

Winnipeg Free Press

<https://www.winnipegfreepress.com/breakingnews/2025/05/16/one-for-the-road-4>

One for the road

Jets look to deliver rock-solid effort under difficult circumstances

By: Ken Wiebe

DALLAS — There is one more riddle left for the Winnipeg Jets to solve if they are to extend this memorable season, again.

Those plucky Jets took the first step in seeing another series go the distance, but in order to achieve that next goal, the organization will need to do something they haven't done since April 27 of 2023.

That's the last time the Jets came away victorious in a Stanley Cup playoff game that wasn't played on home ice.

Just like they were going into Thursday's convincing 4-0 victory over the Dallas Stars, the stakes are clearly defined.

The three wins required to advance to the Western Conference final against the Edmonton Oilers have been reduced to two.

Although the Jets earned a reprieve from their summer vacation, there's another important piece of the puzzle left to complete, one that has proven to be rather confounding.

For a team that led the NHL in road wins with 26, how in the world can one explain the nine-game road playoff losing streak the Jets are currently mired in?

For those keeping score at home, that stretch of misery includes a 0-5 record in 2025.

So while there is plenty for the Jets to build on after matching shutout wins in Games 2 and 5, they were outscored 8-3 at American Airlines Center in Games 3 and 4.

"I'm just worrying about this year. I know, and I've been here for it, too," Jets head coach Scott Arniel said before the team departed for Texas. "

Every streak ends, whether it's a good one or a bad one. And we're planning on doing that (on Saturday). Can't do anything about what's all behind us now. It's a case of us making sure that what comes on the ice (in Game 6) is the best product we can bring. Continue what we did (Thursday) night. There's a lot of real positives there. And build on that and just put that forward."

Following the Game 5 victory, Arniel said he would be looking for a carbon copy of Thursday's effort when the clubs face off again.

There are no residual effects being felt in the Jets' camp relating to the road drought, even though many of the core pieces have been together for the entirety of the road losing skid.

Like all of the other areas they've worked so hard to combat, this is simply the next one to tackle.

"Doesn't matter what happened in the past," said Jets goalie Connor Hellebuyck, who posted a 22-save shutout in Game 5. "We got one game ahead of us and we just need to focus on winning that one."

Hellebuyck and the Jets have no other choice than to channel all of their energy on that next task.

It's been a calling card of the Jets this season, that combination of working through the game review and turning the page, while routinely showing they can rise to the occasion, even when the pressure is mounting.

It's also true that the Jets played their best road game of this postseason just a few days ago and, while the 3-1 loss didn't bring any gratification, there were pieces of the template that were evident throughout the course of the contest.

Were it not for losing the special-teams battle 2-0, the Jets managed to do a lot of things well in that outing.

Things that they did even better on Thursday in finding a way to extend the series with their most complete effort of the spring: having a strong start and scoring first, even if it only happened in the second period; winning the special teams battle 2-0.; finding some valuable secondary scoring that had dried up a bit of late.

Lastly, Hellebuyck found a way to outduel Stars goalie Jake Oettinger for the second time in five games.

"We have so much confidence in Connor, (in) what he does, what he means for our team," said Jets captain Adam Lowry. "In games like (Thursday), he's certainly the reason why we have that belief."

There was a sense of pride as the Jets spoke about delivering a rock-solid effort under difficult circumstances, but there wasn't a sense of achievement either.

This was merely the next step in the process for a team that still has championship aspirations.

"It's important that we don't just hang our hat on this one, but we come back in the next one attacking and we see areas where we can make improvements and put our best foot forward," said Lowry.

"We're still down 3-2 in this series, we haven't accomplished anything. We want to keep playing and we want to come back here."

Should the Jets get the job done and make it back to Winnipeg for Game 7, they'll turn up the temperature on a Stars team that hasn't scored on Hellebuyck inside Canada Life Centre since Game 1, when Dallas earned a 3-2 triumph to steal home-ice advantage from the Presidents' Trophy winners.

Can the Jets finally return the favour?

They've got no other choice.

Otherwise, all of the strides that were taken and the incremental growth that has been on display throughout the 100 games the Jets have played dating back to the exhibition schedule will lead to another far-too-long off-season than this group is interested in having.

For a team that has rewritten the franchise record book and taken massive steps towards rewriting the narrative surrounding the lack of playoff success for much of this core since the remarkable run to the Western Conference final in 2018, there's still plenty of items left on the to-do list.

"It's the toughest time of year, and I thought we stepped up," Jets left-winger Kyle Connor said after Game 5. "But obviously, the job's not done."

To get the job done, the Jets will require another effort that is passenger-free.

The star players need to deliver another round of rock-solid performances and the supporting cast has an opportunity to create another moment they'll never forget.

"We've got a great group in here, a lot of character. We just have a good team. That desperation can bring the best out in you," said Jets centre Mark Scheifele, who was on the receiving end of a punch to the chops from Jamie Benn in the third period on Thursday. That resulted in the Stars captain receiving a US\$5,000 fine for roughing — which is the maximum penalty under the collective bargaining agreement.

"It was hard for me to understand what was going on. My face hurts. There's not much I can really say in this situation.

"I'm not much of a fighter so I can't really remember (the last time he had his bell rung by a punch). It was tough, I couldn't really protect myself. My arms were pinned at my sides, so definitely didn't feel good."

What would feel good for Scheifele and his teammates is having an opportunity to play in another Game 7 on Monday night at Canada Life Centre.

“Yeah, obviously, we haven’t had a road win (yet), but (we’ve) just got to treat this like it’s Game 7, have that desperation and give it our all to get back in front of our fans again,” said Scheifele.

“We’ve liked our game and that’s obviously very important. Obviously, we got a big win in front of our fans (Thursday) night, so we just want to continue to do what we’re doing and stick to our structure and our game plan and go from there.”

Canadian Press

<https://www.winnipegfreepress.com/sports/hockey/2025/05/16/mark-scheifele-says-winnipeg-jets-desperate-to-extend-season-in-dallas>

Mark Scheifele says Winnipeg Jets ‘desperate’ to extend season in Dallas

By: Judy Owen, The Canadian Press

WINNIPEG – The Winnipeg Jets are about to find out if they can pull off a rare feat.

They flew to Dallas for Game 6 on Saturday night, down 3-2 in their best-of-seven series against the Stars — and with no recent road success to draw from.

Winnipeg has dropped all five road games during this year’s Stanley Cup playoffs and nine straight dating back to 2023.

“Obviously, we haven’t had a road win but just got to treat this like it’s Game 7, have that desperation and give it our all to get back in front of our fans again,” Jets centre Mark Scheifele said at the Winnipeg airport Friday.

The Jets have been outscored 25-8 on the road during the post-season, and reigning Vezina Trophy winner Connor Hellebuyck has struggled mightily away from home.

He was pulled in three road games during the first-round series against St. Louis and enters Dallas with a 5.84 goals-against average and .793 save percentage away from home.

Scott Arniel, in his first year as Winnipeg’s head coach after two seasons as associate coach, isn’t concerned that his players will dwell on their road struggles.

“Every streak ends, whether it’s a good one or a bad one,” he said. “And we’re planning on doing that (Saturday).”

