



# **Buffalo Sabres**

**Daily Press Clips**

*Sunday, February 10, 2013*

## **Miller makes 41 saves in Sabres' win over Isles**

Associated Press

February 10, 2013

UNIONDALE, N.Y. (AP) -- The Sabres and the New York Islanders both agreed that Ryan Miller stole two points for Buffalo.

Miller made 41 saves, and Alexander Sulzer scored the tiebreaking goal midway through the third period for the Sabres, who earned a 3-2 victory over the Islanders despite being outshot 43-15.

"Every season you're going to have games like that," Sabres coach Lindy Ruff said. "Ryan made the big saves when we needed them."

Thomas Vanek and Christian Ehrhoff added goals for the Sabres, who won their second straight game.

The Islanders dropped their fourth in a row after a 4-2-1 start.

"We deserved better tonight, there's no question," Islanders coach Jack Capuano said. "I felt the effort for 60 minutes was there."

John Tavares and Colin McDonald scored for New York, and Brian Strait had two assists. Evgeni Nabokov made 12 saves for the Islanders, who erased a pair of one-goal deficits but couldn't overcome a third even after Tavares was awarded a penalty shot with 3:53 remaining.

"We got to win hockey games, we have to get results," Tavares said. "We got to find a way to get points we need. We got to find ways to win and get back on the winning track and there's not much time."

The teams were tied 2-2 after two periods largely because of Miller, who made 27 saves through 40 minutes. He covered up for breakdowns by his teammates in the defensive zone and then turned aside Tavares' penalty shot with a glove save.

"We just need a win at this point," Miller said.

Miller, the 2010 Vezina Trophy winner as the NHL's top goalie, was also bailed out when Tavares hit the post on a semi-breakaway earlier in the third.

"I think with as many opportunities as we had, we got to put them in when we can," Tavares said.

Sulzer put the Sabres ahead for good 7:35 into the third, and Miller made sure they would leave snowy Long Island with a win. Sulzer's shot appeared to bounce off the ice and in the net over Nabokov's shoulder.

"Just one-timed it," Sulzer said. "Maybe (the puck hit him in a) tough spot."

Vanek, the NHL leader with 11 goals, opened the scoring 9:28 into the game. The forward was stationed in front of Nabokov and jammed a loose puck over him.

Tavares got the Islanders even at 1 in the final minute of the first period with his sixth goal of the season. After he got free from Ehrhoff, Tavares planted himself on the far side of the net before stuffing Brian Strait's shot past Miller.

Ehrhoff atoned for an earlier mistake by giving the Sabres a 2-1 lead 12:21 into the second with his first goal of the season. Ehrhoff, Vanek and Cody Hodgson played a three-man passing game through the neutral zone.

"(Hodgson) hit me back through the middle, and (I) put it in," Ehrhoff said. "That was definitely a good play."

However, that lead was also short-lived as McDonald scored the tying goal with 2:25 left in the second. He snapped a shot from the slot past Miller for his first goal of the season, and the second of his NHL career.

The Islanders got a pair of previously suspended players into their lineup for the first time this season.

Defenseman Lubomir Visnovsky, who made his Islanders debut, and forward Josh Bailey made their debuts.

Bailey was on the club's suspended list because of an injury he sustained while playing in Germany during the NHL lockout that prevented him from playing when the season started.

Visnovsky, acquired in a trade after last season, was suspended by New York after he chose not to report to the team when the lockout ended.

The defenseman attempted to have the trade overturned, and subsequently said through his agent that he wanted to play this season with HC Slovan of the Kontinental Hockey League.

The announced crowd of 12,608 alternated between booing Visnovsky and chanting "Lubo."

"I was pleased with his game for a guy who hasn't played for the last three, four weeks," Capuano said.

Bailey started the game on a line with Casey Cizikas and Matt Martin. Visnovsky was paired with Strait at even strength, and then with captain Mark Streit on New York's first power play. Bailey was even in 12:48 of ice time. Visnovsky logged 20:34.

NOTES: Buffalo scratched defenseman Tyler Myers and forwards Matt Ellis and Cody McCormick. Myers has a minus-9 rating and 12 penalty minutes in 11 games. ... Eric Boulton, Joe Finley and Marty Reasoner were scratched by the Islanders. ... Buffalo improved to 70-59-22 against the Islanders.

## **Myers watches Miller steal one**

By John Vogl

Buffalo News

February 10, 2013

UNIONDALE – Tyler Myers, wearing a suit and winter hat, sat in the press box high above the ice Saturday night while Ryan Miller stole a victory for the Buffalo Sabres. The defenseman didn't want to be there.

"I'm embarrassed, and I should be," Myers said.

Coach Lindy Ruff ran out of patience with his struggling defenseman and scratched him for the Sabres' 3-2 victory over the New York Islanders, which featured a 41-save performance by Miller. All of Myers' ice time came in the morning, when he skated hard for 75 minutes under the watchful eye of assistant coach James Patrick.

