

**Winnipegjets.com**

<https://www.nhl.com/jets/news/three-things-namestnikov-leads-jets-to-game-5-win>

***Three things - Namestnikov leads Jets to Game 5 win  
Namestnikov scores game winner, Connor has three point night in 5-3 win***

By Jamie Thomas

WINNIPEG – Vladislav Namestnikov recorded his first two points of the Stanley Cup Playoffs leading the Winnipeg Jets to a 5-3 win over the St. Louis Blues in Game 5 at Canada Life Centre. The Jets now lead the best of seven series 3-2 with Game 6 scheduled in St. Louis on Friday. Kyle Connor (1G, 2A) and Mason Appleton (3A) both had three-point nights as the Jets are one win away from the first series win since 2021. Mark Scheifele left the game after the first period and did not return, his status for Friday's game is unknown.

***VLADDY STEPS UP***

The Jets came into the night excited about the opportunity with their top line reunited as Gabe Vilardi returned to play for the first time since March 23. Vilardi missed 11 regular season games and the first four games of the opening round series with the Blues. Just under 90 seconds into the game, the Jets opened the scoring, after getting hit in the face with a stick, Mason Appleton recovered behind the Blues net, kicked the puck to Mark Scheifele and he found Kyle Connor alone in the slot and Connor scored his fourth of the series.

Unfortunately, Scheifele wouldn't return after the first period, the Jets centreman took numerous big hits in the opening period including this one from Brayden Schenn.

Scott Arniel would move Vladislav Namestnikov between Connor and Vilardi for the remainder of the night. Namestnikov recorded his first point of the series and Connor his second point of the game when they set up Dylan DeMelo to give the Jets the lead for the third time. Winnipeg took their first two-goal lead of the game at 18:51, Connor hit Namestnikov with a perfect pass and the Russian forward tapped in his first of the postseason to make it 4-2, that goal turned out to be the game winner.

***JETS BACK TO THEIR OLD WAYS***

Winnipeg was the best defensive team in the NHL for a reason during the regular season and showed it for the majority of the first two games at Canada Life Centre. They struggled to find that game in St. Louis, but they found it again Wednesday night. The Jets held St. Louis to just nine shots through the first two periods and looked a lot more like the Presidents' Trophy winners.

"That's Jet hockey, defense. We played defense first and then take it to the offense. And I think for the most part of that game, we did that," said Vlad Namestnikov.

"We stopped them in the neutral zone, and forechecked and kind of hounded him in there end. But we had the lead, and kind of, stayed back a little bit in the third and they got their shots."

#### **HELLEBUYCK RESPONDS**

After being pulled in back-to-back games in St. Louis, all eyes were on the soon-to-be Vezina Trophy winner, Connor Hellebuyck. Hellebuyck said Monday that he would be better and he answered the bell. With the game tied at one in the first period, the Jets gave up a shorthanded two-on-one and Oskar Sundqvist looked like he was about to give the Blues a 2-1 lead but Hellebuyck came up with the gem of a save.

Hellebuyck wasn't busy but he made the saves that were needed at critical times throughout the night and helped Winnipeg push past the Blues in Game 5.

"That's a game changer," said Scott Arniel.

"That's what we needed."

#### **NHL.com**

<https://www.nhl.com/news/st-louis-blues-winnipeg-jets-game-5-recap-april-30>

#### ***Connor, Jets push Blues to brink with Game 5 win in Western 1st Round Forward has 3 points, Scheifele leaves with injury for Winnipeg***

By Darrin Bauming

Kyle Connor had a goal and two assists, and the Winnipeg Jets won 5-3 against the St. Louis Blues in Game 5 of the Western Conference First Round at Canada Life Centre in Winnipeg, Manitoba, on Wednesday.

"I thought throughout the lineup, it was outstanding. I thought that everybody stepped up," Winnipeg coach Scott Arniel said. "We had a great first. We were physical. We were battling, competing, doing all the things we have to do to get ourselves going. Just real proud of the way the guys stuck together and just played our game. We got to Jet hockey. We got to Jet hockey early and we played it for 60 minutes."

Vladislav Namestnikov and Nino Niederreiter each had a goal and an assist, and Mason Appleton had three assists for the Jets, who lead the best-of-7 series 3-2 after losing Game 3 and Game 4 in St. Louis. Connor Hellebuyck made 16 saves.

"It was huge," Appleton said. "You start a series 2-0 and you go to St. Louis and think, 'you win one, you really put a stranglehold on it.' But they played really well in their barn and they got bounces and we didn't and we were staring at an even series... Obviously, now we put ourselves in the driver's seat to go to St. Louis. Hopefully we close this

series out, but we know how good they are at home and what we have to do. That was our best game of the series, and we've got to duplicate that."

Game 6 is at Enterprise Center in St. Louis on Friday (8:00 p.m. ET; CBC, TVAS, SN, TNT, truTV, Max).

Nathan Walker had two goals and Jimmy Snuggerud also scored for the Blues, who are the second wild card from the West. Jordan Binnington made 21 saves.

"They were better than us," St. Louis coach Jim Montgomery said. "There's a lot of facets but we're onto the next one. It's a playoff series — I thought that was their best game, thought it was our worst game, we're onto the next one. We can analyze every part of it — they were better. So, we're onto the next one."

Connor made it 1-0 Jets 1:23 into the first period, scoring top corner from the slot after Mark Scheifele fed him from behind the net.

Scheifele did not return to the game after the first period. Arniel had no update postgame other than saying Scheifele will be reassessed on Thursday.

"It's not one guy that needs to fill the shoes of Mark," Connor said. "It needs to be everybody. And the way [Namestnikov] plays, he's been great for the whole series and a couple chances here or there he could have some better results. You see it tonight. He drives hard to the net, plays all hard areas very well, defends well and obviously a key contributor on two of those goals."

Walker tied it 1-1 at 3:42, deflecting Colton Parayko's point shot as he stood in front of Hellebuyck. It was Walker's first career playoff goal.

"They're a good team but we've played some good hockey at home for a couple of months now, so we're comfortable there and the fans are behind us," Blues captain Brayden Schenn said. "We played well in Games 3 and 4. You knew it was going to be a tough series. They're a good team, a lot of back-and-forth and momentum swings. So far, the road team hasn't been able to get the job done. It's our turn to get one at home now."

Niederreiter tipped Dylan Samberg's shot through traffic to make it 2-1 at 8:39.

"I think every game so far, the first period has been very physical," Blues forward Oskar Sundqvist said. "It's no different if it's here or at home. So, it's been a physical series. And I don't think that's going to stop on Friday either."

Snuggerud tied it 2-2 at 6:06 of the second, scoring on the rush from below the right face-off dot by sliding the puck between Hellebuyck's left pad and the post.

Sundqvist said, "No one's won on the road so far, so obviously we're feeling good going home and do everything we can to come back here on Sunday (for Game 7)."

Dylan DeMelo's point shot at 11:05 put the Jets up 3-2 after it deflected in off the back of Parayko.

Namestnikov pushed the lead to 4-2, banging in Connor's setup on the backhand at 18:51.

"Things happen in playoffs, sometimes the puck doesn't go in, but you kind of have to stick with it," Namestnikov said. "When things don't go your way, we lost [Scheifele], people have to step up. So I think as a team we stepped up today and got the win."

Adam Lowry scored into an empty net at 16:47 of the third to make it 5-2.

Walker jammed in a rebound at the side of the net at 19:07 for his second goal and the 5-3 final.

The Blues had 10 shots on goal in the third after generating just nine total through the first two periods.

"That's Jet hockey, defense," Namestnikov said. "We played defense first and then take it to the offense. And I think for the most part of that game we did that. We stopped them in the neutral zone, and forechecked and kind of hounded them in their end. But we had the lead and kind of stayed back a little bit in the third and they got their shots. But overall, I thought we played it very well all game."

*NOTES:* The Jets franchise has gone 1-1 in playoff series when tied 2-2 through four games. Winnipeg lost 4-2 to the St. Louis Blues in the 2019 Western Conference First Round and beat the Nashville Predators in seven games in the 2018 Western Conference Second Round. ... Namestnikov's goal was his first in 21 games, dating back to March 11 in the regular season. ... The Jets held the Blues to less than 20 shots for the second time in the series. ... DeMelo's goal was the first of his career in the Stanley Cup Playoffs. ... Connor's second three-point game of these playoffs was the fourth of his career, tying Blake Wheeler for the most in Jets/Thrashers history. ... Jets forward Gabriel Vilardi had a team-high four blocked shots in 18:23 of ice time. It was his first game since returning from an upper-body injury that kept him out of the final 11 games of the regular season and first four games of the playoffs.

<https://www.nhl.com/news/winnipeg-jets-respond-after-losing-mark-scheifele-against-st-louis-blues>

***Jets respond with full roster contributions after losing Scheifele in Game 5 against Blues***

***Namestnikov has 1st goal, assist of playoffs as Winnipeg takes control in 2nd period***

By Tracey Myers

WINNIPEG – When Mark Scheifele didn't come out to start the second period of Game 5 of the Western Conference First Round, the Winnipeg Jets could've let the loss of their top center affect their game negatively.

Instead, they responded with a strong period and arguably their best game of the series. They got the shots on St. Louis Blues goaltender Jordan Binnington. They got the secondary scoring that eluded them the first four games. And now they've got the chance to advance to the second round for the first time since 2022.

"Sometimes when you lose your No. 1 center, you lose a key piece to your lineup there can be a bit of a sag, an emotional letdown. But you know, I thought the guys really rallied around it," Jets captain Adam Lowry said after their 5-3 win against the Blues at Canada Life Centre on Wednesday.

Jets coach Scott Arniel said they'll see how Scheifele is on Thursday. He did not know if Scheifele could make the trip to St. Louis, where the Jets can eliminate the Blues with a win in Game 6 at Enterprise Center on Friday (8 p.m. ET; FDSNMW, MAX, truTV, SN, TVAS, CBC).

The Jets lead the best-of-7 series 3-2. The home team has won every game of this series.

Scheifele has taken a couple of big hits in the series, including one from Blues captain Brayden Schenn along the boards at 6:12 of the first period on Wednesday. Scheifele remained in the game but took another big hit at 17:02 of the first from Blues forward Radek Faksa.

Scheifele has six points (two goals, four assists) in five games, second on the Jets in the playoffs behind Kyle Connor with eight points (four goals, four assists).

