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<https://www.nhl.com/jets/news/practice-report-april-26>

Practice Report - April 26

"We've done a really good job of bouncing back after games we don't like." - Lowry

By Mitchell Clinton

ST. LOUIS - When Winnipeg Jets head coach Scott Arniel went over the video from Game 3, one thing stood out to him, and he made sure Saturday's 35-minute practice focused on fixing it.

"We were a step behind St. Louis we really felt like for most of that first period," Arniel said. "When we were doing things at a higher pace, a higher tempo, we end up changing the momentum of the game. They were doing that to us it seemed like more than us doing it to them."

Of course, the Jets expected St. Louis to come out with a strong start in Game 3 in front of their home fans. Still, they felt their start could've been a lot better – specifically when it came to pace – and aim to play with far more speed to start Game 4 on Sunday.

"I think this year we've done a really good job of bouncing back after games we don't like, coming back with a much better effort, dialing back into details and things like that," said Jets captain Adam Lowry. "We need to try and get to our game quicker than they do. But I think the belief in this group is in the way we defend, the structure we have. We don't have a record like we do without being able to bounce back, without coming into big games and rising to the occasion."

Gabriel Vilardi just might be part of the group helping the Jets rise to the occasion.

The 25-year-old hasn't played since suffering an upper-body injury on March 23 against the Buffalo Sabres. He had been wearing a non-contact jersey since April 20, but on Saturday he was a full participant in a regular jersey.

Arniel says Vilardi is a game-time decision.

"There is a possibility for him tomorrow," Arniel said. "I haven't really talked to the medical team yet... I have to talk to those guys and we'll see where he's at."

Vilardi set a new career high with 27 goals, 34 assists, and 61 points in 71 regular season games. His 12 power play goals led the Jets, and his six game-winners were the third most.

The forward didn't take line rushes in a regular spot, but did participate in a couple power play rotations. With no morning skate ahead of the noon puck drop at Enterprise Center, warm-up will be the best indication of whether Vilardi will play or not.

The line rushes at practice did have a small wrinkle, as Morgan Barron moved from his centre spot (with David Gustafsson and Jaret Anderson-Dolan on the wings) to the left wing alongside Adam Lowry and Mason Appleton.

The full rushes looked like this:

Connor-Scheifele-Iafallo
Niederreiter-Namestnikov-Perfetti
Barron-Lowry-Appleton
Tanev-Gustafsson-Anderson-Dolan

Morrissey-DeMelo
Samberg-Pionk
Stanley-Schenn
Fleury-Miller

Being on a line with Adam Lowry isn't new for Barron. In fact, the two usually hop over the boards together following a Jets power play (depending on which power play unit finishes the man advantage), so there is plenty of familiarity between the two.

According to Natural Stat Trick, the duo has played 65:07 together at five-on-five, controlling just over 51 percent of the shot attempts and holding a 14-8 edge in high-danger chances generated.

"They have an identity. You guys know it, I know it, you can kind of see the way they want to play. To me, it's just jumping in and being a part of that," Barron said of joining Lowry and Appleton. "It's being heavy, being physical. You never know what matchups you're going to get on the road, especially, but it's a line that plays against the other team's top line at times, and pretty much right down the lineup. So I'll just try to go out and do what I know I can do, bring speed, and be physical, and hopefully get in on the forecheck and create a bit more zone time for us."

Arniel said the move – if it's used in Game 4 – has more to do with some of the matchups the Blues were looking for against the Jets. It's the next phase of the chess match that has been going on since the puck dropped on Game 1.

"You're always trying to find something that might work in tomorrow's game that maybe you didn't try earlier," said Arniel. "I think both teams will look to do things and get an edge. They had it the other night. Now we have to make sure we have the next one."

And for the Jets, it all starts with speed and playing fast.

“When you’re slow and not up and running, it’s taking longer to get to that offensive zone and we don’t have the numbers and the bodies we usually need,” said Arniel. “I think if we’re going faster, cleaner coming out of our end, now we’re coming early on in shifts instead of later in shifts.”

