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<https://www.nhl.com/jets/news/three-things-connor-scores-game-winner-to-give-jets-2-0-lead>

***Three things - Connor scores game winner to give Jets 2-0 lead
Connor scores game winning goal 1:43 into the third in 2-1 win over Blues***

By Jamie Thomas

WINNIPEG – The Winnipeg Jets got another third period game winning goal from Kyle Connor to beat the St. Louis Blues 2-1 in Game 2 at Canada Life Centre. Mark Scheifele had the other goal for Winnipeg and added an assist as the Jets took a 2-0 series lead. Connor Hellebuyck made 21 saves, as the Jets only allowed five shots in the third period to lock down the win. The Jets will head to St. Louis for the next two games, with Game 3 scheduled for Thursday.

ANOTHER PHYSICAL OPENING PERIOD

The Blues have made it clear that they are targeting Mark Scheifele in this series. In the opening period, Tyler Tucker, Brayden Schenn and Ryan Suter took shots at the Jets centreman. On the first goal of the game, Scheifele went around Nick Leddy and moved in on Jordan Binnington and as he shot the puck, Blues forward Jimmy Snuggerud went for the hit and ended up pushing the puck past Binnington for a 1-0 Jets lead.

In total, there were 32 hits thrown in the first period, 16 for each team but no hit was bigger than this one from Logan Stanley on Jordan Kyrou at the Jets blueline.

KC WITH ANOTHER ONE

Kyle Connor was the hero on Saturday night with the game winner with 1:36 remaining in the game. This time, he scored the winner 1:43 into the final frame. The play started behind the Blues net when Scheifele found Cole Perfetti, who wasted no time with a quick pass to Connor who had found an open spot in the slot and his shot went through Jordan Binnington to send Canada Life Centre into a frenzy. Connor became the fourth player in the past 20 years to record the game-winning goal in consecutive games to open the playoffs. He joined Chris Kreider (2023), Nathan MacKinnon (2021) and Nicklas Lidstrom (2007).

"He's obviously pretty feisty. He can win a lot of battles that way," said Connor.

"And he's got great hands, and he wins that battle. And, you know, kind of threads the needle there."

CREDIT TO THE PENALTY KILL

The Jets gave up two power play goals in Game 1 and allowed another one with just under two seconds to go at the end of the first period tonight to Jimmy Snuggerud that tied the game at one. However, Winnipeg made some adjustments and shut down one

of the best power plays in the NHL since the 4 Nations Face-Off break. The Jets only allowed three shots on two Blues power plays in the second and then when they were nursing a 2-1 lead in the third, St. Louis did not register one shot on their final man advantage of the night.

Canadian Press

<https://www.chrisd.ca/2025/04/22/winnipeg-jets-st-louis-blues-playoffs-game-2-win/>

Connor's Heroics Help Jets Get Over Game 2 Hump, Lead Blues 2-0 in Series

By Judy Owen, The Canadian Press

Kyle Connor smiled when asked if he was only scoring game-winners in the playoffs.

"Yeah, I'll take it," the Winnipeg Jets top winger said Monday after another timely goal.

Connor scored his second consecutive game-winner in the third period and Mark Scheifele had a goal and assist to propel Winnipeg to a 2-1 victory over the St. Louis Blues and a two-game lead in their opening-round playoff series.

It was the first time in three NHL seasons the Jets have started with a 2-0 series lead in the Western Conference best-of-seven contest. The past two years, Winnipeg won the first game and then lost the next four to be eliminated.

Game 3 is Thursday in St. Louis.

Did it provide a mental boost to get over that Game 2 hump?

"I don't know if it's a mental boost, but we're aware of it coming into it," Connor said. "I think over the past couple of years, this group is motivated.

"We talked about it over the off-season, we preached about it all year, it's in this room. Everybody needs to be better, bear down, it's dragging everybody into the fight. Yeah it's a second win, but we're not resting here. We've got a long ways to go."

A fan favourite, his KC initials often spark fans to dress up as Colonel Sanders of KFC (Kentucky Fried Chicken) fame. One of those fans held a sign inside Canada Life Centre asking for a hockey stick in exchange for a chicken drumstick.

Connor made it 2-1 at 1:43 of the third period after getting a feed out front by Cole Perfetti at the side of the net.

In Winnipeg's 5-3 victory last Saturday, Connor's goal with 1:36 remaining in the third gave the team a 4-3 lead.

Connor Hellebuyck made 21 saves in front of a full house of 15,225 loud, white-clad fans.

Taking a 2-0 lead in the series wasn't cause for celebration by Jets head coach Scott Arniel.

"This is all (about) Game 3 now," Arniel said. "We'll do our post-game work tomorrow or over the next couple of days here. The guys know how hard it is, now."

Rookie Jimmy Snuggerud scored his first playoff goal and Jordan Binnington stopped 20 shots for eighth-seeded St. Louis.

"Winnipeg has made one more play than us. Both games," Blues head coach Jim Montgomery said. "Shots are dead even, so they're just making one more play, and their best players are making them."

Scheifele escaped Blues defenceman Cam Fowler behind the St. Louis net and sent the puck to Perfetti to feed Connor.

"Scheif is so smart when it comes to that, body positioning, getting inside a guy or just making a little poke on the puck," Perfetti said. "And he was able to get the guy's stick and then make just a little poke. That was all that he needed for the puck to come to me and create that little bit of space."

The Blues continued their hitting ways from the first game's loss and the Jets didn't back down.

Within the first minute of Monday's tilt, St. Louis skaters delivered five hits. Winnipeg responded with a pair of their own.

Six-foot-seven Jets defenceman Logan Stanley later crushed Jordan Kyrou into the boards. The forward carefully went to the bench with about seven minutes remaining in the period.

Blues captain Brayden Schenn, who had seven hits in the first period of Game 1, skated across the ice and flew into Jets captain Adam Lowry. He finished with four hits in the period and five overall.

Winnipeg ended up out-hitting the visitors 33-29.

"After the game you go home and you feel sore, but it's a good sore, and a good tired," said Jets defenceman Luke Schenn, who had seven hits. "You know, when you come away with the win, it obviously doesn't hurt as much."

Scheifele scored on a great effort to get around a St. Louis defender and then fired a backhand from the slot. The puck bounced off Snuggerud into the net with 3:28 left.

Winnipeg didn't capitalize on two power plays, but the Blues cashed in on their first one.

Snuggerud sent the puck high over Hellebuyck's blocker side on the man advantage with two seconds remaining in the first frame to make it 1-1.

Montgomery had flipped Snuggerud and left-winger Jake Neighbours for the game, moving the former University of Minnesota star from the second line to the top one with centre Robert Thomas and Pavel Buchnevich. He said the motive was to produce more offence.

St. Louis got its fourth straight power play six minutes after Connor's goal, but Winnipeg's defenders killed it.

SWITCHING SETTINGS

As the series moves to St. Louis, the Blues will try to capitalize on their 24-14-3 regular-season home record, including 12 consecutive victories.

The Jets went 3-1 against the Blues in their four-game regular-season series, winning two matches in Missouri.

NHL.com

<https://www.nhl.com/news/st-louis-blues-winnipeg-jets-game-2-recap-april-21>

Jets hold off Blues in Game 2, extend lead in Western 1st Round Scheifele has goal, assist for Winnipeg; Snuggerud scores for St. Louis

By Darrin Bauming

WINNIPEG -- Kyle Connor broke a tie 1:43 into the third period, and the Winnipeg Jets extended their lead in the Western Conference First Round with a 2-1 win against the St. Louis Blues in Game 2 at Canada Life Centre on Monday.

"We talked about our mentality going into tonight," Connor said. "You saw, it was a tight-checking game, run around, not a ton of space and not a ton of odd-man rushes. They weren't going to be beat that way, we weren't going to be beat that way. Just came down to who wanted it more."

Connor made it 2-1 with a one-timer in the slot after Cole Perfetti found him with a pass from behind the net.

"I think that play should be killed behind the net by us, and then we've got to be able to cover," St. Louis coach Jim Montgomery said. "I mean, we want to force the puck up high versus allowing 81 (Connor) to get a shot from the hash marks."

In Game 1 on Saturday, Connor scored the go-ahead goal for the Jets with 1:36 remaining in a 5-3 win.

"[Connor] finds the right pockets of the ice, how to get open," Perfetti said. "I just made a quick look and he was wide-open, and then he makes a great shot. So, it was a great play."

Mark Scheifele had a goal and an assist for the Jets, who won the Presidents' Trophy as the team with the most points in the regular season. Connor Hellebuyck made 21 saves.

"He kind of settled us into the game (early)," Connor said of Hellebuyck. "They did get a couple looks, and he's been doing that all year. Even Game 1 on the breakaway, he just comes up with timely saves after timely saves. He's one of the best in the world for it. Just like everybody, I think he elevated his game tonight."

Jimmy Snuggerud scored his first Stanley Cup Playoff goal for the Blues, who are the second wild card from the West. Jordan Binnington made 20 saves.

"Hellebuyck made some saves tonight," St. Louis captain Brayden Schenn said. "We could just do a little bit better job of getting traffic and pucks and people to the net for some second opportunities."

Game 3 will be in St. Louis on Thursday (9:30 p.m. ET; FDSNMW, ESPN2, SN, TVAS, CBC, TVAS2).