The Jets responded to Scheifele's loss with two second-period goals – their first goals in any second period of this series – and outshot the Blues 14-3.

"I thought throughout the lineup, it was outstanding. I thought that everybody stepped up, obviously finding out that 'Scheif' wasn't coming back," Arniel said.

"But even prior to that, we had a great first. We were physical. We were battling. Competing. Doing all the things we have to do to get ourselves going. Just real proud of the way the guys stuck together and just played our game. We got to Jet hockey. We got to Jet hockey early and we played it for 60 minutes."

Part of that was getting much-needed scoring from those who had been quiet thus far in the series. Vladislav Namestnikov, who took Scheifele's place on the top line, scored

what proved to be the game-winner at 18:51 of the second period. It was his first goal since March 11 against the New York Rangers.

"We need it from everybody, and I thought he rose to the occasion," Connor said of Namestnikov.

"Obviously I agree with 'Lows' (Lowry), it's not one guy that needs to fill the shoes of Mark. It needs to be everybody and the way he plays, Vladdy, he's been great for the whole series and a couple chances here or there he could have some better results. You see it tonight. He drives hard to the net, plays all hard areas very well, defends well and obviously a key contributor on two of those goals."

Dylan DeMelo had his first goal of the postseason, and the second by a Jets defenseman in this series, at 11:05 of the second period to give the Jets a 3-2 lead. Nino Niederreiter got his first goal and assist of the series.

The Blues, meanwhile, were frustrated with their game. After outscoring the Jets 12-3 in two wins at home, they couldn't swing the momentum gained there onto the road.

"We've got to be more connected. I didn't think our puck support was good enough, I didn't think we got back quick enough, I didn't think we won our forecheck, we didn't establish it. Like I said, it's every facet," Blues coach Jim Montgomery said. "But you know what, it's a series. It's going to happen. Unfortunately, we're not happy about it but we're onto the next one. It's as simple as that. We've got to forget about it. We're in a series."

The Jets and Blues are most definitely in a series. The best regular-season team in Winnipeg against the hottest team down the stretch in St. Louis and the two have had quite the battles. The Jets will be trying to finish it on Friday, whether or not Scheifele is with them.

"Obviously, now we put ourselves in the driver's seat to go to St. Louis," Jets forward Mason Appleton said. "Hopefully we close this series out, but we know how good they are at home and what we have to do. That was our best game of the series, and we've got to duplicate that."

### **Canadian Press**

<https://www.chrisd.ca/2025/05/01/winnipeg-jets-st-louis-blues-playoffs-game-5-2/>

### ***Connor's Three-Point Effort Leads Jets to 5-3 Win Over Blues, 3-2 Series Lead***

By Judy Owen, The Canadian Press

WINNIPEG – Vladislav Namestnikov and his Winnipeg Jets teammates knew they had to find another gear after losing star centre Mark Scheifele in Game 5 against the St. Louis Blues on Wednesday.

They did just that with a 5-3 victory over the Blues that earned them a 3-2 lead in their best-of-seven Western Conference playoff series. Game 6 is Friday in St. Louis.

Namestnikov replaced Scheifele on the top line after he took big hits from Brayden Schenn and Radek Faksa in the first period and didn't return for the second.

Namestnikov scored the game-winning goal and added an assist in relief.

"When things don't go your way, we lost (Scheifele), people have to step up. So I think as a team we stepped up today and got the win," Namestnikov said.

According to the NHL, teams that take a 3-2 lead in a series go on to win the series 79 per cent of the time (233-62).

Jets head coach Scott Arniel had no update on Scheifele and couldn't answer if he would make the trip to St. Louis.

"I don't know, we'll have to wait and see till (Thursday)," Arniel said.

Six minutes into the game, Scheifele was crushed into the boards by Schenn, who appeared to jump up before the hit. Scheifele continued playing and got hit by Faksa late in the period and didn't return after the intermission.

"Really proud of the effort," said Jets captain Adam Lowry, who scored an empty-netter. "Sometimes when you lose your No. 1 centre, you lose a key piece to your lineup there can be a bit of a sag, an emotional letdown. But you know, I thought the guys really rallied around it."

Kyle Connor had a goal and two assists and Nino Niederreiter scored once and added an assist. Dylan DeMelo also scored and Mason Appleton contributed three helpers in front of the whiteout crowd at Canada Life Centre.

Connor Hellebuyck made 16 saves for Winnipeg, including a key paddle save on Oskar Sundqvist in the first period. Jets winger Gabriel Vilardi was back in action after he missed 15 games with an upper-body injury.

Namestnikov hopes for a repeat of everyone's effort on Friday.

"Just take the momentum from tonight's game and play the same way in their building," he said. "It's a tough building to play in, but I know we can get the win there."

Not many teams have accomplished that lately.

The Blues outscored the Jets 12-3 in Games 3 and 4 while extending their home record to 14 consecutive victories since the Four Nations Face-Off break.

Nathan Walker scored twice and rookie Jimmy Snuggerud also had a goal for the Blues on Wednesday. Jordan Binnington stopped 21 shots.

“They’re a good team, but we’ve played some good hockey at home for a couple of months now, so we’re comfortable there and fans (are) behind us,” Schenn said.

Winnipeg led 2-1 after the first period and 4-2 following the second.

Scheifele sent the puck from behind the net out to Connor, who snapped it past Binnington 1:23 into the opening period.

The Blues quickly responded when Walker stayed in front of Hellebuyck and tipped in a point shot from Colton Parayko at 3:42.

St. Louis defenceman Cam Fowler also picked up an assist, extending his point streak to five games with one goal and eight assists. He leads the Blues in scoring.

After the hit on Scheifele, Schenn was called for interference and then roughing when Jets forward Brandon Tanev defended his teammate.

Twenty-seven seconds after Schenn’s extra penalty expired, Niederreiter went net front and tipped in a Dylan Samberg shot at 8:39.

Both teams took four penalties, and had 17 hits each, as the temperatures rose during the opening period.

Snuggerud scored his second goal of the playoffs with a low shot that went between Hellebuyck’s left pad and the post at 6:06.

DeMelo scored Winnipeg’s first second-period goal of the series when his point shot went off the back of Parayko and into the net at 11:05.

Namestnikov broke his 20-goal scoring drought to make it 4-2 with 1:09 remaining in the second.

Winnipeg outshot the visitors 14-3 in the middle period and 22-9 through 40.

### *TURNING THE TIDE*

The Jets had gone 2-4 in previous Game 5s, including losing four straight.



Their last Game 5 victory was in the second round of the 2018 Stanley Cup playoffs, when they beat the Predators 6-2 in Nashville.

**Sportsnet.ca**

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

### ***Jets silence critics with bounce-back win in Game 5***

By Jacob Stoller

WINNIPEG — The "here we go again" folks can take a seat for now.

Despite the series being tied 2-2, the Winnipeg Jets were on their heels heading into Game 5 after laying two eggs in St. Louis.

Connor Hellebuyck had been shaky. The power play had lost its lustre. Secondary scoring was non-existent.

But as we've come to learn this season, these Jets aren't like years past. And Wednesday's 5-3 win over the Blues was a perfect example of just that.

They had every reason to roll over when Mark Scheifele exited the game after the first period.

"Sometimes when you lose your No. 1 centre, you lose a key piece to your lineup, there can be a bit of a sag, an emotional letdown," Adam Lowry said from the podium after Winnipeg took a 3-2 series lead. "But you know, I thought the guys really rallied around it. Coming in the intermission and finding out he's not coming back, guys were upbeat. Guys needed to step up."

And that they did.

The Jets' middle-six, which had been rather lacklustre all series long, punched above their weight.

Vladislav Namestnikov — widely perceived as the weak link in the top-six — stepped into Scheifele's shoes and kept the top line afloat, finishing the night off with one goal and one assist. He did so while being matched up against the Blues' top guns through the final 40 minutes.

Nino Niederreiter, Mason Appleton and Lowry regained the pep in their step.

Those individual performances wouldn't have been made possible if this team didn't get back to looking like it did throughout the regular season.

"We were physical. We were battling. Competing. Doing all the things we have to do to get ourselves going," Jets coach Scott Arniel said. "Just real proud of the way the guys stuck together and just played our game. We got to Jet hockey. We got to Jet hockey early and we played it for 60 minutes."

With the exception of St. Louis's first goal — a net front tip by Nathan Walker — Winnipeg found a way to tame the chaos in front of Hellebuyck.

"We talked about a lot of the offence we were giving up in St. Louis being our doing. Us coming out of our structure. Us just not doing the things that we're accustomed to doing in the D zone, doing in the neutral zone," Lowry said. "I thought we did a really good job of breaking pucks out, playing with structure in the d-zone, keeping them to the outside. I thought our box outs by our D were great, allowing Helly to make some saves. The defending, it starts with forechecking. I thought we did a really good job getting on their D, turning pucks over, spending time in the O-zone."

All the while playing without their best player.

Scheifele leaves game

Scheifele was on the receiving end of two massive hits in the first period.

The first came via an interference penalty from Brayden Schenn, when the Blues captain appeared to leave his feet. The second came later in the period, with Radek Faksa levelling Scheifele at the blue line.

Which one caused Scheifele to exit the game? Well, it depends on who you ask.

"Let's make it clear, (Scheifele) got hurt from the Faksa hit. He played six minutes after the Schenn hit," Blues coach Jim Montgomery said.

Montgomery went on to incorrectly state that Scheifele didn't return after the Faksa hit (he played another shift at the tail-end of the first period).

"I didn't know Monty got his medical degree, trying to say how our player got hurt," Arniel responded when asked about Montgomery's assessment. "He's way off base. He should not make that comment. There's some things that have been going on in this series and that was a repeat of what we've seen before. A player leaving his feet and then hitting a player in a very unprotected spot. Hitting him in the sense of almost blindsiding him. I'm not happy with how the call was made. A two-minute minor. Not even looking at it is what I was upset about. And it is something that we have talked to the league about for five games."

Arniel didn't have an update on Scheifele's status after the game and couldn't confirm or deny if his top-line centre would be making the trip to St. Louis.

"I don't know, we'll have to wait and see 'till tomorrow. I'll find out what's going on," Arniel said. "We don't discuss injuries, especially this time of year."

