

Winnipegjets.com

<https://www.nhl.com/jets/news/three-things-hellebuyck-shutout-helps-jets-even-series>

Three things - Hellebuyck shutout helps Jets even series

Hellebuyck made 21 saves for his fourth career playoff shutout, Jets beat Stars 4-0

By Jamie Thomas

WINNIPEG – Connor Hellebuyck made 21 saves and recorded his fourth career playoff shutout to lead the Winnipeg Jets to a 4-0 win over the Dallas Stars. The best-of-seven series is tied 1-1. Nikolaj Ehlers had two goals, and an assist, Gabriel Vilardi and Adam Lowry scored the other goals for Winnipeg. Josh Morrissey got an assist in his return to the lineup after missing most of Game 7 against St. Louis and Game 1 of this series with the Stars. The series now moves to Dallas with Game 3 scheduled for Sunday at 3:30 CT.

THE BEGINNING WAS SO GOOD

Good starts haven't been the Jets calling card in the playoffs, but they took care of business in the first period on Friday night. 17 seconds into the game, Tyler Seguin was given a double-minor for high sticking. Winnipeg would cash in on the power play when Nikolaj Ehlers slot shot would go off the post, Gabriel Vilardi pounced on the loose puck and tapped in his first of the postseason at 3:35.

The Jets added to their lead 3:32 later, Ehlers saw Mark Scheifele heading to the far post and his pass attempt would go off of Esa Lindell's skate and into the net for Winnipeg's first two goal lead of the series.

HELLEBUYCK FINDING HIS GROOVE

Since the third period of Game 7 against ST. Louis, Connor Hellebuyck started to look more like the goaltender that is going to win his third Vezina Trophy. In the process of getting the shutout on Friday night, he put on a show in the second period when Winnipeg was up 3-0. His best save came off Evgeni Dadonov, Hellebuyck made the initial save, but the rebound went to Dadonov and the Jets star lunged to his left and got a glove on the shot. Josh Morrissey provided an assist clearing the rebound away with his glove.

"It's what he does every night for us," said Josh Morrissey.

"He's an incredible goaltender. He makes very difficult saves look very easy. You could tell he was feeling it tonight."

NICE TO HAVE MORRISSEY BACK

The Jets were thrilled to get their number one defenceman back tonight as he returned to the left side along with Dylan DeMelo. On top of that, he was with Kyle Connor, Mark

Scheifele, Nikolaj Ehlers and Gabriel Vilardi on Winnipeg's top power play unit which hasn't been together in a month and a half because of injuries. Morrissey played 22:39, leading Jets blueliners in ice time and was a +2.

"Really good to see him out there," said Gabriel Vilardi.

"He's always jumping in the rush, but he's so reliable defensively and he's a key part of our team."

NHL.com

<https://www.nhl.com/news/topic/playoffs/2025/series-k-news/dallas-stars-winnipeg-jets-game-1-recap-may-7>

Hellebuyck makes 21 saves, Jets shut out Stars in Game 2 to even West 2nd Round Ehlers has 2 goals, assist for Winnipeg

By Darrin Bauming

WINNIPEG — Connor Hellebuyck made 21 saves for the Winnipeg Jets, who evened their best-of-7 series against the Dallas Stars with a 4-0 win in Game 2 of the Western Conference Second Round at Canada Life Centre on Friday.

"I thought the guys in front of me did a phenomenal job, just letting me see pucks and keeping the tips away, playing the rebounds," Hellebuyck said. "It's never just the goalie doing it — it's everyone out there."

Dallas won Game 1, 3-2 on Wednesday.

"We're playing our game, and we know what it looks like and we know what it feels like," Hellebuyck said. "That being said, we've got to wipe it and go play a hard road game. It's never easy on the road, especially at playoff time."

Nikolaj Ehlers had two goals and an assist, and Gabriel Vilardi and Adam Lowry also scored for the Jets, who won the Presidents' Trophy awarded annually to the team that finishes with the most points in the regular season.

"[Hellebuyck] was fantastic," Winnipeg coach Scott Arniel said. "Sometimes we take him for granted because he makes the hard look easy, so easy, but he had some acrobatic ones tonight."

Jake Oettinger made 21 saves for the Stars, who are the No. 2 seed from the Central Division.

"[Hellebuyck] made some huge saves in the second (period)," Stars forward Matt Duchene said. "We get one there or two there, it's a different game. He was great. I also think it wasn't our best game. We did enough to score some goals and he made some big saves. We know that's not our A-game, it's not our best. Game 1 was solid and we want to go back home and get ready for that."

Game 3 is in Dallas on Sunday (4:30 p.m. ET; MAX, truTV, TBS, SN, TVAS, CBC).

"Dallas, you just saw why they're No. 2 in the league on their transition and their ability to attack," Arniel said. "We've got to be aware of that. That's something that's kind of self-inflicted but 'Helle' made sure that we shut the door on them."

With the Jets on a four-minute man-advantage after Stars forward Tyler Seguin took a double minor penalty for high-sticking Jets defenseman Josh Morrissey just 17 seconds into the game, Vilardi scored on the power play at 3:35 of the first period to make it 1-0. After an Ehlers shot hit the post behind Oettinger, Vilardi jammed in the loose puck in the crease.

"You get behind the eight-ball early, it's unfortunate, another four-minute (penalty)," Duchene said. "It seems like it's happening a ton and the guys aren't trying to do it, obviously, but we're in the box a little too much this postseason. It's really tough to get some momentum... They were better than us tonight, simple as that. I don't think it was a horrible effort from us, it's just not at the level it needs to be at."

Ehlers said, "Obviously huge to get that goal early and especially on the power play as well. I don't want to say too much. If you look at video from the previous games, you try to find things you can do better, things that are open and I think we were able to find those tonight."

Ehlers then made it 2-0 at 7:07 when his shot from the left circle redirected in off the skate of Stars defenseman Esa Lindell.

"One goes off our own skate into the net, and you're down 2-0," Dallas coach Pete DeBoer said. "That's a big hole in this rink. Self-inflicted. That one was kind of unlucky. Having said that, I thought we pushed hard in the second and tried to climb back into the game. Hellebuyck made some saves. (If) we get one there, maybe the momentum shifts."

Lowry pushed it to 3-0 at 11:02 of the second when Dylan DeMelo's shot caromed off the boards behind the Dallas net and Lowry lifted the puck over Oettinger.

"It is always great when you get the lead and just play your game and trust your game," Hellebuyck said. "That being said, it was a full 60 tonight. We didn't put the brakes on at all and couldn't take a break, and I thought we did just that."

Ehlers shot it the length of the ice into an empty net at 16:20 for the 4-0 final.

"We feel good — we're a resilient group and we have a lot of confidence in our game," Dallas forward Wyatt Johnston said. "I think at this point in the playoffs, we have a pretty good idea of what we need to do each night to win. It's just a matter of going out there and putting our best game out there for Game 3."

Duchene said, "Guys were working and trying their best out there, trying to do the right things. We didn't have enough tonight. When you get shut out it doesn't feel good and we don't want to have that. We're too good of a team to get shut out. [Hellebuyck] made some great saves, he's going to have games like that. He might be MVP of the league this year. Short memory, and get ready for Game 3."

NOTES: Ehlers' goal was his first in 16 playoff games, dating back to May 23, 2021 when he scored twice, including the overtime winner, in a 5-4 victory in Game 3 of Winnipeg's first round series against the Edmonton Oilers. ... Hellebuyck's first shutout of these playoffs was his fourth career postseason shutout, tying Craig Anderson for the seventh most by a U.S.-born goaltender.

<https://www.nhl.com/news/topic/playoffs/2025/series-k-news/jets-connor-hellebuyck-returns-to-form-with-game-2-shutout-against-stars>

Hellebuyck returns to form for Jets in shutout win against Stars in Game 2 Goalie's game continuing to build after early postseason struggles for Winnipeg

By Tracey Myers

WINNIPEG -- Every time Connor Hellebuyck is announced as the starter, the chant goes up at Canada Life Centre.

"MVP! MVP!"

That chant was there for Hellebuyck again at the end of Game 2 of the Western Conference Second Round, and rightfully so. The Winnipeg Jets goalie has had his rough Stanley Cup Playoff moments but on Friday he was looking every bit the finalist for the Hart Trophy, awarded annually to the League's most valuable player.

"There were stretches in the first round where I really liked my game. Just wasn't in the results, but built it back better," Hellebuyck said after making 21 saves in a 4-0 win against the Dallas Stars in Game 2 of the Western Conference Second Round at Canada Life Centre on Friday.

"I like where we're at. The team in front of me is playing phenomenal, so we're going to have fun. Just continue to have fun."

The best-of-7 series is tied 1-1. Game 3 is at American Airlines Center on Sunday (4:30 p.m. ET; MAX, truTV, TBS, SN, TVAS, CBC).

It was Hellebuyck's first playoff shutout since May 21, 2021, when he made 38 saves in a 1-0 win against the Edmonton Oilers in Game 2 of the Stanley Cup First Round.

"It's what he does every night for us. He's an incredible goaltender," Jets defenseman Josh Morrissey said. "You know, he makes very difficult saves look very easy, routinely and often.

"You could tell he was feeling it tonight. When he's feeling it like that, it gives the players in front of him, defensemen, forwards a lot of confidence. We'd like to cut down on some of those chances near the end of the second period, but he was feeling it, clearly. He's done that all year, he's done that for a long time. We rely on him, sometimes too much, but he was incredible tonight."

Morrissey returned Friday after sustaining an undisclosed injury in the first period of the Jets' 4-3 double-overtime win against the St. Louis Blues in Game 7 of the first round. He missed Game 1 of this series, as well. Jets coach Scott Arniel said Friday was the first time the Jets had everyone healthy and available to play since Game 71 of the regular season (March 23).

The now-healthy Jets were very good in front of Hellebuyck on Friday. They took advantage of a Stars double-minor for high-sticking to get an early 1-0 lead. They clamped down on Stars forward Mikko Rantanen, who had hat tricks in back-to-back games and 14 points (eight goals, six assists) in his past four games.

When the Jets did falter, Hellebuyck was there to clean up the problems, especially in the second period when the Stars made their biggest push of the game.

"He was fantastic. Like I've mentioned a few times, sometimes we take him for granted because he makes the hard saves look easy, so easy, but he had some acrobatic ones tonight," Arniel said.

"I thought that, for 51 minutes of that hockey game, we were really good and there was a nine-minute span where puck management wasn't great. We got caught sometimes on our numbers and then they, Dallas, you just saw why they're No. 2 in the League on their transition and their ability to attack. We've got to be aware of that. That's something that's kind of self-inflicted but 'Helly' made sure that we shut the door on them."

At 14:16 of the second period, Hellebuyck got a piece of Stars forward Evgenii Dadonov's shot. He then got a little help from Morrissey, who kept Stars center Wyatt Johnston from pouncing on the rebound. Less than a minute later Hellebuyck made a left-pad save on Stars captain Jamie Benn on the doorstep. At 16:20 Hellebuyck kept Stars defenseman Ilya Lyubushkin from scoring his first goal of the playoffs.

"He was good. Made some huge saves in the second. We get one there or two there, it's a different game. He was great," Stars forward Matt Duchene said. "I also think it

wasn't our best game. We did enough to score some goals, and he made some big saves. We know that's not our A-game, it's not our best. Game 1 was solid and we want to go back home and get ready for that."

Hellebuyck hasn't allowed a goal since Rantanen completed his hat trick at 16:38 of the second period in Game 1 on Wednesday. He had his rough moments in the postseason, especially on the road in the first round, but he's looked more like his Vezina Trophy-winning self since late in Game 7 of the first round.

"We're still playing hockey and it's May. So, that's fun," Hellebuyck said. "It's the best time of year because you've dialed your game in all year long and you're just going out and playing hockey and having fun."

<https://www.nhl.com/news/haydn-fleury-making-most-of-nhl-playoffs-opportunity-with-winnipeg-jets>

***Fleury making most of playoff opportunity with Jets
Defenseman has done 'fantastic job stepping in' when called upon***

By Tracey Myers

WINNIPEG -- Haydn Fleury has never questioned why he is or why he isn't in the lineup. The Winnipeg Jets defenseman just rolls with it.

"I mean, that's not really my job to decide whether I play. I think I'm a person that comes to the rink every day with the same attitude -- work hard," he said. "I think we have a lot of really good defensemen here who all have different strengths. So, I just think it's something where, right now, it's my turn to step up for the team."