"I think as a group, we're not happy to be down 2-0," Montgomery said. "But the games are really close. There's not much separation going on right now. We need to make a separation, we need to find another level when we go home so we can end up on top by a goal."

"We're going to go home, we're going to be in front of our frenzied crowd, and we're going to have an opportunity to hold serve at home. We've got to get to Game 3."

Scheifele gave the Jets a 1-0 lead at 16:32 of the first period. After driving to the net around Blues defenseman Nick Leddy, Scheifele lost the puck while trying to avoid Binnington's poke check. However, the puck ended up deflecting into the net off the skate of Snuggerud as he delivered a hit on Scheifele.

"I feel like (I'm) just trying to backcheck him, play the body on him," Snuggerud said. "Puck happens to hit skates and stuff and it just went in. It's an unfortunate bounce, but it happens. ... That's how hockey goes. I feel like it's that one play that can make the difference in the game, and it was unlucky for us that they got it."

Winnipeg coach Scott Arniel said: "That's your best players playing at the top of their game. That's what [Scheifele] has done. You can see that he's taken on that challenge. He's going head-to-head against their best player, whether it's defending or whether

he's (on) offense with the puck. He has a strong skillset that we have seen in all 82 games, and now he's taken it into this playoff series. When your best players are your best players, that certainly goes a long way towards helping you win hockey games."

Snuggerud tied it 1-1 on the power play with two seconds remaining in the first period. Pavel Buchnevich sent a cross-ice pass to Snuggerud, who beat Hellebuyck blocker side with a wrist shot from the top edge of the left circle.

"It was a great play by 'Bucci' [Buchnevich]," Snuggerud said. "I tried to pick a corner and fortunately enough it went in, but at the end of the day, we lost and it's no fun losing."

St. Louis, which started 3-for-4 on the power play in the series, had three other opportunities following Snuggerud's goal but was unable to score.

"That's one of the biggest things in the playoffs are special teams, especially when 5-on-5 is always so close," St. Louis defenseman Colton Parayko said. "So many different opportunities can be created on the power play. If not a goal, then momentum. That's huge in the playoffs. ... [The series] is super close. I think the special teams are going to be huge. Just could be the difference as well."

NOTES: Connor is the fourth player in the past 20 years to score the game-winning goal in consecutive games to open the playoffs. He joined Chris Kreider (2023), Nathan MacKinnon (2021) and Nicklas Lidstrom (2007). ... Snuggerud (20 years, 324 days) is the third Blues player in the past 15 years to score his first career playoff goal at the age of 20 or younger, joining Robert Thomas (19 years, 303 days) and Robby Fabbri (20 years, 90 days).

<https://www.nhl.com/news/topic/playoffs/2025/series-e-news/blues-focused-on-putting-together-60-minute-effort>

***Blues focused on 'putting together 60 full ones' after Game 2 loss
St. Louis lost both games at Winnipeg in 3rd period despite strong starts***

By Tracey Myers

WINNIPEG -- It was another tight game, another opportunity for the St. Louis Blues to play spoiler and steal a game on the road in the Western Conference First Round.

But for the second straight game, the Winnipeg Jets had the answers in the third period and the Blues, despite playing some strong hockey through two games, have nothing to show for it.

"Winnipeg made one more play than us. Both games. Shots are dead even. So, they're just making one more play and their best players are making them," Blues coach Jim

Montgomery said after their 2-1 loss to the Jets in Game 2 at Canada Life Centre on Monday.

You really can't sum it up better than that.

The Jets and Blues each had 22 shots on goal in Game 2. Add in tight checking, great goaltending at each end from the Jets' Connor Hellebuyck and the Blues' Jordan Binnington, and so much is so close between the two teams. But when it comes to finding that answer from anyone, superstar or otherwise, the Jets have found it, usually from the former.

For the second consecutive game, Jets top-line forward Kyle Connor ruined the Blues' night by scoring the game-winning goal. This one came at 1:43 of the third period.

"Obviously they're getting a couple of extra goals in the third. I don't know, other than that, just continue to make sure we push as a group all three periods. That's the biggest thing, putting together 60 full ones," Blues defenseman Colton Parayko said.

"The playoffs are super tight, especially these Central Division games. Right from the regular season they're all tight, (and) the playoffs are even tighter. So, one mistake could cost you a game."

To that end, Montgomery thought the Blues could've done a better job on the sequence that led to Connor's game-winning goal.

Jets forwards Mark Scheifele and Cole Perfetti battled Parayko and Blues forward Robert Thomas for the puck behind the net, with Perfetti getting it and passing it back to Jets defenseman Josh Morrissey. Then it was a pass to defenseman Luke Schenn, who found Scheifele behind the net. Once Scheifele got control, he passed to Perfetti, who found Connor for a wide-open one-timer in the slot.

"I thought we had good puck pressure on the play up top and I think that play should be killed behind the net by us. And then we've got to be able to cover," Montgomery said. "We want to force the puck up high versus allowing 81 (Connor) to get a shot from the hash marks."

But there were other opportunities for the Blues. Their power play was 2-for-3 in Game 1 and capitalized again when forward Jimmy Snuggerud scored on the man-advantage with two seconds remaining in the first period to tie it 1-1.

The Blues had three more power plays in Game 2, but they came up empty.

"Yeah, probably not as much shot volume, as we needed to get second and third chances or just to tire them out," Blues captain Brayden Schenn said. "That's something that we're going to have to look at it. It's a series of adjustments, and the power play has to do a better job to come up big for us in key moments."

Jets coach Scott Arniel said Winnipeg's penalty kill "did a fantastic job of being in sync."

"They all had their different looks to them," he said. "St. Louis has great puck movement. They do a good job of finding the weak side of the ice, and just us being able to recognize that and get back and get in that next lane, so to speak, and not allowing, whether that's a shot or a pass -- we just did a really good job of reading off of each other."

Now the best-of-7 series shifts to St. Louis, where the Blues will host the Jets at Enterprise Center on Thursday (9:30 p.m. ET; FDSNMW, ESPN2, SN, TVAS, CBC). The Blues are ready to have their raucous crowd behind them, to get that last line change and to get back into this series.

"Obviously, we can't be down. We can't focus on the last two games," Parayko said. "We can focus on the sense that we're going to learn and take what we can from the positive side and learn from the things we maybe made mistakes on and how we can get better as a group in terms of playing them. Take that into Game 3, home ice. It's going to be exciting."

"Just one game at a time. It's a lot. It's a seven-game series for a reason. We know where we're at. Just make sure we go home and put our best foot forward and see where we land."

The Blues are keeping things in perspective. It's tough not to get frustrated with the way things have ended in each game, but it's been so close between these two. For Snuggerud, it's clear what will be the deciding factor in this series.

"Third periods, for sure," he said. "You know, they had two good third periods the last (two) nights, so I feel like we have to have a stronger third period and we're working on it. That's our end goal is to win these games in the third, and that's what comes down to in the crunch time."

<https://www.nhl.com/video/st-louis-blues-and-winnipeg-jets-discussion-6371774587112>

St. Louis Blues and Winnipeg Jets discussion (VIDEO)

The NHL Tonight crew discuss the Game 2 matchup between the St. Louis Blues and the Winnipeg Jets as the Jets go up 2-0 on the series with a 2-1 win

Winnipeg Free Press

<https://www.winnipegfreepress.com/breakingnews/2025/04/21/scheifele-a-man-on-a-mission>

Scheifele a man on a mission

Centre of attention does it all as Jets take 2-0 lead in series vs. Blues

By: Mike McIntyre

Mark Scheifele looks like a man on a mission.

The first draft pick of the Winnipeg Jets played a starring role in Monday's hard-hitting, pulse-pounding 2-1 victory over the St. Louis Blues that has his team halfway home in their first-round playoff series.

Scheifele opened the scoring with a terrific individual effort, made a clever play to set up the game-winner by linemate Kyle Connor early in the third period, then saved the day later in the final frame by pulling a loose puck away from his team's crease before it could trickle across the line.

"That's your best players playing at the top of their game," said Jets head coach Scott Arniel.

"That's what Scheif has done. You can see that he's taken on that challenge. He's going head-to-head against their best player, whether it's defending or whether he's (on) offence with the puck, he has a strong skillset that we have seen in all 82 games and now he's taken it into this playoff series."

The Presidents' Trophy-winning Jets now lead the Blues 2-0 in the best-of-seven series, which shifts to Missouri for Games 3 and 4 on Thursday night and Sunday afternoon.

Winnipeg won the opening game of the playoffs in 2023 (against Vegas) and 2024 (against Colorado), then proceeded to lose the next four both times. They've quickly ensured hockey history will not repeat itself this time around, although nobody is taking a victory lap.

Just as they did in Saturday's 5-3 triumph, Winnipeg smothered St. Louis in the third period and took full control of the game as it wore on. The Blues managed only five shots in the third period Monday after putting up two in the final frame of the opening game which saw Winnipeg rally with three consecutive goals.

2018 VIBES

Who can forget the way Scheifele took over the 2018 playoffs, particularly the second-round series against the Nashville Predators in which he scored seven of his 14 goals that spring as the Jets made it all the way to the Western Conference Final.

Yes, we're only two games into this current run but Scheifele looks like he's turned back the clock.