"Can't do anything about what's all behind us now. It's a case of us making sure that what comes on the ice (Saturday) is the best product we can bring. Continue what we did (Thursday) night. There's a lot of real positives there and build on that and just put that forward."

The Jets fell 5-2 in Game 3 in Dallas, then put up more of a fight in Game 4 before losing 3-1.

That effort, coupled with Thursday's 4-0 home victory in Game 5, bodes well for the next challenge, Arniel said.

"We were really good in (Game) 4 and probably should have been rewarded a little bit more in that one," he said. "But we didn't get enough traffic into the net and around the net."

"I thought (Thursday) night we did a better job of attacking, getting inside, and our game looked more like our game (Thursday) night."

The team also knows it can survive elimination in this year's Western Conference playoffs.

Winnipeg won Game 7 in the first round against St. Louis in double overtime. In Thursday's victory, it outshot the Stars 35-22 while scoring a pair of power-play goals.

It's a change from the previous two seasons, when they lost both first rounds in five games to Colorado last year and Vegas in 2023.

"We just have a good team," Scheifele said when asked what's changed. "That desperation can bring the best out in you, so I'm really proud of this group."

Scheifele scored Thursday's first goal, a shot that went off Stars forward Wyatt Johnston and then defenceman Thomas Harley's skate.

"Sometimes you've got to put it in an unorthodox way, but obviously it proved to be a big goal and hopefully we can do that in Dallas," Scheifele said.

The Jets won the Presidents' Trophy this year with a franchise-record 56 wins and 116 points in the regular season.

They're trying to reach the conference final for the first time since 2018, when they fell in five games to the Vegas Golden Knights.

The Edmonton Oilers await the winner of the series.

BAD BENN

Stars forward Jamie Benn was fined US\$5,000 Friday for roughing Scheifele with 6:32 left in the third period of Thursday's match.

Benn sucker-punched Scheifele in the head while the Jets forward was being held back by linesman Ryan Daisy during a scrum. The official and Scheifele both fell to the ice.

Benn was given a minor penalty for roughing and a 10-minute misconduct. Scheifele also got dinged with a roughing call.

It was a chaotic moment that still baffles Scheifele.

"It was hard for me to understand what was going on," he said. "My face hurts. There's not much I can really say in this situation."

He can't recall the last time he got punched like that.

"I'm not much of a fighter, so I can't really remember," Scheifele said. "It was tough, I couldn't really protect myself. My arms were pinned at my sides, so definitely didn't feel good."

Winnipeg Sun

<https://winnipeg.sun.com/sports/hockey/nhl/winnipeg-jets/playoff-pioneers-jets-head-for-dallas-determined-to-cover-new-ground>

Playoff pioneers: Jets head for Dallas determined to cover new ground

By Paul Friesen

They've already proven they're not the same old Winnipeg Jets, a team that folded when the games mattered most.

That team didn't meet an elimination game that didn't overwhelm it.

This one has already run into two, conquering them both. The latest, Thursday's 4-0 win over Dallas in Game 5 of their second-round series.

To even reach the unfamiliar territory of the second round, the Jets had to pull off a miracle in the first Game 7 the Manitoba capital has ever hosted.

So you could say these Jets are playoff pioneers.

It was a fitting location, then, from which head coach Scott Arniel addressed the media at the Winnipeg airport on Friday.

Towering behind him was the 15-foot statue of commercial aviation pioneer James Armstrong Richardson, Sr., the man the airport is named after.

Richardson, like Arniel, was born in Kingston, Ont.. He became synonymous with Winnipeg, and if Arniel takes these Jets to their final destination, he will be, too.

To do that, they'll have to continue to find something the teams of the last two seasons couldn't: a way to not just survive, but thrive, when there's no room for error.

Saturday's Game 6 in Dallas demands it, yet again.

At least they have a well to draw from.

"We got to go through that Game 7, which is a big experience for a lot of guys that had never even been in that position," Arniel said on Friday. "It's learning from what's happened in the past. There's a lot of things on my mind, times that we talked about this, when you're going to run into these hard situations."

The lessons on Arniel's mind from this season go back as far as November and back-to-back games against defending Stanley Cup champion Florida.

The first produced a humbling 5-0 loss on the road. It was just the Jets' third setback in 18 games, after a 15-1 start that also broke historic new ground.

Days later, they bounced back to beat the Panthers in Winnipeg, 6-3, in what felt a little like a playoff back-to-back.

Another one of those hardening moments was beating the high-flying Capitals in overtime on Feb. 1 in Washington, at the end of a three-game trip.

A playoff feel surrounded the Jets' April 10 trip to Dallas, too. They came away with a 4-0 win.

"How you handle them then," Arniel said. "Is going to help you now."

Mark Scheifele is one of many players who didn't handle the moment well the last two playoff seasons.

He looks like he's added a layer of grit to his game, allowing him to better fend off checks and adversity.

No. 55 delivered the first offensive punch on Thursday and absorbed the last literal one, a smack from Stars captain Jamie Benn in a late scrum.

If that gloved fist was designed to send a message for Game 6, these Jets seem better equipped to handle what's to come on Saturday.

"We've got a great group in here, a lot of character," Scheifele said. "That desperation can bring the best out in you. I'm really proud of this group... guys that love playing with each other. It's just been a real pleasure to battle with these guys every night."

The road hasn't been much fun lately.

The Jets have yet to land in Winnipeg with a playoff victory in tow: winless in five tries this year, nine in a row including the previous two years.

"I know, and I've been here for it, too," Arniel said. "Every streak ends. Whether it's a good one or a bad one. And we're planning on doing that."

The last time the Jets found a way to stave off elimination on the road was Round 2, Game 7 in Nashville, seven years ago.

Arniel was still four years away from coming back to Winnipeg, six from becoming the head coach.

On Friday, a few fans wished players well as they walked through the terminal, past the statue where Arniel had spoken.

"See you in Game 7," one said to goalie Connor Hellebuyck. "We believe in you."

"You got this," another said to captain Adam Lowry.

Compared to the frenzy of the night before, it was quiet.

"We're feeling it," Arniel said of the support. "And not just on game days. Everybody's rallying. We just need this to go a little bit longer."

With that, his pioneering team boarded a plane, determined to cover more new ground.

<https://winnipegssun.com/sports/hockey/nhl/winnipeg-jets/no-room-for-momentum-on-jets-flight-to-dallas-for-game-6>

No room for momentum on Jets' flight to Dallas for Game 6

By Paul Friesen

A dominant win, a second shutout at home and an edge in all phases of the game was exactly the confidence boost the Winnipeg Jets needed against the Stars in Game 5.

But how much of that momentum made it onto the Jets Friday flight bound for Dallas and Game 6?

"It's a whole new game. And it's on the road," Jets winger Nik Ehlers said after Thursday's 4-0 win. "So for me, nothing."

Looking at the Jets' two series, so far, and at other series around the NHL suggests Ehlers is right, as there have been wild swings, back and forth, the momentum changing with the wind.

Things snowball for a team in one game, melt away in the next. A bit like Winnipeg weather in May.

"From any series, game-to-game, they are totally different," Jets captain Adam Lowry said. "It's important that we don't just hang our hat on this one, but we come back in the next one attacking and we see areas where we can make improvements."

"We're still down 3-2 in this series. We haven't accomplished anything."

