

Three things - Scheifele line dominates Game 1

WINNIPEG – Mark Scheifele (1G, 2A) and Kyle Connor (1G, 2A) each had three points in the Winnipeg Jets 5-3 win over the St. Louis Blues at Canada Life Centre to take a 1-0 series lead. Alex Iafallo, Jared Anderson-Dolan and Adam Lowry also scored for Winnipeg who won their first game of the playoff series for the third straight year. Scott Arniel became the second coach to win in their playoff debut with the Jets/Thrashers franchise, joining Rick Bowness (Game 1 in 2023 R1)., the Jets will host the Blues in Game 2 on Monday.

TOP LINE LEADS THE WAY

The Jets are going to go as far as the top line takes them and Saturday was a tremendous start for Scheifele, Connor and Iafallo. Scheifele scored a power play goal to even the game at one at 13:38 of the first. Then with the Jets trailing 3-2 in the third period, Scheifele banked a pass off the side of the net that went right to Iafallo, and he slid the puck to the far corner behind Jordan Binnington. That assist pushed Scheifele (40 points) past Blake Wheeler (39 points) into first place for most playoff points in Jets/Thrashers history.

Scheifele would factor in on the game winning goal with 1:36 left in the period, the Jets centreman spotted Connor open on the right side and he one-timed the pass past Binnington. It marked the latest go-ahead goal in Jets/Thrashers history, eclipsing Blake Wheeler (55:01 in Game 3 of 2018 R2).

"I think they read off each other so well, they're so dynamic together, and then their space is incredible," said Adam Lowry about Scheifele and Connor.

"They don't crowd each other in the (offensive) zone, but they always seem to have that tight support whenever they need an out. It was great to see them rewarded. I thought they had a heck of a Game 1."

HELLEBUYCK SAVE BUILDS MOMENTUM

The two-time Vezina Trophy winner wasn't very busy over the final two periods but with the Blues leading 2-1 in the second, Hellebuyck came up with his most important save of the night. Jordan Kyrou got in behind the Jets defence and was going in on a breakaway and tried to beat Hellebuyck five-hole, the Jets goaltender shut the door. From that point, Winnipeg only gave up two shots over the entire third period and 17 total for the game.

"In one of those types of games, there's not a lot of action, there's not a whole lot of feel. You just have to make one big save and that's going to be the difference maker. I thought that was it," said Hellebuyck when asked about his save on Kyrou.

"That being said, I felt good all night. I was just waiting to get some action. I thought we were controlling the play pretty well there."

RARE NIGHT FOR PK

Winnipeg's penalty kill was in a good place heading into the postseason killing better than 80 per cent of the time they were shorthanded since the start of February. On the other side, St. Louis power play was the third best unit since the 4 Nations Face-Off at 29.5%. The Blues opened the scoring while on the power play in the first period at 9:31 when Robert Thomas beat Connor Hellebuyck glove side. In the second period and the game tied at two, Jordan Kyrour fired a shot that Hellebuyck didn't see thanks to Oskar Sundqvist providing the screen. It's just the third time in the last 43 games that Winnipeg had allowed two power play goals in a game.

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<https://www.nhl.com/news/st-louis-blues-winnipeg-jets-game-1-recap-april-19>

Jets rally to defeat Blues in Game 1 of Western 1st Round

Connor gets go-ahead goal with 1:36 left, Winnipeg scores 3 straight in 3rd period

By Darrin Bauming

WINNIPEG -- Kyle Connor broke a tie with 1:36 remaining in the third period, and the Winnipeg Jets rallied for a 5-3 win against the St. Louis Blues in Game 1 of the Western Conference First Round at Canada Life Centre on Saturday.

"That's Winnipeg Jets hockey where you're rolling around the O-zone," Connor said. "Getting possession, early changes, getting the next line out there, keep doing it, hemming teams in."

Connor made it 4-3 with a one-timer from low in the right face-off circle off a pass from Mark Scheifele.

"It was obviously a great play by 'Scheif,'" Connor said. "Just try to get it off quick."

Scheifele said, "All I want to do is put the puck in his hands and he does some fantastic things. Like I said before, I'm lucky to play with him. He's absolutely fantastic, he shoots the puck fantastic, he does so many little things fantastic. Like I said a million times, he's amazing to play with."

Connor and Scheifele each had a goal and two assists, and Josh Morrissey had two assists for the Jets, who are the No. 1 seed in the West and won the Presidents' Trophy with the NHL's best regular-season record (56-22-4). Connor Hellebuyck made 14 saves.

"Scheifele came around the top and it was tough to find where it was through the traffic there," Blues goalie Jordan Binnington said of the game-winning goal. "He's good at finding those holes and [Connor] got a good shot off. It is what it is and it's the life of a goaltender. You've got to regroup and focus on the next one."

Winnipeg scored three straight goals in the third after trailing 3-2.

"I didn't think we managed the game very well in the third period," St. Louis coach Jim Montgomery said. "Penalties. Puck management. A little bit of our emotions. ... Our habits weren't very good tonight. Defensively, we weren't very good tonight. We'll get better."

Robert Thomas, Oskar Sundqvist and Jordan Kyrou scored for the Blues, who are the second wild card from the West. Justin Faulk had two assists, and Binnington made 21 saves.

"Tomorrow's a new day, and it's going to be a long series," St. Louis captain Brayden Schenn said. "Two good teams that play tight defensively and like I said, obviously [we] would have liked to have a better third period, but move on and worry about Game 2, and we're going to get better."

Game 2 of the best-of-7 series will be in Winnipeg on Monday (7:30 p.m. ET; CBC, TVAS2, ESPN2, FDSNMW).

Thomas gave the Blues a 1-0 lead on the power play at 9:31 of the first period. Cam Fowler kept the puck in the offensive zone with a flip pass to Thomas, who scored with a shot from the left face-off dot.

"I thought [in] the first period we looked real nervous," Winnipeg coach Scott Arniel said. "Just trying to find our way, get going. Built it up in the second but then stuck with it and really played well in the third."

The Jets scored twice in a span of 1:24 to take the lead.

Scheifele tied it 1-1 at 13:38, 16 seconds into a power play. His centering-pass attempt from the left side of the net went off the stick of Blues defenseman Ryan Suter and over Binnington's shoulder.

Jaret Anderson-Dolan then made it 2-1 at 15:02 after he and Morgan Barron each got a piece of Luke Schenn's point shot through traffic.

"It's another level from regular season in the playoffs," Sundqvist said. "It's a tight game. It's two teams playing physical and playing north, so it certainly goes up and down throughout games. I think we have to be better at managing when they're pushing forward."

Sundqvist tied it 2-2 at 18:10. Luke Schenn stopped Zack Bolduc's shot with his left skate but missed on a clearing attempt, leaving the puck for Sundqvist to score from the low slot.

"That first period it was kind of a little bit wacky and we were a little bit sloppy," Arniel said. "And then all of a sudden, second period, we started to do some things that we talked about. Got some zone time. Started to create chances and then it kind of built towards that third, and it was a real good third period."

Kyrou put St. Louis in front 3-2 on the power play at 1:13 of the second period. With Sundqvist in front screening Hellebuyck, Kyrou stepped up from the point and scored with a wrist shot from the top of the right circle.

"We had the lead, and obviously they're going to press a little more and that's just the game of hockey," Binnington said. "I feel like we played a hard game. A lot of good things to take away from this game for sure. It's just back to drawing board for the next game. It's one game at a time, we know that. Whether you win or lose, you've got to focus on that next game."

Alex Iafallo tied it 3-3 at 9:18 of the third with a quick shot from the doorstep after Scheifele fed him with a spinning pass from behind the net.

After Connor gave the Jets the lead, Adam Lowry scored into an empty net at 19:07 for the 5-3 final.

"You know what, I think it feels like every year Game 1 in each series, [it's] a bit of a bloodbath," said Lowry, the Winnipeg captain. "Teams are both trying to assert their dominance. Everyone's amped up. Our style of game is, we want to be a fast forechecking team, heavy, hard to play against. ... They played hard. They did a real good job of making it tough to get to the net. It was a real tight game, and it was nice to come out on top of that one."

NOTES: With 41 career Stanley Cup Playoff points (22 goals, 19 assists), Scheifele passed Blake Wheeler (39) for the most in Jets/Atlanta Thrashers history. ... Connor scored his fourth game-winning playoff goal and tied Paul Stastny for the most in franchise history. ... Connor and Scheifele each has 19 assists in his playoff career. They passed Dustin Byfuglien (18) for the second most in franchise history, trailing only Wheeler (30). ... Brayden Schenn had a game-high nine hits.

