

Winnipeg Free Press

<https://www.winnipegfreepress.com/breakingnews/2025/05/08/we-cant-hit-the-panic-button>

'We can't hit the panic button' ***Jets even-keeled after Game 1 loss to Stars***

By: Ken Wiebe

The land of opportunity is a complex ecosystem.

As the Winnipeg Jets get set to face the Dallas Stars in Game 2 of the second-round series on Friday night, there is a level of urgency that is required.

A 3-2 loss in Wednesday's opener means that the Jets need to raise their collective level to avoid falling into a 0-2 hole before the series shifts deep into the heart of Texas.

"It's more important that we get back to playing how we expect to play ourselves," said Jets captain Adam Lowry, noting there were points in Game 1 when his team put forth the characteristics that allowed them to enjoy a great deal of success over the course of the campaign. "Then, there were other points and other instances that we were really just having a lot of self-inflicted plays that were hurting us.

"It's an important game. We want to at least get the split here at home before you head out on the road."

That Lowry wasn't about to overreact to a single loss should come as a surprise to no one.

His ability to dissect situations and keep an even keel is a big part of the reason he's the undisputed leader of this group, though his ability to ensure everyone on the roster has a voice that will be heard is another important part of the equation.

Lowry was quick to swat away a question about the importance of avoiding falling into an 0-2 hole on home ice.

"Regardless of the outcome (Friday), the series isn't over," said Lowry. "You've got to go from game to game, look at the things you can improve on, look at the things you do well and then try and implement them in the next game.

"Dallas is a great team at home. So are we. It's hard to win in the other team's building. And we want to take care of what we can and hopefully put ourselves in a good spot to go into Dallas feeling good and in a better spot in the series."

It's the first time in four playoff series the Jets didn't win the opener, though they lost two of those, so they're leaning more on the ability they've shown over the course of the season to regroup and rebound, rather than anything else.

"For us, there's some frustration because we know we didn't play our best game," said Jets defenceman Dylan DeMelo. "But it happened in the first round and we were able to move on and attack the next day with a fresh mindset and go after it. That's kind of the ebbs and flows from the playoffs and being able to learn from our mistakes from last game, try to take it into the next game and move on because Game 2 is obviously a critical game for us. We want to tie this thing up at 1-1 and the encouraging thing is we do have a lot better. We still did a lot of good things, too. We can't lose track of that.

"You don't want to be down 2-0. But at the end of the day, you don't win the series after (Friday's) game. You'd like to get it, obviously. There's going to be urgency from our side to get it done. But, knock on wood, God forbid we lose, we can't hit the panic button and start freaking out."

Freaking out isn't a trait the Jets have built their foundation on, nor do they plan to incorporate it at this stage of the proceedings.

With the benefit of sleeping on it and sorting through the day-after video session, the Jets were emphasizing the need to have better execution and coming through with a crisper start.

Despite scoring first on a marker from Nino Niederreiter early in the second period, the Jets gave up the first eight shots on goal of the contest before eventually turning the tables and finishing the first period stronger.

"Sometimes the simple play is the effective play and the right play," said Lowry. "When the plays are there, you still have to make them. There is a directness to our game when we are at our best. For whatever reason, we didn't have that at the start."

Another thing the Jets didn't have in the series opener was top defenceman Josh Morrissey, who missed the game with a suspected shoulder injury.

Morrissey was among a small group of players on the ice on Thursday and continues to progress.

Jets head coach Scott Arniel is encouraged by the progress Morrissey is making, though he wouldn't commit to anything other than his playoff standard "game-time decision" declaration.

The Stars are also getting close to welcoming top blue-liner Miro Heiskanen, who finds himself in the day-to-day category as he works his way back from a knee injury he suffered in late January.

A Game 1 victory by the Stars provides a chance to take a commanding series lead, though they recognize it also figures to bring out the best in their opponent.

“Your desperation level always goes up after you lose a game,” Stars head coach Pete DeBoer told reporters on Thursday. “They’re not going to want to lose two at home, so their desperation level is going to go up. We have to make sure that ours is comparable.”

Desperation levels, much like scar tissue, are difficult to measure — both individually or for a team. Even if the impact each of those items can have on an outcome is easy to identify.

So while the Jets should see some benefit of this building of calluses that has been ongoing, this round they’re up against an opponent that has accumulated plenty of their own.

Those results — and occasional heartbreaks — include three trips to the conference final during the past five seasons, with the loss to the Tampa Bay Lightning in the Stanley Cup final in 2020 stinging the most.

So for as much as we’ve been hearing about the difference in physical play or style for the Stars compared to the Blues, the experience factor is also at play.

Whereas the Blues were back in the post-season dance for the first time in three seasons, the Stars are in for a fourth consecutive spring — and they’ve got some unfinished business of their own to sort through after losing to the Edmonton Oilers in six games in the Western Conference final last June.

You’re seeing years of working to be structurally sound and digging into the details at play from both the Jets and the Stars.

You’re also seeing two teams that required frenzied third-period comebacks to avoid an early summer vacation.

