

Winnipegjets.com

<https://www.nhl.com/jets/news/special-year-for-hellebuyck>

***Special year for Hellebuyck
Hellebuyck: "It means a lot."***

By Jamie Thomas

Connor Hellebuyck had a season to remember in 2024-25, and his work was recognized with a second consecutive William Jennings Trophy at the end of the regular season.

But there was far more to come, and on Thursday, he completed his hat trick of honours.

Not only did the 32-year-old win his third Vezina Trophy (and second in a row), but he also became the first goaltender to win the Hart Trophy as the National Hockey League's most valuable player since Carey Price in 2014-15.

"It means a lot. It's one of those things that doesn't get swung towards the goalies too often, so any time that a goalie kind of gets a sniff at it, you take notice. You kind of look at the special things that occurred along the way to get there and looking back in the year, it was just such a fun year," said Hellebuyck.

"We had so much positivity around the locker room, and everyone was just kind of living in the moment and enjoying the year and with team success, individual success comes and just to get one of these is pretty special in my world."

Hellebuyck edged out Edmonton Oilers forward Leon Draisaitl and Tampa Bay Lightning forward Nikita Kucherov for the Hart. By earning his third career Vezina Trophy, he also became the first American born goaltender to accomplish that feat. t

It's not every day that you go out fishing and, on your way back, discover that you have won two individual awards, but that's exactly what happened to Hellebuyck.

"My agent (Ray Petkau) came into town and tricked me and said he wanted to go fishing, and we just talked about it before I left. So, I took him out fishing and then I was trying to help him catch a fish, and the whole time he was just keeping his mouth shut, not that he didn't want to fish, but really, he was just out there to distract me," said Hellebuyck.

"I was coming in towards my dock from the water to get my son to go out because that was their excuse to get me to come back off the water. And as I was coming in, I saw the camera guy out there and I was really confused and really surprised so it was really cool experience."

The Commerce, Michigan product was surprised by his wife Andrea, his kids, both his parents, his two brothers, his sister, a couple of buddies and Jets goaltender Eric Comrie made a surprise appearance along with the two trophies.

“Just to have all those people there meant a lot to me and just the fashion that it all happened was really cool. I was just very surprised because everyone did a very good job of keeping that hidden,” said Hellebuyck.

“Just coming in and getting to spend the day at my house with the trophies was really cool as well, because most of these trophies aren't usually given to you for a day and you get to experience them for a little bit. You usually get a picture with them, and you buzz off. So having it at my house is really cool.”

From the start of the season, Hellebuyck looked like he was destined to add that third Vezina, helping the Jets to a 15-1 start. He finished the campaign with 47 wins, eight shutouts, a 2.00 goals against average and a 0.925 save percentage, helping the Jets win the Central Division title and Presidents' Trophy for the first time in franchise history. One could argue that his first Vezina Trophy (in 2020) was his most impressive campaign but statistically, this season was his best.

“When you include the shot totals are down a lot this year because they're reviewing every single shot that .925, realistically compared to history is probably more like a .935,” said Hellebuyck.

“This was probably the easiest year that I had of just going with the flow and the guys in front of me were playing incredible and just feeling my rhythm all year long. I never had any real ups and downs.”

Back in February, Hellebuyck returned to international hockey at the 4 Nations Face-Off and almost backstopped the Americans to victory, but they lost to Connor McDavid and Canada in overtime in the championship game. US teammate Dylan Larkin said after the game that setback would make Hellebuyck stronger.

“I understand what the Olympics are going to kind of look like and the big games, how they're going to feel and the intensity that's going to come. Granted that was just a little tournament and the Olympics is probably even a step above that,” said Hellebuyck.

“But just getting your feet wet at that kind of knowing what to expect, it's very crucial experiences that are gonna help us succeed in the future and, you know, just battles ups and downs of a mid-season tournament.”

Hellebuyck and the Jets fought their way through a tough, grinding seven-game series with the St. Louis Blues and advanced past the first round of the Stanley Cup Playoffs for the first time since 2021. Eventually they were eliminated by the Dallas Stars in six games. Teammate Mark Scheifele lost his father on the morning of Game 6, but the

team rallied around Scheifele and almost forced a seventh game back in Winnipeg losing 2-1 in overtime. Hellebuyck believes that day pulled the team closer together.

“We had the battle adversity there and we weren't able to prevail for him (Scheifele), and all our hearts are with him and his family. But I think if there's anything good to come from it, it's the fact that if you come to Winnipeg, you're part of a family,” said Hellebuyck.

“You're not just going to the business side, you're not just going to play hockey, you're going to really connect with a group of people and a fan base that's really there for you every step of the way.”

Hellebuyck would know all about the support from the fan base in the Manitoba capital. The Jets goaltender struggled in all three road games in St. Louis but when the team came home for games five and seven, the MVP chants before each contest got louder and louder. Now that Hellebuyck is officially the MVP, he had this to say to Jets fans.

“Thank you for the for the support and couldn't do without you guys and I hope that there's more to come and we can continue to celebrate things together and hopefully hoist that Cup in the near future,” said Hellebuyck.

“Hopefully, I can bring the (Hart) Trophy and let the all the fans experience it with me and get a couple of pictures with the trophy like they did last year.”

Hellebuyck was named to the First All-Star Team for the third time in his career, joining him was teammate Kyle Connor who is making his postseason All-Star Team debut.

Winnipeg Free Press

<https://www.winnipegfreepress.com/breakingnews/2025/06/12/hellebuyck-reels-in-hart-vezina-honours>

Hellebuyck reels in Hart, Vezina honours Jets netminder NHL's MVP and top goalie

By: Ken Wiebe

Connor Hellebuyck thought he was out on the water for a relaxing day of fishing with his agent, angling for his latest catch.

When Ray Petkau suggested Hellebuyck turn the boat around to pick up his son, Hugh, to join in the outing, the Winnipeg Jets goalie had no reason to suspect he was being set up — in the best way possible.

“That was the excuse to go back to the house,” Hellebuyck said in a telephone interview from Michigan.

“Pulling into the dock, there was my best friend, my family, my brother and sister and their respective families. And then Eric (Comrie) showed up randomly.”

It turns out this wasn't a random pop-in and Comrie wasn't alone either.