Fleury's turn to step up came in Winnipeg's 4-3 double-overtime win in Game 7 of the Western Conference First Round against the St. Louis Blues on May 4. He played a career-high 33:02 after Josh Morrissey left in the first period with an undisclosed injury.

The 28-year-old has been in the lineup ever since and is expected to be there again in Game 3 of the second round against the Dallas Stars at American Airlines Center in Dallas on Sunday (4:30 p.m. ET; MAX, truTV, TBS, SN, TVAS, CBC).

Fleury got his second assist of the Stanley Cup Playoffs on Nikolaj Ehlers' first goal at 7:07 of the first period of Winnipeg's 4-0 win in Game 2 at Canada Life Centre on Friday. The Jets and Stars are tied 1-1 in the best-of-7 second-round series.

Known as a strong skater, Fleury's presence should be beneficial against the skilled and quick Stars.

"Just another guy that's been here all year that's kind of helped fill some of these holes when we've had some injuries and played extremely well," Winnipeg coach Scott Arniel

said. "Again, another skillset. He's real mobile, he can skate out of trouble. Another guy that can be a part of that rush, a part of what we're talking about getting after Dallas here and getting on our toes. And that's what he brings to our game."

The No. 7 pick by the Carolina Hurricanes in the 2014 NHL Draft, Fleury has 44 points (10 goals, 34 assists) in 307 career games with the Hurricanes, Anaheim Ducks, Seattle Kraken, Tampa Bay Lightning and Jets. Winnipeg has solid depth on defense, so Fleury wasn't an everyday player during the regular season; he had seven assists in 39 games.

Fleury has four points (two goals, two assists) in 22 career postseason games. Prior to playing Game 4 against the Blues, he's played only one NHL postseason game since 2020 (with the Lightning in 2023).

Nobody could have predicted the five remaining defensemen logging the heavy minutes they did in Game 7 against St. Louis. But when needed, they responded, Fleury included. He played nearly 13 minutes more than his previous playoff career high of 20:33, which he logged with the Hurricanes in a 4-3 double-overtime loss to the Boston Bruins in Game 1 of the Eastern Conference First Round on Aug. 12, 2020.

"I think Haydn's done a fantastic job stepping in," Jets defenseman Dylan DeMelo said. "He's been kind of obviously sitting out and waiting his time and then coming in and playing as good as he did in Game 7 there, with five [defensemen], and stepping in and playing last game, I thought he played great too."

Fleury and DeMelo were on a defense pair in Game 1 against the Stars before Fleury and Colin Miller played together in Game 2.

"Fantastic skater, a great guy in the room, always works hard, puts his head down, he doesn't complain," DeMelo said. "So, when you see a guy step in like that and play well, you're just really happy for him."

Fleury said his Game 7 was "just a huge confidence boost."

"When you're called upon in that situation, then with Josh going out, it felt like you owe it to guys like [Morrissey] and 'Scheif' (center Mark Scheifele, who did not play in Games 6 or 7) and the guys who aren't playing to put your best foot forward because they do so much for us. They're such big parts of our team and they would've killed to be out there," he said.

"The rest of us stepping up like we did is just a testament to our group and how close we are as a team. We all really care about each other, and I think that was just guys stepping up for each other."

Fleury got a chance and took advantage of it. Things have gone well for the Jets, who are in the second round for the first time since 2021, and Fleury's excited to be a part of it.

"It's really special," he said. "Playoffs are the most fun time of year and playing in these games that matter not only to our team, but the city and the province (Manitoba) is really special."

Canadian Press

<https://www.chrisd.ca/2025/05/09/winnipeg-jets-dallas-stars-round-2-game-2/>

Connor Hellebuyck Perfect in Net as Jets Blank Stars 4-0

By Jim Bender, The Canadian Press

It certainly looked like the Winnipeg Jets' Vezina-talented netminder was back in top form.

After admittedly struggling during the playoff series against the St. Louis Blues, Connor Hellebuyck was outstanding as he stopped 21 shots to backstop the Jets to a 4-0 victory over the Dallas Stars on Friday night.

It was Hellebuyck's fourth playoff shutout and first since May 21, 2021. He believes he is back in the right rhythm.

"There were stretches in the first round where I really liked my game, just wasn't in the results," said Hellebuyck. "But, built it back better. I like where we're at."

"The team in front of me is playing phenomenal, so we're going to have fun. Just continue to have fun."

Nikolaj Ehlers scored two goals — the second into an empty net on a clearing shot from in front of his net — and an assist before a sold-out crowd of 15,225 at Canada Life Centre as Winnipeg tied the best-of-seven series 1-1.

Adam Lowry and Gabe Vilardi also scored for Winnipeg.

The Jets were dominant but Hellebuyck held the fort on some dangerous Dallas chances.

"It's what he does every night for us," said Josh Morrissey, who assisted on Vilardi's power-play goal early in the game. "He's an incredible goaltender."

"He makes very difficult saves look very easy, routinely and often. You could tell he was feeling it tonight."

Dallas coach Pete DeBoer was also impressed by Hellebuyck.

“He was good. I think we can always make it more difficult on him, but he was really good,” he said.

“Yeah, he was fantastic,” said Jets coach Scott Arniel. “Sometimes we take him for granted because he makes the hard look so easy. But, he had some acrobatic saves tonight.”

Jake Oettinger stopped 22 shots for Dallas.

Winnipeg had taken a 2-0 lead into the second period when a shot by Ehlers deflected off Esa Lindell’s skate in front of the net past Oettinger for his first goal of the playoffs. In fact, it was his first playoff goal since May, 23, 2021 when he scored twice, including the overtime winner. It was his first playoff goal in 15 games.

“Yeah, it’s nice to see him get rewarded,” Arniel said. “I’m just really happy for him. He was dominant. He had the puck a lot. I liked the fact that he attacked the net a bunch of times with the puck.”

Dallas will host Game 3 on Sunday afternoon and the Jets have yet to win a road game during these playoffs.

“We’re playing our game (now) and we know what it looks like, and we know what it feels like,” Hellebuyck said. “That being said, we’ve got to wipe it and go play a hard road game. It’s never easy on the road, especially at playoff time.”

Lowry had given Winnipeg a 3-0 lead midway through the second. The Jets captain pounced on the rebound of a Dylan DeMelo shot from the point that had bounced off the boards and fired the puck past a surprised Oettinger.

“We would have liked to get two (wins), obviously, but we have to look at the big picture,” said Stars defenceman Cody Ceci. “It’s a long series. It’s kind of what we expected against these guys — they’re a good team.

“Two (wins) would have been nice but we gotta look at the bright side, 1-1, and we’re going back to our building.”

The Jets need to win at least one game in Dallas to re-take home-ice advantage.

“It’s going to be a tough building,” Arniel said. “They grabbed home ice from us by winning Game 1, so we’re going to have to win down there.

“We know we have to do a lot of what we did tonight. This is a really good hockey team we’re going against.”

NOTE: Hellebuyck became the sixth goaltender in NHL history to account for each of a franchise's first four playoff shutouts. The previous five includes Georges Vezina (Montreal).

<https://www.winnipegfreepress.com/sports/hockey/2025/05/10/jets-star-defenceman-returns-to-play-key-role-in-winnipegs-game-2-win-over-dallas>

Jets star defenceman returns to play key role in Winnipeg's Game 2 win over Dallas

By: Judy Owen, The Canadian Press

WINNIPEG – Josh Morrissey expanded his role for the Winnipeg Jets in Friday's key 4-0 victory over the Dallas Stars.

The star defenceman drew a penalty that led to Winnipeg's first goal, assisted on it and then later saved a potential Dallas goal.

"Yeah, part goaltender. That's the Josh we know," Jets head coach Scott Arniel said.

Morrissey was back in action after suffering an upper-body injury early in the first period of Winnipeg's opening-round 4-3 Game 7 victory over the St. Louis Blues last Sunday.

He missed Winnipeg's 3-2 Game 1 loss to Dallas, but made a quick impact Friday in a victory that evened the second-round Western Conference series.

Morrissey drew a high-sticking double minor for Stars forward Tyler Seguin 17 seconds into the first period.

Vilardi scored in the second part of the penalty at 3:35, with the Calgary native picking up the secondary assist.

Winnipeg had gone 0-for-4 on the power play in Game 1 against Stars and finished Friday's match 1-for-5. Dallas was 0-for-3.

"You saw what he can do, both quarterbacking that power play and also the offensive side, him jumping in the offensive zone," Arniel said of Morrissey.

"He's a tough guy to target. He's a tough guy to kind of shut down when he has the puck up there. Liked a lot of what he did. And certainly, having him back is a real good feeling for our group."

Nikolaj Ehlers scored his first of two goals, one an empty-netter, on Dallas netminder Jake Oettinger less than four minutes after Vilardi's marker.

Jets captain Adam Lowry made it 3-0 at 11:02 of the second period.

With just over five minutes left in the middle frame, Morrissey helped out goalie Connor Hellebuyck big time.

Evgenii Dadonov's shot hit Hellebuyck's glove and the puck started going across the crease. Morrissey tangled up Stars forward Wyatt Johnston on the doorstep and knocked the puck away.

"Just an amazing save by Helly to start that," Morrissey said. "It's a pretty high-danger opportunity. He made a great save, was just trying to box out Johnston on the backside.

"In those moments it's just desperation. Thankfully, we had Helly to make that save, and then like I said, just try and get it out of there as fast as possible."

Hellebuyck appreciated the help.

"It's a team game, and it takes everyone," said the reigning Vezina Trophy winner, who's up for the top goalie award again.

Back on the top defensive pairing with Dylan DeMelo, Morrissey logged a team-high 22:39 of ice time, had one shot on goal, two blocks and one hit.

"Really good to see him out there," Vilardi said of Morrissey. "He's always jumping in the rush, but he's so reliable defensively and he's a key part of our team. It's good to have him back. Good to have him on the power play as well."

Morrissey was glad to be back, especially after missing out on Winnipeg's dramatic Game 7 win over the Blues.

The Jets had been down 3-1 late in the third period of that game when Vladislav Namestnikov scored and then Cole Perfetti tied with three seconds remaining. Captain Adam Lowry scored at 16:10 of double overtime.

"I wish I was out there to feel that excitement," Morrissey said. "I was so proud of the team and the guys for what they were able to do and the resilience they showed with (three) seconds left. It was amazing.

"The heroics and every guy stepping up to get us to the next round, I feel very grateful that I get to be back on the ice with the guys here and able to chase this playoff dream here."

Dallasstars.com

<https://www.nhl.com/stars/news/heika-s-take-dallas-stars-put-together-lopsided-effort-in-game-2-loss-to-winnipeg-jets-051025>

***Heika's Take: Stars put together lopsided effort in Game 2 loss to Jets
Dallas took too many penalties and fell in an early hole as Winnipeg clawed its way back to level in the series***

By Mike Heika

The Stars know all about the back-and-forth of a playoff series. Heck, they had a few in the previous two weeks against Colorado.

So as much as Winnipeg dominated a 4-0 Game 2 at Canada Life Centre on Friday, Dallas understands the importance of “flushing the game” and moving on.

“We’re an even-keel group, and we know what our best game looks like, so we’ll get back to that,” said veteran center Matt Duchene.

While Wyatt Johnston added, “We feel good. We’re a resilient group and we have a lot of confidence in our game. At this point of the playoffs, we have a pretty good idea of what we need to do each night to win, so it’s just a matter of putting our best game out there for Game 3.”

While it may not feel that way, the Stars are actually in a good place. Dallas earned a split in the first two games and now is tied 1-1 in the best-of-seven series with three of the remaining five games at home. The Stars have been tied through two games a lot in recent series, but were heading out on the road for Games 3 and 4. Playing host to a Winnipeg team that went 0-3 in the First Round away from home seemingly creates a real opportunity.

That said, that same Winnipeg team is feeling good about itself right now.

“They’re a great team and you knew they were going to come out hard in Game 2,” Johnston said. “We probably could have done a better job of matching that, but it’s a long series, and it’s all about how you come back from that.”

The Stars won Game 1, breaking an eight-game stretch in which they had lost the first game of a series. That meant they didn’t have their backs to the wall in Game 2, and it kind of showed. Tyler Seguin took a double minor for high sticking 17 seconds into the game and the Jets cashed in late in the four-minute power play. Nikolaj Ehlers then shot a puck in off of Esa Lindell’s skate seven minutes in and Winnipeg had a 2-0 lead. The Jets were 30-0-3 when leading after two periods this season, and the Stars knew coming back against this team in this building would be difficult.