The Stars earned the leg up in responding to the euphoria — not from a dominating performance, but from a steady one.

In what was mostly an even game, they got a superhuman performance from Mikko Rantanen, strong goaltending from Jake Oettinger (30 saves) and won the special-teams battle 1-0.

When teams get down to the final eight, these games are often decided by the slimmest of margins.

“They handled it better than we did,” said Arniel, referring to riding the emotional high of respective Game 7 victories. “That’s a lesson learned. Be good with our details. The

other thing for me is how much time we had with the puck, that we didn't realize it. We got rid of pucks faster than we needed to. I like to think we're a pretty good puck possession team, especially on the attack and in the O-zone.

"It was a hot potato at times. In the third period, we got better at it, but we needed to do it at the start. We need to have that confidence that we're going to go out and make plays and make Dallas defend us."

<https://www.winnipegfreepress.com/breakingnews/2025/05/08/fervent-fans-put-a-lot-of-thought-into-whiteout-fashion-choices>

Fervent fans put a lot of thought into Whiteout fashion choices

By: Massimo De Luca-Taronno

The first rule of the Jets Whiteout parties is obvious: wear white.

After that, it seems, anything goes.

Winnipeg's National Hockey League team resumed its playoff journey Wednesday with Game 1 of the Western Conference semifinal series against the Dallas Stars.

The Free Press checked in with some fans to see how their "white" vision came to light.

Derek Morley

If the Jets are to have a playoff prayer, then it doesn't hurt to have a pope on their side. That's where Morley comes in, having dressed as the "Jets Pope" since the 2017-18 NHL post-season.

"I was trying to think of a unique white costume that nobody else was doing at the time," he said. "I sent a message to my family group chat, and they were sending different ideas, like a doctor or surgeon, but my older sister, Susanne, had the idea of a pope, and I thought it was a great idea."

He tracked down his base layer — a costume store pope outfit — before customizing it with all sorts of Jets logos, embroidering the front, back and shoulders.

"It took weeks to make," Morley said.

Like any fashion maven, he's constantly making alterations, adding fresh updates every year. Most recently, he's had his hat embroidered.

Morley has been to almost every Whiteout party since Jets 2.0 returned to the Stanley Cup playoffs in 2015. He said the energy is unmatched.

“Honestly, there’s just nothing like Winnipeg,” he said. “I used to live in Vancouver and go to Canucks parties, and I’ve been to a lot of sporting event parties, but the Winnipeg Whiteout is one of a kind.”

Morley said his pre-game ritual reminds him of the Spider-Man movie.

“(The pope hat) talks to me like the Green Goblin mask,” he said. “I’m just sitting in my living room, and it starts talking to me like, ‘It’s time, you must put it on.’”

“Some nights I’m too tired, or I have to work the next day, but it calls to me. It’s like a curse sometimes, but there’s no way I would have it any other way.”

Gillian Laninga and Quinn Lyon

The Winnipeggers showed up adorned in white aprons painted with catchy taglines.

“This was all her. She’s the mastermind behind this,” Lyon said.

Laniga, 26, said she’s created seven different aprons involving Jets puns. Some of them include “Tony the Tiger because the Jets are GRRREAT!” and “Special Kyle Connor.”

“I went to the dollar store for some inspiration, and I saw some white aprons,” Laniga said. All that was left to do was “add her unique twist to it.”

Laniga and her boyfriend spent more than four hours prepping the aprons.

They had a 3-0 record at Whiteout parties heading into Wednesday’s game, a 3-2 loss for the Jets.

Colour plays a factor in their pre-game ritual.

“When I wake up, I make sure I don’t wear any colours of the opposing team,” Laniga said; Dallas wears green, black and white.

“No green socks, no green anything.”

Lyon said he enjoys the camaraderie at the Donald Street events.

“Everybody is so electric outside, standing around in the middle of the crowd. Half the people you know, half the people you don’t, but everybody here is like brothers and sisters, just getting along,” he said. “We’re all here for the same reason: we want the Jets to win the (Stanley) Cup.”

Matthew Salyn

Salyn, completely covered in lights from the chest down, said he wanted to shine like a star ahead of Game 1’s matchup against the Stars.

"I just got lights from Walmart, wrapped myself around, and I wanted to be the brightest here," he said. "I look cool, and I stand out."

Salyn said the white jumpsuit and lights took about 20 minutes to put together. His inspiration comes from Squirtle, the turtle who plays the saxophone on the massive score clock at Jets games.

"He has lights all over him, and I wanted to be as bright as him... to stand out from miles away."

This is Salyn's first year attending the street parties. He said he keeps coming back because of the environment.

"It's incredible," he said. "Everybody is here, everybody is crazy, so happy and so positive."

He said the Jets' improbable come-from-behind Game 7 win against the St. Louis Blues to advance from the first round Sunday is a memory he will never forget.

"Everyone was going nuts," he said.

Aside from the bright lights, the 20-year-old also revealed what he believes will be the key to Manitoba's team lifting the Stanley Cup.

