

***Three things - Jets one step closer to Central title
Connor Hellebuyck makes 25 saves for eighth shutout of season in 4-0 win over Stars***

By Jamie Thomas

The Winnipeg Jets are one step closer to their first ever division title as they beat the Dallas Stars 4-0 at American Airlines Center. Winnipeg is now 54-21-4 and need one more point in their last three games to clinch the Central, Kyle Connor scored twice, Morgan Barron and Nino Niederreiter added singles. Connor Hellebuyck recorded his 45th win of the season to set a franchise record and on top of that had his eighth shutout this campaign and 45th of his career. The Jets will fly to Chicago and will face the Blackhawks Saturday for their final road game of the regular season.

"Yeah. We had to be ready. This is obviously a team that, like we've talked about, they haven't left our rearview mirror all year long," said Scott Arniel.

"We had to be good early and I thought our first period was really strong and then we built off of that. Throughout our lineup, there were a lot of guys doing what they needed to do to help us have success."

ANOTHER DEFENSIVE CLINIC

The Jets locked down one of the hottest teams in the NHL, the St. Louis Blues on Monday holding them to just 15 shots. That momentum carried over to Thursday night as Winnipeg gave the Stars fits allowing just 24 Dallas shots and that meant that the Jets have held teams below 30 shots in 18 straight games. Natural Stat Trick said that the Stars had five high danger scoring chances in the first period at 5-on-5 but only managed two more over the final two periods. Even though Dallas had the better chances in period one, Winnipeg's patience paid off at 18:37 when Nino Niederreiter redirected a Josh Morrissey shot behind Jake Oettinger for his 16th.

BACK-TO-BACK FOR BARRON

The Jets fourth line has really started to shine since Morgan Barron was moved to the middle and Brandon Tanev was acquired at the deadline. Barron scored a big goal on Monday against St. Louis and his goal on Thursday night looked very similar as the big centre used his speed through the neutral zone and eventually finished things off with a power move to the front of the net and beat Oettinger.

40 GOAL SEASON FOR CONNOR

Kyle Connor made sure the Stars didn't have a chance to come back in the third period with two goals 2:20 apart to blow the game open. First at 6:20, Alex Iafallo broke up a Dallas Stars scoring chance, sent a pass to Mark Scheifele who chipped the puck

towards the front of the Stars net and Connor swooped in and beat Oettinger five hole for his 39th. Scheifele set a career high with his 85th point of the season.

At 8:40, Connor reached 40 goals for the second time in his career and again it started back in the Jets end of the ice with a solid defensive play. Josh Morrissey carried the puck up the ice waited until he saw Connor head to the front of the net, Morrissey sent a pass that was tipped nicely by Jared Anderson-Dolan right to Connor who joined Ilya Kovalchuk as the only players in franchise history to score 40 twice. Connor also set a career high with his 94th point of the season.

NHL.com

<https://www.nhl.com/news/winnipeg-jets-dallas-stars-game-recap-april-10>

Hellebuyck, Jets shut out Stars to increase lead in Central Makes 25 saves, Connor scores twice for Winnipeg; Dallas clinches top-2 finish in Central

By Taylor Baird

DALLAS -- Connor Hellebuyck made 25 saves for the Winnipeg Jets in a 4-0 win against the Dallas Stars at American Airlines Center on Thursday.

It was his 45th win and eighth shutout of the season, both a franchise record. He is the seventh goalie in NHL history to win at least 45 games in a single season.

"It seems every night the last month or so he's been accomplishing a new record. You honestly can't put into words how important he is to our team, what he does day in and day out," Winnipeg defenseman Josh Morrissey said. "As a teammate of his, I feel extremely lucky that I've gotten to play in front of him basically my entire career. What he does in terms of preparation, the way he's always figuring out ways to improve his game, is incredible. Even in the last few years, you think, 'Man, I don't know if this guy can get any better,' and then he finds a way to. Really lucky to have him, and what he's doing this year is very special."

Kyle Connor scored twice to set an NHL career-high in points (94; 40 goals, 54 assists), and Morrissey had two assists for Winnipeg (54-21-4), which is 6-2-0 in its past eight games.

"This is the type of game that's tight checking. You're not going to get too many looks. We had one in the second period, a couple in the first. When you get a look, you've got to make the most of it and capitalize," Connor said. "It's a two-goal game, it's tight. We're working for that next one. We came out strong and that PK (to start the third period), set the tone for us. That was a big momentum shifter. Getting three and four, a little bit of breathing room is always a good feeling."

Jake Oettinger made 31 saves for the Stars (50-23-6), who clinched a top-two finish in the Central Division and home-ice advantage in the Western Conference First Round with the Colorado Avalanche losing 4-1 to the Vancouver Canucks on Thursday.

Dallas, which has lost four straight (0-2-2), trails the Jets by six points with three games remaining.

"We've struggled with them all year. They're the best defensive team in the League. Their record is where it's at because of that," Dallas forward Matt Duchene said. "I thought we did a lot of good things. Our work ethic was good, some traffic shots, but they were one and done a little too much. Breakdowns that ended up in our net. It's not like they were dominating us all night. I don't think it was a 4-0 type game by any means. It felt like a 2-1 either side. I think the last two games [here] are steps in the right direction of where we want to get to, as funny as that sounds."

Nino Niederreiter gave Winnipeg a 1-0 lead at 18:37 in the first period when he tipped in Morrissey's point shot from the high slot.

"We had to be ready. [Dallas] is obviously a team that hasn't left our rearview mirror all year long. We had to be good early, and I thought our first period was really strong and we built off that," Winnipeg coach Scott Arniel said. "Throughout our lineup there was a lot of guys that were doing what they had to do for us to have success."

Morgan Barron made it 2-0 at 3:37 in the second period. He skated around Dallas defenseman Lian Bichsel and shot the puck stick side on Oettinger.

Connor extended the lead to 3-0 by beating Oettinger five-hole at 6:20 in the third period. Dallas forward Oskar Back turned the puck over in Winnipeg's zone, springing Connor for a breakaway.

"They have a good goalie and they play good defensively," Dallas forward Roope Hintz said. "We got to find a way to score against those guys. We played all right for two periods, but we just couldn't score, so we got to find a way to score. We got to watch some video and see what didn't work today, and then from there and take those with us to the next game."

Connor scored his second of the game to make it 4-0 at 8:40. He converted from the edge of the right face-off circle after Jaret Anderson-Dolan found him with a no-look one-touch pass in the slot.

"Tyler Seguin said it to our group, we went 10-2 down the stretch last year and proceeded to lose two home games to Vegas in the first round, so that tells you how important [the end of the regular season] is," Dallas coach Pete DeBoer said. "We've got to keep building here. There are some periods here that are, for me, winning-type hockey come playoff time in a week. We've got to take those and build on them. The

things that don't help you win in the playoffs, like some of the plays we've made in the third, we've got to eliminate."

NOTES: With an assist, Winnipeg forward Mark Scheifele set a new career high in points with 85 (38 goals, 47 assists). ... Dallas was the last team in the League to be shut out this season.

Winnipeg Free Press

<https://www.winnipegfreepress.com/breakingnews/2025/04/10/jets-make-statement-against-stars>

Jets make statement against Stars Visitors outshine Stars in scrappy affair in Dallas

By: Mike McIntyre

DALLAS — Scott Arniel began the day by embracing the magnitude of the task ahead.