Hellebuyck's backup and close friend was joined by some shiny hardware in the latest viral moment the NHL looked to capture as part of a new format to hand out its awards.

Not only did Hellebuyck receive his third Vezina Trophy as the top goalie in the NHL, he also became the eighth goalie in league history to be presented with the Hart Trophy, as the individual deemed to be the most valuable player on his team during the regular season.

The Hart Trophy is voted on by members of the Professional Hockey Writers' Association and Hellebuyck earned 1,346 points (with 81 first-place votes, 45 second-place votes, 30 third-place votes, 22 fourth-place votes and five fifth-place votes, compared to 1,209 points for Leon Draisaitl of the Edmonton Oilers and 973 for Nikita Kucherov of the Tampa Bay Lightning.

“The way that they did it, showing up at my house, I was really not expecting that,” said Hellebuyck.

“I was just coming off the water from fishing — and I was just shocked about what was happening in front of me. The whole day and the whole process, I was very surprised and just in the moment. It was a true raw reaction.”

Hellebuyck put together a season for the ages in 2024-25, leading the NHL in wins (47), shutouts (eight) and goals against average (2.00) while sitting second in save percentage (.925) by .001 percentage points to Anthony Stolarz of the Toronto Maple Leafs, who made 19 fewer appearances.

The numbers were staggering and Hellebuyck's impact on the Jets' best season in 2.0 franchise history was undeniable, even if the team took tremendous strides in front of him when it comes to improved defensive play and making things more predictable for the All-World netminder.

“It's really surreal,” said Hellebuyck, who made 62 starts and appeared in 63 games.

“The team was playing great and we weren't really losing. There was a moment where me and Eric (Comrie) looked at each other and he said ‘You haven't lost in two months.’ When moments happen like that, it's just so crazy because that's not ever something that seems realistic.

“It goes back to what I always say: with team success comes individual success. I’m just so proud of the guys around me. This isn’t just to celebrate me winning this award, it’s a celebration of the team and what we’ve done together. Just a fantastic year.”

The fantastic year also includes becoming the 13th goalie in NHL history to win the Vezina three times.

Goalies to win the Vezina Trophy three times

Jacques Plante (7)

Dominik Hasek (6)

Bill Durnan (6)

Ken Dryden (5)

Terry Sawchuk (4)

Martin Brodeur (4)

Michel Larocque (4)

Tiny Thompson (4)

Connor Hellebuyck (3)

Glenn Hall (3)

Patrick Roy (3)

Tony Esposito (3)

Georges Hainsworth (3)

Hellebuyck’s name was first on 31 of 32 ballots cast by NHL general managers who voted for the award, with Andrei Vasilevskiy of the Tampa Bay Lightning finishing second (and receiving one first-place vote) and Darcy Kuemper of the Los Angeles Kings placing third.

“It’s kind of getting overshadowed right now, to be honest with you. It’s another trophy on the shelf at this point, with the Hart being the main talking point,” said Hellebuyck.

“Looking back on it, there are only so many goalies that have won three of them. To have that opportunity is pretty rare.”

Though not as rare as winning the Hart Trophy as a goalie, which is something that hadn’t been done since Carey Price of the Montreal Canadiens accomplished the feat in 2014-15.

Dominik Hasek is the only goalie to win the Hart Trophy twice, in 1996-97 and 1997-98.

“Not too many goalies even get considered for that (award). When that happens, you’ve got to take notice. For me, it was always about being the best goalie in the world and to win a Stanley Cup. The Hart doesn’t usually go along with those two goals,” said Hellebuyck.

"It takes a really special season and something that stands out from most of the others. That being said, I've still got my mind on the Stanley Cup. That's all that's left and that's really what I'm looking forward to for the next goal. It's the reason I train.

"That's what I enjoy about sports. Once you're there, you're not set there. Just because you're there today doesn't mean that you're there tomorrow. I might be considered the best today, but tomorrow I've got to prove it again. That's what really excites me. Staying ahead of the curve is what keeps me really driven and really into it."

That Comrie was on hand to present the trophies was fitting, since he was a huge advocate and often he mentioned Hellebuyck and the Hart Trophy during the second half of the season whenever he was interviewed.

"For a goalie to win the Hart Trophy is one of the most rare things you can do. It was well deserved and I was just so happy to be part of it," said Comrie.

"It's just unbelievable to see. He was so dialed in every single game. Every single game he gave the team a chance to win and it was so impressive to see. Having a front row seat to that was just incredible. It was spectacular, it was special. To see what he did every single night. I was in awe and shocked all the time. Watching the video and seeing how easy he made it look."

Goalies to win the Hart Trophy
2024-25, Connor Hellebuyck, Winnipeg Jets
2014-15, Carey Price, Montreal Canadiens
2001-02, Jose Theodore, Montreal Canadiens
1997-98, Dominik Hasek, Buffalo Sabres
1996-97, Dominik Hasek, Buffalo Sabres
1961-62, Jacques Plante, Montreal Canadiens
1953-54, Al Rollins, Chicago Blackhawks
1949-50, Chuck Rayner, New York Rangers
1928-29, Roy Worters, New York Americans

That Hellebuyck was first in the voting in such a strong field of candidates is a testament to the work he has put in since the Jets chose him in the fifth round of the 2012 NHL Draft.

"It shows you how special his year was. I'm just so happy for him because it was truly deserved and it was truly earned," said Comrie, who shared the net with Hellebuyck in the American Hockey League before both players eventually graduated to the NHL.

"I don't think it's a surprise for anybody. You could see right from the start that he was special, that he was different. He's got a big body, he moves well and he has all of the intangibles. He was ready to go right away and it was impressive to see. Look at his college numbers, look at his American Hockey League numbers, look at his numbers all

the way through where he's played. It's as elite as elite gets and it's continued all the way to the NHL."

Although the playoff run didn't end up the way the Jets wanted, Hellebuyck acknowledged the strides the group was able to take in rallying to win Game 7 of the first round against the St. Louis Blues in double overtime after facing a 2-0 deficit and pushing the Dallas Stars to six games in the second round of the Stanley Cup playoffs.

Advancing to the second round for the first time since 2021 and reaching six postseason victories after accumulating two in the previous two playoff runs was another important step forward for Hellebuyck and the organization.