"There are a few pairs of underwear I do not wear during a Jets game," he said. "The one I have with flowers on it, never."

Canadian Press

<https://www.winnipegfreepress.com/sports/hockey/2025/05/08/winnipeg-jets-confident-necessary-tweaks-can-be-made-in-time-for-game-2-of-series>

Winnipeg Jets confident necessary tweaks can be made in time for Game 2 of series

By: Judy Owen, The Canadian Press

WINNIPEG – Scott Arniel smiled when asked what the mood was as the Winnipeg Jets watched film of their Game 1 playoff loss to the Dallas Stars.

"They probably didn't like it while they were watching it,' the Jets head coach said of his players, who studied instead of skated Thursday. "But no, there's meaning behind it.

"We talked about it, they recognize it. We gave up Game 1, we gave up home-ice advantage (Wednesday night). And I'm not going to be disrespectful of Dallas, but we had a lot to do with that."

Recognition of what went wrong in Wednesday's 3-2 loss to open the best-of-seven, second-round series means mistakes can be fixed for Game 2 on Friday.

"I really noticed how much time we had to make plays and we rushed it or we didn't execute it," Arniel said. "To me, when we're on we're like clockwork."

"We're working together as five-man units, we're clean, we're fast and we weren't that (Wednesday night)."

Jets captain Adam Lowry also believes improvements can be made to the team that captured the Presidents' Trophy for having the league's best regular-season record.

"I think just some tweaks, some things that we looked at (Thursday) and we'll look at (Friday) — that we can be more effective when we have the puck as opposed to feeding their transition game," the veteran centre said. "I thought we did a poor job on both blue lines of puck management and really allowing them to get into that transition that they're so good at."

Jets forward Nino Niederreiter began Wednesday's scoring with a goal at the 3:30 mark of the second period. Dallas forward Mikko Rantanen replied, not once, not twice, but three times — becoming the third player in NHL history to record hat tricks in consecutive playoff games. He netted three third-period goals in the Stars' opening-round Game 7 victory over Colorado.

Top-line centre Mark Scheifele missed Games 6 and 7 in Winnipeg's first-round series win over St. Louis with an upper-body injury. He returned and made it 3-2 late in the second.

Lowry said the Jets have to muscle Rantanen off his game.

"Every chance you can, you have to go through the body," he said. "You have to slow the game down for him. You have to make him work to get to the open ice."

The Jets don't have a do-or-die mentality heading into the next match.

"Obviously, there's urgency to get the win because you don't want to be down 2-0," defenceman Dylan DeMelo said. "But at the end of the day, you don't win the series after (Friday's) game."

"You like to get it, obviously be 1-1. There's going to be urgency from our side to get it done. But, knock on wood, obviously god forbid we lose, we can't hit the panic button and start freaking out."

MORRISSEY A MAYBE

Winnipeg defencemen Josh Morrissey and Logan Stanley skated in regular jerseys Thursday morning, along with other players who didn't get into Wednesday's game. Both were injured in Game 7 against the Blues.

Arniel was asked if he was hopeful the veteran Morrissey might return and said he remains a game-time decision.

Morrissey is a key to Winnipeg's power play, which went 0-for-4 in Game 1.

"If Josh is back then obviously that's going to be a huge boost for us," DeMelo said of his top defence partner. "We've missed him and we know what he brings to our team.

"So if he's in, awesome. If he's not, obviously we've just got to continue to step up back there and try to get the job done."

REST FOR THE VICTORS

The Stars had the day off Thursday and only head coach Pete DeBoer spoke to the media at the team's hotel.

"Any time we can get a day mentally and physically away, I think it's something that we have to take"" he said.

Veteran defenceman Miro Heiskanen remains day-to-day in his recovery from knee surgery in early February.

"He has a surgeon who did the surgery in New York who has to sign off and he has a part of this, but we're moving closer on all those things," DeBoer said.

Global Winnipeg

<https://globalnews.ca/news/11172002/analysis-winnipeg-jets-dallas-stars-game-2/>

ANALYSIS: Jets-Stars series has very different personality from 1st round

By John Shannon CJOB

I have always been one to be guarded about making bold statements that profess "the greatest" or "the best." In this day and age, in 2025, we are far too quick to use those monikers. It's called recency bias.

Sunday night's Game 7 heroics against the St. Louis Blues do not need any type of hyperbole. And quite frankly, nothing the Winnipeg Jets do from this point requires any level of exaggeration. It's just that special. This year feels special. The Blues and Jets were great. The best? Not so sure — but they were great.

So here we are, in the next round. And yet, it just doesn't feel the same. Everyone could easily describe the Jets-Blues series in a few words. The tension, the excitement that built throughout the whole first-round series against the Blues will be hard to match, for a number of reasons.

Firstly, the Stars don't grind the same way St. Louis did. I suspect we won't see a 100-hit game in this round like we did in the last round. And remember, the chaos throughout the Blues series took more than two weeks to build to a double-overtime crescendo.