"Everybody knows how big of a game this is," the Winnipeg Jets head coach said following the morning skate inside American Airlines Center.

His hockey club ended the day with another statement, schooling the Dallas Stars from start to finish in the form of a dominating 4-0 victory that might just be one of the most important in franchise history.

The Jets are now on the cusp of clinching the Central Division and sewing up the No. 1 spot in the Western Conference, which would be the first time that's happened in Winnipeg's NHL history.

The only way they can't finish on top is if they lose all three of their remaining games in regulation, and Dallas finds a way to win all three of their remaining games in regulation.

"Obviously, we clinched a playoff spot and right now, we're chasing the top spot. That's our goal. To try and get home ice throughout the whole playoffs," said Jets forward Kyle Connor.

"It could be the difference down the stretch. You never know, especially the way our fans come out. We love playing in front of them. It will be pretty special."

Touted as a heavyweight battle between two legitimate Stanley Cup contenders, it was the Jets who took the biggest and hardest swings. From their own crease to the Dallas net, this was a clinic in efficient, smothering two-way hockey.

It was also milestone night for the Jets in more ways than one.

Goaltender Connor Hellebuyck stopped all 25 shots he faced to increase his franchise record with his eighth shutout of the year. He also beat his franchise record with his 45th victory, which is three off the NHL's all-time mark.

Not to be outdone, Connor scored twice in the third period to put the game on ice, hitting 40 for the second time in his career and setting a new single-season personal high with 94 points.

Linemate Mark Scheifele set up one of those goals, which gave him a career-high 85 points.

The Jets also increased their franchise record for wins in a year, now at 54, and they need three points in their final three games to set a new franchise record for points.

"We've had a few milestones that have happened this year. It's great. Great accomplishment for those players, should be real proud of them," said Arniel.

"At the end of the day, I don't even have to tell them. Those are the guys that are more concerned about where the team's at and where we are when it comes to securing a playoff spot, where we are in the standings. Those guys know that they need to do those things offensively for us to have success but at the same time, they recognize that it's a team game and there's a lot more to it."

Go to the net, get rewarded

It's easy to say, but much harder to do. And, to be honest, Nino Niederreiter hasn't done nearly enough of it lately as his offensive game has largely gone ice cold.

The veteran winger got back to the basics in this one, getting a stick on a Josh Morrissey blast and causing the puck to change direction enough to beat a surprised Jake Oettinger with just over a minute left in the first period that the Jets had largely controlled.

Niederreiter's 16th of this season gave the visitors the lead they were desperately looking for. It also served up a valuable reminder that good things often happen when you go to the hard areas of the ice.

So nice, he did it twice

Morgan Barron scored one of the nicest goals of his career in Monday's 3-1 win over the St. Louis Blues, taking a pass from Morrissey, turning on the burners, fending off an attacker and burying a breakaway deke.

It was incredible stuff from a depth player with 29 goals on his resume over 252 NHL games. Surely he couldn't do that again if he tried, right?

Wrong.

Barron served up a thrilling sequel on Thursday, this time taking the puck himself out of the defensive zone, gaining speed through the neutral zone and then carving up the Dallas D-core like perfectly barbecued brisket to give the Jets a 2-0 lead early in the second period.

Have the Jets somehow unlocked the best version of the 26-year-old? It sure seems that way, and shifting him over to centre from the wing last month has clearly done wonders for a player who has the size and the speed to be a force.

Let's get physical

A sure sign the Jets came to play? The fact they were willing to pay the price, time and time again, by taking the body.

Winnipeg's single-game season high for hits was 37. They had 40 in this one — by the second intermission. They finished with 44.

Leading the way was trade-deadline addition Luke Schenn, whose seven bodychecks included a third-period bone-crusher on Dallas forward Mason Marchment. The other newest Jets skater, Brandon Tanev, had six, as did captain Adam Lowry.

"I think that has a lot to do with the guys (recognizing) what's still at stake here for us," Arniel said of the physicality.

"Dallas is a big team. They're a great skating team. If you don't run into them, they're going to make plays. They're going to do things that you don't want them to do. I thought that, for us, we came out and played a hard road game. You try to do that every game but tonight, I liked our battle. It was really strong."

Key play

Barron's breakaway goal early in the second period gave the Jets some breathing room.

Three stars:

Jets, Connor Hellebuyck: 25 saves for the shutout

Jets, Kyle Connor: 2G

Jets, Josh Morrissey: 2A

Extra, extra

There were only two minor penalties in the game. The first, a dubious slashing call near the end of the second period to Nikolaj Ehlers. The Jets killed it off as officials essentially let them play.

Speaking of Ehlers, he returned from a two-game absence due to a lower-body injury and dropped the gloves late in the third with Dallas forward Sam Steel, who had given him a swat to the head after taking a holding penalty against the speedy Dane.

"You know what, that's Nikky. He sticks up for himself," said Arniel.

"I've seen him in a few fights now. He's a tough, scrappy kid. When you have elite, top-six players like that, (who) are extremely competitive like he is and doesn't give up an inch... that's just the competitive side and you love to see it."

Defenceman Neal Pionk also returned to the lineup after missing the past 12 games with a lower-body injury.

Winnipeg's healthy scratches were defencemen Haydn Fleury, Colin Miller and Ville Heinola; forwards David Gustafsson and Rasmus Kupari; and third-string goaltender Chris Driedger.

The Jets flew to Chicago following the game and will enjoy a day off Friday in the Windy City. They'll face the Blackhawks on Saturday night in their final regular-season road contest, then return home to host the Edmonton Oilers on Sunday and the Anaheim Ducks on Wednesday.

<https://www.winnipegfreepress.com/breakingnews/2025/04/10/family-first-for-anderson-dolan>

***Family first for Anderson-Dolan
Jets forward hopes his story inspires youngsters from non-traditional
backgrounds***

By: Mike McIntyre

DALLAS — Jaret Anderson-Dolan's road to the NHL started like so many other Canadian kids. A stick in his hand and skates on his feet at a tender young age with devoted, loving parents cheering him on at every step along the way.

However, unlike the majority of his teammates, it wasn't a case of mom and dad in the stands. Rather, it was mom and mom.

"I am so proud of my parents," the Winnipeg Jets forward told the Free Press on Thursday. "I don't want to hide anything. I'm very open to talk about it."

Anderson-Dolan, 25, hopes his "unique" story can resonate with others, especially young kids who might be growing up in non-traditional family environments. He is believed to be the first NHL player who is the product of a same-sex marriage.

"If they can see me in the same situation, they can look up to me and know that I had the same upbringing," he said. "All their other friends might have a mom and a dad and so they feel like a bit of an outlier."

Anderson-Dolan's biological mother is Fran, a former semi-pro player who met her future wife, Nancy, at a hockey tournament in Coleman, Alta., while they were

teenagers. The two Calgarians were playing on opposite teams at the time but began dating in high school.

They eventually married and brought two boys into the world. First came Dorian, whose biological mother is Nancy, followed a short time later by Jaret, who is a proud advocate for LGBTTTQ+ community and is encouraged by progress he believes is being made regarding inclusion in all aspects of life, including sport at the highest levels.

“People nowadays are a lot more comfortable talking about it, a lot more open. You’re seeing a lot of teams doing Pride Nights and that sort of thing, which is great,” he said.