<https://www.sportsnet.ca/nhl/video/how-hellebuyck-rebounded-to-key-the-jets-crucial-win/>

### ***How Hellebuyck rebounded to key the Jets' crucial win (VIDEO)***

Luke Gazdic joins Sportsnet Central to discuss the Winnipeg Jets' Game 5 win over the St. Louis Blues, and how goalie Connor Hellebuyck delivered some big saves after surrendering five goals the previous game.

### **TSN.ca**

<https://www.tsn.ca/nhl/video/how-have-blues-focused-on-targeting-scheifele-this-series%7E3125224>

### ***How have Blues focused on targeting Scheifele this series? (VIDEO)***

The TSN Hockey panel discusses how the Blues have targeted Mark Scheifele after he was crushed into the boards by Brayden Schenn and didn't return after the first period, takes a closer look at Connor Hellebuyck's impressive performance in Game 5, and how the Jets' top line was firing on all cylinders in Wednesday night's win.

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

### ***How did the Jets respond to Scheifele's absence? (VIDEO)***

TSN Hockey analyst Martin Biron joins Jay Onrait to share his thoughts on how the Jets dealt with the absence of Mark Scheifele in the second and third period, discuss if Connor Hellebuyck was at his best in Game 5, as well as Scott Arniel's comments after the game about some questionable hits throughout the series.

### **Global Winnipeg**

<https://globalnews.ca/news/11158589/winnipeg-jets-regain-series-lead-with-5-3-game-5-win-over-blues/>

### ***Winnipeg Jets regain series lead with 5-3 Game 5 win over Blues***

By Christian Aumell & Russ Hobson Global News

It seems that a little home cooking was just what the Winnipeg Jets needed to get back on track.

After getting demolished in two games in St. Louis, the Jets regained control of their battle with the Blues thanks to a 5-3 win at Canada Life Centre Wednesday night to take a 3-2 series lead.

Kyle Connor and Mason Appleton each recorded three points as the home team won for their fifth straight game in the series to push the Blues to the brink of elimination.

But the Jets finished the game without Mark Scheifele after he left the game following the first period.

“Really proud of the effort,” said Jets captain Adam Lowry. “I think sometimes when you lose your number one centre, you lose a key piece to your lineup, there can be a bit of a sag and an emotional letdown. But I thought the guys really rallied around it.”

Scheifele took a couple of big hits in the opening frame before leaving the game after 20 minutes. But Jets head coach Scott Arniel didn’t give a lot of insight into his status going forward with only 48 hours until a key Game 6 on Friday.

“We’ll wait and see here,” said Arniel. “We’ll just wait and see where we’re at. See how he is later tonight and see tomorrow.”

Arniel was visibly upset on the bench with the officials to start the second period.

“There’s some things that have been going in this series and that was a repeat of what we’ve seen before,” said Arniel. “A player leaving his feet and then hitting the player in a very unprotected spot. Like hitting him, in a sense, almost blindsiding him. Not happy how the call was made, a two minute minor. Not even looking at it is what I was upset about, and it’s something we have talked to the league about for five games.”

After Scheifele left the game, Vladislav Namestnikov was elevated to the top line and he scored a goal in the second period and also added one assist.

“It was unbelievable,” Arniel said. “We certainly needed it big time and that’s been our group. Our group has had to step up all year long with injuries and that was a huge for us to go into that role.”

“You always want to contribute,” said Namestnikov. “But as I said, hockey is not all about scoring. Sometimes you have to defend as well. So yes, you’d like to contribute and I put a lot of pressure on myself to do that and good thing that one went in today.”

It’s the first time the Jets have won a game after a loss in a playoff series since the 2020 Stanley Cup Playoffs. The victory also ended the Jets four-game losing streak in Game 5’s that dated all the way back to the 2018 playoffs.

The Jets held the Blues to just nine shots on net in the first two periods as St. Louis finished with just 19 shots.

"We played on our toes," Lowry said. "We played fast. We were making simple but effective plays and Arny (Arniel) did a really good job of going through the breakdowns in Game 3 and 4 and just when you review those things, and you kinda see a lot of it is self-inflicted."

The Jets had five different goal scorers with Connor, Namestnikov, Nino Niederreiter, Dylan DeMelo, and Adam Lowry all getting on the scoresheet.

"I thought it was, throughout the lineup, it was outstanding," said Arniel. "I thought that everybody stepped up."

"Great first and we were physical, we were battling, competing and doing all the things we had to do to get ourselves going. Just real proud of the way the guys stuck together and just played our game, we got to Jet hockey."

The Jets got exactly the start they needed, opening the scoring just 1:23 into the game.

The play started when a forechecking Appleton was clipped by a high-stick in the St. Louis zone but no call was made. As he got to his knees behind the net, he kicked a loose puck to Scheifele who then fed Connor in front for a wrister that beat Jordan Binnington high over the glove.

But it didn't take the Blues long to respond. Just 2:19 after Connor scored, Nathan Walker finished off a long St. Louis shift in the Jets' end by tipping a Colton Parayko point shot through Hellebuyck.

The intensity was ratcheted up a few notches when Brayden Schenn ran over Scheifele in the Winnipeg end, resulting in a Jets power play.

A minute into that man advantage, Gabriel Vilardi, playing in his first game since Mar. 23, was called for interference in the neutral zone but Oskar Sundqvist also went to the box for embellishment.

In the end, the Jets did not cash in, but not long after the Blues returned to even strength, Winnipeg regained the lead when Niederreiter tipped a Dylan Samberg point shot past Binnington at the 8:39 mark.

There was some more rough stuff at the midway point after the Blues took exception to the Jets banging away at a puck that Binnington had covered in the crease. St. Louis would wind up with a power play after the dust settled but Winnipeg killed it off.

The Jets got to the end of the period with the 2-1 lead intact, the first time all series they had led after 20 minutes, but had to play the rest of the game without Schiefele, who got hurt late in the period.

Winnipeg got their second power play look of the night early in the second when Justin Faulk was called for slashing but they couldn't cash in, their 12th failed power play in 14 tries in the series.

To make matters worse, the Blues leveled the score at the 6:06 mark when Jimmy Snuggerud beat Hellebuyck with a low wrister in transition that Hellebuyck likely should have stopped.

Winnipeg got just the break they needed at the 11:05 mark of the period. DeMelo's shot from the point appeared to be heading wide before it hit the backside of Parayko and trickled into the net, reminiscent of a Blues goal in Game 4 that banked in off the backside of Neal Pionk.

The Jets got a huge insurance goal with just over a minute to go in the second. Appleton took a pass from Pionk and skated over the St. Louis blue line before sending a pass to Connor streaking into the zone. He then sent it over to Namestnikov, and while he didn't get everything on his shot it fooled Binnington and gave the Jets a 4-2 lead after 40 minutes.

Winnipeg also had a 22-9 edge in shots on goal through two periods.

The Jets went into lockdown mode in the third, sitting on their lead and doing everything they could to ensure they got to the finish line.

With 4:06 remaining and the score still 4-2, the Blues pulled Binnington and less than a minute later, just like he did in Game 1, Lowry scored into the empty net to seal the win.

Walker would add his second of the night with 51.4 seconds left but it wouldn't be enough as the Jets improved to 3-0 on home ice this postseason.

Hellebuyck stopped 16 shots in the win, while Binnington made 21 saves in defeat.

The Jets will try to end the series Friday night in St. Louis. The action begins just after 7 p.m. with pregame coverage on 680 CJOB starting at 5 p.m.

### **Winnipeg Free Press**

<https://www.winnipegfreepress.com/breakingnews/2025/05/01/jets-down-blues-5-3-back-in-control-of-series>

### ***Jets down Blues 5-3, back in control of series***

By: Mike McIntyre

Mark Scheifele didn't make it beyond the first period. Connor Hellebuyck let in another softy. The Winnipeg Jets, it seemed, were in a world of hurt on Wednesday night inside Canada Life Centre.

Just when it looked like the NHL's best regular season team was about to find itself on the brink of playoff elimination, the shorthanded squad dug deep and pulled away with one of the most important wins in franchise history.

A 5-3 triumph over the St. Louis Blues now has Winnipeg on the cusp of advancing to the second round. They lead the best-of-seven series 3-2, with Game 6 set for Friday evening in Missouri.

"Really proud of the effort," said captain Adam Lowry.

"Sometimes when you lose your No. 1 centre, you lose a key piece to your lineup there can be a bit of a sag, an emotional letdown. But you know, I thought the guys really rallied around it."

This one was not for the faint of heart, with the Jets finding another gear as the adversity began to pile up.

Scheifele has been a prime St. Louis target the entire series and was on the receiving end of two huge hits in the opening frame — one from Blues captain Brayden Schenn, who was given a minor penalty for interference on the play, and then later in the period from Radek Faksa.

As the Jets emerged for the middle frame, coach Scott Arniel was irate. He called over referee Jake Brenk and read him the riot act — no doubt angered by the news he'd received from medical staff that he'd have to continue this critical contest without his top centre.

Arniel felt the Schenn play was deserving of more than two minutes — replays showed he may have left his feet to hit a player that didn't have the puck — but the damage was already done. He didn't have an immediate post-game update on Scheifele's status.

It appeared like things were going from bad to worse when Blues rookie Jimmy Snuggerud beat Hellebuyck early in the second period to tie the game 2-2. It was just the seventh shot of the night against the reigning Vezina Trophy winner, who had been chased from two straight lopsided losses in St. Louis, and it was one he absolutely needed to have.

Would the Jets — who had just watched their second one-goal lead of the night evaporate — add another ugly chapter to the growing narrative that they wilt under pressure?

Quite the opposite, actually.

"I thought throughout the lineup, it was outstanding," said Arniel.

"We were physical. We were battling. Competing. Doing all the things we have to do to get ourselves going. Just real proud of the way the guys stuck together and just played our game. We got to Jet hockey. We got to Jet hockey early and we played it for 60 minutes."

A pair of goals in the latter half of the period gave the home team some much-needed breathing room, paving the way for an efficient final frame in which they mostly held the Blues in check, eventually adding an empty-netter before giving up a late tally in the final minute.

"Not only do I think we defended well, but we absolutely attacked them and kind of had some stretches where we poured it on, doing what we do best," said forward Mason Appleton.

"We forechecked really hard, we recovered pucks, we made a lot of plays in the o-zone, we got on top of their goalie. We did what we needed to do to win that game."

### *STEPPING UP*

With Scheifele down and out, Vlad Namestnikov got the bump up to the top line to skate between Kyle Connor and Gabe Vilardi, who was returning from a 15-game injury absence.