That's the hole the Jets have dug themselves by losing the series opener at home and failing to win one in Dallas.

Getting a lead in Game 6 on Saturday is the first change head coach Scott Arniel would like to see.

"We've never been a team that's panicked if we're down one or two," Arniel said. "But that's something we haven't really done in this playoffs, is get out in front of it, build off some of that momentum and maybe take the crowd out of it."

Arniel's team is 2-0 when leading after the first period in these playoffs, 1-4 when trailing.

Thursday's game was scoreless through 20 minutes, but the Jets had the edge in play. By a lot.

"It's everybody just taking it up a notch, winning battles," is how Kyle Connor saw it. "If you just look at it over the course of the game how many 50-50 battles there are, it adds up. It's just a combination everybody having that extra gear and that fight."

That extra gear hasn't been there away from home, although the Jets liked a lot of what they did in Game 4, a 3-1 loss that saw Stars goalie Jake Oettinger stand on his head.

"Probably should have been rewarded a little bit more in that one," Arniel said.

The one thing the coach thought was lacking in their last trip to Texas: traffic in front of Oettinger.

That improved on Thursday and will have to stay improved in Game 6, or the Jets could well be lamenting another playoff season gone south.

"We've got to win a road game," Lowry said. "We haven't played well on the road at all this playoff. No better time than now to start."

If the Jets pull it off, Game 7 will be back in Winnipeg on Monday.

<https://winnipegsun.com/sports/hockey/nhl/winnipeg-jets/tit-for-tat-jets-scheifele-has-sore-face-stars-benn-lighter-wallet>

Tit for tat: Jets' Scheifele has sore face, Stars' Benn lighter wallet

By Paul Friesen

Mark Scheifele looked like he was wrestling a grizzly bear, only it was wearing stripes.

The Winnipeg Jets centre lost his temper late in Game 5 against Dallas on Thursday, when Stars captain Jamie Benn delivered a gloved left hook to his face.

An official prevented Scheifele from getting at Benn to retaliate, or the damage to the Jets' top centre may have been worse.

"My face hurts," Scheifele said on Friday, after the first punch he's taken in a while. "I'm not much of a fighter, so I can't really remember. It was tough. I couldn't really protect myself. My arms were pinned at my sides. So definitely didn't feel good."

It was linesman Ryan Daisy who was holding Scheifele's arms, and who ended up wrestling No. 55 to the ice.

Benn received a misconduct and was done for the night, along with Jets winger Brandon Tanev, who'd come to Scheifele's defence when the skirmish started with a Benn cross-check at the Dallas bench.

The Jets actually wound up shorthanded, with all three players getting roughing minors, something Jets coach Scott Arniel questioned after the game.

"I don't understand how we've been shorthanded a lot of times in the playoffs," countered Stars coach Pete DeBoer on Friday.

The Stars were already down 3-0 at the time, so had little to lose in what turned out to be a 4-0 Jets win.

Scheifele scored his second goal of the series and added an assist.

"He was outstanding," Arniel said. "When you get into games like that... your best players have to be your best players. We're going to need all that (Saturday). This game is hard. Yeah, you need your role players to step up. But when you're in big moments

like this, when your best players can be your best players it certainly helps you win hockey games.”

The teams meet in Dallas for Game 6 on Saturday, the Stars holding a 3-2 lead and the series heating up.

“That hatred grows in a series as the games go on,” DeBoer said. “That’s the beauty of hockey. That’s what separates it from a lot of other sports, is that physical emotion that the guys play with at this time of year.”

The NHL Department of Player Safety on Friday slapped Benn with a maximum fine of \$5,000.

“Jamie Benn can afford the fine,” DeBoer said.

Since Scheifele absorbed the punch, we’ll give him the last word.

“That money goes towards the retired players fund,” he said. “So it’s great.”

Sportsnet.ca

<https://www.sportsnet.ca/nhl/article/promise-of-golden-generation-looming-over-jets-in-push-for-conference-final/>

Promise of golden generation looming over Jets in push for Conference Final

By Iain MacIntyre

WINNIPEG — The Winnipeg Jets soared into a promising new era in 2018.

Driven by a core comprised mostly of talented young players drafted and developed by the team, the Jets came within three games of making the Stanley Cup Final, generating the franchise’s first playoff success since it moved to Winnipeg from Atlanta in 2011 and was reborn.

That team included 21-year-old rookie Kyle Connor and 22-year-old Nikolaj Ehlers. Josh Morrissey, who would soon become a No. 1 defenceman, was 23 and in his second NHL season. Future captain Adam Lowry, top centre Mark Scheifele and all-world goalie Connor Hellebuyck had all recently turned 25.

What might a team like that accomplish?

With all that youth and potential, the Jets won two playoff rounds that magical 2018 spring before they were ambushed 4-1 by the first-year Vegas Golden Knights in the Western Conference Final.

Seven years later — and, remarkably, still with these six players — the Jets have won two playoff rounds since.

“You know, as a younger player, you always hear the older players talk about how hard it is to just make the playoffs,” Morrissey said this week. “And how hard it is to have playoff success and actually have a chance to go on a run with the ultimate goal of winning a Stanley Cup. For me, going back to 2018, it's my second year in the league and we go to the conference finals. I didn't really understand at that point how hard it is to get there.

“Seven years later, I haven't been back to the conference final or beyond. Definitely, it stokes the fire and provides a lot of motivation. You don't know how many opportunities you get and what years you really have a chance.”

These Jets really have a chance. Still.

It isn't a fluke that they claimed the Presidents' Trophy this season or that they have won more games these past three years (154) than any other NHL team.

But winning in the playoffs is much more difficult, and this spring the Jets are again taking the hard way.

They rallied in an epic Game 7 victory over the St. Louis Blues in Round 1, the Jets' first series win since 2021 and their first triumph in front of fans since 2018. And now they're trying to rally against the Dallas Stars, who were soundly beaten 4-0 here Thursday but still lead the second-round series 3-2.

Game 6 is Saturday in Dallas.

“I love this group of guys,” Scheifele told Sportsnet before Game 4. “This team has been such a blast to be a part of for my whole career. And then this year has been one of the best years I've had with a group of guys. You know, it is a special group. It's a special team. It's an uphill climb right now, but there's no other team I'd want to do this battle with.”

Between them, Scheifele, Morrissey, Ehlers, Connor, Lowry and Hellebuyck have played 4,183 games for the Jets. And zero for anyone else. Include their playoff totals, mostly in single-round increments, and these half-dozen players have logged more than 4,500 games for the franchise.

And they are still trying to get back to the conference final.

The Jets are 0-5 on the road these playoffs, and have endured an inconceivable nine straight playoff losses away from home since taking Game 1 two years ago against the Knights, who then won the next four.

"I'm just worrying about this year," Jets coach Scott Arniel told reporters before Friday's charter to Texas. "I know... every streak ends, whether that's a good one or a bad one. And we're planning on doing that tomorrow. We can't do anything about what's all behind us now; it's just a case of us making sure that, you know, what comes on the ice tomorrow is the best product that we can bring. Continue what we did last night. There's a lot of real positives there, and build on that and just put that forward."

Arniel inherited a lot of good things from former head coach Rick Bowness, who hired and groomed Arniel to succeed him, which he did this season. But Arniel would probably like to give back the first half of the road losing streak.