Myers hopes to be back in the lineup tonight when the Sabres host the Boston Bruins in First Niagara Center. The game will be played, but the Bruins' home game against Tampa Bay on Saturday was canceled because more than 2 feet of snow fell in Boston. Its airport was scheduled to reopen late Saturday night, which allowed the Bruins to get to Buffalo.

"He's had a rough go," Ruff said of Myers. "He's struggled. His confidence is low. Sometimes if you sit and watch a game, even in the back-to-back situation, I don't think this can hurt him."

Myers was on the ice for three of Boston's four goals in their initial meeting, part of the reason he found himself scratched Saturday. He has one goal, no assists and a team-worst minus-9 rating.

"It's just all mental for me," he said. "I make a mistake, I'm too hard on myself and put too much pressure on myself in the long run. I think I just need to relax and take a step back and start enjoying myself instead of working my way out of my own game."

"It's easier said than done. The way the last seven out of 10 games have gone, it's tough to have fun when that's happening. It's a matter of trying to get on the positive side mentally and just start enjoying myself. It's a game. I know I have to make some changes, and just keeping it simple is a good place to start."

The full-game benching was just the second in Myers' career. Ruff scratched him in November last season in Montreal, and Myers responded with his first two goals of the season in the next game.

"Two years in a row now," Myers lamented. "It doesn't feel very good, but silver lining, I responded the way I needed to last time, and this is what I have to do this time."

Myers is in the first season of a seven-year, \$38.5 million contract extension. He got a \$10 million signing bonus in July and has a prorated \$2 million salary.

His high perch gave him a good view of the Sabres' sloppiness and Miller's effectiveness, which included a stop of John Tavares on a penalty shot with 3:53 left in the third period. The Islanders outshot Buffalo, 43-15, but the Sabres never trailed and made their limited scoring chances count.

"We just need a win at this point," said Miller, whose team won its second straight. "I was able to get in the way a little bit more than the last few games. It's good to get in the flow and have the puck hit me and be able to get a win."

Thomas Vanek opened the scoring with his 11th goal in his 11th game. It seemed inevitable New York would score, though, and it did with 41.1 seconds left to tie the game and cap a one-sided period. Tavares beat Miller from close range, and the Islanders skated into intermission with a 15-4 shot edge.

The avalanche of attempts continued into the second. The Islanders built their advantage to 22-4 and finished the period with a 29-11 lead. Once again, though, the Sabres struck first and the Isles had to score late to tie it.

Christian Ehrhoff, booed by the small crowd of 12,608 because he declined to sign with the Islanders two summers ago, gave the home fans another reason to jeer with 7:38 left. He worked a give-and-go rush with Cody Hodgson, accepted the return pass for a breakaway and beat Nabokov stickside.

The Sabres couldn't reign in New York, however. Colin McDonald scored from the slot with 2:25 to go, sending the teams into the final period in a 2-2 deadlock.

Buffalo took its third and final lead with 7:35 gone in the final period. Steve Ott dropped a pass to charging defenseman Alexander Sulzer, and he rocketed a shot home. He got help from the screen set by rookie Mikhail Grigorenko, who played just 2:44 in the opening two periods and finished with 7:13 of ice time.

"His ice time some nights is going to be real good. Some nights it's going to be down. He knew that coming in," Ruff said. "He's a young kid that we want to progress along, and I thought he did a good job for us in the third period."

## **Inside the NHL: Pegula should have listened to insiders**

By Bucky Gleason

Buffalo News

February 10, 2013

Shame on me.

Really, I should have known better. I should have been more suspicious when Terry Pegula purchased the Sabres and started talking about winning the Stanley Cup. I should have watched and waited before listening and believing. I should have been more skeptical. I should have realized he was too good to be true.

It was about this time two years ago in which several people from Pegula's inner circle fawned over him and insisted the Sabres would change for the better. He would clean up this mess, I was told. He was obsessed with bringing the city a championship, I was told. Actually, it was championships, plural, I was told.

Not a single person, not one in dozens of interviews, had a negative word to say about the guy. In most cases, they were right. He's a warm and generous man, like they said. He's humble and carries himself like he doesn't have a dime in his pocket, like they said. He cares deeply about Buffalo, like they said.

They also said he would restore credibility.

And they were wrong.

High-ranking people from across the league are laughing at the Sabres, just as they did last year after the season turned ugly. What people, you ask? Sorry, but their names will remain private. It's an unfortunate but necessary aspect of the media that many don't understand, but with anonymity comes unfiltered opinions.

And the general opinion from a wide range of hockey minds – general managers, scouts, agents, league officials, former players – is that Pegula's success in the real world means almost nothing in the sports world. Most are stunned Darcy Regier and Lindy Ruff have survived when common sense called for their dismissal long ago.

The general message: It's incredible.

That, of course, is the opposite of credible.