After putting up three points (1G, 2A) in Game 1, Scheifele picked up where he left off in Game 2. He took a pass from teammate Dylan DeMelo at the Blues' blue-line and quickly left defenceman Nick Leddy in his dust, powering to the net to put a shot on Jordan Binnington.

Blues rookie forward Jimmy Snuggerud, who was backchecking hard, then inadvertently knocked the loose puck into the net as he tried to get Scheifele out of the crease.

You have to be good to be lucky, right? The Jets were up and running at 16:32 of the first period.

Scheifele has always taken more pride in his playmaking abilities than scoring, and that was on full display when he spun out of a check from Blues defenceman Cam Fowler behind the St. Louis net, allowing Cole Perfetti to slide the puck to Connor who broke the 1-1 tie at 1:43 of the third period.

It was deja vu for Connor, who converted a Scheifele feed Saturday night to break a 3-3 tie with 96 seconds left in the game.

"I'll take it," Connor said of his timely tallies. "It was a tight-checking game, run around, not a ton of space and not a ton of odd-man rushes. They weren't going to be beat that way, we weren't going to be beat that way. Just came down to who wanted it more."

MAKING A MARK

The only similarity Logan Stanley has with Scheifele is that he, too, is a first-round draft pick. The much-maligned Jets defenceman, who many fans and pundits have suggested shouldn't even be in the lineup, made a compelling case in this one.

The 6-7 rearguard crushed Blues forward Jordan Kyrou with one of the cleanest, hardest hits you'll see early in the game, causing the sold-out crowd to erupt and likely making every Jets teammate feel a little bigger and stronger.

"The crowd certainly came out of their shoes on that one," said Arniel.

"That's what playoff hockey is all about. These guys know it and I love the way we kept sticking with it. That's part of what happens in series, you try to wear the opposition down. Who is going to give up first? We've just got to keep doing what we're doing."

Kyrou, who scored in Game 1 and was arguably the most dangerous player for St. Louis, was shaken up and never quite looked the same the rest of the night.

“He’s been just improving each and every day,” Luke Schenn said of Stanley, his defence partner.

“He’s done a great job not chasing hits, but taking the hits when they’re there and being heavy and using his size to his advantage down low and in front of the net. On top of that, I think he’s moving the puck pretty efficiently as well. You obviously can’t teach size like that. When you put it all together it can be really effective.”

The Jets continued the physical play, ultimately out-hitting the Blues 33-29. Stanley finished with three of them, while Schenn led the way with seven.

“It’s fun. This is what you play for,” said Schenn.

“When games are this physical and this tight and the compete level is so high on both teams, these are the ones you love and want to be a part of. After the game you go home and you feel sore — but it’s a good sore, and a good tired.”

MIND GAMES

Perhaps Scheifele had a little extra bounce in his step due to some pre-game shenanigans with Blues backup goaltender Joel Hofer.

First, some quick background: For his entire career, Scheifele has always been the last player to leave the ice after warmups. It’s kind of his thing. Hofer, who happens to be from Winnipeg, clearly knows that and decided to create a bit of a standoff.

With the clock at zero and the Zambonis waiting to come on the ice, Hofer wouldn’t leave. In fact, he kept firing pucks from his own end towards Winnipeg’s net, where Scheifele was still waiting him out.

The crowd picked up on what was happening and began to boo Hofer, who dragged this out for another couple minutes before finally conceding to Scheifele and exiting stage right — this time, to a roar of cheers.

SPECIAL TEAMS

The Blues potted a pair of power-play goals in Game 1, then added their third of the series with just under two seconds left in the first period and Dylan DeMelo in the penalty box for tripping.

Snuggerud, who just finished up his collegiate career, ripped a wicked wrist shot past Hellebuyck.

Give the Jets credit. They really buckled down from that point on, killing three consecutive minors before the night was done as St. Louis ultimately finished 1-for-4 (now 3-for-7 in the series).

“They did the job. They got the job done,” said Arniel. “I thought we did a fantastic job of being in sync.”

Defenceman Dylan Samberg had one of the best games of his young career, repeatedly showing his worth including some exceptional work on the PK. Goaltender Connor Hellebuyck was there to answer the bell, stopping 21 of 22 pucks he faced.

Winnipeg got just two chances on the power play, both in the first period, and couldn't convert. They are now 1-for-6 in the series.

KEY PLAY

Connor's second consecutive game-winning goal, thanks to a great play from Scheifele and then Perfetti.

THREE STARS

1. Jets C Mark Scheifele: 1G, 1A
2. Jets D Dylan Samberg: Team-high 24:30 of ice time
3. Blues RW Jimmy Snuggerud: 1 goal

<https://www.winnipegfreepress.com/breakingnews/2025/04/21/take-a-deep-breath-and-just-go-play-hockey>

'Take a deep breath and just go play hockey'

Staying in the moment key for Jets amidst bright, thunderous atmosphere

By: Ken Wiebe

Mason Appleton has taken part in plenty of home playoff games. But when he spoke with reporters after the morning skate on Monday, the Jets right-winger shared some thoughts about what the atmosphere means in terms of making a minor adjustment as a player.

One of his observations was related to what all of those outfits provide as a backdrop.

“Certainly, it's brighter, it's louder, it's not normal,” said Appleton. “So, to say everyone's a little nervous, a little on edge to start, it is what it is. You kind of learn to process it a bit, kind of take a deep breath and just go play hockey. And I thought as the game went on, obviously the crowd stayed there and stayed electric. But we definitely settled in. Yeah, there's a learning curve kind of each game, (with) each series and each year.”

Jets head coach Scott Arniel thought nerves might have played a role in terms of execution during an uneven start, but shrugged his shoulders when asked about the brightness angle brought up by Appleton.

“I didn’t notice that,” said Arniel. “I hear it in my voice, that I have to yell a lot louder because it is so loud to make sure everybody knows what’s going on on the bench and stuff. But yeah, I suppose. I didn’t think of it that way.”

Blues head coach Jim Montgomery showed his sense of humour when he was asked if the visiting team noticed it was brighter in the building in Game 1.

“Well, our players were talking about it because the white was shining off my bald head,” said Montgomery. “When they were changing, it was blinding them. They couldn’t hear me. They were squinting the whole time.”

In all seriousness, the atmosphere in Winnipeg was as expected and you can be sure the Blues will look forward to returning home for what will be their first home playoff games in three seasons — when they were bounced in six games in 2022 by the Colorado Avalanche.

SCHENN V. SCHENN: Brayden Schenn can appreciate the storyline and why it’s topical, but the captain of the St. Louis Blues has reached the point where he’s done talking about the battle with his brother.

Before the Winnipeg Jets and Blues met in Game 2, the younger Schenn shared his enthusiasm, but then made it clear that the topic be changed to the remainder of this opening-round series.

“It was awesome. Playing here in Canada, it’s always fun,” said Brayden, who had a game-high nine hits in the series opener. “Canadian fans are so passionate with the Whiteout and it was loud in there. Just the whole start of the game, the energy and emotion, and the build-up, it’s awesome. Playoff hockey, this is what we play for, a chance to win the Stanley Cup.”

He was quick to admit that this first-ever playoff battle with his older brother is even more challenging for family members watching and trying to figure out how to handle the unique situation.

“A lot harder than what it was on me and Luke, put it that way,” said Brayden. “One team scores and they don’t know whether to cheer or not to cheer. Like I said, it’s not about me and Luke, it’s about Blues vs. Jets and that’s the way we’re going to keep it.”

Going into the series, Luke made it clear that the lines of communication would be paused until one player moves onto the second round and the other is eliminated and moves into off-season mode.

“Yeah, we’re not (talking),” said Brayden. “Like I said, I don’t really want to talk about me and Luke anymore. I want to talk about the series. We’re competitors and we’re going to leave it at that.”

Jets defenceman Logan Stanley, who has been a regular defence partner for Luke, was asked if he'd thought about what it would be like to have to battle with a sibling in a Stanley Cup playoff series?

"If it was my brother, he'd be chasing me around the ice and I'd want nothing to do with him," said Stanley. "But my brother's not that good at hockey, so. No it's got to be a little bit weird for them but they're both professionals and I think they'll handle it well."

Stanley also said that Luke has been a great mentor since his arrival in the deadline deal with the Pittsburgh Penguins.

"It's nice to watch him and see how he plays and how hard he works at his game in practices and in the gym," said Stanley. "Definitely someone I've looked up to. If I can take some stuff away, and when you think about the future, if that's me in 10 years, I'd be very, very happy. A great guy to look up to and he's been a great teammate."

LOOKING UNDER THE HOOD: With a two-day break on the horizon — and two more of them scheduled before Game 4 arrives — both head coaches were asked about the temptation to cut down the bench.

"You're doing that no matter what," said Arniel. "The importance of winning this game, you're going to do whatever it takes. Don't worry about the next one. Whatever it takes, that's what you're going to do. We're not looking for days off to rest. It's about making sure we win this game."

Both the Jets and Blues pride themselves on being a four-line hockey team, but finding beneficial matchups and an extra shift here or there for a star player or a big line, is part of the chess match and game within the game that you see at this time of the year.

"As a coach, it's why you love playoff hockey," said Montgomery. "I know that there's going to be adjustments and wrinkles by both of us. That's what you love as a coach."