“You start the game with a 4 minute minor 10 seconds in, and one goes off of our skate, and you’re down 2-0,” Stars coach Pete DeBoer said. “That’s a big hole in this rink. Self-inflicted the [first] one, the other was kind of unlucky. Having said that, I thought we pushed back, Hellebuyck made some saves, but I thought that was the game.”

Winnipeg goalie Connor Hellebuyck is expected to win the Vezina as best goalie in the NHL and is also a finalist for the Hart Trophy (regular-season MVP), but he struggled in large chunks of the First Round and entered Game 2 with a 3.75 GAA and .830 save percentage. So when he looked like top-notch Connor Hellebuyck in posting a shutout with 21 saves, that was a boost for the Jets and a concern for the Stars.

“Obviously, when you get shut out, it doesn’t feel good,” Duchene said. “We’re too good of a team to get shut out. He made some great saves, he’s going to have games like that, he might be MVP of the league this year, but we have to have a short memory.”

Dallas created some good scoring chances, but couldn’t continue to ride the magic of Mikko Rantanen, who had posted back-to-back hat tricks but got nothing in 21:42 of ice time on Friday. Winnipeg stretched its lead to 3-0 in the second period and added an empty-netter in the third. However, Jake Oettinger was great again, so the big challenge going forward is for the scorers.

Dallas also needs to address its penalty problems. Veterans Seguin and Jamie Benn took two in the first period, and then Lian Bichsel, Alexander Petrovic and Rantanen were nailed in the second period. The Stars have been shorthanded 31 times in nine playoff games for an average of 3.4 per game. They were shorthanded an average of 2.8 times in the regular season.

“We’ve just got to stop shooting ourselves in the foot,” said defenseman Cody Ceci. “It’s tough to start a game that way. If we take too many penalties against these guys, they have a really good power play and they’re going to make us pay.”

Duchene added, “I have no explanation. I’ve never seen so many 4 minute high sticking penalties in my life. And it’s not that guys are being undisciplined, guys are just competing. Maybe it’s trying to do too much sometimes. I can’t put my finger on what it is, but we’ve got to put our finger on it and clean it up, because we’re a heck of a team at 5-on-5.”

DeBoer said the message has been delivered for the past month, and sometimes the players have to simply do the right thing on the ice.

“We can talk about it, but that’s in our dressing room,” DeBoer said. “They’ve got to grab the importance of that and realize it and fix it.”

Because the roller coaster ride is still going. If the Stars can take advantage of two games at home and start taking control, then the Jets might have to go back to Winnipeg in a tough spot. But if Winnipeg gets its confidence back and Hellebuyck continues playing top-notch hockey, then Dallas will have to find a way to beat the NHL’s best team this season.

Ceci was on an Edmonton team that made it to the Stanley Cup Final last season, so he understands the emotions.

“It helps a lot,” Ceci said of the experience. “Once you go through some long runs, you understand the ups and downs and how they can weigh on you and how quickly you have to move on. It’s unfortunate and we would have liked to have a better effort tonight, but we can’t let it drag into next game.”

Sportsnet.ca

<https://www.sportsnet.ca/nhl/article/we-werent-at-our-best-jets-disappointed-with-performance-in-game-1-loss/>

Why Jets’ Hellebuyck appears to be coming back into Hart Trophy form (VIDEO)

The Hockey Central panel discusses during the second intermission of Game 2 whether or not Winnipeg Jets goaltender Connor Hellebuyck is coming back into Hart Trophy form.

<https://www.sportsnet.ca/nhl/video/hellebuyck-gets-swagger-back-in-jets-emphatic-game-2-win-over-stars/>

Hellebuyck gets swagger back in Jets emphatic Game 2 win over Stars (VIDEO)

Luke Gadzic joins Ken Reid and Evanka Osmak after the Jets Game 2 win over the Stars, to discuss Connor Hellebuyck returning to dominant form in a shutout performance and also touches on how the Jets were able to slow down the red-hot Mikko Rantanen.

<https://www.sportsnet.ca/nhl/article/hellebuyck-jets-firing-on-all-cylinders-in-series-tying-game-2-win-vs-stars/>

Hellebuyck, Jets firing on all cylinders in series-tying Game 2 win vs. Stars

By Jacob Stoller

WINNIPEG — That was a textbook win.

Friday’s 4-0 win over the Dallas Stars — tying the second-round series at 1-1 — saw the Winnipeg Jets check off virtually every single box.

Both special teams units delivered, starting with a power-play goal from Gabriel Vilardi at the 16:25 mark of the first period. The penalty kill went three-for-three, limiting Dallas’ man-advantage to just one high-danger shot.

Connor Hellebuyck was brilliant, stopping all 21 shots faced.

Winnipeg's checking lines provided offence in the way they do best, with Adam Lowry scoring the third goal of the game on the heels of an excellent fourth line shift that hemmed the Stars in their own zone.

And the Stars' top line — Roope Hintz, Mikko Rantanen and Mikael Granlund — was completely nullified, generating just two shot attempts during five-on-five play.

It's no coincidence that a performance like that came in a game where the Jets had a fully healthy roster for the first time since March 23.

"When you have your roster like that, everybody gets kind of aligned in their spots," Jets coach Scott Arniel said post-game. "Having your top-four defenceman. Having your top-six offensive guys. Then two checking lines, two heavy lines. We're back to looking, finally, like we've looked for most of the season."

For all the talk about Dallas' depth, tonight was a reminder that the Jets are indeed as deep as they advertised themselves during the regular season.

And when this team's on their game, they're a pain in the butt to play against.

"When we get in the forecheck, we get the pucks below the tops of the circles and get into our cycle game, it's to our advantage," Arniel said. "I thought we played way faster. I thought we got out of our end quick and it allowed us to get down there and when we pressure, whether that's in the O-zone or that's in the D-zone, that's the idea to help work to get the puck back."

Helly's Back

Hellebuyck didn't face a lot of rubber but man, he was magnificent.

"He makes very difficult saves look very easy, routinely and often," Josh Morrissey said. "You could tell he was feeling it tonight. When he's feeling it like that, it gives the players in front of him, defencemen, forwards a lot of confidence."

The biggest takeaway from Hellebuyck's game? He's found his mojo again. He's calm, composed and seeing pucks through chaos. Dating back to the second intermission of Game 7 last round, Hellebuyck has saved 55 of his last 58 shots faced.

"There were stretches in the first round where I really liked my game, just wasn't (shown) in the results," Hellebuyck said. "But, built it back better. I like where we're at."

What we've seen from Hellebuyck over this last little bit is what the Jets have needed. Peak Hellebuyck, capable of stealing games and shining when the pressure is at its highest.

Don't overlook the Jets' Cup odds if he keeps playing at this level.

Stoller Says

- Well, Nikolaj Ehlers finally delivered in the playoffs. His two goals may have not been highlight worthy — the first banked off Esa Lindell's skate, the second was a clear-out from the Jets' zone that went into the empty net — but he was engaged all night. He also added an assist on Vilardi's goal.

"He was dominant. He had the puck a lot," Arniel said of Ehlers, who finished the night with a team-high six shot attempts during five-on-five play. "I liked the fact that he attacked the net a bunch of times with the puck. We need his line and we need him doing what he did tonight. We're a tougher threat when we have all of our pieces going like that."

- That was, bar none, the best game we've seen from Morrissey in these playoffs. Even before his latest injury, he hardly looked 100 per cent. He wasn't weaponizing his edges as much as he usually does, nor was he joining the rush as often. But on Friday? That was a 'Norrissey' performance.

"He's a big minute man for us," Arniel said of Morrissey, who logged a team-high 22:39 minutes. "He plays against the other teams' top lines. Then you saw what he can do, both quarterbacking that power play and also the offensive side, him jumping, him in the offensive zone. He's a tough guy to target. He's a tough guy to kind of shut down when he has the puck up there. Liked a lot of what he did. And certainly having him back is a real good feeling for our group."

Global Winnipeg

<https://globalnews.ca/news/11173144/hellebuyck-shines-as-winnipeg-jets-tie-up-series-with-4-0-game-2-victory/>

Hellebuyck shines as Winnipeg Jets tie up series with 4-0 Game 2 victory

By Russ Hobson Global News

The Winnipeg Jets are back on even terms in their second round playoff series.

The Jets scored twice in the first eight minutes and Connor Hellebuyck was tremendous as the Jets defeated the Dallas Stars 4-0 in Game 2 on Friday at the Canada Life Centre. The Jets tied up the best-of-seven series at one game apiece.

Hellebuyck made a number of key saves at the end of the second period and finished with 21 stops for his fourth career playoff shutout and first since 2021.

It's the first time in their last seven playoff games the Jets have allowed less than three goals. The Jets had given up three or more goals in 16 of their previous 18 playoff

games and Hellebuyck looked a lot more comfortable in the net than he did in the first round against St. Louis.

"There was stretches the first round where I really liked my game, just wasn't getting the results," said Hellebuyck. "But broke it down, built it back better, and I like where we're at, and the team in front of me is playing phenomenal."

Nikolaj Ehlers scored two goals and added one assist for his first career three-point playoff game as the team got back on track after a disappointing Game 1.

"Way better obviously," said Ehlers. "We had talked about getting a better start than last game and I think everybody could see that we were ready to go. The first 30 minutes we played a really good game."

The Jets are now 5-1 on home ice in the playoffs.

Gabriel Vilardi and Adam Lowry also notched markers for Winnipeg in the win.

"I thought we played way faster," said Jets head coach Scott Arniel. "I thought we got out of our end quick and it allowed us to get down there. When we pressure, whether that's in the O-zone or whether that's in the D-zone, that's the idea to help work to get the puck back."

Josh Morrissey returned to the lineup for the Jets after getting injured in the Game 7 thriller. He had one assist in over 22 minutes of ice time in his first game back.

It's the first time the Jets have been completely healthy since back in late March.

"That's the first time since game 71 that everybody's back," Arniel said. "It was good to see. There's obviously the familiarity, started with that power play."

"When you have your roster like that everybody gets aligned into their spots. Having your top four defencemen, having your top six offensive guys, then you got two checking lines, two heavy lines. Like, we're back to looking, finally like we've looked for most of the season."

After going 0-for-4 on the power play in the series opener, the Jets broke through on the man advantage just 3:35 into the game.

"We were very successful this year," said Vilardi. "Just gotta keep it going. Special teams are so crucial in the playoffs. I think we had a lot of opportunities and I think there's still room for improvement for sure."

Winnipeg outshot Dallas 25-21 and the Jets have allowed less than 30 shots on goal in all nine of their playoff games so far.

The Jets will look for their first series lead on Sunday with Game 3 in Dallas starting at 3:30 p.m.

TSN.ca

<https://www.tsn.ca/nhl/video/hellebuyck-has-his-first-shutout-of-playoffs-as-jets-even-series-with-stars%7E3131041>

Hellebuyck has his first shutout of playoffs as Jets even series with Stars (VIDEO)

Connor Hellebuyck stole the show with a shutout on Friday night to help the Jets even their series against the Stars. The TSN Hockey panel weighed in on Hellebuyck's performance, Winnipeg's blistering start to the contest, and more from Game 2.

<https://www.tsn.ca/nhl/video/biron-this-is-the-way-hellebuyck-looks-when-he-s-at-his-best%7E3131040>

Biron: 'This is the way Hellebuyck looks when he's at his best' (VIDEO)

After a shaky first round of the playoffs, Connor Hellebuyck looked like he may be back to Vezina form with a 21-save shutout in Game 2 against Dallas. TSN Hockey analyst Martin Biron breaks down how Hellebuyck helped Winnipeg tie up the series.

The Athletic

<https://www.nytimes.com/athletic/6345320/2025/05/10/jets-stars-nhl-playoffs-2025-game-2-takeaways/>

Connor Hellebuyck, Jets shut out Stars in Game 2 to even series: Takeaways

By Murat Ates and Mark Lazerus

WINNIPEG — Connor Hellebuyck's best game of the playoffs has equalized Round 2. Hellebuyck's 21-save shutout, his first playoff shutout in four years, sends the series to Dallas tied 1-1.

Winnipeg also got goals from Gabriel Vilardi, Nikolaj Ehlers (two) and Adam Lowry to earn the 4-0 win Friday.

Hellebuyck's playoff performance has been much maligned. He'd given up 26 goals under heavy duress against the St. Louis Blues and was pulled from three straight road games, creating a crisis of confidence, and was unable to keep Mikko Rantanen off the board in Game 1.

Hellebuyck responded with a vintage performance in Game 2.