Winnipeg Free Press

<https://www.winnipegfreepress.com/breakingnews/2025/04/26/vilardi-could-return-to-jets-lineup-sunday>

Vilardi could return to Jets lineup Sunday Winnipeg looking for bounce-back after tough loss in Game 3

By: Ken Wiebe

ST. LOUIS – Adam Lowry was standing in a hallway in the bowels of the St. Louis Blues practice rink, surrounded by a group of reporters who were taking his temperature two days after the Winnipeg Jets had been thumped 7-2 in Game 3.

If you thought the captain of the Jets would still be rattled after the lopsided defeat, you came to the wrong place.

Sour about the lopsided loss?

Certainly, but he kept those emotions to himself and was the picture of calm, buoyed by the way the Jets have responded to various challenges this season.

“We’ve done a really good job of bouncing back after games we don’t like, coming back with a much better effort, dialing back into details and things like that,” said Lowry. “The belief in this group is in the way we defend, the structure we have. We don’t have a record like we do without being able to bounce back, without coming into big games and rising to the occasion. I think there’s been a lot of times this year where we had an effort we didn’t like and the next game was one of our best games. I expect nothing different tomorrow.”

The Jets hold a 2-1 series lead in the best-of-seven battle between Central Division rivals, with puck drop for Game 4 on Sunday scheduled for noon CT before the series shifts to Winnipeg on Wednesday.

A slow start was a big factor in Game 3 as the Blues scored twice in the opening 3:11 of action and built a 3-0 lead before the first period was over.

“The biggest thing for me looking at the tape is being a lot faster,” said Jets head coach Scott Arniel. “Being a lot faster going back to get pucks, breaking out, our forecheck. We were a step behind St. Louis we really felt like for most of that first period. When we

were doing things at a higher pace, a higher tempo, we end up changing the momentum of the game. They were doing that to us, it seemed like, more than us doing it to them.”

The Blues made some subtle adjustments that seemed to bring results, so now it's time to see if the Jets can follow suit.

“You’re always trying to find something that might work in tomorrow’s game that maybe you didn’t try earlier,” said Arniel. “There are other things too, that maybe were working in Game 1 or 2, but now they’ve adjusted to, so maybe you have to do things on the fly or prior to. That’s all part of the chess match that happens. I think both teams will look to do things and get an edge. They had it the other night. Now we have to make sure we have the next one.”

To that end, the Jets made a couple of tweaks to their line combinations on Saturday, promoting Morgan Barron to the third line with Lowry and Mason Appleton, while shifting Brandon Tanev down on the fourth line with Jaret Anderson-Dolan and David Gustafsson, who slid back into the middle.

Should those lines stay the same, Barron knows what is required of him.

“They have an identity. You guys know it, I know it. You can kind of see the way they want to play,” said Barron, who has two assists through three games. “To me, it’s just jumping in and being a part of that. It’s being heavy, being physical. You never know what matchups you’re going to get on the road, especially, but it’s a line that plays against the other team’s top line at times, and pretty much right down the lineup.

“So I’ll just try to go out and do what I know I can do, bring speed, and be physical, and hopefully get in on the forecheck and create a bit more zone time for us.”

The other development on Saturday was that forward Gabe Vilardi finally shed his yellow non-contact jersey and was a full participant for the first time with the full group since suffering an upper-body injury on Mar. 23 in a game against the Buffalo Sabres.

Although Vilardi didn’t take many line rushes, he did see some reps with both the first and second units on the power play, prompting Arniel to be encouraged by what he saw.

“Game-time decision now,” said Arniel. “He’s got the (non-contact) jersey off. Lots of good things today.”

Should Vilardi be ready to return, it will be interesting to see where he slots in and how much ice time he could handle.

“He’s a power forward with great skill,” said Arniel. “He helps us in the offensive zone and helps us on the power play.”

With another two-day break coming after Game 4, Vilardi would have a few extra days to gear up for Game 5 on Wednesday, where the Jets can dictate the matchups since they have the last change.

But Arniel wasn't ready to rule him out from playing on Sunday – and it wasn't because he was trying to keep the opposition guessing.

“I haven't talked yet (to the medical staff) on what happened today,” said Arniel. “There is a possibility for him tomorrow. I'm not hiding, I'm just telling you, he's got that yellow jersey off, so he now becomes a game-time decision.”

After missing Game 3 due to illness, all signs point to Dylan DeMelo being back on the top pairing with Josh Morrissey on Sunday afternoon.