The same Namestnikov who had gone 20 straight games without a goal and had just two assists in his last 12 games, none in the playoffs.

He came up huge.

Namestnikov and Connor set up defenceman Dylan DeMelo for the go-ahead goal at 11:05 of the second. Vilardi was tied up near the front of the net with Blues defenceman Colton Parayko, whose backside ended up deflecting DeMelo's blast past Jordan Binnington into the back of the net.

Then, with just 69 seconds left before the intermission, Namestnikov took a perfect pass from Connor and beat Binnington for a crucial insurance marker at the time, which would turn out to be the game-winner.

"Things happen in playoffs, sometimes the puck doesn't go in, but you kind of have to stick with it," Namestnikov said of his drought.

"When things don't go your way, we lost Scheif, people have to step up. So I think as a team we stepped up and got the win."



Winnipeg hadn't scored a second period goal during the previous four games of the series, and these two couldn't have come at a better time.

Connor, who had opened the scoring just 83 seconds into the game off a nice feed from Scheifele and Appleton (who had three assists in the game), now leads the Jets with eight points (4G, 4A) in this series.

Vilardi played 18:23, with two shots on goal, four blocks and a hit.

"He was great. We know what he brings to the table," Connor said of getting one linemate back on a night he lost the other.

"Wins a ton of puck battles. Smart. Great defensively. Blocks a ton of shots. What he means to our power play, just having that right shot. He's a game-changer, and I'm glad he's back, feeling good."

### *MAKING A POINT*

The Jets were repeatedly victimized in Games 3 and 4 by the Blues ability to get shots from the blue-line which were either screened or tipped to get by Hellebuyck.

It looked like that trend might continue when Nathan Walker got the Blues on the board early in the first period, deflecting a Parayko shot shortly after Connor's opening tally.

But give the Jets credit. Not only did they begin to box out the St. Louis forwards trying to set up shop in front of their net, they also did a much better job of covering off the points to limit the number of pucks getting through.

"That was good. That's Jet hockey, defense," said Namestnikov.

"We played defense first and then take it to the offense. And I think for the most part of that game, we did that. We stopped them in the neutral zone, and forechecked and kind of hounded him in their end."

And, in a bit of turnabout being fair play, they created some traffic jams in front of Binnington. Nino Niederreiter gave the Jets a 2-1 lead near the midway mark of the first period doing just that, deflecting a Dylan Samberg point shot.

### *ROOM FOR IMPROVEMENT*

Hellebuyck, who might just be named a Hart Trophy finalist on Thursday morning, had vowed to be better after his two previous outings ended in pulls and chants of "We Want Connor" from the rabid St. Louis faithful.

This one was a bit of a mixed bag.

Hellebuyck made one of the best saves you'll see in the first period, with the score tied 1-1, when he dove across to get a piece of an Oskar Sundqvist one-timer on a shorthanded 2-on-1 rush.

"It's one of those saves that Bucky wows you with," said Appleton, who was on the ice at the time and had a great view of it.

"He has a tendency to do things like that. That's why he's the best goalie in the world. That was an absolutely insane save and it kind of flipped the momentum of the game there."

Hellebuyck then brushed aside the Snuggerud stinker and stopped the next 11 shots he faced before Walker scored with just under a minute left to finish the scoring.

The final numbers weren't great — 19 shots, 16 saves — but the Jets have to take solace knowing they're just one win away from moving on even though Hellebuyck has yet to show his best work so far.

"That paddle save that he makes, you can call it series changing, you can call it game changing, but that was a key play," said Lowry.

"I thought he had a heck of a game. Disappointing to give up that third one for him, but he kept us in it and he really shut the door when we got that lead."

#### *GETTING UGLY*

The Schenn hit on Scheifele wasn't the only nasty piece of business between two teams who are clearly getting sick of seeing each other.

There were plenty of others, including an undetected spear from Cole Perfetti on Zach Bolduc that had the Blues forward in some agony in the first period. Defenceman Josh Morrissey was left labouring on multiple occasions after being on the wrong end of some huge hits, while Brandon Tanev sparked a fracas by playing a game of human bumper cars.

Then, later in the third period, veteran St. Louis defenceman Ryan Suter got away with a big cross-check on Niederreiter that was either missed or ignored by the men in stripes.

The NHL's department of player safety, which reviews everything, might have a lengthy list from this one.

#### *KEY PLAY*

Namestnikov's first goal in 21 games was enormous.

#### *THREE STARS*

1. WPG LW Kyle Connor: 1 goal, 2 assists

2. WPG C Vlad Namestnikov: 1 goal, 1 assist
3. STL RW Nathan Walker: 2 goals

### **EXTRA, EXTRA**

With Vilardi returning to the lineup, forward David Gustafsson was a healthy scratch. The Jets also swapped out defenceman Haydn Fleury for Logan Stanley. St. Louis made one change, with injured defenceman Tyler Tucker coming out in favour of Suter.

Jets forward Nikolaj Ehlers is getting closer to a return from a lower-body injury that has cost him the past six games. He is currently skating in a non-contact jersey.

The Jets went 0-for-2 on the power play and are now just 2-for-14 in the series. St. Louis went 0-for-1.

Puck drop on Friday night is set for 7 p.m. CT. If the Blues win to force a winner-take-all Game 7, that would occur Sunday in Winnipeg.

<https://www.winnipegfreepress.com/breakingnews/2025/05/01/jets-comeback-victory-marred-by-hit-on-scheifele>

### ***Jets' comeback victory marred by hit on Scheifele Centre's role in Game 6 now in doubt***

By: Ken Wiebe

Scott Arniel had a clear message to send, and the head coach of the Winnipeg Jets wasn't holding back.

His team had just won a pivotal Game 5 in this best-of-seven slugfest with the St. Louis Blues and as proud as he was with the effort that led to the 5-3 victory on Wednesday at Canada Life Centre, Arniel had an issue with the hit that knocked star centre Mark Scheifele out of the game.

He also took umbrage at a suggestion from St. Louis Blues head coach Jim Montgomery that Scheifele's injury was a result of a hard check from Radek Faksa with 2:58 to go in the first period at the offensive blue line, not the jarring hit from Blues captain Brayden Schenn that took place 6:12 into the contest.

"Let's make it clear: 55 got hurt from the Faksa hit," said Montgomery. "He played six minutes after the Schenn hit. He didn't come back after he got rocked by Faksa."

A quick look at the shift chart showed that Scheifele actually did take one more 50-second shift in the final minute of the first period, but didn't come out for the second and was lost for the remainder of the game.

Arniel came out spitting fire as his post-game presser progressed.

“Well, I didn’t know Monty got his medical degree, trying to say how our player got hurt. He’s way off base,” said Arniel. “He should not make that comment.”

Arniel’s blood was boiling and he was just getting started.

“There’s some things that have been going on in this series and that was a repeat of what we’ve seen before,” said Arniel. “A player leaving his feet and then hitting a player in a very unprotected spot. Hitting him in the sense of almost blindsiding him.

“I’m not happy with how the call was made. A two-minute minor. Not even looking at it is what I was upset about. And it is something that we have talked to the league about for five games.”

Asked to expand on what those conversations with the league entailed, Arniel didn’t go into much detail.

“I think I have to keep that one to myself, to us,” he said. “We communicate after every game. There’s some things that happened and I’m sure that St. Louis has some things that they’re complaining about, but there’s things that... we’ve noticed that have been going on since Game 1. And that hit is a lot of what we’ve been talking about.”

A little extra spice between coaches is always welcome at this time of year, especially when it’s a Central Division rivalry.

There has been a high physical toll paid by both teams in this series, as almost every available check has been finished by both sides.

Battling through the brutality is part of playoff hockey and the Jets have been doling out plenty of their own.

Schenn was given a minor for interference for his hit on Scheifele, though it seems clear Arniel felt that charging should have been the call and a major should have at least been considered during a review.

The status of Scheifele is going to be a storyline for the next few days and it’s safe to say his availability seems very much in question at this moment.

It’s the time of year when injury updates are limited and Arniel wasn’t willing to hazard a guess whether Scheifele would even be able to travel with the team for Friday’s Game 6.

“We’ll just wait and see where we’re at,” said Arniel. “I don’t know. I’ll find out what’s going on. We don’t discuss injuries, especially this time of year.”

Even after pushing the Blues to the brink of elimination with their most complete effort of this postseason, the loss of Scheifele for any length of time would have serious implications for a team with Stanley Cup aspirations.

But the Jets aren't about to get ahead of themselves, so we won't, either.

In the short term, the Jets got a bunch of impressive individual performances throughout the lineup, including the best game of the series from Vladislav Namestnikov, who was promoted to the top line with Kyle Connor and Gabe Vilardi.

Namestnikov snapped a 20-game drought to deliver the game-winning goal for what was the most important goal of his Jets career since he was acquired from the San Jose Sharks for a fourth-round draft pick on March 1, 2023.

He also embraced the opportunity to go up against the Blues' top-line centre Robert Thomas.

Trading for Namestnikov was one of those under-the-radar deals made by Jets general manager Kevin Cheveldayoff that was part of making his team harder to play against.

He's versatile, he plays hard and does a lot of the little things extremely well.

On a night that featured plenty of names on the marquee, Namestnikov's marker was a memorable one and he nearly added a second on a two-on-one rush before his shot somehow trickled through the crease after he walked around Blues goalie Jordan Binnington.

"Vlad is such a smart player that you can kind of plug and play him anywhere," said Jets right-winger Mason Appleton, who chipped in three assists himself to lead the secondary scoring barrage. "But when you change lines in the middle of a playoff game, it's not the easiest task."

Neither is having to play without a top-line centre who produced a career-high 87 points in 82 regular-season games and had two goals and five points in this series before he was sidelined.

"It's hard losing your best player, but at the same time we've dealt with this all year with injuries, so it's the next-man mentality," said Namestnikov. "Guys stepped up."

With Scheifele likely out for at least Friday, it will be incumbent on Namestnikov, Adam Lowry, Morgan Barron and either David Gustafsson or Rasmus Kupari to shoulder the load down the middle.

Keeping the secondary scoring flowing will be essential for the Jets to secure one more victory to advance to the second round and to send the Blues packing.

“It’s not one guy that needs to fill the shoes of Mark,” said Connor, who scored a goal and had two assists. “It needs to be everybody.”

Delivering the knockout punch won’t be easy, as the Blues are riding a 14-game home winning streak.