The Jets got Vilardi's power-play goal 3 1/2 minutes into the game and Ehlers' fortunate bounce 3 1/2 minutes after that. They responded with a casual second period, creating several rush chances for the Stars that could have swung the game.

What they got instead was a Hellebuyck highlight reel.

Hellebuyck made nine of his 21 saves in the second period — none more spectacular than this glove save on Evgenii Dadonov.

The play before the rush was a Kyle Connor backhand pass into a seam that the Stars had picked off. Winnipeg fed the Stars' transition multiple times in the second — Wyatt Johnston hit the post with a backhand deke that began with Mark Scheifele giving the puck away on a rush of his own.

In the end, it was only a chance for the Canada Life Centre crowd to chant "MVP!" at its starting goaltender.

"This crowd believes in me, this team believes in me, as much as I believe in myself," Hellebuyck said before Round 2. "That's dangerous. That's when things get going and things get rolling."

Hellebuyck was a weapon in Game 2.

Jets' top PP unit reunited, shines early

Vilardi's power-play goal was the product of two days' worth of Jets homework. Frustrated by their 0-for-4 performance in Game 1 — but encouraged by some of their chances — the Jets identified the low ice they wanted to exploit as a response to the Stars' aggressive penalty kill.

Vilardi's goal was partly a broken play, but partly a case of Winnipeg's adjustments going exactly the way it had hoped. The Jets drew Dallas away from the middle of the ice multiple times by working the puck inside the slot and then back out to the flanks, daring the Stars' aggressive PK to pressure Josh Morrissey at the top of the zone.

On the decisive play, Scheifele moved it to Morrissey at the top and Morrissey found Nikolaj Ehlers in the middle with just a little bit of time. Ehlers spotted Vilardi, attempted a pass that hit Cody Ceci, and fired a scrambled shot at Jake Oettinger with the remains. Vilardi was all alone to clean up the rebound because three Stars skaters were above the hash marks — just as the Jets had drawn it up.

"There's some stuff there that we're looking to expose," coach Scott Arniel had said.

It was the first time the Jets' top unit had been healthy since Vilardi's injury March 23, and it got Winnipeg off to an ideal start.

Another stumbling start for Stars

The Stars finally snapped their baffling streak of eight consecutive Game 1 losses on Wednesday, but slow starts continue to plague them in another way.

Dallas has just three first-period goals in nine playoff games after coming up empty again Friday night. Only the Montreal Canadiens have fewer first-period goals in these playoffs, and they played just five games. It gets better from there, as Dallas is tied with Los Angeles for a postseason-leading 11 goals in the second period. But the Stars have given up the first goal in eight of their nine playoff games, which isn't generally a recipe for success.

Rantanen wrapped up

The good news for Rantanen is that his gobsmacking run of scoring or assisting on 12 consecutive Dallas goals is still intact. The bad news is, that's because the Stars didn't score any goals in Game 2.

Rantanen, coming off back-to-back hat tricks and with eight goals and six assists in his last four games, was finally held in check in Game 2. Arniel glued Selke-caliber center Lowry to Rantanen for much of the game, and it paid off. Whenever the puck hit Rantanen's stick, he drew boos from the crowd and a crowd of blues. He rarely found any space to work with, and when he did, Winnipeg quickly closed in on him. A chance early in the third period was Rantanen's best look, but Neal Pionk poked the puck off his stick in the slot before he could get a shot off.

Stars coach Pete DeBoer shook up the lines in the third period, putting Rantanen out with a few different combinations, including Jamie Benn and Sam Steel, but the result was the same. In 7:07 of five-on-five time against Lowry, Rantanen was out-attempted 8-3, out-chanced 3-1 and outscored 1-0. As the scene shifts to Dallas for Sunday's Game 3, we'll see if DeBoer uses the last change to prioritize keeping Rantanen away from Lowry.

Josh Morrissey makes big impact in return

Morrissey's return to the Jets lineup gave Winnipeg its strongest roster of the playoffs, keyed Vilardi's power-play goal and led to several stalwart defensive plays — including the clear from the crease that helped get the puck to safety after Hellebuyck's highlight-reel save on Dadonov.

The playoffs are still waiting for their vintage Morrissey moment, but he was leading rush attacks and played the most minutes of all Jets skaters in Game 2. He moved well, attacking seams and making incisive passes, creating near misses in addition to generating his power-play assist.

The series was always going to be defined by which team could get its star players back — and playing at the highest level. Scheifele and Jason Robertson returned for Game 1, with Scheifele getting on the scoreboard, but Morrissey's return — and Miro Heiskanen's continued absence — gave the Jets an advantage in Game 2.

DeBoer spoke in praise of Heiskanen before the game but said the Stars would need to get the job done without him.

“You’re taking one of your best defensemen in the world out of your lineup — and when I say in the world, he may be in the top five defensively. That doesn’t even take into account the puck possession in the time we have the puck when he’s on ice,” DeBoer said.

Help wanted in Dallas

Lost amid Mikko mania the last few games has been how little help he’s gotten. The Stars’ depth is their calling card, but they’ve been relying almost exclusively on Rantanen to carry the offense, with Roope Hintz and Johnston chipping in.

Matt Duchene, who scored 30 goals and had 82 points in the regular season, has yet to score in the playoffs. Mikael Granlund, Benn and Dadonov have one goal each, and Robertson is clearly still feeling his way back from a right leg injury that kept him out of the first round. Robertson, who had a team-high 35 goals in the regular season, played 17:08 — three minutes more than he did in Game 1 — but was largely a non-factor, with five shot attempts, two on goal.

Dallas did have its chances, including Hellebuyck’s stellar saves on Dadonov and Benn (off a perfect backdoor feed from Tyler Seguin), and Johnston hitting the post. But at some point, somebody else besides Rantanen is going to have to step up and start scoring.

Nikolaj Ehlers breaks through

Ehlers spent the majority of Game 1 trying to create offense while occasionally looking like he had his wires crossed with linemates Cole Perfetti and Vladislav Namestnikov.

He made multiple giveaways that let the air out of Jets power plays, put his linemates offside at even strength, and otherwise looked unable to replicate the big-game moment he had in helping Winnipeg tie Game 7 against St. Louis.

His vision to find Vilarde on the power play — and his tenacity to get that puck on net — got Winnipeg out to an early lead. A fortunate bounce off of Esa Lindell got him his first goal of the playoffs, while a strong defensive play with the Stars’ net empty — and a long-range shot from his own goal line — got Ehlers his second.

The three-point effort brought Ehlers to four points in four playoff games this year — an ideal launching pad for him to round out the rest of his game.

<https://www.nytimes.com/athletic/6345989/2025/05/10/nhl-playoffs-winnipeg-jets-game-2-win/>

After an impressive Game 2 win, 5 reasons to start believing in the Winnipeg Jets

By Murat Ates

WINNIPEG — These are the Winnipeg Jets the NHL was supposed to be afraid of.

It took nine games, multiple injury recoveries from multiple star players, and the St. Louis Blues' near-destruction of Connor Hellebuyck. It took a Game 1 wakeup call, two days' worth of video, and an ill-timed four-minute penalty by Tyler Seguin. It also took good luck and the good decision to retool Winnipeg's defence corps.

But Josh Morrissey, Mark Scheifele, Nikolaj Ehlers, and Gabriel Vilardi are all back in the lineup now. Hellebuyck is back in top form, dazzling in the second period on the way to his first playoff shutout since 2021. Suddenly, the Presidents' Trophy winners look like a No. 1 team again. With Sunday's Game 3 looming, the Jets have given themselves the opportunity to go ahead in Round 2 — and it's taken every aspect of Winnipeg's game hitting its stride to do it.

After their 4-0 win over the Stars on Friday, here are the five biggest reasons to believe in the Jets as their Round 2 series shifts to Dallas, plus a critical seed of doubt.

Hellebuyck tried to warn everyone.

Speaking in the Jets dressing room before Winnipeg's second-round series, Hellebuyck said the weight had come off his shoulders in Game 7 of Round 1. He said he'd found himself, that Winnipeg's Game 7 win had given him a second chance, and that he was ready to make the most of his opportunity in Round 2.

"This crowd believes in me, this team believes in me, as much as I believe in myself. That's dangerous. That's when things get going and things get rolling," he said.

It would have sounded like false bravado had Hellebuyck not (finally) admitted that he did start to question himself after getting shelled and pulled three times against St. Louis. It would have been a blip without what Hellebuyck did to the Stars on Friday in Winnipeg: a 22-save shutout and a series of highlight-reel saves.

None of his saves were more impressive than this second-period robbery of Evgenii Dadonov:

"I locked eyes with it," Hellebuyck said. "It didn't go right on his tape so I had a little bit of time."

If Hellebuyck is as locked in again as he looked on Friday, the Jets are going to be a problem. He's capable of stopping anything that he sees and the Jets are doing a much better job clearing his sightlines against Dallas. Dylan Samberg and Neal Pionk had a massive game in a matchup capacity against Mikko Rantanen on Friday, with Rantanen drawn into a high-sticking penalty as a partial result of an early, effective boxout by Samberg.

The Stars may not have the same chaos-creating horses that St. Louis did, despite superior overall skill. It's a series Hellebuyck can win, regardless of his first-round stat line, and he appears to be satisfied with his own game once again.

"I broke it down and built it back better," he said after Game 2.

Better? Yeah, that's a reason to believe in the Jets.

The Jets have reassembled the No. 1 power play in the NHL. Nobody scored more goals per minute of power play time than the Jets this season. A string of injuries that began with Vilardi on March 23 and included Ehlers, Scheifele, and Morrissey kept the Jets' top unit apart until Friday.

Morrissey's Game 2 return restored the Jets' full arsenal of weapons and led to a goal.

Winnipeg spent the night pulling the Stars' PK unit out of its structure, then moving the puck down low and driving to the net. Ehlers forced a tough save from Jake Oettinger early, then set Vilardi up for the game-winning goal.

"If you look at video from the previous games, you try to find things you can do better, things that are open and I think we were able to find those tonight," Ehlers said.

There are a lot of reasons why the Jets' top unit works so well together. All five of Vilardi, Ehlers, Scheifele, Morrissey, and Kyle Connor are elite offensive players. They can each burn teams in a variety of ways, depending on where they're set up at any given moment. The Jets' coaching staff has done a tremendous job of drawing up options that Winnipeg's top-end talent can exploit.

Give Davis Payne credit here: The Jets' assistant coach's video sessions have led directly to multiple Jets goals this year. Combine it with the number of weapons on display, the options available to each puck carrier, and the speed to create entries and recover loose pucks, and consider that the second unit has weapons, too: Cole Perfetti scored a big goal in Game 7 via a redirection set play.

But the Jets' top unit reunion is a recipe for Winnipeg's power play to skyrocket from 13th of 16 playoff teams.

Morrissey's back and Winnipeg has its pairings sorted out

The Jets didn't remotely ease Morrissey back into the lineup in Game 2. He led all Jets skaters in ice time, blocked two shots, led the Jets in transition, and contributed a power-play assist. You can also see Morrissey box Wyatt Johnston out and then clear the puck out of the crease in the Hellebuyck video above.

Morrissey's return to the lineup restored the Jets' season-long top-four: Morrissey/DeMelo and Samberg/Pionk. It also allowed Winnipeg to go to a third pairing of Haydn Fleury and Colin Miller after that duo outplayed Logan Stanley and Luke Schenn in Morrissey's absence. Winnipeg moves the puck up ice with greater success in this configuration, while fewer plays die at the offensive blue line. Stanley and Schenn worked hard, with Schenn in particular having a massive Game 7, but the Jets have now dressed their most effective six defenceman for the first time these playoffs.

Here's how Arniel used his top four in Game 2:

Morrissey/DeMelo: A mix of top-nine competition, primarily against Johnston and Matt Duchene's lines

Samberg/Pionk: A harder match against Roope Hintz's line with Rantanen and Mikael Granlund

Samberg and Pionk were phenomenal in Game 2, but give credit to Fleury and Miller for winning the shot share against Rantanen, too.

The pairing got outscored 8-2 in 150 minutes together this season but they carried an edge in shot attempts and expected goals, according to Evolving Hockey. Winnipeg's awful on-ice shooting and save percentages while they were on the ice may have kept the Jets from trusting a viable duo.

Either way, Winnipeg's top four has snapped back into place and it makes Winnipeg that much more dangerous.