“It makes it feel a lot more inclusive for everyone, no matter your sexual orientation or upbringing. I feel like even in the last five, six years it’s gone a long way. That’s definitely cool to see.”

Hockey has always been a prominent part of their lives.

“Definitely a lot of roots in the family,” said Anderson-Dolan, who laughed as he recalled finding an old photo the other day showing him, around the age of one, wearing a Montreal Canadiens jersey.

“That was Fran’s choice. She was a Canadiens fan,” he said.

Both boys began skating around the age of two, eventually playing minor hockey in the Calgary area and spending hours on the backyard rink their mothers made sure was in peak condition. Fran was his first coach while Nancy, a nutritionist, has always ensured he has the ingredients he needs to succeed.

“They’ve done so much for myself and my brother,” said Anderson-Dolan, noting that included enrolling him at a prominent prep school for athletes in Calgary. “It’s opportunities like this (being in the NHL), where you realize just how lucky you are. The support they have shown me throughout my career has been great.”

Although Dorian hung up his skates at about the age of 12, Jaret’s passion, natural ability, and willingness to put in the work began turning plenty of heads. At the age of 14, while playing Bantam AAA, he racked up 103 points in 50 games. That led to him being selected 14th-overall in the 2014 Western Hockey League draft by the Spokane Chiefs.

Anderson-Dolan played parts of five years in the WHL, with 76 points (39G, 37A) in 72 games during the 2016-17 season. That summer, the Los Angeles Kings selected him in the second round, 41st-overall.

His two mothers would regularly make the nearly 1,400-km round-trip drive from Calgary to Spokane to watch him play and put up 236 points (113G, 123A) in 244

games. His junior career was capped off by being named an alternate captain to the 2019 Canadian World Junior team.

Those long car trips by his biggest fans became long plane trips once Anderson-Dolan made his NHL debut in the 2019-20 season, appearing in four games with the Kings and 53 with their American Hockey League affiliate in nearby Ontario, Calif.

He scored his first big-league goal the next season against Robin Lehner of the Vegas Golden Knights and began settling in for what has become an up-and-down ride between the NHL and AHL. To date, he has 28 points (15G, 13A) in 130 NHL games and 98 points (41G, 57A) points in 166 AHL games.

Anderson-Dolan signed a two-year free agent contract with the Jets last summer, knowing he might have to be patient in order to get some more big-league action under his belt.

“Everyone comes into training camp wanting to make the team. At the same time, you realized how good of a team they were last year and that they had a lot of guys back. You just kind of wait your turn and control what you can,” he said.

Unfortunately, he suffered a broken foot during a pre-season game, which led to him being sidelined for multiple weeks and, admittedly, feeling like he was “behind the 8-ball” as he tried to adjust to his new hockey home.

Anderson-Dolan was sent to the Manitoba Moose once healthy but got off to a slow start, then gradually began heating up prior to being called up by the Jets a couple weeks ago once the injury bug began to bite.

“It took a little bit to find my game coming out of that,” he said.

“Every game you get here is a great opportunity. You never know when it could be your last one. You want to make the most of it. I’ve kind of been taking that approach, playing every game like it could be my last. I feel like the game’s been pretty solid for the whole line.”

Indeed, his trio along with centre Morgan Barron and fellow winger Brandon Tanev has made a big impact in their first three games together, which has included big wins over Vegas and St. Louis.

“It’s obviously very exciting. I’ve been here for a short time, but you see why we’re at the top of the standings. Just the type of people, how close everyone is,” said Anderson-Dolan.

“It’s just such a relaxed environment in between games, and then when it’s time for game time everyone dials in. It’s definitely one of the best groups I’ve been a part of.”

Although some injured skaters are starting to return to the lineup, coach Scott Arniel wants to see more of Anderson-Dolan as they head down the final stretch towards the playoffs.

"I've liked a lot of what I see. He's got energy, he's detailed. He knows how to play without the puck, which is important," Arniel said prior to Thursday's game against the Dallas Stars.

Anderson-Dolan's mothers have made the trip to Winnipeg a couple of times this year to see him play with the Moose, and the next step might be seeing him in action with the Jets.

"It's nice now being in Winnipeg, that's a little bit closer to Calgary (than Los Angeles was) for them to visit," he said. "At the end of the day, you're not in this position without your parents."

<https://www.winnipegfreepress.com/breakingnews/2025/04/09/business-owners-thrilled-by-whiteout-forecast-hoping-blizzard-a-long-one>

Business owners thrilled by Whiteout forecast, hoping blizzard a long one

By: Tyler Searle

As the Winnipeg Jets battle to stay atop the National Hockey League standings in the final week of the regular season, business owners in the city's core are gearing up for Whiteout excitement and a long playoff run to boost their bottom lines.

"We look forward to this every year," Colin Koop, co-owner of Devil May Care Brewing Co., said Wednesday.

"It's the culmination of the hockey season and we know that downtown gets a lot more vibrant."

The brewery and taproom at 155 Fort St. is one of the more than 1,000 downtown businesses waiting for the Easter long weekend; the playoffs start a week from Saturday, although teams are still jockeying for position in the final standings, and the Jets' schedule won't be determined until regular-season play ends on April 17. They have, however, clinched home-ice advantage in the first round, which means Games 1 and 2 will be played on Portage Avenue.

Up to 5,000 frenzied, white-clad fans could attend the Whiteout street parties, with another 15,225 seats available inside Canada Life Centre for home games and road-game viewing parties.

The Whiteout dates back to the first iteration of the Jets — before the club left the city in 1996 — and was a response to Calgary Flames fans' "C" of red in that city's Saddledome during the 1987 playoffs.

Last year, restaurants and bars near the arena saw a 90 per cent increase in sales on the Jets' playoff opening day, said Kate Fenske, chief executive officer of the Downtown Winnipeg Business Improvement Zone.

"The playoffs can be a really big boost for businesses. I mean, that was the highest surge among all four Canadian cities with teams in the playoffs, so we know these large-scale events absolutely drive economic activity," Fenske said.

"Businesses really want to be a part of this, and they're putting their best foot forward to create that community celebration."

Cleaning efforts are underway to beautify the downtown area in anticipation of the events. Meanwhile, more than a dozen downtown businesses have already announced playoff deals, watch parties and themed events, with others expected to join in, Fenske said.

"The playoffs really allow businesses to scale up. Many of them will be expanding their hours, their offerings, expanding their customer reach," she said.

Eric Saniuk, owner of Blazing Chicken Shack at 392 Graham Ave., said he is doing just that.

"We're probably going to be staying open later... probably until we are close to selling out of food," Saniuk said. "It's going to be all hands on deck... I've been told by other restaurant owners to be prepared."

Saniuk spent Wednesday rushing to track down a new ice maker so he can introduce a new product — homemade lemonade — before the Whiteout blizzard descends. He launched his restaurant last September, and hopes the street parties will be an opportunity to introduce customers to his signature spicy chicken sandwiches, he said.

Patrons who show off their tickets for the playoff parties will enjoy 10 per cent off their meals, and Saniuk has ordered custom white T-shirts and hats bearing the Blazing Chicken Shack logo, he said.

"It's going to be awesome. I can't wait for it. I wish it was today," he said with a laugh. "If they sell out quick, I'll order more and more and more."

Matthew Baragar, manager of Royal Sports, knows how quickly Whiteout merchandise can sell out.