But that's just not the case in this Stars-Jets series. At least not yet.

By the time Game 2 ends Friday night, we will start to see and feel that same drama that occurred five or six days into the last series. And when this Dallas-Winnipeg series returns to Canada Life Centre (and it will return) for Game 5, we will be right where we were after Game 5 against the Blues.

Yes, the intensity, the anxiety, the drama will be in this series. It will just take time. And here's fair warning: if the Jets triumph and move on to the third round, we will go through the same circle of emotions one more time. Such is life in the Stanley Cup playoffs, where every series has its own personality. There is every chance that this round of games might be greater than the last series. Really. It is very possible.

We just haven't figured out what personality this series has yet. But don't worry — we will.

NHL.com

<https://www.nhl.com/news/winnipeg-jets-focus-on-containing-mikko-rantanen-in-game-2>

Jets focused on containing Rantanen, tying series with Stars in Game 2 Have to 'find a way to shut him down' after forward had hat trick in opener

By Tracey Myers

WINNIPEG -- Adam Lowry hopes he and his teammates will figure out a way to limit the production of Mikko Rantanen, but the Winnipeg Jets captain knows that won't be easy.

Trying to contain the Dallas Stars forward will be one of the focal points for the Jets when they play Game 2 of the Western Conference Second Round at Canada Life Centre on Friday (9:30 p.m. ET; CBC, TVAS, SN, TNT, truTV, MAX).

Rantanen had a natural hat trick for the Stars in a 3-2 win in Game 1 on Wednesday. He has scored a hat trick in back-to-back games, the first time in nearly 40 years an NHL player has done that. Jari Kurri of the Edmonton Oilers was the last to do it, doing so in Games 5 and 6 of the 1985 Conference Final.

"Well, I'll just break down the first (Rantanen goal)," Lowry said. "In the neutral zone, (Stars forward) Sam Steel gets the puck, goes down. Rather than us getting into him, we're passive. We kind of duplicate. He hits the weak side. But generally, in our coverage and the way we want to play, we'd play it differently. It's just being more assertive in terms of playing on our toes."

Rantanen has factored on each of the Stars' past 12 goals, the longest streak by a player in playoff history. He's scored six of their past seven goals.

"We all know how elite he is. He's really done it these last few games and throughout his whole career," Jets forward Nino Niederreiter said. "Always a fantastic player, but we've got to find a way to shut him down and not make it too easy on him."

That's easier said than done. His former team, the Colorado Avalanche, couldn't do it in the first round, and they knew him as well as anyone. Rantanen played 10 seasons there before the Avalanche traded him to the Carolina Hurricanes on Jan. 24. The Stars acquired him from Carolina on March 7.

Rantanen got off to a slow start in the Stanley Cup Playoffs, with one assist in his first four games. Since then, however, he's been sizzling, with 14 points (eight goals, six assists) in the past four games.

"He's an absolutely fantastic player, big (6-foot-4, 215 pounds), strong and does a lot of really, really good things out there," Jets center Mark Scheifele said. "He's an absolutely phenomenal player, and when you need to take away that time and space, it makes it harder, but obviously, he's a fantastic player. I've got to really watch out for him."

Rantanen leads all players with 15 points (eight goals, seven assists) in eight postseason games. Toronto Maple Leafs forward William Nylander and Edmonton Oilers center Connor McDavid are next with 13 points each.

So, how to slow him down?

"I think one is the transition game. Him and Roope (Hintz) and Mikael (Granlund), they do a great job in transition off the rush, feeding and I felt like we fed into that," Lowry said of the Stars' top line. "A guy like that, you have to force to defend. The less time their line has the puck, the less dangerous he's going to be. Make him spend some shifts in his own end."

"I think it's important when you get in the D-zone against guys like that, you take away his stick. He's such a big body, you're generally not going to be able to push him away from the net or push him off pucks. But if you (don't) allow him to get the pucks in spots he wants to be or with the time he wants to have, it generally makes it harder for him to make those plays."

The Jets weren't happy with their game overall on Wednesday. After their incredible 4-3 double overtime win against the St. Louis Blues in Game 7 of the first round, they looked sluggish.

Coach Scott Arniel said it "felt like Game 45 in the middle of December" more than the second-round opener. The Jets want to be more aggressive, they want to get back to their structure and they want to even this series. Keeping Rantanen at bay is a big part of it, too.

"He's an exceptional player," Lowry said. "He made a huge difference in the game last night and every chance you can, you have to go through the body. You have to slow the game down for him. You have to make him work to get to the open ice.

"I think we got a little loose in our structure on a couple of [the goals], that he was able to get a tip on the one, he was able to get the netfront positioning. But I think the plays before that lead into those chances for him. We just have to do a better job of limiting those."

Dallasstars.com

<https://www.nhl.com/stars/news/robo-s-return-how-jason-robertson-seamlessly-slid-back-into-lineup-in-game-1-against-the-winnipeg-jets-050825>

Robo's return: How Jason Robertson seamlessly slid back into the lineup in Game 1

By Mike Heika

Game 1 was the perfect return to play for Jason Robertson.