But the Jets did an incredible job of disrupting the rhythm of an opponent that had struck for 12 goals in a pair of blowout victories over them at Enterprise Center.

The score said it was only a two-goal victory on Wednesday, but the Jets dominated the second period and carried the flow of play before a garbage time rebound goal from Nathan Walker tightened things up.

Where things go from here could be a defining moment for many members of the Jets’ core group.

By stemming the tide, the Jets followed a playoff loss with a win for the first time since Game 2 of the qualifying round against the Calgary Flames back in 2020.

For as much as the Jets have said they don’t care about what’s happened in the past, this was another example of this edition of the team pushing the envelope and rewriting history.

In order to pen the next chapter, another determined effort — or two, if the series goes the distance — is going to be required.

<https://www.winnipegfreepress.com/breakingnews/2025/04/30/its-go-time>

***‘It’s go time’***

***Jets look for momentum swing with tight turn around in remaining games***

By: Ken Wiebe

The expanded nature of the schedule, complete with three two-day breaks and a smorgasbord of start times, was a storyline heading into this best-of-seven series between the Winnipeg Jets and St. Louis Blues.

But with the extended breaks finally in the rearview mirror after Game 5, was there any advantage to be had by either team?

Going into the series, Jets head coach Scott Arniel spoke about how you’d like to keep playing if you could build a lead in the early going, for fear that the time between games might put a dent in any momentum a team could build.

After winning the first two games on home ice, the Jets went on the road and the Blues held serve to send the series back to Winnipeg all tied up.

There's been plenty of talk about adjustments being made by the two coaching staffs, the result of having some additional time to dig into the opponent.

"Yeah, I'm sure (Blues head coach Jim Montgomery) would say he liked the two extra days there after Game 2. I'm actually OK with it after Game 4," said Arniel. "There's some things we got to work on, some things we got to look at. But now it's every other night, it's go time. It's the next game that's the most important one, and we're going to take it from there."

Jets forward Cole Perfetti was among the players who would have preferred the standard playoff schedule of having a game every other night.

"I don't know. I personally don't love it. I like playing," said Perfetti. "I like getting in the flow of it, every-other-day kind of thing. But that's now how it is so you have to adapt and get used to those two days in between."

"It's good for rest in that aspect."

The breaks weren't long enough for Perfetti to get much growth on his playoff beard, which caused him to take a bit of good-natured ribbing from his teammates.

"Yeah, it doesn't look good, that's for sure. Hopefully it gets a lot longer," said Perfetti. "I didn't have much faith in myself either but it's (been) a week and a half. I don't love the look on me but it's all right."

Asked specifically about the chess match taking place between games, Montgomery wasn't in the mood to take any credit for any tactical changes that helped his team outscore the Jets 12-3 during the two games in St. Louis.

"I've always said this — players win games. Coaches give a game plan and players go out and win games," said Montgomery. "I do think, for the most part, you guys do make too much of the matchups and the X's and O's and adjustments. We're not as important as you think we are."

Montgomery did say that the Blues' difficult road to qualify for the post-season helped harden them for moments like this.

Being stifled by the Jets in the third periods of Games 1 and 2 — where the Blues were held to a grand total of seven shots on goal and were outscored 4-0 in those 40 minutes of action — was an important step in the growth process.

"You've got to mature in the playoffs or else your season is over," said Montgomery. "So I'm proud of our group for the way we've matured so quickly in the playoffs."

*THE REUNION:* That Arniel chose to reunite Nino Niederreiter with Adam Lowry and Mason Appleton for the pivotal game was no surprise.

They were regarded as one of the best third lines in the NHL for more than half the season before injuries caused each of the players to move in and out of the lineup.

Niederreiter was needed in the top-six after injuries to Gabe Vilardi (who returned to the lineup for Game 5) and Nikolaj Ehlers (who skated in a yellow non-contact jersey with his teammates on Wednesday morning but isn't expected to return before this series is over).

Although they're known primarily for their work defending, Arniel reminded reporters that one of the best traits for the line is that they force the opposition to spend a lot of time in the defensive zone — which limits the damage those skilled opponents can do offensively.

"You know exactly what we demand from one another," said Niederreiter. "We're tenacious on the forecheck, get pucks on net. Getting to the inside, that's something which we do extremely well. In the D-zone, we know what we are supposed to do and try to get the momentum for our team."

*PRAISE FOR MORRISSEY:* Blues defenceman Colton Parayko admits he gained an appreciation for Jets blue-liner Josh Morrissey during the 4 Nations Face-Off in February.

Parayko and Morrissey were a frequent pairing and took on a lot of tough matchups during the best-on-best event that concluded with Canada capturing a gold medal.

"He's an incredible player and a great person," said Parayko. "We see them quite a bit during the season (in the Central Division), but when you get to play with him, you realize how good a player he really is."

"When he was dialled in, he was unreal. Some of the plays that he made, I wouldn't even think about seeing those plays. The little things that he does stick out the most are what you appreciate as a defenceman."

What were some of those things?

"He's not maybe the biggest defenceman, but he plays hard and he's hard to play against. He gets right in there and he's aggressive," said Parayko, who helped the Blues win the Stanley Cup in 2019 and suited up in his 87th NHL playoff game on Wednesday. "He moves the puck extremely well and has (great) vision. He sees the plays steps before they even happen."

*THE PLAYOFF DEBUT:* Although having a starting goalie pulled in consecutive games is never a good thing for a team, the removal of Connor Hellebuyck in the third period of



Games 3 and 4 allowed Jets backup Eric Comrie to make his Stanley Cup playoff debut.

Comrie looked comfortable between the pipes in mop-up duty, turning aside eight of the nine shots on goal that he faced.

The lone shot to beat him was a blistering one-timer off the stick of Parayko for a power-play goal.

That left Comrie with a 2.19 goals-against average and .889 save percentage in his 27:27 of work.

*THE THIRD DEFENCEMAN:* One of the reasons the Jets haven't been as disruptive as usual on the forecheck during parts of the series is the excellent puck-handling of Blues goalie Jordan Binnington.

Because Binnington is active behind the net and accurate with his passes, he's given his teammates some additional time to avoid being under pressure in the defensive zone.

Montgomery said that Binnington's hockey sense allows him to act like a third defenceman.

"He's definitely been very good in this series," said Niederreiter. "But at the same time, we didn't do a great job keeping it away from him. He's a good goaltender at handling the puck."

### **Winnipeg Sun**

<https://winnipegsun.com/sports/hockey/nhl/winnipeg-jets/jets-keep-it-out-of-the-ditch-take-series-lead-against-blues>

### ***Jets keep it out of the ditch, take series lead against Blues***

By Paul Friesen

Home ice continues to rule in the Winnipeg Jets' first-round playoff series against St. Louis.

Shaking off back-to-back routs on the road, the Jets returned to their Whiteout crowd on Wednesday and played their most complete game of the five.

Their reward: a 5-3 win and 3-2 series lead, a victory away from punching their ticket to Round 2. Their first of two chances comes in St. Louis on Friday.

“Throughout the lineup, it was outstanding,” head coach Scott Arniel said. “Everybody stepped up. We were physical. We were battling. Competing. Doing all the things we have to do to get ourselves going. Just real proud of the way the guys stuck together and just played our game.

“We got to Jet hockey. We got to Jet hockey early and we played it for 60 minutes.”

Jets goals came from Kyle Connor, Nino Niederreiter, Dylan DeMelo, Vlad Namestnikov and Adam Lowry, into an empty net.

Connor Hellebuyck rebounded from a soft goal to stop 16 of 19 shots, as Winnipeg out-shot the Blues, 26-19.

“That was their best game, it was our worst game,” Blues coach Jim Montgomery said. “We can analyze every part of it. They were better.”

The win may have come with a price, though, as the Jets lost star centre Mark Scheifele to an injury in the first period, one shift after taking a hard, blindside hit from St. Louis captain Brayden Schenn.

Arniel wouldn't shed any light on his status for Game 6.

Both teams seemed to realize the start was going to be critical, because it was fast, intense and nasty.

The first Jets goal, just 1:23 into the game, was a case of adding exaltation to injury.

The play began with Mason Appleton down on the ice behind the Blues net, having taken a high stick to his face.

Getting up with a ‘What the —’ look at the ref, Appleton found the puck at his feet and kicked it to Scheifele, who fed Connor in front for his fourth of the series.

It took the Jets just two minutes to squander the lead, the Blues finishing a dominant shift with a tip-in from Nathan Walker.

Things got a little nasty after that, St. Louis captain Schenn demolishing Scheifele with a blindside hit and sparking a scrum that left the Jets with a power play.

They didn't capitalize on it. In fact, only a spectacular stick save from Hellebuyck on a Blues two-on-one while shorthanded kept it tied.

Soon after the penalty expired, Niederreiter tipped a Dylan Samberg point shot for his first of the playoffs and the Jets were back in the lead, the crowd back in a frenzy.

More rough stuff put the Blues on the power play midway through the first, but the Jets had little trouble killing that off.

The teams traded as many blows as chances in that opening 20 minutes, the lowest a spear by Cole Perfetti on Blues forward Zack Bolduc that somehow went uncalled.

Arniel was more PO'd by how Scheifele was being manhandled, and when his No. 1 centre couldn't answer the bell for the second period, Arniel let the official know exactly how he felt.

He wouldn't have been thrilled with the weak goal Hellebuyck let in some seven minutes into the second, Jimmy Snuggerud sliding it past the goalie on the short-side from an angle to tie it up.

The Jets took their third lead of the game when DeMelo's wrist shot from the point went off St. Louis defenceman Colton Parayko and past Jordan Binnington. It was DeMelo's first goal in his last 38 games.

The Jets added another before the second was up, Namestnikov, filling in for Scheifele on the top line, chipping a Connor pass in for his first in 21 games, giving his team a two-goal lead with just 1:09 to go in the period.

"It was unbelievable," Arniel said of players like Namestnikov stepping up. "We needed it big time."

From there, the league's stingiest defensive team did what it did almost all season, shutting down any thoughts of a St. Louis comeback.

Walker would add his second of the game with 51 seconds to go, but that was only window dressing for a Blues team that, for one more night in downtown Winnipeg, couldn't keep up with the NHL's top team in the regular-season.

<https://winnipegssun.com/sports/hockey/nhl/winnipeg-jets/jets-lose-scheifele-status-up-in-the-air-for-game-6-vs-blues>

### ***Blues take out Scheifele, while Jets' Arniel fumes***

By Paul Friesen

Head coach Scott Arniel has seen enough.