<https://www.nhl.com/news/kyle-connor-mark-scheifele-chemistry-on-display-in-winnipeg-jets-game-1-win>

***Connor, Scheifele's chemistry on display for Jets in Game 1 win against Blues
Winnipeg's regular-season points leaders spark 3rd-period comeback against St. Louis***

By Tracey Myers

WINNIPEG -- Kyle Connor and Mark Scheifele supplied a bulk of the Winnipeg Jets offense this season, Connor leading them in points and Scheifele 10 points behind him.

They're the go-to guys, for the Jets and for each other, their chemistry and familiarity from years of playing on the same line together so evident when they're on the ice. So, it came as no surprise that when the Jets needed answers in the third period when they were down a goal, those two were at the forefront yet again.

"They are just two elite players who see the game so well. There are guys with a ton of skill and then there are guys who are smart. They kind of have both. And when you put them together, they use both. That's what makes them so elite together," Jets goaltender Connor Hellebuyck said of Connor and Scheifele after they led a third-period comeback in a 5-3 win against the St. Louis Blues in Game 1 of the Western Conference First Round at Canada Life Centre on Saturday.

Game 2 is in Winnipeg on Monday (7:30 p.m. ET; CBC, TVAS2, ESPN2, FDSNMW).

Connor and Scheifele each had three points in Game 1 for the Jets. Connor had the game-winning goal at 18:24 of the third, the primary assist on Scheifele's power-play goal in the first and the secondary assist on their linemate Alex Iafallo's game-tying goal at 9:18 of the third.

Scheifele had a power-play goal and two primary assists. His first assist came on Iafallo's goal and the next on Connor's winner. His assist to Iafallo gave him the most playoff points in Jets/Atlanta Thrashers history with 41 (22 goals, 19 assists).

"It's obviously really cool" Scheifele said of his milestone. "To do it in front of the fans tonight was pretty special. That was a fun game to be a part of, just had a fun time."

Connor's goal was his fourth game-winner in the playoffs, tying him with Paul Stastny for the most in franchise history.

"The way they see the game and they read off each other," Jets center Adam Lowry said of what makes Connor and Scheifele so dynamic. "KC's got such a deceptive release. He gets his shot off in traffic, he's able to get separation when it seems like there's not a lot of space. And then 'Scheif's so cerebral that he's able to buy time."

“You look at that play where they’re able to just find a seam. It was similar to where ‘KC’ hit the one on the power play that (Blues goalie Jordan) Binnington got across on. This one he didn’t miss. But I think they read off each other so well, they’re so dynamic together, and then their space is incredible. They don’t crowd each other in the (offensive) zone, but they always seem to have that tight support whenever they need an out. It was great to see them rewarded. I thought they had a heck of a Game 1.”

On Connor’s game-winning goal, Scheifele took a pass from defenseman Josh Morrissey, came up around the top of the left circle and passed to Connor, who had enough space in the right circle to capitalize on a one-timer.

When talking about Connor, Scheifele came back to one descriptor often.

“All I want to do is put the puck in his hands and he does some fantastic things. I’m lucky to play with him. He’s absolutely fantastic, he shoots the puck fantastic, he does so many little things fantastic. Like I said a million times, he’s amazing to play with.”

So, does Connor just expect that pass from Scheifele, given their years together?

“Uh, yeah, I’d like to think so,” Connor said with a laugh.

On his assist to Lafallo, Scheifele kept possession of the puck behind the net, and slipped a centering pass between Blues center Robert Thomas and defenseman Cam Fowler to Lafallo, who scored glove-side on Binnington.

“I think there’s been a long list of things that kind of shows what type of player he is in the playoffs. I look at 2017-2018 and kind of the run that he had, (he) really carried the mail offensively with the number of goals he scored in that year. But every year, he seems to work on some new skills, come back an even better player than he was before,” Lowry said of Scheifele, who had 20 points (14 goals, six assists) in the 2017-18 playoffs, when the Jets advanced to the Western Conference Final.

“It’s difficult to kind of understand that someone in their 30s is continuing to get better, they’re not kind of plateauing. But he puts in the work, he’s rewarded for it. I thought tonight was a perfect example of our stars being our stars.”

Connor and Scheifele’s work in the regular season is a big reason why the Jets won the Presidents’ Trophy, awarded annually to the team that finishes with the most points in the regular season. Connor had 97 points (41 goals, 56 assists) in 82 games. Scheifele had 87 points (39 goals, 48 assists) in 82 games. The two combined for 19 game-winning goals this season, Scheifele having 11 of them.

They’re the backbone of the Jets offense, and they showed that again on Saturday.

<https://www.nhl.com/news/topic/short-shifts/winnipeg-jets-fans-bring-the-noise-for-whiteout>

***Jets fans pumped and ready for Game 1 Whiteout in Winnipeg
It's going to be loud inside, outside Canada Life Centre for playoff game against Blues***

By Tracey Myers

WINNIPEG – Sheila Hathaway was bedecked in her Winnipeg Jets Whiteout best, including a white-and-blue wig with the Stanley Cup affixed to the top and face makeup of the team's logo, a silver jet with edges of the Canadian maple leaf surrounding it.

It's an outfit the Winnipeg native has put together each of the eight times the Jets have been in the Stanley Cup Playoffs since relocating here from Atlanta prior to the 2011-12 season.

"Forty-five minutes," she said on how long it took to get ready. "I've been a season ticketholder since Day 1."

Hathaway was one of a few thousand people outside enjoying the Winnipeg Whiteout street parties taking place around Canada Life Centre prior to Game 1 of the Western Conference First Round between the Jets and the St. Louis Blues (6 p.m. ET; CBC, TVAS, SN, TNT, truTV, MAX, FDSNMW).

Fans gathered along Donald Street for pregame festivities, enjoying everything from pizza to tater tots and music that blared from the main stage, situated closer to Portage Avenue.

There was plenty of creativity in the outfits, from white wigs to white fur coats to a Darth Vader mask – in white, of course. Another fan had a stuffed animal with a saxophone attached to emulate the "Saxophone Squirtle" video played at Jets games.

"This is our first Whiteout party, but we've come to a few games this year and been lifelong fans forever," said Shannon Burnette, who was attending with fellow Winnipeg native Kasper Pogrzevski.

The Whiteout inside the arena, where fans dress in white from head to toe and bring deafening noise to support the Jets, has been a part of Winnipeg hockey since 1987 with the original Jets.

In 2018, when the Jets made a run to the Western Conference Final, Winnipeg expanded the Whiteout tradition to include outdoor watch parties. Since then, more than 170,000 fans have participated in them.

Tickets were \$10, with \$5 donated to the United Way Winnipeg. Those attending games can use their gameday ticket to get into the parties. More than \$312,000 has been raised to provide critical support in the areas of homelessness, addiction, and hunger through the Whiteout Street Parties. The outdoor party crowd is capped at 5,000 fans and tickets go fast.

Fans can also be part of the True North Square party in the plaza, where they can gather three hours before puck drop to watch the game indoors at Hargrave St. Market or outdoors in the plaza. The Jets also have whiteout watch parties for away games during the postseason.

It's been a frustrating few seasons for the Jets, who advanced to the Western Conference Final in 2018 but have been eliminated in the first round the past three seasons.

So what convinces fans this year will be different?

"Connor Hellebuyck is going to get the monkey off his back. He's due," said Pogrzevski of the Jets goaltender.

Hellebuyck won the Vezina Trophy, awarded annually to the League's best goalie, last season and in 2019-20 and he'll probably win it after another stellar outing this season. But he has struggled in the postseason, going 18-27 with a 2.85 goals-against average, .911 save percentage and three shutouts in 45 starts.

Hathaway had other ideas.

"This year is definitely different because this year we have four lines deep," she said. "It doesn't matter what line we put out. The next line is going to do it. We don't have a weak line this year. That's our power play this year."

Winnipeg Free Press

<https://www.winnipegfreepress.com/breakingnews/2025/04/19/dyanmic-duo-lift-jets-to-series-opening-win-over-blues>

Dynamic duo lifts Jets to series opening win over Blues

By: Ken Wiebe

Mark Scheifele knows that he probably could have found Kyle Connor in open space with his eyes closed.

But that would have sounded like bragging, so the Winnipeg Jets' centre took his post-game answer in a different direction, preferring to heap praise on the guy who has been riding shotgun beside him for the better part of nine NHL seasons.