"Yeah, it's all his fault," Arniel joked, noting that he was on the staff for all nine losses.

"Any experience you have, you know, there's opportunities to learn from it," Scheifele said. "There's moments that you look back on and can reflect on and learn from. I think you definitely can look back at your prior experiences and get better from it."

Overcoming a 3-2 playoff deficit is hard, though not as daunting as a 3-1 disadvantage.

As Morrissey said, you never know how many chances you will get. This may still be the best opportunity to win for Winnipeg's golden group.

"I'm definitely trying to take advantage of the opportunity," the defenceman, now 30, said. "You know, it's seven years since I've moved past the second round. Definitely, I'm trying to seize the moment."

Scheifele admitted it's possible there is a mental aspect to overcome, along with the Stars, in Saturday's road game.

"Maybe very, very subconsciously," the 32-year-old said. "But in the moment, just go out and play a hockey game. That's what we love to do — is go play in these big games and big moments. We all put pressure on ourselves. But at the end of the day, you've just got to go play a hockey game."

"There's so many great friendships here. And like I said before, there's no other guys that I'd want to go to battle with than these guys right now. Go enjoy it."

While you can.

JETS STREAM – Scheifele said "my face hurts" when asked about the fracas that occurred late in Thursday's game when Stars captain Jamie Benn knocked him down with a left-handed sucker punch as the Jet was being held by linesman Ryan Daisy. Benn was assessed a roughing minor and 10-minute misconduct with 6:32 remaining and, on Friday, fined \$5,000 by the NHL.

"Not much of a fighter," Scheifele said of himself. "I couldn't really protect myself; my arms were pinned at my side. It definitely didn't feel good."

And the fine?

"I think that money goes towards the retired players' fund," he said. "So it's great."

NHL.com

<https://www.nhl.com/news/connor-hellebuyck-overcome-road-woes-for-winnipeg-in-game-6-against-dallas>

Hellebuyck must overcome road woes to help Jets extend series against Stars Goalie aims to 'leave it all out there' in Game 6, end personal 9-game playoff skid away from home

By Nicholas J. Cotsonika

WINNIPEG -- Connor Hellebuyck snared the puck with his glove, and the Winnipeg Jets played the "Theme from Superman." The trumpets blared as the crowd roared. The goalie might as well have worn a cape and sported an "S" on his chest.

But you know where this is going, don't you?

Though Hellebuyck looked like Superman again at home Thursday, shutting out the Dallas Stars 4-0 in Game 5 of the Western Conference Second Round, his kryptonite awaits in the glowing green arena in Dallas.

For the Jets to avoid elimination and bring the best-of-7 series back to Winnipeg for Game 7 on Monday, Hellebuyck must overcome his greatest weakness in Game 6 at American Airlines Center on Saturday (8 p.m. ET; ABC, ESPN+, SN, TVAS, CBC).

The road.

Hellebuyck is 0-5 with a 5.84 goals-against average and .793 save percentage away from home during the Stanley Cup Playoffs this season.

Go back further, and he's 0-9 with a 5.50 GAA and .831 save percentage in his past nine road playoff games. He's 6-15 with a 3.50 GAA, .890 save percentage and one shutout in his past 21.

"It's unfortunate that we got into this position," Hellebuyck said, referring to the series deficit, not his road record. "But you know what? I believe in this group, I believe in myself, and I believe in all of our fans, so we're going to continue to compete and leave it all out there."

Making Hellebuyck out to be Superman is, well, comical. He's a superstar, not a superhero. He's human.

But Hellebuyck has set the bar so high for himself that it's in the clouds. Last season, he won the Vezina Trophy, voted as the NHL's best goalie, for the second time. This season, he was so good he's a finalist for the Vezina and the Hart Trophy, voted as the NHL's most valuable player.

He won 47 regular-season games, nine more than anyone else. He had eight shutouts, two more than anyone else. Among goalies who played at least 35 games, he led the League in goals-against average (2.00) and save percentage (.925). Of course, he was good on the road: 20-9-0, 2.43 GAA, .911 save percentage, two shutouts.

Everybody expects him to make saves like he did 39 seconds into the second period of Game 5. The puck came to Stars defenseman Thomas Harley all alone in front. Hellebuyck moved to his right anticipating a deflection, but Harley switched from his forehand to his backhand. In a split second, Hellebuyck adjusted and flashed the leather to keep the game scoreless.

Three times in a 3-1 loss in Game 4 in Dallas, the Stars beat Hellebuyck glove side. Not this time. Cue the Superman music.

"I thought he was going to tip it, so I had kind of a bit of a blocker reaction, and then he pulled it back," Hellebuyck said. "He might have fanned on it a little bit, but he tried to go glove side. I wouldn't do that."

When Jets captain Adam Lowry was asked about that save after the game, he was eager to answer. The subtle message was no one should take Hellebuyck's heroics for granted.

"Yeah, I'm glad you brought that up, actually," Lowry said. "That was incredible. But that's what he's done for us all year. You know what? Another stellar game by him."

"But like you said, it's 0-0. We have a bit of a breakdown. Easily could be down 1-0 there, and you know, gets the building on their feet, gives us some energy, lets us take a deep breath, and we're able to score 4-on-4 not too long after."

"So you know what? We have so much confidence in Connor and what he does, what he means for our team. Games like tonight are certainly the reason why we have that belief."

Road games are certainly the reason why others don't have that belief. But Winnipeg forward Kyle Connor, who trains with Hellebuyck in the offseason in suburban Detroit, said Hellebuyck doesn't care.

"He's got that type of natural confidence," Connor said. "He doesn't have social media. He doesn't really think of what other people will think. He just goes about his business, comes to the rink. He's always has a lighthearted mindset and attitude.

"I think that's allowed him to do great, because if you score one or you get one on him, he probably forgot about it. He thinks about it real quick, and then it's gone. It's the next shift, the next shot."

The next game is one of the biggest of Hellebuyck's career. Lose, and his road record worsens. The Jets' season ends. Win, and he snaps the streak. Winnipeg comes home for Game 7. Hellebuyck is 6-1 with a 1.73 GAA, .916 save percentage and two shutouts at Canada Life Centre this postseason and has shut out Dallas for more than seven straight periods at home.

One thing to remember about kryptonite: Superman can overcome it. Comic Book Resources has an article titled "10 Times Superman Fought Back Against Kryptonite (& Won)."

Aren't those the best stories?

<https://www.nhl.com/news/topic/playoffs/2025/series-k-news/dallas-stars-hope-home-success-continues-in-game-6-against-winnipeg-jets>

Stars seek to advance with more home success in Game 6 Have scored 8 of 11 goals in series against Jets on home ice

By Tracey Myers

WINNIPEG -- Tyler Seguin wants to be part of the scoring as much as anyone, the Dallas Stars forward usually a strong contributor during the Stanley Cup Playoffs.

"Yeah, I mean, you want to produce," said Seguin, who has four points (two goals, two assists) in 12 postseason games, but none against the Winnipeg Jets in the Western Conference Second Round. "Having some chances and sometimes they don't go in, sometimes they go in. Looking for that first one (in this series)."

He's not the only one, but the Stars have definitely found more scoring at home than on the road. They'll look to tap that home-ice production in their second chance to eliminate the Jets in Game 6 at American Airlines Center on Saturday (8 p.m. ET; ABC, ESPN+, SN, TVAS, CBC).