"Looking back on it, I can't believe that I let it be such a roller-coaster ride, to be honest with you," said Hellebuyck, who was pulled for the first three times of the post-season against the Blues, but made the dramatic finish in Game 7 possible and posted a pair of shutouts on home ice against the Stars.

"I'm not super happy about how I handled it, but I am happy that I was able to build my game out of that and really start to break down my game and really learn what it's going to take for myself and the team to get to the next level. I've been building that for years, but this playoff run showed me what it's going to take to be at my best, every single day and every single night, regardless of what happens on the ice.

"We can definitely use this as a learning experience and we're going to build off of this. The guys in the room are already building off it. I'm looking forward to next season already."

<https://www.winnipegfreepress.com/breakingnews/2025/06/11/skys-the-limit-for-julien>

Sky's the limit for Julien

Jets prospect set to join Moose after memorable Memorial Cup win

By: Mike McIntyre

Jacob Julien couldn't have scripted a better ending to his junior hockey career.

The 20-year-old Winnipeg Jets prospect played a prominent role in bringing the Memorial Cup back to his hometown, capping off a terrific playoff run by scoring in the winner-take-all game as his London Knights beat the Medicine Hat Tigers earlier this month.

"It's what you dream of," Julien told the Free Press on Wednesday in a telephone chat. "You grow up watching London win the Memorial Cup a couple times and then to actually be a part of it and win it yourself with your team, I couldn't be happier."

Julien finished the four-team tournament with four points (2G, 2A) in five games after racking up 19 points (6G, 13A) in 17 earlier playoff games as London ultimately claimed the Ontario Hockey League championship. Being a point-per-game player at the most important time of the year would suggest Julien was able to find another gear.

“Playoff time is crucial, so to be able to help any way I could, that’s all I was trying to do,” said Julien, who was also a key part of the leadership group as an alternate captain. “Whether it was offensively or defensively.”

There’s no question Julien is one of the more intriguing players in the Jets pipeline. The left-shooting centre has plenty of size — he’s six-foot-four and 190 pounds — along with some serious skill. After being selected by Winnipeg in the fifth round in 2023, Julien had a monster 2023-24 campaign with 78 points (29G, 49A) in 67 regular-season games.

London is also an NHL development factory, led by veteran head coach Dale Hunter and general manager and owner Mark Hunter. The Knights made it to the Memorial Cup last spring but ultimately fell short. Second time turned out to be the charm.

At first glance, Julien’s stats from this past year might suggest he took a small step backwards, as he had 54 points (11G, 43A) in 65 regular-season games. However, that doesn’t tell the whole story. His role changed on a loaded London team, with less top line and top power-play work. More defensive responsibilities also came his way, which he embraced.

Essentially, Julien became a better two-way player which should help serve him well going forward.

“I think I got off to a bit of a rockier start than what I wanted. To be able to look back and play well throughout the playoffs at the end of the season, I was really happy with how it ended,” he said.

“To be able to look back and play well throughout the playoffs at the end of the season, I was really happy with how it ended.” =Jacob Julien

He was in constant communication with the Jets organization, specifically Jimmy Roy and Mike Keane who work in player development.

“They’re the best development guys in the league,” said Julien. “They were around the rink and texting with me, just making sure I was always doing well and doing what I needed to do.”

Julien also kept in close touch with a pair of fellow Jets prospects competing in the OHL — 19-year-olds Kevin He (Niagara IceDogs) and Kieron Walton (Sudbury Wolves).

“We texted each other quite a bit over the year. Win or lose you gotta always say ‘Hi’ to the other guys,” he said.

Julien admitted there were plenty of emotions on display following the Memorial Cup victory as he said goodbye to his teammates for the final time.

“After the final game everyone was excited but it’s a sad thing, right? To be able to end it on a win was obviously a tremendous opportunity that we had. I couldn’t ask for a better way to go out,” he said.

Now, the focus turns to his pro career. Up first will be the Jets development camp at the Hockey For All Centre which is slated for early next month. Then it will be on to training camp in September and likely starting things off with the Manitoba Moose.

“After the final game everyone was excited but it’s a sad thing, right? To be able to end it on a win was obviously a tremendous opportunity that we had. I couldn’t ask for a better way to go out.” —Jacob Julien

“Super excited for the next step. I’m going to be able to develop well wherever I play. I’m ready to go,” said Julien, who signed a three-year, entry-level contract this past March with an average annual value in the NHL of US\$925,000.

Obviously the NHL is the main goal, but having the AHL club under the same roof as the big boys is a blessing.

“It creates a great atmosphere all the time. To be able to be around the NHL guys, the veterans and all that,” he said.

Julien hasn’t touched his equipment since capturing the championship, wanting to take a bit of a breather following a gruelling campaign. He’ll get back on the ice soon, with a continued focus on improving his skating and also his defensive zone play.

“I think we played 90 games in total. But with the group we had, everyone worked hard and got it done. It was so exciting and fun to come to the rink. The games kind of flew by,” he said.

“It’s a little bit more condensed of a summer. But we’ll have a good summer and get ready for the season.”

Although he had his own busy schedule to focus on, Julien admitted he was keeping a close eye on what was happening with the Jets this season and was captivated by all that occurred — especially in the playoffs. That only increased his hunger to get to Winnipeg.

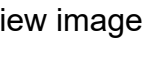
“It was electric,” he said. “I was watching when they scored with two seconds left (in Game 7 against the St. Louis Blues) and I almost jumped off my couch. They had a great season, and to be able to come into the organization now, I’m really excited.”

Global Winnipeg

<https://globalnews.ca/news/11243532/winnipeg-jets-analysis-free-agency/>

ANALYSIS: Jets could have a number of holes to fill in free agency

By Kelly Moore Global News

ANALYSIS: Jets could have a number of holes to fill in free agency - 

With two weeks remaining before the NHL free agent market opens, there could be a few openings on the Winnipeg Jets roster depending on how things shake out over the next month or so.

As we speak today, there is no certainty the quartet of Nikolaj Ehlers, Mason Appleton, Brandon Tanev and Haydn Fleury will remain with Winnipeg come July 1.

There is far more clarity on the futures of pending restricted free agents Gabe Vilardi, Morgan Barron and Dylan Samberg, but still, no guarantee deals will be completed with one, two, or all three members of that trio when training camp begins around the third week of September.

