

***Three things - Blues even series with 5-1 win
The Jets give up five unanswered goals in 5-1 loss in Game 4***

By Jamie Thomas

The St. Louis Blues scored five unanswered goals to beat the Winnipeg Jets 5-1 in Game 4 and even the best-of-seven series at two games apiece. The Blues have won 14 straight games at Enterprise Center going back into the regular season. Jake Neighbours had a goal and two assists for the Blues, Kyle Connor scored his third goal of the series for the Jets. Game 5 of this series moves back to Winnipeg as the Jets will host on Wednesday at Canada Life Centre. When a best-of-seven is tied 2-2, the winner of Game 5 holds an all-time series record of 233-62 (.790), including a 123-30 mark in the opening round of any postseason.

GREAT FIRST PERIOD UNTIL...

The attitude around the Jets dressing room was that they knew they would be better today than they were in Game 3. From the opening faceoff, Winnipeg had their legs and got off to the start they were hoping for...

The Jets looked like they were going to go to the dressing room with a one goal lead and some momentum with a solid period behind them. But with under 30 seconds left in the first, Colton Parayko's shot was redirected by Jake Neighbours behind Connor Hellebuyck to tie the game at one.

"That's just coverage that we got stuck on the wall, and that's just a coverage thing. I mean, two of their guys at the net front versus one of ours, and make a nice play and tip it. But I'm tired of watching them make nice plays and put them in the net."

WHEELS COME OFF

Scott Arniel said his team lost Game 3 in the first period, and you can easily say they lost Game 4 over the final 10 minutes of the middle frame. The game was still tied at one when Tyler Tucker blasted a shot from the point and Oskar Sundqvist went through Hellebuyck's eyes at the right time, allowing the shot to get by Hellebuyck at 10:46. The Blues would add two more courtesy of Brayden Schenn at 17:23 and Justin Faulk at 18:54 for a 4-1 lead after two periods.

HELLEBUYCK PULLED A SECOND TIME

After allowing just four goals in the first two games in Winnipeg, Connor Hellebuyck has given up 11 goals in the two games at Enterprise Center. The soon to be Vezina Trophy finalist has also been pulled twice in the last two contests, now the argument can be made that it's not all on the shoulders of Hellebuyck and has the support of his teammates heading into Game 5.

"Yeah, lots of confidence. I mean, he's had an unbelievable year, and you watch the replay of the goals that went in. I mean they're deflections, they're screens, they're bouncing off us and in," said Luke Schenn.

"Just obviously gotta do a better job in front of the net, games are won and lost in the hard areas and hard areas in front of their net, in front of our net, we obviously have to do a much better job of that."

NHL.com

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

***Blues cruise past Jets in Game 4 of Western 1st Round, even series
Neighbours has 3 points for St. Louis, which chases Hellebuyck again***

By Lou Korac

ST. LOUIS -- The St. Louis Blues scored five straight goals and chased Connor Hellebuyck again in a 5-1 win against the Winnipeg Jets in Game 4 of the Western Conference First Round at Enterprise Center on Sunday.

"It's playoffs. You have to win the net front battle, you have to go to the net," St. Louis captain Brayden Schenn said. "Not even just our series, but look League-wide right now how pucks and goals are going in in the playoffs; they're not always going to be pretty. It's such a cliché answer, but you get pucks and people and traffic to the net, shoot the puck and hopefully good things happen."

Jake Neighbours had a goal and two assists, Schenn had a goal and an assist, and Jordan Binnington made 30 saves for the Blues, who are the second wild card from the West and won 7-2 in Game 3 here on Thursday.

The best-of-7 series is tied 2-2. Game 5 is at Canada Life Centre in Winnipeg on Wednesday (9:30 p.m. ET; CBC, TVAS, SN, ESPN, FDSNMW).

"We knew where we were," St. Louis defenseman Justin Faulk said. "We had a job to do when we came back -- start with the first one, come in and try and play well, get to our game. Obviously, [Game 3] went pretty well and went our way. We knew we had to try and recreate that again today. It was a tough task after losing the first two [in Winnipeg]. We wanted to get back even in the series, and that's where we are. It's three games now, series tied up. We've got to keep going and keep playing well."

Hellebuyck allowed five goals on 18 shots and was pulled for the second straight game for the Jets, who won the Presidents' Trophy as the team with the most points in the regular season. Eric Comrie made six saves in relief.

Hellebuyck was pulled from Game 3 after he allowed six goals on 25 shots. He is 3-10 with a 4.53 goals-against average and an .863 save percentage in his past 13 playoff games.

"I'm 100 percent confident in Connor Hellebuyck," Winnipeg coach Scott Arniel said. "His resume speaks for itself. At the end of the day, we need to be better in front of him. We need to let him see some pucks. There were a couple there we didn't let him see. There's things that we have to do to help him. He knows he has to do things that help us. And that's how it's been all year long.

"We're all in this together. You know what, it's just a situation that we've got to put our best foot forward when we go home. ... We worked our tails off for 82 games to get home-ice advantage. Well, it's a best-of-3 now. Now we've got to make sure we take care of business."

Kyle Connor gave the Jets a 1-0 lead at 13:58 of the first period when he backhanded a rebound past Binnington.

Neighbours tied it 1-1 at 19:37. Cam Fowler's shot-pass caromed to Colton Parayko at the point, and his shot was redirected in front by Neighbours for his first Stanley Cup Playoff goal.

"It felt really good because I felt I had multiple instances where I could have made a difference on their first goal, so it was nice to get one back for the team," Neighbours said. "The emotion of it, it's just exciting. It's the playoffs; you want to compete for your team and help out any way you can. It was a good feeling."

Tyler Tucker gave St. Louis a 2-1 lead at 10:46 of the second period with his first playoff goal, a one-timer from the right point that beat Hellebuyck clean low to the far side.

Schenn made it 3-1 at 17:23, five seconds after a Blues power play expired. Parayko drove the net off the left side, and Schenn roofed a shot from the top of the crease after taking the puck off Hellebuyck's stick.

Faulk scored 1:31 later at 18:54, a point shot that caromed in off Jets defenseman Neal Pionk to make it 4-1.

It was the fourth goal in the past two games by a St. Louis defenseman.

"I think by them moving their feet, they get more into a rhythm of the game and they end up getting open looks, especially in the offensive zone," Blues coach Jim Montgomery said. "If they're moving their feet, I thought we were standing still a lot in Winnipeg, and I think as a team, we're moving our feet and we're getting to goal lines, we're getting numbers on the puck and then we're able to go low to high and our defensemen, because of the way Winnipeg does such a great job in the [defensive] zone, have a little more time if they're moving their feet to get to middle ice."

Robert Thomas made it 5-1 at 2:01 of the third period when he dangled in the slot and backhanded a shot past Hellebuyck, chasing the Winnipeg goalie from the game.

"Yeah, lots of confidence," Jets defenseman Luke Schenn said of Hellebuyck. "I mean, he's had an unbelievable year and you watch the replay of the goals that went in, I mean, they're deflections, they're screens, they're bouncing off us and in.

"(We) just, obviously, [have] to do a better job in front of the net. ... Games are won and lost in the hard area and the hard area is in front of our net, in front of their net, and we obviously got to do a much better job of that."

Tucker was injured late in the third period, buckling on top of his right leg after a checking play in the corner with Jets forward Brandon Tanev.

"I don't have an update. We'll have more [Monday]," Montgomery said. "His goal was huge for us getting a lead and being able to play with the lead. I thought he was really aggressive tonight, I thought that was his best game of the three games and I thought he was physical."

NOTES: St. Louis has won 14 in a row at home dating to Feb. 23, and Binnington has won 13 straight home starts dating to Feb. 8. ... The Blues have scored at least 12 goals in their first two home playoff games for the second time in franchise history (scored 14 in 1982). ... Jets defenseman Dylan DeMelo played 21:56 after missing Game 3 with an illness. ... Winnipeg forward Gabriel Vilardi took warmups but did not play again due to an upper-body injury. ... Jets defenseman Logan Stanley was scratched in favor of Haydn Fleury, who was minus-1 in 12:58. Arniel said Stanley is "banged up."