Arniel's Winnipeg Jets may have won Game 5 against St. Louis on Wednesday, but they suffered a loss before it was even half over, as top centre Mark Scheifele didn't come out for the second period.

Scheifele had taken another pounding through the first 20 minutes, and while it wasn't immediately clear when he was injured, the biggest hit he took was from Blues captain Brayden Schenn along the side boards in the St. Louis zone.

Scheifele had lost the puck and was looking back on the play when Schenn steamrolled him, taking an interference penalty and sparking a scrum.

Scheifele played the rest of the period, taking another jarring hit from Radek Faska at the St. Louis blue line.

We'll turn it over to the coaches from here.

"Let's make it clear: 55 got hurt from the Faksa hit," Blues boss Jim Montgomery said. "He played six minutes after the Schenn hit. He didn't come back after he got rocked by Faksa."

Arniel looked ready to chew off his necktie when he heard that.

"I didn't know Monty got his medical degree, trying to say how our player got hurt," he said. "He's way off base. He should not make that comment."

Arniel was just getting warmed up.

"There's some things that have been going on in this series and that was a repeat of what we've seen before," he said. "A player leaving his feet and then hitting a player in a very unprotected spot... almost blindsiding him. I'm not happy with how the call was made. A two-minute minor. Not even looking at it is what I was upset about.

"And it is something that we have talked to the league about for five games."

Scheifele has been the Blues' No. 1 target the entire series. Every chance to finish a check on him, they've taken it.

Some have been high, others late.

Arniel wasn't ready to share more about his talks with the NHL.

"I have to keep that one to myself, to us," he said. "We communicate after every game. There's some things that happened and I'm sure that St. Louis has some things that they're complaining about. But there's things that we've noticed that have been going on since Game 1. And that hit is a lot of what we've been talking about."

When Scheifele didn't come out of the tunnel for the third period, the only question left was whether he'd miss Game 6 in St. Louis on Friday.

Arniel wasn't ready to answer that, yet.

His loss would be another blow to a top line that had just been reunited, with the return of Gabe Vilardi from the injured list.

Scheifele collected an assist on the Jets first goal, by Kyle Connor, giving him six points in the series, tied with his linemate for the team lead at that point. Connor went on to collect two more assists.

The Jets rallied without No. 55, out-scoring the Blues 2-1 in the second period while outshooting them 14-3 on their way to a 5-3 win and 3-2 series lead.

“Really proud of the effort,” captain Adam Lowry said. “Sometimes when you lose your No. 1 centre, you lose a key piece to your lineup, there can be a bit of a sag, an emotional letdown. But the guys really rallied around it. Coming in the intermission and finding out he’s not coming back, guys were upbeat.”

Filling in at centre on that line on Wednesday was Vlad Namestnikov, normally the anchor of the second line.

Set up by Connor, Namestnikov scored his first goal in 21 games late in the second period, giving his team a 4-2 lead going into the third.

“Like Lows said, we need it from everybody,” Connor said. “He rose to the occasion. It’s not one guy that needs to fill the shoes of Mark. It needs to be everybody. And the way he plays, Vladdy, he’s been great for the whole series and a couple chances here or there he could have some better results.”

The Jets won’t hit the ice on Thursday, hopping a charter flight to St. Louis shortly after noon, so any updates on Scheifele will have to come from Arniel before they board.’

<https://winnipegsun.com/sports/hockey/nhl/winnipeg-jets/hawerchuk-statue-gets-tam-treatment>

### ***Tailor-made: Hawerchuk statue gets the Tam treatment for Jets playoffs***

By Paul Friesen

He’s Winnipeg’s tailor-to-the-stars, having outfitted Oscar-winning actors and Jets players alike.

But through half a century of making or altering clothes, Tam Nguyen never had an assignment quite like this one.

“I’ve never made one for a statue,” Nguyen was saying as he stood in front of the towering image of Dale Hawerchuk outside the downtown arena on Wednesday.

On this day the statue of the late, great Jets captain was wearing white, a home sweater complete with the logo and the 'C' on the front and the Hawerchuk name on the back.

The giant jersey gets pulled onto the bronze figure for game days.

The fit was no easy task, even for a master tailor like Nguyen.

While players such as Josh Morrissey, Adam Lowry and Neal Pionk, and TV/movie stars like the late Philip Seymour Hoffman, Samuel L. Jackson and Henry Winkler stepped into his Ellice Avenue shop to be measured, that wasn't an option for this project.

"It took me a week to do it," Nguyen said. "Back and forth, fitting, take the measurement on the statue. It's so big. We had a ladder to get up. Lucky I have a tape measure big enough."

He wound up using four of the largest jerseys he could find, cutting them up and adding pieces to fit the reaching, one-hand-on-his-stick likeness of the Jets hall of famer.

There was also the not-so-small problem of getting the sweater onto the sculpture.

"Normally you put your arms up," Nguyen said.

Again, not an option.

"It's difficult," he said. "The body, the way he stands, and so big. So I put two zippers, one on each side."

While normally Nguyen is fine-tuning an existing suit, this was a completely different process. A bit like stitching together a hockey Frankenstein, but with striping that has to line up perfectly from one piece of fabric to the next.

"It's challenging," Nguyen said. "But I'm glad I can do something like that. It's special to make it for a statue. Not normal."

He even added the strap underneath the back of the sweater. For players, it's to prevent someone pulling it over their heads in a fight.

For the statue, it's to keep it in place when the west wind howls through True North Square.

Tailor Tam, as he's known, first got the call from the Jets a couple weeks before the playoffs. A big fan, the 68-year-old didn't hesitate.

"I say, 'Wow, OK. That is special.'"

His fee?

“Nothing,” he said. “I trade the labour. I told him I don’t want money, I want to go to the game.”

A chance to attend Game 5 of the series wasn’t the only thing that made Wednesday special for Nguyen.

The date marked exactly 45 years since he escaped Vietnam, stepping onto a boat in Saigon, bound for Malaysia.

“The day I know I stay alive,” he calls it. “I survived. I’m so happy I’m still alive. I look back 50 years, the fall of Saigon, lots of stories.”

The Vietnam war had ended exactly five years before Nguyen left the country. Five days on that boat, with no food, led to a few months in a refugee camp.

That October, 1980, he landed in Winnipeg, knowing nothing about hockey.

A few years later he did some work for Hawerchuk and some of his Jets teammates – without having a clue who they were – beginning a relationship with players that continues to this day.

Stitching together the largest No. 10 jersey on the planet was a pretty good way to start what he calls semi-retirement.

“I’m happy I did it,” Nguyen said. “I’m lucky I chose Canada. I came to the right place.”

<https://winnipegssun.com/sports/hockey/nhl/winnipeg-jets/show-me-state-matches-winnipeg-whiteout-in-jets-blues-series>

### ***Show Me State matches Winnipeg Whiteout in Jets-Blues series***

By Paul Friesen

It’s the only Stanley Cup playoff series where home was actually sweet home through the first four games.

Ask the Winnipeg Jets and St. Louis Blues why nobody could win a game in the other’s building going into Wednesday’s Game 5, and they pointed to the noise.

“Just both buildings (are) really loud,” Jets forward Cole Perfetti said. “The atmosphere has been great in both spots. When you have that crowd going with you, that energy really picks you up. When you’re going into their building and their building’s loud, it’s hard. It’s hard to play.”

For the Jets it was harder in St. Louis than anybody could have expected.

They left Games 3 and 4 with barely a whimper, blasted by a combined 12-3 count and reduced to a shadow of the team that rolled to the NHL's best regular-season record.

Seems the famous Winnipeg Whiteout, which has shown the NHL how home-ice advantage can be measured in decibels, has a challenger down in the Show Me State.

"They talked about our Whiteout and how loud it was," Jets coach Scott Arniel said of the Blues. "And it was loud in St. Louis. Really loud. And again, that's just that home-ice advantage. That's what we played those 82 games for."

Much is always made of the advantage of having the last change at home, too, allowing a coach to get the player matchups he wants.

Sometimes too much, Blues boss Jim Montgomery says.

"I've always said this – players win games," Montgomery said. "Coaches give a game plan and players go out and win games. For the most part you guys do make too much of the matchups and the X's and O's and adjustments. We're not as important as you think we are."

"Attitudes have meant more to the home teams winning more than matchups."

The Jets will have to approach Game 6 in St. Louis on Friday with a different attitude, then.

"They're always a great team in their building, and we are a really good team in our building," forward Nino Niederreiter said. "Sometimes it can help you, and sometimes it doesn't help."

If the series goes the distance, the Jets will be banking on the former.

Listening to Montgomery, all bets might be off at that point.

"Both tough buildings to play in," he said. "But the playoffs are just different. I'm sure everyone thought Ottawa was done. (Toronto) was up 3-0, now it's 3-2. It looked like Vegas was going to fall down 3-1, now they're up 3-2."

"Every series is its own animal, its own journey, and you've just got to be immersed in your own journey."

Hacks, whacks and chops

No successful playoff journey happens without balanced scoring from throughout a team's lineup.



Sure, a first line like Winnipeg's – Mark Scheifele between Kyle Connor and, beginning with Game 5, Gabe Vilardi – will likely produce the most.

But the Jets will need something from their second and third lines, too, which were held off the scoresheet, aside from an Adam Lowry empty-net goal, through four games.

Goals from the bottom of the lineup can be things of beauty for a team, even if they're not works of art.

"Those are the type of goals that are getting scored in this league right now," Arniel said. "The greasy ones, the hack and whack, chop, deflections – those are the ones that we need to get."

Second-line winger Cole Perfetti says it hadn't been for a lack of chances from his threesome.

"If you go back over the four games, we've created chances, had good looks, whether it's posts or great saves or getting unlucky bounces in front of the net," Perfetti said. "You're creating and that's all you can ask for. Eventually the puck's going to go in."

Back to you, coach.

"You can say it's bad bounces or whatever, but you've got to make your own bounces," Arniel said. "You've got to make your own breaks. Sometimes we're not attacking inside and we're not putting pucks from bad angles and we're trying to make the next play instead of doing it yourself."

"At this time of year, secondary scoring is important... it will go a long way towards moving on in this series."

And from Niederreiter: "You want to get on the board. You can't just rely on the top group to score goals."

### *Back in rhythm*

After Game 5 the series reverts to a more normal schedule, with games every other day.