And for those who haven’t taken the time to check out the 2025 free-agent crop, in my opinion, the branches are pretty bare on that tree.

If Ehlers chooses to hit the open market — as all indications suggest he will — do the Jets have any chance at enticing Mitch Marner or Sam Bennett to fill that vacancy in the top six?

Would Patrick Kane or Brock Boeser be a worthwhile investment to consider?

And that leaves Vlad Gavrikov and Aaron Ekblad as impact-worthy additions to the top four on the blue line who would be worth the risk of a contract offer of any term beyond five years.

Remember those words of Kevin Cheveldayoff a year ago? The Jets GM openly challenged Winnipeg’s prospects to be ready to grab the brass ring at camp and then the preseason.

As it turned out, none really did. Any form of a window of opportunity pretty much slammed shut in the wake of a historic 15-1 start to the season.

For Brad Lambert, Nikita Chibrikov, Parker Ford and Elias Salomonsson, it could very well be a second straight chance to make it impossible for the coaching staff and management to NOT include them on the opening day roster.

Perhaps Brayden Yager, Colby Barlow or Jacob Julien take an unanticipated step forward straight out of the junior ranks.

Until the grey area becomes more black and white, it would be best to not rule out any potential scenario that exists, heading into this third week of June.

<https://globalnews.ca/news/11239694/jets-season-hellebuyck-awards-analysis/>

ANALYSIS: Plenty to be proud of in banner year for Jets, MVP Hellebuyck

By John Shannon CJOB

It's been 27 days since the Winnipeg Jets' season ended.

That was the day of Game 6 against Dallas. Who can forget everything that surrounded that last game, including the heroic appearance of Mark Scheifele, whose father died in the early hours of that Saturday? And now, here we are, in the middle of June, the Stanley Cup final is now a best-of-three, going back to Edmonton. And while there are only two teams remaining in this season, Thursday was a great day for the Jets and Connor Hellebuyck.

That should be Vezina Trophy and Hart Trophy winner Connor Hellebuyck.

There is little doubt that the announcement of Hellebuyck winning the best goaltender award was a given, but to add the most valuable player award marks Thursday, June 12, as the greatest individual day for any member of the Jets.

As an aside, the Vezina is voted on by the NHL general managers. The Hart is voted on by the members of the Professional Hockey Writers Association. And in the world's greatest team sport, individual awards are often very hard to measure. They can be very subjective. But not this year, not with these two trophies. These awards are a tribute to Hellebuyck's regular-season success, which also included the Jennings Trophy as the best statistical goaltender in the NHL: 47 wins, a 2.00 goals-against average, a .925 save percentage and eight shutouts — key stats that helped the Jets to the best regular season in the NHL.

In so many ways, it's a season that hockey fans in the province should never forget. And numbers that the Jets goaltender will call his most successful career numbers to date. Also add No. 37 being named to the NHL's first all-star team — along with teammate Kyle Connor, by the way — and Thursday was a banner day for the Jets.

For Hellebuyck, the team and Jets fans everywhere, the Vezina Trophy, the Hart Trophy and the first all-star team are satisfactory consolation prizes for not playing in the Stanley Cup final.

They aren't the ultimate prize, but they are reminders that this season was not completely a lost cause. There is plenty to be proud of.

Winnipeg Sun

<https://torontosun.com/sports/hockey/nhl/winnipeg-jets-hellebuyck-is-6th-goalie-in-nhl-history-to-win-hart-and-vezina-in-the-same-year>

Superstar Jets goalie Hellebuyck casts wide net, winning Hart, Vezina trophies

By Lance Hornby

Connor Hellebuyck didn't come back with any fish, but still landed two major NHL awards.

Hellebuyck was surprised by his parents, children and extended family when he docked his pleasure craft after a solo fishing trip at the family's Michigan cottage while cameras rolled. While they all posed with the Vezina, his Jets backup Eric Comrie suddenly appeared, asking where the "other" trophy was. Hockey Hall of Fame officials then brought out the Hart.

Hellebuyck had 81 first-place votes to runner-up Leon Draisaitl's 53, as tabulated by the Professional Hockey Writers Association, though he surely would've swapped places with the Edmonton Oilers centre starring in the Stanley Cup final. His victories represented just under 84% of the Jets' 56 wins, though after the voting he had road game hiccups in Winnipeg's two playoff series.

Winger Nikita Kucherov of the Tampa Bay Lightning, winner of the Ted Lindsay Award as the MVP voted on by players, edged Colorado's Nathan MacKinnon for third place.

"I saw someone in my yard and was confused," Hellebuyck said with a laugh. "That moment (when the Hart appeared) was like putting a cherry on top. I had no idea what the Hart looked like.

"I'll probably picture this day as one of the greatest in my career. This is awesome, I can give everyone a hug."

He becomes the fifth goalie to win the Hart and Vezina in the same year and the fourth to do it for a Canadian team. Carey Price, Jose Theodore and Jacques Plante had the double for Montreal through the decades — Price the last one to do it in 2015 — while Dominik Hasek won both with Buffalo in 1997 and 1998.

The league moved away from a formal awards gala into a gradual release of the winners via surprise videos involving teammates, family and friends presenting the trophies.

Bolts general manager Julien BriseBois called Kucherov into his office at the practice rink for a staged meeting while the players drove to the practice rink and gathered outside with his Lindsay prize.

Rookie of the year Lane Hutson of the Canadiens was pranked at a restaurant after the defenceman was told there was going to be a party for his Calder Trophy nomination. A Hall of Fame rep hid in the washroom with the silverware.

Florida centre Aleksander Barkov was given the Frank J. Selke Trophy as top defensive forward and the King Clancy community service award by patients at a children's hospital he supports. Cale Makar of the Avalanche got the Norris Trophy as top defenceman and Anze Kopitar the Lady Byng for clean play and high production on respective golf courses. Washington's Spencer Carbery received the Jack Adams as coach of the year at the end of a supposed TV interview in D.C. with his parents flown in and waiting in the wings.