That premise comes with one quick caveat though.

"You have to weigh that balance of how much is too much?" said Montgomery. "Because you just want your players to play fast and free mentally so you can't throw the kitchen sink at him."

After Arniel and the Jets have home-ice advantage and last change for the first two games, Montgomery will have the opportunity to dictate whether or not he'd like to try and shift some of the matchups in the two outings in St. Louis.

IN THE DOT: Aside from a wide disparity in hits in Game 1 (53-33), the other area where the Blues held a clear edge was in the faceoff circle, where St. Louis won 57 per cent of the draws compared to 43 for the Jets.

Robert Thomas (73 per cent) and Radek Faksa (67 per cent), led the way for the Blues, while Adam Lowry (53 per cent) and Morgan Barron (50) led the Jets in that category.

The importance of wingers getting involved to secure loose pucks is a critical component to swaying those numbers in a team's favour.

"Obviously you kind of see what set they're in first and that dictates where you line up. And then, based on your hands versus their hands, then it's just getting a good jump off the draw," said Appleton. "Obviously, you want to get inside positioning right away. You've got to fight and compete for ice and win your 50-50 battles. Any pucks that go directly to the left or the right, it's essentially a new faceoff between the wingers. The more of those we win the more possession we have to start shifts."

Oddly enough, the game-winning goal from Kyle Connor was a result of an offensive-zone faceoff win by Mark Scheifele (who only won 40 per cent of his faceoffs in Game 1), so a cursory look at the numbers doesn't always tell the full story.

Winnipeg Sun

<https://winnipegsun.com/sports/hockey/kyle-connor-nets-game-winner-jets-win-2-1-over-the-st-louis-blues>

Kyle Connor nets game-winner, Jets win 2-1 over the St. Louis Blues

By Gordon Anderson

Once again, the Winnipeg Jets are flying high in the third period.

Kyle Connor scored the game winner early in the final stanza as the Jets defeated the St. Louis Blues 2-1 on Monday night.

Connor found space in the low slot just before Cole Perfetti passed the puck from near the goal line to the winger. Connor's quick shot snuck between the legs of Jordan Binnington at 1:43 for his second game winner of the series. Connor scored late in the third to provide the winning margin in Game 1.

The Blues pulled Binnington at 17:43 for the extra attacker but managed just one shot on net.

In the series opener the Jets trailed 3-2 after 40 minutes but netted three goals in the third to win 5-3. So far through 120 minutes of action, the Jets have outscored the Blues 4-0 in the final stanza. One of the goals was scored via the empty net.

Over two games the Jets have limited St. Louis to seven shots in the final period.

Mark Scheifele also scored for the Jets. Scheifele had a two-point night. The #55 also scored once and earned two helpers in Game 1. The Jets went 0-2 on the power play.

Connor Hellebuyck turned aside 16 shots through two periods and 21 for the game.

Jimmy Snuggerud scored for the Blues. St. Louis has one even-strength goal in the series. The Blues have three goals in seven power-play opportunities through two games.

Binnington turned away 20 shots in the loss.

The Jets opened the scoring at 16:32 of the first with Scheifele getting his second of the series.

Scheifele skated around Nick Leddy and headed for the St. Louis crease. Scheifele's progress to the net was impeded by Snuggerud, the puck deflecting off Snuggerud and into the net.

The Blues tied the game at 19:59 with a power-play goal as Snuggerud found the top half of the net with a shot from the right faceoff circle for his first goal of the post-season.

<https://winnipegsun.com/sports/hockey/nhl/winnipeg-jets/friesen-these-jets-dont-look-like-the-old-jets>

FRIESEN: These Jets don't look like the old Jets

By Paul Friesen

And now for something completely different: a 2-0 Winnipeg Jets series lead.

The NHL's top regular-season team has so far been one of its best in the playoffs, too. And while back-to-back wins is nothing to write home about, it beats what this team did in its last two playoffs.

"I don't know if it's a mental boost, but we're aware of it coming into it," Kyle Connor said after his team suffocated the St. Louis Blues in a 2-1 win on Monday. "Over the past couple of years, this group is motivated. We talked about it over the off-season, we preached about it all year. It's in this room. Everybody needs to be better, bear down. It's dragging everybody into the fight.

"Yeah it's a second win, but we're not resting here. We've got a long ways to go."

All the way to St. Louis for Game 3 on Thursday.

This time it won't be the Jets second-guessing themselves on the flight. The Blues, though, will have plenty to wonder about, after the Jets took every hit they dished out in Game 1 and upped the ante in Game 2.

The dealer everybody was talking about after this one was towering defenceman Logan Stanley, whose first-period hit on Jordan Kyrrou sent the Blues' top goal-scorer to the bench doubled over in pain and put an exclamation point on the message the Jets were sending: you're not going to hit us out of this series.

"It's not like the period wasn't already up and running with a lot of physical hits on both sides," Jets head coach Scott Arniel accurately noted. "The crowd certainly came out of their shoes on that one, as everybody did."

"It was a big moment," defenceman Dylan DeMelo added. "We got up on the bench, the crowd got into it. Anytime you get a chance to lay a hit on their top-end guys, their skill guys, we want to make it hard on them. Not everybody can hit like that."

Stanley's defence partner Luke Schenn comes close, making for a punishing blue-line pair and tweaking the identity of a team that hasn't been known for its ruggedness.

"This is what you play for," Schenn said. "When games are this physical and this tight and the compete level is so high on both teams, these are the ones you love and want to be a part of. After the game you go home and you feel sore. But it's a good sore, and a good tired."

The hitting can be contagious, the virus spreading throughout the lineup.

"Those two obviously jump out at you," Arniel said. "But that's everybody. Our compete level is where it needs to be for playoff hockey. Something we talked about from the very beginning that it isn't just our big guys, our big heavy guys. It has to be everybody."

While the twin towers were doing their thing, their teammates were doing what they've done better than anybody in the NHL this season.

"It was a great defensive performance," winger Cole Perfetti said. "We were just frustrating them. We weren't giving them much ice, and we were just being patient with it, making them come through us. It's frustrating to play against when you play like that."

When they did spring a leak, the captain of the nets bailed them out.

Connor Hellebuyck kept it scoreless when the Jets stumbled out of the gate for a second straight game. This time they buckled down more quickly, giving up a power-play goal – the Blues' third in two games – and nothing more.

For the second straight game the Jets won it with their high-end talent, Connor with his second straight third-period winner, Mark Scheifele with a goal that spoke volumes about his determination to erase the ghosts of playoffs past.

Looking more like Brandon Tanev, Scheifele barged in on Blues goalie Jordan Binnington, causing chaos that resulted in the puck bouncing off a Blues' skate and in.

It's true, they don't ask how, just how many. But Scheifele's don't usually look like that.

"You can see that he's taken on that challenge," Arniel said. "He's going head-to-head against their best player, whether it's defending or whether he's (on) offence with the puck. When your best players are your best players, that certainly goes a long way towards helping you win hockey games."

With their 2-1 lead coming early in the third, the Jets were so airtight that a late Blues push never seemed to come.

"I don't know if you could say there's no push," Schenn said. "I felt the whole game both teams were pushing."

Trying, sure. But little came of it.

Relentless isn't too strong a word to describe Winnipeg's desire to check the opposition into the ground.

"Every single shift matters," Perfetti said.

That's music to a coach's ears.

"That's what playoff hockey is," Arniel said.

Connor had this take: "Just came down to who wanted it more. On to the next game. It's going to only get more intense from here on out."

That's hard to imagine.

But if it does, the Jets seem ready for it.

<https://winnipegssun.com/sports/roll-with-the-punches-jets-blues-series-becomes-mental-test>

'Roll with the punches': Jets-Blues series becomes mental test

By Paul Friesen

Hockey players are creatures of habit, their lives built around the routines of morning skate times and game times that are fairly consistent.

Then the Stanley Cup playoffs and its TV network demands come barging into their lives.

"We have had some wacko start times," Winnipeg Jets forward Mason Appleton was saying on Monday. "If you think back to that game against Edmonton a few years ago, when it was a nine o'clock start, and with those overtimes you are out of here at 1:30 in the morning. It is what the playoffs have become."

The Jets and St. Louis Blues will get the full experience this week.

In what may feel like an eternity between games, Game 3 won't start until 8:30 p.m. in St. Louis on Thursday, leaving Tuesday and Wednesday for practice (insert NBA star Allen Iverson's "we talkin' about practice" rant here).

Another two days off in St. Louis, then it's Game 4 on Sunday. At noon.

"Rest is also important," Appleton said. "But two games where you have two days in between each one, it looks a little different than traditionally in the playoffs. But both teams have to deal with it."

"It's definitely different," Jets defenceman Dylan DeMelo added. "You play at weird times, times you've never played at all year. Routine is important. It's good to have. But if you're married to the routine you can get into your own head."

"Sometimes you just roll with the punches."

Next Sunday it'll be more like rolling out of the sack for a puck brunch.

"Most of us like a noon start where you don't have to think," Appleton said. "You roll out of bed, eat breakfast and go to the rink."

Waiting for an evening game can be a challenge, as players expend all kinds of energy well before the drop of the puck.

