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(Colo.)- Johnson Scores In OT, Avs Beat Jets 3-2 To Earn Playoff Spot

By: Jeremy Anderson Posted at: 04/05/2019 06:44 AM

DENVER (AP) - Erik Johnson scored 1:49 into overtime, Philipp Grubauer made 34 saves and the Colorado Avalanche clinched a playoff berth by rallying from a two-goal deficit to beat the Winnipeg Jets 3-2 on Thursday night.

Johnson took a feed from Nathan MacKinnon and knocked it past Connor Hellebuyck for the winner.

Colorado players actually celebrated on the bench as soon as the clock ran out in regulation since the team needed only a point to earn a spot. The Avalanche went 8-0-2 down the stretch to secure a wild-card position for a second straight season. They trail Dallas by a point for the first wild-card spot. The Stars still have two games remaining.

Winnipeg's loss was a big blow in its quest to capture the Central Division crown. The Jets fell a point behind Nashville and dropped into a tie with St. Louis with one game remaining. It was the fifth loss in six games for Winnipeg.

Carl Soderberg tied it up at 2 with 9:25 remaining. Tyson Barrie also scored for Colorado.

Mark Scheifele and Nikolaj Ehlers scored first-period goals for the Jets, while Hellebuyck made 35 saves.

Just like Tuesday, the Avalanche fell behind by two goals. And just like Tuesday, when they responded with six unanswered goals to beat Edmonton, the Avalanche recovered.

Soderberg tipped in a shot from Tyson Jost to tie things up.

But things were tense down the stretch. Colorado was called for too many skaters on the ice with 1:26 left. The Jets couldn't get anything past Grubauer, setting the stage for Johnson.

After the game, the Avalanche gave away their jerseys as part of fan appreciation night. The bigger prize, of course, was earning a spot in the postseason.

Barrie cut the deficit to 2-1 at 5:17 of the second period when he scored from a difficult angle. Nikita Zadorov nearly tied it up moments later on a shot that clanged off the post and went behind Hellebuyck, who secured the puck by laying on it.

And moments after that, J.T. Compher had a wide-open net with Hellebuyck on the ground, only to have his attempt tipped over the net by the stick of defenseman Dustin Byfuglien.

Scheifele got the Jets on the board first as he poked the puck into the net just before Blake Wheeler tumbled over the back of Grubauer. The Avalanche challenged the play for goaltender interference, but the officials upheld the call.

Ehlers extended the lead to 2-0 toward the end of the first by knocking in the puck as he fell to his knees. It was his 20th goal of the season.