Whether Vilardi plays or not, the Jets will be looking to earn a split on the road, which would push the Blues to the brink of elimination.

“We all knew we probably weren't going to win all 16 in a row, and it was going to be a breeze, so it was a good chance for us to reset,” said Barron. “We are playing a good team here that has won (13) in a row at home. It is obviously a great challenge and a tough building to play in, but I think it is something we can embrace.

“It is a great opportunity for us.”

The Blues skated earlier in the day and based on their line rushes, it looks like Mathieu Joseph might return to the lineup for the first time since the series opener.

Joseph would push Alexandre Texier to the sidelines after he made his series debut in Game 3.

<https://www.winnipegfreepress.com/breakingnews/2025/04/25/getting-back-to-the-blueprint>

Getting back to the blueprint

Jets know what adjustments to make after Game 3 loss

By: Ken Wiebe

ST. LOUIS — Do you remember all of those times Scott Arniel mentioned building calluses over the course of the regular season?

This is when those teachable moments should come in handy.

After being on the receiving end of a 7-2 throttling on Thursday, the Winnipeg Jets used Friday to recharge their collective batteries.

With a two-day break before Game 4 on Sunday at Enterprise Center, the Jets did require some additional time to lick their wounds, but this lopsided loss doesn't necessarily signify the beginning of the end either.

You can understand why some folks in the fan base see any defeat as a sign that a four-game losing skid is right around the corner, given the way several of the more recent playoff series have gone.

But the Jets used the 82-game regular season to prepare them for dealing with adversity and — to be honest — a single playoff defeat, no matter how ugly it was, doesn't even represent a full dose of it.

The Jets will enter Sunday's game with another opportunity to build a 3-1 cushion in this best-of-seven series with a Central Division rival.

Of course, the Jets hoped to end the series as quickly as possible but a sweep was always the unlikelyst of outcomes. Especially when you consider how well the Blues have played coming out of the break for the 4 Nations Face-Off, and how hard they pushed the Jets in Games 1 and 2 before faltering in the third periods of each game.

Jets defenceman and alternate captain Josh Morrissey exuded a calmness in his post-game interview. No doubt he was disappointed with the outcome and the overall performance, but this is not a time for panic.

"You lose that game in overtime, you lose that game how we did, it's the same result," said Morrissey. "Playoffs are all about turning the page, learning lessons, and improving as the series goes on.

"Our team has done a great job all year of being resilient and bouncing back from games that aren't us, so that's our expectation over the next few days."

There haven't been many games like Thursday's, where the sound defensive structure gets poked, prodded and penetrated.

That doesn't mean the Jets need to reinvent the wheel or come up with a completely new game plan for Game 4 — though better execution is also a necessity.

Obviously, adjustments will need to be made, but this is more a matter of getting back to a blueprint than overhauling what has made the Jets successful for most of the 85 games they've played to this point.

"Bottom line, like we've talked about all year, we try to look at what we're doing and what we do in our room and how we know when we're at our best and when we're not," said Morrissey.

There was some saltiness in Jets head coach Scott Arniel's tone during his media availability and that's to be expected.

Nobody likes getting their butt kicked, and hating to lose can sometimes be as important as knowing how to win.

Not only was giving up a seven-spot out of character, it was the manner in which most of those goals were allowed.

"We gave up the middle of the ice a lot," said Arniel. "Which we don't usually do."

Because the Jets don't normally give up the middle of the ice, it stands to reason that it should be an area that is fairly easy to get sorted out.

But there are a number of things the Jets can do better, even while holding a 2-1 series lead.

One of the storylines that was under the microscope going into these playoffs revolved around how Jets goalie Connor Hellebuyck was going to play.

After getting pulled for the first time this season on Thursday, a lot of eyes will be on Hellebuyck again.

While his removal was more of a mercy pull than an indictment of his play, Hellebuyck's turnover less than a minute after the Jets had scored to narrow the deficit to 3-1 was a critical error.

As far as Hellebuyck's play goes, there aren't an abundance of soft goals that he's allowing. Though, there haven't been as many timely saves being made either.

After another incredible regular season that has Hellebuyck on the verge of a third Vezina Trophy and a strong possibility he could be a finalist for the Hart Trophy, it's been an uneven start to these playoffs.

Although the sample size is remarkably strong, the early numbers don't paint a pretty picture.