<https://www.nhl.com/news/topic/playoffs/2025/series-e-news/winnipeg-jets-must-regroup-after-latest-loss-in-game-4>

Jets must 'regroup' following latest defeat in Game 4 of Western 1st Round Series tied after Winnipeg is outscored 12-3 in back-to-back losses at Blues

By Tracey Myers

ST. LOUIS -- Mark Scheifele kept his head down for the majority of his postgame media availability, the Winnipeg Jets center searching for answers to how a great start turned into a dismal ending.

"I don't know. They obviously got that second (goal) and then made a bad read on the third one and it ends up in the back of the net, and then it gets away from us," Scheifele said after a 5-1 loss to the St. Louis Blues in Game 4 of the Western Conference First Round at Enterprise Center on Sunday. "We kind of unraveled a little bit. It's more our doing than theirs."

Unravelling was something the Jets rarely did during the regular season, when they went 56-22-4 and won the Presidents' Trophy, which is awarded annually to the NHL team with the most points. They're looking to change their Stanley Cup Playoff narrative, which has included a first-round exit in each of the past two seasons.

On Sunday, they got out to their best start of the series with their overall game, and they held a 1-0 lead when Kyle Connor scored at 13:58 of the first period. But after a 7-2 loss here in Game 3 on Thursday, Winnipeg again struggled to find goals, saves, or ways to stop St. Louis' surges.

The best-of-7 series is tied and will shift back to Canada Life Centre in Winnipeg for Game 5 on Wednesday (9:30 p.m. ET; CBC TVAS, SB, ESPN, FDSNMW).

"It's a 2-2 series," Jets defenseman Luke Schenn said. "Obviously, they're a dominant team at home, there's no question about that. They've been playing some great hockey down the stretch. At the end of the day, when you're up 2-0 in the series, there's nothing to protect.

"Maybe we sat back and thought we'd defend that a little bit. You've got to keep pushing, keep pushing."

Certainly, Enterprise Center has been a tough place to play for the visiting team. The Blues have won 14 in a row here, their last loss a 4-3 shootout defeat against, you guessed it, the Jets on Feb. 22. They were once again opportunistic, getting bodies in front of the net and using redirects, traffic and bounces, be it off their own sticks or opposing players, to seize control.

"The first five minutes we started off really well, then we got the two penalties and they generated a lot of shots from the outside and on the power play," St. Louis coach Jim Montgomery said. "I thought in the second they were getting to their game and we weren't having enough [offensive]-zone time. But then I thought we started to get to our [offensive]-zone time, and I think we're owning the net front, and our goaltender (Jordan Binnington) is making saves."

Winnipeg goalie Connor Hellebuyck was pulled for the second consecutive game after Blues center Robert Thomas made it 5-1 at 2:01 of the third period. Hellebuyck allowed five goals on 18 shots.

After allowing five or more goals just three times in 62 regular-season starts, Hellebuyck has allowed at least five in each of his past two games of this series. Adding to that, he is 3-10 with a 4.53 goals-against average and a .863 save percentage in his past 13 playoff games.

But Jets coach Scott Arniel said he's not concerned about his No. 1 goalie.

"I'm 100 percent confident in Connor Hellebuyck," Arniel said. "His resume speaks for itself."

Hellebuyck is a two-time winner of the Vezina Trophy (2020, 2024), which is awarded to the League's top goalie. He's likely to win it again after he led the NHL in wins (47), GAA (2.00) and shutouts (eight) during the regular season.

"At the end of the day, we need to be better in front of him," Arniel said. "We need to let him see some pucks. There were a couple there we didn't let him see. There's things that we have to do to help him. He knows he has to do things that help us, and that's how it's been all year long."

Luke Schenn agreed.

"I mean, he's had an unbelievable year, and you watch the replay of the goals that went in, they're deflections, they're screens, they're bouncing off us and in," he said. "(We've) just, obviously, got to do a better job in front of the net. Like I said, games are won and lost in the hard area, and the hard area is in front of our net, in front of their net, and we obviously got to do a much better job of that."

It starts with Game 5 back home on Wednesday.

"It's a best 2-out-of-3 series," Scheifele said. "We know we have home ice. We have two days to regroup and then back in front of our fans. It's not what we wanted, but it's a best 2-out-of-3 series now."

<https://www.nhl.com/video/nhl-tonight-hellebuyck-struggling-6372005154112>

NHL Tonight: Hellebuyck Struggling (VIDEO)

NHL Tonight discusses Connor Hellebuyck's playoff struggles after allowing five goals against the Blues in game four

Sportsnet.ca

<https://www.sportsnet.ca/nhl/article/how-jets-hellebuyck-responds-after-another-rough-start-will-define-series-vs-blues/>

How Jets' Hellebuyck responds after another rough start will define series vs. Blues

By Jacob Stoller

How did things go so wrong, so fast?

The Winnipeg Jets had put forth a strong first 20 minutes, as good as you could ask for from a road team, and entered the second period deadlocked 1-1.

By the midway point of the third period, Winnipeg trailed 5-1 and St. Louis Blues fans chanted “We Want Connor” as Eric Comrie tended the net in relief for a second straight game.

There’s no way around it, Connor Hellebuyck has not been playing anywhere close to a Hart-Trophy candidate over the last two games, allowing 11 goals on 43 shots against. At the same time, the Jets’ skaters are doing their Vezina-calibre goaltender a disservice — they’re not clearing out the net front well enough.

Sort of feels like déjà vu, hey?

These last two games mirror what happened against the Colorado Avalanche last year, a series that Hellebuyck — who posted a 5.23 goals against average in five playoff games — didn’t want to dwell on in his pre-playoff media availability. A series where he said he believed he played the best hockey of his career. A series where the Jets opponent capitalized on their inability to protect the net front.

It’s happening all over again.

<i>Segment</i>	<i>SV%</i>	<i>GAA</i>	<i>GSAA</i>
Regular Season (187 GP)	0.922	2.29	0.57
Playoffs (14 GP)	0.866	4.27	-0.05

Why does this happen to Hellebuyck in the playoffs?

Game 4 shed further light on what has become a troubling playoff pattern for these Jets.

“You watch the replay of the goals that went in, I mean, their deflections, their screens, they’re bouncing off us and in,” defenceman Luke Schenn told reporters after the loss, which tied the series 2-2.

The Stanley Cup Playoffs are a different game for a goaltender, there are more screens on shots and the one-on-one aspect — where Hellebuyck thrives, as he’s excellent at reading point shots — fades. Hellebuyck isn’t the best skater, and that’s partially why he stays so deep in his net. The problem with that, though, is that with all the traffic that comes in the post-season, his ability to respond is hindered, and that’s why he gets exposed up high, through traffic and on rebounds.

When you’re playing against a team through the course of a playoff series, it’s easy to expose that. Now, obviously, there’s an onus on Hellebuyck to see the puck better and react quicker. There’s also onus on him to play with more urgency, be it when he plays the puck — which often triggers an audible gasp — or when covering the puck, like on

Brayden Schenn's goal in Game 4 where he looked like that one buddy who loses rock paper scissors and is thrown into the net for road hockey.

But the Jets defence shares a good chunk of the blame here, too. They're not clearing the net front.

"At the end of the day, this time of year, that's where games are won and lost," Schenn said.

The Jets have one of the smaller top fours in the league, and it's shown on a lot of the goals where there's so much chaos in front of Hellebuyck.

"The coverage part of it, there's ways we have to play. One is obviously, if there are people getting to the net, we have to get them out of there before they try to get their screens," Jets coach Scott Arniel told reporters. "We've got to box out earlier, those types of things. There's a lot, like I mentioned, of coverage stuff. We know how to do those things. We've been doing it all year long. We just have to get back to doing it. We were better at it in the first, we did a great job at it in the first."

You know what deflated them after the first? That tipped goal by Jake Neighbours on a fluttering puck, with 23 seconds remaining in the first period. It killed the Jets' momentum, and it wasn't long into the second until the Blues imposed their will. Both parties — the Jets defence and Hellebuyck — were at fault here, although at the end of the day, the buck stops at Hellebuyck to see those shots among the chaos.

"We unraveled in the last seven, eight minutes of that second period," Mark Scheifele told reporters. "I don't know if it's the moment we're at or whatever, but it's uncharacteristic of our group."

Uncharacteristic? Maybe in the regular season. This is a playoff pattern. And it's up to the man who is showered with "M—V—P" chants before games to get the Jets through this final stretch of the series.

