

***Three things - More franchise records set in Jets win
Scheifele OT winner gives Jets franchise record 56 wins and 116 points***

By Jamie Thomas

WINNIPEG - The Winnipeg Jets closed out the regular season with a 2-1 overtime win over the Anaheim Ducks at Canada Life Centre. The Jets finished the season with a 56-22-4 record and ended up with 116 points setting a franchise record for points and wins. Mark Scheifele scored the winning goal at 1:11 of overtime, Neal Pionk had the other goal for Winnipeg who will face the St. Louis Blues in the opening round of the playoffs starting Saturday at 5 CT.

PATIENTLY WAITED...

After a first period that the Jets had numerous scoring chances but couldn't get one past Ducks goaltender Ville Husso, Winnipeg kept pressing in the middle frame. With just over six minutes remaining in the second, Cole Perfetti found Neal Pionk open at the point and the Jets defenceman wired a shot past a screened Husso for his 10th of the season and it was the 28th shot of the night by Winnipeg. It marked the second time in his career that Pionk hit double digits in goals and tied his career best set in 2022-23.

"Yeah, it's kind of what we've done all year. Find ways to win. Play good defence," said Pionk.

"We played sound defensively. They got a few chances but for the most part we played pretty well."

SCHEIFELE FOR THE WIN

Anaheim tied the game 5:45 into the third period ruining Connor Hellebuyck's chance at his ninth shutout of the season. Winnipeg and Anaheim had a few good chances to win the game in regulation but ended up heading to overtime. In overtime, Anaheim had a two-on-one, but Josh Morrissey broke up a pass from Mason McTavish and went back the other way and eventually set up Mark Scheifele for the overtime winner. Scheifele set a franchise record with his 11th game winning goal of the season.

ANOTHER TROPHY FOR HELLEBUYCK

Connor Hellebuyck is the favourite to win his third Vezina Trophy later this season, but he locked down a second consecutive William M. Jennings Trophy, Hellebuyck became the fifth goaltender to win the William M. Jennings Award in consecutive seasons since it was first presented in 1981-82, following Martin Brodeur (1996-97 to 1997-98 & 2002-03 to 2003-04), Roman Turek (1998-99 to 1999-00), Patrick Roy (1986-87 to 1988-89) and Brian Hayward (1986-87 to 1988-89).

“Obviously, the goalies, they speak for themselves. Their play was fantastic all year. It’s a pleasure and a treat for us to have them backstopping us,” said Cole Perfetti of Hellebuyck and Eric Comrie.

“They make life easy for us. I think it shows the buy-in and the commitment from this group. Winning it two years in a row is not easy. “

Canadian Press

<https://www.chrisd.ca/2025/04/16/winnipeg-jets-anaheim-ducks-game-recap/>

Perfetti, Winnipeg Jets Ready to Face St. Louis Blues in NHL Playoffs

By Jim Bender, The Canadian Press

Cole Perfetti was anxious for another shot at the NHL playoffs.

The young Winnipeg Jets forward only played in one of the club’s five first-round games last year. Now, Perfetti — coming off his best season as a pro — is looking forward to facing the St. Louis Blues in the first round of this year’s NHL post-season.

The best-of-seven series will begin here Saturday.

“I can’t wait to get Game 1 going,” Perfetti said after Winnipeg’s 2-1 overtime win over the Anaheim Ducks on Wednesday night before the club’s 16th sellout of the season at Canada Life Centre. “There’s a lot of anticipation.

“In the second half of the year, it started to feel a little more real, like we’re going to be there, we’re going to be a top seed so we’ve been progressing throughout the year. I only got one taste of it last year ... I’m excited for this year.”

The Jets wanted to use Wednesday’s contest to prepare for the playoffs.

“We created a lot (offensively), I thought,” Perfetti said. “We wanted to use it as a good tune-up for Game 1 and I thought we played pretty good.

“Their goalie (Ville Husso) played pretty well. We had a lot of great chances and didn’t give up too much and I thought that was a pretty good performance for us.”

Perfetti assisted on Neal Pionk’s second-period goal to give him 50 points on the season for the first time.

Winnipeg beat the Blues 3-1 to snap a 12-game winning streak recently.

“Obviously, they’ve been playing good hockey as of late, since the break,” Perfetti said. “They’re a good team.

"We saw them four or five games ago so we know we can beat them. We're familiar with them, we know their game. They're playing well and it's going to be a fun series."

Pionk agreed.

"Yeah, can't wait. Best time of year," he said. "Tonight was just about keeping good habits and making sure we do the right things."

"Now we play for real. It will be a fast, physical series. They've had a heck of a run after the break there, one of the hottest teams in the league. We've got to be ready to go."

Husso made 42 saves — many of them brilliant — and was impressed by the Jets as they head into the playoffs.

"They play a solid game pretty much all 60 minutes," he said. "Their talent, their skill, and their back end is pretty good."

"It was fun to follow (Jets goalie Connor) Hellebuyck, too. He makes the game look so easy there. They have a good chance, for sure."

Hellebuyck won the William M. Jennings Trophy for the second year. It is presented annually to the goaltender(s) who play a minimum of 25 games for the team that's allowed the fewest regular-season goals.

Winnipeg allowed just 191 goals this season.

"Winning it two years in a row is pretty impressive, I think," Perfetti said. "Some nights, it was great team defence, some nights it was Helle (Hellebuyck) or Comms (Eric Comrie) standing on their heads."

"And that's what you need if you want to be successful in this league and win that trophy."

Jets coach Scott Arniel was pleased with both the Jennings Trophy and that Winnipeg amassed a club-record 116 points this season.

"Again, amazing accomplishment for these guys to put a season together like that," he said. "I can't credit the players enough for what they've done."

"Just stayed focused, all 82 games. To get it here at the end was special, in front of all our fans."

The players talked about the Jennings from the start, Arniel said.

"We did a lot of team-building stuff at the beginning of the year," he said. "It was amazing that every group came back (and said) part of our identity, first and foremost, was going to be how we defended like we did last year."

"To be in hockey games, we had enough skill to score goals but everybody knows that when it comes to Game 83 and on, the teams that defend the best are the ones that usually end up at the end of the day holding that trophy."

"It's everybody believing in a certain way to play and that gives you the chance to win hockey games. You back it up with an outstanding goaltender. Goaltenders. That makes it much more difficult to play against us."