Going into Friday's action, Hellebuyck has allowed 10 goals in his three starts and, while it's worth noting that five of those have come on the power play, his goals-against average has ballooned from 2.00 to 3.54 and his save percentage has dipped from .925 to .844.

Want to look under the hood at some underlying numbers?

MoneyPuck has Hellebuyck at -3.9 goals saved above expected and that number is tied for 16th among goalies with Linus Ullmark of the Ottawa Senators.

Hellebuyck led the league with 39.6 goals saved above expected.

These early returns don't mean that Hellebuyck can't get the job done when the lights are brightest, though it does suggest he'll need to find another level in order for the Jets to retain control of this series.

The Jets don't need Hellebuyck to single-handedly carry them to the promised land either, they simply need him to come up with a few more saves — like the breakaway stop he made on Jordan Kyrrou late in the second period of Game 1.

Now, there are other areas that require improvement for the Jets in Game 3 — including special teams, secondary scoring and a return to stifling defensive play among them.

The Jets are minus-4 in the special teams battle after surrendering six power-play markers and scoring just two so far.

The improvements the Jets made on both the power play and penalty kill during the regular season were significant — with Winnipeg finishing atop the NHL with the man-advantage and jumping up from the bottom third to 13th while shorthanded.

But cleaning up those two facets of the game would take off some pressure when it comes to scoring at even strength.

The Jets' top line delivered the game-winning goal in each of the first two games, while the Blues' top guns and top D-men were all over the scoresheet in Game 3.

By the time the buzzer sounded, top-line centre Robert Thomas had four assists and first-line winger Pavel Buchnevich delivered his first career hat trick and added an assist.

Cam Fowler, acquired from the Anaheim Ducks in mid-December to bolster the blue line, had a Morrissey-esque effort, scoring a goal off the rush and adding four helpers for five points.

It's been said often already that the best players have to be the best players, and that's been the case through three games.

The Jets' fourth line has already scored twice in the series, while the Blues' fourth unit got a goal from Alexey Toropchenko in Game 3.

Jets captain Adam Lowry had the lone goal for his team's identity line and that one was scored into an empty net. Lowry thrives at this time of the year and supplying supplementary offence is something the Jets have come to rely on from that trio, so they'll need to do more as well.

As the Jets continue to play without Gabe Vilardi and Nikolaj Ehlers, there must be some temptation for Arniel to reunite Nino Niederreiter with Lowry and Mason Appleton.

Although moving Niederreiter into the top-six where he's spent a good chunk of his career is an option, he's got to produce a bit more offence no matter what line he's playing on, as he's generated only two shots on goal so far.

The same goes for Vladislav Namestnikov, who has gone 16 games without scoring, has one goal in his past 32 games and has yet to record a shot on goal in this series.

There's no questioning the effort of Niederreiter, Namestnikov or Cole Perfetti (who has one assist and nearly had a goal in Game 3 that didn't count because there wasn't conclusive video evidence to overturn the original call on the ice), but they'll need to chip in some more offence given how well the Blues' second line has been playing.

The Jets leaned on their depth throughout the roster all season long and it's time to see if they can stand tall once again.

Winnipeg Sun

<https://winnipeg.sun.com/sports/something-we-can-embrace-jets-look-to-pass-first-adversity-test-in-game-4-against-the-blues>

'Something we can embrace': Jets look to pass first adversity test in Game 4 against the Blues

By Gordon Anderson

Let's be brutally honest here: There was zero chance the Winnipeg Jets were going to win the Stanley Cup without facing adversity.

Fresh off a 7-2 setback to St. Louis on Thursday, the Jets look to respond when they tangle with the Blues on Sunday afternoon in Game 4 of this Western Conference quarterfinal series.

"We all knew we probably weren't going to win 16 in a row, and it was going to be a breeze, so it was a good chance for us to reset," Jets forward Morgan Barron told reporters in St. Louis. "It is a great challenge and a tough building to play in, but I think it is something we can embrace."

The seven goals given up were the most markers the club allowed this season, either at home or on the road.

Captain Adam Lowry is confident his team can flip the script and take the series back to Winnipeg with a chance to finish the best-of-seven on Wednesday night.

"We don't have a record like we do without being able to bounce back, without coming into big games and rising to the occasion," Lowry said.

