're probably going to dump it in and go get it and he is the support off of that. He knows how to get to (open ice)."

Ehlers rarely plays with shutdown players — aside from a brief stint with Lowry and Alex Lafalco in late January — but he seems open, if not enthused, with the idea of sticking with it.

"I'm trying to go out there and use my speed every single time I go out there," Ehlers said. "We're trying to read off each other as much as possible. I think today was OK. I think we had some really good shifts, and then personally I was maybe throwing the puck away a little too much. And playing with those two guys that are able to play down deep and hold on to pucks and create space for me and the other guy, that's something

that we want to take advantage of. I like playing with those two guys, and we've got to keep working. We've got to keep building. You don't know how long you're going to be together, but I think we've done a really good job, so that's obviously exciting for us."

### *Stoller Says*

- Loved this quote from Appleton on the challenges of guarding Alex Ovechkin, who scored to send the game to overtime with four minutes remaining in the third.

"When you're on him, you're not even really on him. You've gotta be in his pocket or you've basically gotta be touching him because his release is so lethal," Appleton said. "You can't just be fronting him because he can get pucks through, around, you know, every which way through the guy. He's a heck of a goal scorer. You give him just a little time and space and he can kill you."

- Cole Perfetti looked great, yet again. Perfetti's playmaking ability along the wall is amazing, even with his skating and size limitations. Speaking of the latter — it was really impressive when he not only withstood a complete beating from Matt Roy in the third period, but the 23-year-old didn't hesitate to return the favour to a much more physically imposing player.

"He had the puck a lot. I liked the way he held onto it," Arniel said. "A couple times he drove — he came out of the corners — took it to the front of the net. Those are great things. Those are all the things we've talked about, him kind of evolving as a player, and that's the stuff in playoffs that you have to do."

### **Winnipeg Free Press**

<https://www.winnipegfreepress.com/breakingnews/2025/03/25/ehlers-saves-the-day>

#### ***Ehlers saves the day***

#### ***Jets clinch playoff spot as Dandy Dane nets OT winner in showdown between NHL's top teams***

By: Ken Wiebe

Never mind the milestone markers, it was Nikolaj Ehlers who found an extra gear and delivered the overtime winner for the Winnipeg Jets.

Ehlers, who told reporters after the morning skate it felt like Washington Capitals captain Alex Ovechkin often scored memorable goals against the Jets, was the one who sent the hometown fans happy in a 3-2 victory on Tuesday night before a sold out crowd of 15,225 at Canada Life Centre.

At the end of a long shift of three-on-three action, Ehlers took advantage of a line change when many wondered if he might be heading to the bench himself.

But sensing an opportunity to put his blazing speed to use, Ehlers called for the puck and accepted a pass from Dylan Samberg before exploding into the offensive zone and wiring home a wrister that beat Logan Thompson high to the glove side at 1:28 of the extra period.

“It’s just kind of following my guy and reloading. And then I saw them change, and I thought, ‘Why not?’” said Ehlers, who is up to 24 goals and 61 points in 63 games this season. “Perfect pass. At first, I was thinking, ‘What are you doing putting that on the wall?’ But when you put it that perfectly on the wall and off the wall, yeah, it couldn’t have worked out better.”

The Jets, who improved to 49-19-4 on the season and punched their ticket to the Stanley Cup playoffs, continue this four-game homestand on Friday against Brenden Dillon and the New Jersey Devils.

In a battle between the top two teams in the NHL and the leaders in each conference, overtime was required for the second time in as many meetings this season.

This game once again lived up to the hype as it was a highly-entertaining contest, featuring plenty of intensity, some glass-rattling hits and plenty of scoring chances to go along with sound defensive structure from both teams.

“That was a heavyweight battle right there. It really was,” said Jets head coach Scott Arniel. “Even though one team’s from the East, one’s from the West, it was like we play each other eight times a year. There was a lot of trash talking going on, there were some big hits, there was a lot happening. Both teams recognized that they want to be No. 1. It was a great game. Punch, counterpunch going on all night.”