They're playing for each other, plus a clean sheet by the Jets' PK

A block and a clear by Samberg. A breakaway for Adam Lowry. Great sticks by Vladislav Namestnikov and Brandon Tanev to knock seam pass attempts to safety. It's too soon to say the Jets' penalty kill is a reason to believe — Dallas went on to hit a post and is still one-for-five in the series — but the effort is there.

More importantly, a lot of the players involved are helping in all areas of the game. Lowry can score this even strength goal because of the incredible fourth line shift that preceded it.

Watch the clip and it's clear that Lowry wins a race. Check out a shift chart and find that defencemen Thomas Harley and Ilya Lyubushkin were caught on the ice for two and a half minutes and two minutes, respectively, in the buildup to Lowry's goal.

"What set that up for me was our fourth line, the shift before," Arniel said. "They had a great shift, they hemmed Dallas, mostly their defence, in their end of the rink. We

actually had all three forwards changed on the O-zone possession, and Lowry's line got out there and finished the job off."

Hand-off shifts like the one Morgan Barron, Tanev, and Alex Lafallo gave Lowry's line are some of the most dangerous situations in the game — especially when teams can trap their opponents' tired players out on the ice. But hand-off shifts take selflessness: it's hard to want to leave the ice while winning battles and working in the offensive zone. The smart change by Barron's line put Lowry, Mason Appleton, and Nino Niederreiter in a great position to win the battles that set up the initial shot — and then win the race to the rebound — on Lowry's goal.

"That's wearing teams down by being heavy and being relentless," Arniel said. "That's a big goal in the game. You're up two and to get that third one takes a little bit of wind out of their sails."

Ehlers finally has his launchpad

Ehlers is a point-per-game playoff player for the first time in his career. Yes, it takes a minuscule sample of four games. Yes, he got a lucky bounce off of Esa Lindell's foot for his first goal and an empty-netter for his second.

It's hard to imagine a key offensive player needing that kind of result more than Ehlers did these playoffs. He was a part of the Jets' miraculous Game 7 comeback, finding Connor with the pass that led to Perfetti's game-tying goal, but there have been misfires alongside Ehlers' magic moments. It's easy to point to his 14 points in 37 playoff games before this year and conclude he's a spent force when the games get tough, but Ehlers is getting better opportunities than he ever has before.

His power play assist was made possible by top unit power play time. His lucky bounce goal came on a shift following a successful Jets PK — the type of shift where Arniel likes to load up offensive talent in the form of Ehlers, Scheifele, and Vilardi, even if it means mixing lines. His empty net goal came because the coach trusted him to play with the opponent's net empty and the Jets protecting a lead.

These are the types of opportunities that require a coach to believe in a player. In Arniel, Ehlers has found that belief.

"I'm just really happy for him. He was dominant," Arniel said.

When Ehlers is going, the Jets have two offensive lines they can trust and two defensive lines they can play against anybody. It's the formula that led to the best regular record in the NHL this season. If it works in the playoffs — as it's clearly starting to — then Winnipeg's healthy lineup is a threat to take over the series in Dallas.

Relax: It's only 1-1 and the Stars have been down this road before

The Stars have been to back-to-back Western Conference finals. They were tied 1-1 with Colorado in the second round of 2024 before winning their series in six games.

They were tied 1-1 with Seattle in the second round of 2023 before winning that series in seven games. This 1-1 series scoreline isn't new ground for the Dallas Stars.

There were also parts of Game 2 where the Jets fed Dallas' transition offence. Hellebuyck's highlight reel was a team effort; part of that team effort required giveaways and hope plays in the offensive zone. It also seems reasonable that Rantanen or Jason Robertson will get free on home ice, while Miro Heiskanen is "close" and would be an instant, dramatic upgrade to the Stars in all three zones.

The Jets have done well to tie their series 1-1. They have good health and the opportunity to get on a roll — and, if Hellebuyck is as "back" as he looks — then watch out.

It's early, but there are signs the Jets are rolling now.

Dallas Morning News

<https://www.dallasnews.com/sports/stars/2025/05/09/five-thoughts-from-stars-jets-game-2-dallas-grounded-in-lopsided-loss/>

Five thoughts from Stars-Jets Game 2: Dallas grounded in lopsided loss Winnipeg returns to regular-season form in 4-0 victory.

By Lia Assimakopoulos

WINNIPEG, Manitoba — The Dallas Stars could no longer ride the high from their last two games.

After hat tricks in back-to-back games for Mikko Rantanen, the Stars were humbled early by the Jets attack and their offense went cold in a 4-0 loss in Game 2 at Canada Life Centre.

es returns to Dallas tied 1-1, with the Stars stealing an important win in Game 1.

But the Jets' response in Game 2 was concerning, as a Winnipeg team that's underperformed all playoffs seemed to have awoken.

Here are five thoughts from the Stars' Game 2 loss:

Shades of regular season

Friday's game was much more in line with the regular-season series between the Stars and Jets than Game 1.

In four regular-season meetings, the Jets outscored the Stars 13-5. Winnipeg's power play, overall offensive effort and goaltending proved to be far too much for the Stars to overcome when they met in the regular season and became key reasons the Jets went on to win the Presidents' Trophy.

The Jets looked like the better team and a Stanley Cup contender again Friday, overcoming a shaky start to their playoff run. They scored just 3:35 into the game, added a second tally less than four minutes later and never looked back.

Just like many of their regular-season meetings, the Stars weren't able to find an answer offensively, and goaltender Connor Hellebuyck was a big reason.

Playing from behind

The Stars have sacrificed the first goal in eight of nine playoff games. They only scored first in their 6-2 rout of Colorado in Game 5.

Dallas has managed to come back after four of those early deficits, but it dug far too big of a hole Friday to recover.

Tyler Seguin committed a high-sticking penalty that was called a double minor just 17 seconds into the game. Toward the end of that four-minute power play, Gabriel Vilardi scored the Jets' first goal. Minutes later, Nikolaj Ehlers' shot bounced off Esa Lindell's skate and in.

The Stars have recovered from multigoal deficits before, like in the third period of Game 7, but didn't have the necessary push in Game 2.

In the regular season, the Stars were 31-11-4 when scoring first compared with 19-15-2 when trailing first.

Connor Hellebuyck puts up MVP performance

The Jets' starting goalie is a Hart Trophy finalist for a reason, and he looked the part in Game 2.

Hellebuyck made 22 saves, including a handful of diving stops late in the second period when the Stars had one of their strongest pushes. He stymied any momentum the Stars built, keeping them off the board entirely.

Friday marked just the fourth shutout in 53 career playoff games for Hellebuyck.

Hellebuyck was inconsistent in the first round against St. Louis, posting an .830 save percentage and a 3.85 goals-against average. On the road, his numbers were far worse, with a .758 save percentage and a 7.24 goals-against average, so the real test will be how he fares when the series makes its way to Dallas on Sunday.

Penalties remain an issue

Penalties have been an issue for Dallas throughout the playoffs, and the wrong players have been the culprits as of late.

Earlier in the playoffs, it was Mason Marchment and Lian Bichsel, two of Dallas' most physical players, responsible for the penalties. But Friday, the Stars' veterans committed costly penalties early.

Seguin's high-sticking double minor on his first shift led to Winnipeg's first goal. Captain Jamie Benn then negated a Stars power play by tripping Adam Lowry. Whether Lowry embellished or not, Benn's stick was in the wrong spot at a time it didn't need to be there.

Dallas committed seven penalties Friday. Winnipeg finished 1 for 5 on the power play.

Stars return home in comfortable spot

A 4-0 loss is never comforting in the playoffs, but the Stars accomplished what they needed in Winnipeg.

Dallas split with the Jets, who had home-ice advantage entering the series, meaning the Stars have overtaken that edge. All they have to do is win Games 3, 4 and 6 at home to secure the series.

That, of course, is easier said than done, but Dallas is typically at its best after losses, especially demoralizing ones. The Stars have not dropped two games in a row yet in the postseason. Under Pete DeBoer, they are 14-5 after a playoff loss.

<https://www.dallasnews.com/sports/stars/2025/05/10/stars-cant-let-this-troubling-trend-continue-against-nhl-best-jets/>

Stars can't let this troubling trend continue against NHL-best Jets

The Stars are inherently the underdog of this series and need to stop making themselves an even bigger one.

By Lia Assimakopoulos

WINNIPEG, Manitoba — Stars coach Pete DeBoer started his most veteran forwards on the ice when the puck dropped for Friday's Game 2.

It probably wasn't a coincidence, hoping he could count on them to make good decisions and remain composed during what was anticipated to be a heavy push from Winnipeg after losing Game 1 on home ice.

But DeBoer got the opposite result.

Tyler Seguin was called for high-sticking 17 seconds into the game. It was called a double minor, so Winnipeg earned a four-minute power play. Just 3:35 into the game, the Jets held a 1-0 lead after Gabriel Vilardi followed up a shot by Nikolaj Ehlers.

“We’ve just got to stop shooting ourselves in the foot,” Stars defenseman Cody Ceci said. “It’s tough to start a game that way.”

The Jets never looked back, winning 4-0 to even the series 1-1 as it heads back to Dallas.

Friday marked the eighth time in nine playoff games that the Stars sacrificed the first goal. The only time they scored first was when Wyatt Johnston scored nine seconds into the Game 5 rout of Colorado.

The Stars have managed to win four of the games they first trailed in, including three against Colorado when they trailed entering the third period. Mikko Rantanen hat tricks helped with a few, but even in the Game 6 loss to Colorado the Stars overcame an early 2-0 deficit to tie the game in the second period.

But Friday showed why that’s a trend that cannot continue.

The Stars escaped a series against Colorado by the skin of their teeth, thanks to some overtime heroics and one of the greatest revenge games in history by Rantanen. His greatness was enough to take Game 1 in Winnipeg, but the Jets are far too skilled of a group to relinquish leads every other night this series.

They won the Presidents’ Trophy for a reason, and it wasn’t without putting away their opponents when they had the chance.

The Stars pulled off one regular-season comeback win against the Jets, but their other three losses came not only as Winnipeg scored the first goal, but the first four in each.

“They’re a heck of a team when they’re up,” Stars forward Matt Duchene said.

Those regular-season losses looked eerily similar to the way Winnipeg played the Stars on Friday, jumping out to an early lead and continuing to apply the pressure.

Less than four minutes after Vilardi scored, Ehlers’ shot bounced off Esa Lindell’s skate and in. Even when the Stars made a second-period push, it was already a significant hole to overcome, and Adam Lowry capitalized off a fortunate bounce off the boards to make it 3-0 and even less manageable.

“That’s a big hole in this rink,” DeBoer said. “Self-inflicted.”

The Stars haven’t gotten good bounces all playoffs, and sometimes, that can be the difference, especially when already setting yourself up to play from behind.

Hand in hand with the early deficits have been penalties. The Stars ranked in the bottom third of the league in penalty minutes in the regular season with 6.36 per 60. In the playoffs, they’ve upped that to 7.39, including 16 penalty minutes Friday.

“We’re taking more penalties in those games we’re chasing in,” Duchene said. “I have no explanation. I’ve never seen so many four-minute high-sticking penalties in my life. It’s not guys being undisciplined, it’s just tough plays, guys trying to compete on the puck.

“We’ve got to find a way and clean it up.”

Then, all it took was the greatest goalie in the world to play that way. Connor Hellebuyck is a factor the Stars did not have to consider when pulling off miraculous comebacks against Colorado.

Related: National reaction from Stars-Jets Game 2: Connor Hellebuyck has entered the chat

The Jets underperformed through eight playoff games, but Friday it appeared they have awakened. The Stars are inherently the underdog of this series and need to stop making themselves an even bigger one night in and night out.

Despite an underwhelming showing in Game 2, they return home to Dallas having done exactly what they needed to do — winning one of two games in Winnipeg to steal home-ice advantage. Now, they just need to win three games at home to secure the series, where they were 28-10-3 in the regular season.

They’re also 14-5 after losses in the playoffs under DeBoer.

But if the Stars find themselves down early Sunday afternoon or Tuesday night, like they have eight other times in the playoffs, there may not be enough luck remaining for another miraculous comeback.

Winnipeg Free Press

<https://www.winnipegfreepress.com/breakingnews/2025/05/09/hellebuyck-is-back-2>

Hellebuyck is back

All-world goalie unbeatable as Jets dominate Stars to even series

By: Mike McIntyre

Go figure that the deepest version of the Winnipeg Jets also happens to be the most dangerous.

That was on full display Friday night as a group we haven’t seen for quite a while — nearly two months in fact — rolled to a dominant 4-0 victory over the Dallas Stars at Canada Life Centre.