But first, there is this challenge to overcome.

The last time the Blues dropped a home game was a 4-3 shootout loss to the Jets on Feb. 22. Their last regulation loss at home was Feb. 6 against the Florida Panthers.

"Obviously, our fans are helping us a lot, that energy they're bringing to all the guys," Blues forward Oskar Sundqvist said. "Otherwise, we feel comfortable at home. We're comfortable with home ice, we usually have good starts at home, we usually dictate the game."

And then this challenge to match and overcome.

"I've liked our confidence and self-belief throughout the series," Blues head coach Jim Montgomery said. "But I liked our attitude and how aggressive we were, offensively and defensively to start the last game and for the 60 minutes."

Jets head coach Scott Arniel agreed with Montgomery.

"We were a step behind St. Louis for most of that first period," he said. "When we were doing things at a higher pace, a higher tempo, we end up changing the momentum of the game. They were doing that to us more than us doing it to them."

A prior promising precedence was set on the heels of a poor road performance earlier this season, and Winnipeg hopes it can respond in the same manner. They laid an egg, as far as Arniel was concerned, in a 5-2 loss to the Utah Hockey Club on Jan. 20. Arniel publicly ripped his team and the overall effort, calling it "horse bleep."

The club responded to the comments with an 11-game winning streak.

"We've done a really good job of bouncing back after games we don't like, coming back with a much better effort, dialing back into details," Lowry said. "This series has been hard-fought. We came out with two big wins, we knew they were a desperate team, and they were ready to go. They put us on the back foot and really got to their game."

And the key to surviving the early first period onslaught the Blues are surely to bring come game time? With the exception of Game 2, the Blues have been the team getting into the swing of things much quicker.

"We need to try and get to our game quicker than they do," Lowry said. "But I think the belief in this group is in the way we defend, and the structure we have."

<https://winnipeg.sun.com/sports/just-wait-winnipeg-gabe-vilardi-a-game-time-decision-for-game-4-against-the-blues>

Just wait, Winnipeg: Gabe Vilardi a game-time decision for Game 4 against the Blues

By Gordon Anderson

There was an interesting colour change at the Winnipeg Jets' skate on Saturday in advance of Game 4 against the St. Louis Blues.

Jets forward Gabe Vilardi was in the usual contact jersey as the Jets took to the ice at the Centene Community Ice Center.

"He is a game-time decision," head coach Scott Arniel told reporters in St. Louis. "He's got the (yellow non-contact) jersey off. Lots of good things today."

Vilardi was not made available to the media.

The Jets hold a 2-1 series lead in this best-of-seven Western Conference quarterfinal series. Game 4 is scheduled for Sunday at noon.

The last game Vilardi played was the March 23 game against the Buffalo Sabres. He played 16:02 in the 5-3 defeat. Prior to leaving for St. Louis on April 23, Vilardi was in the non-contact jersey, though his work rate in practice had increased notably from practices earlier in the week.

Vilardi scored 27 goals and assisted on 34 others in 71 games played. The Kingston, Ont., native also led the Jets in power-play goal with a dozen.

"He's a power forward with great skill," Arniel said. "He helps us in the offensive zone and helps us on the power play."

Overall, the Jets have scored two power-play goals in six chances through three games. Mark Scheifele and Neal Pionk have found the net behind Jordan Binnington.

Arniel was asked if Vilardi has medical clearance to play.

"I haven't really talked to the medical team yet," Arniel said. "I had to come talk to the media before I got on the bus. I have to talk to those guys, and we'll see where he's at."

ON THE REBOUND

Jets defenceman Dylan DeMelo missed Game 3 due to an undisclosed illness. Arniel suggested the D-man could be back for Game 4.

“As of right now, everybody seems to be back up and running,” Arniel said. “DeMelo obviously felt a lot better being out there.”

<https://winnipegson.com/sports/a-better-job-of-bearing-down-the-jets-need-to-clean-up-the-penalty-kill-heading-into-game-4>

'A better job of bearing down': the Jets need to clean up the penalty kill heading into Game 4

By Gordon Anderson

The Winnipeg Jets are just extending an open invitation to even the series, if the recent trend continues any further.