The Stars' leading scorer for the past three seasons, the 25-year-old winger has been pushing hard to improve his defensive game and be a more complete player. So in coming back from missing all of the First Round because of a lower-body injury, Robertson's chore was to play smart.

"I got my feet wet and didn't make any big mistakes," Robertson said. "I tried to keep it simple and then build on it."

That has been the key for Robertson this season. At his heart, he is a guilt-free offensive player who mostly wants to upstage opposing goalies (and sometimes his own, in practice). But after having offseason surgery on his foot, he had to come back with a few limitations and adjust his game.

Robertson had 28 points (9 goals, 19 assists) in his first 36 games this season. Once he got up and running, he had 52 points (26 goals, 26 assists) in the final 46 games. He ranked seventh in points and fourth in goal scoring in the NHL during that span.

"It took some time," Robertson said earlier in the year. "I'd never really had injuries before, so there was an adjustment period. I had surgery, and that was tough."

His latest injury only required three weeks of rehab, so that should make things easier. In his first game back, coach Pete DeBoer said he liked what he saw.

"He did a good job for us," DeBoer said. "It's not easy jumping into this series when you've been sitting on the sideline. I thought he gave us some really solid minutes. I like how physical he was, he threw his body around and won some board battles. We kept his minutes at a pretty reasonable level for a first game, but he's just going to get better and better."

Robertson played 13:44 on Wednesday in a 3-2 win over Winnipeg. He averaged 17:48 during the regular season, second most among forwards. He also was a regular on the left side of Roope Hintz, and that could change now that Hintz is playing with Mikko Rantanen and Mikael Granlund. But the fact that Robertson is more versatile now opens the door for him to be helpful in a lot of ways.

"That's always the big thing, getting offensive players to appreciate winning hockey – that they still can create offense by doing the right thing with the puck," DeBoer said. "I think he's really an underrated defensive player. He doesn't cheat, he's really hard and heavy on pucks, he's more physical than people give him credit for. He doesn't get enough appreciation for what he does on that end of the ice."

Robertson is listed at 6-3, 207, so he definitely has the size. He also is one of the team's smartest players. That said, he uses a big part of his intelligence trying to create offense.

"That's Robo in a nutshell, he's a shooter," said defenseman Thomas Harley. "He's a boost to our forward group, hopefully he can score."

Robertson can definitely do that. He was the team's leading goal-scorer this season with 35 in 82 games, and leads in every major offensive stat in the DeBoer era. In the past three seasons, Robertson has 269 points (110 goals, 159 assists) in 246 games. That's a points per game average of 1.09. He is tops in power play goals (31), power play points (88) and shots on goal (755), so he's kind of a big deal.

But he also understands the importance of team play and balance. After watching Rantanen go crazy in the past four games with 8 goals and 6 assists, Robertson said the hope is that all of the players can feed off of that positive momentum.

"I'm coming back in the lineup, hopefully we get Miro [Heiskanen] back in the lineup, everything else will start to build," Robertson said. "I think everyone's playing great. Everyone's getting opportunities, chances. [Rantanen] is a premiere player. He gets good bounces and I'm sure everyone else will get good bounces, too. He's working

hard, everyone else is working hard and I'm sure everyone in here is itching to take the load off him but we're happy to take his performances and we'll just find ways to win."

And that's always been the key for Robertson. Yes, he loves the points and goals and shots on goal, but he definitely loves the wins more.

"Robo understands through two long playoff runs the importance of details this time of year," DeBoer said after Game 1. "To his credit, he came in and stuck to the game plan and contributed in a lot of little ways that maybe didn't show up on the scoreboard but helped us win a hockey game."

And that was just the first step. Now, he hopes to look a little more like himself as the series goes on. He's earned that with his work in the gym over the past three weeks.

"It was definitely frustrating," he said. "It was one of those things that just happened. I had that thing over the summer, but I didn't miss any games and certainly didn't miss any playoff games. Building into the playoffs, it was definitely tough. I knew I had to work hard in the gym, try to get back as quick as I can and these guys did their job and gave me a chance to play. I just have to keep building off this game and try to improve some aspects and get on a roll."

TSN.ca

<https://www.tsn.ca/nhl/video/jets-ice-chips-jets-dissect-game-1-after-allowing-rantanen-to-run-rampant~3130045>

Jets Ice Chips: Jets dissect Game 1 after allowing Rantanen to run rampant (VIDEO)

The Jets spent the day off the ice on Thursday and opted to study film from their Game 1 loss to the Stars. A key figure in the session was Mikko Rantanen and the mistakes which led to bigger mistakes on his three goals. TSN's John Lu has more.

<https://www.tsn.ca/nhl/video/will-arniel-call-out-spark-jets-in-game-2~3130121>

Will Arniel call out spark Jets in Game 2? (VIDEO)

Scott Arniel shared his criticism of his team following the Jets' Game 1 loss to the Stars but will that provide the spark that Winnipeg was missing? What might Connor Hellebuyck be feeling when he goes up against a sizzling Mikko Rantanen? TSN Hockey analyst Martin Biron joins Domino's That's Hockey to discuss.