The Jets are now one point behind the Capitals in the chase for the Presidents’ Trophy, though Washington holds a game in hand.

Winnipeg scored first and built a 2-1 lead but needed extra time after giving up a goal late in the third period to none other than Ovechkin.

“Sometimes those can be real deflating, but that didn’t deflate our group at all,” said Jets forward Mason Appleton, who provided the go-ahead goal for the Jets late in the second period. “We had that 2-1 lead, and sometimes you sit back and protect it a little bit too much, but I didn’t think we did that at all. We played a really good third, and they got that one, but our mindset didn’t really change.”

Let’s take a closer look at this one:

### *OVI WATCH*

Ovechkin is the subject of conversation each and every day at the rink in both dressing rooms as he continues his pursuit of the NHL goal-scoring record.

Opponents and teammates alike continue to be dazzled by the accomplishment and Ovechkin took another step closer to Wayne Gretzky by scoring his 36th goal of the season and 889th of his career with four minutes to go in regulation, sending this game to overtime. Ovechkin is within six goals of breaking Gretzky's record of 894.

Ovechkin found some quiet ice in the offensive zone around the faceoff dot and Capitals forward Aliaksei Protas got a pass across to him for a quick shot that beat Connor Hellebuyck.

"It's a fun time. You just have to enjoy it. It's a special moment," said Ovechkin. "Everybody is watching, everybody is paying attention to it."

And everybody will continue to pay attention to it as the chase continues.

### *THE LAST LAUGH*

There was a humorous exchange that spilled over into the penalty box involving Jets defenceman Colin Miller and Capitals forward Andrew Mangiapane.

Miller was given a boarding minor for a hit on Mangiapane, who retaliated with a cross check to the chest of Miller, who was sent flying.

Miller got Mangiapane's attention with a smirk as he rose from the ice, knowing that the Capitals' power play had been nullified.

The two continued the exchange for the bulk of the broadcast timeout and didn't appear to come to much of a resolution.

Mangiapane quickly got back in his coach's good books by coming out of the penalty box at the end of the four-on-four situation and taking a pass from Jakob Chychrun on a three-on-two rush and burying his shot high to the blocker side of Jets goalie Connor Hellebuyck.

### *SLUMP BUSTER*

Shortly after a Jets' power play expired late in the second period, Nino Niederreiter found Appleton with a cross-ice pass and Appleton ripped home a shot over the glove of former Brandon Wheat Kings goalie Logan Thompson.

It was the first point in eight games and first goal in 12 games for Appleton, who is up to nine markers for the season.

The Jets already have 11 players in double digits in goals, with Appleton and defenceman Neal Pionk sitting at nine.

### *NOT-SO-WELCOME BACK*

Capitals centre Pierre-Luc Dubois has changed teams twice since leaving the Jets, but he's received the same treatment in each of his three return visits to Canada Life Centre.

Dubois was lustily booed every time he touched the puck, but that didn't prevent him from having a solid showing in just over 20 minutes of ice time.

Much of the Dubois trade from the deal that sent him to the Los Angeles Kings was heavily involved in the storylines revolving around this meeting.

With the upper body injury to Gabe Vilardi, Alex Lafallo was promoted to the top line, while Rasmus Kupari returned to the lineup for the first time since Mar. 4.

Lafallo didn't get an assist on the play, but his ability to get to the net allowed Josh Morrissey to blast home a slapper that went in off of Capitals defenceman Martin Fehervary.

### *THE KEY PLAY*

Nikolaj Ehlers burst down the wing and buried a wrister at 1:28 of overtime.

### *THE THREE STARS*

- 1) Nikolaj Ehlers, Jets, delivered the overtime winner, finished with seven shot attempts.
- 2) Alex Ovechkin, Capitals, scored the equalizer late in the third, had four shots on goal, and seven shot attempts.
- 3) Josh Morrissey, Jets, scored a goal, finished with nine shot attempts in 25:03 of ice time.