Heading into Game 4 of this Western Conference quarterfinal against the St. Louis Blues, the Jets are ranked 13th on the penalty kill at 60 per cent.

“You give them eight opportunities, they’re going to make you pay,” Jets captain Adam Lowry told reporters in St. Louis. “We’ve got to do a better job of bearing down. When we have pucks on our stick, getting them down (the full length of the ice), denying zone entries, winning those one-on-one battles and getting in some shooting lanes.”

The Blues scored a trifecta of power-play goals in their 7-2 win over Winnipeg on Thursday evening in St. Louis. Pavel Buchnevich, Colton Parayko and Jordan Kyrrou found the back of the net for the home team.

The Jets lead this best-of-seven series 2-1, with Game 4 set for Sunday afternoon.

Robert Thomas, Kyrrou, scored in Game 1 and Jimmy Snuggerud netted his first of the series in Game 2.

“We’ve had a couple where they’re close to being kills and they hit the seam on us, and it ends up in the back of the net,” Lowry said. “One misread and you get numbers high above the puck, and they have three guys down below and good players are going to make you pay.”

St. Louis has a power play conversion rate of 40 per cent, scoring six times on 15 opportunities. Just as a comparison only, the club ended the regular season 16th on the power play, a 22.1 per cent conversion rate.

“I think (our power play has) been very direct, I think we’ve attacked well, and I think Steve Ott’s had a very good plan,” Blues head coach Jim Montgomery said of his assistant coach. “He’s always figuring out new ways to attack from the same kind of look. I think we have really talented players who are playing at a high level right now.”

Montgomery says the PP has had some success switching players at random times, for example Buchnevich subbing in and out with forward Zack Bolduc. The intention is to get the Jets thinking about alternative methods of attack.

"Maybe it creates a little bit of hesitancy," Montgomery explained. "Maybe they cover one guy more than the other. It creates a different opening, especially for the passers (on our team)."

During the regular season, the Jets' penalty kill was 13th at 79.4 per cent. If the Jets want to play into the month of June, cleaning up the penalty kill is a good place to start.

"We still have to be aggressive with smart reads and like I said, when we have the puck on our stick or have an opportunity to get clears," Lowry said. "You have to force them to go down the length of the ice, you have to be able to get fresh killers out so you can maintain that pressure."

Lowry says certain aspects of the PK have been decent, but not enough for sustained success. The Jets penalty kill was 13th at 79.4 per cent during the regular season.

"We're denying shots, we're denying seams and the slot," Lowry said. "We're getting pressure when we can. Sometimes when you get shelled early, you have a tendency to get back on your heels. That's almost the worst thing you can do."

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<https://www.nhl.com/news/winnipeg-jets-st-louis-blues-game-4-preview-april-27>

Jets at Blues, Western Conference 1st Round Game 4 preview Winnipeg holds 2-1 series lead, but St. Louis has momentum after dominant Game 3 win

By Tracey Myers

ST. LOUIS -- The Winnipeg Jets will try to put the frustrations of their last game behind them when they play the St. Louis Blues in Game 4 of the Western Conference First Round at Enterprise Center on Sunday (1 p.m. ET; FDSNMW, MAX, truTV, TBS, SN, TVAS, CBC).

The Jets lead the best-of-7 series 2-1 but struggled in every facet in a 7-2 loss to the Blues in Game 3 on Thursday. Winnipeg was down 2-0 3:11 into the first period, and never really got back into it. Center Adam Lowry said the key to getting back to their game is "execution, playing fast."

"There are things they did really well that limited our ability to get to our transition, to get to our forecheck, allowed them to get on the body and turn pucks over and put us on our heels," Lowry said. "I think as we saw in Winnipeg, when we get to our game, we're

efficient through the neutral zone, we're good at turning pucks over and create a lot of zone time and really limit the chances. Watching Game 3 back, (they had) a lot of time and space through the neutral zone.

"We knew they were going to throw a lot of pucks at the net and it's getting in shooting lanes, winning those 1-on-1 battles and winning the battles down low to stop the zone time they started to get. It starts in the defensive zone and leads offensively to us possessing the puck more, breaking out the puck more efficiently and getting to our forecheck."

Meanwhile, the Blues are riding a wave of confidence off Thursday's game. They know the Jets will probably adjust, and they'll try to be ready for it.