With the game tied late in the third period, the Winnipeg Jets dynamic duo provided another highlight-reel moment, with Scheifele winning an offensive-zone draw, gaining control of the puck and then waiting for the perfect opportunity to feed Connor for a deadly one-timer in what finished off as a 5-3 victory for the Winnipeg Jets over the St. Louis Blues before a raucous crowd on Saturday at Canada Life Centre.

With the win, the Jets took a 1-0 lead in the best-of-seven first-round series between Central Division rivals.

It's the third consecutive spring the Jets have won a series opener.

"He's a real pleasure to play with. I've said it many times, I'm lucky to have spent as much time with him as I have," said Scheifele, who became the Jets/Thrashers franchise leader in playoff points (41) by providing a goal and two assists. "Oh, it's amazing. All I want to do is put the puck in (Connor's) hands and he does some fantastic things.

"He's absolutely fantastic, he shoots the puck fantastic, he does so many little things fantastic. Like I said a million times, he's amazing to play with."

Game 2 goes Monday night at 6:30 p.m. before the series shifts to Missouri.

That Scheifele and Connor were able to combine for a meaningful goal is often the rule and not the exception.

Both players established career-highs for points this season (97 for Connor and 87 for Scheifele) to go along with their improved two-way play.

Connor had a glorious chance to tie the game on a power-play early in the third period, but he was robbed by the glove of Binnington.

But Connor was dangerous throughout the contest and ultimately provided an exclamation point to Game 1.

"You've just got to stick with it, stay positive, knowing you're doing the right things, getting the chances," said Connor, who scored his fourth playoff game-winner. "It was obviously a great play by (Scheifele). Just try to get it off quick."

The chemistry they've built over years of playing together was on full display throughout the game, culminating in the dagger that pushed the Jets over the top.

"The way they see the game and they read off each other," said Jets captain Adam Lowry. "(Connor) has got such a deceptive release. He gets his shot off in traffic, he's able to get separation when it seems like there's not a lot of space. And then (Scheifele) is so cerebral that he's able to buy time. You look at that play where they're able to just

find a seam. It was similar to where KC hit the one on the power play that (Blues goalie Jordan) Binnington got across on. This one he didn't miss.

"They read off each other so well, they're so dynamic together and then, their spacing is incredible. They don't crowd each other in the (offensive) zone, but they always seem to have that tight support whenever they need an out. It was great to see them rewarded. I thought they had a heck of a Game 1."

That heck of a game included doing a strong job defensively against the Blues top trio of Robert Thomas, Pavel Buchnevich and Jake Neighbours.

"They are just two elite players who see the game so well. There are guys with a ton of skill and then there are guys who are smart," said Jets goalie Connor Hellebuyck. "They kind of have both. And when you put them together, they use both. That's what makes them so elite together. They're just deadly and fun to watch."

Let's take a closer look at this one:

DOMINANT FINISH: Although the Jets talked openly about having a nervous start that lacked execution, there were no such issues in the third period, where the Jets held a wide territorial advantage and gave up just two shots on goal.

The defensive play was stifling, as the Jets were able to overcome a 3-2 deficit to score three times (including one into an empty net) on nine shots on goal.

"I just like that we didn't start cheating the game," said Lowry, who delivered the empty-netter that sealed it with 51.9 seconds to go in regulation. "The structure was there once we settled into the game, and then we really limited their chances, didn't give up a whole lot. That's a good blueprint for success."

The Lowry line — with Mason Appleton and Brandon Tanev — helped set the table for the equalizer by having an excellent cycle shift that got the Blues on their collective heels.

The Scheifele line jumped over the boards and Scheifele found Alex Iafallo at 9:18, sending the Whiteout crowd into a frenzy.

Iafallo finished with three shots on goal and five hits, getting into it with Blues forward Jake Neighbours before time ran out.

"He can do it all. He's such a big asset for our team and he comes into our line and doesn't change a thing, plays the same exact way, wins a ton of battles," said Connor. "He's one of the best defenders on our team, backchecks really hard, great stick. Seems like he's knocking the puck down every chance he can get. He's got a knack around the net and you've seen that the past 20 games or however long he's been with us. It translates to playoff hockey."

UNSUNG HEROES: Speaking of playoff hockey, unsung heroes finding a way to deliver on the big stage is another prevalent theme and it didn't take the Jets' fourth line long to get involved in this one.

After David Gustafsson made a smart play to get the puck to the point, Luke Schenn unloaded a quick shot that was tipped by both Morgan Barron and Jaret Anderson-Dolan.

Barron was initially credited with the goal, but it was changed to Anderson-Dolan, who spent the bulk of the season with the Manitoba Moose of the American Hockey League.

This was the fifth career Stanley Cup playoff game for Anderson-Dolan and that was his first post-season goal.

"It's all four lines, it's all of our D contributing. We roll well when everybody is a part of it," said Arniel. "That's kind of what we got."

SPECIAL TEAMS: There were seven power plays in the contest, with the Jets going one-for-four with the man-advantage and the Blues finishing two-for-three.

Scheifele's power play marker was an intended pass that rode up the stick of Blues defenceman Ryan Suter and got behind Binnington.

THE KEY PLAY: With the Jets trailing 3-2 and 1:56 to go in the second period, goalie Connor Hellebuyck closed up the five-hole on a breakaway attempt by Jordan Kyrrou, setting the stage for the third-period rally.

THE THREE STARS

1. Mark Scheifele, Jets, Scored a goal and set up the equalizer and game-winner.
2. Kyle Connor, Jets, Buried the game-winner, added two assists and had five shots on goal on 11 shot-attempts.
3. Jordan Kyrrou, Blues, Scored early in the second period and finished with four shots on goal.

EXTRA, EXTRA: It was a feisty first period, with the Blues finishing with 32 hits to 14 for the Jets. The game settled down a bit in the second and finished 53-33 for St. Louis.

"You know what, it feels like every year Game 1 in each series, (is) a bit of a bloodbath," said Lowry. "Teams are both trying to assert their dominance. Everyone's amped up. Our style of game is we want to be a fast forechecking team, heavy, hard to play against. But we don't need to chase hits."

Blues captain and former Brandon Wheat Kings star Brayden Schenn led the hit parade with nine, including a whopping eight in the first period as the two teams worked to set a

physical tone. “Brayden Schenn is an incredible competitor and he’s our leader,” said Blues head coach Jim Montgomery. “He sets the tone for us really well every night.”

Jets defenceman Luke Schenn led the Jets with five hits.

The Jets were without injured forwards Nikolaj Ehlers (lower body), Rasmus Kupari (concussion) and Gabe Vilardi (upper body), while the healthy scratches were goalie Chris Driedger, defencemen Colin Miller, Haydn Fleury and Ville Heinola and forward Dominic Toninato.

The Blues scratches were forwards Dylan Holloway (upper body) and Alexandre Texier and defencemen Tyler Tucker and Matthew Kessel.’

<https://www.winnipegfreepress.com/breakingnews/2025/04/19/hellebuyck-dispels-thoughts-of-deja-vu-after-rough-start-in-game-1>

Hellebuyck dispels thoughts of deja vu after rough start in Game 1

By: Mike McIntyre

The night began with ear-splitting chants of “MVP, MVP, MVP” serenading Connor Hellebuyck before the puck had even dropped, a nod to his incredible regular-season where he shattered franchise records left and right.

But when Jordan Kyrou’s wrist shot eluded the Winnipeg Jets goaltender just 73 seconds into the second period — already the third St. Louis Blues goal he’d surrendered on just 10 shots — you could feel the mood start to shift inside Canada Life Centre.

The air was quickly coming out of the proverbial balloon with a nervous, anxious fan base that likely has some collective trauma from how things have played out the previous two springs.

It wasn’t nearly as subtle on social media, where the hot takes were pouring in fast and extremely furious.

“He looks as bad as the haters claimed he would. I know it’s early but woof.”

“Is Hellebuyck the worst playoff goalie of all time.”

“Playoff Helle strikes again.”

You get the picture. It wasn’t pretty.

But then a funny thing happened on the way to inexplicably condemning the guy who is a shoo-in to win a third Vezina Trophy and is a legitimate contender to win the Hart Trophy as well.

Late in the second period, with the Jets down a goal to the opportunistic Blues, Kyrrou was sent in on a breakaway after a flip pass essentially bounced his way. This had extreme danger written all over it, a golden chance for the underdog visitors to really put a stranglehold in the game and snatch home-ice advantage away from the Presidents' Trophy winners.

Hellebuyck had other ideas, calmly playing the deke attempt and making a difficult stop look rather routine, the way he so often does.