The Stars lead the best-of-7 series 3-2.

Dallas has 23 goals in six home games, compared to nine in six road games. They are 5-1 at home and 2-4 on the road, and have been shut out 4-0 in each of the past two games at Canada Life Center, including Game 5 on Thursday.

Stars coach Pete DeBoer talked prior to Game 5 on how it was only a matter of time before they started getting depth scoring which they had in Games 3 and 4 at home (5-2 and 3-1 wins, respectively). But he also said teams "have to be comfortable not scoring" in the playoffs.

"Everyone makes a big deal about scoring," DeBoer said. "Vegas gets eliminated (Wednesday) by Edmonton in a 0-0 game, you know? It's 1-0 in overtime and you've got two of the greatest offensive players in the world on the ice (Oilers forwards Connor McDavid and Leon Draisaitl). If you throw (Golden Knights forward) Jack Eichel in, maybe three of the top five or six. So, you have to be comfortable and it's OK that you're not scoring, that you're still finding ways to win."

Stars forward Matt Duchene has not scored a goal in the playoffs but has five assists in 12 games.

"Obviously, you want to help your team win," he said. "I'm doing a lot of good things out there. You make five or six plays for Grade-As and it doesn't go, what can you do? Just keep going. It'll go at some point."

Duchene's work paid off at a critical time last season. He scored the series-winning goal against his former team, the Colorado Avalanche, in Game 6 of the second round.

"I've had a million hot streaks and a million slumps in my career. I've played a long time," he said. "It's all about putting your best game out on the ice and I thought our line had a lot of good looks tonight and easily could have been the difference. It'll go here one of these days. Hopefully the dam breaks and away we go."

One of the Stars' many strengths during the regular season was their offensive production. They scored 275 goals, an average of 3.35 goals per game, third in the NHL behind the Tampa Bay Lightning (3.56) and Washington Capitals (3.49).

They got that offense from a lot of different players: 10 Stars had 40 or more points this season. Sure, two of those were NHL Trade Deadline acquisitions, who did a bulk of their scoring elsewhere: Mikko Rantanen, who was acquired from the Carolina Hurricanes on March 7, had 88 points (32 goals, 56 assists), including 18 points (five goals, 13 assists) in 20 games with the Stars; and center Mikael Granlund, acquired from the San Jose Sharks on Feb. 1, had 66 points (22 goals, 44 assists), including 21 (seven goals, 14 assists) in 31 games with the Stars.

Rantanen leads the playoffs with 19 points (nine goals, 10 assists). Granlund had a hat trick in Game 4 and has seven points (four goals, three assists) in 12 games, including five points (three goals, two assists) against the Jets.

Captain Jamie Benn has three points (one goal, two assists) in the playoffs, including one assist in five games against the Jets. Mason Marchment, who was on the second

line in the first round, finished Game 5 on the fourth line. He has three points (one goal, two assists) in 12 games, none in this round.

Jason Robertson has one assist in five games after missing the entire first round with a lower-body injury sustained in the Stars' final regular-season game. It seems just a matter of time for Robertson, who was one of their top scorers their past two playoff runs (16 points last season; 18 points in 2022-23).

The Stars are confident they can advance to the Western Conference Final for the third consecutive season, especially based on what they've done at home.

"We're trying," Duchene said. "We're getting chances it's just not going in. We'll just keep working."

Associated Press

<https://globalnews.ca/news/11184097/stars-look-to-knock-out-jets-in-game-6-not-let-hellebuyck-have-another-shot-at-home/>

Stars look to knock out Jets in Game 6, not let Hellebuyck have another shot at home

By Stephen Hawkins The Associated Press

The Dallas Stars may just want to wrap up their second-round Western Conference series when they have a chance in Game 6, and not let Connor Hellebuyck and the Jets get another game in Winnipeg.

While the Stars have a 3-2 series lead and aren't facing elimination Saturday night at home, a loss would send them quickly back to Winnipeg for a series-deciding game. That is where Hellebuyck has back-to-back shutouts and hasn't allowed a goal to Dallas in more than 141 minutes on the ice since Mikko Rantanen's hat trick in the second period of Game 1 that was enough for a 3-2 win.

"We felt like we needed to win this one. You don't want to give them any life at all. We don't want to come back here for Game 7," Stars forward Matt Duchene said after their 4-0 loss Thursday night extended the series. "Obviously up 3-1 at one point, it might take seven. They're a good enough team, it could."

Hellebuyck and the Jets, however, have lost nine consecutive playoff road games since winning their postseason opener at Vegas in 2023, including Games 3 and 4 of this series in Dallas. The Presidents' Trophy winner has been outscored 25-8 away from home in these playoffs.

"We've got to win a road game," Jets captain Adam Lowry said. "We haven't played well on the road at all this playoff, so no better time than now to start."

The winner of this series advances to play a resting Edmonton team in the Western Conference Final. The Oilers wrapped up their second round-victory over Vegas with a 1-0 overtime win in Game 5 on Wednesday night.

Dallas is trying to reach the West final for the third season in a row, and lost in six games to Edmonton last year. Winnipeg's last conference final was in 2018.

Stars captain Jamie Benn sucker-punched Winnipeg center Mark Scheifele during a late scrum in Game 5. Benn was given a misconduct penalty then, and on Friday was fined by the NHL the maximum-allowed \$5,000, but avoided a suspension.

"My face hurts. There's not much I can really say in this situation," Scheifele said Friday before the Jets flew to Texas.

Scheifele got credited with the opening goal Thursday on a wrist shot that deflected off two Dallas players and past goaltender Jake Oettinger, who had 31 saves. The Jets had a two-man advantage after consecutive tripping periods early in the third period and went ahead 2-0 when Nikolaj Ehlers scored — he added a late empty-netter for his fifth goal in the series.

"I thought we actually weathered the storm OK. Jake was really good early, which you need. I think the goal off our own skate, the 4-on-4 goal, that's a tough one to give up. Then you give up the 5-on-3 goal," Stars coach Pete DeBoer said. "They played with a desperation level like it was an elimination game. We're a little bit off that."

Dallas has won five home games in a row since starting the postseason against Colorado with its eighth consecutive Game 1 loss — an unexplainable streak that finally ended with the Rantanen-led win to open this series. That was after his four-point third period with a hat trick in Game 7 against the Avalanche, his former team.

If the Stars do need another Game 7 on Monday night, they have won all three they have played under DeBoer over three seasons. He is the only coach or player in NHL history to be part of nine Game 7 victories, with four different teams, and hasn't lost one.

Dallas would prefer not to have to play another one, while the Jets hope to stave off elimination for the third time this postseason.

"It would mean that we're not going on vacation yet," Ehlers said. "We want to go to Dallas and win that game. ... It's been so special to play here in front of this crowd, and we want to repay them by coming back and playing a Game 7 here."

The Athletic

<https://www.nytimes.com/athletic/6360989/2025/05/16/nhl-playoffs-winnipeg-jets-game-5/>

Jets survive Game 5 like past versions couldn't, but can they do it again?

By Murat Ates

WINNIPEG — The Winnipeg Jets' season was on the line, but this time there was no last-second miracle comeback. The Jets' 4-0 win in Game 5 was a 60-minute onslaught.