"I'm 100 per cent confident in Connor Hellebuyck," Arniel said. "His resume speaks for itself."

His resume in the regular season speaks for itself. His playoff resume, as we've seen, is hardly as flattering.

How Hellebuyck plays, from here on out, will define the series.

"We really wanted to come home either winning it or up 3-1. We're not. Now it's a best of three," Arniel said. "Our best players have to be better than their best players."

<https://www.sportsnet.ca/nhl/video/how-can-the-jets-reclaim-momentum-in-first-round-series-vs-blues/>

How can the Jets reclaim momentum in first-round series vs. Blues? (VIDEO)

Sportsnet's Nick Nypreos joins Faizel Khamisa and Danielle Michaud to recap the St. Louis Blues' Game 4 victory over the Winnipeg Jets.

Associated Press

<https://www.sportsnet.ca/nhl/article/jets-allow-five-unanswered-goals-as-blues-tie-up-series-2-2/>

Jets allow five unanswered goals as Blues tie up series 2-2

By Associated Press

ST. LOUIS — Brayden Schenn, Tyler Tucker and Justin Faulk each scored second-period goals to help the St. Louis Blues beat the Winnipeg Jets 5-1 on Sunday to tie their playoff series at 2-all after dropping the first two games in Winnipeg.

Robert Thomas and Jake Neighbours also scored, and Jordan Binnington made 30 saves for St. Louis, which has won 14 straight regular-season and playoff games at home dating back to Feb. 23.

"We knew where we were," Faulk said. "We had a job to do when we came back. Start with the first one, come in and try and play well, get to our game. Obviously, the first one went pretty well and went our way. We knew we had to try and recreate that again today."

Kyle Connor scored, and Connor Hellebuyck made 13 saves for Winnipeg before being pulled after Thomas scored his second goal of the playoffs 2:01 into the third period.

Eric Comrie made five saves in relief of Hellebuyck, who has allowed at least four goals in 10 of his last 13 playoff appearances and has been pulled in consecutive games for just the second time in his career, counting the regular season.

"I can look at all the goals," Jets coach Scott Arniel said. "Those are coverage goals. Those are things that we usually handle pretty well. We didn't tonight."

Schenn gave the Blues a 3-1 lead with 2:37 remaining in the second period when he wristed a puck in the crease over Hellebuyck for his first goal of the playoffs just five seconds after Jets captain Adam Lowry returned from serving a roughing penalty.

"The benefit of having guys like (Jordan) Kyrou, Schenn and Neighbours on your second line is you get favourable matchups at home," Blues coach Jim Montgomery

said. "Give credit to them for taking advantage of it, scoring at the end of the power play and getting that other big goal 5-on-5. When you see a skilled player like Jordan Kyrrou being at the net front helping create screens, you know your team's really invested."

Tucker scored his first career playoff goal on a slap shot from the point to give the Blues a 2-1 lead with 9:04 left in the second period. Tucker needed help leaving the ice with 4:17 remaining in the game after his legs slammed into the boards awkwardly as Oskar Sundqvist delivered a hit on Brandon Tanev next to him.

"I don't have an update," Blues coach Jim Montgomery said about Tucker. "His goal was huge for us getting a lead and being able to play with the lead. I thought he was really aggressive. I thought that was his best game of the three games."

Neighbours used the blade of his stick to deflect a shot from Colton Parayko past Hellebuyck for his first career playoff goal with 23 seconds remaining in the first period.

"It felt really good because I felt I had multiple instances where I could have made a difference on their first goal," Neighbours said. "It was nice to get one back for the team. The emotion of it, it's just exciting. It's the playoffs, you want to compete for your team and help out any way you can. It was a good feeling."

Connor scored his third goal of the post-season with 6:02 left in the first period to give Winnipeg a 1-0 lead.

"You've got to reset," Jets defenseman Luke Schenn said. "I don't think anyone expected this to be an easy series, at least, personally, I didn't. I watched the Blues' last two months of the season — they're the hottest team in the NHL for a reason, and have the best home record and didn't lose at home down the stretch."

The Jets and Blues return to Winnipeg for Game 5 Wednesday night.

The Athletic

<https://www.nytimes.com/athletic/6315725/2025/04/27/nhl-playoffs-blues-jets-game-4/>

Another big Blues win over the Jets has series tied 2-2: Takeaways

By Jeremy Rutherford and Murat Ates

The St. Louis Blues held serve at home, and now the Western Conference first-round series against the Winnipeg Jets is tied at two games apiece.

Winnipeg took the first two games at Canada Life Centre, and St. Louis responded with back-to-back wins at Enterprise Center, including a 5-1 victory in Game 4 Sunday.

The home team overcame a 1-0 deficit on a goal by Kyle Connor, his third of the series, with Jake Neighbours, Tyler Tucker, Brayden Schenn, Justin Faulk and Robert Thomas responding for the Blues.

The goals by Schenn, Faulk and Thomas came on three consecutive shots, and the last one chased Winnipeg goalie Connor Hellebuyck for the second straight game. He surrendered five goals on 18 shots in Game 4 after allowing six goals on 25 shots in Game 3, and he's now given up 15 goals on 81 shots in the series for a .817 save percentage.

Hellebuyck's latest playoff loss could be a confidence-cracker for the goalie who's expected to win his third Vezina Trophy and perhaps the Hart Trophy as the league's MVP.

Not only will the Jets have to find some offense when the best-of-seven series returns to Winnipeg for Game 5 Wednesday – they've scored just three goals in the last two games – but the top-seeded team will somehow need Hellebuyck to return to his regular-season form.

The Blues didn't have the start in Game 4 that they had in Game 3, in which they netted three goals on 15 shots in the first period. They had just five shots on goal in the opening period and were lucky to be tied 1-1 on Neighbours' first-career playoff goal.

The Blues' defense, one of the highest-scoring blue lines in the league this season, took over on the scoreboard after that.

In the first two games of the series, Blues defensemen did not score a goal. But in Game 3, Cam Fowler had a goal and a five-point night and Colton Parayko also scored. In Game 4, Tucker picked up his first goal of the NHL playoffs and Faulk added another.

Blues goalie Jordan Binnington allowed just one goal on 30 shots for the win.

Hellebuyck needs to get his groove back

This is beginning to look like an implosion.

A circus deflection by Neighbours made it 1-1. Brandon Tanev, Oskar Sundqvist and Josh Morrissey screened Hellebuyck to make it 2-1. Faulk bounced a point shot off of Neal Pionk's back and in to make it 4-1. You can argue those plays. You can pick them apart, put yourself in Hellebuyck's sightline, and — while not everyone will agree — you can argue that those pucks would have beaten anybody.

On the Blues' 3-1 goal, the decision Hellebuyck made to try to fight off Brayden Schenn with the paddle of his stick took Hellebuyck completely out of the play. Short of somebody tackling Schenn, Hellebuyck's one-handed effort was doomed to failure and left him protecting a tiny portion of the net when Schenn buried it.

Coming on the heels of his giveaway in the third period of Game 3, it's the second straight game in which Hellebuyck played a substantial role in the Blues' backbreaking goal. The Jets don't have enough secondary scoring to give up a goal per game for free.

Hellebuyck was pulled in consecutive playoff games for the first time in his career. Enterprise Center responded with multiple "We want Connor!" chants long after Eric Comrie entered the game and, during one stoppage in play, the organist even joined in.

Neighbours undoes Winnipeg's best start of the series

If there was a Blues storm to start Game 4 — and let's not forget they got two attempts from the slot before the game was a minute old — it ended after Winnipeg killed Vladislav Namestnikov's tripping penalty. The Jets followed that kill by going on a 10-2 run in shots, with a heavy forecheck and multiple pucks stolen by Connor, Alex Iafallo, Mark Scheifele and Cole Perfetti after Iafallo had changed to create Connor's 1-0 goal.

It was Winnipeg's best first period of the series, and while Hellebuyck did his part, the Blues still got out of the frame with a tie. For Winnipeg, it's a case of a two-on-two battle lost by Scheifele and Luke Schenn in the corner. Worse, it's a case of Neighbours hanging out all alone beside that board battle, despite Nino Niederreiter and Iafallo looking on. Neighbours popped the puck to the point for free, then went to the net and scored on a high deflection of Parayko's knuckling puck from the point.