"He kind of drove wide. He had a couple options but he kind of looked like he was trying to use his speed to get around me," Hellebuyck explained after the fact.

"In that moment I was just trying to smother him because he got a little tight to me and it stuck to me."

File this one under the timeliest of saves. It kept the score 3-2 in favour of St. Louis and ultimately set the stage for a frantic comeback victory in the form of three straight third-period tallies by Winnipeg.

"You just have to make one big save and that's going to be the difference maker. I thought that was it," said Hellebuyck, who would only face a total of seven shots after Kyrrou's goal, including the breakaway bid. He turned them all aside.

"Big save at a big time. That's Helly for us," said Jets centre Mark Scheifele, who went on to have the primary assist on Alex Lafallo's game-tying goal and Kyle Connor's game-winning goal in the third period.

"He's the backbone of this team and that was a tremendous save and obviously at a big point in the game. Kept us in it and played awesome tonight."

Hellebuyck's final numbers definitely won't jump on the page. A 3.00 goals-against-average is a full goal more than what he had during 62 regular-season starts. And a .824 save-percentage is not even in the same time zone as the .925 he posted over the six-month campaign.

But in the small sample size that is the playoffs, when you make a save can be more important than how many you make.

"That's what great goaltenders do," said Jets coach Scott Arniel.

“They (the Blues) have one and we have one. I think at the end of the day, just ask our guy to make one more big save than their guy and make sure we come out at the right end of it.”

Hellebuyck has the ultimate poker face and doesn't show many emotions, certainly not when dealing with the media, so there's no telling just how big this victory was for him. But in a year when the Jets have significantly raised the internal bar, gutting out a win and not letting a tough start wear him down seems enormous.

“That's playoff hockey. You have to play right to the last minute and right to the last second,” said Hellebuyck.

“It was fun. The guys were buzzing out there. I didn't get a whole lot of action in the third, but it was really fun to watch and be a part of. There will be a lot more.”

The Jets and their fans are certainly hoping that's the case. His last two playoffs have been forgettable, with a combined 2-8 record against the Vegas Golden Knights and Colorado Avalanche. He had a bloated 5.23 GAA and .864 SV% last year, and a 3.44 GAA with an .886 SV% in 2022-23.

That's certainly not all on Hellebuyck, even if he ultimately wears it more than his teammates. It's more a reflection on how the Jets have abandoned their systems and structure at the worst possible times.

Hellebuyck saw no evidence of that in Game 1.

“I thought we just continued with our details, continued putting the pressure on and getting the puck deep and not turning it over in the right areas. When we're holding the puck the whole time it makes it like that,” he said of only facing two shots in the final period.

“I thought we were controlling the play pretty well. We played great and now we just have to move on to the next one and continue to do it,” he said.

Blues coach Jim Montgomery, clearly frustrated with how his team played once they got the lead, wasn't so sure the breakaway save on Kyrrou was as big of a deal as the Jets felt it was.

“With the way we played in the third, I don't know if two (goal lead) would've been enough,” he said.

There was a moment late in the third period, once the Jets had already completed the comeback with Adam Lowry's empty-net goal that tempers began to flare and several skirmishes broke out, the way they often do when two rivals get together in the playoffs.

Blues goaltender Jordan Binnington, who can run a little hot at times, began to make his way towards centre ice. Was he looking to drop the glove and blocker and go toe-to-toe with Hellebuyck?

"A goalie fight in playoffs would be dumb. That would just be dumb," said Hellebuyck.

Maybe, but also entertaining and certainly memorable. Speaking of which, Hellebuyck said he'll never forget how this game started for him, with the crowd showing their appreciation for his work so far with those MVP chants.

"That was crazy. That's one of those things I'm going to remember for the rest of my life," he said.

"That was really cool. That gave me a little boost and excitement for the game. I'm just so happy we pulled this one out and now we move forward."

<https://www.winnipegfreepress.com/breakingnews/2025/04/19/whiteout-party-opens-with-honour-for-hawerchuk>

Whiteout party opens with jersey for Hawerchuk statue

By: Nicole Buffie

Dale Hawerchuk's statue got its own Winnipeg Whiteout Saturday afternoon.

The bronze statue depicting the former Winnipeg Jet and Hockey Hall of Famer in True North Square plaza was draped in a white, #10 Jets jersey to celebrate the first game of the Jets playoff run against the St. Louis Blues.

"It only makes sense to give one of the best Jets players their own Whiteout jersey," said Stuart Mack in front of the statue Saturday afternoon.

Mack was one of more than 5,000 fans packing the streets in front of Canada Life Centre for two playoff watch parties. Tickets for the Whiteout Street Party event sold out within minutes of going on sale Tuesday.

At True North Square plaza, the Party at the Plaza packed even more fans in front of massive screens to watch the game. Liquor and food tents and a DJ entertained guests in the 90 minutes before the 5 p.m. puck drop.

Jets VIPs Mick E. Moose and Benny rolled up to the plaza party in style. The beloved mascots greeted fans from a limousine which was escorted by a car draped in Jets flags and horns.

Superfan Sheila Hathaway says she would be OK with the Jets losing at least one game.

"I think a loss is important, because we play harder," Hathaway said. "They have to have that drive and hunger and I think it keeps them sharper."

Hathaway spent 45 minutes Saturday afternoon preparing for the game by painting her face in Jets red, white and blue and finished it off with silver gemstones depicting a Stanley Cup.

The season ticket holder said she dresses up each time the Jets make the playoffs.

"I figure if they got to put extra effort in, I should put extra effort in, right?" she said with a laugh.

The street party brought multiple road closures to downtown Winnipeg. Southbound Donald Street between Ellice Avenue and St. Mary Avenue will be closed from Saturday at 6 a.m. until Tuesday at 7 a.m.

Eastbound and westbound Graham Avenue between Hargrave Street and Smith Street will close on Saturday at 6 a.m. until Sunday at 7 a.m.

They will close again between Monday at 9 a.m. and 7 a.m. Tuesday.

Winnipeg Transit buses will be rerouted off Graham Avenue between Kennedy Street and Smith Street starting at 6 a.m. on Saturday.

Regular service will resume on Sunday, with the reroute starting again at 9 a.m. on Monday and ending on Tuesday.

Brother and sister Brent Nemeth and Larissa Sayles took in the whiteout party on Donald Street before heading inside the arena to take in the game.

Sayles lives in B.C. but grew up in Winnipeg and managed to secure playoff tickets to attend the game with her brother.

"This is my home and this is my team," Sayles said.

"We're gonna go right to the end," Nemeth added.

The Jets are the first team from Canada to finish with the NHL's best regular-season record since the Vancouver Canucks in 2012, ending their season with the Central Division and Western Conference titles.

The Jets and Blues will play Game 2 on Monday at 6:30 p.m. at Canada Life Centre.

Winnipeg Sun

<https://winnipeg.sun.com/sports/a-bit-of-a-bloodbath-jets-blues-dont-hold-back-in-game-1>

'A bit of a bloodbath': Jets and Blues don't hold back in Game 1 that had everything

By Paul Friesen

Is everybody ready for Round 2?

One game into the Winnipeg Jets series against St. Louis it feels a bit like they've already gone six or seven games.

Because Game 1 had pretty much everything you'd want or expect in a playoff tilt between division rivals.

A brutally physical start, much of it courtesy of the Blues, an explosion of goals, a third-period comeback from the home team and the game-winner in the dying minutes – all were present and accounted for.

Oh, and a melee to end it, signalling more of the same is likely to come.

The final count was 5-3, Jets, but not before some anxious moments for the sellout throng and few blocks full of white-clad supporters outside.

Twice they fell behind, shaking off the deficits like the repeated body contact.

"I just like that we didn't start cheating the game," Jets captain Adam Lowry said. "The structure was there once we settled into the game, and then we really limited their chances, didn't give up a whole lot. That's a good blueprint for success."

That blueprint had some red on it.

"It feels like every year Game 1 in each series, a bit of a bloodbath," Lowry said. "Teams are both trying to assert their dominance. Everyone's amped up."

If the Jets weren't sure how the Blues were going to play them, they found out pretty quickly.

Led by captain Brayden Schenn, they hit pretty much everything in dark blue that moved.

From Cole Perfetti to the towering Logan Stanley, anyone handling the puck was fair game and could expect to pay a price.

“We did a pretty good job of matching it, mitigating it and settling into our style,” Lowry said.

The home side took a while to get that part of their game going – it’s tough when you play the first few shifts in your own end – but Lowry changed that some five minutes in, flattening defenceman Ryan Suter behind the Blues net.