### *EXTRA, EXTRA*

Hellebuyck made his 54th start of the season and finished with 27 saves.

Jets defenceman Luke Schenn led all players with six hits.

The Jets healthy scratches were defencemen Haydn Fleury and Ville Heinola and forward David Gustafsson.

<https://www.winnipegfreepress.com/breakingnews/2025/03/25/all-eyes-on-ovechkin>

### ***All eyes on Ovechkin***

By: Mike McIntyre

The Alex Ovechkin show rolled into town Tuesday with the pursuit of hockey history taking centre stage at Canada Life Centre.



“It’s kind of a rock star tour right now,” is how Washington Capitals teammate Tom Wilson described it a few hours prior to puck drop against the Winnipeg Jets.

Like Jimi Hendrix on guitar, John Bonham on drums or Aretha Franklin on vocals, Ovechkin is making a compelling case of being the best ever when it comes to his instrument of choice — specifically, a CCM Ribcor Trigger ASY Stick.

With 889 career goals, the “Great Eight” is in pursuit of Wayne Gretzky’s record and is six behind for the most in NHL history. A spotlight that has been on him since he was selected first-overall in the 2004 draft is now brighter than ever.

“You can feel it on the bench, you can feel it every time he touches the puck in every building we go to. There’s an excitement that’s continuing to build,” said rookie Capitals head coach Spencer Carbery.

“It’s like nothing I’ve ever felt as a coach.”

Wilson described fans staked out at various airports, including Winnipeg Richardson International when the team touched down on Monday, and mobbing Ovechkin outside hotels and restaurants.

“He’s been a superstar his whole career,” said Wilson. “But this is bigger than the game of hockey.”

Not all of the feelings about Ovechkin are positive, especially in a place like Winnipeg where Ukrainian roots run deep. The 39-year-old hasn’t shied away from his support of Russian President Vladimir Putin, who is responsible for the deadly invasion of Ukraine and the ongoing bloodshed now in its third year.

Ovechkin’s official Instagram profile photo still has a photo of him and the dictator, and he’s never spoken out to directly condemn the war despite countless pleas to do so.

There was a petition spearheaded by some members of the local community to have the Hoosli Ukrainian Male Chorus perform the anthems prior to Tuesday’s game — as they do a few times each season — to send a strong message to Ovechkin and his supporters. That did not occur.

There was a smattering of boos when Ovechkin handled the puck during Tuesday’s game, but no other signs of hostility or protest.

Although he’ll turn 40 in September, Ovechkin is showing no significant signs of slowing down. He missed 16 games earlier this year with a broken leg yet still has 35 goals and 59 points through 54 games prior to facing the Jets. He’s also the captain of the No. 1 team in the NHL while also juggling the circus-like atmosphere that comes with his chase.

“He handles it so well. I’ve been extremely proud to watch him day in and day out, just the pressure and the burden throughout the whole season,” said Wilson.

“It’s a lot of fun, I think everybody’s going to be able to tell their kids about it one day. He’s a great friend, a great teammate, and it’s been a lot of fun to be a part of. He does a great job of making sure everybody feels a part of it.”

Capitals forward Dylan Strome grew up in Ontario watching Ovechkin, who is 12 years older than him, take the NHL by storm. Now he’s playing on the same line as the future Hall of Famer, feeding him passes that routinely end up in the back of the net.

“The thing that stuck out to me the most is he’s just as excited when he’s on the ice for a goal, even if he doesn’t score it, as when he does score it. His arms are in the air, cheering, celebrating laughing,” said Strome.

“Even on the bench he’s the happiest guy on the bench. Loves to score goals and loves to be a part of goals, maybe that’s why he’s closing in on the most all-time.”

Strome has watched video of when Gretzky passed Gordie Howe for No. 1 all-time and paid particular attention to the pass from Oilers teammate Marty McSorley. He admits the thought of feeding Ovechkin for the historic tally has crossed his mind “once or twice... or three or four times.”

“We know it’s going to happen at some point, we’re just happy to be along for the ride and to assist him in any way we can,” said Strome, who has already set a career high this year in assists (45) and points (68).