Mark Scheifele scored the game-winner in overtime.

NHL.com

<https://www.winnipegfreepress.com/breakingnews/2025/04/13/jets-clinch-presidents-trophy>

Scheifele scores in OT, lifts Jets past Ducks in finale Forward ends it at 1:11, Hellebuyck stops 30, wins Jennings Trophy for 2nd year in row

By Darrin Bauming

WINNIPEG -- Mark Scheifele scored 1:11 into overtime to give the Winnipeg Jets a 2-1 win against the Anaheim Ducks at Canada Life Centre on Wednesday.

Scheifele scored on a wrist shot from the bottom of the left circle off a pass from Josh Morrissey, who began the sequence by stealing the puck from Mason McTavish on the other end during an Anaheim 2-on-1.

"We had enough skill to score goals," Winnipeg coach Scott Arniel said. "But everybody knows that when it comes to Game 83 and on, the teams that defend the best are the ones that usually end up at the end of the day holding that trophy."

Neal Pionk also scored, and Connor Hellebuyck made 30 saves for the Jets (56-22-4), who won four of their final five (4-1-0) to end the regular season.

"It's kind of what we've done all year," Pionk said. "Find ways to win. Play good defense. We played sound defensively... Tonight was just about keeping good habits and making sure we do the right things. Now we play for real."

Hellebuyck won the William M. Jennings Trophy for the second straight year, which is presented annually to the goaltender(s) who plays a minimum of 25 games for the team allowing the fewest goals during the regular season. He became just the fifth goaltender

to win the award in consecutive seasons since it was first presented in 1981-82, following Martin Brodeur (1996-97 to 1997-98 and 2002-03 to 2003-04), Roman Turek (1998-99 to 1999-00), Patrick Roy (1986-87 to 1988-89) and Brian Hayward (1986-87 to 1988-89).

"It's a pleasure and a treat for us to have [Hellebuyck and Eric Comrie] backstopping us," Jets forward Cole Perfetti said. "They make life easy for us. I think it shows the buy-in and the commitment from this group. Winning it (the William M. Jennings Trophy) two years in a row is not easy. We're not sacrificing our offense for it either -- we're able to put up and score a lot of goals on top of being the best defensive team two years in a row. That's pretty impressive and says a lot about our group."

Winnipeg finished first in the Central Division and won the Presidents' Trophy with the League's best record, and will face the St. Louis Blues in Western Conference First Round of the Stanley Cup Playoffs (Game 1; Saturday at 6 p.m. ET; CBC, TVAS, SN, TNT, truTV, MAX, FDSNMW). The Blues clinched a playoff berth on Tuesday with a 6-1 win against the Utah Hockey Club.

"Amazing accomplishment for these guys to put a season together like that," Arniel said. "I can't credit the players enough for what they've done. Just stayed focused, all 82 games. To get it here at the end was special, in front of all our fans."

Troy Terry scored, and Ville Husso made 42 saves for the Ducks (35-37-10), who lost their fourth straight (0-2-2) in their final game of the season. Anaheim was coming off a 3-2 overtime loss to the Minnesota Wild on Tuesday.

"They're a big, heavy team, very difficult to play against, very hard to get inside ice on them," Anaheim coach Greg Cronin said. "They get that blend of skill, with Connor and Scheifele right now, but when they get [Nikolaj] Ehlers back (from injury) they're going to be a real threat. I mean, I really like the way they play; they're disciplined, they're structured. It'll be an interesting playoffs."

Pionk gave the Jets a 1-0 lead at 13:49 of the second period. Vladislav Namestnikov won the face-off in the Anaheim zone, allowing Perfetti to set up Pionk for a slap shot from the point that beat Husso's blocker.

"(Winnipeg assistant coach) Marty Johnston's been all over me to score a face-off goal all year," Pionk said. "It took 82 games, but we got it done."

Terry tied it 1-1 at 5:45 of the third period, tapping in the rebound after Frank Vatrano tipped Ian Moore's point shot.

"I'm really excited, probably the most excited I've been since I've been here just with the steps that so many guys took this year," Terry said. "The way we kind of came together as a team, I really do think that there's another big step to be had next year and we have the group to do it."

"I don't want anyone to be satisfied; we didn't achieve our goals. But I think there's a lot of reason to be optimistic, and it's a little easier to push each other going into the summer when you can see kind of the light at the end of the tunnel. And really excited about going into next year."

NOTES: Winnipeg had the best regular season in Jets/Thrashers franchise history with 116 points. ... Jets forward Kyle Connor had an assist to finish with 97 points (41 goals, 56 assists) breaking his own mark (93 in 2021-22) for the most regular-season points since the franchise moved to Winnipeg from Atlanta. Connor ranks fourth in Jets/Thrashers history for the most points in a season, trailing only Marian Hossa (100 in 2006-07), Ilya Kovalchuk (98 in 2005-06) and Marc Savard (97 in 2005-06). ... Hellebuyck earned his 47th win to tie Roberto Luongo (2006-07) and Bernie Parent (1973-74) for the second most by a goaltender in a season in NHL history. The trio trails only Braden Holtby (48 in 2015-16) and Martin Brodeur (48 in 2006-07). ... Winnipeg forward Mason Appleton skated in his 400th NHL game. ... Terry finished the season as Anaheim's leader in points (55) and assists (34), while his 21 goals tied for second on the team with forward Frank Vatrano (21) behind McTavish (22). Terry has led or co-led the Ducks in goals in three of the previous four seasons.

Sportsnet.ca

<https://www.sportsnet.ca/nhl/article/jets-earning-a-reputation-around-the-league-heading-into-big-playoff-year/>

Jets earning a reputation around the league heading into big playoff year

By Jacob Stoller

WINNIPEG — In a year where they've exuded "Cup-or-bust" vibes — downplaying all the milestones throughout their Presidents' Trophy season — winning the William M. Jennings Trophy, for a second year in a row, hits different for these Winnipeg Jets.

The defence-first system they've been building over the last few years? It reached a new level.

And it's not just because of their goalie, who is showered with "M — V — P" chants every night. That's not to undermine the brilliance of Connor Hellebuyck, a shoo-in for the Vezina (and maybe even the Hart?) after leading the league in wins (47), goals-against average (2.00) and shutouts (eight).