Meredith Gaudreau came to Sean Monahan's front door in suburban Toronto with the Bill Masterton Trophy for perseverance, sportsmanship and dedication to hockey. The Columbus forward helped alleviate her grief and that of many Blue Jackets players and fans after good friend Johnny Gaudreau and brother Matthew were killed last summer on their bikes by an alleged drunk driver.

The league's general managers vote on the Vezina, broadcasters on the Adams, while all other awards are chosen by the PHLA.

The league's all-star teams, also picked by the PHLA, were released Thursday. MacKinnon outpointed Draisaitl for first-team centre, though the Oiler had more first-place votes. Handily winning at left and right wings were Kyle Connor of the Jets and Kucherov, ahead of Tampa's Brandon Hagel and Boston's David Pastrnak.

Makar and Zach Werenski of Columbus were first and second in votes for first-team defence with Vancouver's Quinn Hughes and Tampa's Victor Hedman on the second with Lightning goalie Andrei Vasilevskiy.

The Athletic

<https://www.nytimes.com/athletic/6422758/2025/06/13/nikolaj-ehlers-jets-nhl-free-agency/>

With Nikolaj Ehlers' future uncertain, looking back at how 7 famous Jets exits worked out

By Murat Ates

If Nikolaj Ehlers signs with another team on July 1, his Winnipeg Jets exit won't be the most dramatic, most acrimonious or most needed departure in Winnipeg's history.

But Ehlers' role as a Jet has been the subject of discussion for several years in a row. His ice time in the playoffs — ninth among Jets forwards at five-on-five, but fifth overall, thanks to the power play — followed a regular season that saw Ehlers play the eighth most minutes per game of his 10-season NHL career.

Did the Jets leave results on the table?

More pressing: Is Ehlers about to sign in New York or Carolina or New Jersey, receive first-line minutes and deliver results that make the Jets regret his departure?

There are several famous Jets comparables, from Ehlers' good buddy Patrik Laine to Jacob Trouba, Pierre-Luc Dubois and Blake Wheeler — among others — who have left Winnipeg for what seemed like greener pastures. It didn't always work out for them. Still, there are cases where players left Winnipeg, picked up a few extra minutes per night along the way and took the next step in their career.

Today, we dig deeper into Winnipeg's most famous exits, what happened to them and what it could mean for Ehlers should the UFA market win him over on July 1.

Patrik Laine (2021)

Patrik Laine was Winnipeg's own, delightfully chaotic, "Fortnite" playing bundle of dryly comedic energy. He arrived in 2016 via a draft lottery win, with the Jets moving from sixth to second overall, and then scored 80 goals as a teenager. He adored Winnipeg and seemed to be meant for stardom — if not as an all-around play driver, then at least as a one-shot scorer — but ultimately asked for a trade in 2021.

With Winnipeg: Laine was mostly a second-line right wing, while playing a key role on the Jets' top power-play unit. His best work came in 2017-18, back when Wheeler had Laine, Mark Scheifele and Dustin Byfuglien as three right-shooting one-timer options on Winnipeg's power play. After a rookie season spent primarily on Scheifele's wing, Laine spent a lot of time with Bryan Little and Ehlers, with Paul Stastny making a 2017-18 cameo. Laine got a bigger push in 2019-20, when he got the third-most minutes among Jets forwards — at five-on-five and overall, too. With 63 points in 68 games, it seemed as though Laine had truly arrived.

With Columbus: Laine started off as a second-line right wing, but struggled out of the gate at five-on-five. His second and third seasons with the Blue Jackets were exceptional, though — first-line minutes, Laine's first point-per-game season, and the two most productive points-per-minute seasons of his career. His power-play production was volatile, depending on his goal scoring and suffering with respect to playmaking

and puck retention. His five-on-five ice time in Columbus never quite matched that of Laine's final year in Winnipeg, but he played a big role through most of his tenure.

Outlook: Laine entered the NHL/NHLPA Player Assistance Program in January 2024. In August 2024, Columbus traded Laine to Montreal (at his request), where he seems to be revitalizing his career. Montreal deployed him as a power-play specialist to tremendous results, limiting him to the 10th-most five-on-five minutes among regularly used Canadiens forwards, and he shot out the lights with that power-play usage.

Was the grass greener outside of Winnipeg?

No, then maybe, then no. Laine is not on the path of stardom once anticipated for him. There are legitimate caveats available (in addition to a slew of injuries, Laine stepped away from hockey in 2024 to focus on his mental health) and it's clear the 27-year-old can still produce points in the right contexts. The Canadiens are deploying him as a third-line forward/power-play specialist. Looking back, Laine's workload peaked at 19:25 per game in his final year with the Jets — roughly four more minutes than Ehlers got this season. Laine was young enough to bank on continued development, but Ehlers could gain ground in terms of opportunity.

Pierre-Luc Dubois (2023)

Pierre-Luc Dubois was meant to get the Jets out of their Laine jam. For a minute there, it even seemed to work: Dubois struggled in 2021 but scored 60, then 63 points in his next two seasons. There were times when he outplayed Scheifele and times when he seemed to disappear altogether. In the end, his disinterest in signing with Winnipeg cost him a pretty good gig, while the Jets are still looking for his replacement.

With Winnipeg: Dubois' first partial season in Winnipeg was a poor one, with a two-week quarantine followed by two injuries. He spent the next two years playing the role of second-line centre — sometimes excelling, sometimes going cold to the point of being completely ineffective. It was important that he move on; remember that, along with the inconsistency, Dubois delivered two of Winnipeg's best seasons by a second-line centre ever. Little was a 64-point 1C prior to Scheifele's emergence and a 40-50 point 2C afterward; Stastny signed in Vegas; Vladislav Namestnikov has scored 37 and 38 points in his last two seasons.

With Los Angeles: Dubois was so underwhelming, producing just 40 points in 82 games, that the Kings traded him to Washington before his no-movement clause kicked in. It seemed as though getting everything he ever wanted let the air out of Dubois as a player; the consensus analysis piled on the Capitals for acquiring him as opposed to recognizing their low-cost acquisition of a still-viable player.

Outlook: Getting out of Winnipeg was not the answer. Dubois was a markedly better Jet than he was a King. He's found a great fit in Washington, revitalizing his game and scoring a career-high 66 points and dramatically outscoring his opponents on a line with Connor McMichael and Tom Wilson. It's not out of line to think he could have done the

same playing between Perfetti and Ehlers — let's not get carried away calling Dubois' resurgence a total shock — but it's clear Winnipeg got as much out of Dubois as was possible.