The locally owned Pembina Highway sports gear and clothing store has become a source for toques, hoodies, T-shirts, hats, jerseys and white overalls during previous playoff runs. Baragar estimated Royal Sports ordered more than 5,000 articles of clothing this time around.

“Obviously, once the playoffs do start, it has a pretty big impact on the store, with lots of people coming in,” he said. “The further the Jets go, the better it is for a business because as the rounds go on, more people get involved.”

T-shirts and hoodies are typically the top-selling products. The retailer is currently selling off last year’s stock of those items at 50 per cent savings while supplies last. Baragar urged customers to come in early if they want to ensure they can find something in their size.

“Winnipeg has the craziest atmosphere for hockey. I’ve been to a couple different cities for NHL games and I’ve never seen anything like it,” he said.

Winnipeg Police Service officers will be wearing white baseball caps during the parties, said spokesperson Ally Cox.

“You may already see some of our foot patrol members wearing them in the leadup to the first game,” Cox said. “The WPS has significant experience preparing for these events and our members are looking forward to a lengthy and ultimately successful playoff run.”

Back downtown, Koop is getting ready to open his brewery’s patio, and hopes (weather permitting) it will be jam-packed and rocking before and after the Whiteouts. Devil May Care will sell pints of beer for \$6, and \$2 samosas “for those who are a little bit snacky” on game days, he said.

As a business owner invested in downtown, support from the community, organizations and the provincial government (which committed up to \$300,000 in funding for Whiteout events), is critical, he said.

“There’s some affirmation there. A bit of vindication for decisions that we’ve made to be part of downtown, to be part of the community here and help build something up.”

The Whiteout parties provide an example of how robust and vibrant downtown can be. While the NHL playoffs can, fans here hope, continue until early June, their economic benefits extend further, Fenske said.

Winnipeg Sun

<https://winnipeg.sun.com/sports/hockey/nhl/winnipeg-jets/jets-grab-stranglehold-on-division-crown-with-rout-of-stars>

Jets grab stranglehold on division crown with rout of Stars

By Paul Friesen

The showdown for first place in the NHL's Central Division and Western Conference turned out to be a Texas-sized rout.

The Dallas Stars were no match for the Winnipeg Jets on Thursday, a 4-0 Winnipeg win all but securing the Jets home-ice advantage through three rounds of the Stanley Cup Playoffs – if they get that far.

One more point over their last three games, or a point lost by Dallas (106 points), will secure the Jets the top seed in the West for a playoff run that begins on the Easter weekend.

"A ton of respect for how good that team is over there, and we've been trying to fight them off all year," Jets defenceman Josh Morrissey told reporters in Dallas. "There's still hockey left to be played, obviously, for us to accomplish our short-term goal of winning the division. But it was a big game.

"Even more so... we want our game right for this time of year. Game 83 is on the horizon."

Kyle Connor scored twice to hit 40 goals on the season, while Nino Niederreiter and Morgan Barron added singles as the Jets improved to 54-21-4, good for 112 points, two shy of the franchise high set seven years ago.

At the other end, Connor Hellebuyck picked up his eighth shutout and set a career mark with his 45th win of the season, adding one more argument for Hart Trophy consideration as NHL MVP.

"It seems every night the last month or so he's been accomplishing a new record of some kind," Morrissey said. "Honestly, you can't put into words how important he is to our team."

Final shots were 35-25 favouring Winnipeg.

Playing at nearly full health – Nik Ehlers and Neal Pionk returned from injuries, leaving only Gabe Vilardi out – the Jets picked up where they left off in smothering St. Louis three days earlier.

The Stars came into the game reeling of late, having blown three straight third-period leads, and the Jets kept them on their heels.

"It takes a lot of mental strength and perseverance for our team to play that game," Connor said. "We celebrate the little things. That's what we do well."

Going into the game, Niederreiter said he hadn't been getting to the front of the net enough. That's where he went to open the scoring, tipping Morrissey's shot past Jake Oettinger for his 16th of the year but first in eight games.

The goal came with just 1:23 left in a fast-paced and intense opening 20 minutes that saw the Jets out-shoot the Stars, 13-10, and out-hit them, 23-8, according to official league stats.

The final hit count was 44-27.

"I wouldn't say that was really part of the plan was intently to come out and be physical," Morrissey said. "When you see hits like that it generally means when the guys are driving their legs and ready to play, not turning off checks... that usually results in going through bodies. That's probably why you see the hits ramp up."

Early in the second, the suddenly-dangerous Barron made it 2-zip Jets with a rush not usually seen by fourth-liners, weaving his way over the Dallas blue line and scoring for the second straight game.

An Ehlers slashing penalty with 21 seconds left in the second opened the door a crack for the Stars, but the Jets slammed it shut. In fact, the Dallas push-back never came.

"We came out strong on that PK, set the tone for us," Connor said. "That was a big momentum shifter."

When Connor was sprung on a breakaway some six minutes into the third, Winnipeg had win No. 54 all but in the bank.

Mark Scheifele's assist on the play gave him a career-high 85 points on the year, while Connor tied his career high with point No. 93.

Connor made it 94 with another goal two minutes later, becoming the seventh 40-goal man in the NHL, and the Stars were running up the white flag.

The only thing head coach Scott Arniel might not have been crazy about was Ehlers getting into a fight with Sam Steel later in the third. Fresh off a foot injury, the last thing Ehlers needs to risk is his hands.

The coach, though, wasn't complaining in the least.

“You know what, that’s Nikky,” Arniel said. “He sticks up for himself. I’ve seen him in a few fights now. He’s a tough, scrappy kid. When you have elite, top-six players like that, (who) are extremely competitive like he is and doesn’t give up an inch....that’s just the competitive side and you love to see it.”

Aside from that, the Stars went down meekly, all but ensuring them a first-round playoff meeting with Colorado.

Winnipeg has three more games to clinch that Central crown: Saturday in Chicago, Sunday at home to Edmonton and Wednesday at home to Anaheim.

<https://winnipegssun.com/sports/hockey/nhl/winnipeg-jets/not-going-to-be-as-pretty-anymore-jets-niederreiter-goes-for-ugly>

'Not going to be as pretty anymore': Jets' Niederreiter goes for ugly

By Paul Friesen

He hadn’t scored in seven games and had just one goal in his last 23.

A few players may be having career years with the Winnipeg Jets, but forward Nino Niederreiter isn’t one of them.

With 15 on the season entering play Thursday, Niederreiter was on pace for his lowest goal output since he was with Carolina five years ago.

The 32-year-old has an idea why he’s struggled to produce of late.

“You’ve got to get more to the net-front,” he said before his team took on the Stars in Dallas on Thursday. “That’s something which I personally have been lacking lately a little bit. You’ve got to get more to the dirty areas. It’s got to be hard scoring goals. They’re not going to be as pretty anymore as they used to be probably.”

Niederreiter had 18 goals last season, 24, combined, with the Jets and Nashville the year prior, 24 and 20 with Carolina the two seasons before that.

In 2019-20 he managed just 11, while playing only 67 games.

His linemates on the Jets’ checking line, Adam Lowry and Mason Appleton, scored two apiece during Niederreiter’s drought. They have 16 and 10 on the season, respectively.

Their head coach knows it’s often the grinders and lesser lights, though, who can put a team over the top in the playoffs.

“That’s the sign of all good teams, when you have four lines that can roll,” Scott Arniel said. “You look at teams that have had success in the playoffs, it’s those third and fourth

lines that step up. You know the limelight is on the top star players and it's those role players that step up, and they've been doing a good job all year long.