Nobody will complain about not getting two days off between each one.

"I personally don't love it," Perfeitt said. "I like getting in the flow of it, every other day."

"It's nice to play it every second day, where you can just stay in rhythm," Blues defenceman Colton Parayko added.

Montgomery says the unusual schedule has probably affected the style of play.

"There's been a lot of down time," he said. "I think that's why it's been so physical."

### *The last word*

"It doesn't look good, that's for sure. Hopefully it gets a lot longer." – Perfetti, on his playoff beard going into Game 5.

### **The Athletic**

<https://www.nytimes.com/athletic/6325602/2025/05/01/nhl-playoffs-jets-blues-game-5/>

### ***Jets' unlikely heroes step up to help beat Blues in Game 5: Takeaways***

By Murat Ates and Jeremy Rutherford

On Wednesday night, Vladislav Namestnikov was the unlikeliest hero for Winnipeg, stepping up in Mark Scheifele's absence to propel the Winnipeg Jets to a 5-3 win over the St. Louis Blues and a 3-2 series lead.

Here was a player who had zero points in the series – a player not viewed as a "real" second-line center. The Jets had picked him up for a fourth-round pick in 2023, to no fanfare at all, and then replaced him at 2C with Sean Monahan last season, before trying to do it all over again this year.

Winnipeg worked hard to upgrade at the trade deadline, ultimately falling short in its quest to acquire Brock Nelson.

The Jets didn't land their coveted No. 2 center – and yet, there was Namestnikov, playing on Winnipeg's top line after Scheifele left the game, scoring a goal and an assist to give the Jets a 4-2 lead and a Game 5 win.

Now the Blues are on the brink of elimination, needing to win at home on Friday to keep their season alive.

Namestnikov, Winnipeg's other depth step up big  
Kyle Connor and Mark Scheifele were the only Jets producing offence through four games, casting doubt on the impact of Winnipeg's depth players. Then Scheifele got hurt, Namestnikov stepped up and Winnipeg's depth exploded to win Game 5.

Namestnikov had already made a big play leading the rush in the buildup to Nino Niederreiter's 2-1 goal – and Mason Appleton had made a brilliant kick play to help get Connor on the board early – when Scheifele was hurt. That's when Namestnikov, who had zero points through four games, was catapulted to the role of No. 1 center.

He helped Winnipeg take over the game. First, it was a clean puck retrieval after Gabriel Vilardi was eliminated from a rush that helped Connor get the puck to the point for Dylan DeMelo's goal. Then, with 1:09 left in the second period, Namestnikov joined a rush, gave Connor an option and finished off Connor's feed to put the Jets ahead 4-2.

He wasn't the only middle-six player to have a big impact on the game.

Appleton was down and out behind the Blues' net after taking a stick from Robert Thomas on his way into the zone. Still holding his mouth, perhaps concerned he was bleeding, Appleton got himself together just in time to kick the puck to Scheifele, who centered it: Connor scored the 1-0 goal with clinical finish. Appleton also got the puck to the point in the buildup to Niederreiter's goal while taking a heavy hit from Ryan Suter. Niederreiter's deflection was his first goal of the series; he and Appleton combined to get Adam Lowry the empty-net goal that capped off the game.

Scott Arniel had said he wanted more from his "meat and potatoes" guys. Winnipeg got it – and went back for seconds.

### *Scheifele's night ends early*

The physicality in Game 5 was a continuation of what has been the most physical series in the NHL playoffs.

Scheifele took a pounding from the Blues in the first period, receiving heavy hits from Brayden Schenn, Justin Faulk and Radek Faksa, but continued to play a regular shift until the intermission.

Namestnikov took his spot between Connor and Vilardi and on the top power play unit to start the second period. Scheifele's loss is a massive blow to the Jets, who had only just gotten Vilardi back for Game 5 and are still without Nikolaj Ehlers.

Scheifele's early exit was a concern and his timeline to return to the Jets lineup is unknown.

The Jets' playoff record without Scheifele is not sterling, as one might imagine. They won one game and lost two against Calgary in the 2020 qualification round, then lost all three games without him when he was suspended against Montreal in 2021.

The Jets' win was remarkable in his absence.

### *Hellebuyck bends, doesn't break*

Winnipeg's goaltender struggled in St. Louis but you wouldn't know it from the way fans at Canada Life Centre cheered when his name was announced in the starting lineup. They chanted "MVP!" between those cheers and the land acknowledgment, just as they had done during Game 1 and Game 2. The combination of net-front traffic and a red light behind Connor Hellebuyck would have been all too familiar, but even Walker's deflection didn't let the air all of the way out of the building.

But Hellebuyck flat out missed on Jimmy Snuggerud's second-period goal, allowing the Blues to tie the game with Scheifele out, the Jets reeling and Winnipeg's power play failing to score earlier in the frame.

That's a save Winnipeg needs from its No. 1 goalie in any circumstance, let alone in a game so big.

It's also what makes his first-period save on Oskar Sundqvist all the more stunning. The Blues had broken into Winnipeg's zone on a shorthanded rush, the Jets were slow to get back, Walker made a perfect pass — and there was Hellebuyck reaching across with a desperate paddle save.

He stopped a sure goal, keeping the game tied long enough for Niederreiter to put the Jets ahead. It wasn't all roses — Snuggerud's goal came afterward, in the second period — but Hellebuyck made an important, spectacular save.

Those "MVP!" chants returned in the third period when Hellebuyck stopped Jordan Kyrrou and Jake Neighbours on back-to-back slot shots.

#### *Blues had been winning second period – until Game 5*

Through the first four games of the series, the Blues had owned the second period in this series, outscoring the Jets 4-0.

But in the second period of Game 5, Winnipeg outshot the Blues 14-3 and got their first two goals of the series in the middle period.

The Blues got the first goal of the period from rookie Snuggerud, tying the score 2-2. But Demelo and Namestnikov answered with back-to-back goals, part of a period in which the Jets directed 33 shots at the net compared to just seven for the Blues.

#### *Blues lose Broberg briefly*

The Blues lost defenseman Tyler Tucker to a lower-body injury in Game 4 and replaced him with veteran Ryan Suter in Game 5.

Then late in the second period of Game 5, Blues defenseman Philip Broberg left the game after blocking a shot by Dylan Samberg. Broberg was slow getting to the bench and didn't play his final shift. Nick Leddy took his spot alongside Justin Faulk and those two were on the ice when Namestnikov scored for a 4-2 lead.

Broberg returned for the start of the third period.

#### *NHL's first Australian scores twice*

In 2017, as a member of the Washington Capitals, Nathan Walker became the first Australian player to play in the NHL.

Walker is now a right winger with the Blues, and in his 10th playoff game in the league, he scored his first goal in the postseason.

At the time, the goal was an important one for the Blues. Connor put the Jets on the scoreboard just 1:23 into the game, and with the decibel level rising inside Canada Life Centre, Walker quieted the crowd just 2:19 later.

Blues defenseman Colton Parayko put a shot on net and Walker deflected it past Hellebuyck, tying the score 1-1.

Walker scored his second goal of the game with less than a minute remaining in regulation.

<https://www.nytimes.com/athletic/6325328/2025/05/01/jets-blues-arniel-scheifele-nhl-playoffs/>

### ***Jets' depth players shine, Arniel blasts Montgomery over Scheifele hits: 'He's way off base'***

By Murat Ates

WINNIPEG — Game 5 hero Vladislav Namestnikov said the Winnipeg Jets beat the St. Louis Blues because they did their homework. Jets coach Scott Arniel accused Blues coach Jim Montgomery of faking his way through medical school.

The verbal sparring and Namestnikov's heroics came as a result of an injury to Mark Scheifele that cast a dark cloud on Winnipeg's 5-3 win. Scheifele had taken two particularly hard hits in the first period — one from Brayden Schenn and one from Radek Faksa. Schenn's shoulder struck Scheifele's head as his arms pushed through Scheifele's chest 6:12 into the first period. Faksa dumped Scheifele with a hard shoulder-to-shoulder check 17:02 in.

“(Scheifele) got hurt from the Faksa hit. He played six minutes after the Schenn hit. He didn't come back after he got rocked by Faksa,” Montgomery said.

“I didn't know Monty got his medical degree, trying to say how our player got hurt. He's way off base,” said Arniel.

Scheifele played the rest of the first period but did not return.

Schenn's hit was by far the more dangerous of the two. Scheifele had received a rimmed puck at the left-wing boards and played it with his back to Colton Parayko at the point. Parayko stepped up and made a stick check, stopping Scheifele from making a clean play and keeping Scheifele's attention focused on the bouncing puck. Schenn was assessed a minor penalty for interference, but Arniel argued it should have been more.

“I’m not happy with how the call was made. A two-minute minor,” Arniel said. “Not even looking at it is what I was upset about. And it is something that we have talked to the league about for five games.”

Replays that show Schenn from the front and Scheifele from the back make it difficult to see Schenn’s shoulder strike Scheifele’s head; a reverse angle shown on Sportsnet approximately 38 seconds into this clip makes it clearer.

We do not have clarity on Scheifele’s medical status, nor can we say for certain that the injury was the result of the Schenn or Faksa hits, or any other moment in the first period. Arniel said Scheifele would be evaluated further and did not give a definitive answer when asked if Scheifele would travel to St. Louis for Game 6.

This makes Namestnikov’s emergence such an important part of the story. Before Game 5, Namestnikov had zero points in four playoff games and hadn’t scored a goal since March 11, shortly after the trade deadline, at which point Winnipeg did its best to replace him with Brock Nelson. That attempt followed the Jets’ 2024 acquisition of Sean Monahan — another move to bump Namestnikov down from second-line centre. Instead of moving Namestnikov down the lineup, Scheifele’s injury catapulted him to the No. 1 job and top power-play duties.

Namestnikov responded by scoring the game winner, adding an assist on Dylan DeMelo’s 3-2 goal and making the zone entry that led to Nino Niederreiter’s 2-1 goal earlier in the game. He could have scored another in the third period, deking out Jordan Binnington but missing the net, and is as unheralded as it comes. Even his own teammates had no idea how good he would be when the Jets picked him up for a fourth-round pick in 2023. (Namestnikov was the runaway winner of “most underrated player” in our Jets player poll last season.)