Was the grass greener outside of Winnipeg?

No. It was not green at all in Los Angeles, but Dubois has found himself again in Washington.

Jack Roslovic (2021)

Jack Roslovic was packaged with Laine in the trade for Dubois. He was an afterthought at first, given Laine and Dubois' pedigree, but Roslovic made the smoothest transition of all three players. His role has grown the most since Winnipeg — which makes sense, given his youth, the Jets' depth and his difficulty finding minutes early on in his career.

With Winnipeg: In his final Jets season, Roslovic scored 12 goals, 17 assists, for 29 points in 71 games, finally getting a full season's worth of middle-six deployment. His 13:10 per game at five-on-five — more than Ehlers got this season — was a dramatic increase in his nightly workload after getting buried by Winnipeg's depth in his previous two seasons. The problem, if you were looking for an instant return, was that his scoring rate marched in place despite playing with Ehlers and Wheeler more than any other teammates. He asked for a trade and got one — to his hometown, where he was meant to flourish.

With Columbus: Roslovic flourished. He scored at a 49-point-per-82-game pace over four seasons, backing up his inflated usage on a worse Blue Jackets team with legitimate offence. The same questions persisted: Was he best at centre or at wing? Could he drive a line or was he a complementary piece? Roslovic contributed like a middle-six scorer throughout his time with Columbus and again for Carolina this season.

Outlook: He's what Winnipeg drafted him to be, achieving the middle-six potential we saw in short doses during his Jets tenure. The grass was greener for him — first in his hometown, now with Carolina — although it's tough to argue with his usage in that final Jets season. (Roslovic's ice time was paltry before that, but there are concessions available based on the sheer depth of the 2017-18 and 2018-19 Jets teams.)

Was the grass greener outside of Winnipeg?

Yes. Roslovic is a good example in favour of "more minutes equals more points" for most players.

Jacob Trouba (2019)

With Winnipeg: Trouba was a top-pairing defenceman who received a 2018-19 promotion to the top power-play unit in the wake of injuries to Byfuglien and Josh Morrissey. He'd always been a productive five-on-five defenceman but added 18 power-play points, scoring 50 points in total. Continued power play success was never a good

bet, but Trouba had been a productive even-strength defenceman for several years. The Jets' version of Trouba was an above-average top-four defenceman, even when Byfuglien was healthy and manning the top power-play unit.

With New York: Trouba struggled early and late in his Rangers career, with a pair of good top-four seasons sandwiched between multiple seasons of getting outchanced and outscored. He emerged as a violent physical threat in New York, which is an element that is missing from the Jets lineup — and had one great season, results-wise, wherein the Rangers won his minutes by 15 goals. Most often, though, Trouba's pairings were outchanced and outscored over the course of his Rangers tenure.

Outlook: It's not that Trouba's performance fell off a cliff in New York. We always knew that he was out of his element playing PP1, as he did prior to the Jets trading him. Still, Winnipeg got Trouba's best year in terms of points (50) and his three best years in terms of shot attempts and expected goals. Trouba's best on-ice situation was playing alongside Morrissey on the Jets — this much is clear — even if he preferred to live in the U.S.

Was the grass greener outside of Winnipeg?

No.

Paul Stastny (2018)

Paul Stastny was acquired at the 2018 trade deadline and became an instant fan favourite, playing defensive conscience for Laine and Ehlers while contributing to the Jets' top power play. The Jets tried to re-sign him in the offseason, thinking themselves set with Scheifele, Stastny, Little and Lowry down the middle, but Stastny chose Las Vegas instead. Two years later, Winnipeg traded for him again — this time, from the Golden Knights — with lower expectations now that he was 36 years old.

With Winnipeg: Stastny was a stretch run and postseason darling, scoring the goal that beat Nashville in Game 7 among 15 points in 17 playoff games. His friendship with Wheeler made him an instant cultural fit, while he appeared to fit seamlessly on the Jets' top power play, taking rookie Kyle Connor's interchange spot and adding a few tricks of his own.

With Vegas: Stastny scored at a 63-point pace in his first season with the Golden Knights, which seemed to justify Winnipeg's efforts to sign him. An injury limited him to 50 games, however, and his point production fell off the following year. It's oversimplistic to suggest he played poorly in his 38-point, 71-game sophomore effort with the Golden Knights — Stastny, Mark Stone and Max Pacioretty dominated the flow of play without finishing their scoring chances — but he was clearly on the downswing when he arrived in Winnipeg for his second stint.

Outlook: The Jets were right to want Stastny back in 2018 and he continued to find ways to contribute further down the lineup in his late-career encore. The grass was a

little bit greener — he made the Western Conference final in the 2020 bubble — but Stastny's own performance matched the quality he'd reached in Winnipeg. His role was almost identical to the one he'd played in Winnipeg and in St. Louis before that.

Was the grass greener outside of Winnipeg?

A little bit, via those 2020 playoffs, but nothing to worry about if you're a Jets fan.

Blake Wheeler (2023)

Blake Wheeler was one of the world's best five-on-five players for nearly a decade, consistently outplaying more famous competition without earning league-wide recognition. Wheeler was Winnipeg's captain for six seasons and, thanks to a power-play explosion quarterbacking the Connor/Scheifele/Laine/Byfuglien unit, he became a 91-point player — twice — before age caught up to him.

His brash, sometimes top-down leadership approach served him well until it didn't. His later years are marked by dressing-room conflict, struggles to integrate youth and the eventual removal of his captaincy. He was bought out in 2023 and played his final season for the Rangers.

With Winnipeg: Wheeler was everything for Winnipeg for a lot of years. In the year prior to his departure, he was 36 years old and clearly on the downswing, with second-line usage at five-on-five to go with a key role on a struggling power play. Even then, he maintained a 1.85 points per 60 minutes at five-on-five — good by second-line standards, but the third-worst production rate of his career.

With New York: To Wheeler's credit, his 1.64 points per 60 minutes at five-on-five in New York was slightly above average for NHL forwards — while doubling as the worst production rate of his career. His ice and impact continued to decline, playing 11:29 per game at five-on-five while getting second-unit power-play duties. His scoring rate dropped on the power play, too, which makes sense moving from Connor and Scheifele to Kaapo Kakko and Alexis Lafrenière.