"I've heard hockey players talk about it, that you get so caught up in what's coming that you burn all of your energy during the day," Arniel said. "And then you don't sleep the night before, (with) all you're thinking about. You're almost zapped. I've heard lots about guys going into the Super Bowl, it's the hype, hype, hype and then you get into the game and instead of being calm and cool, you're already so hyped that it affects you."

"We went through it once here... now we know what to expect."

The Jets looked a little rattled at the start of Game 1 on Saturday, before settling down.

The way St. Louis captain Brayden Schenn opened the series, throwing himself at opposing players on virtually every shift, you'd think he might appreciate the extra days of rest coming up.

"Yes and no," Schenn said. "Obviously the recovery's great. But the mental side of it... it's just nice to be in the flow of playing hockey every second day. So you get a little bit of both. At the end of the day, that's what we got thrown at us."

It'll get thrown at them between Games 4 and 5, too, as the series won't shift back to Winnipeg until Wednesday, April 30.

<https://winnipegssun.com/sports/hockey/its-not-normal-winnipeg-whiteout-still-affects-jets-and-opponents>

'It's not normal': Winnipeg whiteout still affects Jets and opponents

By Gordon Anderson

The Winnipeg whiteout has been around for years, but it still can throw players off their games — and not just visiting players, either.

The atmosphere in the Jets-St. Louis series opener was so highly-charged, some Jets fell victim to short-circuit syndrome.

"The crowd was so electric you can get caught up in it too much," Winnipeg winger Mason Appleton said going into Monday's Game 2. "We were over-amped a little bit. But you've just got to calm down, take a breath."

Appleton says it's not just the noise.

"It's brighter, it's louder, it's not normal," he said. "Everyone's a little nervous, a little on edge to start. You learn to process it, take a deep breath and just go play hockey."

The sea of white numbering 15,000-plus does provide a different look inside the downtown arena.

It's the deafening sound, though, that affects Scott Arniel.

The Jets head coach was already sounding hoarse after just one game.

"I hear it in my voice," Arniel said. "I have to yell a lot louder because it is so loud, to make sure everybody knows what's going on on the bench."

Like Appleton, this is defenceman Dylan DeMelo's third playoff season experiencing white-clad, sellout crowds in full throat.

“That first game, the first whiteout, no matter how many times you’ve done it, there’s some nerves, there’s some excitement,” DeMelo said.

The nerves didn’t manifest in tangible stats, like goals, shots and hits, but more in a lack of flow and precision in all three zones.

“We looked nervous, just trying to find our way and get going,” Arniel said. “We built it up in the second but then stuck with it and really played well in the third.”

In the series opener, the Jets erased a 3-2 deficit with three goals in the final 20 minutes to earn a 5-3 victory.

“We were a little tentative, but we got it going,” DeMelo said. “That crowd was rocking. Afterwards, when you think about it and decompress, you’re like, ‘Wow, that was pretty sweet.’”

The visitors weren’t immune to the effect of the raucous atmosphere.

“From when we stepped on for warmups to puck drop, the crowd was there,” Blues forward Jimmy Snuggerud said of his first playoff game in Winnipeg. “The whiteout is something in the NHL that’s a staple. You get into the game after the first 10 minutes. But that first 10-minute push, it’s insane.”

Blues head coach Jim Montgomery had a more lighthearted take on the effect it had on his team.

“Our players were talking about it because the white was shining off my bald head,” Montgomery said. “When they were changing, it was blinding them. They couldn’t hear me. They were squinting the whole time.”

The series shifts to St. Louis for Games 3 and 4 on Thursday and Sunday.

Game 5 is scheduled for Winnipeg on Wednesday, April 30.

Sportsnet.ca

<https://www.sportsnet.ca/nhl/article/jets-check-every-box-in-game-2-masterclass-against-blues/>

Jets check every box in Game 2 masterclass against Blues

By Jacob Stoller

WINNIPEG — The Winnipeg Jets always say they try to win games 2-1.

They just did that on Monday, exhibiting a masterclass performance that epitomized 'Winnipeg Jet hockey' en route to taking a 2-0 lead in their first-round series against the St. Louis Blues.

'Winnipeg Jet' hockey boils down to four things, which are painted on their dressing room wall:

Structure

Embrace hard areas

Win 50/50 battles

10 per cent more

They ticked each box in Game 2.

Structurally, the Jets completely clogged up the slot, limiting St. Louis to just one high-danger shot and three high-danger attempts during five-on-five play. Connor Hellebuyck would've had to have made more than 21 saves if it weren't for his teammates nullifying potential rebound chances.

"We weren't giving them much ice, and we were just being patient with it, making them come through us," Cole Perfetti said. "We didn't give the middle of the ice away. I think it's frustrating to play against when you play like that. We were able to keep them on the outside, and when they did get a chance, like at the onset there, Bucky made a great save. It was a great defensive performance."

Embracing the hard areas of the ice and winning 50/50 battles? That was the Jets' bread and butter. Eight of Winnipeg's 17 five-on-five shots came from high-danger areas.

"They've been harder at the net front than we have offensively," Blues coach Jim Montgomery said. "And that's net hunger."

The team's slew of north-south, meat-and-potatoes players weren't the only ones with an appetite. It was everyone, notably the team's top line of Mark Scheifele, Kyle Connor and Alex Iafallo. Scheifele's net front drive to open the scoring was a perfect example of a skilled player putting his work boots on and driving to the net, even if the goal wasn't the prettiest.

"Our compete level is where it needs to be for playoff hockey," Jets coach Scott Arniel said.

The puck battles weren't coin flips.

"I thought our puck battles were real strong tonight. It started in the first period — on the walls, net fronts, off faceoffs — there's a lot of areas where we were certainly a lot stronger," Arniel said.

And the 10 per cent more trope? Yet another third period where Winnipeg was above and beyond the better team.

"Winnipeg has made one more play than us. Both games," Blues coach Jim Montgomery said. "Shots are dead even, so they're just making one more play, and their best players are making them."

Two wins down. 14 to go.

Playoff Scheifele

Joel Hofer may want to be careful next time he toys with Scheifele.

The Blues' backup goaltender, the last one on the ice for warmups, has been shooting pucks from his end of the ice into the Jets' net in each of the first two games. He continued as the clock struck zero, a queue for everyone not named Scheifele to exit the ice. Number 55 is always the last one off the ice, especially at Canada Life Centre.

Scheifele even waved at Hofer to get off the ice at one point.

Way to go Joel, you awoke the beast.

Scheifele played with a vengeance tonight. He was leveraging his strengths — protecting pucks along the wall, threading the needle with his passes — and he had some snarl. After scoring the game's opening goal, he was jawing at Brayden Schenn from the bench. He was dialled in defensively, finishing hits with authority and batting down opponents' passes with precision.

Here's the thing about Scheifele — his game is tailor-made for the playoffs. He loves creating offence off the cycle, is excellent at pinpointing narrow seams, and has the clutch gene, too.

Dating back to the 2017-18 playoffs — where he scored 14 goals in 17 games — Scheifele is tied for the third most playoff goals per game among players who have played at least 30 post-season games (0.58).

The Hammer and the Sword

Winnipeg's third pair of Logan Stanley and Luke Schenn deserves a nickname.

The Hammer and the Sword.

Stanley, the hammer, can instantly change a game with a bone-crushing hit. Aside from the two goals, Canada Life Centre didn't get any louder than it did when the six-foot-seven defencemen obliterated Jordan Kyrrou.

Schenn, the sword, demonstrates procession when taking time and space away. He may not lay a guy out in open ice — although he does leave players black and blue along the wall — but the way he can box players out and pin them against the wall is a work of art.

The hammer and the sword were excellent on Monday.

"Those are two intimidating guys out there," Arniel said. "When we've got Luke there, and it's the same as Stan, we want people to go the long way around to get to the net front. And if they're going in the corners to get pucks, we want to make sure they know it's not going to be an easy ride."

<https://www.sportsnet.ca/nhl/video/jets-scheifele-is-proving-nothing-the-blues-do-can-get-under-his-skin/>

Jets' Scheifele is proving nothing the Blues do can get under his skin (VIDEO)

The Hockey Central crew breaks down the St. Louis Blues game plan to target Winnipeg Jets' Mark Scheifele in Game 2, even starting in the warmups, but Scheifele doesn't seem to be fazed by anything.

The Athletic

<https://www.nytimes.com/athletic/6298052/2025/04/21/nhl-playoffs-jets-blues-game-2/>

Jets take 2-0 series lead over Blues thanks to another Kyle Connor winner: Takeaways

By Murat Ates and Jeremy Rutherford

Kyle Connor scored his second straight game-winning goal, finding soft ice behind Blues coverage like a 97-point scorer should not be able to do, giving the Winnipeg Jets a 2-1 win over the St. Louis Blues to stake a 2-0 series lead.

A tightly contested Game 2 was punctuated by thunderous body checks — Logan Stanley's crushing check on Jordan Kyrrou the biggest of the bunch — along with a Jimmy Snuggerud power-play snipe and acrobatic saves from both goaltenders.

Connor's goal was his second goal and fourth point of an evenly matched series. Despite the Blues getting the better of the special teams battle, the Jets have made the biggest plays at the key times. Connor snuck behind Pavel Buchnevich to get the better

of the Blues' top line for the second straight game, following a puck battle win and a centering pass from Cole Perfetti.