"We are trying to stay ahead of it because that's an excellent team that's really well coached. You try and anticipate maybe things that will change, but the thing that's really important for us is that we stay true to who we are, our identity, that attitude of being aggressive offensively and defensively," Blues coach Jim Montgomery said. "The changes that we thought we would make (in Game 3), I don't even know if they materialized. It was just more of an attitude that was different about us."

Teams that have taken a 3-1 lead in a best-of-7 series in the Stanley Cup Playoffs have won the series 91 percent of the time (316-32). The Blues are 8-20 (.286) when trailing 2-1 in a series.

Here is a breakdown of Game 4:

Jets: Winnipeg has talked about getting out to good starts throughout the series and the lack of doing so hurt them badly in Game 3. That start has to be there in Game 4. "We need to try and get to our game quicker than they do, but I think the belief in this group is in the way we defend, the structure we have," Lowry said. "We don't have a (regular-season) record like we do without being able to bounce back, without coming into big games and rising to the occasion."

Blues: St. Louis has gotten a bulk of its scoring from its top line, left wing Pavel Buchnevich, center Robert Thomas and right wing Jimmy Snuggerud. Buchnevich has six points (three goals, three assists) in three games, including his hat trick from Game 3. Thomas has five points (one goal, four assists) and Snuggerud two points (one goal, one assist). The Jets had a hard time stopping this line in Game 3, and the Blues will try to take advantage of home ice and last change with this group again.

Number to know: 2. Number of power-play goals the Blues have allowed, on 10 power-play opportunities, through the first three games against the Jets. Winnipeg came into the playoffs with the No. 1 power play in the regular season (28.9 percent).

What to look for: Can the Blues bring the confidence they gained in Game 3 into Sunday's game? Will the Jets snap out of their power-play woes?

What they are saying

"We all knew we probably weren't going to win all 16 in a row, and it was going to be a breeze, so it was a good chance for us to reset. We are playing a good team here that has won 13 in a row at home. It is obviously a great challenge and a tough building to play in, but I think it is something we can embrace. It is a great opportunity for us." -- Jets forward Morgan Barron

"Since 4 Nations (Face-Off), the belief in this group has raised significantly and it doesn't matter if we're down or up in a game, we have a big belief in this group that we can win hockey games. I think it's come a lot in this group over the last couple of months and you can kind of sense the difference in what we're really believing in what we're doing." -- Blues forward Oskar Sundqvist

Status report

Vilardi will be a game-time decision; the forward wore a regular jersey at practice on Saturday but was skating as an extra. However, he did blend in on power-play drills. ... DeMelo will return after missing Game 3 with an illness and replace Miller, a defenseman. ... Barron and Tanev will flip lines while Gustafsson will slide into the middle. ... Joseph is expected to play after being a healthy scratch the past two games and replace Texier, a forward. ... Suter is expected to be a healthy scratch for a second straight game.

<https://www.nhl.com/news/topic/playoffs/2025/series-e-news/cam-fowler-stabilizing-force-for-st-louis-blues-heading-into-game-4>

Fowler becomes stabilizing force for Blues heading into Game 4 against Jets Defenseman acquired in December looks to help St. Louis even West 1st Round

By Tracey Myers

MARYLAND HEIGHTS, Mo. -- The first thing you notice about Cam Fowler when you talk to him is how relaxed he is. Apparently, that serenity is constant in the St. Louis Blues defenseman.

"When you talk to him, it's like his pulse never gets above 60. It's like, 'Oh, OK, I did that wrong? No problem. What should I have done?'" Blues coach Jim Montgomery said in a more relaxed voice.

"My voice might be elevated, I don't know, but he's like, 'I understand. Thank you.' Even if you praise him, 'Hey, five-point night, great game,' he says, 'Oh, I appreciate it.' He's just really calm."

That was Fowler's reaction when he had five points (one goal, four assists), a Blues record for points in a playoff game by a defenseman, when they defeated the Winnipeg Jets 7-2 in Game 3 of the Western Conference First Round on Thursday.

"I'm thankful, I'm happy that I was able to contribute and help our team get a win," was the first thing he said.