The best-of-seven second-round series between the Central Division rivals is now a best-of-five, tied 1-1 as it shifts to Dallas. Game 3 is Sunday afternoon, while Game 4 goes Tuesday night.

You have to go all the way back to March 11 to find the last time not a single Jets player was on the injured list. Defenceman Neal Pionk got hurt that night, and several other teammates have followed at various times since, including Gabe Vilardi, Nikolaj Ehlers, Josh Morrissey and Mark Scheifele.

The infirmary was emptied on Friday night, with everyone available to Jets coach Scott Arniel. The result was a club that reminded everyone how — and why — they won the Presidents' Trophy as the league's best regular season team and the William Jennings Trophy as the NHL's stingiest.

"When you have your roster like that, everybody gets kind of aligned in their spots. Having your top-four defenceman. Having your top-six offensive guys. Then two checking lines, two heavy lines," Arniel said of being back to full strength.

"We're back to looking, finally, like we've looked for most of the season."

It all starts with goaltender Connor Hellebuyck, who responded to the usual pre-game chants of "MVP" by playing like one. He was terrific, including a handful of "how the heck did he do that?" stops that had all 15,225 fans inside the downtown rink on their feet.

"I thought the guys in front of me did a phenomenal job, just letting me see pucks and keeping the tips away, playing the rebounds," said Hellebuyck. "It's never just the goalie doing it; it's everyone out there."

Hellebuyck stopped all 21 pucks that came his way for his fourth career playoff shutout and his first since the 2021 pandemic-shortened season against the Edmonton Oilers.

"It is always great when you get the lead and just play your game and trust your game. That being said, it was a full 60 tonight," said Hellebuyck. "We didn't put the brakes on at all and couldn't take a break, and I thought we did just that."

From the goaltender on out, this was the desired response for a team that dropped Game 1 by a 3-2 score, surrendering home-ice advantage in the process. The Jets were the more desperate team, forcing Dallas to repeatedly chip and chase the puck rather than generating any kind of sustained offensive zone pressure or attack.

"We obviously wanted to have a better start and I thought our first period especially, we were a lot better tonight," said Morrissey, who made his return after getting hurt in the first period of Game 7 last Sunday against the St. Louis Blues.

“We’re going to have to continue to build off those good starts. It was, overall, a pretty good game all around. We’re going to have to take that on the road.”

Look ma, no hands!

Vilardi had yet to make a mark on the playoffs, recording just one assist through his first four games. That’s not a knock on the player, but rather a reflection on the fact he was coming off a 17-game absence when he jumped into Game 5 of the first-round series against the St. Louis Blues.

“I said to him, he was on a bicycle jumping on an Indy track that is going 200 miles an hour,” Jets coach Scott Arniel said Friday morning of the sudden transition.

“So, now he knows the pace, now he knows what’s coming. You see it. He’s more and more comfortable making plays, he’s holding onto pucks. Getting around that net.”

That’s exactly where Vilardi was when he buried a feed from Ehlers 3:35 into the first period to give the Jets a 1-0 lead. Veteran Dallas forward Tyler Seguin had caught Morrissey with a high stick just 17 seconds into the game, drawing blood and earning a four-minute penalty.

The Jets — with their top power play unit back intact for the first time since March 23 — quickly made them pay. A healthy Vilardi, who can be a net-front menace, is a great development for Winnipeg.

“The last two games have been much better than the first round,” said Vilardi. “It’s definitely tough to come in Game 5 when guys have been basically going to war for four games. But I knew that coming into that series. But I definitely feel more confident out there.”

Gotta be good to be lucky

Ehlers didn’t miss as much time as Vilardi — just seven total games, including the first five against the Blues — but he, too, had been fighting the puck at times.

Fortunately for the pending unrestricted free agent, he’s had a bit of good puck luck on his side as he gets back up to speed. In Game 7, for example, he whiffed on an initial shot attempt, which ultimately led to the sequence of incredible events that resulted in Cole Perfetti’s game-tying goal at 19:57 of the third period.

On Friday, it was a pass attempt that hit Dallas defenceman Esa Lindell’s skates and directed straight into the back of the Stars’ net.

They don’t ask how, just how many.

Ehlers’ fifth career playoff goal in his 41st career playoff game was a big one, giving the Jets a 2-0 lead at 7:07 of the opening frame.

Ehlers had several other great looks in what was easily the most complete game since his return. He then finished off his productive night with a long-distance empty-netter with just over three minutes left in the game.

“Just a phenomenal player,” Hellebuyck said of Ehlers. “He’s using his speed and thinking the game at a really high pace. He’s just a phenomenal player and it’s fun to watch when he really gets going.”

A determined Ehlers — who is not only playing for his current team but also his next contract — is a dangerous weapon for Winnipeg.

“Way better,” Ehlers said of the overall team game.

“We had talked about getting a better start than last game and I think everybody could see we were ready to go. First 30 minutes, I think we played a really good game, then we started playing a little different for the last 10 minutes of the second period and got back to it in the third. That’s something we obviously have to look at but I think overall, we played a really good game and Bucky made some great saves.”

The moose wasn’t loose

Mikko Rantanen began the night on an all-time heater, having been involved in 12 straight Dallas goals (either scoring them or assisting on them) to establish a new Stanley Cup playoff record.

But the man who scored all three goals by the visitors in Wednesday’s 3-2 Game 1 victory was held in check on this night. Sometimes literally, such as when Jets defenceman Neal Pionk put a big bear hug on the man known to teammates as “Moose” and wrestled him to the ice in the first period.

The Jets didn’t give him much time and space.

The shutdown line of Adam Lowry, Nino Niederreiter and Mason Appleton was in his face early and often and even managed to tilt the ice for a sustained stretch in the second period, which resulted in Lowry making it 3-0 for the Jets at 11:02.

It came after a lengthy offensive zone cycle shift, which began with the fourth line pinning Rantanen and company in their end.

“What set that up for me was our fourth line, the shift before. They had a great shift, and they stuck to, they hemmed Dallas, mostly their defence, in their end of the rink. We actually had all three forwards changed on the O-zone possession, and Lowry’s line got out there and finished the job off,” said Arniel.

“For me, that’s wearing teams down by being heavy and being relentless. That’s a big goal in the game. You’re up two and to get that third one takes a little bit of wind out of their sails.”

Rantanen took a high-sticking minor against Dylan Samberg late in the second, which ended up being his only notation on the gamesheet. He had just one shot on goal, two giveaways and one blocked shot in just over 21 minutes of ice time.

The good news for Rantanen? Since Dallas didn't score at all, his streak of 12 remains intact.

Finger lickin' good

Kyle Connor, who is often referred to by fans as KFC (short for Kyle "Frickin" Connor), was the subject of a funny cross-promotion on Friday night involving the fast food chain by the same name.

The first 10,000 fans entering the arena were given white buckets bearing Connor's likeness — which bore a striking resemblance to Colonel Sanders — and a lookalike sitting in the crowd for good measure.

Not only that, but the KFC located at 1275 Portage Ave. has temporarily re-branded by replacing the usual logo with the Connor one.

Connor, who leads the Jets with 12 playoff points so far this spring, didn't add to his tally.

Key play

Lowry's goal midway through the second period felt like the dagger.

Three stars

1. WPG G Connor Hellebuyck: 21 save shutout.
2. WPG LW Nikolaj Ehlers: 2 goals, 1 assist
3. WPG C Adam Lowry: 1 goal

Extra, extra

Winnipeg went 1-for-5 on the power play and a perfect 3-for-3 on the penalty kill.

Dallas goaltender Jake Oettinger, who was once again serenaded with "U.S. backup" chants by the Winnipeg crowd, stopped 21 of 24 shots he faced.

With so many healthy bodies now available, plenty of tough decisions had to be made by Arniel. Four skaters who have already appeared in the playoffs — forwards Jaret Anderson-Dolan, Dominic Toninato and David Gustafsson, and defenceman Luke Schenn — were all scratched, along with defenceman Ville Heinola, forward Rasmus Kupari and third-string goaltender Chris Driedger.

Dallas rolled the same lineup for a second straight game, meaning defenceman Miro Heiskanen did not return from a lengthy absence due to a knee injury. He could be an option as early as Sunday.

With the Jets' victory, a Game 5 in Winnipeg is now guaranteed to take place on Thursday. No time has been released by the NHL.

<https://www.winnipegfreepress.com/breakingnews/2025/05/10/winnipeg-triumphs-4-0-over-the-stars-to-even-the-series-1-1>

Winnipeg triumphs 4-0 over the Stars to even the series 1-1

By: Ken Wiebe

To call it an arrival is an exaggeration.

How about an awakening?

Now, that's a far more apt description of the series of events that allowed the Winnipeg Jets to pull even in this best-of-seven Central Division battle with the Dallas Stars after a 4-0 triumph on Friday night before another sold-out crowd at Canada Life Centre.

The Jets took care of a quicker start and crisper execution, which were two of the major themes to come out of the debrief from Wednesday's series opener.

But on this night, Connor Hellebuyck was out there doing Connor Hellebuyck things — which means he once again resembled the guy who is a lock for a third Vezina Trophy and is also up for his first Hart Trophy.

That Hellebuyck was able to build on his strong finish to Game 7 of the epic opening-round showdown with the St. Louis Blues was a promising sign for the Jets to begin with.

By elevating his game once again in Game 2, where those 21 saves provided Hellebuyck with his first Stanley Cup playoff shutout since Game 2 against the Edmonton Oilers back in May of 2021, was a signal that he's shifted from turning to turned the corner.

As Hellebuyck spoke during his post-game scrum, there was further evidence of his reference to the weight that was lifted by advancing past the first round for the first time since 2021.

There was an easiness in his voice that matched the economy of movements you saw in his crease during most of the first 120 minutes of this series.

Hellebuyck's reads look sharper, which allows him to combine his knack for anticipation with his sound fundamentals.

Although his numbers are going to require some further massaging as the playoffs move along, Hellebuyck's ability to reset after the second period of the deciding game has been on full display.

By turning aside 45 of the first 48 shots on goal he's faced in this series, Hellebuyck is rocking a 1.50 goals-against average and .938 save percentage — though it's important to remember the sample size remains small, especially when you consider how volatile the position can be.

Hellebuyck talked about building his game back up better, and when he's at his best, it can make life difficult for the opponent.

Speaking of which, Jets defenceman Josh Morrissey had his best game of these playoffs, which was even more impressive when you consider he was just four days removed from getting knocked out of Game 7 with a suspected shoulder injury in a series he was treated by the Blues like a piñata.

Morrissey was understandably guarded when it came to offering much in terms of details of the ailment he's been dealing with or the lengths he went to in his recovery to ensure he would be back for Game 2.

But he went out of his way to express his gratitude for the opportunity to still be playing, something that wouldn't have been possible if the Jets hadn't rallied with two goals with the goalie pulled in favour of an extra attacker and the double overtime redirection by captain Adam Lowry.

In Friday's game, Morrissey was delivering all over the ice and his impact was felt far beyond the traditional stats package.

Offensively, he recorded an assist, but his most important contributions came while joining the rush, moving the puck efficiently and defending well in just under 23 minutes of ice time.

Morrissey's most impactful play came after Hellebuyck made his best save of the contest, pushing across to stop a one-timer from Evgenii Dadonov with roughly 5:43 to go in the second period.

As great as the glove save was, Hellebuyck's shutout bid would have gone out the window were it not for a spectacular defensive effort by Morrissey on Stars' centre Wyatt Johnston, who thought he was going to be able to deposit the rebound into an open net.

Not only did Morrissey tie up Johnston well enough to win the one-on-one battle to prevent Johnston's stick from finding the loose puck, the Jets alternate captain calmly pushed the puck out of harm's way to complete the play.

As he so often does, Morrissey deferred credit on the play, citing the work of Hellebuyck instead.

"It's a pretty high-danger opportunity. He made a great save, (I) was just trying to box out Johnston on the backside. In those moments it's just desperation," said Morrissey.

"Thankfully, we had Helly to make that save, and then like I said, just try and get it out of there as fast as possible."

Morrissey's moment was expanded on by Nikolaj Ehlers, who joined the Jets' blue-liner at the podium after his team's fifth victory in the postseason.

"He's a guy that's so calm with the puck," said Ehlers. "On the power play goal (by Gabe Vilaradi to open the scoring), he lays it into me there under pressure. Plays physical as well. He makes saves, apparently.

"He's a guy that does everything really well and has had a huge impact on us and has been great for us for the last many years. It's great to have him back."