The Jets delivered their best game of the playoffs in their most important, must-win Game 5 — and earned one more chance to keep their season alive. It took Connor Hellebuyck's second straight home shutout, a resurgent Winnipeg power play, a little bit of luck, and a level of desperation past Jets teams couldn't have matched.

"That was everybody. That was our whole roster stepping up and knowing what the challenge was in front of us. And putting their best game on the ice," said Jets coach Scott Arniel. "And it was everybody: forwards, D, goaltender. It was everybody stepping up, not wanting to be eliminated tonight. You could see it right from the puck drop, the opening shift. We didn't take our foot off the gas."

As hockey games go, Game 5 gave Winnipeg's Canada Life Centre crowd everything it could have asked for. The Jets dominated the first period, outshooting Dallas 11-4 and creating scoring chances for top scorers Kyle Connor, Nikolaj Ehlers and Mark Scheifele that Jake Oettinger turned aside. Then, when Winnipeg lost its defensive coverage to open the second period, Hellebuyck came to their rescue. Matt Duchene found Thomas Harley undetected in the slot, Harley fooled Hellebuyck by taking the puck to his backhand and then Hellebuyck's reflexes took over.

"I thought he was gonna tip it," Hellebuyck said. "So I had a bit of a blocker reaction. Then he pulled it back, and he might have fanned on it a little bit, but he tried to go glove side."

Five minutes later, Scheifele took a shot off the rush that hit Wyatt Johnston's stick, then bounced off Harley's skate and behind Oettinger. The Jets had their game-winning goal and, even though Ehlers and Vladislav Namestnikov's third period power play goals were much nicer to look at, there is poetry in the way Winnipeg won Game 5: There's no way the the Jets who lost to Vegas and Colorado in five games each could have beaten Dallas on Thursday. They'd have been blown out before a fluky, double-deflection goal like Scheifele's could have done them any good.

Facing elimination in Game 5 against Vegas in 2023, the Jets were outshot 23-14 and outscored 4-0 by the second intermission. They pushed back harder against Colorado

in the same circumstances last season, but trailed 3-2 after 40 minutes after recovering from a poor first period with a better effort in the second.

“You have to be able to push back when things aren’t going your way,” Rick Bowness said after the Vegas series. “We had no pushback. Their better players were so much better than ours tonight, they deserved to win. They were the better team in the regular season, (and) they were the better team in this series.”

Those words aren’t true anymore.

Winnipeg’s season was on the line, and this time, Winnipeg’s best players rose to the occasion. Scheifele scored a goal and an assist. Connor picked up two assists. Ehlers, whose playoff reputation falls short of his quality as a player, scored twice and is now tied for third in Jets playoff scoring with seven points in seven games. Hellebuyck, whose Game 6 could redefine his playoff narrative, delivered his best postseason performance.

Ironically, those accomplishments say more about the level the Jets have reached as a team than they do about the individuals involved.

Zoom out past Hellebuyck’s heroics, Scheifele’s fortunate bounce, Ehlers’ clever five-on-three shot, Namestnikov’s rocket wrist shot and Ehlers’ empty netter: The story of Game 5 is that the Jets won a game they couldn’t have won in recent history. There was no last-minute miracle because no miracle was necessary. There was no postgame tirade about a complete lack of pushback because no such tirade was needed.

It was also the first time in franchise history that they’ve won an elimination game outside of a Game 7, and their reward is the opportunity to do it all over again, only this time in much tougher circumstances. The Jets, mired in a nine-game playoff road losing streak, must beat the Stars in Dallas on Saturday. Win that, and then there’s the matter of Pete DeBoer’s 9-0 record in Game 7s.

“It’s unfortunate that we got into this position,” Hellebuyck said. “But you know what? I believe in this group, I believe in myself, and I believe in all our of our fans, so we’re going to continue to compete and leave it all out there.”

We’ll get back to Winnipeg’s unfortunate position in a moment. It’s worth noting that Ehlers and Arniel joined Hellebuyck in putting Jets fans at the heart of his motivation.

“It’s been so special to play here in front of this crowd,” Ehlers said. “We want to repay them by coming back and playing a Game 7 here.”

“We’d love for a chance to come back and do it in Game 7, but we’ve got a lot of work ahead of us in Game 6,” Arniel said. “To reward our fans and to give them a chance to see another game, that’s what we were looking to do.”

So, how do the Jets win their first road game of the playoffs? By dragging the series back to Winnipeg?

Step one is bottling what worked in Game 5. Hellebuyck locked in, the Jets' power play came to life and Winnipeg got goals from the top and middle of the lineup. The shutout belonged partly to the goaltender, partly to better puck support in all three zones and even to a little bit of puck luck. Harley could have tried to deflect his shot, like Hellebuyck thought he wanted to do. Tyler Seguin could have gone bar-down with his second-period rush chance instead of going bar-and-out. But Harley and Seguin's chances were two of Dallas' few Grade A's on the night. The Stars are a potent rush team; Winnipeg got through most of Game 5 without conceding odd-man rushes.

"We were quick with our decisions, we were quick with the reads, quick supporting the puck all over the ice," Lowry said.

He also spoke to Winnipeg's self-inflicted wounds in games 3 and 4.

"(We were) hurting ourselves within our team game, feeding into their transition, feeding into their offence," Lowry said. "We talked about if we could get back to defending how we have all year, if we could get back to that fast transition, good puck support all over the ice, we'd put ourselves and Helly in a much better position to be successful."

It's important to consider the role matchups played in Dallas' home ice advantage. Stars coach Pete DeBoer is good at using last change to keep his best players away from Lowry's shutdown line — and targeting Scheifele's line instead. Consider that the 8:37 Mikko Rantanen played against Lowry in Winnipeg in Game 5 is more than Rantanen played Lowry in both games in Dallas. Through five games, Winnipeg has outshot Dallas and kept the score to 1-1 during Lowry versus Rantanen minutes, while Rantanen has outscored Scheifele's line 2-0 while keeping Winnipeg hemmed in its zone.

It's a massive swing, with impacts at both ends of the ice. Every shift that Rantanen, Roope Hintz and Mikael Granlund beat Scheifele's line in transition creates offence for Dallas and keeps three of Winnipeg's top offensive players 200 feet from Jake Oettinger.

Remember Winnipeg's last-minute line shuffle to start Game 4? Arniel deflected questions about his new line combinations, offering only that it was about "matchups" but it's clear that he was trying to give Scheifele's line some defensive help. Connor and Scheifele sometimes miss their assignments playing transition defence. Alex Iafallo was a safety valve.

It gets lost because Winnipeg lost Game 4, but Arniel's thought process was mostly vindicated: Connor, Scheifele, and Iafallo sawed off their minutes, earning a 7-6 edge in shots and a 0-0 scoreline while playing together. From an X's and O's standpoint, Iafallo helps Connor and Scheifele by staying on the right side of the puck on breakouts and by

staying on the right side of his check when the Stars are rushing up ice. There have been times when the Connor/Scheifele/Vilardi line gets caught up the ice — and DeBoer has leaned into that matchup to try to get offence for Rantanen, Granlund, and Hintz.

So it's not just about the hometown crowd.