But that cool demeanor and veteran presence was exactly what the Blues needed and why they acquired him from the Anaheim Ducks on Dec. 14. He couldn't have been a bigger help on Thursday and now the Blues, down 2-1 in the best-of-7 series, are a confident group entering Game 4 at Enterprise Center on Sunday (1 p.m. ET; FDSNMW, MAX, truTV, TBS, SN, TVAS, CBC).

"He's been remarkable," Montgomery said of Fowler on Thursday. "I told him after the game, 'Thank God you're not in Anaheim anymore.'"

Fowler became the eighth defenseman in NHL history with five or more points in a postseason game. Cale Makar of the Colorado Avalanche was the most recent to do it, with a goal and four assists in Game 4 of the 2022 Western Conference Final. Paul Coffey has the record with six points (one goal, five assists) for the Edmonton Oilers in Game 5 of the 1985 Campbell Conference Final.

Fowler has seven points (one goal, six assists) in his past three games. He has a four-game point streak (one goal, eight assists), which includes the Blues' final regular-season game against the Utah Hockey Club.

"He's like the little piece of the puzzle we were missing from the start of the season," Blues forward Radek Faksa said. "He's obviously a good skater, has lots of experience running the power play. Since he got here the power play's gotten way better. He's huge for us and playing really well."

Indeed, the Blues' power play went 31-for-124 (25 percent, 10th in NHL) since Dec. 15, the day after Fowler's first game with the Blues. St. Louis' power play was 12-for-71 (16.9 percent, 26th in the League) before Fowler was acquired.

The 33-year-old laughed at Montgomery's description of him, saying part of that calmness comes from being a father. He and his wife Jasmine have two boys, Beau who was born March 8 and Charlie, who turned 3 on Saturday. Fowler said it also comes from time in the League.

"I think that's something that's developed over time. Now that I have a couple of kids at home and I'm whatever, 15 years in [the NHL], I think it just helps give me perspective and know that, in the grand scheme of things, there are bigger things in life than hockey," he said.

"So, I'm just happy to be here competing and I think it just helps me stay grounded, having my family and my boys. That's helped my overall demeanor as my career's gone on."

Bruce Boudreau, who coached Fowler with the Ducks from 2011-16, said the Blues acquiring him “was the best deal of all the trade deadline deals” prior to the March 7 NHL Trade Deadline.

“He’s playing with better players and they’re not all younger players. For the last five years in Anaheim, he’s been the senior citizen and he’s been the guy having to teach the young guys, the young defense. Now he’s fitting in and he’s playing with (defenseman Colton) Parayko, he’s playing with guys that are on his level,” Boudreau said.

“I think it’s a real lift off his shoulders. He doesn’t have to take care of this guy and that guy. He just worries about his own job. I’m sure whoever’s running the defense or Jim (Montgomery) said, ‘Just go be you, man.’ And when he’s himself, he’s a really good first-pass guy, jumping into the play.”

The No. 12 pick by the Ducks in the 2010 NHL Draft, Fowler has 493 points (105 goals, 388 assists) in 1,042 career games with the Ducks and Blues. His 15 seasons with the Ducks made him the longest-tenured player for them and he’s second for Anaheim in games played (991 games) behind former forward Ryan Getzlaf (1,157).

Boudreau said Fowler was “more of a really solid defenseman and a great teammate,” in Boudreau’s time in Anaheim.

“When [the Ducks] were good, when they went to the second round, or the conference final or anything, Cam was the guy who was the leader on defense. No matter how good a defense you had, he was the one who played 24 minutes a night when you had Hampus Lindholm, and you had Shea Theodore, and you had Sami Vatanen and Josh Manson. He was still the guy,” Boudreau said of former Ducks defensemen.

“What I see now is a different style of play where he’s being way more aggressive offensively, and they’re giving him that power to go. He’s showing he can be an elite offensive defenseman.”

Fowler has gotten very comfortable in his surroundings, a benefit of being traded in December instead of March. He’s fit in well and is thrilled to be back in the Stanley Cup Playoffs.

“That’s why we play as athletes is to have the opportunity to play in the Stanley Cup Playoffs. That’s something that I’ve been missing the past little while. So, to have that opportunity I’m very grateful,” he said.

“We had a lot of success early on in Anaheim and you can get a little spoiled. Because once it goes away, it’s hard to get back. I know how hard it is just to get to this point, so I’m happy to be competing and playing in meaningful games. That’s what matters most.”