That opening 20 minutes that had the hit-counters hopping: they counted 37 in all, 24 by the Blues. The final hits were 53-33, St. Louis.

It’s as if the underdogs were testing the mettle of a team that hasn’t handled playoff hockey well the last two seasons.

“Our style of game is we want to be a fast forechecking team, heavy, hard to play against,” Lowry said. “But we don’t need to chase hits. Anytime a team’s chasing hits you can get them out of position.”

It was the Jets who appeared out of it early on.

“A little bit wacky,” is how head coach Scott Arniel put it. “We were a little bit sloppy. Hesitant at times. We didn’t execute very well. And first game, there’s a lot of pressure. But then we calmed down and got back to doing what we do.”

Not before giving up three goals in the first 21 minutes of the game. We’re talking about the best defensive team in the NHL.

Any fans having a flashback to last year’s first playoff game against Colorado could be forgiven. That one ended 7-6, Jets.

In this one, the Jets tightened up, to the point where they held the Blues to just two shots in the third period.

That’s when the talent kicked in.

Mark Scheifele set up two goals that made you sit up and take notice. His game was on all night.

First he used his muscle to win a puck battle behind the net, finishing with a nifty setup to Alex Iafallo in front.

His cross-ice pass to Kyle Connor for the late game-winner was a needle-threader, missing the stick of a defender by inches.

“What a play,” is all Lowry needed to say.

While Scheifele, who scored one himself, supplanted Blake Wheeler as the franchise's career playoff point producer, Jaret Anderson-Dolan scored his first career post-season goal, an unexpected contribution from the fourth line.

We told you the game had a bit of everything.

There were dumb and dumber penalties, too. Neal Pionk's rough-housing late in the first led to a St. Louis goal early in the second.

The Blues' Zack Bolduc delivered a brain-dead cross-check to Lafallo four minutes into the third, his team trying to protect a one-goal lead.

"We can't take that penalty in the playoffs," St. Louis head coach Jim Montgomery said. "It took us from a situation where I thought we were a little bit in control, and then we weren't."

Both teams were in danger of losing control in the dying seconds, splitting 10 misconducts. But all 10 players seemed to know enough not to instigate an actual scrap and risk drawing a suspension.

Blues goalie Jordan Binnington was even wandering to near his blue line in an apparent attempt to get the attention of Connor Hellebuyck at the other end.

"A goalie fight in playoffs would be dumb," Hellebuyck said.

Correct.

Perhaps all of it was simply a tone-setter for Game 2 on Monday.

"It's just emotion, boiling over," Lowry said. "A little extracurriculars. It was nice to see all of our guys standing up for each other. That's what we do as a team. No one's going to back down from anyone. We're going to stick together until the final buzzer. That's just the emotion of the game. I wouldn't read too much into that."

We won't.

We'll just wait to see for ourselves.

<https://winnipeg.sun.com/sports/hockey/nhl/winnipeg-jets/jets-stalwarts-scheifele-and-connor-combine-for-comeback-win-over-st-louis-blues>

Jets stalwarts Scheifele and Connor combine for comeback win over St. Louis Blues

By Gordon Anderson

Winnipeg's dynamic duo waited until the third period to bust the game open for the Jets.

Mark Scheifele set up both the game-tying goal and game winner and Kyle Connor blasted home the deciding marker as the Winnipeg Jets beat the St. Louis Blues 5-3 on Saturday night.

"Connor is absolutely fantastic," Scheifele said. "He's a real pleasure to play with. I've said it many times, I'm lucky to have spent as much time with him as I have."

Connor and Scheifele ended up with one goal and two assists each.

"It was another fun night playing with him," Scheifele said.

The game winning goal was a bit of sublime work from the Jets top centreman as he carried the puck from low to high before dishing a cross-seam pass to his longtime linemate, the Jets goal scoring leader from the regular season blasting the puck behind Jordan Binnington at 18:24.

"Connor has got such a deceptive release," Jets captain Adam Lowry said. "He gets his shot off in traffic, he's able to get separation when it seems like there's not a lot of space. Scheifele is so cerebral that he's able to buy time. You look at that play where they're able to just find a seam."

Lowry marvels at the way both players can play the game at such a high level, setting each other up for gilt-edged chances on a consistent basis using ingenuity and intelligent offensive play.

"I think they read off each other so well, they're so dynamic together, and then their space is incredible," Lowry said. "They don't crowd each other in the (offensive) zone, but they always seem to have that tight support whenever they need an out. It was great to see them rewarded."

Lowry iced the game with an empty-net goal at 19:07.

Courtesy of his three-point game Scheifele is now the Jets/Thrashers all-time playoff point getter with 41 points. The Kitchener, Ont., native tied Blake Wheeler with his first-period power-play goal and assumed the lead when he grabbed the primary assist on Alex Iafallo's third period equalizer at 9:18. Wheeler netted 39 points in his Jets career.

"That's one thing about the best players or the top players, especially offensive guys, they have a knack for finding holes," head coach Scott Arniel said. "I thought Connor had a lot of puck possession in the second period, he just didn't get that shot off a few times."

<https://winnipeg.sun.com/sports/hockey/nhl/winnipeg-jets/a-roaring-start-jets-rally-with-three-goals-in-the-third-to-win-5-3-over-the-st-louis-blues>

A roaring start: Jets rally with three goals in third to beat Blues in Game 1

By Gordon Anderson

The Winnipeg Jets are off to a thunderous start to the post-season.

The Jets scored three third-period goals en route to a 5-3 victory over the St. Louis Blues on Saturday night in the opening game of their best-of-seven series.

"I thought the first period, we looked nervous," head coach Scott Arniel said. "Just trying to find our way, get going. Built it up in the second but then stuck with it and really played well in the third."

The Jets outshot the Blues 9-2 in the third and 26-17 overall.

Kyle Connor gave the Jets a 4-3 lead at 18:24 when he blasted a Mark Scheifele cross-ice pass behind Jordan Binnington.

Scheifele scored a power-play goal in the first period and added a helper on Alex Iafallo's equalizer.

Adam Lowry scored an empty-net goal at 19:07.

Coming into the post-season, the Blues owned a 35-2-1 record when leading after two periods. The Jets were 12-16-0 when trailing after 40 minutes.

Jaret Anderson-Dolan also scored. Anderson-Dolan's goal was his first of the season and first of his NHL playoff career.

Connor Hellebuyck stopped 14 shots.

Robert Thomas, Oskar Sundqvist and Jordan Kyrou scored for the Blues. Binnington turned away 21 shots.

St. Louis opened the scoring at 9:41 of the first with a power-play goal as Thomas whipped a shot from the right faceoff circle that beat Hellebuyck over the glove hand.

The Jets tied the game with a man-advantage goal at 13:38 when Scheifele's centring pass deflected off the stick of Ryan Suter and over the right shoulder of Binnington. The Jets went 1-4 with the man advantage.

Winnipeg assumed a 2-1 lead at 15:02 when Anderson-Dolan redirected a Luke Schenn point shot.

The Blues evened the game at 18:10 when Sundqvist beat Hellebuyck to the top half of the net.

The visitors took a 3-2 lead at 1:13 of the second when Kyrrou's shot from the left faceoff circle beat Hellebuyck over the right shoulder for a power-play marker. The Blues went 2-3 on the powerplay.

The Jets tied the game at 9:18 of the third when Lafallo jammed the puck underneath the pads of Binnington.

"That was a heck of a play by Scheif and Al going to the dirty area to get us back in the game, and kind of the building erupted," Lowry said. "I feel like we seized that momentum."

Game 2 of the series goes Monday night at Canada Life Centre.

Sportsnet.ca

<https://www.sportsnet.ca/nhl/article/connor-scheifele-shine-bright-as-jets-take-game-1-vs-blues/>

Connor, Scheifele shine bright as Jets take Game 1 vs. Blues

By Jacob Stoller

WINNIPEG — The word clutch is thrown around a lot this time of year.

Hockey is a game of inches and in the playoffs those margins narrow. Teams need their best players to deliver when their backs are against the wall.

In Game 1 of the Winnipeg Jets' first-round series against the St. Louis Blues — a 5-3 win — Mark Scheifele and Kyle Connor did just that.

"Tonight was a perfect example of our stars being our stars," Adam Lowry said.

Scheifele and Connor each finished the night with a goal and two assists, connecting on the game-winning goal. It was a vintage sequence by one of the NHL's most dynamic duos. With 1:36 remaining in the third period and the game deadlocked 3-3, Scheifele fed Connor with a cross-ice seam pass that found the latter in his sweet spot.