The Jets were 23 seconds away from a perfect opening period but couldn't win the board battle or regain possession after. It was also an unfortunate end to a solid period for Hellebuyck: Neighbours' circus deflection was only the Blues' fifth shot of the game.

Clearly, the Blues were not done.

Blues' PK getting the job done

In the first period of Game 4, Winnipeg had back-to-back power plays after a roughing penalty on Pavel Buchnevich and a tripping call on Tyler Tucker. But despite six shots by the Jets' power play, they did not score, and as a result, Neighbours was able to tie the game late.

Winnipeg has two power-play goals in the series, but through four games, the Jets are now 2-for-12 on the man advantage.

The success of the Blues' penalty-killing unit comes after a regular season in which it ranked No. 28 in the NHL (74.2 percent). They're doing it without defenseman Ryan Suter, who averaged nearly three minutes of PK ice time in Games 1-2 and has been a healthy scratch the past two games.

Maroon gives the Blues a boost

Pat Maroon, who won a Stanley Cup with the Blues in 2019, recently announced his retirement from the NHL. With his free time, the native St. Louisan wore a Blues' jersey and waved the team's rally towel before Game 4.

Maroon has always been a fan favorite, so the loud reaction Sunday was no surprise, especially when Maroon grabbed his beer and chugged it.

A few weeks ago, Maroon played his final game in his hometown as a member of the Chicago Blackhawks, who are the Blues' biggest rival. So all seemed right with the world again to see him back in Blues' colors.

Montgomery misdirection

During an off-day practice Saturday, Blues coach Jim Montgomery had Mathieu Joseph on the third line and it appeared that he would draw back in for Alexandre Texier in Game 4.

"Sometimes you have a gut feel that it's going to be more of a checking game," Montgomery said. "Mojo (Joseph) does a lot of penalty-killing for us, so it's just another weapon in our arsenal."

Then Sunday morning, Montgomery doubled down when asked what Joseph could bring to the lineup.

"To continue the hit parade we're doing on their D corps, and to have dogged determination on pucks," he said.

But then, when the puck dropped, Texier remained in the lineup for his second straight game, and Joseph was a healthy scratch.

Winnipeg's lack of secondary scoring has become a problem

Gabriel Vilardi was a "gametime decision," as per Scott Arniel, and even took the warmup, although it was clear at Jets practice on Saturday that Vilardi was unlikely to play. Nikolaj Ehlers remains out week to week and will not be an option for the Jets in Round 1.

Vilardi alone won't be able to turn the tide of this series but somebody other than Scheifele and Connor needs to contribute to Winnipeg's offence. Scheifele and Connor have five points each; the Jets' next highest scorers are Perfetti, Jaret Anderson-Dolan, Morrissey, Mason Appleton and Morgan Barron — a five-way tie with two points each after four games.

Winnipeg could survive without offense or saves. However, it's in trouble heading into Game 5 because it's not getting either.

<https://www.sportsnet.ca/nhl/video/why-no-goal-call-against-jets-stood-after-review/>

Why the Jets' 'best of three' series vs. Blues is 3 years in the making

By Murat Ates

ST. LOUIS — The Winnipeg Jets got outscored 12-3 in two games. They were dominated in Game 3, then started well enough in Game 4 to create a little bit of hope before their late-game implosion. Their Vezina-caliber goaltender got shelled — again — and despite some bad luck, Connor Hellebuyck contributed directly to one of St. Louis' goals. Again.

But the Winnipeg Jets did not lose their series in St. Louis.

There is also truth behind Blues coach Jim Montgomery's series of verbal daggers after Game 4.

"I thought we started to get to our O-zone time," Montgomery said. "And I think we're owning the net front. And our goaltender's making saves."

Long pauses between each statement added impact to all three of those thoughts, especially the last one. Whether intended this way or not, Montgomery's goaltending comment sounded double-edged and sharp: His goaltender is making key saves and Winnipeg's goaltender is not. Jordan Binnington stopped 47 of 50 shots in St. Louis; Hellebuyck was pulled in back-to-back games.

And still, the Jets did not lose the series in St. Louis.

No, they haven't won a single playoff game after losing one since 2019 against these same Blues. They lost four straight to Colorado after winning Game 1 in 2024, four straight to Vegas after winning Game 1 in 2023, and four straight to Montreal after sweeping Edmonton in 2021. The 2020 qualification round complicates things if you count it, but there is no way around acknowledging that history is against Winnipeg's odds of a comeback.

But they don't need a comeback. The series is tied 2-2.

So let's talk about what the rest of this series means for the Jets. Winnipeg is about to begin a best-of-three series, with home-ice advantage, after the best season in franchise history. That "best season in franchise history" comes on the heels of a substantial step forward against Colorado — not in results but in terms of pushback — after an embarrassing effort in an elimination game against Vegas. All of it is taking place on a team in a state of cultural transformation from the Blake Wheeler captaincy, through Rick Bowness' hiring and his changes to Winnipeg's leadership group, and towards a defence-first group wherein everybody on the team plays for each other even when the chips are down.

This series is meant to be the payoff of all that hard work — of Winnipeg's courage to hire Bowness, Bowness' courage to remove a franchise cornerstone's captaincy and the step-by-step emergence of this generation of Jets players. Adam Lowry's captaincy is meant to be one in which all players' voices are heard. Mark Scheifele and Josh Morrissey are meant to be inclusive, team-first players who have the emotional resilience to take heat when the team struggles and show up on the scoresheet the next day. Extend the leadership group beyond the men who wear letters, and Kyle Connor, Neal Pionk, Dylan DeMelo, Nino Niederreiter and so many more of Winnipeg's veterans have developed Presidents' Trophy-winning habits over the course of three seasons after 2022's playoffs miss.

Round 1 of this year's playoffs is meant to be proof that Winnipeg made it from 2022's implosion under Dave Lowry — including loud, public-facing questions about their willingness to show up for each other — to the franchise-record-setting performance and successful team culture we saw for 82 games this season. Forget about the St. Louis Blues as the league's hottest team down the stretch. This series after the heartache that came before it is about Winnipeg's arrival as a legitimate Cup-contending team.

What happens if Winnipeg fails? How do the Jets go from running it back — brilliantly, it seemed — in the face of doubt to a season like this one ... and then run it back again next year? The core players won't change, outside of a potential Nikolaj Ehlers departure. Scheifele and Hellebuyck are finishing the first year of matching seven-year extensions. The Jets have extended Niederreiter, Pionk, DeMelo, Vladislav Namestnikov and Alex Iafallo, while Lowry and Connor are also under contract next season. Winnipeg's veterans showed a tremendous amount of guts, digging in to find their "5 to 10 percent better" and set a new standard for the Jets franchise. Their regular-season success vindicates continuity and makes that many veteran contract extensions make sense.

It also demands a breakthrough.

Imagine looking in the mirror after losing a series like this one — after losing a series like Colorado, after losing a series like Vegas — and conjuring the offseason belief all over again. What would give a player, coach or manager realistic self-confidence in bringing back the same group, with the same shared hardships, in the name of a different result? To go up 2-0 against St. Louis just to lose again, pushed out of the series by a team that found another level, would challenge any athlete's self-confidence. Players are people, too; if Jets fans feel a sense of "here we go again," the thought has likely entered the team's minds, as well.

The difference is that fans can only wait, watch and hope. Winnipeg's players have the opportunity to deliver on the promises they made to each other when the season began. This series is a dead heat at five-on-five. The power play could get Gabriel Vilardi back as soon as Game 5. The penalty kill had been awful prior to Game 4 but pulled off a 3-

for-3 result Sunday. Despite the Jets' lack of momentum right now, every day that goes by when a team has yet to be eliminated is a day it can still prepare itself to win.

Who's going to ask the Jets to dig in? Whose belief is going to inspire their teammates? Winnipeg can't win or lose the series on Wednesday, but it needs to give itself a reason to believe, lest the post-Wheeler era of Jets 2.0 hockey maintain its pre-existing association with playoff misery.

The answer to these kinds of questions has usually been Hellebuyck, but Hellebuyck has given up a goal for free in each of Winnipeg's two losses. Sometimes it looks like he's trying to win the game when a save in the moment would do. The Jets need to show up for him, to buy him time to regain whatever confidence has been chipped away by back-to-back drubbings. I thought Scott Arniel did a good job of that after Game 4, asserting "100 percent" confidence in Hellebuyck heading into Game 5. Arniel also said that Winnipeg's best players need to be better than St. Louis' best players — and it's clear that Hellebuyck is a part of that group.