The Jets penalty kill gave up Snuggerud's goal with 1.8 seconds left in the first period but killed off two penalties in the second period and one more in the third, and only surrendered five shots in the third period. Connor Hellebuyck finished with 21 saves on 22 shots.

Back-to-back game-winning goals for Connor

Connor's Game 1 winning goal was the product of a Winnipeg faceoff set play, with all five Jets skaters executing their roles to perfection. His goal to win Game 2 was pure offensive instinct – an offensive powerhouse sneaking quietly into soft ice before firing the game-winning dagger past Jordan Binnington.

When Perfetti won a puck battle in the corner to extend an offensive zone shift, Connor went to work looking for soft ice he so often exploits. First, he offered puck support to Josh Morrissey high in the zone. Then he curled toward the slot completely unguarded as the Jets worked the puck around the boards to Scheifele, then Perfetti behind the goal line.

Perfetti's pass was perfect; Connor's finish was the same.

Snuggerud, Neighbours switch spot

Blues coach Jim Montgomery made one change with his forward combinations Monday, flipping Jimmy Snuggerud and Jake Neighbours.

Snuggerud moved up on the top line with Robert Thomas and Buchnevich, while Neighbours slipped to the second line with Brayden Schenn and Jordan Kyrrou.

Though the Blues scored three goals in Game 1 against Hellebuyck, they had just 17 shots.

"Sometimes as a coach you have a feel that this will hopefully create a little more offense and give us better defensive positioning with our top two lines," Montgomery said.

On Monday, they had 22 shots on net and Snuggerud scored his first NHL playoff goal on the power play very late in the first period.

Stanley makes big impression at both ends

"Sometimes a stick check is just as important as a big hit in the right moment," Logan Stanley said before Game 2. Then he did this:

Stanley's check was a thunderous moment, with Kyrrou fully occupied by pressure from Adam Lowry. It's exactly what Winnipeg's coaching staff hopes Stanley can bring in big

playoff moments. Kyrrou left the ice immediately afterward, while Canada Life Centre roared its approval.

Stanley's check nearly erased the memory of him falling after a Mason Appleton giveaway to give the Blues one of their first Grade A chances of the game. He got over-exuberant with his cross-checks on Snuggerud in the second period, getting called for his third after Snuggerud went down.

But Stanley's heavy hitting made a big impression on the game. He followed his check on Kyrrou with another good hard hit on Thomas in the second period.

Tucker inserted for toughness

After the Blues' morning skate Monday, it appeared they'd keep the same lineup for Game 2. But shortly before puck-drop, it became official that they were inserting defenseman Tyler Tucker and taking out forward Mathieu Joseph, electing to go with seven defensemen and 11 forwards.

There were two potential reasons for this: Joseph was kept on the bench in the third period for several games down the stretch in the regular season, and the Blues wanted to add some toughness to the lineup after Game 1.

In the final minute of Game 1, five players from each team were issued 10-minute game misconducts.

Tucker, who played in 38 regular-season games this season, had 10 fighting majors. He took a cross-checking penalty in the first period of Game 2.

Winnipeg Jets PK bends, breaks, then puts itself back together just in time

Scott Arniel and Dean Chynoweth went to work over the 4 Nations break in an effort to upgrade Winnipeg's struggling penalty kill. The Jets PK came out of the break with more aggression and put together a long stretch where they were the hardest team in the league against which to generate a shot.

Then St. Louis scored on three of its first four power plays in the series, including Snuggerud's first-period equalizer on Monday. When Scheifele and Stanley combined to give St. Louis two second period power plays, the Jets PK held steady, getting blocks, clears and big saves from Hellebuyck.

Luke Schenn's roughing penalty with the Jets up 2-1 and 11:59 to go in the third period elicited the angriest home crowd chant of the game. This time, Winnipeg's high-pressure approach did not result in Snuggerud or Thomas all alone with time and space to burn. The home crowd found extra decibels for clears by Dylan DeMelo and Neal Pionk, while Schenn came out of the box just in time for a breakaway pass from Morrissey. Binnington made the save but the Jets had accomplished their task.

No scally cap for Montgomery

With the start of the playoffs, Winnipeg's "Whiteout" was back at Canada Life Centre in Games 1-2.

Montgomery, who has a shaved head, joked Monday morning that he might have to wear a scally cap for Game 2.

"Our players were talking about (the whiteout) because the white was shining on my bald head when they were changing," he said. "It was blinding them and they couldn't hear me. They were squinting the whole time."

Alas, there was no scally cap for the coach when he walked onto the bench for the game.

<https://www.nytimes.com/athletic/6297778/2025/04/22/winnipeg-jets-kyle-connor-blues-nhl-playoffs/>

As Jets extend series lead, Kyle Connor continues to be a problem the Blues can't solve

By Murat Ates

WINNIPEG — The shocking thing isn't that Kyle Connor keeps scoring game-winning goals. It's that a player who scored 97 points during the regular season — and then scored the goal that won Game 1 — continues to find so much space at all.

The 41 goals and 97 points that made him the NHL's seventh-most dangerous goal scorer this season should make him a marked man. And he is a marked man, playing two-thirds of his minutes against the St. Louis Blues' best defencemen — Colton Parayko and Cam Fowler — who are doing everything they can to contain him.

Yet still, Connor disappears.

Defenders think he's covered, then forget about him altogether — and that's when he strikes.

He scored the Game 1 winner by following orders, perfectly executing a faceoff set play. He scored the goal that won Game 2 by following his instincts, sneaking into the slot completely unmarked, just in time to bury Cole Perfetti's centering pass. In the buildup to Connor's second-straight game-winning goal, he escaped coverage high in the zone, watching as Mark Scheifele beat Fowler to a puck on the endboards. As Scheifele spun the puck to Perfetti, all five Blues were watching the play down low, so Connor snuck behind Pavel Buchnevich to score the goal that sent Winnipeg to a 2-1 win and a 2-0 series lead over St. Louis.

“They’re just making one more play,” said Blues coach Jim Montgomery of Winnipeg’s lead. “And their best players are making them.”

It’s what Jets coaches might have said about Nathan MacKinnon during last year’s playoffs or Jack Eichel in 2023. When the games got tough, the Jets’ opponents’ biggest stars made the biggest difference. The Jets could apply pressure for a period of time, pushing back better against Colorado than they did against Vegas, but fell short in the deciding moments.

Winnipeg’s best players are the series’ best players now, and Connor isn’t the only one. Scheifele leads all playoff scorers with two goals and three assists, featuring in five of the Jets’ seven goals. Josh Morrissey didn’t score Monday but contributed to Connor’s goal. Dylan Samberg was a force at the blue line and on the penalty kill. Connor Hellebuyck stopped 21 of the 22 shots he faced. There were “MVP!” chants between the announcement of Hellebuyck’s name and the singing of the national anthems.

Robert Thomas and Jordan Kyrrou haven’t been able to match Connor and Scheifele. The Jets are up 3-0 when Connor and Scheifele are on the ice against Thomas, while the only Blues player with a goal at five-on-five is Oskar Sundqvist. That may change when the Blues get home-ice advantage in St. Louis on Thursday, but this series, as close as it is, appears to be a case of Winnipeg being a little better in the most important matchups.

I think back to the Jets’ six-game series with the Blues in 2019 and remember St. Louis always had an answer in the deciding moments of close games (before utterly dominating Game 6). That the Jets have those answers now speaks to remarkable growth from recent defeats.

“Every single shift matters,” Connor said of Winnipeg’s approach to winning the key moments. “Every time you step on the ice, you’ve got to be aware of that. And you’ve got to be locked into our details. You’ve got to be connected as five and play as a team. I think that’s what it comes down to — you can’t take anything off. It could be the difference one night.”

Game 2 was close on the scoresheet, tied on the shot clock, but heavily tilted in St. Louis’ favour to start the game. The Blues tweaked their breakout, getting away from Winnipeg’s aggressive, pinching defencemen at the blue line, and it led to early opportunities for Thomas, Fowler and Kyrrou.

On the shift after a rush chance by Kyrrou, Jimmy Snuggerud picked off Mason Appleton’s pass in the neutral zone and Logan Stanley fell while trying to pivot. Snuggerud rushed into the space left behind and fired a shot off Hellebuyck’s pad; only a sliding block from Appleton stopped Sundqvist from putting the rebound into an empty net. Soon after, Neal Pionk knocked the puck away from Thomas straight to Buchnevich; the Blues’ counterattack saw Thomas’s cross-crease pass to Kyrrou knocked down by Samberg.

The Jets had every opportunity to crumble under that pressure. Instead, Stanley hit Kyrrou with the hardest bodycheck of the series. The Blues took their second penalty of the first period and, soon after killing it off, Scheifele got the opening goal: a power forward's turn around Nick Leddy combined with a fortunate bounce off of Snuggerud's foot. Snuggerud would get his revenge with 1.8 seconds left in the period, but the Jets made it to the intermission tied 1-1.

"I was a little upset there at the end of the first period because I thought that was a (successful) kill," Jets coach Scott Arniel said. "I thought we had done it perfect. I thought that we had the puck in the corner with 15 seconds left and to me it was just ... every play matters."