"And that's the idea, is that when we get to the playoffs it's four lines that do the right thing shift in, shift out."

Rasmus Kupari is close to returning to the Jets' fourth line after being sidelined with a concussion.

Jaret Anderson-Dolan was to play his fourth straight game in that role in Dallas.

"There were probably a couple of opportunities earlier in the year we could have maybe called him up ... it never really worked out for us," Arniel said. "We wanted to throw him in here, and not just for one game. I like a lot of what I see. He's got a lot of energy, he's detailed, knows how to play without the puck, which is important. That's what we've been asking, and that's what he's given us."

After Thursday's game in Dallas, the Jets play back-to-back games on the weekend: in Chicago on Saturday, at home to Edmonton on Sunday.

<https://winnipeg.sun.com/sports/hockey/nhl/winnipeg-jets/its-vital-jets-want-special-teams-humming-going-into-playoffs>

'It's vital': Jets want special teams humming going into playoffs

By Paul Friesen

They're No. 1, but only by the thickness of a strip of hockey tape.

Going into Thursday night action, the Winnipeg Jets power play was hitting at 29.2 percent, 0.1 percent better than Vegas in the No. 2 slot.

It's a step down from the 33-percent range they've flirted with most of the season, a drop at least partly attributable to the loss of Gabe Vilardi to injury for the last seven games.

During that time, the Jets are 3-for-16 with the extra man, a success rate of just 18.8 percent.

Another factor: Opponents are clamping down.

"This time of year you don't get a lot of looks anymore," forward Nino Niederreiter said before Thursday's game in Dallas. "So you've got to make them count when they're there."

The Jets were facing the NHL's second-best penalty-killing unit on Thursday, the Stars operating at 83.8 percent, bettered only by Carolina.

Winnipeg's own penalty kill could boast an 85% score through its previous nine games, just the latest surge after a rough start this season.

It was ranked 15th.

"Guys are buying in, blocking shots," defenceman Logan Stanley said.

That's not all.

"It just seems like guys are a lot more comfortable," head coach Scott Arniel said.

"They're not thinking. They're reacting. It's certainly a lot more aggressive than we were last year, so there has been lots of change for everybody. But guys have grasped it and been real good in the second half.

"It's vital. As we move into the later parts of the year going into your playoffs, your specialty teams have to be good."

As always, goaltending is a big part of the PK.

Stanley: "When you've got Helly (Connor Hellebuyck) and Coms (Eric Comrie) back there, that always helps, too."

Sportsnet.ca

<https://www.sportsnet.ca/nhl/article/how-jets-are-making-a-good-case-as-stanley-cup-favourites/>

How Jets are making a good case as Stanley Cup favourites

By Jacob Stoller

The Dallas Stars had been barking at their doorstep for a few weeks now.

On Thursday, the Winnipeg Jets kicked them off the porch.

A 4-0 win over the Stars all but locked up first place in the Central Division for Winnipeg, which now needs just one point through its next three games to officially clinch.

And above all, that game reaffirmed the quiet part out loud. The prevailing thought amongst Winnipeggers that most are afraid to say for fear of getting hurt:

This team might actually be able to win a Stanley Cup.

Laugh all you want. Roll your eyes. Cite how you've seen this song and dance before, like when the Jets posted consecutive shutouts against the Stars and Colorado Avalanche at the tail end of last season before the latter pummeled them in the playoffs.

Yeah, the playoffs are a different animal. But the same can be said about these Jets, who have been striving for Game 83 since the drop of the puck back in October.

Smothering Dallas the way they did was the culmination of a season in which this team has not only consistently risen to the occasion but also grown into its own skin as the hard-nosed, stingy defensive team they've strived to be the last three years.

Winnipeg held the Stars to just seven high-danger shot attempts all game. The Jets recorded 44 hits — all but four of came through the first 40 minutes — and got in the grill of Dallas' stars, delivering five hits to both Mikko Rantanen and Thomas Harley, respectively.

"I think that has a lot to do with the guys (recognizing) what's still at stake here for us," Jets coach Scott Arniel told reporters. "Dallas is a big team. They're a great-skating team. If you don't run into them, they're going to make plays."

Rantanen and Wyatt Johnston, two of the league's most dangerous scorers, were hardly visible. And even in a game where they had the puck on their sticks most of the night — controlling the shot attempt and quality share by a sizable margin — the Jets somehow generated more blocks (15-10) and hits (44-27) than their opponent.

"It takes a lot of mental strength and perseverance for our team to play that game," Kyle Connor told reporters post-game. "We celebrate the little things. That's what we do well. We're picking each other up, whether it's a board battle, a backcheck, (Adam Lowry) has great back pressure on the wall and turns (the puck) over. Those are the things that we keep harping on and we keep doing. It frustrates teams."

Focusing on the little things has led to these big things.

"We clinched a playoff spot and right now, we're chasing the top spot. That's our goal. To try and get home ice throughout the whole playoffs," Connor said. "It could be the difference down the stretch. You never know, especially the way our fans come out. We love playing in front of them."

Connor Hellebuyck

As much as it's become evident that Connor Hellebuyck is going to win the Vezina Trophy, the same should be said about the Hart Trophy.

Not only is Hellebuyck leading virtually every single goalie metric — basic or advanced — but he's creeping up on league records, too. On Thursday, he became the seventh goalie in NHL history to record a 45-win season and if he maintains his 1.99 goals-

against average, he'd become the second goalie in NHL history to put up 45 wins and a sub-2.00 GAA, as per SN Stats.

"The way he's always figuring out ways to improve his game is incredible," Josh Morrissey told reporters. "Even in the last few years, you think, 'Man, I don't know if this guy can get any better' and he finds a way to."

Crazy Hellebuyck stat: he's recorded more shutouts (eight) than 27 NHL teams.

Stoller says

- No surprise that Nikolaj Ehlers dropped the mitts in the wake of a gloved sucker punch from Sam Steel. Not only was that cheap shot unwarranted but Ehlers never hesitates to stand up for himself, having challenged the likes of Brayden Schenn, Brad Marchand, Corey Perry and Ryan Getzlaf over his career.

- Brilliant effort Thursday by Lowry, who recorded one primary assist, six hits, two blocks and went 11-for-16 in the faceoff dot. The Jets captain always seems to raise his game in these types of divisional high-stakes games.

Associated Press

<https://www.sportsnet.ca/nhl/article/jets-take-control-of-race-for-first-in-west-with-shutout-win-over-stars/>

Jets take control of race for first in West with shutout win over Stars

By Associated Press

DALLAS — Connor Hellebuyck stopped 24 shots for his single-season franchise record 45th win and NHL-leading eighth shutout, and the Winnipeg Jets moved closer to the top seed in the Western Conference with a 4-0 win over the second-place Dallas Stars on Thursday night.

Kyle Connor scored twice in the third period to get to 40 goals for the Jets, who are 54-21-4 for 112 points, and need only one more point over their final three games to be the No. 1 seed for the first time. Nino Niederreiter and Morgan Barron also scored.

"It can be the difference down the stretch, you never know," Connor said of home-ice advantage. "Especially the way our fans come out, we love playing in front of them. It will be pretty special."

The Jets never have won a division title in either era of the franchise.

Dallas (50-23-6, 106 points), which has three games remaining, is 0-2-2 its last four.