So the Jets need more saves from their No. 1 goaltender. They also need to do a much better job protecting the net front to help him make those saves. They need more secondary scoring: 18 of 20 Jets skaters have two points or fewer through four games. They need Scheifele and Connor, their primary scorers, to maintain their defensive assignments while working for their next goal. They need Morrissey to make the difference he so often does and for players such as Niederreiter, Namestnikov, Lowry and Mason Appleton — veteran middle-six forwards — to put the puck in the net.

What Winnipeg doesn't need in Game 5 is a miracle.

The Jets have controlled play as often as the Blues have through four games. They've gotten as many scoring chances from dangerous areas and made defensive adjustments in Game 4 that took away some of the Blues' advantage switching sides in the offensive zone. This isn't a case of the 2024 Colorado Avalanche steamrolling through the Jets, leaving zero doubt as to Winnipeg's ability to stay in a game.

It is a case of two good hockey teams fighting to be great, with each one needing two more wins before reaping any reward at all. For the Jets, it's the opportunity to prove they were right all along and the answers are in the room after all of these years. You can't spend the whole season arguing that a team will be judged by its playoff performance and then throw that out because the opponent was really good.

But what happens if the Jets succeed?

"It's a best two out of three series," Scheifele said. "We know we have home ice. We have two days to regroup and then back in front of our fans. It's not what we wanted, but it's a best two out of three series now."

What would these Jets be capable of if they dug in and made Game 5 their own in front of their home fans? Isn't there still some juice to squeeze out of a season spent exceeding expectations on so many levels until this week in St. Louis?

Those answers are for them to write.

<https://www.nytimes.com/athletic/6315401/2025/04/27/blues-defenseman-scoring-nhl-playoffs-hellebuyck-jets/>

How the Blues are beating Connor Hellebuyck and more from a beer-chugging win over Jets

By Jeremy Rutherford

ST. LOUIS — St. Louis Blues defenseman Colton Parayko wasn't expecting the puck at the point, but when teammate Cam Fowler's shot was blocked by the Winnipeg Jets' Haydn Fleury, it ricocheted right to him.

With less than 30 seconds left in the first period of Game 4 Sunday, Parayko put an innocent shot on net with Jake Neighbours parked just to the left of Jets goalie Connor Hellebuyck.

"I didn't actually see (Neighbours) there," Parayko said.

Neighbours saw Parayko, however, and the puck rotating as it elevated toward him.

"Honestly, the puck came in so slow, I had time to line it up and make sure I got a stick on it," Neighbours said.

Neighbours had his first NHL playoff goal and the Blues were on their way to another rout of Winnipeg, a 5-1 win that evened the Western Conference first-round series at two games apiece.

That goal was pivotal because it came late in the period and provided the Blues with some much-needed momentum. But there was added significance because of the way it was scored — Neighbours at the front of the net.

"To get that deflection goal, being at the net-front, something we're trying to do offensively, and get rewarded for it, it gave us the confidence to keep standing at the net-front and our defense to keep pounding pucks," Blues coach Jim Montgomery said.

It was the beginning of another barrage on Hellebuyck, who gave up five goals on 18 shots. He was pulled from a second straight game, after allowing six goals on 25 shots in the Blues' 7-2 win in Game 3 Thursday.

In the storyline of the series so far, the goalie who's expected this week to win his third Vezina Trophy, and who could take home the Hart Trophy as the league's MVP, has been shelled by St. Louis. Hellebuyck already had an underperforming reputation in the postseason and he'll see that take another hit with an .817 save percentage in this series so far.

If Blues players feel like they've solved Hellebuyck, however, they weren't willing to say so Sunday.

"It's playoffs," captain Brayden Schenn said. "Not just our series, but look league-wide right now how pucks and goals are going in. It's such a cliché answer, but you get people and traffic to the net, shoot the puck and hopefully good things happen."

Four of the Blues' five goals in Game 4 were scored either at the net or from the point with traffic in front of the net.

"It's a simple recipe," defenseman Justin Faulk said. "It's nothing crazy."

After dropping two close games in Winnipeg, the Blues outscored the Jets 12-3 in St. Louis, which was rocking Sunday with 2019 Stanley Cup champion and hometown hero Pat Maroon working as the pre-game hype man, waving a rally towel and chugging a Bud Light.

A few hours later, Winnipeg was waving the white towel; however, the Jets do have home-ice advantage with Games 5 and 7 (if necessary) at Canada Life Centre, and the visiting team has yet to win in this series.

"We held a majority of the lead of both games in Winnipeg," Montgomery said. "We felt we played well but we didn't feel we played to our identity for 60 minutes. So it gave us confidence that if we were able to play for 60 minutes, then we'd have success. It's a two-out-of-three now."

If the Blues continue a trend that developed in Games 3-4 in St. Louis, it will bode well for them in the remainder of the series. It was another element of the Neighbours' goal: defensemen being involved in the offense.

In the first two games, the Blues directed a total of 90 shots at the net, which includes ones blocked by the Jets and ones that missed. Of those 90, 65 were from forwards and 25 were from defensemen. The defensemen had no goals and combined for four assists.

In the next two games, they directed a total of 107 shots at the net. Of those 107, 56 were from forwards and 51 were from defensemen. The defensemen had four goals, nine assists and factored in nine of the 12 goals.

"We've got a lot of D that can skate, shoot pucks, make passes, whatever," Faulk said. "Guys that have played in the league a long time. It's an emphasis of ours to make sure we're skating and doing our part to help out, and create offense as much as we can. If we can skate and make plays and put them on their heels a little bit, it just makes it a little bit tougher on them."

During the regular season, the Blues' defense ranked No. 3 in the NHL in goals (46) and No. 11 in points (171), according to Stat Muse.

Early in this playoff series, they weren't generating the chances that led to production from the back end, but they are now.

"Yeah, I think by them moving their feet, they get more into a rhythm of the game, and they end up getting open looks, especially in the offensive zone," Montgomery said. "I thought we were standing still a lot in Winnipeg, and as a team, if we're moving our feet and getting to goal lines, then we're getting numbers on the puck and we're able to go low-to-high. Our defensemen have a little more time if they're moving their feet to get to middle ice."

On the Blues' second and fourth goals Sunday, they worked the puck low-to-high to set up one-timers from Tyler Tucker and Faulk. On Faulk's goal, Neighbours made the play to the point.

"That's when we're at our best, when we're connected as five-man units," Neighbours said. "The last two games our D have been phenomenal in the O-zone, shooting a lot of pucks. That's something we were missing in the first couple of games, just that shot mentality from up top and getting people there. The D-men have done a great job of being shot-ready and putting themselves in positions to get those shots off and get them through."

The fact that Blues defensemen are clicking made it tough to see Tucker being helped off the ice later in the game, not putting much weight on his right leg.

"I don't have an update," Montgomery said afterwards. "His goal was huge for us getting a lead and being able to play with the lead. I thought he was really aggressive tonight. I thought that was his best game of the three games."

"His ability, I've said it many times, but he's a really good offensive defenseman and it shows with how he gets shots off. They don't get blocked because he puts himself in a shot-ready mindset."

Parayko added: "He's been a big part of this team for a long time. He's a great player, a great defender, and we're lucky to have him. Just hope everything is OK."

Just a few days ago, Blues fans were hoping they would be OK after falling behind 2-0 in the series, and they responded with their 13th and 14th straight wins on home ice.

Interestingly, the players likened the situation coming home earlier this week to when they were coming out of the 4 Nations Face-Off eight points back of a playoff spot.

“We were down and out a long time ago, and our mentality was to keep playing hard, keep playing for one another and just worry about the little details and habits that are going to win you hockey games,” Schenn said. “That’s kind of what we did after Game 2, just rely on one another to do your job, and that’s been getting us results for a couple months now.”

“We knew where we were,” Faulk said. “We had a job to do when we came back. Obviously, the first one went pretty well, and we knew we had to try and recreate that again today. We wanted to get back even in the series and that’s where we are. It’s three games now — series tied up — and we’ve got to keep playing well.”

As the Blues came off the ice Sunday, they were met by a former teammate and friend who’s now their hype man.