Regrouping matters, too. The Jets took a pair of penalties in the second period but killed them off. They adjusted their dump-ins and forecheck, keeping the puck out of Jordan Binnington's hands. They got through a seldom-called "removing the helmet" penalty on Luke Schenn. The Canada Life Centre crowd cheered on clears from Pionk and Morrissey during that penalty kill as loudly as they cheered for Connor's game winner.

Thus, the Jets did something to the Blues that no one else has been able to do. Since the 4 Nations Face-Off break, the Blues were 15-0 when leading after two periods. That streak ended in Game 1. They were 3-1 when tied after two periods — until Game 2. And the other loss was against Winnipeg on April 7.

Back to Connor, though. You can almost trace Winnipeg's evolution as a team through his development. Two years ago, he was ineffective in Game 5 against Vegas; the Jets won Game 1, but the Golden Knights won four straight. He was one of Winnipeg's best players in a much better effort against Colorado last year, but the Avalanche found a level to their game that no Jet could match.

Through two games of Round 1, Connor has made himself a problem that the Blues can't solve. A lot of the time, they can't even find him.

There's one more important takeaway from Winnipeg's victory in Game 2.

The Jets are well aware of their history and the magnitude of Monday's win. They know they won Game 1 against Vegas and Colorado but lost both series in five games. They know they swept Edmonton the last time they went up 2-0 in a series. We know this because Connor said as much. But the Jets have celebrated harder and spoken more proudly after regular-season wins.

It was evident when Connor, Schenn, Perfetti, Dylan DeMelo and Arniel gave their postgame interviews that no one seems to think the Jets have accomplished anything yet. They aren't getting too far ahead of themselves.

Connor said he's aware of Winnipeg's history and the importance of winning its first Game 2 since 2021. He lived that history; he was an active participant in it. His only focus now is on writing the next chapter.

"This group is motivated. We talked about it over the offseason, we preached about it all year: It's in this room," he said. "Everybody needs to be better, bear down. It's dragging everybody into the fight. Yeah, it's a second win, but we're not resting here. We've got a long ways to go. We'll take what we can, look at the video, make adjustments if need be, and on to the next one."

<https://www.nytimes.com/athletic/6297765/2025/04/22/blues-third-period-nhl-playoffs-jets/>

Blues' biggest strength has become a weakness in back-to-back playoff losses to Jets

By Jeremy Rutherford

WINNIPEG — In the final two months of the regular season, St. Louis Blues coach Jim Montgomery would sit down behind a microphone to discuss the superlatives that came with a dramatic run, and almost every time, it included how impressed he was with the third period.

By now, Blues fans have memorized the team's record since the 4 Nations Face-Off: 19-4-3.

But dig deeper and you'll find that within those 26 games, the Blues were almost unstoppable when they were leading, or even tied, heading into the third period.

Blues' 19-4-3 run since 4 Nations

Leading after 2

15-0-0

Tied after 2

3-1-0

Trailing after 2

1-3-3

That's right, a record of 18-1 in games they either led or were tied in heading into the third.

The one defeat came on April 7, a 3-1 loss to the Winnipeg Jets, in which the teams were tied 1-1 heading into the third period. The Jets got a goal from Alex Iafallo midway through the period and an empty-netter from Adam Lowry.

Well, guess what? There's a theme here: Winnipeg.

For the second time in three nights, the Blues found themselves in a familiar position. They were tied 1-1 heading into the third period in Game 2 of their Western Conference first-round series, and just 1:43 into the final frame, the Jets' Kyle Connor scored the go-ahead goal for what became his second game winner of the series in a 2-1 triumph over the Blues.

In Game 1 Saturday, the Blues were leading 3-2 heading into the third period. The Jets got three unanswered goals, including the decisive game winner from Connor, in a 5-3 victory.

"Winnipeg has made one more play than us. Both games," Blues coach Jim Montgomery said. "Shots are dead even, so they're just making one more play, and their best players are making them."

As a result, Winnipeg leads 2-0 in the best-of-seven series, which heads to St. Louis for Game 3 on Thursday.

With both games essentially being decided by one goal — the Jets added an empty-netter in Game 1 — one could make the case that the Blues deserved a little better fate in Winnipeg. The shots were 22-22 in Game 2, and the Jets have just a 49-39 edge in the series. However, they've outshot the Blues 16-7 and outscored them 4-0 in the third period.

"It's close," Blues captain Brayden Schenn said. "We had some chances, and they were able to capitalize on their chances in the third period so far. They did their job at home, and now it's our turn to go to the Enterprise, where we've had success, in front of our fans, and do our job."

It's no fluke that Winnipeg has been the only team to do this to the Blues three times in their last 28 games. The Jets won the Presidents' Trophy for a reason. But while they should get the credit for what they're doing — more specifically, what their top line is doing — the Blues are making some poor plays in their defensive zone to allow these game-deciding goals.

In Game 2 on Monday, the Blues tied the score 1-1 on Jimmy Snuggerud's first NHL playoff goal, which came on the power play with two seconds left in the first period. Neither team scored in the second period, setting up a third-period showdown.

But less than two minutes in, Connor found himself wide open again and beat Blues goalie Jordan Binnington after multiple misplays, according to Montgomery.

"I thought we had good puck pressure on the play up top," Montgomery said. "I think that play should be killed behind the net by us, and then we got to be able to cover. We want to force the puck up high versus allowing 81 to get a shot from the hashmarks."

Blues defenseman Colton Parayko and forward Robert Thomas had a chance to kill the play, but Winnipeg's Cole Perfetti came out with the puck and sent it back up to the point. The Jets then moved it D to D before putting it back down below the goal line again, where Cam Fowler had another opportunity to extinguish the play.

Instead, Mark Scheifele got the puck to Perfetti, who slipped it past Parayko and teammate Pavel Buchnevich to Connor for the easy shot from the slot. Thomas was nearby, looking on, but couldn't get to Scheifele behind the net, or Connor in front of the net.

In trying to explain the scoring sequence, Parayko said, "Just trying to hold and then a quick play behind the net, a quick strike out front and then, yeah, bang-bang."

Bang-bang, that's what it's felt like against Winnipeg's No. 1 line in this series. In the two games, Connor and Scheifele have a combined four goals and nine points, and seven of those points have come at five-on-five.

For the Blues in the series, Thomas' line includes him at minus-4, Pavel Buchnevich minus-3, and Jimmy Snuggerud and Jake Neighbours, who've split time on that unit with Thomas and Buchnevich, both minus-2. The top defensive pair of Parayko and Fowler is also minus-4.

"They just play well together," Parayko said of Connor and Scheifele. "They're dangerous from all areas, and they can score from all over the offensive zone. They've played together all year and know where each other are. They're just dangerous players whenever they get the puck."

"They're just poised," Snuggerud said. "That's kind of how the NHL's turned to, like the corner plays. I feel like Connor does it really well. He's very poised in the corners. So you have to have your stick in seams throughout the whole game whenever they're on the ice. They're good at what they do, so it's it's tough, but you got to do it."

It also doesn't help that both Thomas and Parayko may not be at 100 percent. Thomas left the Blues' regular-season finale with a lower-body injury and missed a practice before the playoff series began. He's played both games in the series, including 23:13 in Game 2, but he was seen walking gingerly in the locker room after the game.

Parayko missed close to six weeks with a knee scope, and while he returned for the final two games of the regular season, he doesn't appear to be himself either.

So, what can the Blues do moving forward in the series against Winnipeg? For starters, look for a different matchup against the Jets' top line, which Montgomery will have control over as the home team.

"Well, we're going to have the last line change now," Montgomery said.

"We have the matchup and whatever Monty wants," Schenn said. "We know they're good players. They've had good seasons. Just keep being hard on them, in your face, and try and make them play in their own end. So far, they've capitalized on their chances, and now it's our job to go home and worry about our job."

Offensively, the Blues haven't been nearly aggressive enough in front of Winnipeg goalie Connor Hellebuyck. They had just three high-danger chances in Game 2 on Monday compared to 12 by the Jets, according to Natural Stat Trick. In Game 1, it was 8-4 in favor of the Jets.

"I do think they've been harder at the net front than we have offensively, and that's net hunger," Montgomery said. "Our net hunger needs to increase."

The Blues had just one rebound attempt at five-on-five Monday, according to Natural Stat Trick.

"Yeah, get inside a little bit more," Schenn said. "Do a little bit better job of getting traffic, and pucks and people to the net for some second opportunities."

And regardless of how close the games have been thus far, the Blues won't get back in the series without better third periods.

"Third periods, for sure," Snuggerud said. "They had two good third periods the last (two) nights, so I feel like we have to have a stronger third period, and we're working on it."

They've got two days to work on it before Game 3.

"As a group, we're not happy to be down 2-0, but the games are really close," Montgomery said. "There's not much separation going on right now. We need to make a separation, we need to find another level when we go home, so we can end up on top by a goal."

Global Winnipeg

<https://globalnews.ca/news/11142236/connor-scores-winner-again-as-winnipeg-jets-down-blues-2-1-to-take-2-0-series-lead/>

Connor scores winner again as Winnipeg Jets down Blues 2-1 for 2-0 series lead

By Christian Aumell & Russ Hobson Global News

Game 2's have not been kind to the Winnipeg Jets in their young history.

But trends are made to be broken as the Jets emerged from a tight, entertaining hockey game with a 2-1 Game 2 win over the St. Louis Blues to take a 2-0 series lead.