But this team, as a whole, has evolved into a well-oiled machine, earning a reputation— similar to the likes of the Los Angeles Kings or Carolina Hurricanes — as an exhausting opponent. As a five-man unit, they give you little room to operate.

"Our defending isn't just in our end of the rink," Jets coach Scott Arniel said after Winnipeg's 2-1 win over the Anaheim Ducks in their regular season finale on Wednesday. "It's when we don't have the puck. It's a part of our forecheck. It's a part of how we defend through the neutral zone."

As a five-man unit, they give you little room to operate.

"They're a very well-rounded team and they seem very bought in to the style of play that they're trying to play," Ducks coach Greg Cronin said.

That buy-in has been from top-to-bottom.

Star players Mark Scheifele and Kyle Connor aren't chasing the game in the defensive zone anymore. Cole Perfetti has developed a knack for leveraging his hockey IQ to break up plays.

Josh Morrissey looks even better defensively than he already was. Same goes for Adam Lowry, who deserves some Selke love. And Dylan Samberg evolved into one of the league's best shutdown defenders, too.

"Our offence has actually even gotten better because of it," Arniel said of his team, which finished tied for third in goals for per game (3.35). "I think the players recognize that, if you do the right things without the puck, you have it more on your stick and now you go do all of the fun things, and that's score goals."

Under former coach Rick Bowness, this team was still learning how to make these things second nature. This year, it's all come together.

"I don't think they have a weakness," Cronin said. "I think they have the high-end talent to score goals, they have the goalie, they have size."

And they're not resting their laurels.

"Stanley Cup, (and) we'll be satisfied," Jets defenceman Neal Pionk said.

Playoff Pionk

A lot of mud is slung at him in this market but if there's one under-the-radar player poised for a stellar playoffs, it's Pionk.

Don't let last year's post-season — which came during a season where he had to grieve the loss of his close friend, Adam Johnson — distract you from his track record. Over the course of the 2021 and 2023 playoffs, Pionk has recorded 11 points in 13 games and logged 26:30 minutes a night.

Sure, to the naked eye, maybe the Jets weren't in dire straits over the last month, when Pionk missed nearly a month with a lower-body injury. But the Jets are far more lethal with him, than without him.

"You really notice he has an offensive side to him. You saw it tonight," Arniel said of Pionk's slapshot goal, which opened the scoring. "But he has an offensive side, much like Josh Morrissey. Those (things) are important because if we're trying to create our offence, it has to come from everybody on the ice. It has to come from your back end as well. We've been harping on this for the last three years here, that the offence has to come from all five guys on the ice. If our D aren't a part of that, it's real easy to shut us down. When Neal is not there, that's another weapon (missing) for us. Not only on the power play, but at five-on-five. He makes plays. Whether that's passing the puck or getting that shot off, he has a really good offensive instinct that we miss when he's not there."

<https://www.sportsnet.ca/nhl/video/which-team-or-player-has-most-pressure-in-stanley-cup-playoffs/>

Which team or player has most pressure in Stanley Cup playoffs? (VIDEO)

The Hockey Central panel discusses the hottest topics as the Stanley Cup Playoff draws near, including which team or player has the most pressure in the postseason.

<https://www.sportsnet.ca/nhl/video/jets-perfetti-talks-bond-with-scheifele-then-shows-off-dishes-and-snipes/>

Jets' Perfetti talks bond with Scheifele, then shows off dishes and snipes (VIDEO)

In the season finale, Winnipeg Jets centre Cole Perfetti talks relationship with teammate Mark Scheifele, which makes Colby sentimental for bygone days sharing saunas with the boys. Perfetti then displays some off-wing dishes and snipes.

Global Winnipeg

<https://globalnews.ca/news/11136378/winnipeg-jets-wrap-up-regular-season-with-2-1-ot-win-over-anaheim/>

Winnipeg Jets wrap up regular season with OT win over Anaheim, playoffs start Saturday

By Christian Aumell & Russ Hobson Global News

It was a fitting ending to a phenomenal regular season for the Winnipeg Jets.

Mark Scheifele scored the winner in overtime to send the fans home happy in a 2-1 victory over the Anaheim Ducks Wednesday night in the regular season finale.

The Jets broke their franchise record for most points in a season as they finished the campaign with 116 points, two points better than the previous mark from the 2017-2018 season.

“Amazing accomplishment for these guys to put a season together like that,” said Jets head coach Scott Arniel. “We’ve done some really outstanding things this year and when you start day one, game one, you don’t anticipate something like this happening and there’s been a lot of fantastic things. I can’t credit the players enough for what they’ve done.”

Pionk scored the other Jets’ marker as they finished the season with a franchise-record 56 wins.

“Best time of year,” said Jets defenceman Neal Pionk. “Tonight was just about keeping good habits and making sure we’re doing the right things, so, now we play for real.”

The Jets will open the Stanley Cup Playoffs with Game 1 of their first round series against the St. Louis Blues on Saturday at 5 pm at the Canada Life Centre.

“A lot of anticipation,” said Jets forward Cole Perfetti. “Obviously this is something that we’ve strived for since training camp, but in the second half of the year it started to feel a little bit more real.

“It’s been a lot of anticipation, excitement. I only got one taste of it last year, so it was one of the coolest things ever to play in front of a whiteout, so I’m excited for Saturday.”

Connor Hellebuyck also secured the William M. Jennings Trophy for the second straight season as the Jets allowed the fewest goals in the NHL.

“Everybody knows that when it comes to game 83 and on, the teams that defend the best are the ones that usually end up at the end of the day holding that trophy,” Arniel said. “The buy-in from these guys the last couple of years has been amazing and it isn’t just defensive players, it’s your top players, your offensive guys, your role players, it’s everybody believing in a certain way to play.”

Eric Comrie does not get his name on the trophy as he suited up in 20 games, five shy of the threshold for recognition by the league.

Winnipeg dominated the opening period, peppering Ville Husso with 19 shots but couldn’t find the back of the net. Hellebuyck also turned aside all nine shots he faced in the opening 20 minutes.

Both teams continued to pepper the goalies in the second until the Jets finally broke through on their 28th shot of the night.

Off a faceoff win in the offensive zone, Pionk fired a shot from the point that beat a screened Husso at the 13:49 mark of the second for his 10th goal of the season, matching his career-high from two seasons ago.