If Winnipeg is meant to beat Dallas in Game 6, the Jets need to shut down the Stars' dynamic rush attacks. To do that, Winnipeg needs Connor and Scheifele to play their best 200-foot games of the playoffs. Arniel can also try to help with lineup tweaks like he offered in Game 4, but it's on his players to execute such that they don't give up as many Grade A chances for free as they did earlier in the series.

"I think they were winning the battles the first couple games before this one, and we needed to step up," Connor said, "And I think everybody did. It's one game and we've got to re-focus (quickly) and get ready for the next one."

Winnipeg's suffocating 4-0 win in Game 5 means only that a series comeback is possible. It's still the best result available to the Jets in Game 5, and a better result than Winnipeg's core had achieved in recent years. The Jets are off to Dallas to see if they can achieve their first road win of the playoffs — and their season is on the line all over again.

<https://www.nytimes.com/athletic/6362557/2025/05/17/stars-nhl-playoffs-miro-heiskanen/>

Stars' Miro Heiskanen, even at partial strength, demands an opponent's full attention

By Mark Lazerus

WINNIPEG — Miro Heiskanen can't remember what exactly he was doing, whether it was lifting or riding or squatting or running. But he remembers the sound, dulled through the thick concrete walls of American Airlines Center but reverberating nonetheless. He remembers the excitement, too.

But mostly, he remembers the angst. The frustration. That helplessness that every fan knows all too well, but that's largely foreign to a professional athlete.

"When you're playing, you really don't think about anything," Heiskanen told The Athletic. "You just play and do your thing. But it's hard to watch when you're not playing. You can't help in any way. For sure, it's more stressful than playing."

Heiskanen was in the building for Game 7 against the Colorado Avalanche, but he wasn't on the ice. He was back in the dressing room area, in the gym, working out while watching on television on a slight delay, that sound and those reverberations always

preceding the image. It was as agonizing as any other part of his rehab from Feb. 4 knee surgery.

Throughout that first-round series, spilling over into the first three games of the second-round tilt with the Winnipeg Jets, Heiskanen was on the cusp of returning. First, he started skating on his own. Then, he started participating in morning skates. Then, he started rotating in on line rushes and power-play work.

Every day, Dallas Stars coach Pete DeBoer was asked whether Heiskanen was returning. And every day, he was merely “close.” It didn’t matter much that DeBoer had said Heiskanen wasn’t an option for the first round early on, because when you saw him on the ice, you assumed you’d see him in the game. It felt like part truth, part subterfuge. The usual postseason mind games.

But the way Heiskanen tells it, he wasn’t being held back by anybody. And he wasn’t trying to force his way in, either. It wasn’t as if he were waking up every morning thinking this was going to be the day. In his words, he just knew “it’s not there yet.” And the idea of jumping straight into the hyper-intensity of a Game 7 after 3 1/2 months off was foolhardy. He knew that.

“The doctors didn’t let me play, and I didn’t feel good enough to play,” he said with a shrug. “So it wasn’t really a question.”

Didn’t make it any easier on him, though.

“It’s hard, for sure,” he said. “This time of year, you want to be playing. There just was not much I could do about it to get back. It’s hard when you’re not playing; it feels unfair. But I had to trust the guys and believe in them.”

As Jason Robertson, who had to work his own way back from a leg injury that cost him the first round, put it, “you win a game, you earn more games, more opportunities.” And thanks largely to new teammate and fellow Finn Mikko Rantanen, Dallas earned enough games for Heiskanen to return.

So Saturday night, when the Jets step on the ice in Dallas for Game 6, Heiskanen will be right in the thick of things, not back in the gym. It’s huge for the Stars, of course, as Heiskanen is one of the top defensemen in the league. But it’s huge for Heiskanen, too, as all the work he put in alongside fellow rehabbers Tyler Seguin and Nils Lundkvist finally paid off.

Heiskanen said he always believed he’d be back this year, not next.

“I knew we had a good team and we could go far,” he said. “So I knew there was a possibility I could come back and play again. I never really thought about (my) season being over.”

Now it's a matter of trying to extend that season by expediting the long climb back to midseason form. In his first game back, Heiskanen played just 14 minutes, 52 seconds — 10 minutes fewer than he averaged during the regular season as the league's fifth-most-used player. And though he had a primary assist, he failed to register a shot on goal and had a couple of key mistakes, one of which led to a Kyle Connor short-handed breakaway — a breakaway Heiskanen was uncharacteristically unable to catch.

Game 5 in Winnipeg was progress. Heiskanen was one of the few bright spots for Dallas in a 4-0 loss, as he put four shots on goal while DeBoer upped his minutes to 18:33. The way he casually took the puck off Nino Niederreiter's and Mason Appleton's sticks during the same second-period shift was a reminder of just how smooth, just how slick he can be out there. Sure, there were still a couple of puck bobbles, but he looked more like himself. His gap was tighter and his breakouts were more aggressive. He took a few big hits in each game — including an Adam Lowry cross-check in Game 5 — and popped right back up each time. DeBoer told reporters Friday that he'll stick with seven defensemen until Heiskanen can comfortably play 20-plus minutes a night. So he's far from all the way back, but he's getting there in a hurry.

And the way the Jets are feeling after that big Game 5 win, Dallas will need all Heiskanen can give them.

"He affects all parts of our game, even though he's not 100 percent yet," DeBoer said. "His composure with the puck, his puck movement, his ability to transition us up the ice from our own end through the neutral zone, power play — that doesn't even touch his defending and his gaps and things like that."

Even at partial strength, Heiskanen demands an opponent's full attention.

"You certainly have to be aware of him," Winnipeg's Dylan DeMelo said. "Obviously, he's missed some time (but) he's a fantastic player. Even if he's missed that much time, he's going to make an impact. We have a game plan for him, like we have on all their guys, and it's just basically executing that. He is such a great player in this league, he gets up in the rush, moves pucks really well, he's good on the O-zone blue line and he's good defensively. He's a fantastic player in this league, so we have to be aware of him."

The Stars team that Heiskanen has rejoined isn't the same one he left Jan. 28, when the Vegas Golden Knights' Mark Stone recklessly dove at Heiskanen's left knee and wrecked it. Rantanen's arrival March 8 gave the Stars another huge asset and gave their opponents another focal point.

The trade thrilled Heiskanen, and he couldn't wait to play alongside him.

"He's not fun to play against," Heiskanen said. "So I'm glad he's on our side right now."

Heiskanen is just 25, and he's signed through 2028-29. Rantanen is 28 and signed through 2032-33. Throw in No. 1 center Roope Hintz, yet another Finn who's signed

through 2030-31, and the Stars have quite a core to work with. There'll be plenty more postseasons in which Heiskanen can make up for lost time.

But right now, he's just focused on getting one more win. Because one more win means one more round. And one more round gets him one step closer to 100 percent.

"It's frustrating to miss that long (a) time and watch the guys play," he said. "Just have to stay positive and work hard to get back. The guys did a great job to win the Colorado series and got some more time. Now I'm back, so it's good."

Dallas Morning News

<https://www.dallasnews.com/sports/stars/2025/05/16/dallas-stars-winnipeg-jets-game-6-preview/>

History is on the Stars' side as they aim to bounce back, close out the Jets in Dallas

By Shawn McFarland

Let's make revisions to an old cliché for one moment: It is about how you start, it is about how you finish, and for these Dallas Stars, it is about how they'll respond and react to each and everything in between that determines survival.