Hellebuyck had tied his own franchise record with his 44th win over St. Louis on Monday, and extended it with 45th career shutout. He is in position to be the first goalie since Bob Froese for Philadelphia in 1986 to finish the season as the league leader in wins, goals-against average, save percentage and shutouts.

"It seems every night the last month or so he's been accomplishing a record of some kind," Jets defenceman Josh Morrissey said. "Honestly, you can't put into words how important he is to our team ... Really lucky to have him. What he's doing this year is special."

Takeaways

Jets: Winnipeg, first in the West every day since Jan. 14, extended its single-season franchise record with its 54th win. The Jets are 48-3-1 when scoring at least three goals.

Stars: Dallas was shut out for the first time this season. The Stars lost 6-5 in overtime at home to Vancouver on Tuesday, becoming the first team in NHL history to lose after having a three-goal lead in the final minute of regulation.

Key moment

Dallas opened the third period with 1:20 left on a power play, but Hellebuyck made a stick save on a point-blank shot by Roope Hintz to maintain Winnipeg's two-goal lead.

Key stat

The Jets improved to 29-0-3 when leading after the first period, and 40-0-1 when ahead after the second.

Up next

Winnipeg plays its final regular-season road game at Chicago on Saturday, the same day the Stars have their home finale against Utah.

Global Winnipeg

<https://globalnews.ca/news/11126513/winnipeg-jets-all-but-wrap-up-central-division-title-with-4-0-win-in-dallas/>

Winnipeg Jets all but wrap up Central Division title with 4-0 win in Dallas

By Christian Aumell & Russ Hobson Global News

The Winnipeg Jets are on the verge of doing something they've never done before.

Thanks to yet another exemplary performance in a 4-0 win in Dallas Thursday night, the Jets need to pick up just one more point in their final three games to clinch both a division and a conference title for the first time in the history of NHL hockey in Winnipeg.

Kyle Connor scored a pair of goals and Connor Hellebuyck made 25 saves for his eighth shutout of the season as the Jets moved six points clear of the Stars for top spot with a defensive masterpiece.

"They haven't left our rearview mirror all year long," said Jets head coach Scott Arniel. "We had to be good early and I thought our first period was really strong and then we built off of that. But, yeah, just throughout our lineup, there was a lot of guys doing what they needed to do to help us have success."

Winnipeg extended their franchise record with their 54th win of the campaign and the Jets now have 112 points on the season, which is just two points shy of the team record.

The Jets registered a season-best 44 hits in the victory to take three of four games from the Stars in the season series.

"We've been trying to kinda fight them off all year," said defenceman Josh Morrissey who had a pair of assists. "It was a big four point game. So, still hockey left to be played obviously for us to kinda accomplish our short term goal of winning the division, but it was a big game."

"Having our game right for this time of year and obviously game 83 is on the horizon."

Both Connor and Mark Scheifele surpassed their career-highs for points in a season in the victory.

Hellebuyck broke his own franchise record with his career-best 45th win of the season, which is the sixth most in NHL history and only three wins shy of the league record which is shared by Braden Holtby and Martin Brodeur.

"It seems every night, the last month or so, he's been accomplishing a new record of some kind," said Morrissey. "Honestly, you can't put into words how important he is to our team."

"What he's doing this year is special and definitely deserves to be talked about cause it doesn't happen very often."

Both Nikolaj Ehlers and Neal Pionk returned to the lineup from injuries in the win and Ehlers got into a third period fight with Sam Steel as he had two shots on goal in just under 20 minutes of ice time.

"He sticks up for himself," Arniel said. "I've seen him in a few fights now. He's a tough scrappy kid. When you have sorta elite top-six players like that, that are extremely competitive like he is, and doesn't give up an inch, and that's just the competitive side of him, and you love to see it."

Both teams had a few chances to score during a fast-paced, physical first period before the Jets broke the ice with less than two minutes to go.

As the Jets broke the puck into the Dallas end, Adam Lowry dropped the puck off to Morrissey for a one-timer that Nino Niederreiter deflected past Jake Oettinger, opening the scoring at the 18:37 mark of the first.

Winnipeg wound up outshooting the Stars 13-10 through 20 minutes.

The Jets doubled their lead at the 3:37 mark of the second. After the Winnipeg were called for icing, they were able to corral the puck off the ensuing faceoff and their fourth line broke the puck out up the ice.

Morgan Barron made a move at the Dallas blue line to elude Lian Bichsel, creating space to drive the net and beat Oettinger on the blocker side, reminiscent of the goal he scored to open the scoring against the Blues on Monday.

Winnipeg carried the 2-0 lead into the third period as Hellebuyck turned aside all seven shots he saw in the middle frame.

The Jets had to begin the third period shorthanded as Ehlers was called for the game's first penalty in the dying seconds of the second but Winnipeg got the kill.

A great backcheck by the Jets' top line led to the backbreaker with just over six minutes gone in the third.

After Connor turned the puck over near the Dallas blue line, he helped break up a play in the defensive zone, leading to a bad pass that was intercepted in the slot by Alex Iafallo. He sent the puck up the ice where Scheifele raced to it, chipping it past Bichsel and into the Stars' end where Connor was first to it before deking out Oettinger and sliding the puck into the net to make it 3-0 with 13:40 remaining.

The assist for Scheifele was his 85th point of the season, setting a new career-high while Connor matched his career high with his 93rd point of the campaign.

A few minutes later, Connor set a new career-high in points, scoring his 40th goal of the season thanks to a great setup from Morrissey and Jaret Anderson-Dolan, who let the pass from Morrissey go through his legs and right to Connor alone in front of Oettinger.

From there, the Jets allowed very little to get through to Hellebuyck, who only had to make seven saves in the third.

While one more point by the Jets would clinch the division, any more losses by Dallas would also guarantee the division title for the Jets, which technically would not be the first in franchise history as the Atlanta Thrashers won the Southeast in 2007 before getting swept in the first round by the Rangers.

The original Jets did not win a division title in 17 seasons before moving to Arizona.

The Jets get their first crack to seal the deal Saturday evening in the Windy City against the Blackhawks. Pregame coverage on 680 CJOB starts at 4 p.m. with the puck dropping just after 6 p.m.

<https://globalnews.ca/news/11126849/analysis-winnipeg-jets-playoff-odds/>

ANALYSIS: League-leading Jets somehow still on outside of Cup conversation

By John Shannon CJOB

On the afternoon of March 7, the hockey world anointed the winners of that day's trade deadline. After 2 p.m. central that Friday, the discussion centred on the Dallas Stars and the Colorado Avalanche being the big winners.

Mikko Rantanen, Brock Nelson, Charlie Coyle and Ryan Lindgren were going to make their respective teams so much better, and both teams became prohibitive favourites for the Stanley Cup. Jim Nill and Chris McFarland had the assets to improve their teams as they started the stretch run in the Central Division.

Except someone forgot to tell the Winnipeg Jets. The Jets, who made two depth trades that day, for Luke Schenn and Brandon Tanev, have owned the lead in the Central every day of 2025.

Since the return to action from the 4 Nations Face-Off, most people (including me) have been waiting for both the Stars and the Avs to take a run at the Jets in the division, but Winnipeg has responded with the confidence and style of a quality team, swatting the challengers aside.