Perfetti also picked up an assist on the goal to give him 50 points for the first time in his NHL career.

The Ducks evened the scoring 5:45 into the third when Troy Terry banged home a rebound, beating Hellebuyck on their 24th shot of the night.

The Jets got a great chance to regain the lead with 5:29 to go in the third when the Ducks took their fourth minor penalty of the game, but for the fourth time Anaheim killed it off, keeping the score tied 1-1.

Winnipeg had some good chances to score in the final moments of the third but Alex Iafallo missed the net on a partial break and Kyle Connor was robbed in tight by Husso, sending the game to overtime.

In OT, Josh Morrissey made a great sliding poke-check to break up an Anaheim odd-man rush, creating one for the Jets that Connor and Scheifele could not finish off but as the play continued, Connor got the puck behind the net and sent it to Morrissey before he slid it cross-ice to Scheifele who made no mistake for his 39th of the season. It was also his 11th game-winning goal of the season, setting a new franchise-best.

With an assist on the play, Connor finished the campaign with 97 points, building on his Jets 2.0 era record. Scheifele also finished the season with a career-high 87 points.

Hellebuyck turned aside 30 shots to secure his 47th win of the season, tied for third-most all-time for single-season wins by a goalie and just one shy of matching the record.

The Jets will now move on to the postseason where they will host the Blues for the second time in franchise history after losing to the Blues in six games in the first round of the 2019 Stanley Cup Playoffs.

<https://globalnews.ca/news/11136868/analysis-winnipeg-jets-season-playoffs/>

ANALYSIS: Storybook regular season for Jets means nothing once playoffs begin

By John Shannon CJOB

What a season it has been for the Winnipeg Jets. Storybook stuff, really. Career years for so many players, including Connor Hellebuyck, Kyle Connor, Mark Scheifele and

Cole Perfetti. League-wide recognition for Josh Morrissey, a breakout season for Dylan Samberg, and the league's deepest team that got even deeper at the trade deadline.

And as we enter the Stanley Cup playoffs on Saturday, all that means is... absolutely nothing. You heard it: absolutely nothing.

When the Jets and the Blues start their series at Canada Life Centre, the ledger will show no advantage for the Jets, other than Game 7. But the storylines are tremendous.

Yes, we will have Schenn vs. Schenn, which will be so neat to watch. And I don't think there's any debate that the highlight of this season was the 4 Nations Face-off, which featured a goaltenders' battle of Hellebuyck versus Jordan Binnington — something we will witness this whole series. The styles are different, for sure, but the compete levels are comparable. And remember: the 4 Nations was just a single-game final (that went to overtime); this could be a seven-game series.

The first game after the 4 Nations for both teams was on a Saturday in St. Louis, which ended in a Jets shootout victory. After that, Winnipeg was a respectable 17-8-1 to claim the Presidents' Trophy. The Blues were the game's best team for a while, which included a 12-game winning streak (that the Jets ended, by the way). The Blues lost only four games in regulation of their remaining 26.

And all that means — you guessed it — absolutely nothing.

You see, when it comes to pressure, the Blues don't have much on them. They were a sub-.500 team on Feb. 22. They are playing with house money. And they will play that way.

In my opinion, so much of the pressure is on the Jets. After two disappointing first-round eliminations, the core of this team has worked so hard to erase those memories. Expectations have to reflect that the team with 116 points should win. But how this team manages the pressure, even as early as Saturday's Game 1, will be the central storyline until the series is over.

The Jets have passed every test this season, this one might just be a little tougher to pass.

Winnipeg Free Press

<https://www.winnipegfreepress.com/breakingnews/2025/04/16/amazing-accomplishment>

'Amazing accomplishment'

Jets finish best season in team history with OT win over Ducks

By: Mike McIntyre

Now that's how you finish up in style.

The Winnipeg Jets brought the curtain down on their best regular season ever Wednesday night with a thrilling 2-1 overtime victory over the Anaheim Ducks. Mark Scheifele, the first-ever draft pick of the 2.0 era, capped off a memorable 82-game campaign with the highlight-reel winner inside Canada Life Centre.

"Amazing accomplishment for these guys to put a season together like that," said Jets head coach Scott Arniel.

"We've done some really outstanding things this year and when you start Day 1, Game 1, you don't anticipate something like this happening. I can't credit the players enough for what they've done. Just stayed focused, all 82 games. To get it here at the end was special, in front of all our fans."

After capturing the Central Division, Western Conference and Presidents' Trophy this past weekend the Jets added a couple more honours.

Goaltender Connor Hellebuyck, who is a lock to win a third Vezina Trophy and might just capture the Hart Trophy as well, stopped 30 of 31 shots to earn the William Jennings Trophy for a second straight year as the Jets gave up the fewest goals among all 32 NHL teams.

Arniel said that was a goal of his group, which did some team building sessions during training camp and immediately identified defence as the top priority.

"Every group came back (and said) part of our identity, first and foremost, was going to be how we defended like we did last year," said Arniel.

"The buy-in from these guys the last couple years has been amazing. It isn't just defensive players. It's your top players, your offensive guys. Your role players. It's everybody believing in a certain way to play and that gives you the chance to win hockey games. You back it up with outstanding goaltenders. That makes it that much more difficult to play against us."

That defensive commitment was on display during overtime. Josh Morrissey made a terrific play in his own end to break up a 2-on-1 rush, quickly turned the puck the other way and, along with Kyle Connor, fed Scheifele for the winner.

Hellebuyck extended his own franchise record with his 47th win, one off the NHL's all-time mark. He ended up leading the league in wins, shutouts (eight) and goals-against-average (2.00) and is second to Toronto's Anthony Stolarz for top save-percentage (.925, just .001 behind) in a bid to become the third goalie in NHL history to lead in all four categories.

A huge save in the final minute of regulation against Anaheim's leading scorer Troy Terry — who had beaten him earlier in the period to tie the game — ensured Tuesday's game would go to overtime, which meant the Jets had just set a franchise record for points in a year.

Scheifele's winner gave them a 56-22-4 record and 116 points, which beats the 114 they had in 2017-18. Incredible stuff, but the Jets were ready to turn the page and look towards the playoffs as soon as the final buzzer sounded.