<https://www.tsn.ca/nhl/video/arniel-knows-jets-capable-of-more-after-game-1-loss~3130158>

Arniel knows Jets capable of more after Game 1 loss (VIDEO)

The Jets were coming off an emotional Game 7 victory over the Blues but fell flat in Game 1 against the Stars. Head coach Scott Arniel called out his team for their sloppy play and TSN Hockey analyst Martin Biron shared his thoughts on Winnipeg's performance against Dallas, how Mikko Rantanen has been so impactful lately and more.

Winnipeg Sun

<https://winnipeg.sun.com/sports/hockey/nhl/winnipeg-jets/jets-need-to-look-their-sunday-best-in-fridays-game-2>

Jets need to look their Sunday best in Friday's Game 2

By Paul Friesen

After their miracle comeback in Game 7 against St. Louis, the resilience of the Winnipeg Jets shouldn't be up for debate.

Still, the idea of dropping the first two games of a playoff series at home would paint a pretty bleak picture.

That makes Friday's Game 2 against Dallas a rather necessary conquest. Not a must-win, technically. But right next to it in the How To Win A Stanley Cup manual.

"You don't win the series after tomorrow's game," defenceman Dylan DeMelo said on Thursday. "There's going to be urgency from our side to get it done. But, knock on wood, God forbid we lose, we can't hit the panic button and start freaking out."

There are many ways to skin a cat, after all.

There might only be one way to beat the Stars, though: At their own game.

Because it's almost a carbon copy of the Jets' game.

It's defence first, and speed – when forechecking, coming back and attacking. No easy ice given, no puck battle uncontested.

The Jets weren't quite that on Wednesday. Like a crumpled up shirt pulled from the bottom of the drawer, they weren't crisp.

Friday will have to see them at their Sunday best.

"It's more important that we get back to playing how we expect to play," captain Adam Lowry said. "We want to at least get the split here at home before you head out on the road. But like Dylan said, regardless of the outcome tomorrow, the series isn't over."

Maybe not, but you might be able to get an initial glimpse of the end from an 0-2 vantage point.

When you factor in how the Jets did on the road in the first round, well, maybe you understand why Scott Arniel has been so quick to utter these words.

"We gave up home-ice advantage," the coach said, post-game and again the next day. "And I'm not going to be disrespectful of Dallas, but we had a lot to do with that."

His team was one of the NHL's best on home ice all season.

But the Stars were in the top five, too.

"Dallas is a great team at home," Lowry said. "So are we. It's hard to win in the other team's building."

The Jets would have to do that twice in Dallas to even the series if they lose again on Friday.

Odds are they'll be better. But there's always the threat of an opposing goalie stealing one.

That's why losing what looked like a winnable Game 1 didn't sit well with the coach minutes after it or the next morning.

"I know there was the hype coming off that game (Game 7), but... I'm not letting our team off the hook," Arniel said. "Because Dallas came off the same high... we were both running into the same situation. They handled it a lot better than we did."

As much as the Jets gained from that first series, it's Dallas that came into this series with the greater number of playoff callouses.

"They're a team that's gone to the conference final (the last two years)," Arniel said. "They handled it better than we did. That's a lesson learned. When we're on, we're like clockwork. We're working together as five-man units. We're clean, we're fast. And we weren't that."

Getting Josh Morrissey back on the blue line would help. He skated a little more on Thursday, but his status for Game 2 remains up in the air.

"We've obviously missed him," DeMelo, his regular partner, said. "If Josh is back then that's going to be a huge boost for us. So if he's in, awesome. If he's not, we've just got to continue to step up back there and try to get the job done."

The Jets have already debunked one playoff adage, the one that says you shouldn't drop two games in a row and expect to win a series.

So who's to say they can't debunk another if they drop two straight at home?

The funny thing about the Stars under Pete DeBoer is with all their playoff success, winning Game 1 is new to them.

"It's a long time coming," the Dallas coach said. "I'm glad I don't have to answer more questions about it."

They were winless in their last seven series-openers going into this one.

"We're not used to it," DeBoer said. "We're used to playing from behind."

Perhaps the Jets have them right where they want them.

<https://winnipeg.sun.com/sports/hockey/nhl/winnipeg-jets/top-that-father-in-law-of-jets-demelo-got-game-7-whiteout-baptism>

'Top that': Father-in-law of Jets' DeMelo got Game 7 whiteout baptism

By Paul Friesen

The Winnipeg whiteout can be intimidating, inspiring and nerve-wracking, all at the same time.

That goes for players on the home team, too.

Jets defenceman Dylan DeMelo says as much energy as players draw from Winnipeg playoff crowds, it can be a challenge to manage the nerves.