"The top players, especially offensive guys, they have a knack for finding holes," Jets coach Scott Arniel said.

Especially those two.

“There are guys with a ton of skill and then there are guys who are smart. They have both,” Connor Hellebuyck said. “And when you put them together, they use both. That’s what makes them so elite together.”

It was another one of those instances that showed why the two have been inseparable since Connor broke into the league in 2016.

“They read off each other,” Lowry said. “KC’s got such a deceptive release. He gets his shot off in traffic, he’s able to get separation when it seems like there’s not a lot of space. And then Scheif’s so cerebral that he’s able to buy time.”

But that goal was all the more impressive given what the two had been fighting through all game. As the Blues clamped down on them, Winnipeg’s star forwards didn’t defer to the perimeter, attempt toe-drag dekes or overthink plays. They kept attacking off the cycle. When they didn’t have the puck, Scheifele and Connor — along with Alex Lafallo, who was terrific again — worked hard to get it back. And they did so while going toe-to-toe against St. Louis’ first line of Robert Thomas, Pavel Buchnevich and Jake Neighbours.

“That’s part of what we have talked about all year long,” Arniel said. “No matter who you are, there’s a way to play without the puck and the buy-in we’ve gotten from our top guys has obviously helped us have success defensively. That was a good matchup. They had some looks, that line had some looks obviously. But that’s what it’s going to be. They’re going to have to do it, could be possibly six more times. When you go head-to-head against top players, you have to be at your best.”

Especially given the uncertainty surrounding injuries to Gabriel Vilardi and Nikolaj Ehlers.

Winnipeg has executed a next-man mentality all year — just look at how Lafallo has fared — but the loss of two top-six pieces puts further onus on Scheifele and Connor. For a team that strives to out-edge teams 2-1 rather than 7-6, the Jets’ top two scorers are going to be the team’s x-factors down the stretch.

Character win

All year long, we’ve talked a lot about this team’s response.

It’s something they’ve prided themselves on and Game 1 was another great example. Winnipeg started sloppy in the first period. Maybe it was a byproduct of nerves, given how intense the whiteout crowd was, but the Blues, to their credit, came out guns blazing and finished nearly every single hit they could.

But that all changed in the second, when the Jets out-chanced the Blues 7-3 during five-on-five play.

"I really thought in the second period we got to our game," Connor said. "That's Winnipeg Jets hockey where you're rolling around the O-zone, getting possession, early changes, getting the next line out there, keep doing it, hemming teams in. The rush really wasn't there. I thought they did a great job with their F3. Obviously, we talked about that and they don't want to give anything up. So, just getting through the neutral zone, being simple if the play's there. If not, make those D turn and get it back on the forecheck."

Angry 'Al'

Given how he's supported Scheifele and Connor, maybe Lafallo remains on the top line even once Vilardi returns.

"He can do it all," Connor said. "He's such a big asset for our team and he comes into our line and doesn't change a thing, plays the same exact way, wins a ton of battles. I think he's one of the best defenders on our team, backchecks really hard, great stick. Seems like he's knocking the puck down every chance he can get. He's got a knack around the net and you've seen that the past 20 games or however long he's been with us. It translates to play off hockey."

Not only did Lafallo score the tying goal but he exhibited a level of bite to his game we haven't seen before. He's always aggressive in the hard areas but the way he was involved in extracurriculars — like going after Zachary Bolduc after the Blues forward hit him from behind — gives the Jets' first line a little bit of sandpaper against a tight-checking opponent.

Stoller Says

- Safe to assume the chippiness in Game 1 — the 86 combined hits, the scrum in the final minute of the third — will foreshadow the rest of the series. The Blues won the hit battle 53-33, although that underscores how the Jets were able to impose their will in other ways.

"We want to be a fast forechecking team, heavy, hard to play against. But we don't need to chase hits," Lowry said. "I think anytime a team's chasing hits you can get them out of position."

- Jordan Binnington skated up to the blue line while chaos ensued late in the third period. Did Connor Hellebuyck consider what looked to be an invitation for a goalie fight?

"A goalie fight in playoffs would be dumb," Hellebuyck said. "That would just be dumb."

- That was a master-class performance by the Jets' fourth line of David Gustafsson, Morgan Barron and Jarret Anderson-Dolan. The trio controlled 75.6 per cent of the expected goals share, combined for four hits and generated Winnipeg's second goal — a double-tip from Barron and Anderson-Dolan that the latter was credited with, despite both players celebrating.

“Like it has been all year long, it’s all four lines, it’s all of our D contributing,” Arniel said. “We roll well when everybody is a part of it. That’s kind of what we got tonight.”

<https://www.sportsnet.ca/nhl/video/why-hellebuycks-composure-will-prove-crucial-for-jets-playoff-hopes/>

Why Hellebuyck’s composure will prove crucial for Jets’ playoff hopes (VIDEO)

Elliotte Friedman joins Sportsnet Central to discuss the play of Winnipeg Jets goalie Connor Hellebuyck in Game 1 against the St. Louis Blues, and why his confidence could prove crucial as the series goes on.

<https://www.sportsnet.ca/nhl/video/how-jets-survived-an-early-storm-to-triumph-over-blues/>

How Jets survived an early storm to triumph over Blues in Game 1 (VIDEO)

Ron MacLean, Kevin Bieksa, Elliotte Friedman and Kelly Hruddy breakdown Game 1 between the St. Louis Blues and the Winnipeg Jets after Kyle Connor scored late to send the fans home happy.

Canadian Press

<https://www.chrisd.ca/2025/04/19/winnipeg-jets-st-louis-blues-playoffs-game-1-win/>

Connor, Scheifele Use Their Smarts to Make Winnipeg Jets Soar

By Judy Owen, The Canadian Press

Kyle Connor and Mark Scheifele go together like laces and hockey skates.

The Jets’ top-line duo each had a goal and two assists to boost Winnipeg to a 5-3 victory over the St. Louis Blues in Saturday’s Game 1 opening-round playoff match.

Scheifele threaded a pass to set up Connor’s one-timer with 1:36 remaining in the third period, a goal that snapped a 3-3 tie. Captain Adam Lowry added an empty-netter with 53 seconds left to seal the victory.

Scheifele become the Jets/Thrashers’ all-time franchise leader in playoff points with 41.

“To do it in front of the fans tonight was pretty special,” said the Kitchener, Ont., centre. “That was a fun game to be a part of, just had a fun time.”

Connor was asked if he had an idea Scheifele would send him a pass because of their years of knowing what each other might do.

“Yeah, I’d like to think so,” he said with a laugh.

Scheifele said he has confidence Connor might score any time he feeds him the puck.

“All want to do is put the puck in his hands and he does some fantastic things,” Scheifele said. “Like I said before, I’m lucky to play with him.”

Lowry said the pair are “dynamic together.”

“They don’t crowd each other in the (offensive) zone, but they always seem to have that tight support whenever they need an out,” he said. “It was great to see them rewarded. I thought they had a heck of a Game 1.”

Game 2 in the best-of-seven Western Conference series goes Monday at Canada Life Centre, which featured a loud “whiteout” full house of 15,225 fans.

Teams that win Game 1 of a best-of-seven series own an all-time series record of 525-247 (. 680), according to NHL stats.

Both Connor and Scheifele finished the regular season with career-highs in points, and each played 82 games.

Connor had 97 points, including 41 goals, while Scheifele recorded 39 goals and 87 points.

Scheifele, 32, surpassed former captain Blake Wheeler’s franchise mark of 39 playoff points.

“Every year, (Scheifele) seems to work on some new skills, come back an even better player than he was before,” Lowry said when asked about the new franchise-leader’s value to the team.

“It’s difficult to kind of understand that someone in their 30s is continuing to get better, they’re not kind of plateauing. But he puts in the work, he’s rewarded for it. I thought tonight was a perfect example of our stars being our stars.”

Jaret Anderson-Dolan and Alex Iafallo also scored for the Jets, who won their regular-season series against the Blues 3-1. Josh Morrissey added a pair of helpers.

Connor Hellebuyck made 14 saves for Winnipeg, which claimed the Presidents’ Trophy for the NHL’s best regular-season record (56-22-4).

“They are just two elite players who see the game so well,” Hellebuyck said of Connor and Scheifele.

"There are guys with a ton of skill and then there are guys who are smart. They kind of have both. And when you put them together, they use both. That's what makes them so elite together."

Robert Thomas and Jordan Kyrrou each scored on the power play for St. Louis. Oskar Sundqvist added one at even strength and Justin Faulk had two assists.