“Obviously a little emotion, taking you back to 2019, being from St. Louis, being a huge Blues fan my whole life, and just being part of this — to do it in the playoffs, it’s so much fun,” Maroon said. “Just putting the jersey back on again and supporting them is the most important thing. To wear the Blue Note again, that was really special. I had to (chug the beer). It was too early, but I figured I’ve got to get the crowd going.”

Schenn didn’t see Maroon chug the beer, but said he would find the video.

“That’s what St. Louis is all about,” he said. “Guys care that they played for this team. They show up and just embrace fun moments around the hockey rink.”

Winnipeg Free Press

<https://www.winnipegfreepress.com/breakingnews/2025/04/27/blues-even-series-in-afternoon-drubbing>

Blues even series in afternoon drubbing Jets look to regroup with Game 5 home-ice advantage

By: Ken Wiebe

ST. LOUIS — This is what adversity looks like.

If the Winnipeg Jets want to rewrite the narrative about coming up small in big moments during the Stanley Cup playoffs, the time to respond is upon them.

Now that the Jets have watched a 2-0 series lead evaporate into thin air, it’s time to see what this group is made of.

After getting thumped 7-2 in Game 3, the Jets vowed to be better to start Game 4, and for more than 19 minutes they were true to their word.

But after giving up a goal with 22.7 seconds to go in the first period, the Jets lost their grip on this game — and the series — after a 5-1 loss to the St. Louis Blues on Sunday afternoon at Enterprise Center.

“We know we have home ice. We have two days to regroup and then (get) back in front of our fans,” said centre Mark Scheifele. “It’s not what we wanted, but it’s a best two out of three series now.”

In the simplest terms possible, the Jets will either rebound and win two of the next three to advance to the second round or, if things go the opposite way, they will be lamenting a third consecutive first-round exit — and be facing many of the same questions as they did last May.

Trying to eliminate a Blues team that has now won 14 consecutive home games is a big enough challenge as it is.

Game 5 is set for Wednesday at Canada Life Centre, with puck drop expected to come around 8:50 p.m.

For the second time in as many games, the Blues chased goalie Connor Hellebuyck out of his net, this time just 2:01 into the third period.

Hellebuyck has allowed 11 goals during the past two games, and while Sunday featured a deflection from Jake Neighbours and a Justin Faulk blast that caromed in off Neal Pionk, Hellebuyck quite simply isn’t playing at an elite level right now.

During the final question of his post-game presser, Jets head coach Scott Arniel gave his goaltender a vote of confidence — and made it clear this was a two-way street.

“I’m 100 per cent confident in Connor Hellebuyck. His resumé speaks for itself,” said Arniel. “At the end of the day, we need to be better in front of him. We need to let him see some pucks. There were a couple there we didn’t let him see. There’s things that we have to do to help him.

“He knows he has to do things that help us. And that’s how it’s been all year long. We’re all in this together. You know what, it’s just a situation that we’ve got to put our best foot forward when we go home. Like I mentioned, we worked our tails off for 82 games to get home-ice advantage. Well, it’s a best of three now. Now we’ve got to make sure we take care of business.”

The best way for the Jets to take care of business is to tighten defensively and to do a better job of clearing the front of the net so that Hellebuyck can see a few more of those point shots the Blues generated during Games 3 and 4.

“It comes down to one-on-one battles,” said Jets defenceman Luke Schenn. “Obviously, we have to do a better job. Everyone doing a better job of making sure (Hellebuyck) is seeing the puck. They’re getting sticks on it and they’re screening him, doing a pretty good job (at that). At the end of the day, this time of year, that’s where games are won and lost.”

Blues head coach Jim Montgomery urged his team to show more determination in getting to the ice around the blue paint and they’ve won a lot of those one-on-one battles during the past two games to even up this series.

“We’re owning the net front and our goaltender’s making saves,” said Montgomery, who applauded Jordan Binnington’s 30-save effort.

Let’s take a closer look at where things stand after Game 4.

RINSE AND REPEAT

Hellebuyck hadn’t been pulled all season and now he’s got the hook in consecutive starts.

Blues fans serenaded him with chants of “Connor, Connor” and “We want Connor” during the course of the contest and you can be sure that Hellebuyck is motivated to get things turned around.

To this point, Hellebuyck has turned aside 67 of 82 shots on goal that he’s faced and has a 4.24 goals-against average to go along with a .817 save percentage.

For the sake of comparison, Binnington lowered his goals-against average for the series to 2.29 and raised his save percentage to .907 after Sunday’s effort.

THE MISSED OPPORTUNITY

The Jets understood that the Blues were going to be an extremely tough out, given the way that they’d been playing coming out of the 4 Nations Face-Off break, and that’s proven to be true.

“You’ve got to reset. I don’t think anyone expected this to be an easy series, at least, personally, I didn’t,” said Schenn. “I watched the Blues (the) last two months of the season — they’re the hottest team in the NHL for a reason, and have the best home record and didn’t lose at home down the stretch.

“At the end of the day, when you’re up 2-0 in the series, there’s nothing to protect. Maybe we sat back and thought we’d defend that a little bit rather than you’ve got to

keep going and keep pushing. It's a best of three now, we've got a great crowd at home and we've got to clean up some things and move on to the next one."

Scheifele felt the Jets "unravelling a little bit" after the strong start and now it's up to them to work through some of the issues that allowed the Blues to steal the momentum in this series.

"We unravelled in the last seven, eight minutes of that second period. I don't know if it's the moment we're at or whatever, but it's uncharacteristic of our group," Arniel concurred. "We are so good at how we defend and I thought we did a really good job of it for close to 30 minutes. Other than giving that goal up at the end of the first period.

"We can go back, look at it, talk about it, make sure we handle these situations better than we did (on Sunday)."

Arniel reiterated that situations like this were part of the reason why the Jets worked so hard to finish first overall.

"They took advantage of home ice. We played 82 games to get home ice," said Arniel. "We put ourselves in this position, we really wanted to come home either winning it or up 3-1. We're not. Now it's a best of three. Our best players have to be better than their best players."

THE KEY PLAY

Seconds after the Jets had killed off a minor penalty, Brayden Schenn drove to the net and converted a pass from Colton Parayko for an insurance marker at 17:23 of the second period that made it 3-1 for the Blues.

THE THREE STARS

1. Jake Neighbours, Blues, The feisty winger scored a goal and added a pair of helpers.
2. Colton Parayko, Blues, The towering blue-liner chipped in two assists and three blocked shots.
3. Brayden Schenn, Blues, The captain scored his first goal of the series and added an assist.

EXTRA! EXTRA!

Jets right-winger Gabe Vilardi took the warm-up, but didn't take any line rushes and was ultimately scratched. How close did Vilardi come to entering the series?

"He was a game-time decision, so he's closer," said Arniel. "He's off the injured reserve. He's close now."

Vilardi has been out of action since Mar. 23 and could provide a boost if he's able to suit up in Game 5.

The Jets made two lineup changes on Sunday. Along with Dylan DeMelo returning after missing Game 3 due to illness, fellow blue-liner Haydn Fleury drew in on the third pairing for Logan Stanley. Fleury had just under 13 minutes of ice time, including 42 seconds while shorthanded. Arniel wouldn't say whether or not Stanley was a healthy scratch or if he was banged up.

Colin Miller was scratched for DeMelo after making his series debut in Game 3.

<https://www.winnipegfreepress.com/sports/2025/04/27/absence-of-top-players-spotlights-jets-costly-mistake>

***Absence of top players spotlights Jets costly mistake
Salary cap space left empty at trade deadline leaves club with few backup options***

By: Mike McIntyre

There are countless reasons the Winnipeg Jets are suddenly in a world of hurt against the St. Louis Blues.

Spotty goaltending from Connor Hellebuyck. Shoddy special teams. Failing to get to the point — literally — and prevent all the offence coming from the defence. Uncharacteristic breakdowns and turnovers. A lack of scoring. The ghosts, if you believe in them, of playoffs past perhaps wreaking havoc with their collective heads.

Here's another factor to consider and something that actually occurred off the ice but is becoming increasingly notable as this gruelling first-round best-of-seven series wears on, now tied 2-2 after a pair of lopsided road losses: The Jets made a costly mistake by failing to take advantage of the rules that apply to every NHL team.