"Stanley Cup (is when) we'll be satisfied," said defenceman Neal Pionk, who had opened the scoring for the Jets with his 10th of the year.

A first-round series with the St. Louis Blues begins Saturday night at the downtown rink, with puck drop set for 5 p.m. The rest of the schedule will be announced Thursday.

"Can't wait. Best time of year," said Pionk. "Now we play for real."

DON'T GET HURT

The best news for the Jets on Wednesday? Everybody who started the game finished it. That wasn't the case last Saturday in Chicago (Nikolaj Ehlers got hurt and is now week-to-week) or Sunday at home against Edmonton (Dylan Samberg blocked a shot and didn't return, fortunately escaping any damage).

There were some close calls, however.

Centre Vlad Namestnikov blocked a Jacob Trouba slapshot and went to the room near the end of the first period. On the same shift, Cole Perfetti took a stick to the face and left for repairs. Both were back for the middle frame, but Perfetti then fell awkwardly on his elbow and was slow to get up. In the third, he took a deflected puck to the face. Perfetti also recorded an assist on Pionk's goal to hit 50 points for the first time in his career.

Prior to the game, Arniel said he was dressing his full lineup at the urging of players, who didn't want to potentially sit a full week without game action. The idea was to fine-tune some details to stay sharp. Most importantly, they stayed healthy.

HOME, SWEET HOME

The Jets didn't just have a great year on the ice. Business began to pick up off of it, too. Wednesday's game was the eighth straight sellout, and the 16th overall, which increases their average attendance over 41 games to 14,366.

That's the latest since prior to the COVID-19 pandemic and a big spike from the average of 13,490 they drew last year.

The Jets quickly sold out their first two home playoff dates so the streak is going to continue for the foreseeable future. No doubt the team hopes to keep the good times rolling as they finished with a sizzling 30-7-4 record in their own barn this year.

KEY PLAY

Scheifele's 39th goal of the year sent the Jets into the playoffs on a hockey high.

THREE STARS

1. ANA G Ville Husso: 42 saves
2. WPG G Connor Hellebuyck: 30 saves
3. WPG C Mark Scheifele: Game-winning goal

TAKE A BOW, GENTLEMEN

The Jets announced their annual team award winners prior to puck drop.

Forward Alex Iafallo won the Dan Snyder Memorial Award, which is given to the player who "embodies perseverance, dedication and hard work without reward or recognition, so that his team and teammates might succeed."

Morrissey captured the Community Service Award for his various charitable endeavours including with the Dream Factory, where he is an ambassador, and the True North Youth Foundation and Project 11

And Hellebuyck won the most Three Stars honour — the seventh time in the past eight years he's done so. Of course, it came on a night when he was once again asked to take a post-game twirl for his work in the crease.

EXTRA, EXTRA

Winnipeg went 0-for-4 on the power play, including an extended 5-on-3. Anaheim went 0-for-1.

Jets' healthy scratches were defencemen Ville Heinola, Colin Miller and Haydn Fleury and forward Dominic Toninato. Ehlers, along with forwards Gabe Vilardi and Rasmus Kupari, remain injured.

The Jets will hold practices on Thursday and Friday to get set for the start of the playoffs.

<https://www.winnipegfreepress.com/breakingnews/2025/04/16/youve-got-to-be-kidding-me>

'You've got to be kidding me'
Jets versus Blues a family affair for the Schenns

By: Mike McIntyre

Winnipeg Jets defenceman Luke Schenn's phone began blowing up Tuesday evening, mere moments after a cloudy Western Conference playoff picture had become crystal clear.

A couple of texts were from his sisters, Madison and Macy, which essentially said the same thing: "You've got to be kidding me."

Mom, Dad and younger brother Brayden — the captain of the St. Louis Blues — quickly followed with similar stunned sentiments.

"I think everyone's got the same opinion, just how the heck did this happen?" Luke said of a first-round playoff matchup between the Jets and Blues.

A great question with a fascinating answer.

At the start of March, Luke was a member of the Nashville Predators while Brayden was the subject of trade rumours with his Blues outside a playoff spot at the time.

There were rumblings the two can ultimately be a package deal and end up on the same team, the way they were for three seasons in Philadelphia including a playoff run together in 2013-14.

Only one ended up on the move — twice, in fact.

Luke was shipped to Pittsburgh 48 hours before the trade deadline, with the Penguins then flipping him to the Jets at the last minute. Meanwhile, Brayden stayed put as his Blues went on an incredible run, which included 12 straight wins at one point.

"It's kind of worked out where the team kind of got hot down the stretch, and he ended up being a huge part of that," said Luke. "I was cheering for him down the stretch, realizing it could be a possibility of playing against one another."

A possibility, for sure.

But not locked in stone until a series of events played out Tuesday night. St. Louis was 22 seconds away from facing the Vegas Golden Knights in the first round, only for the Minnesota Wild to tie their game against Anaheim at 19:48 of the third period and change the playoff hopes for five teams.

By staving off a regulation loss, the Wild clinched a playoff spot, eliminated the Calgary Flames and jumped over the Blues, which means they would instead head to Winnipeg and Vegas would instead draw Minnesota.

“You (wouldn’t) draw this up, even a month ago,” said Luke. “So a lot had to happen in order for this to happen. It’s not in our control.”

Whether it was fortuitous or fate, the fact is this series is going to be a family affair for the Schenns.

“It’s a strange one,” admitted Luke, who talks with Brayden daily but admits that the schedule is likely going to be altered.

“Probably not chat much, or at all, once the playoffs start. Which is good. He doesn’t need to know what’s going on with our team, and vice versa. I would say we’re pretty in the know and in the mix, in terms of what’s going on with each other’s teams, for the most part. And this is just going to be a totally different scenario.”

The brothers spoke by phone on Wednesday morning.

“I was joking around with him that if I was still in Nashville I’d be cheering for the Blues right now. Obviously things have totally changed,” said Luke.

“We both agree it’s game on. When we play each other, we’ve both got the same goal in mind. Opposing teams, so it’s going to be a huge battle out there. He’s a huge part of what they’re doing in St. Louis, their leader and been there a long time and he has Stanley Cup winning experience. And I’m going to do whatever I can to help our team win.”

Luke admits this might be even more difficult on their parents, sisters and other family members and friends who might have all kinds of conflicted feelings once the puck drops.