Ovechkin can certainly thank the Jets for playing a part in his success. His 56 career goals against the franchise in 74 career games is the most against any single opponent. He also has 101 points against the 2.0 Jets/Atlanta Thrashers, which trails only the 105 he’s put up against the Carolina Hurricanes.

“I mean, I’m glad he’s seven goals away. Let’s put it that way,” Jets forward Nikolaj Ehlers said Tuesday morning.

“I feel like every time we’ve played against Washington, there’s been some type of milestone that he’s hit. He’s obviously been a player that in this league has done unbelievable things and is about to do another incredible thing, which I believe he’s probably going to hit this year.”

Ehlers said he’s tried to incorporate parts of Ovechkin’s game into his own.

“I don’t have nearly the same shot he does. But he also shoots from everywhere. And that’s how you score goals in this league,” he said.

“You’re not going to get the perfect opportunity every single time, but as long as you get the puck towards the net, there’s a chance it’s going in. And the way he does that is pretty impressive. That’s something that I’ve looked at doing sometimes. I maybe take some weird shots, but that’s how I kind of get going.”

Jets centre Mark Scheifele shared a story Tuesday of how, a few years ago, team equipment manager Jason McMaster requested that he sign a stick.

“I was like, ‘Oh, who’s it for?’ He said, ‘It’s for Ovi.’ And I was like, ‘Can I get one too?’” said Scheifele, who was happy to honour the request. Ovechkin thanked him for the souvenir swap in the warm-up.

“He’s a phenomenal player, and the things that he’s done for this league, for the game of hockey, for everything. He’s done so much to pave the way for a guy like me and guys for years to come. Guys like him and Sid (Crosby), we’re lucky that they came into this league and came into the world to make the NHL where it is today.”

The Ovechkin show will get even bigger in the coming days. Once he is within five goals of the record, an entourage including Gretzky and NHL commissioner Gary Bettman will begin following him around to every game.

“He’s like nothing you would have expected, in the best way possible. A guy that is really loved (in Washington), he is the life of this group,” said Capitals defenceman Jakob Chychrun.

“Watching him growing up, great memories. To be here now with him and playing with him, getting to know him has just been a blast. I’m just so happy for everything that he’s accomplished to this point. We’re hoping to make history. There’s no doubt he’s going to, it’s just a matter of when.”

**TSN.ca**

<https://www.tsn.ca/nhl/video/was-this-a-statement-win-for-the-jets-over-the-best-team-in-the-east%7E3103475>

***Was this a statement win for the Jets over the best team in the East? (VIDEO)***

TSN Hockey analyst Bruce Boudreau joins SportsCentre to explain how Alex Ovechkin continues to raise his game in key moments, and give his thoughts on if this was a statement win by the Jets against the best team in the East.

## **Winnipeg Sun**

<https://winnipeg.sun.com/sports/hockey/nhl/winnipeg-jets/jets-clinch-playoff-spot-with-another-ot-thriller-over-caps>

### ***Ovechkin smirks, Jets get last laugh, in OT win over Caps***

By Paul Friesen

They've battled for first place in the overall NHL standings for much of the season and they've needed extra time in both their meetings.

There hasn't been much to choose between the Winnipeg Jets and Washington Capitals, and after Tuesday night's tilt in downtown Winnipeg they're just one point apart at the top.

Nik Ehlers's goal 1:28 into overtime, his 24th of the season, gave the Jets a 3-2 win, 102 points on the season and clinched a playoff spot.

They have much more in mind, of course, and so do the Capitals, with 103 points in one less game.

"That was a heavyweight battle right there," Jets coach Scott Arniel said. "It really was. Even though one team's from the East, one's from the West, it was like we play each other eight times a year. There was a lot of trash talking going on, there were some big hits, there was a lot happening. Both teams recognized that they want to be No. 1. A great game. Punch, counterpunch, going on all night."

"This was a big challenge for us," Ehlers said. "And I believe they felt the same way in the other room."