Both Dallas and Colorado made their changes in order to avoid a first-round playoff matchup against each other. Both made catching the Jets the key objective of the last third of the season. And most people believed that one, if not both, would do it. Not many people gave the Jets the respect of winning the Central, let alone being a true playoff contender.

What's fascinating for me is that the numbers don't lie. Since 4 Nations, the Stars, Avalanche and Jets have all won the same number of games: 15. And yet, with those same wins, Winnipeg still isn't in the conversation. It makes no sense.

Even as late as this week, the Jets are not getting enough respect as the best team in the NHL and a favourite for the Cup. After impressive statement games, all wins versus Vegas (the best team in the Pacific), St Louis (on a 12-game winning streak) and their

closest divisional rival, Dallas, the Jets still sit on the outside of favourites to win the Stanley Cup.

Can that many people be wrong? Yes. Yes, they can.

TSN.ca

<https://www.tsn.ca/nhl/video/the-talking-point-how-should-the-jets-rest-their-most-important-player~3113370>

The Talking Point: How should the Jets rest their most important player? (VIDEO)

Connor Hellebuyck has started 61 games this season for the Jets, who have three games remaining before the playoffs and need one point to lock up the Central Division title. TSN Hockey analyst Martin Biron shares his thoughts on how Winnipeg should go about resting its most important player ahead of the postseason.

<https://www.tsn.ca/nhl/video/how-have-jets-been-able-to-excel-against-the-stronger-teams-in-the-league~3113831>

How have Jets been able to excel against the stronger teams in the league? (VIDEO)

With another clutch win over the Stars, the Jets are closer to clinching the Central Division crown, and the Presidents' Trophy. How has Winnipeg been able to excel against the stronger teams in the league? TSN Director of Scouting Craig Button shares his thoughts.

<https://www.tsn.ca/nhl/video/the-stars-had-nowhere-to-go-sawyer-breaks-down-dominant-jets-win~3113774>

'The Stars had nowhere to go': Sawyer breaks down dominant Jets win (VIDEO)

The Jets opened the scoring, and didn't allow Dallas much time to create. When there were chances, Connor Hellebuyck shut the door on the Stars. TSN's Dan Robertson and Kevin Sawyer have more on what Winnipeg did so well in the victory, and examine the play in Neal Pionk's return to the lineup.

The Athletic

<https://www.nytimes.com/athletic/6270238/2025/04/11/winnipeg-jets-win-stars-record-setting/?onboarded=true>

Winnipeg Jets' record-setting win ... could win them the division? 5 takeaways

By Murat Ates

A team doesn't get within a point of its city's first divisional title without doing a lot of things well.

The Winnipeg Jets' stars shone brightly Thursday in Dallas, but it took a lot more than a few players to give them a decisive 4-0 win that brings them to the precipice of Winnipeg history.

Winnipeg celebrated Connor Hellebuyck's career-high 45th win, Kyle Connor's 40th goal and career-high 94th point and Mark Scheifele's career-high 85th point during Thursday night's win. These are magnificent achievements that propel Hellebuyck beyond back-to-back Vezina Trophy consideration and into Hart territory while proving that Connor and Scheifele can score while playing better defence than earlier in their careers.

Dig deeper, and you'll find more reasons the 54-21-4 Jets are making so much Winnipeg history. As of Friday, the Jets have spent 100 days leading the NHL standings. They're within two points of their franchise record of 114, and the next point they gain — or the Dallas Stars lose — would win the Central Division and guarantee the Jets home-ice advantage through at least three rounds of the playoffs. Fend off the Washington Capitals (who are three points back, with one game in hand), and Winnipeg would win its first-ever Presidents' Trophy.

And it couldn't have beaten Dallas in a more appropriate way Thursday night.

The Jets got their first goal on a play that started with Stars' possession: Mason Appleton outskated Mason Marchment's breakout attempt, and Adam Lowry knocked down Marchment's cross-ice pass. A safe pass from Lowry to Dylan DeMelo was followed by a pressure-breaking pass from DeMelo to Appleton, a rush back towards the Stars' goal, a clever play by Nino Niederreiter to knock down a chest-high pass right onto Lowry's stick, and then a perfect deflection by Niederreiter that put Josh Morrissey's point shot past Jake Oettinger.

There could be no better emblem of the Jets' success so far this season: All five Jets skaters took a puck that was once safe on a Dallas player's stick and turned it into a game-breaking goal.

Morgan Barron: LOTR expert, Cornell graduate, power forward

Winnipeg's success in Dallas goes four lines deep. Morgan Barron — in some ways a prototypical Lowry line understudy — gave the Jets a two-goal lead with a highlight-reel goal in his second straight game. Barron went outside-in on Lian Bichsel before a far-side finish that Oettinger might have known was coming if he'd watched Barron against the St. Louis Blues on Tuesday.

Barron and his “energizer badger” linemate, Brandon Tanev (nickname credit: Beastly Bob on Bluesky), ran rampant against the Stars, and newly promoted Jared Anderson-Dolan made a clever play in the slot that led to Connor's second goal of the game. The trio finished with a 4-1 lead in shots and 10 hits between them while playing predominantly against the Stars' second and fourth lines.

On defence, Josh Morrissey is one point away from hitting 60 for the third straight season. Dylan Samberg has emerged as a top-four shutdown defenceman. Neal Pionk is back in the lineup and moving well, and DeMelo is making the crisp passes that have traditionally been his calling card. The Jets' most vulnerable pair of Luke Schenn and Logan Stanley were solid Thursday, with Schenn ending several Stars offensive opportunities. Credit the Jets' coaching staff as well; even on the road, Stanley played just 1:37 against Roope Hintz and 1:40 against Jason Robertson — his lowest totals against any Stars skaters. Thus, the Stanley-Schenn pair held its own and contributed to the win.

Even more Connor Hellebuyck history ... again?

It could be argued that the Stars had more quality scoring chances through two periods. Hellebuyck had to stop more shots from close range, and not all of them were easy.

Hellebuyck earned his eighth shutout and 45th win of the season. Both of these stats lead the league this season, as do his 45.5 goals saved above expected (as per Evolving Hockey), his 1.99 goals-against average, and his .925 save percentage. Hellebuyck's 45th win sets a Jets franchise record, breaking his own record from 2017-18.

If Winnipeg holds its nine-goal lead over the Los Angeles Kings for fewest goals against, the Jets will win their second straight William M. Jennings Trophy. Goalies need to play at least 25 games to claim the award, meaning Hellebuyck can become the first goaltender in NHL history to be the lone Jennings Trophy winner in consecutive seasons. Hellebuyck could also become the fifth goaltender on record to lead the NHL in wins, shutouts, save percentage and goals-against average at the end of a season, joining Bob Froese, Ken Dryden, Bernie Parent and Jacques Plante.

“It seems every night the last month or so, he's been accomplishing a new record of some kind,” Morrissey told reporters in Dallas. “Even in the last few years, you think, ‘Man, I don't know if this guy can get any better,’ and he finds a way.”

Kyle Connor: A new high in points, a new high in helping win hockey games

I cannot emphasize the importance of Connor's improvements enough: When he set his previous career high of 93 points in 2021-22, the Jets were minus-3 with him on the ice at five-on-five. As Connor sets his new career high of 94 points in virtually identical minutes this season, the Jets are plus-20. That kind of swing takes more than one player, but that 23-goal swing is worth about four wins all by itself.