Ehlers was back as well, using his blazing speed to have his most explosive offensive output of these playoffs.

Playing in just his fourth game as he works his way back from a lower-body issue, Ehlers chipped in two goals and an assist for three points to go along with his seven shots on goal and 13 shot attempts.

Ehlers was here, he was there, and he was everywhere in this outing.

He was omnipresent.

Unlocking Ehlers makes the Jets even more dangerous to try and defend.

"Yeah, it's nice to see him rewarded. Again, another guy to jump into the middle of a playoff series late in that last series," said Jets head coach Scott Arniel.

"And to just have the opportunities that he's had....I'm just really happy for him.

"He was dominant. He had the puck a lot. I liked the fact that he attacked the net a bunch of times with the puck. We need his line and we need him doing what he did. We're a tougher threat when we have all of our pieces going like that."

Keeping those pieces going is the next step in the process as the Jets try to get a leg up and win for the first time away from home in what will be the fourth opportunity to do so in these playoffs.

That opportunity comes on Sunday afternoon at American Airlines Center.

<https://www.winnipegfreepress.com/breakingnews/2025/05/09/everybody-wants-to-play-every-night>

***‘Everybody wants to play every night’
Jets’ depth good problem to have for Arniel***

By: Ken Wiebe

In this high stakes game of musical chairs, getting your No. 1 defenceman back in the lineup is an obvious bonus.

But for Winnipeg Jets head coach Scott Arniel, attempting to hit all the right notes with the rest of his roster can be both a blessing and a bit of a curse.

As the Jets welcomed back blue-liner Josh Morrissey for Game 2 of the second-round matchup with the Dallas Stars on Friday, Arniel also made the choice to sit down veteran D-man Luke Schenn for the first time since he was acquired prior to the NHL trade deadline from the Pittsburgh Penguins.

Morrissey was back with familiar D partner Dylan DeMelo after missing the series opener with a suspected shoulder injury.

A frequent target of the St. Louis Blues in the first round, Morrissey was on the receiving end of several glass-rattling checks and he left Game 7 in the first period after taking only three shifts for just over two minutes of ice time.

Following a few days of treatment and recovery, Morrissey got the green light to return.

“He’s a part of our rush, he’s a part of that offensive side,” said Arniel. “He has a skill set that when the puck’s on his stick, whether it’s a pass or whether him shooting it, you know what he does with that shot of his.

“Josh and (DeMelo) have done a great job for us the last couple of years playing against top-end players.”

Stars defenceman Thomas Harley always thought highly of Morrissey’s game and having the opportunity to play with him for Team Canada at the 4 Nations Face-Off gave him a greater appreciation for his skill set.

“I knew he was a really elite player before the 4 Nations. Nothing that I saw changed my mind on that,” said Harley. “He’s an elite puck-mover, he’s better defensively than he gets credit for. He’s an all-situations kind of guy.”

Because of how physical Schenn plays, it’s unclear whether he was a healthy scratch or if he was dealing with a nagging injury of some kind.

He was limited to 18 shifts and just under 11 minutes of ice time in the series opener, but still finished with five hits.

Colin Miller had three shots on goal and six shot attempts to go along with two blocked shots in just under 18 minutes of work while playing on his off side (the left side), primarily with Schenn.

When asked about the decision on the third pairing, Arniel mentioned that the style of the opponent had something to do with keeping Miller in on the third pairing with Haydn Fleury, who skated alongside DeMelo in Game 1.

“He’s the type of guy, a veteran guy, that’s played at this time of year, has experience in the playoffs,” Arniel said of Miller. “You look for guys that don’t get rattled by the moments. He’s got lots of skill and that certainly helps us offensively, (with) jumping in the rush, that big shot. But defending as well. He’s got good feet, gets into people and has a little bit of an edge to his game.”

As for the bigger-picture discussion about having numerous options at his disposal — the Jets have already used two goalies, eight defencemen and 15 forwards through nine playoff games — those discussions with the scratches aren’t a fun part of the job.

“Not just in the playoffs, it’s hard during the regular season when you’ve got to tell a guy he’s not playing. Everybody wants to play every night, and (those are) hard conversations,” said Arniel.

“But guys also recognize, too, that we’re hoping to play for another month here, and we’ve used everybody, or a lot of guys already. And they’re still part of it. And it may happen as quick as Game 3.

“But just always to be ready. You never know how it looks, how we’re going to go about things. And guys have been good that way. Not happy, but they recognize what we’re doing.”

Miller only got one chance to play in the opening round and he was called into action late on the day of Game 3 when DeMelo was a late scratch due to illness.

During the Stanley Cup playoffs last spring, Miller entered the lineup in Game 5 against the Colorado Avalanche and came up with a strong showing.

That’s an acquired skill, but it’s an important club to have in your bag, especially at this time of the year since the playoffs can sometimes be about the battle of attrition.

“We have a deep group here. We’ve got eight, nine, 10 guys (on defence) that can all play, so just make sure you’re ready and then when you get called upon, try and take advantage,” said Miller.

“Obviously we’re a team in here. There have been guys that have gone up and down in the lineup and injuries and all kinds of things, and stuff like that’s going to happen this time of year, so step up when you can.”

The Jets have leaned heavily on that depth, given that all of Morrissey, Mark Scheifele, Gabe Vilardi, Nikolaj Ehlers and Logan Stanley have already missed time due to injuries in these playoffs.

Going into Friday’s game, 20 of the 23 skaters to suit up in a game for the Jets in the playoffs had recorded at least one point.

The Stars continue to be without top defenceman Miro Heiskanen, who has been out of the lineup since suffering a knee injury on Jan. 29 after an awkward collision with Vegas Golden Knights captain and Winnipegger Mark Stone, who lost his balance and crashed into Heiskanen.

Heiskanen continues to skate with the Stars and is inching towards a return, potentially during his series.

Praise for Lowry

Stars head coach Pete DeBoer confirmed what had been reported leading up to the selection of Team Canada for the 4 Nations Face-Off, that Mark Scheifele wasn’t the only Jets centre who was under consideration for a spot on the roster.

Adam Lowry was another guy that the coaching staff and management talked about deep into the process before the final determinations were made for the best-on-best event held in Montreal and Boston back in February.

“I’m a big Adam Lowry fan. I think he’s probably one of the top-three defensive centres in the league,” said DeBoer, who was an assistant coach on Jon Cooper’s staff. “He’s got that combination of size and length, hockey IQ and some edge to his game that I think everyone’s looking for in that type of role.

“I think he does an exceptional job. Even back to the 4 Nations, his name was in conversations when we were talking about that role. He’s a highly thought-of guy around the league.”

The debate over Canada’s roster for the Olympics in 2026 is on the back burner for the time being, as Lowry’s primary responsibility in this series will be to try and minimize the damage done by the Stars’ top line — which is centred by Roope Hintz — and to chip in offensively like he did in the first round when he scored three times, including the double OT clincher in Game 7 against the Blues.

<https://www.winnipegfreepress.com/breakingnews/2025/05/09/the-goal-heard-round-the-peg>

***The goal heard 'round the Peg
An improbable victory, an obsessive fanbase and a new symbol of city pride
fuelled by Jets***

By: Conrad Sweatman

It's a magic number Winnipeggers won't soon forget — 1.6.

That was the number of seconds remaining on the clock (later adjusted to 2.2) when forward Cole Perfetti saved the Winnipeg Jets with his game-tying goal in Game 7 against the St. Louis Blues on May 4.

That paved the way for captain Adam Lowry's sudden-death winner in double overtime that sent Canada Life Centre into a frenzy.

It was a "where were you when" moment that rivals May 31, 2011, when NHL commissioner Gary Bettman strode into what was then MTS Centre to announce the return of Canada's favourite sport to Winnipeg.

It was a moment hockey experts couldn't have envisioned as many pre-season predictions had the Jets missing the playoffs. Instead, Winnipeg won the Presidents' Trophy as the NHL's top team in the regular season.

It was a moment for a team and town often underestimated not just by outsiders — but by many of its own fans and residents.

"Me and my sister were not gonna walk out of the arena, when it was like, two seconds before the game was over. She said, 'We're gonna stay and cheer for them, because they work so hard,'" says musician Rhonda Head.

Apparently, at least a few fans in the stands headed for the exit as things started to look unwinnable for the lads in blue.

"Manitoba is a hockey province. And (winning brings) great pride and joy... we won't get that negative attention that we do from crime and all that."

Head has showcased her love of the Jets on some of the largest stages.

The Grammy-nominated mezzo-soprano from Opaskwayak Cree Nation made headlines in 2023 for flying the Jets flag at that year's Grammy Awards. For all of her accolades, Head says she still counts singing the national anthem in Cree at a Jets game last year as a career highlight.

“We’re the underdogs, right?” says Jino Distasio, a professor of geography at the University of Winnipeg. “You think of an old English pub where they’re cheering for the working-class football team. People can get around something like that.”

Canadians talk today of locking arms, “elbows up,” in the face of a trade war perpetrated by the United States. But, of course, Manitobans continue to harbour a mildly spirited grudge toward their wealthier, more powerful neighbours to the west and east.

And, for the underdogs in these scenarios, is there a more entertaining stage to rehearse such tensions than hockey?

Few activities exercise civic pride with as much gusto as a Winnipeg Whiteout — the celebration held outside the downtown arena where thousands of fans dressed head to toe in white gather to watch the Jets playoff games on massive outdoor screens.

“We’re a city of spectacle,” says Distasio. “We like a party, and also we find ourselves using the downtown as the stage for those parties... There’s no doubt that the economic impact of these kinds of events is transformative for the local economy.”

Damon Hayes-Couture, an architectural designer from Winnipeg who has lived in Calgary for more than a decade, is not a Flames fan, and never will be.

TSN’s fancam footage of his family went viral across TikTok and Instagram last Thanksgiving. It showed his infant son, in aviation goggles and Jets regalia, asleep in Hayes-Couture’s lap at a Jets game against the Minnesota Wild.

“Wakey, wakey buddy!” said Kevin Sawyer, TSN’s colour analyst for the Jets. A still from the cute scene lit up the Jets’ banner on X for a couple of weeks.

“The Jets are a vital way for me to stay connected with home,” says Hayes-Couture. “It’s an excuse to call to say, ‘Oh, hey, did you hear about that trade? Did you watch that game?’”

He says he tries not to just attend a Jets game when he’s in Winnipeg, but stick around downtown, grab a meal and spend time with family and fans.

“First and foremost, it’s a hell of a lot of fun to be at the games. But I also think of it as an act of civic responsibility, in a way, to not only go to games, but make a night of it,” he says. “It’s like by being a Winnipegger and participating in that atmosphere, Winnipeg grows.”

“If I cheer loudly, then it means that others will feel compelled to cheer just as loudly.”

The fortunes of the Jets and downtown Winnipeg often feel closely entwined.

Even after the NHL team returned in 2011, critics continued to question whether this small-market city could support big-league hockey. At the same time, the downtown struggles with disinvestment, high vacancy rates and profound social inequities.

The Jets aren't a solution to all this; the entity brings tens of thousands of people and millions of dollars downtown — much of this surging temporarily from the suburbs.

"We've got to call it what it is," says Distasio about the playoff games — and especially Whiteouts, which have a low-cost admission of \$10, with half going to the United Way.

"And, really, it's a momentary reprieve from the otherwise desperate situation that downtown Winnipeg has found itself in."

He compares the playoffs to Nuit Blanche, the outdoor fall festival that celebrates contemporary art as "the downtown and parts of the inner city are transformed into this tapestry of hope and fun and interest and intrigue."

So, how to bottle up and hold onto this civic energy after the popcorn's swept from the stands?

"The downtown has always been a second (away) from being loved or hated," says Distasio. The feelings swing almost as quickly, or even hinge on, fans' attitudes towards the Jets — with pride and excitement swelling during a winning streak, only to shift to frustration and disillusionment when goaltender and MVP candidate Connor Hellebuyck lets a soft one in.

"I wish we could figure out how to fill retail space, how to fill more restaurants and have more people living and coming downtown," says Distasio.

"But even during my time, downtown has changed dramatically... to me, there's always hope. And it's with these kinds of events that there's hope, right?"

The emotional ups and downs of being a Jets fan absorb Ben Schellenberg.

The associate professor in the University of Manitoba faculty of kinesiology and recreation management researches sports fandom and helped guide a study of Jets supporters a few playoffs back.

The researcher admits a favourite sports joke of his is comedian Jerry Seinfeld's quip that fans merely "rooting for clothes," staying loyal to a team rather than players who come and go.