A third straight sellout crowd in Winnipeg contributed to the big-game vibe.

Alex Ovechkin gave it another vibe when he tied it with exactly four minutes left in regulation time.

A mix of cheers from Caps fans in the building and boos rained down as Ovechkin celebrated goal No. 889 of his career, leaving him six shy of breaking Wayne Gretzky's all-time NHL record with 11 games left in his regular season.

"He came by the bench he gave me the biggest smirk," Arniel said, chuckling. "I'm glad he's getting close to whatever that number is. End of the day, that's him. It doesn't take much. The puck is on his stick, off his stick."

"It was (like) a playoff game," Ovechkin added. "The physicality was there as well. It was a good one."

The Jets did well to bounce back from what could have been a real swing in momentum.

“Sometimes those can be real deflating,” winger Mason Appleton said. “But that didn’t deflate our group at all. We had that 2-1 lead, and sometimes you sit back and protect it a little bit too much, but I didn’t think we did that. We played a really good third, and they got that one but our mindset didn’t really change.”

In a battle of the No. 1 and No. 3 stingiest teams in hockey, Grade-A chances were hard to come by, hacks and whacks a little more plentiful, with plenty of chirping after whistles.

“I don’t think it was very hard to fire the guys up for this one,” Arniel said. “I’ve seen our response all year long when we get challenged like this against real good hockey teams and we’ve responded in the right way. If we weren’t ready, we would have got run over. We did a fantastic job.”

His counterpart was pretty happy with this team, too, in what he called a chess match.

“When you play against good teams that are structured and don’t give you much, what it comes down to is a team is going to crack at certain moments,” Caps coach Spencer Carbery said. “If you want to win this time of year, you can’t crack.”

Two of the NHL’s top goalies also did their thing.

Connor Hellebucyk out-stopped Logan Thompson, improving his record to 41-10-3 and dropping Thompson to a still eye-popping 31-4-6, Final shots were 29-25, Washington.

Ehlers’ game-winner came after a long, off-the-boards, bank-pass from Dylan Samberg — from behind his own net.

“Perfect pass,” Ehlers said. “At first, I was thinking, ‘What are you doing putting that on the wall?’ But when you put it that perfectly on the wall and off the wall, yeah, it couldn’t have worked out better.”

Appleton and Josh Morrissey had the other Jets goals, as Winnipeg improved to 49-19-4, while Washington fell to 47-15-9.

Up next for the Jets, a visit by the New Jersey Devils on Friday.

Winnipeg got the start it wanted when Morrissey’s blast from the point went off a Washington leg and in behind Thompson less than seven minutes in for the defenceman’s 12th of the year.

Just when the Jets thought they'd take the lead into the break, the Caps got a three-on-two capped by Andrew Mangiapane with 39 seconds left in the first.

Mangiapane and Winnipeg's Colin Miller had just come out of the penalty box after coincidental minors, Miller for boarding, Mangiapane for retaliating with a cross-check.

The physical tone picked up in the second, the Jets surviving a couple of penalties against the Ovechkin-led Caps power play.

During the first, No. 8 didn't even touch the puck. He got two shots on the second, but no damage done.

Winnipeg got a power play of its own in the dying minutes of the second and cashed in 10 seconds after it ended – and with 12 ticks left on the clock.

Appleton scored his first in 13 games, picking the far corner on Thompson after a cross-ice feed from Nino Niederreiter.

"I saw a little bit of net on that far side... hit my spot," he said of his ninth of the year.

A lot of the physical stuff was initiated by the Caps' Tom Wilson, the forward with an edge to match his scoring touch.

Jets defenceman Luke Schenn got caught retaliating to Wilson's clean hit on Appleton but the Jets penalty kill had a perfect, 2-for-2 night.

Fast forward to a potentially critical moment in the third, Washington's Taylor Raddysh taking an unnecessary interference penalty to send the Jets back on a power play that was one-for-its-last-20 chances.

Make that one-for-21, something the Jets will want to turn around over their last 10 games.