Outlook: It's clear that Winnipeg had greater use for Wheeler's skill set than New York did. It seems reasonable to guess that his status in Winnipeg led to more first-unit power-play time — his last Jets season was among his worst in terms of power-play production — but his usage had started to drop there, too. It could be a case of a veteran losing clout with a new team; it could simply be that Wheeler's time had come. He played fewer minutes in his final season than Ehlers has at any point in his career.

Was the grass greener outside of Winnipeg?

No.

Dustin Byfuglien (2019)

With Winnipeg: ★

Since Winnipeg: 🇨🇦

<https://www.nytimes.com/athletic/6398783/2025/06/12/connor-hellebuyck-hart-vezina-trophy-nhl-awards-jets/>

Winnipeg Jets' Connor Hellebuyck wins rare Hart Trophy, Vezina Trophy combination

By Jesse Granger and Julian McKenzie

Connor Hellebuyck of the Winnipeg Jets won the Hart Trophy (league MVP) and Vezina Trophy (top goalie) in the same season for only the sixth time in NHL history, as announced on the league's awards show on Thursday night.

Hellebuyck joined Jacques Plante (1962), Dominik Hasek (1997 and 1998), Jose Theodore (2002) and Carey Price (2015) in that Hart-Vezina club.

Hellebuyck also became the eighth goalie to win the Hart Trophy, but because Vezina Trophy voting did not begin until 1981 and different criteria were used, Hart-winning goalies Roy Worters (1929), Chuck Raynor (1950) and Al Rollins (1954) did not win the Vezina in those seasons.

Also, with his third Vezina win in the last six seasons, Hellebuyck put himself in an elite class, joining Patrick Roy, Hasek and Martin Brodeur as the only goalies to win the award more than twice since 1981.

The other finalists for the Hart Trophy were Leon Draisaitl of the Edmonton Oilers and Nikita Kucherov of the Tampa Bay Lightning. The other Vezina Trophy finalists were Darcy Kuemper of the Los Angeles Kings and Andrei Vasilevskiy of the Tampa Bay Lightning.

Hellebuyck had one of the most impressive regular seasons by a goalie in recent history. The Commerce, Mich., native was the anchor behind Winnipeg's 116-point season, which earned the Jets the Presidents' Trophy.

He led the NHL with 47 wins — nine more than the next-closest goalie — eight shutouts and 2.00 goals against average. His .925 save percentage was second to Anthony Stolarz's .926, and Hellebuyck's stats were even more impressive considering his heavy workload of 63 games.

Hellebuyck saved 49.48 goals above expected according to Evolving-Hockey, which lapped the rest of the field and was the third-most by any goalie since 2007. As he's been most of his career, he was consistent, with a save percentage of .900 or better in 71 percent of his starts (also the highest in the NHL).

Along with the Vezina, Hellebuyck also won his second consecutive William M. Jennings Trophy this season as the primary goalie on the team that allowed the fewest goals in the NHL. Because a goalie must start at least 25 games to win the award, and Winnipeg backup Eric Comrie didn't hit that threshold, Hellebuyck was the sole recipient. He is the first goalie in NHL history to win the Jennings solo in back-to-back seasons. He's also now the only active goalie with three Vezina Trophies, and ties Hockey Hall of Famers Roy, Tony Esposito, Glenn Hall and George Hainsworth for the ninth-most all-time.

Only 32, Hellebuyck is already scaling the all-time leaderboards. His 322 regular-season wins are the fifth-most ever by a U.S.-born goalie. His 45 career shutouts are second by an American, behind only Jonathan Quick (63).

Unfortunately for Hellebuyck and the Jets, his sensational regular season was followed up by yet another disappointingly short playoff run. Hellebuyck posted a sub-.900 save percentage for the third consecutive postseason, and Winnipeg lost in the second round against Dallas. All three Vezina finalists struggled in the playoffs, with Kuemper and Vasilevskiy both exiting in the first round.

Hellebuyck just finished the first season of a seven-year, \$59.5 million contract extension that he signed in 2023.

<https://www.nytimes.com/athletic/6420007/2025/06/11/nhl-trades-free-agency-kreider-marchand-tavares/>

NHL rumblings: Latest on Kreider, Marchand, Tavares, Pettersson, more as the summer market heats up

By Pierre LeBrun

The potential Chris Kreider trade from the New York Rangers to the Anaheim Ducks has kicked off what should be a rather intriguing summer.

Intriguing because as I made calls over the past few days, taking time away from the Stanley Cup Final to get caught up on offseason affairs, one central theme popped up: Where are the sellers?

The landscape in the NHL is changing with long-established rebuilding clubs like the Ducks, Montreal Canadiens and Detroit Red Wings all wanting to add — and even teams further down the pecking order like the Chicago Blackhawks and San Jose Sharks wanting to get better by adding pieces as well.

“Almost everyone is looking to add or get better, pretty much,” one NHL general manager said Wednesday. “There’s almost no one purely selling.”

Or as another NHL GM put it: What team is entering a new rebuild right now?

Instead, it seems teams that need to get younger are looking at the fantastic re-tool the Washington Capitals pulled off over the past few years and deciding that's the model they want to follow.

In a more traditional offseason, several teams would be entering a rebuilding phase, saying, "Take our veteran players off our roster" for future assets. But there really isn't a single franchise ready to implode its roster.

The Pittsburgh Penguins could be considered that team, in some ways. They are listening on pretty much everyone other than their legacy guys. Bryan Rust is the guy most teams are calling on. Rickard Rakell is also a name to monitor.

It could put the Penguins in a unique position with the lack of sellers to cash in on that leverage.

But overall, it's really interesting how many teams, regardless of their place in the standings, are looking to add to some degree. It's a one-sided market, at least at the onset of this offseason.

What else I'm hearing from around the league:

- Pat Brisson, the agent for Jonathan Toews, has heard from multiple teams regarding interest in his client, who is returning to the NHL next season. But Brisson is keeping the list of real suitors down to three or four teams, max. The Winnipeg Jets, as discussed before, are one of those teams. I wonder about the Colorado Avalanche as an option as well, but regardless of where it goes, Brisson already has it narrowed down to a tight list.