“My dad always says, when we play during the regular season, he says he just wants us to take it overtime and then it’s up to us to figure it out. And now, I don’t know,” he said.

“Either way, they’re going to have someone walking away into the second round, so I guess that’s a positive. But yeah, I don’t even know what to think or what they’re thinking. They’re probably just cheering for us individually and they’ll be supportive any which way.”

The sibling rivalry is just one of the compelling storylines in this series, which is a rematch from their 2019 first-round meeting, which St. Louis took in six games on their way to a first-ever Stanley Cup.

The two starting goaltenders, Connor Hellebuyck and Jordan Binnington, went head-to-head in February at the 4 Nations Face-Off, with Hellebuyck's American squad losing in the final to Binnington's Canadian club.

There's also the fact that the Blues seem to be following an eerily similar script from six years ago.

In 2019, a struggle out of the gate led to head coach Mike Yeo being replaced by Craig Berube, which triggered a surge in the standings. This year, bench boss Drew Bannister was fired after a rough start and replaced with Jim Montgomery.

"We've been through a lot, both of us, throughout our careers and this one just adds to it," Brayden told reporters on Tuesday night following their victory over Utah HC to punch their playoff ticket.

"It's going to be — I don't even know how to describe it. We're both physical guys, and we both play physical in the playoffs, so anything can happen and we might get some screaming by Mom and Dad at us if we go too hard."

Luke shared a story Wednesday of growing up in Saskatoon and playing street hockey with Brayden and some friends which would occasionally include some roughhousing on his part.

"Me being the bigger, older brother, I'd throw him into the snowbank a few times and we'd get into some scraps along the way," he said.

"Brayden and I were with each other literally every day growing up. To this day, we still train together in the summertime. We skate together. We live five minutes down the road from each other."

And now they'll battle each other with a trip to the second round of the playoffs on the line.

The NHL has not yet released its playoff schedule with the last wildcard spot in the Eastern Conference still to be decided. Game 1 is expected to be either Saturday or Sunday at Canada Life Centre. Winnipeg went 3-1-0 in their head-to-head games this season, with St. Louis going 1-2-1.

Luke's wife and three young children, who have remained behind in Nashville, have now joined him in Winnipeg for a few days and will take in the first two playoff games.

"It means a lot to have them here. Obviously, three kids at home and a lot of stress that goes onto my wife trying to juggle everything with the kids. Her family's been there to help quite a bit, too, and we have a big support system," he said.

“My kids are excited. I had my two boys out on the ice skating after practice (Tuesday) and yeah, they’re fired up. They’ve got their Jets jerseys all done up. They’re fired up for the whiteout and they’re pumped to see some games here.”

Of course, they’ll also get to watch Uncle Brayden in action, too.

<https://www.winnipegfreepress.com/breakingnews/2025/04/16/outdoorsman-lafallo-sticks-with-jets>

***Outdoorsman lafallo sticks with Jets
Winger signs three-year extension with club***

By: Ken Wiebe

Alex lafallo’s teammates often joke he’s “the most interesting man in the world.”

“We joke around that he’s the Dos Equis guy... because in the summertime, he goes off the grid and goes camping or is out in his truck,” Dylan DeMelo said on Wednesday morning after the Winnipeg Jets announced lafallo had signed a three-year contract extension worth US\$11 million.

“He’s into fishing, ice fishing. He’s from the Buffalo (New York) area, so I don’t think the cold scares him too much.

“He’s been such a great fit for our team on and off the ice. It was a seamless fit, really. We knew right away how good a player he was.”

Of the many things lafallo has shown since he was an understated yet important piece of the blockbuster deal with the Los Angeles Kings in the summer of 2023, is that he feels right at home in Winnipeg.

That’s part of the reason lafallo has chosen to forego unrestricted free agency to remain with the Jets for the next three seasons.

“Obviously, I wanted to stay here. Pumped to get it done before playoffs,” lafallo said on Wednesday before the Jets faced the Anaheim Ducks.

“It’s just amazing. Having so much fun on and off the ice. The team camaraderie and everything that we’ve done this year, we’ve just got to keep building and keep going into playoffs like this. So, I wanted to stay and be a part of it.

“It’s such a great team. I don’t want to go anywhere else.”

lafallo is the latest player to commit his future to the organization, which leaves Nikolaj Ehlers and fellow Jets’ forwards Mason Appleton, Brandon Tanev and defencemen Neal Pionk and Haydn Fleury as regulars who can become UFAs on July 1.

lafallo ending up signing a new contract with an average annual value (US\$3.667 million) that is less than his current deal (US\$4 million) was paying him warrants further examination.

While it's true that lafallo has been used mostly on the fourth line this season, he's frequently been called upon to move up the lineup, including his current role on the top trio with Mark Scheifele and Kyle Connor since Gabe Vilardi left the lineup with an upper-body injury on Mar. 23.

lafallo is incredibly diligent when it comes to the defensive details of the game, yet he's still been able to be a double-digit goal scorer, even with his ice time reduced by roughly three minutes per game since the days he played on the Kings' top unit with Anze Kopitar.

He's also someone who is often first over the boards with the penalty-killing unit and often a member of the second power-play grouping, though he's up with the top unit these days since both Vilardi and Ehlers are sidelined with injuries.

"He can play up and down your lineup and any line that he's on, he makes it better," said DeMelo.

"First line, checking line, whatever. He's really versatile. Guys love him. A quiet demeanour, but a great guy and we're just so happy to have him back for another three more fun years with him.

"He's not going to destroy guys (with hits) out there, but is he ever in the battle and in the thick of things, in the net front, whacking away. He's got such a good stick and seems to come out with a lot of pucks. He's a gamer and he's a heck of a player."

So does that mean lafallo took a hometown discount with this new deal?

That's an interesting theory — and not to be dismissed entirely either.

It's certainly possible that teams like the Buffalo Sabres, Columbus Blue Jackets or even the Ducks — to name a few clubs — might have paid lafallo closer to the US\$4 million he's currently making if he had reached July 1 without a contract.

That's because the aforementioned teams all have more cap room and would also value the versatility and production of lafallo, plus be able to provide him with more consistent minutes throughout the top-nine forwards.

However, lafallo values what the Jets are building, in terms of both the on-ice results and culture.