"It's a combination of both, for sure," the 32-year-old said on Thursday. "Because you want to play well in front of your fans, and that nervousness, anxiousness, excitement, all rolled into one ball of energy, really. It's a blast, though. The whiteout's unbelievable."

Joining the Jets five years ago, DeMelo soon found out TV doesn't do justice to the whiteout.

Visiting friends and family members have found that out over the years, most recently in the first round against the Blues.

"I've had some family and friends come to some playoff games and they're blown away," DeMelo said. "My father-in-law was at Game 7 against St. Louis, first-ever playoff game. I'm like, 'Uh, hopefully you can top that going forward.' But that's a pretty good one to go to. It's an amazing experience. It's very unique across the league. When it's all said and done, you look back on your career, those are the ones that are going to stick out, is the playoff games here at home.

"And we've had some really good playoff games here over my time."

None more hair-raising than the come-from-behind, double-overtime win over the Blues.

Adam Lowry has experienced more of them than DeMelo, but they don't seem to get old.

"The rink gets brighter," the Jets captain said. "And the crowd chanting MVP to Hellebuyck before the game and the anticipation for the game... you saw in Game 7 the energy we were able to feed off. With the rink being the smallest in the league, it feels they are right on top of you when they are on their feet.

"We feed off that momentum, and hopefully they help propel us to a better start in Game 2 and a victory."

Wednesday's Game 1 of Round 2 went Dallas's way, 3-2 the count.

It was a first look and listen to the whiteout for most of the Stars, including forward Sam Steel of tiny Ardrossan, Alberta.

"It's a loud building. A passionate fan base," Steel said. "It's always looked cool on TV. So to see it firsthand, it's a cool atmosphere. But we tried our best to limit the crowd's momentum, because they can definitely play a part in the game."

<https://winnipeg.sun.com/sports/hockey/nhl/winnipeg-jets/limiting-rantanen-a-key-for-jets-may-09-2025>

'Through the body': Limiting Rantanen a key as Jets look to even the series at one each

By Gordon Anderson

Mikko Rantanen is currently on a historic points pace, much to the chagrin of the hometown heroes.

Yet, there is grudging respect for the hottest scorer on the planet right now.

Rantanen scored three second-period goals on Wednesday as the Dallas Stars beat the Winnipeg Jets 3-2 in Game 1 of the Western Conference semifinal at the downtown rink.

"He's an exceptional player. He made a huge difference in the game last night," Jets captain Adam Lowry said on Thursday.

Rantanen also netted a third-period hat trick against the Colorado Avalanche in Game 7 of their first-round series on Saturday as the Stars won 4-2 to send the Avs crashing out of the NHL playoffs.

Naturally, Lowry and his teammates have a vested interest in keeping the power forward off the scoresheet. Otherwise, the Jets may be enjoying this recent spell of summer-like weather on the golf course sooner rather than later.

Lowry has some ideas on how to limit the current Finnish flash.

"Every chance you can, you have to go through the body," Lowry said. "You have to slow the game down for him. You have to make him work to get to the open ice. I think we got a little loose in our structure on a couple of them that he was able to get a tip on the one, he was able to get the net-front positioning. But I think the plays before that lead into those chances for him. We just have to do a better job of limiting those."

Rantanen has factored in on each of his team's last dozen goals. That is the longest streak by a player in Stanley Cup playoff history. He has eight goals and six assists in his last four games. The 28-year-old leads the post-season points race with 15 points.

"Let's see how long he can run this for," Stars head coach Pete DeBoer said. "He's rolling and he's feeling it. It is impressive what he's doing, considering the opponent and the time of year and how he's dominating games."

On Wednesday, Rantanen muscled Dylan Samberg out of the way to slam home a rebound for his first of the night, then maneuvered his way in front of Colin Miller before tipping home a point shot. He was the beneficiary of a fortunate bounce for his third goal, as the puck bounced off either the skate or stick of Samberg before slipping between the legs of Connor Hellebuyck.

"It's important when you get in the defensive zone against guys like that, you take away his stick," Lowry said. "He's such a big body, you're generally not going to be able to push him away from the net or push him off pucks. But if you don't allow him to get the pucks in spots he wants to be or with the time he wants to have, it generally makes it harder for him to make those plays."

Game 2 is Friday night in Winnipeg.

<https://winnipeg.sun.com/sports/hockey/nhl/winnipeg-jets/jets-admit-they-need-to-stop-having-poor-starts>

Jets admit they need to stop having poor starts

By Gordon Anderson

Winnipeg Jets head coach Scott Arniel didn't mention just one or two things when asked about the start to Game 1 of his team's second-round playoff series. He mentioned six.

"(I didn't like) our execution, our details, whether that's off faceoffs, whether that's our rush coverage, our attack, our entries, there's a lot of things," Arniel said on Thursday.

"Our starts haven't been great throughout the playoffs," Jets captain Adam Lowry added. "There is a directness to our game when we are at our best. For whatever reason, we didn't have that at the start."

The Jets opened the Western Conference semifinal with a 3-2 loss to the Dallas Stars at the downtown rink on Wednesday night.