Specifically, allowing approximately US\$6 million worth of salary cap space to inexplicably gather dust as the trade deadline came and went last month. That's a huge potential weapon left in the holster, one we'd now suggest is shooting them in the foot with every passing game.

Consider this: Winnipeg iced a 20-man lineup on Sunday afternoon that was nearly US\$15 million below the regular-season salary cap of US\$88.5 million, which doesn't exactly scream going "all in" for a team fresh off winning the Presidents' Trophy. A cap, we remind you, which disappears for the playoffs and allows teams to go over as much as they like.

Take the Colorado Avalanche, for example, who had nearly US\$95 million worth of players shredding the Dallas Stars in Saturday's 4-0 victory. The timely return of captain Gabe Landeskog, who had been buried on long-term injured reserve (LTIR), has paid off in addition to the key adds they made through trades include Martin Necas, Brock Nelson and Charlie Coyle.

While the Jets didn't have any LTIR players at the time the March 7 deadline approached, they didn't need any to create financial flexibility. They had plenty of that already — yet only brought in bottom-six winger Brandon Tanev and depth defencemen Luke Schenn, who together accounted for not even half of their projected US\$12 million available.

Hindsight will always be 20-20, but leaving millions unspent in a season like this is now looking like a major, self-inflicted wound. You could understand the restraint if they were barely clinging to a playoff spot at the time. But this was a team supposedly built to win now, one that we've seen spend to the cap ceiling in previous years. Yet, financially, they acted more pretender than contender.

What happened shortly after the deadline passed has really made this a tough pill to swallow with nearly US\$10 million worth of players going down with injury.

Forward Gabe Vilardi suffered an upper-body issue on March 23 and hasn't played since, a span of 15 straight games and counting. There's optimism he could return for Wednesday's crucial Game 5. The Jets sure could use him, especially on a sputtering power play that is just 2-for-12 so far. How quickly might he be able to return to form and help the team?

Forward Nikolaj Ehlers went down with a serious lower-body ailment on April 9. He's not even skating, which is a bad sign, and was recently spotted in a walking boot. The Jets sure could use him, especially for an offence that has mustered just five goals in the last three games. Has the pending unrestricted free agent already played his last game with the team?

These are not minor losses. Vilardi and Ehlers are the top scoring forwards on the Jets aside from Mark Scheifele and Kyle Connor, who suddenly find themselves without a pair of talented teammates to help carry the offensive load. Have you seen how aggressive the Blues are targeting Scheifele and Connor? They know keeping those two in check is a huge key to success.

The domino effect of being without two top six wingers is significant and has really challenged Winnipeg's depth. It's exactly why general managers of very good hockey teams will usually empty the bank account. You can never have enough insurance this time of year, especially if you're planning on a two-month march to the Stanley Cup.

At this point, it's starting to look like the Jets might not even make two weeks.

A scoring winger would have been a valuable add with the Jets struggling to put the puck in the net. A top-four defenceman could have helped the cause, too, with the Jets getting shredded in their own end, including Schenn on several occasions.

But the most glaring area of omission when it comes to all that unused cap space was the second-line centre spot. It's gone from a serious concern to a five-alarm blaze at

this point with Vlad Namestnikov, who has held down that position for the majority of the season, going ice cold.

He has no points in four playoff games and hasn't scored a goal since March 11 — a span now of 20 games. In fact, he has just two goals in his last 47 games overall. Those are ugly numbers for an important player who averages nearly 15 minutes a game, including power-play time. However, head coach Scott Arniel doesn't really have any better options at this point.

Money can't buy you a championship, of course. We've seen the Jets take big swings before, most notably centre Sean Monahan and winger Tyler Toffoli last season, only to come up short. But it's hard to imagine this organization won't have some regrets at how the deadline was ultimately handled if they are once again one-and-done in the playoffs.

We know general manager Kevin Cheveldayoff tried to make deals which ultimately fell through. Whether it was another team swooping in with a better offer or a player with trade protection refusing to waive to come to Winnipeg, the reasons don't really matter much right now.

This is a results-based business and, when it comes to the on-ice product, the Jets are looking a day late and many dollars short.

Winnipeg Sun

<https://winnipegsun.com/sports/hockey/all-square-blues-hold-serve-at-home-beat-the-jets-5-1-in-game-4>

All square: Blues hold serve at home, beat the Jets 5-1 in Game 4

By Gordon Anderson

A quick-strike offence has the Jets singing the blues.

The St. Louis Blues leveraged a three-goal second period en route to a 5-1 victory over the Winnipeg Jets on Sunday afternoon.

Tyler Tucker, Brayden Schenn and Justin Faulk scored for the Blues in the second period to turn a 1-1 scoreline into a 4-1 lead for the home team. The goals came in an 8:08 span.

Robert Thomas scored for the Blues in the third period to finish the scoring.

St Louis hasn't lost a home game in regulation since early February. They are 14 -0-0 in that span. Their last regulation loss came to the Florida Panthers prior to the 4 Nations break. Winnipeg was outscored 12-3 in Games 3 and 4.

“Obviously, they’re a dominant team at home,” Jets defenceman Luke Schenn told reporters in St.Louis. “There’s no question about that. When you’re up 2-0 in the series... maybe we sat back and thought we’d defend that a little bit. You’ve got to keep pushing, keep pushing. It’s a best of three now. We’ve got a great crowd at home and we’ve got to clean up some things and move on to the next one.”

Game 5 is Wednesday night at the downtown rink. Puck drop is 8:30 p.m.

“We have two days to re-group and then back in front of our fans,” Jets forward Mark Scheifele said. “It’s not what we wanted, but it’s a best two out of three series now.”

Scheifele has two goals and three assists in four games. Scheifele was minus-5 in Games 3 and 4 combined. Kyle Connor has three goals and two assists in four games. Connor was also minus-5 in Games 4 and 5 combined. Linemate Alex Iafallo was minus-5 for both games in St. Louis. Iafallo has scored one goal in the series.

Connor scored the lone goal for the Jets. Connor and Scheifele have combined to score five of the team’s 10 goals through four games.

Connor Hellebuyck allowed four goals on 17 shots through two periods. The Jets netminder was pulled at 2:10 of the third period. He stopped 13 of 18 shots. The Jets number one was also pulled late in the third period of Game 3 with the Jets losing 6-2. Eric Comrie turned aside six shots in relief duty.

Hellebuyck’s save percentage is now .817, which ranks bottom five in playoff eligible goaltenders. His goals against average is bottom five of playoff eligible goalies at 4.24.

St. Louis went 0-3 with the man advantage. The Jets went 0-2. Winnipeg has two power-play goals through four games. The Blues have six.

Jake Neighbours also scored for the Blues. The Blues have 12 players with at least one goal in the series.

The Blues lead the NHL playoffs in points from the blue line with four goals and 12 helpers in four games

The Neighbours goal came late in the first period with the Jets leading 1-0. A Colton Parayko shot from middle ice was deflected on the way to the net, Neighbours bunting the puck into the top half of the net at 19:37, opening the door for the Blues to walk through in the second and third period.

The shots were 12-5 for the Jets in the first period, and 31-24 overall for Winnipeg.

Jordan Binnington stopped 30 of 31 shots to earn the win.

<https://winnipeg.sun.com/sports/we-unravelled-jets-a-rag-tag-version-of-themselves-in-st-louis>

'We unravelled': Jets a rag-tag version of themselves in St. Louis

By Paul Friesen

It's all even after four games, but it sure doesn't feel that way.

After back-to-back shellackings in St. Louis, the Winnipeg Jets are a dishevelled, rag-tag version of the team we saw all season.

The stingiest team in hockey has become the most generous. Its top goalie, the most porous.

Two games, a combined 12-3 whupping. Two games in which Connor Hellebuyck got the hook.

Going into Game 5 in Winnipeg on Wednesday, the Blues are rolling, the Jets reeling.

The first-round playoff series may be tied 2-2, but this hasn't been a case of home-ice providing a razor-thin edge. That may have been the case for the first two games in Winnipeg.

In the last two, including Sunday's 5-1 loss, the ghosts of Jets playoffs past have come out of the woodwork.

The man behind the bench has had the look you'd expect from someone who'd just seen one.

"We unravelled in the last seven, eight minutes of that second period," head coach Scott Arniel told reporters in St. Louis. "I don't know if it's the moment we're at or whatever, but it's uncharacteristic of our group."