The Jets know exactly what they're getting from Lafallo and he knows the opportunity they'll be providing him.

That's part of what has helped this hockey marriage flourish.

Since the culture change began with the arrival of Rick Bowness and Scott Arniel as an associate coach in the summer of 2023, the Jets have leaned into the narrative that they want players who want to be here.

That's been obvious with the extensions signed by Vladislav Namestnikov last month, DeMelo last summer and Nino Niederreiter last season.

"All summer long we get into those free agent situations and the trade deadline, how hard it is for guys to come here," said Arniel. "We showed and talked to him about his importance to our hockey team now and in the future, he recognizes (it).

"The part, for me, just looking at it — not so much as his coach — he recognizes he's in a good spot. He's in a good position. He's well-used, well-liked. Very popular. Those are all real good things. You don't know what you're going to get when you go out to free agency. You may have to start all over again and build again. For him, he likes this situation and we like him, so it's worked out real well."

Lafallo also stays in a place he's enjoyed the exploration of the great outdoors in friendly Manitoba.

"He's a Buffalo kid who became a surfing dude out in L.A. and he's a back-country guy here. He's taken advantage of the places that he's lived and we love that. We love the fact he loves it here," said Arniel.

"We have a lot of players that love to take advantage of what's offered around Winnipeg and Manitoba, so he's that kind of guy. Whether he's on the ocean or he's back in the backwoods, it's how he spends his off days."

At the age of 31, being able to get a three-year pact provides Lafallo with stability while the Jets get cost certainty on a player that can move up and down the lineup, at a time when the salary cap is about to rise dramatically.

Ultimately, both the player and the team will benefit over the course of this deal, which sounds like the definition of a win-win situation.

Which was part of the impetus to get the contract signed before the Stanley Cup playoffs begin this weekend.

Winnipeg Sun

<https://winnipeg.sun.com/sports/hockey/nhl/winnipeg-jets/jets-iafallo-contract-extension-apr-17-2025>

'Don't want to go anywhere else': Jets' Iafallo chooses NHL's back country

By Paul Friesen

Perhaps the best description of Winnipeg Jets forward Alex Iafallo came from his head coach on Wednesday.

"He's a Buffalo kid who became a surfing dude out in L.A. and he's a back-country guy here," Scott Arniel was saying. "He's taken advantage of the places that he's lived, and we love that."

Iafallo will take advantage of what Manitoba has to offer for another three years, if everything goes according to plan.

That's the length of the contract extension he's signed, walking off the trail to unrestricted free agency.

The 31-year-old may love exploring the back country in his Jeep, but he wasn't dying to see what was out there as far as offers go next summer.

For most players, it would take a pay hike for that kind of early commitment. Instead, Iafallo took a slight haircut, seeing his average annual salary drop from \$4 million to \$3.7 million.

"It's such a great team," he explained. "I don't want to go anywhere else. I was going to accept under what I was worth, or whatever it was. It's a great contract for me and I'm loving it, so it's going to be a great three years. We've got a big playoff run so I'm not focused on that at all."

"We've got to win some games here."

They've been doing plenty of that since Iafallo arrived – the 2023 summer trade also brought Gabe Vilardi and Rasmus Kupari to Winnipeg in exchange for Pierre-Luc Dubois – except at playoff time.

Iafallo says he didn't want his uncertain future to be a distraction during this post-season, which starts with a first-round series against the St. Louis Blues.

"It's a huge playoff run for us so I just didn't want to think about that and have anybody thinking about it."

Through his eight NHL seasons, six of them with the Kings, the most playoff games Lafallo has played in one year is seven. He played just five with the Jets last year.

The NHL's top regular-season team appears poised to go deep this time.

"It's just amazing. Having so much fun on and off the ice," he said. "The team camaraderie and everything that we've done this year, we've just got to keep building and keep going into playoffs like this. So I wanted to stay and be a part of it for the next three years."

Arniel likes to call Lafallo a Swiss Army Knife and it has nothing to do with his love of camping.

The guy started the season on the Jets' fourth line, going without a point in eight of his first nine games. He finished it on the first line, subbing for the injured Vilardi, with a four-game points streak going into Wednesday's regular-season finale.

For a second straight season he has played every game, scoring 15 goals, adding 16 assists and recording a plus-21 rating, the highest among Jets forwards, going into Wednesday's game.

"We showed and talked to him about his importance to our hockey team, now and in the future," Arniel said. "He recognizes he's in a good spot. He's well-used, well-liked. Very popular. Those are all real good things. You don't know what you're going to get when you go out to free agency. You may have to start all over again."

"He likes this situation and we like him, so it's worked out real well."

Lafallo's signing leaves winger Nik Ehlers and defenceman Neal Pionk as the bigger-name pending UFAs this summer.

It wouldn't be a shock to see one or both of them re-sign, too. Like Mark Scheifele, Connor Hellebuyck, Josh Morrissey and Kyle Connor, just to name a few, have done before them.

Lafallo says you can add his name to the list of players who wouldn't have put Winnipeg on a long-term destination list before he got here.

"You've got to enjoy every second no matter where you are," he said. "Obviously people say that about Winnipeg, and that's just their perception of the city. Everybody in the locker room would say different ... winning helps, too, but at the same time it's what's in the locker room. And you have fun."

"Going into playoffs, it feels good in here and we're ready," Lafallo said. "We're chomping at the bit."

The back country can wait.

<https://winnipegssun.com/sports/hockey/nhl/winnipeg-jets/now-we-play-for-real-jets-set-franchise-mark-focus-on-playoffs>

'Now we play for real': Jets set franchise mark, focus on playoffs

By Paul Friesen

The Winnipeg Jets ended their regular season in style, setting a franchise record for points with a 2-1 overtime win over the Anaheim Ducks on Wednesday.

Mark Scheifele's goal 1:11 into overtime put a 56-22-4 mark into the history books, good for 116 points, two more than the Jets collected in the 2017-18 season.

"Amazing accomplishment for these guys to put a season together like that," head coach Scott Arniel said. "When you start Day 1, Game 1, you don't anticipate something like this happening. I can't credit the players enough for what they've done."

Arniel's club also clinched a second straight Jennings Trophy as the NHL's stingiest team, goalie Connor Hellebuyck leading that charge with another stellar performance between the pipes.