Fourth Period

<https://www.thefourthperiod.com/jun-2025/toews-aims-to-select-team-by-draft>

TOEWS AIMS TO SELECT TEAM BY DRAFT

Veteran centre Jonathan Toews has generated significant interest from several teams and is beginning to narrow down his options.

Toews, 37, is not eligible to sign a new contract until July 1, but he and his agent Pat Brisson are fully engaged in contract discussions with teams.

According to TFP's David Pagnotta, Toews and his camp are expected to make a decision by this month's NHL Draft.

Toews last played in the NHL after the 2022-23 season and revealed, at the time, that he would be stepping away from the game primarily due to the effects of long COVID and chronic immune response syndrome.

The Winnipeg Jets and Toronto Maple Leafs are two of the clubs that have expressed interest in Toews.

The three-time Stanley Cup champion is expected to ink a short-term contract, likely one-year, that may be painted with various goal-oriented bonuses, such as games played and points totals.

Toews accumulated 372 goals and 511 assists for 883 points over his career, which was also highlighted by winning the Conn Smythe Trophy as Playoffs MVP in 2010.

TSN.ca

<https://www.tsn.ca/nhl/video/biron-takes-a-closer-look-at-hellebuyck-s-dominance-this-season~3149657>

Biron takes a closer look at Hellebuyck's dominance this season (VIDEO)

TSN Hockey analyst Martin Biron joins That's Hockey to share his thoughts on Jets goaltender Connor Hellebuyck being awarded the Hart Trophy this season.

<https://www.tsn.ca/nhl/video/did-hellebuyck-deserve-to-win-the-hart-trophy~3151480>

Did Hellebuyck deserve to win the Hart Trophy? (VIDEO)

TSN Director of Scouting Craig Button joins SC with Jay Onrait to share his thoughts on whether or not Connor Hellebuyck deserved to become the fifth goaltender in NHL history to win the Hart Trophy.

Canadian Press

<https://www.sportsnet.ca/nhl/article/jets-connor-hellebuyck-collects-hart-vezina-trophies-after-banner-season/>

Jets' Connor Hellebuyck collects Hart, Vezina Trophies after banner season

By Canadian Press

SUNRISE, Fla. — Connor Hellebuyck will have to make room for some more hardware.

The Winnipeg Jets goaltender won the Hart Trophy as the NHL's most valuable player Thursday. He also captured the Vezina Trophy as the league's top netminder for the second straight season — and a third time overall.

Hellebuyck is the first goalie to claim the Hart since Montreal's Carey Price a decade ago.

"It means a lot," Hellebuyck said in a statement. "It's one of those things that doesn't get swung towards the goalies too often, so any time a goalie gets a sniff at it, you take notice ... you look back at the year, it was just such a fun year and we had so much positivity around the locker-room and everyone was just kind of living in the moment and enjoying the year.

"With team success, individual success comes and just to get one of these is pretty special in my world."

The 32-year-old from Commerce, Mich., topped the stats page in 2024-25 with a 47-12-3 record, a .925 save percentage and a 2.00 goals-against average to go along with eight shutouts.

Edmonton Oilers centre Leon Draisaitl finished second in Hart voting, while Tampa Bay Lightning winger Nikita Kucherov was third. Kucherov won the Ted Lindsay Award as league MVP last week in a vote among members of the NHL Players' Association.

The Hart is chosen by members of the Professional Hockey Writers Association, while the Vezina is decided by the league's 32 general managers.

Hellebuyck appeared on 183 of 191 ballots, receiving 81 first-place votes for 1,346 points. Draisaitl earned 53 first-place votes and 1,209 points. In a razor-thin margin separating third and fourth place, Kucherov edged Colorado Avalanche centre Nathan MacKinnon — the 2023-24 Hart winner — 973-972.

Hellebuyck is just the fourth goaltender in the NHL's post-expansion era beginning in 1967-68 to win the Hart, joining Dominik Hasek (1996-97, 1997-98), Jose Theodore (2001-02) and Price (2014-15). Roy Worters (1928-29), Chuck Rayner (1949-50), Al Rollins (1953-54) and Jacques Plante (1961-62) are the only other netminders on the list.

Hellebuyck took 31 of 32 first-place votes from GMs to beat out Andrei Vasilevskiy of the Lightning and Darcy Kuemper of the Los Angeles Kings for the Vezina. Hellebuyck also took the honour in 2020 and again last season.

The 130th pick at the 2012 NHL draft is the fourth goaltender to win the Vezina at least three times under the current format established in 1981-82, following Hasek (six), Martin Brodeur (four) and Patrick Roy (three).

Hellebuyck is the first repeat Vezina winner since Brodeur in 2006-07 and 2007-08.

His impressive regular-season numbers, however, once again didn't translate to the playoffs.

Despite picking up two shutouts, he won just six of 13 starts in posting an .866 save percentage and a 3.08 GAA as the Jets beat the St. Louis Blues in a dramatic seven-game series before falling 4-2 to the Dallas Stars in the second round.

Hellebuyck, who was the starting goaltender for the United States at February's 4 Nations Face-Off tournament when the Americans lost to Canada in a knife-edged final, had an .870 save percentage in the 2023-24 post-season after putting up a .886 mark the previous spring in consecutive five-game losses in the first round.

Kucherov led the NHL with 121 points in 2024-25 and tied MacKinnon for the most assists with 84. Draisaitl led the league with 52 goals and tied for third in points with Boston Bruins winger David Pastrnak with 106.

Vasilevskiy went 38-20-4 with a .921 save percentage and a 2.18 GAA for Tampa, which lost to the Florida Panthers in five games in the opening round of the playoffs. He also picked up six regular-season shutouts.

Kuemper owned a 31-11-7 mark — including five shutouts — with a .921 save percentage and a 2.02 GAA in his first season with Los Angeles. The Kings beat the Oilers twice to open their first-round series before losing four straight.

NHL.com

<https://www.nhl.com/video/nhl-tonight-connor-hellebuyck-6374262627112>

NHL Tonight: Connor Hellebuyck (VIDEO)

NHL Tonight discusses Connor Hellebuyck joining elite company, winning the Vezina Trophy and the Hart Trophy