But Schellenberg is passionate about understanding the passion of sports fandom.

"When we're cheering for a team, they become part of an individual's identity... you're cheering for yourself," he says.

Those in Schellenberg's field distinguish between "obsessive passion" and "harmonious passion." The first can lead someone to neglect responsibilities and despair after a favourite team loses, while harmonious passion allows fans to enjoy the game without it overwhelming other parts of their life.

"Of course, the day after a game, if the Jets won, people felt better than if they lost, but that effect (tends to be) a lot stronger for fans with high levels of obsessive passion," he says.

In the days following the Game 7 heroics, it seemed every Winnipeg bus stop, radio station, coffee shop and office lunchroom had only one topic of conversation. The superfans could shine as the go-to authorities, the ones turned to for play breakdowns and sermons about the next round of the playoffs and the new battle against the Dallas Stars.

"The flip side is what sometimes people refer to as dampening behaviour, anything you do to kind of be a killjoy or a 'Debbie Downer,'" he says.

Obsessive fans are often more drawn to this dampening behaviour, obsessing over the negatives even after a triumph, Schellenberg says.

Obsessive fans may find themselves especially haunted with concerns such as: How much have I spent on tickets this year? Mark Scheifele is back after missing a couple of games due to injury, but what about injured defenceman Josh Morrissey? And sure, the Jets won Game 7, but they lost Game 1 of the second series.

Schellenberg has a few tips for Winnipeggers hoping to avoid the hangovers of obsessive passion.

"The big recommendation involves having more balance in your life and having things outside of being just a fan that bring you joy and satisfy your needs... But I think we're too late for the middle of a playoff run," he laughs.

"Some people will avoid savouring (the moment) because they haven't won the Stanley Cup yet... So, I think enjoying all the steps along the way would be a valuable thing to do."

Head and Hayes-Couture say they're enjoying the playoff ride even if it ultimately ends before they want it to.

"I've never called down the Jets. I'm cheering them all on all the time," Head says. "They had the best season out of all the NHL franchises... they've made us proud."

Hayes-Couture doesn't dampen the warm feeling, either.

“It’s maybe sacrilege to say, but it’s not all about that one trophy at the end,” he says.

“Whether folks watched Game 7 from a corporate box or their basement hangout, we all felt the same euphoria,” he says.

“It’s hard to find things that build community bridges for Winnipeg than moments like this.”

Winnipeg Sun

<https://winnipegsun.com/sports/hockey/nhl/winnipeg-jets/off-and-running-jets-build-early-lead-and-coast-to-a-4-0-win-over-the-stars>

Off and running: Jets build early lead and coast to a 4-0 win over the Stars

By Gordon Anderson

The Winnipeg Jets created a runway to success in a victory over the Dallas Stars on Friday night at the home of the Jets.

The Jets built a 2-0 lead after one period of play and skated away with a 4-0 victory over visitors in Game 2 of the Western Conference semifinal. The series is tied one each with Game 3 in Texas on Sunday afternoon.

“We wanted to have a better start, and I thought our first period especially, we were a lot better tonight,” Jets defenceman Josh Morrissey said. “We’re going to have to continue to build off those good starts. It was overall a pretty good game all around. We’re going to have to take that on the road.”

The Jets number one d-man made his triumphant return to the lineup after missing nearly two full games with an undisclosed injury. He was injured in the first period of Game 7 against the St. Louis Blues after getting tagged by Oskar Sundqvist in the d-zone. Morrissey logged 22:39 in his return.

Compared to the club’s sluggish and uneven launch point for Game 1, the difference in Game 2 was black and white. There was no bleeding at the edges to suggest a semblance of grey.

The Jets got the start they were looking for, but that came from an unexpected source when Tyler Seguin was dinged with a double minor for high sticking Morrissey in the Dallas defensive zone 17 seconds into the game.

Gabe Vilardi lit the lamp with a power-play goal at 3:35 as he slammed home a rebound, the puck squeezing under the right pad of Jake Oettinger and nestling up near against the post. Nikolaj Ehlers doubled the advantage with a bank shot marker off the skate of Esa Lindell at 7:07.

“Obviously, having a four-minute (power play) early in the game like that and to score, was big,” Jets head coach Scott Arniel said. “Certainly, the crowd, not that they needed a bit of a push, but man they got loud after that one and then we got the second one quick.”

Dallas head coach Pete DeBoer acknowledged the visitors assisted the Jets with their plans to even the series.

“I mean, you start the game with a four-minute minor 17 seconds in, they score on the power play and then one goes off our own skate into the net, and you’re down 2-0,” DeBoer said. “That’s a big hole in this rink.”

Sure enough, Adam Lowry and Ehlers his second of the night into the empty net to provide the winning margin for the victorious Jets.

Connor Hellebuyck stopped 21 shots to earn his first postseason shutout since 2021 against the Edmonton Oilers.

<https://winnipegsun.com/sports/hockey/nhl/winnipeg-jets/like-their-old-selves-jets-shoot-4-0-hole-in-stars-to-even-series>

Like their old selves: Jets shoot 4-0 hole in Stars to even series

By Paul Friesen

Josh Morrissey paid in blood, Adam Lowry did a cartwheel into his own bench and Connor Hellebuyck stood on his head as the Winnipeg Jets bounced back with a vengeance in their second-round series against Dallas on Friday.

A 4-0 win over the the Stars evened the series at a game apiece and restored whatever confidence the Jets may have lost in a 3-2 loss on Wednesday.

It was the Winnipeg’s first playoff game with a fully healthy lineup – Morrissey returning to the blue line after missing one game – and it showed.

“We played way faster,” head coach Scott Arniel said. “That’s the first time since Game 71 that everybody’s back. We’re back to looking, finally, like we’ve looked for most of the season.”

Storming out of the gate, Winnipeg struck twice in the first 7:07 and got a 21-save showing from Hellebuyck for his fourth career playoff shutout and first in four years.

Gabe Vilardi and Nik Ehlers scored their first two goals of the playoffs early, Lowry struck for his fourth and Ehlers added an empty-netter.

Lowry was a force all night, even if an Alex Petrovic hit put him head-over-heels into his own bench in the second period.

The captain's teammates took his lead, buzzing the Stars like their playoff lives depended on it.

"There were a lot of good things out there," Morrissey said. "It will be a whole different animal going on the road here. But definitely a lot we can build on. Power play was great, penalty kill as well, goaltending – lots we can build on and take to Dallas."

When the Stars got their chances – and they're too talented not to – Hellebuyck showed the form that made him a finalist for both the Vezina and the Hart Trophies as the NHL's best goalie and its most valuable player.

"He was fantastic," Arniel said. "Sometimes we take him for granted because he makes the hard look easy, so easy. But he had some acrobatic ones."

Arniel's squad notched a power-play goal, rolled four effective lines and six active, aggressive defencemen. A punishing penalty kill that went 3-for-3 gave them the special-teams edge, too.

One of Winnipeg's other priorities was to start fast, and they couldn't have drawn up a better one.

When Tyler Seguin's stick clipped Morrissey and the Jets defenceman managed to spit up some blood, his team had a four-minute power play just 17 seconds in.

That red dribble paid off in the second half of the penalty when Ehlers' shot hit the post, then goalie Jake Oettinger's skate, leaving an easy tap-in for Vilardi.

"Chasing the games isn't how you want to be playing," Vilardi said. "So to get a four-minute power play within 20 seconds of the game is a great opportunity to capitalize and get the early lead."

It was Vilardi's first goal of the playoffs in his fifth game back from injury.

"The last two games have been much better than the first round," Vilardi said. "It's definitely tough to come in Game 5 when guys have been basically going to war for four games. But I knew that coming into that series. I definitely feel more confident out there."

Ehlers, playing like he'd been shot from a cannon, made it 2-zip less than four minutes later with his first in his fourth game, his pass banking off Esa Lindell's skate and past a bewildered Oettinger.

“It’s nice to see him rewarded,” Arniel said. “Another guy to jump into the middle... in the last series. He was dominant. He had the puck a lot. I liked the fact that he attacked the net a bunch of times... we’re a tougher threat when we have all of our pieces going like that.”

The Stars looked a good step or two behind for the bulk of the opening period.

Midway through the second, Lowry lifted a rebound off the end boards over Oettinger to make it a three-goal spread.

“To get that third one takes a little bit of wind out of their sails,” Arniel said.

When, a shift or two later, the Stars’ Wyatt Johnston had all day and plenty of net in front of Hellebuyck, only to launch his backhand off the post, it felt like the home team’s night.

That second period is where Hellebuyck shone brightest, moving back and forth with authority to rob the Stars a handful of times, most notably a sprawling, glove stop off a rebound attempt from Evgeni Dadonov.

As quick and sharp as his team looked in front of him, Hellebuyck looked every bit as dialled in, with his best performance of the postseason.

It was exactly what the playoff doctor ordered for the Jets, who weren’t happy with their play in Game 1 and needed to reassert themselves.

The league’s best team over the regular season looked a lot more like it again on Friday.

They’ll pack up all the good vibes and head for Texas for Game 3 on Sunday afternoon.

<https://winnipegsun.com/sports/hockey/nhl/winnipeg-jets/jets-ehlers-chasing-playoff-success-not-worried-about-reputation>

Jets' Ehlers chasing playoff success, not worried about reputation

By Paul Friesen

There are reputations, and then there are playoff reputations. Regular-season stars, and so-called “clutch” performers.

Winnipeg Jets forward Nik Ehlers draws accolades by the bushel for his speed and skill through the better part of 82 games. Eight seasons of at least 20 goals in his last nine years has seen to that.

The post-season has been another story for the 29-year-old.

Going into Friday's Game 2 against Dallas, Ehlers had four goals in 40 playoff games.

While not happy with that output, he wanted no part of the suggestion he's fighting a reputation as a player who can't do it in the playoffs.

"No. Not at all," he said in a one-on-one chat at his locker. "I can play hockey. It's pretty simple as that."

Ehlers has never shied away from being hard on himself, publicly. So he wasn't going to pretend he's happy with his post-season numbers, either.

"Obviously not," he said. "But what's in the past I can't change. I keep trying to find ways, keep trying to talk to the coaches about what they see. And that's about all I can do."

A first-round draft pick a decade ago, ninth overall, Ehlers didn't record his first Stanley Cup playoff goal until his 23rd game. He scored two in four games that year (2020), two more, including an overtime winner against Edmonton, in one of six games the next season.

It's been dry through 14 games, since: no goals through just one game in '23 (he was hurt), five last year and three more after his return from injury late in the first round against St. Louis.

Lousy luck?

"Couldn't tell you," he said. "You've got to find your luck, too. And obviously I haven't been doing a good enough job of that."

How he can find luck: by keeping it simple, he said. And using his feet. With Ehlers, is all about the feet.

"When I don't use my feet, I'm not a very good player," is how he put it. "So that should be my No. 1 priority for every single game."

Not that he's been invisible. Far from it.

Ehlers was a big part of the Manitoba Miracle in Game 7 against the Blues, somehow having the wherewithal to send a pass Kyle Connor's way from his spot on the point with seconds left on the clock.

What happened one second later – Connor feeding Cole Perfetti for the game-tying goal with less than three seconds left – give Ehlers a permanent place in Winnipeg hockey history.

His dad, in town from Denmark, was in the stands for that moment, which was just Ehlers' second game back from injury.

With dad back home, the kid wasn't thrilled with the start of his third, Game 1 against the Stars, on Wednesday.

"At this point I should be myself," he said. "I'm three games in. I didn't start great last game, but finished really good, I thought. There's some things that I know I need to do better, and those are easy fixes as well. The first few shifts last game I didn't use my feet, and started flipping pucks out and just getting rid of pucks.

"And that's not really my game."

Carrying the puck is. Firing it when he can. And using his speed to create space for teammates.

Conditioning played a role in his first playoff game or two this spring.

Between April 1 and Game 6 against the Blues, Ehlers played just one full game, missing four of the last six regular-season games altogether and the first five of the playoffs.

That didn't help him be prepared for the grind. He's fought the puck at times, fought to catch his breath at others.

"I'd played one full game in about a month," he said. "So the conditioning was maybe not perfect, the reads, the timing. But you've just got to deal with it. You've got to find a way. Game 7, I was able to find a way and we won the game. I'm just about getting better from now on."

This is Ehlers' seventh playoff run with the Jets. It could be his last, as he's a pending unrestricted free agent.

You could say his future is like his playoff reputation: still to be determined.

(Note: Ehlers broke his 14-game playoff drought with a goal in the first period on Friday night)