Jordan Binnington stopped 21 shots for the Blues, which grabbed the Western Conference's final wild-card spot with a final-game victory (44-30-8).

Even St. Louis head coach Jim Montgomery was asked about what makes Scheifele and Connor a force to be reckoned with.

"Skill and talent," he said. "They make plays, poised plays. I mean that game-winning goal is a high-end play."

Kyrrou's goal at 1:13 of the second made it 3-2, but top-line winger Lafallo got a pass from Scheifele behind the net and tied it at 9:18 of the third to spark the comeback.

"That's playoff hockey," Hellebuyck said. "You have to play right to the last minute and right to the last second. It was fun."

"The guys were buzzing out there. I didn't get a whole lot of action in the third, but it was really fun to watch and be a part of. There will be a lot more."

The Jets outshot the visitors 9-2 in the third.

"You have to control your emotions," Blues captain Brayden Schenn said. "It's the playoffs and special teams are huge. ... We'll be fine for (the) next game. Obviously, Game 1 a lot of emotion with the buildup."

The Jets were 1-for-4 on the power play and the Blues 2-for-3.

The Hockey News

<https://ca.sports.yahoo.com/news/jets-brand-hockey-prevailed-stars-134832398.html>

Jets' Brand Of Hockey Prevailed and Stars Showed Up To Pick Up Game 1 Victory

By Julian Gaudio

It wasn't all smooth sailing for the Winnipeg Jets in Game 1, but they stuck to their game plan and found a way to pick up a vital win.

It was rocky at first, with the St. Louis Blues opening the scoring courtesy of their leading scorer, Robert Thomas. The Jets answered back with goals from Mark Scheifele and Morgan Baron before they coughed up the lead, allowing two unanswered goals.

The Jets sticking to their brand of hockey paid off in the third, with goals from Alex Iafallo to tie it and Kyle Connor to retake the lead.

The Jets outshot the Blues 26-17, holding them to just two shots in the final frame. It wasn't a great game from Connor Hellebuyck, beat cleanly on three separate occasions, but the Jets limited the Blues' opportunity, and it's exactly what HC Scott Arniel wanted.

"I thought the first period we looked real nervous," said Arniel. "Just kinda trying to find our way, kept going and built it up in the second, but then stuck with it and really played well in the third."

The Jets were outshot in the first period, 9-7, before responding by outshooting the Blues 10-6 and 9-2 in the middle and final frames.

"Our third period was Winnipeg Jets hockey," Connor told Sportsnet's Scott Oake. "We limited their chances, and I thought we did a great job of coming back and defending and turning those into offensive-zone shifts."

Connor and Scheifele stepped up, something they'll need to continue to do. Depth scoring is vital to overall success, but teams won't go very far in the playoffs if their best players aren't performing like their best players.

"I thought tonight was a perfect example of our stars being our stars," said captain Adam Lowry about Connor and Scheifele's performance.

The Jets won't be able to score five goals on Jordan Binnington and the Blues each game, so they'll need more out of Hellebuyck than what they received tonight. If they stay the course and do what Arniel asks of them, the Jets will continue to be the toughest team to defeat in the NHL.

The Athletic

<https://www.nytimes.com/athletic/6293156/2025/04/19/jets-blues-nhl-playoffs-2025-game-1-takeaways/?onboarded=true>

Jets score late winner to down Blues in Game 1: Takeaways

By Murat Ates and Jeremy Rutherford

WINNIPEG — The Presidents' Trophy-winning Winnipeg Jets made it clear this week that they are judging their season by the quality of their playoffs. Their 5-3 win on home ice in Game 1 showed that they are more resilient than ever.

The way the Jets kept pushing in the third period, with Alex Iafallo tying the game on a rebound and Kyle Connor scoring the game-winning goal with 1:36 left in the game, an early review of Winnipeg's playoffs shows the team is resilient when it counts.

Winnipeg took a game that was slipping away, and often controlled by Blues' stars Robert Thomas and Jordan Kyrrou, and turned it into a 1-0 series lead. Iafallo's goal tied the score with 10:42 left in the third period, and Winnipeg's top line, with Iafallo in place of injured Gabriel Vilardi, kept pushing until Connor delivered the late game-winning goal.

Connor's goal brought a raucous home crowd to its feet, and that's where it remained as Adam Lowry scored the empty net goal that sealed the 5-3 win.

Connor Hellebuyck stopped 14-of-17 shots in the win.

The Jets controlled the flow of play for large portions of the game but were burned early when Thomas and Kyrrou each scored with the man advantage, and Oskar Sundqvist took advantage of a failed Morgan Barron clear and a puck that bounced awkwardly off of Luke Schenn.

The Jets have preached the benefits of "scar tissue" from last year's playoffs and are meant to be a more resilient group this year. They've shown that to take a 1-0 lead against a hard-working, hard-checking Blues team in Game 1.

Iafallo steps up in the third period

Iafallo is one of Winnipeg's best forecheckers, hardest backcheckers and most tenacious forwards. Coach Scott Arniel likes to refer to him as a Swiss Army knife for his ability to play any role that the coaches ask of him.

He was also a fourth-line player for most of the season.

Iafallo scored four goals and three assists in 11 games upon his sudden promotion when Gabriel Vilardi got hurt, but no play he made was as big as the goal he scored against St. Louis in Game 1.

With Mark Scheifele and Connor cycling on the outside, trying desperately to find a chance in the middle, Iafallo drove to the net and jumped on a Scheifele rebound, scoring the game-tying goal while off balance in the slot.

Hellebuyck bounces back after Blues' third goal

Hellebuyck is facing down playoff demons this year after giving up 24 goals in five games to Colorado last year. The Jets' two-time Vezina Trophy winner, who has been the best goaltender in the world again this season, gave up three goals on St. Louis' first three quality chances of the game. Winnipeg needs to do much more to help him out, but Hellebuyck rose to the occasion all the same.

Game 1 could have gone differently. St. Louis' first goal came as the Jets' PK chased transition offence, failing to get the puck out, and leaving Thomas all alone in the circle. The chaotic bounce off Schenn that helped Sundqvist score the Blues' second goal came after a failed Barron clear, while Kyrrou's power play goal took advantage of a Sundqvist screen. Hellebuyck did his part to keep the Jets in the game, stopping Kyrrou's breakaway fivehole attempt after Dylan Samberg misplayed a puck in the neutral zone, and stopped everything he faced in the third.

This could be the first step in Hellebuyck erasing demons from playoffs past.

Connor and Scheifele can deliver results against St. Louis' star players

Scheifele got the Jets' first goal on the power play, thanks to a fortunate bounce off of Ryan Suter. There were parts of the second period when Scheifele and Connor ran their two-man offensive game, relying on cutbacks, quick turns, and perimeter play to open up seams — and it almost paid off, with Binnington going post-to-post to make two tough saves off of Connor.

Connor was stopped on two cross-seam passes — one from Scheifele, one on the power play from Cole Perfetti — before breaking through with the game-winning goal in the third. He was dancing all night, although some of his cutbacks kept him to the outside.

But there is a realistic, believable world in which Connor and Scheifele take over parts of the series the way they did in Game 1. They're going to need to get to inside ice and execute when they get there — and it took until the third period for them to break through.

Iafallo was the energizer on that line all night, knocking down pucks that helped Winnipeg's stars go to work.

Jets fans back Luke Schenn

One of the big storylines in the series is the fact that brothers Luke and Brayden Schenn are going up against each other. In the days leading up to Game 1, Luke told reporters that younger brother Brayden, captain of the Blues, was instrumental in re-establishing the culture in St. Louis, which helped them get back into the playoff picture.

"I agree with Luke," Blues coach Jim Montgomery said. "I don't think we're in this situation if it's not for Brayden Schenn. There were really trying times during the regular season for our group, and he was the glue that kept us together."

But if you don't need to wonder which Schenn fans at Canada Life Centre were supporting Saturday. After Brayden laid a hit on Jets' captain Lowry, the crowd began chanting: "Luke is better! Luke is better!"

Thomas keeps streaking and feasting

Blues center Thomas ended the regular season on a 12-game point streak, in which he had 25 points (4 goals, 21 assists). He picked up where he left off in Game 1 against the Jets Saturday, scoring the first goal of the NHL playoffs, a power-play goal for a 1-0 lead.

“Dominance,” Blues forward Jake Neighbours said. “I think everybody’s seen that he’s taken it to a different level. He’s been putting his name in the conversation of superstar status in this league. Personally, I feel like he’s been in that conversation for three years now, but this year the production is up a little bit since the 4 Nations (Face-Off).