"It says a lot, that we had commitment and buy-in," defenceman Neal Pionk said. "We all bought in, we all blocked shots and we have the best goalie in the league."

It won't mean much if they don't top what the 2017-18 team did in the playoffs, winning two series and reaching the Western Conference final.

"Stanley Cup, we'll be satisfied," is how Pionk put it.

Their post-season road begins at home against the St. Louis Blues. Game 1 is set for Saturday at 5 p.m., Winnipeg time.

In front of a full house for the eighth straight home game, Wednesday's game against the non-playoff Ducks didn't resemble a playoff tilt except maybe for the low score.

The teams combined for 75 shots on goal, while the Jets were credited with just 13 hits, a far cry from the physical grind they'll expect against the Blues.

Hellebuyck stopped 30 of 31 shots to improve his record to 47-12-3, all but sealing his second straight Vezina Trophy, third of his career, as the top goalie.

Shots favoured Winnipeg, 44-31.

Pionk opened the scoring in the second period, tying his career-high of 10 goals in a season.

The Ducks tied it early in the third, Troy Terry depositing a rebound behind a sprawled Hellebuyck.

Aside from some nicks and bruises – Cole Perfetti the poster boy for those – it appears the Jets came out of the game unscathed.

In the first period, Perfetti was clipped with a high stick and went off for repairs. He went down hard on his back midway through the second, but shook that off, too.

Completing the hat-trick, he took a puck off his hand and face on the same play early in the third, heading for the bench to question exactly what he'd done to irritate the hockey gods.

Perhaps that was just the extra price he had to pay to play all 82 games for the first time in his career.

"It is hard to play 82," Perfetti said. "I don't want to take that for granted. Being able to accomplish that this year feels really good."

He's one of six players to play them all, as Arniel went with his full lineup for one final tuneup before Round 1.

"Can't wait," Pionk said. "Best time of year. Now we play for real."

<https://winnipeg.sun.com/sports/hockey/nhl/winnipeg-jets/first-time-schenn-show-apr-17-2025>

'How the heck did this happen?' Jets-Blues a first-time Schenn Show

By Paul Friesen

Sometimes you just can't fight destiny.

That brothers Luke and Brayden Schenn of Saskatoon have never met in the Stanley Cup playoffs is an oddity, given their combined 29 seasons in the NHL, all but four of them on different teams.

But the hockey gods were determined to make it happen this spring.

How else, other than divine intervention, to explain the series of events that will finally pit Luke, the Winnipeg Jets defenceman, against Brayden, the St. Louis Blues captain, in this year's first round?

“Everyone’s got the same opinion: just how the heck did this happen?” Luke was saying on Wednesday. “Because you draw this up even a month ago, I obviously didn’t believe that I was going to be traded to Winnipeg. And at the time, he was potentially going to be traded at the deadline. The Blues were on the outside, looking in.

“So a lot had to happen in order for this to happen.”

To recap, Luke was traded by Nashville to Pittsburgh, then from Pittsburgh to Winnipeg two days later at the trade deadline, March 7.

Meanwhile the Blues were turning their mediocre season around, so Brayden stayed put to lead the charge.

A franchise-record 12 straight wins had the Blues on the verge of passing Minnesota in the wildcard playoff race, which would have left the Wild as Winnipeg’s first-round fodder.

Then Tuesday happened.

Down 2-1 to Anaheim, the Wild tied it with 22 seconds left then won it with 18 seconds left in overtime to ward off a Blues team that was throttling Utah, 6-1.

Welcome to the Schenn Show, playoff edition.

Talk about a family dilemma.

“My dad always says when we play during the regular season he just wants us to take it overtime and then it’s up to us to figure it out,” Luke said. “And now, I don’t know. I don’t even know what to think or what they’re thinking. I got a couple texts from my sisters, saying, ‘You’ve gotta be kidding me.’

“Maybe my dad will be switching between a Jets and a Blues hat every TV timeout or something.”

On his way into the rink Wednesday morning, Schenn and his brother talked about the improbable road to their first playoff meeting.

“It’s not something that we were hoping and wishing for,” Luke said. “I wouldn’t say you dream of it ... it’s not really something that ever crossed our minds.”

Now that it’s squarely on their minds, they’ll have to make a few changes. You see, the two talk almost every day. Have for years. About how things are going with their teams, in particular.

That changes on Thursday.

“Probably not chat much, or at all,” Luke acknowledged. “He doesn’t need to know what’s going on with our team, and vice-versa. He’s the captain there, he’s not going to be passing along any inside information, obviously. It’s a strange one. We’re pretty in the know and in the mix, in terms of what’s going on with each other’s teams.

“And this is just going to be a totally different scenario.”

Not that their bond will break. It’ll just take a pause. The first of its kind in 30-plus years.

The bond that goes back to street-hockey or backyard games as kids back in Saskatoon, the older brother doing older brother things to Brayden.

“Four or five years old on the backyard rink,” 35-year-old Luke recalled. “I’d throw him into the snowbank a few times and we’d get into some scraps along the way. We had a huge group of boys on the same street that would all play backyard hockey together. And it was every night, so Brayden and I were with each other literally every day growing up.”

Eight or nine of those neighbourhood kids made it as far as the Western Hockey League.

Only Luke and Brayden, two years younger, reached the NHL.

Both have Stanley Cup rings, Luke a pair with the Tampa Bay Lightning, Brayden the one with St. Louis from 2019.

The chase for another begins on the weekend. Against all odds, against each other.

Nobody holding back. Both looking to throw the other into the snowbank of broken playoff dreams.

“It’s going to be a huge battle out there,” Luke said. “He’s a huge part of what they’re doing in St. Louis, their leader ... and I’m going to do whatever I can to help our team win.

“Like I said to Brayden, and we both agree: It’s game on.”

TSN.ca

<https://www.tsn.ca/nhl/video/the-talking-point-does-big-game-history-matter-in-hellebuyck-binnington-duel~3116520>

The Talking Point: Does big game history matter in Hellebuyck/Binnington duel? (VIDEO)

Jordan Binnington has a Stanley Cup under his belt along with defeating Connor Hellebuyck in the 4 Nations Face-Off final. Does big game history matter in the goaltender duel between the Jets and Blues? Martin Biron weighs in during Wednesday's Talking Point.