The moment is one of truth. The playoffs reveal things about a team the regular-season won't.

It's one thing to play mostly air-tight defence from October to March, another entirely in late April.

"We are so good at how we defend," Arniel said. "And we did a really good job of it for close to 30 minutes."

If the NHL decides to shorten games, they could be alright.

Then again, it depends which 30 minutes the Jets show up for.

In Game 3 they were AWOL for the first period.

They plugged that hole on Sunday and took a 1-0 lead into the last minute of the first, when they committed the cardinal sin of giving one up.

Midway through the second, the roof began to cave in. Three Blues goals in just over eight minutes caught the Jets losing corner battles or standing around, sometimes both.

“Those are coverage goals,” Arniel said. “Those are situations we usually handle pretty well. I’m tired of watching them making nice plays and putting them in the net. That’s on us.”

“We unravelled a little bit,” Mark Scheifele added, echoing his coach. “It’s more our doing than theirs.”

Deflections and goals through traffic don’t happen if there’s nobody there to deflect or provide a screen.

“Got to do a better job in front of the net,” defenceman Luke Schenn acknowledged. “Games are won and lost in the hard area, and the hard area is in front of our net, in front of their net.”

Schenn’s team looked hard enough at times.

A first-period goal by Kyle Connor came after a first-line shift that looked more like a fourth-line grinder shift, complete with chaos at the Blues net.

Those moments were few and far between.

Most of the afternoon Scheifele was taking far more of a beating than any No. 1 centre should. His team didn’t have an answer.

By the time first-line Blues centre Robert Thomas waltzed in for St. Louis goal No. 5, the Jets looked like they were playing rec hockey.

Each of Connor, Scheifele and Alex Iafallo were minus-5 over the last two games, while Winnipeg’s second line has yet to weigh in offensively.

“I don’t think anyone expected this to be an easy series,” Schenn said. “At least personally, I didn’t. I watched the Blues’ last two months of the season. They’re the hottest team in the NHL for a reason... didn’t lose at home down the stretch.”

Sunday made it 14 straight wins on home ice for St. Louis.

The Jets don’t have to win a single game in Missouri to win this series.

The way the last two have gone, though, raises doubts about their ability to win another one anywhere.

They won't if they don't find another gear that more closely resembles the one the Blues are in.

"This is a really good hockey team," Arniel said. "And they're not going away."

Those watching his team are starting to wonder. It's made a habit of going away quietly at this time of year.

This one was supposed to be different.

It'll likely get Gabe Vilardi back in the lineup for Game 5, but it'll need more than that.

"We worked our tails off for 82 games to get home-ice advantage," the coach said. "Now we've got to make sure we take care of business."

Rising to the moment is the place to start.

<https://winnipegssun.com/sports/points-from-the-point-blues-defencemen-racking-them-up-in-the-playoffs>

Points from the point: Blues defencemen racking them up in the playoffs

By Gordon Anderson

The St. Louis Blues are receiving a plethora of points from their point men in this opening-round playoff series.

In fact, the Blues lead the NHL in playoffs points from the blueline with four goals and 12 assists in four games against the Winnipeg Jets.

The St. Louis rearguards scored twice and added four assists in Sunday's 5-1 victory over the visiting Jets. The blueline brigade also scored twice and added four assists in the 7-2 win in Game 3.

"I think we try to join and try to help the forwards," Blues defenceman Colton Parayko said. "I don't know if it's necessarily a series-changer, but it's definitely a good part of our team. We have a lot of defencemen that can jump up, skate really well and get pucks to the net. I think we've been doing that well and we've just got to continue it."

Parayko notched two assists in Game 4. The towering rearguard also scored a goal in Thursday's five-goal victory.

In comparison, the Jets have seven points from their defencemen. Josh Morrissey, who led the Winnipeg D-men with 62 points during the regular season has struggled to get going offensively with just two assists.

Blues. Cam Fowler leads the NHL in points by a defenceman with one goal and seven assists.

“We’ve got a lot of (guys on) defence that can skate and play, shoot pucks, make passes, whatever,” Blues defender Kevin Faulk said. “It’s an emphasis of ours to make sure we’re skating and doing our part to help out and create offence as much as we can.”

Faulk contributed to the cause on Sunday with a second-period goal and has three points in the series.

Blues head coach Jim Montgomery says the success on the offensive side of the ledger is a simple willingness to move up the ice and join the rush.

“By them moving their feet, they get into the rhythm of the game, and they end up getting open looks, especially in the offensive zone,” Montgomery said. “I thought we were standing still a lot in Winnipeg, and as a team, we’re moving our feet and we’re getting to goal lines.”

Heck, if you have the players with the skill and aptitude for controlled aggression, why not take advantage of it? The Jets had a difficult time tracking the moving men from Missouri.

“We’re getting numbers on the puck and then we’re able to go low to high and our defencemen, because of the way Winnipeg does such a great job in the D-zone, have a little more time if they’re moving their feet to get to middle ice,” Montgomery said.

Game 5 is scheduled for 8:30 on Wednesday evening at the Canada Life Centre.

Parayko, meanwhile, is waiting for Winnipeg’s response to back-to-back losses at the Enterprise Center.

“They’re going to come out hard at home,” he said. “They’re a really good team in general. So for us, we’ve just got to reset and make sure we’re ready for Game 5.”

<https://winnipegsun.com/sports/hockey/nhl/winnipeg-jets/hellebuyck-shelled-back-to-back-apr-28-2025>

Not again: Jets' Hellebuyck shelled in back-to-back games

By Paul Friesen

There's probably nothing like having your name chanted by a boisterous home crowd.

When it's in an opposing rink, though, it's never a good thing.

For a second straight game, Winnipeg Jets goalie Connor Hellebuyck was serenaded in St. Louis on Sunday.

Giving up five more goals, on the heels of six the previous game, made Hellebuyck the easy and obvious target of Blues fans, as the Jets limped out of a second straight blowout loss, 5-1 the count.

Hellebuyck may be on the verge of winning a second straight Vezina Trophy as the NHL's top netminder, but he hasn't been the better one in this first-round playoff series.

That edge goes to Jordan Binnington, and it hasn't been particularly close.

The Jets did not make Hellebuyck available for questions after the game Sunday, leaving his head coach and teammates to take them.

"I'm 100 percent confident in Connor Hellebuyck," head coach Scott Arniel declared after a rout that evened the series at two games apiece. "His resume speaks for itself. We need to be better in front of him. We need to let him see some pucks. There were a couple there we didn't let him see."

Too often, the Jets allowed the Blues free passes to the net, something they didn't do often while allowing the fewest goals against in the NHL this season.

Goalies occasionally have to steal a playoff game for their team, too, and Hellebuyck hasn't done that.

His numbers in the series look like they've been stolen from one of the worst goalies in the league: He's giving up 4.24 goals per game with a saves percentage of just .817.

The 31-year-old looks more like the goalie who was shelled by Colorado in last year's playoffs, or Vegas the year before, than the one who posted a sparkling 2.00 goals-against-average and .925 saves percentage during the regular season.

On Brayden Schenn's second-period goal that made it 3-1, Hellebuyck had the puck against his stick but allowed Schenn to steal it.

Another play saw him get caught behind the net, although he got away with that one, unlike in Game 3, where a similar move cost his team a goal.

"There's things that we have to do to help him," Arniel said. "He knows he has to do things that help us. And that's how it's been all year long. We're all in this together."

The Jets will need to be more forceful in their own zone in Game 5 in Winnipeg, Wednesday, or else fall behind in the series.

Their goalie will also have to be better.

“Lots of confidence,” defenceman Luke Schenn said. “He’s had an unbelievable year. And you watch the replay of the goals that went in, their deflections, their screens, they’re bouncing off us and in. We’ve just got to do a better job in front of the net.”

TSN.ca

<https://www.tsn.ca/nhl/video/corrado-this-is-not-the-connor-hellebuyck-that-we-saw-in-the-regular-season%7E3123073>

Corrado: 'This is not the Connor Hellebuyck that we saw in the regular season' (VIDEO)

After back-to-back blowout losses in which Connor Hellebuyck has given up 11 goals over those games, the TSN Hockey panel discusses what's stood out about Hellebuyck's last two performances, and explains how the Jets' defence has been hanging him out to dry. The panel also looks at what the Blues are doing to shut down Mark Scheifele.