“But I think the No. 1 thing is his defensive game. You’ve got to worry about him putting up three or four points on you every night, but at the same time you’re not going to get a lot of looks with him on the ice. Just the way he’s able to control the game from both ends of the ice, almost at ease, is pretty impressive.”

Thomas has feasted on the Jets this season. In four regular-season games, he had three goals and five assists. So with the power-play goal Saturday, he has four goals and nine points in five games against them. At the time of his goal in Game 1, he had four goals on just 10 shots.

<https://www.nytimes.com/athletic/6292861/2025/04/20/kyle-connor-mark-scheifele-jets-win-game-one/>

Why Kyle Connor and Mark Scheifele’s Game 1 performances prove they’ve grown

By Murat Ates

WINNIPEG — Winnipeg’s round one matchup against St. Louis is an opportunity for the Jets to prove that their improvement this season was worth something.

That a year’s worth of commitment to process was worth something. That last year’s 4-1 devastation against Colorado was a stepping stone — a lesson learned — and not a permanent indictment of the Jets’ core when games get tough. In that regard, Game 1 against St. Louis was everything Winnipeg needed it to be because Mark Scheifele and Kyle Connor were everything Winnipeg needed them to be.

Winnipeg can win this series if the Jets’ stars outplay St. Louis’ top line of Robert Thomas, Pavel Buchnevich, and Jake Neighbours. Winnipeg can win multiple series if Connor and Scheifele show the tenacity they did at the end of Game 1 against St. Louis — although it’s way too soon to talk about those.

Saturday’s comeback win took patience, aggression and top-end talent from Winnipeg’s biggest forward stars.

The Jets' stars had been pressing all game but getting stymied, whether by Jordan Binnington, the Blues' stodgy defending, or their own decision-making. St. Louis started Game 1 by slowing things down. The Blues played a series of heavy shifts in the Jets' zone, taking the energy away from Canada Life Centre, and appeared to be so committed to slow, heavy hockey that they completed a line change while holding possession of the puck behind their own net. Luke Schenn's interference penalty quickly put the Jets down a goal; Neighbours' slashing penalty helped Scheifele get a bounce to tie it.

It was a game without rhythm to it. Connor Hellebuyck said it "didn't have a lot of feel." Winnipeg made a few mistakes — mostly with failed clears — and paid dearly for them, while St. Louis racked up 53 hits in the name of a physical forecheck. Any time that Connor did escape St. Louis' pressure, leading to his game-high 11 shot attempts, Binnington had the answer. It's exactly this kind of frustrating game that would have derailed past editions of the Jets.

Past editions of Scheifele and Connor might have responded to Saturday's lack of rhythm by extending shifts or chasing for rush plays that weren't quite there. That's not what happened on Saturday, of course: This year's version put the Jets on their back, keying the comeback that gave Winnipeg its 1-0 series lead.

With 11 minutes left in the third period, Scheifele tracked back into Winnipeg's zone to give Dylan Samberg and Neal Pionk close puck support, orchestrating a breakout that got Winnipeg around the Blues' aggressive forecheck. Scheifele got to the offensive blue line with the puck, made an entry pass to Connor through Robert Thomas and continued deep into the zone. Connor had to fight through Colton Parayko, first trying a deke and then making an extra effort play to get the puck back to Scheifele down low. That's when Scheifele spun off of Thomas and defenceman Cam Fowler with one move, getting the puck in front to Alex Iafallo for the game-tying goal. The goal was 50 minutes in the making, and it required Winnipeg to play the right way for long enough to give itself a chance.

"That was a heck of a play by Scheif and Al going to the dirty area to get us back in the game, and the building erupted," said Adam Lowry.

The game-winning goal starts with Scheifele winning a faceoff and continues with the Jets executing a set play off the offensive zone win. Iafallo takes his check to the slot as Scheifele curls around the net. As Scheifele gets the puck from Josh Morrissey, he's looking for Connor the whole way — and Connor is backing away from the slot to open up the seam.

"(Connor) is able to get separation when it seems like there's not a lot of space," Lowry said. "And then Scheif's so cerebral that he's able to buy time. You look at that play where they're able to just find a seam."

Winnipeg has always been able to count on Connor and Scheifele to be on the finishing end of plays like this. This season, we saw them start more and more plays just like them, setting new career highs in points while making stronger defensive impacts. They know how to see the tough spots through, now, in a way that's showing their maturity.

"You've just got to stick with it, stay positive, knowing you're doing the right things," Connor said. "We talked about it between periods. That's got to be our game no matter what."

What's this about winning a series, though? The Jets went up 1-0 on Colorado in 2024, then lost four straight. They went up 1-0 on Vegas in 2023 and then lost four straight games in that series, too. The difference is that Connor and Scheifele are more complete players, committing to a better process. This is not to say the Blues' stars didn't create chances of their own. Thomas and Jordan Kyrrou each scored. Hellebuyck's stop on Kyrrou's second-period breakaway was a major turning point in the game, and Kyrrou's speed was on display again in the third period.

But Iafallo's goal was against Thomas' line; Connor's goal came against Kyrrou's line with Brayden Schenn. A 1-0 series lead is much easier to believe in when it comes with the flow of play instead of against it, and when the habits demonstrated in the win are the same ones you've seen all season long. The Jets spent almost two-thirds of the game in the Blues' zone, holding St. Louis to just two shots in the third period.

"The buy-in we've gotten from our top guys has helped us have success defensively," coach Scott Arniel said. "That was a good matchup ... They're going to have to do it, could be possibly six more times. When you go head-to-head against top players, you have to be at your best."

Winnipeg's success went well beyond its two prolific scorers. Iafallo's tenacity is an enormous part of its top line's success. Jaret Anderson-Dolan scored a deflection goal after a Logan Stanley rocket was recovered along the wall by David Gustafsson and Schenn got a wrist shot off from the point. Nino Niederreiter was a physical force for much of the game, opening up space for Cole Perfetti to work in — and Perfetti looked completely at home playing in his second playoff game.

Keeping with the theme of resilience, Hellebuyck gave up goals on three of the first 10 shots he faced before playing a perfect second half of the game. The goals he gave up were on Grade-A chances: Thomas left all alone in the circle on a Blues power play after Iafallo and Lowry got caught on the wrong side of the puck, Oskar Sundqvist getting a slot shot after Morgan Barron couldn't clear the puck, and Kyrrou's floater from the point going through a Sundqvist screen. If not for Hellebuyck's breakaway save on Kyrrou, Game 1 could have felt like Colorado all over again. Hellebuyck shut the door while Winnipeg played a nearly perfect third period in front of him.

“That’s Winnipeg Jets hockey where you’re rolling around the O-zone, getting possession, early changes, getting the next line out there, keep doing it, hemming teams in,” Connor said.

The last word goes to Lowry, who was asked to comment on Scheifele’s milestone: Scheifele’s goal and two assists put him clear of Blake Wheeler for the all-time franchise playoff point scoring lead.

“There’s been a long list of things that kind of shows what type of player (Scheifele) is in the playoffs. I look at 2017-2018 and kind of the run that he had, really carried the mail offensively with the number of goals he scored in that year. But every year, he seems to work on some new skills, come back an even better player than he was before,” Lowry said.

Lowry went on to express amazement at Scheifele’s continued growth at age 32, before offering a perfect summary of Game 1.

“It’s difficult to kind of understand that someone in their 30s is continuing to get better, they’re not kind of plateauing. But he puts in the work, he’s rewarded for it. I thought tonight was a perfect example of our stars being our stars.”

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<https://www.tsn.ca/nhl/video/jets-top-line-rises-to-the-occasion-with-seven-points-in-game-1-win%7E3118836>

Jets' top line rises to the occasion with seven points in Game 1 win (VIDEO)

John Lu is joined by TSN Hockey Insider Darren Dreger to discuss the performance of the Jets' top line in their Game 1 victory, and how goaltenders Connor Hellebuyck and Jordan Binnington both 'earned their status' on Saturday despite a shaky start.

<https://www.tsn.ca/nhl/video/you-need-your-big-dogs-barking-scheifele-the-x-factor-as-jets-rally-to-beat-blues%7E3118835>

'You need your big dogs barking': Scheifele the x-factor as Jets rally to beat Blues (VIDEO)

The TSN Hockey panel weighs in on an impressive three-point outing by Mark Scheifele in Game 1 against the Blues where he showed he can dig in and lead his team to a victory, shares its thoughts on a rough outing by Connor Hellebuyck, and discusses how St. Louis was able to make life difficult for Winnipeg on Saturday.