“I thought he rose to the occasion,” said Kyle Connor, who scored a goal and set up Namestnikov’s winner with one of his two assists. “It’s not one guy that needs to fill the shoes of Mark. It needs to be everybody. And the way he plays, Vladdy, he’s been great for the whole series, and a couple chances here or there, he could have some better results.”

Namestnikov’s zero goal, zero assist stat line was the primary reason we listed him among the Jets who needed to step up their game the most. The Jets’ advantage over St. Louis is supposed to be the strength and depth of their middle-six forwards, especially with Dylan Holloway missing for the Blues. Namestnikov had been productive with Cole Perfetti and Nikolaj Ehlers earlier in the season, but his two-point performance in Game 5 equaled his production for the rest of April.

“Things happen in playoffs; sometimes the puck doesn’t go in, but you kind of have to stick with it,” Namestnikov said. “When things don’t go your way, we lost Scheif, people have to step up. So I think as a team we stepped up today and got the win.”

I asked if he'd felt the burden of not having produced points before Game 5.

"Yeah, you always want to contribute. But as I said, hockey's not all about scoring; sometimes you have to defend as well. So, yes, you'd like to contribute. I put a lot of pressure on myself to do that and good thing that that one went in."

If Scheifele misses Game 6 or any time after that, Namestnikov's role will remain disproportionately big. There's no star centre in waiting here unless it turns out Scheifele is at 100 percent. The Jets didn't land Nelson at the trade deadline and stuck to the modest additions of Brandon Tanev and Luke Schenn instead. It's already a testament to Namestnikov that he's capable of playing up the lineup to great effect in this short, series-saving burst.

He was far from the only depth player to step up on Wednesday.

Mason Appleton made a brilliant kick play to set up Connor's game-opening goal, despite taking a high stick to the face. Niederreiter scored his first goal of the series, too, deflecting Dylan Samberg's point shot, and then Appleton and Niederreiter combined to get Adam Lowry an empty net goal to make it 5-2 with 3:13 left in the game.

"Sometimes when you lose your No. 1 centre, there can be a bit of a sag, an emotional letdown," Lowry said. "But I thought the guys really rallied around it. Coming in the intermission and finding out he's not coming back, guys (stayed) upbeat. ... I thought Vladdy had a heck of a game. Appy, Nino, Bear, throughout the lineup, guys really playing more minutes."

It was Winnipeg's best game of the series so far, a feat Namestnikov attributed to better preparation. He didn't name the Jets' tactical adjustments but said it was a matter of Winnipeg doing its "homework" and committing to defence first before going on the attack.

That defence-first part of Namestnikov's game is a big part of why the Jets went after him in 2023. His tenacity all over the ice contributes to team success even when he's not scoring, while occasional offensive hot streaks can make him look like a vital middle-six contributor. Even when he's played on the Jets' fourth line, it's been easy to back Namestnikov as someone who might show up in a big game.

Why was this player available for a fourth-round pick? Why did so many teams let him go?

One question Namestnikov can answer is why he stayed in Winnipeg. The Michigan product has signed two two-year extensions with the Jets after bouncing around a lot on bigger market teams. This is what he told The Athletic when he signed his two-year, \$3 million extension that begins next season:

“Winnipeg is very similar to Michigan, to me. You can drive anywhere with no traffic, really, and I like that kind of stuff. I like when it’s more chill. New York was so different. Everything is so crazy there. You were always scared to be late for something.”

If Namestnikov hadn’t shown up in Game 5, the Jets might have been too late to stop St. Louis from taking over Round 1. And if he shows up again in Game 6, it could buy Winnipeg more time to get Scheifele back.

In the meantime, Arniel and Montgomery — old friends turned verbal sparring partners — will study video and draw up their game plans for Game 6. The Jets have the Blues on the brink of elimination now, but have yet to beat them in St. Louis.

<https://www.nytimes.com/athletic/6323597/2025/05/01/blues-jets-nhl-playoffs-game-5/>

### ***Can Blues force Game 7 against Jets? It wouldn’t be surprising, but they’ve got work to do***

By Jeremy Rutherford

WINNIPEG — The St. Louis Blues’ season has been so surprising that it isn’t hard to envision them winning Game 6 against the Winnipeg Jets on Friday and sending this Western Conference first-round series back north.

Close your eyes and you can see Blues players skating out to tap goalie Jordan Binnington on the top of the mask, and a rambunctious sellout crowd of 18,096 saluting them for pushing the Presidents’ Trophy team to the brink.

They believe it.

“I do,” Blues coach Jim Montgomery said. “I believe in our group. We’ve done it here for two and a half months. There’s no reason to believe that we’re not going to be coming out full force and trying to force a Game 7.”

If they think it’s possible, who are we — the ones who prematurely gave up on them even making the playoffs, the ones who lost hope once they fell 2-0 in the series — to say they can’t?

Let’s give the Blues the benefit of the doubt. But if that scene is going to take place at Enterprise Center on Friday, they’ve got work to do after a 5-3 loss in Game 5 Wednesday that gave Winnipeg a 3-2 lead in the best-of-seven series.

The game started just like the first four with bodies flying everywhere on every shift. It quickly became clear whose night it was going to be, though.



After losing star forward Mark Scheifele to a first-period injury, Winnipeg ramped up in the second period. The Jets outshot the Blues 14-3 that period, and though Jimmy Snuggerud tied the score 2-2, the home team took control for good.

The Blues got two of their three goals from Nathan Walker on the fourth line, which also had five of the team's 19 shots. Outside of them and Binnington, who didn't have much of a chance on the Jets' non-empty-net goals, they looked nothing like a team trying to put itself in a clinching scenario Friday.

"They were better than us," Montgomery said. "We've got to be more connected. I didn't think our puck support was good enough. I didn't think we got back quick enough. I didn't think we won our forecheck; we didn't establish it. It's every facet.

"But you know what, it's a series, it's going to happen. We're not happy about it, but we're onto the next one. It's as simple as that. We've got to forget about it."

Mark Scheifele was injured and the likes of Vladislav Namestnikov and Nino Niederreiter stepped up in the Jets' 5-3 win.

The teams have had three two-day breaks in this series, but they will have a quick turnaround after traveling to St. Louis on Thursday. Game 6 is set for 7 p.m. (CT).

It's unknown at this point whether Winnipeg will have Scheifele, who was on the receiving end of a heavy hit by Blues captain Brayden Schenn less than seven minutes into the game.

Schenn, who was assessed a two-minute minor for interference and two minutes for roughing, said afterward, "I haven't seen the replay, but I don't believe I hit him in the head."

Scheifele played three more shifts before being hit again by the Blues' Radek Faksa. After that hit, he took one more shift, then left and didn't return at the start of the second period.

Which hit ended Scheifele's night depended on who you asked.

"Let's make it clear: No. 55 (Scheifele) got hurt from the Faksa hit," Montgomery said. "He played six minutes after the Schenn hit. He didn't come back after he got rocked by Faksa."

Winnipeg coach Scott Arniel was told about Montgomery's comment and replied: "I didn't know Monty got his medical degree, trying to say how our player got hurt. He's way off base."

Whoever delivered the blow in question, or whether or not Scheifele plays in Game 6, will have little bearing on whether the Blues can send the series back to Winnipeg.

They've got a lot of cleaning up to do, and there's a checklist of other items.

When the Blues are connected, breaking the puck out of their zone and forechecking, they can play with anybody in the NHL playoffs. When they're not, they look like a team still in a retool.

"Too spread out," forward Oskar Sundqvist said.

In the second period, the Jets directed 33 shots on net to the Blues' seven.

"They were kind of beating us to both goal lines, so we spent a lot of time in our end and not as much in theirs," defenseman Justin Faulk said.

So what changed after the Blues were so dominant in Games 3 and 4, outscoring the Jets 12-3?

"I mean, there are adjustments always, right?" Schenn said. "I just don't think we liked our game tonight. We weren't good enough tonight to turn the tide. We got some key goals at key times and just weren't able to grab momentum after that. Obviously, it's a little bit deflating."

After chasing Winnipeg goalie Connor Hellebuyck out of back-to-back games in St. Louis, their plan in Game 5 had to be to pepper the Vezina Trophy finalist. They did do that Wednesday, with Walker scoring on a deflection of a shot by Colton Parayko and Snuggerud putting an innocent shot past the netminder.

But they didn't do it nearly enough against someone trying to regain their confidence in this series.

In the Blues' two wins in this series, they have 26 shots. In their three losses, they have 19.3 attempts.

"Shots, traffic," Schenn said. "We made it too easy on him tonight and we know that."

It's tough to say after the offensive outburst in St. Louis, but the Blues need more production from their top three forward lines. After five games, three of their top-six scorers are defensemen: Cam Fowler (9 points), Parayko (4) and Faulk (3).

Pavel Buchnevich had a hat trick in Game 3 and has seven points in the series. Robert Thomas has two goals and seven points. Jake Neighbours has a goal and five points. But Jordan Kyrou has just two points and is a team-worst minus-5 in the series. Zack Bolduc has no goals and one assist.

"The (fourth line) is a good example of what we need to do," Montgomery said.

Meanwhile, Winnipeg broke through with some secondary scoring Wednesday. Vladislav Namestnikov, who replaced the injured Scheifele on the top line, netted his first goal of the series, giving the Jets a 4-2 lead late in the second period. Earlier, Nino Niederreiter had his first of the series.

“They had to move some guys up the lineup, shuffle the lines a bit, and a couple of them scored some goals,” Faulk said. “We’ve got to do a little bit better job at our net and not let them get in tight.”

Which brings us to the last issue: the third defensive pair.

With Tyler Tucker listed as day-to-day with a lower-body injury, veteran Ryan Suter returned to the lineup in Game 5 and played with Nick Leddy. They were on the ice for the first two Jets goals, and Leddy was on for the fourth when Philip Broberg missed a shift after blocking a shot.

It doesn’t seem likely that Tucker will be back for Game 6, so Suter and Leddy, who both played more than 15 minutes in Game 5, will have to suffice.

“At the end of the day, you turn the page, you move on and go to Game 6,” Schenn said.

Added Faulk: “We know we can play better and we know what this group is capable of. We’re excited to get back home, get the job done there and you never know. We’ve just got to win that one and get to Game 7.”

They’ve been in this spot before and surprised us. Now they’ll head home, where they’ve won 14 consecutive games, to see if they can do it again.

“Yeah, definitely,” Sundqvist said. “We’ve probably had worse odds against us throughout the season. We’re going to play Game 6 first and try to force a Game 7.”