It's not that Connor has turned himself into a Selke Trophy candidate, but he's involved in more battles, whether that means tracking back harder to his own zone, winning pucks in open ice or fighting harder to make sure a puck gets out of Winnipeg's zone along the boards. He and Scheifele have curtailed their shift lengths in recent games, too, implying a level of playoff readiness that inspires new belief.

I'll admit Connor made a brazen play and a bad giveaway that Schenn won back in the buildup to his beautiful breakaway goal against Dallas. Mostly, we've seen Connor play with tenacity and patience in addition to flashing his all-world, fast-twitch offensive skill.

"It takes a lot of mental strength and perseverance for our team to play that game," Connor said. "The more that we can stick to our structure and details, you're going to get breaks like that, where you're going to get a breakaway at the end and you've got to capitalize."

Connor gave the puck away trying a move at the offensive blue line before this clip. Then he called game.

Nikolaj Ehlers, back in the action — in more ways than one

Nikolaj Ehlers and Pionk returned to the lineup after missing two and 12 games. Ehlers was all over the ice, helping Cole Perfetti and Vladislav Namestnikov achieve dominant flow of play metrics against a mix of Dallas' top three lines. But Ehlers' most notable moment came after Sam Steel punched him in the face in the third period.

Ehlers challenged Steel to a fight, Steel accepted, and the two 6-foot, sub-200-pound players fought each other in the corner. Given that it was Ehlers' first game back in the lineup, coach Scott Arniel could be forgiven for holding his breath.

"You know what, that's Nikky," Arniel said. "He sticks up for himself. I've seen him in a few fights now. He's a tough, scrappy kid."

Ehlers is not a big player by NHL standards. He plays a skill-first game and sometimes goes down on plays that other players don't. It's all part of what makes him who he is and might contribute to the 22 penalties he's drawn this year — second among Jets to Scheifele, who has played in 11 more games. Don't let that fool you into thinking he doesn't buy into the importance of physicality, standing up for teammates, or the hockey-culture impact of playing through pain.

My guess is that most of the fight was about something that happened in the heat of the moment. A small piece of it could be Ehlers proving to himself and his team that he's giving 100 percent after missing time because of injury.

A note about the Jets and their lack of power plays

The Jets have the puck a lot. At five-on-five, they lead the NHL in expected goals percentage since the 4 Nations break. They're 20th in power-play opportunities, which seems low to me. Multiple studies have shown that the score of a game does a good job of predicting who gets the next penalty, so maybe it's just a feature of the Jets leading a lot.

If I were the Jets, I'd be making the most diplomatic, impassioned case to the league that seemed within the rules of fair play. The playoffs are coming up, Ehlers and Pionk are back, and Gabriel Vilardi is making progress, too. It won't be long before the Jets' power play is a weapon again.

The Jets are within a point of locking up home ice advantage until the Cup final and could earn it in the final, too. Might as well push for more advantages while they can.

Dallas Morning News

<https://www.dallasnews.com/sports/stars/2025/04/10/stars-playoff-seeding-likely-settled-as-connor-hellebuyck-jets-outclass-dallas-at-home/>

Stars' playoff seeding likely settled as Connor Hellebuyck, Jets outclass Dallas at home

By Tim Cowlshaw

There was a strange feeling that something was missing at the AAC Thursday night. It turned out to be competition.

One night after local fans said a tear-filled goodbye (or hello?) to Luka the Laker, Stars fans were primed for their team to make one last run at Winnipeg, one final gasp in hopes of catching the team that has been the best in the West all season and stealing that No. 1 seed for the playoffs.

It was more like one short wheeze.

The Jets are the Jets, the team with the best goaltender on the planet and plenty of firepower up front and they put it all on display in a 4-0 thumping of Dallas that essentially sealed the Stars' fate as the second-place finisher in the division. Get ready for a Stars-Avalanche battle in the first round, a matchup of teams with two of the top six records in the entire NHL.

It was a series Dallas still had a chance to avoid with a win Thursday night and another regulation win while Winnipeg was losing somewhere in the final week. That scenario never came into play Thursday night. Instead, the Stars are six points behind the Jets and each team has three games to play, and you can do the math from there.

The Jets' first-period goal happened in a flash, Dallas sending the puck past the Jets' blue line in one motion and the whole thing getting turned around so fast with veteran Nino Niederreiter redirecting a shot past Jake Oettinger.

It was the second goal that was depressing for Dallas fans, fourth-line center Morgan Barron practically dragging defenseman Lian Bichsel to the net unimpeded and firing an early second-period goal past Otter to make it 2-0. It didn't seem like the kind of lead that Connor Hellebuyck, well on his way to the Vezina Trophy and a contender for the Hart as well, was going to surrender as Team USA's starting goalie in the Four Nations Face-Off gave one more lesson to Team USA's backup.

In the third period, just to emphasize the gap between these two clubs, Jets leading scorer Kyle Connor tallied his 39th and 40th goals of the season. Stars fans were left with a Sam Steel fight as their lone highlight of a rather disturbing evening.

It has been one distressing week for the Stars, who had the record to show they were the best team since the All-Star break before everything began unraveling here Saturday afternoon. First came that loss to the going-nowhere Penguins followed by an OT surrender in Minnesota after Jason Robertson took a penalty to give the Wild a 4-on-3 opportunity that was not wasted.

Then there was the crazy five-goal third period by Vancouver here Tuesday that led to the Stars squandering a three-goal lead in the final 2 1/2 minutes of regulation and losing in overtime. Early Thursday, coach Pete DeBoer was reaching for that elusive silver lining in all of his club's recent miscues.

"You know it is a shame, but I'm looking at it like maybe it's the best thing to happen to us," DeBoer said. "Maybe we needed to go through this adversity in order to find our identity coming out of the trade deadline."

After general manager Jim Nill landed Mikael Granlund and then, the big prize, Mikko Rantanen, before that deadline, the Stars were lauded as the team to beat in the West and perhaps the entire league. And they had the wins to show for it, at least for a time, before running into that self-inflicted adversity the head coach talked about.

In the end, maybe the top seed doesn't make all that much difference. The Stars battled hard to earn it last season and still met the same fate as the year before, falling in six games in the conference finals. Besides, Winnipeg's prize for finishing on top could be a first-round matchup with St. Louis, the hottest team in the West.

"I honestly think there are five teams that could have had 100 points in our division," DeBoer said. "Minnesota and St. Louis are sitting at 93-94, both have a case, you know, St. Louis with a better start and Minnesota with less injuries, and they're probably both 100-point teams. So you know there are no easy opponents."

Dallas will get a rested one since Colorado, locked into the No. 3 seed in the Central despite sitting on 100 points with two games remaining, finishes the regular season Sunday night while the Stars don't get things wrapped up until Wednesday in Nashville.

There will be no stretch run for a title or seed at stake, just playing out the string and trying to regroup before things get serious again at the AAC next weekend. Rantanen has already made one trip to Colorado in a Stars uniform, but perhaps a couple of playoff visits will give the Stars the Luka moment they need to reignite one more time.

Amazon Coast-To-Coast

<https://mlbn-distro.mlb.com/temp/20250410C2C-INTV-HELLEBUYCK-908329.mp4>

Connor Hellebuyck (VIDEO)

Connor Hellebuyck appeared post-game following Winnipeg's 4-0 victory over the Dallas Stars on Amazon Coast-To-Coast with host Andi Petrillo, Mark Messier, and Kevin Weekes.