Mark Scheifele and Nino Niederreiter scored for the Jets. Mikko Rantanen scored three goals for the visitors.

Even though Winnipeg and Dallas went to the first intermission embroiled in a goalless draw, the Stars led 8-0 on the shot count after Esa Lindell forced Connor Hellebuyck into a save at 6:52.

"They had zone time and a lot of chances and Hellebuyck (made some stops) for us," Lowry said.

Arniel mentioned in passing that his team may have suffered an emotional letdown coming off an emotional Game 7 win over the St. Louis Blues.

At the same time, the head coach didn't let his players off the hook as Dallas went through the same situation, the Stars scoring four consecutive third-period goals in a 4-2 triumph over the Colorado Avalanche.

"They handled (the emotion) a lot better than we did," Arniel said. "They're a team that's gone to the conference final two years in a row. That's a lesson learned for our next game on Friday night."

After Neal Pionk registered the first shot on Dallas keeper and "U.S. backup" Jake Oettinger 7:15 into the period, the locals started to make incremental gains in the offensive zone.

The Jets led 13-12 in the shots on goal department after 20 minutes of action.

“As the period wore on, we started to generate some chances and tilt the ice back in our direction,” Lowry said. “That is something we talked about on Thursday and is something we’ll look to do coming out of the gates in Game 2.”

But the head coach needs to see that kind of push back right from the get-go instead of nearly eight minutes into the period.

“We’re a pretty good puck possession team, especially on the attack and in the offensive zone,” Arniel said. “I thought we were getting rid of it. It was a hot potato at times. In the third period, we got better at it, but we needed to do it at the start. We need to have that confidence that we’re going to go out and make plays and make Dallas defend us.”

Once again, Lowry called on the crowd to become a factor, to propel the Jets down the runway with the engines pinned, yet in firm control.

“We feed off the momentum (of the whiteout) and hopefully they help propel us to a better start in Game 2 and get a victory,” he said.

Game 2 is Friday night.

<https://winnipeg.sun.com/sports/hockey/nhl/winnipeg-jets/shades-of-blues-jets-caught-looking-over-their-shoulders-against-stars>

Shades of Blues: Jets caught looking over their shoulders against Stars

By Paul Friesen

We knew the St. Louis Blues took a lot out of the Winnipeg Jets in the first round of the Stanley Cup playoffs.

But we didn’t know their steamrolling, hit-everything-that-moves approach would still have an effect in the Jets series-opener against Dallas.

Yet that’s that happened in Game 1 on Wednesday, a 3-2 Winnipeg loss in which the home team didn’t look like itself.

Head coach Scott Arniel said it was as if his players were still looking over their shoulders, wondering when the next blue wave would come crashing in.

“We rushed ourselves. We were thinking that people were going to come pouring over top of us,” Arniel said, post-game. “We had more time to make plays and to execute.”

Still fresh in their memory banks were the seven games against St. Louis, when the younger, more inexperienced Blues let it all hang out, physically.

It was one of the most rugged series the playoffs has ever produced.

From Game 1, when the Blues threw 53 hits at the Jets, to Game 7, when they recorded 49, it was a constant barrage of blue.

On Wednesday, the Stars were credited with just 24. Meanwhile, the Jets were still playing Round 1, throwing 46 hits at Dallas.

"I felt St. Louis was looking just to run us, to be honest," defenceman Dylan DeMelo said. "Maybe there were times where we'd give up the puck when guys were close, just anticipating getting hit from the previous series... throwing pucks away, where maybe we could've had a chance to hold onto it or maybe make a better play."

"A completely different series than the St. Louis one," is how Jets winger Nino Niederreiter described it. "It's definitely less physical, as of right now. We know we've got to put that aspect in our game to make it harder on them. They're extremely skilled and that's something we need to get better with."

Perhaps the skate is on the other foot for this round: the Jets needing to slow down the three-scoring-line-deep Stars.

"We know we've got to out-work them, out-battle them," Niederreiter said. "But they won most of the battles."

It's true, winning the hit count isn't winning the battles. Winnipeg was the more aggressive team in Game 1. Had more shots on goal, too: 31-24.

But the Jets looked a little out of sync.

Arniel said it looked more like a regular-season game in December than a playoff game. He mentioned sloppiness and poor execution, from the faceoff dot, out.

"We were getting rid of (the puck)," he said. "It was a hot potato at times."

He tinkered with his lines in an effort to shake things up. And he made a long list of things to address in a Thursday video session.

"Areas with us where we have to be better," he said. "And then we'll look at some of the things that Dallas did. There's areas we need to exploit."

Those will be harder to find than they were against the young, rambunctious Blues.

"They are obviously a very experienced team," Niederreiter said. "They know how to be in a tight game. They are extremely patient. That is something we've got to learn from."

Getting a handle on Dallas forward Mikko Rantanen, who scored all three Stars goals, would be a good place to start in Game 2 on Friday.

Maybe another good night's sleep will get the sound of that blue wave out of their heads, too.