Sounds like a lot to take in. Don't fret, coach Pete DeBoer says, these guys can handle it.

"I think we have a real honesty to our group," DeBoer said Friday upon the team's return from Canada. "They're willing to accept some hard coaching and some honest feedback on what we have to fix. They don't get offended by that and they usually get it fixed for the next night."

Like they're carpenters or plumbers.

The Stars are 14-5 after a playoff loss in DeBoer's three seasons on staff and are 4-0 after a defeat this postseason and will need to win a fifth Saturday in Game 6 vs. the Winnipeg Jets at American Airlines Center to advance into the Western Conference finals. The Stars lead the second round series 3-2 after a shutout loss in Game 5 on the road.

Related: Jets' home-ice surge puts pressure on Stars to close out series in Saturday's Game 6

Advertisement

History favors them. The Stars haven't lost consecutive playoff games since the Edmonton Oilers beat them in three straight to knock them out of last year's Western

Conference finals and have outscored opponents by 10 goals in their four bounce-back games this season.

The responses have largely been emphatic.

- The Stars beat the Colorado Avalanche in overtime in Games 2 and 3 after a series-opening loss in the first round.
- After a Game 4 loss to the Avalanche, they answered with a four-goal win in Game 5 and witnessed the apex of Mikko Mania in Game 7 after a Game 6 loss.
- In the second round, they beat the Jets twice in a row at American Airlines Center to take a 3-1 series lead after a Game 2 loss on the road.

A perfect 5-for-5 slate would let Dallas dance for another round and, most importantly, remove the factors that come with an extended series vs. Winnipeg.

“It’s on our group as coaches to kind of look through that tape, find out the things we did well and some of the things we want to fix and make sure we message that tomorrow,” DeBoer said. “They’re really good about implementing some of the things that we’re going to try and do.”

The Stars, ideally, will try to avoid a Game 7 on the road. They’re 5-1 this postseason and 2-0 this series at American Airlines Center but have gone 2-4 on the road and have been shut out in their last two games at Canada Life Centre.

Winnipeg, which is 6-1 at Canada Life Centre this playoffs, has gotten the most out of goaltender Connor Hellebuyck at home. Just look at the stark differences in this series: He allowed eight goals in two games at American Airlines Center but just three total in three games up north.

Stars center Matt Duchene doesn’t necessarily believe that the Jets or Hellebuyck are significantly better or worse dependent on their location. Rather, he said after Thursday’s loss, “they’re a great team everywhere.”

They’d theoretically be at their best, though, with a chance to eliminate the Stars in Game 7 on their home turf.

“You never want to give a team life,” Duchene said. “We felt like we needed to win this one. You don’t want to give them any life at all. We don’t want to come back here for Game 7 obviously up 3-1 at one point. It might take seven. They’re a good enough team, it could. We’ll see what happens. We’re going to go home and try to put our best game on the ice and go from there.”

<https://www.dallasnews.com/sports/stars/2025/05/16/winnipeg-probably-cant-eliminate-dallas-but-the-stars-certainly-can-eliminate-themselves/>

Winnipeg probably can't eliminate Dallas. But the Stars can certainly eliminate themselves

Jamie Benn's punch was a highlight, but Stars need to limit penalties to beat the Jets.

By Tim Cowlshaw

Stars fans love Jamie Benn. A lot of them do, anyway. And while there wasn't much to cheer Thursday night in a 4-0 loss at Winnipeg that sent the series back to Dallas on Saturday, the captain's knockout punch of Mark Scheifele was the highlight for many.

It wasn't the usual hockey punch, just a straight left hand (with glove on) that floored the Jets winger when the two had a linesman trying to hold them apart. It cost Benn \$5,000 Friday but no suspension, and as coach Pete DeBoer said, "Jamie can afford the fine."

But what might have looked cool to some Stars fans certainly enraged Scheifele and the Jets, and you wonder what a punch like that really accomplished. It didn't put the Stars at a disadvantage, although the game was basically over with Dallas trailing 3-0 late, anyway. Benn has done plenty of that, however, with a team-leading 24 penalty minutes even though he has not played a ton in some of these games. His 10:47 of ice time was second-fewest minutes of all the Stars forwards in Game 5.

For me, Benn's punch — almost nine years to the day since Roughton Odor's roundhouse against Toronto's Jose Bautista — was more of a sign of a 35-year-old forward saying, "I can still do this," even if his pursuit of Hart Trophies is long, long gone. Benn has one goal and three points and is a minus-6 in 12 playoff games.

Saturday night is a new game, a fresh opportunity for Dallas to wrap up this second-round series and get on to the business of a rematch with Edmonton. Winnipeg still has not won a road game in these playoffs, and as long as goaltender Connor Hellebuyck didn't gain some injection of confidence with his second shutout of the series, the Stars should be fine.

I don't think Winnipeg can eliminate the Stars. But I do think the Stars can eliminate the Stars.

No team has had to kill more penalties in the playoffs than Dallas. While Winnipeg has more penalty minutes — the Jets and Blues had at least 60 minutes of penalties in all three St. Louis home wins — Dallas' penalty killers have been sent on to the ice 43 times in these playoffs. No other team's PK has been asked to do as much, and Winnipeg broke through with two goals in five tries Thursday. That could turn out to be a much bigger blow than anything Benn delivered.

DeBoer isn't sure his team's time spent with the man disadvantage adds up.

"We've got to work on it, but it doesn't make a lot of sense when you're the least penalized team in the league all season. And we haven't changed our style of play," DeBoer said from Love Field on Friday afternoon, after the team returned from Canada. "So we'll have to work within what's being called, right?"

Dallas wasn't quite the least penalized team this season, but the Stars ranked 27th in the league — a far cry from the time they have been asked to account for their behavior in a postseason in which the emotions are obviously getting ramped up as the conclusion of Game 5 illustrated.

"I think that's normal," DeBoer said. "I mean that's the hatred that grows in a series as the games go on, and the deeper you get in the playoffs, you know there's a lot at stake."

The fact that the Stars are surviving while taking so many penalties is just part of the story. As a result, Jake Oettinger has been forced to stop more pucks than any goalie in the playoffs. Dallas is surrendering an average of 32.5 shots per game. Of the handful of other teams still alive in the postseason, Toronto is allowing the next highest total at 27.8. Despite all of Hellebuyck's struggle in the playoffs for Winnipeg, the Jets give up just 23.6 shots per game. That's a decisive difference that the Stars could really stand to correct if they want to wrap things up at home and avoid having to take DeBoer's spotless Game 7 record into Winnipeg on Monday night.

While I think concerns were raised in Game 5, this thing still favors the Stars. The most important numbers in the playoffs are the Jets' 0-5 road record alongside those awful Hellebuyck road stats (5.84 goals against, .793 save percentage). But in addition to winning the Presidents' Trophy as the team with the best regular season record, Winnipeg had the league's finest power play in the regular season, and Dallas gave that unit a bit of life in Game 5. The Stars will have to deal with that Saturday night.

But after enduring their second shutout of the series, does anyone think the Stars' Finnish line is likely to be silent in front of the home fans with the series on the line? After all that has come before, is Hellebuyck ready to stop them?