Going into Monday night's game, the Jets had lost seven of nine Game 2's in best-of-seven series, including their last three in a row.

But for the second straight contest Kyle Connor scored the game winning goal to break a third period deadlock to give the Jets the victory.

"Just came down to who wanted it more," said Connor. "I thought that once we did get the go ahead goal, we did a great job of just kinda clogging up the middle, not allowing their 'D's' to beat us up the ice and just playing good 'D' there."

It's the first time the Jets have won back-to-back playoff games since 2021 and it's just the third time ever they've held a 2-0 series lead.

Mark Scheifele opened the scoring in the first period and also had an assist for the two-point night. The Blues lone goal came on the man advantage in the final two seconds of the first period for their third power play goal of the series.

"It's just hard fought hockey," Jets defenceman Luke Schenn said. "Our penalty kill did a better job tonight. Obviously, gave up one at the end of the first there which stung a little bit, but resilient and bounced back and then just stuck with it."

The Jets recorded 14 blocked shots and 33 hits in the Game 2 triumph.

"Our compete level is where it needs to be for playoff hockey," said Jets head coach Scott Arniel. "It isn't just our big guys, our big heavy guys. It has to be everybody. I thought our puck battles were real strong tonight. It started in the first period, on the walls, net fronts, off faceoffs. There was a lot of areas we were certainly a lot stronger."

Just like in the series opener, the Jets took over the momentum in the third period and never let up.

"We were just able to find that one and kinda able to hold on," said Jets defenceman Dylan DeMelo. "We were just able to kinda just get back to how we play. We just kinda got away from it a couple times there and Bucky (Connor Hellebuyck) made some big saves for us, but that third period we just felt confident."

Jets defenceman Logan Stanley had a couple of huge hits, including a bone crushing check on Jordan Kyrou in the first period.

"It was a big hit," DeMelo said. "Obviously, it was a big moment. He read the play well and finished strong. It was a big hit. That's how you categorize it. We got up on the bench, crowd got into it. Anytime you get a chance to lay a hit on their top end guys or skill guys, we want to make it hard on them."

It's just the second time in the 1.0 era the Jets have won the first two games of a series on home ice.

The game opened with 5:44 of uninterrupted play as St. Louis looked to jump on the Jets early, forcing several turnovers in the Winnipeg end but they couldn't beat Hellebuyck.

Radek Faksa took the game's first penalty with 6:19 gone in the first but Winnipeg could not capitalize. The Jets got another power play with 6:39 to go in the opening period when Tyler Tucker was called for cross-checking but once again the Jets couldn't cash in.

Moments after the penalty expired, Vlad Namestnikov made a great toe-drag around a Blues defender before setting up Mason Appleton back-door but he was robbed by Jordan Binnington.

Winnipeg finally cracked the code with 3:28 left in the first when Scheifele made his presence felt. He took a pass at the St. Louis blue line and drove along the boards, getting around Nick Leddy and charging to the net. His initial chance was denied but a back-checking Jimmy Snuggerud ran into Binnington as Scheifele went by, knocking the puck into the net.

The Blues' rookie made amends in the dying seconds of the period. With DeMelo in the box for tripping, Snuggerud ripped a shot top-shelf on the power play with 1.7 seconds left to tie the game after 20 minutes.

Winnipeg got their penalty kill sorted out in the second, killing off a pair of minor penalties after the Blues scored on three of their first four power play looks in the series.

Neither team found the back of the net on seven shots each in the second, but early in the third, Winnipeg's Game 1 hero struck again.

At the end of a long shift in the St. Louis end, Winnipeg worked the puck around the boards until it found its way to Scheifele below the goal line. He touched it over to Cole Perfetti at the side of the net before Perfetti found Connor in the slot for a one-timer that beat Binnington five-hole to restore Winnipeg's lead at the 1:43 mark.

The Jets' penalty kill rose to the challenge again near the midway point of the third after Schenn was called for roughing, and when his penalty elapsed he stepped out of the box and had an unlikely partial breakaway but he was unable to get a good shot on net.

Moments later, Binnington tried to play the puck around the boards in his own end but it wound up bouncing off Scheifele and right to the faceoff dot where Perfetti turned and fired a blind shot toward the open net but he missed wide.

The Blues pulled Binnington for an extra attacker with 2:17 to go in the third but they weren't able to level the score as the Winnipeg crowd rose to its feet, cheering to the buzzer as their team held serve on home ice.

As mentioned, it's the third time in franchise history that the Jets have won a game 2 in a best-of-seven series. The previous two times they won a game 2, they went on to win the series.

Hellebuyck made 21 saves to earn the win, including just five in the third period as the Jets, for the second game in a row, allowed very little in the final period en route to victory.

Binnington stopped 20 shots in defeat.

Game 3 goes Thursday night in St. Louis as the Jets go for the series stranglehold. It's a late puck drop, listed as 8:30 p.m. but it will be more like 8:52 p.m. by the time the game actually starts thanks to television doubleheader obligations. Pregame coverage on 680 CJOB will begin at 6 p.m.

<https://globalnews.ca/news/11141394/chamber-of-commerce-jets-whiteout-parties-impact/>

Whiteout parties a boon to downtown and Winnipeg's morale, chamber says

By Sam Thompson Global News

Winnipeggers are set to show up en masse to the city's downtown Monday evening, as the Jets take on the St. Louis Blues for the second game in their best-of-seven playoff series.

The Jets took Game 1 with a 5-3 home victory on Saturday — a day that also marked the return of a Winnipeg playoff tradition: the whiteout. In addition to the fans watching the game from inside the sold-out Canada Life Centre, thousands of Jets supporters celebrated on the streets surrounding the downtown arena.

The sudden growth of the downtown population during home playoff games is a huge boost to the city's economy, the Winnipeg Chamber of Commerce's Loren Remillard says.

Remillard told Global Winnipeg that, according to one study, a home game in the NHL playoffs can potentially generate \$1-3 million in economic spinoffs to the host city.

The frenzied activity around the playoffs and whiteout street parties are doing just that, Remillard said.

“We hope that every Winnipegger is going to come down and support the team — in the building, around the building,” he said.

“But, as well, support the local restaurants, hospitality, bars, and other entertainment venues in and around the arena ... and throughout the entire city.

“Really, that’s what we’re talking about (with) the economic impact around them making the playoffs.”

The celebratory vibe downtown, he said, also provides a much-needed chance for Winnipeggers to celebrate after what has been a difficult year for many so far amid an ongoing trade war with the United States.

“We need the win right now — not just on the ice but as a community,” he said. “There’s a lot of consternation out there — anxiety, frustration with some of what’s transpiring with our trade partner.

“Right now, people need to celebrate, and I think that’s where the Jets making the playoffs, the whiteouts are really going to be a significant morale boost for our community.”

Inside the arena, staff have been very busy — not only with playoff preparations, but also juggling concerts in between games.

Canada Life Centre played host to rappers Nelly and Ja Rule on Friday, the first playoff game Saturday, Winnipeg rock icons Bachman Turner Overdrive on Sunday and now Game 2 of the Jets-Blues series Monday night.

True North Sports + Entertainment’s Ed Meichsner told 680 CJOB’s The Start that a team of 20 staff members are responsible for converting the arena from one event to another — while preserving the arena’s ice surface, which was recently voted by NHL players as third-best in the league.

“We cover the 17,000-square-foot ice surface with a material called arena deck,” Meichsner said.

“It’s an insulated board about an inch and a half thick, and it protects the ice but it also keeps the environment warm for the fan overtop of the surfaces. That’s Step 1 of multi-steps in the process.”

Whiteout gear is also flying off the shelves for the Jets’ playoff run.

Rishi Chandar, True North’s manager of retail operations, told The Start the club is doing its best to maintain stock of team gear at all of its official stores — including the one in Canada Life Centre.

Unsurprisingly, a certain type of Jets merch is outselling all the rest, thanks to the whiteout tradition.

“Anything and everything white — if it’s white, we’ll probably sell it,” Chandar said.

“It’s everything from headwear, caps, apparel, from hoodies, crew fleeces, T-shirts, you name it. Everything white is popular.”

Chandar said the Jets are also selling a lot of other merchandise from Canadian and local brands.

TSN.ca

<https://www.tsn.ca/video/he-played-at-a-vezina-calibre-lu-on-hellebuyck-s-bounce-back-performance-in-game-2%7E3119018>

'He played at a Vezina calibre': Lu on Hellebuyck's bounce back performance in Game 2 (VIDEO)

TSN's Jets reporter John Lu joins Jay Onrait to discuss how important Connor Hellebuyck was for the Jets Monday night to beat the Blues, and how the top line continues to set the tone for the Winnipeg.

<https://www.tsn.ca/video/super-scheifele-continues-dominance-in-game-2-to-lead-jets-to-a-2-0-series-lead~3119713>

'Super Scheifele' continues dominance in Game 2 to lead Jets to a 2-0 series lead

Mark Scheifele scored his second goal of the series and also had an assist as he tallied five points through the first two games of the Jets series against the Blues. Lindsay Hamilton is joined by Craig Button, Jamie McLennan and Kevin Sawyer to break down the Jets win in Game 2 to take a 2-0 series lead, Connor Hellebuyck's bounce back performance Monday night, and discuss how impressive Scheifele has been to start these playoffs.