One general manager hopes Buffalo keeps Regier and Ruff because it leaves one fewer team to worry about. Another executive criticized Regier for giving Tyler Myers a contract that included \$12 million for this season. It could ruin the defenseman, he said. Others are left shaking their heads or snickering or both.

The Sabres missed the playoffs six times in 14 seasons under Regier and Ruff, matching the DNQ total for Buffalo in all other seasons combined. They've missed three times in

five years. They skated into Saturday's game against the Islanders in second-last place in the conference after a 2-6-1 stretch that was 1.9 seconds from being worse.

Pegulaville was supposed to be where hope turned into winning, but it looks more like Palookaville with its collection of lost souls. Several supporters who showered Pegula with praise before he arrived are now questioning his judgment. Advisers who told him to clean house are wondering why he has enabled problems he promised to fix.

Note to self: listen less to what's said and pay attention more to what's accomplished. The record almost always speaks for itself in professional sports. Nobody has definitive answers to the Sabres' problems, but it has become clear what hasn't worked for a team that hasn't won a playoff series since 2007. That, alone, is grounds for dismissal.

Ultimately, it reflects the man at the top. It always does.

Pegula can hire and fire whomever he pleases, but he's not convincing anyone that the reason for the Sabres' existence is to win the Stanley Cup. Forget what he says and examine what he does. His message has become hollow the longer he sticks with a hockey hierarchy that has missed the postseason with disturbing regularity.

Looking back, it was easy to embrace Pegula as a hockey-loving fanatic rather than a shrewd businessman. He was the direct opposite of former owner Tom Golisano, who upon his arrival couldn't explain icing and upon his departure acknowledged his primary concern was the bottom line.

Pegula was an easy sell. It seemed he had the ideal combination of wealth and passion. He wasn't just a billionaire but a billionaire three times over. He wasn't just a Sabres' fan but a former season-ticket holder who drove an hour to listen to games while living in Pennsylvania and running a major company. The mere sight of the French Connection moved him to tears.

In truth, his affection for the Sabres, while admirable, has worked against him. They needed a cold, distant evaluation that would have revealed changes were in order. Members of his inner circle told him to clean house. Instead, he became smitten with Regier and Ruff. He embraced status quo and, with that, accepted mediocrity.

It's not how Stanley Cups are won.

And it's not how credibility is built.

The real kicker was Regier's contract extension, a reward for years of failure, before the season. I wonder which side approached the other. Was Pegula worried about some team stealing his general manager? Did Regier have the audacity to approach them about a new deal? Pegula has declined all interview requests since the start of the season.

Clearly, he's buying whatever Regier is selling. President Ted Black is on board, too, much to the amusement of some in the Penguins organization. Black extended Regier himself or failed to guide Pegula in the right direction. Obviously, they're convinced Regier holds the secret to winning the Cup. Otherwise, he would be gone.

It trickles down from there. Regier has refused to fire Ruff, who over time or repetition lost his voice. He might have reinvented himself again, but his players are getting coached by the same man with a message from the same lips. Players see the coach and general manager keep their jobs, and mediocrity becomes acceptable.

For the most part, the big picture looks the same.

The Sabres can continue putting an inferior product on the ice, and I'll keep writing that their product is inferior. I'm not going anywhere. Pegula isn't going anywhere. Regier isn't going anywhere. Ruff isn't going anywhere. Until changes are made, it doesn't appear the Sabres are going anywhere, either.

Shame on them.

### **Stamkos in good company**

What's more surprising, that Steven Stamkos has scored 186 goals in his career or that he turned 23 years old last week? He's already had a full career.

Stamkos is ranked fourth all-time in goal for players on their 23rd birthday. The other three no-names were Wayne Gretzky (329), Dale Hawerchuk (220) and Mario Lemieux (215). He leads all active players. Sidney Crosby had 186 and Alex Ovechkin 163 at the same age.

“It's pretty surreal when you think about it,” Stamkos said. “It's something that you work hard towards. It's not something that you set as a goal. It's an accomplishment to be up with guys like that.”

### **Flyers buy insurance**

The Flyers handed defenseman Kimmo Timonen a one-year contract extension worth \$6 million partly as an insurance policy going into the summer. Last year, they pursued Ryan Suter and signed Shea Weber to an offer sheet and came away empty.

Timonen is 37 years old and has had been slowed by injuries, including surgery to his back and hip, knee problems and a blood clot in his leg. He's still a great skater and passer, which makes him a valuable asset. Now, they have one fewer headache.

“He's a strong little guy,” GM Paul Holmgren said. “He has been through a lot, but he also plays through a lot. That's part of being a good pro, you just tie your skates up and get out there and play even though you might be dealing with something nagging.”

## **Caps have problems**

Washington's problems getting out of the gate start with goaltending, but they end with their penalty kill. The Capitals have been atrocious in both areas, which explains how a talented team can plummet to the bottom of the conference.

The Capitals thought they had two solid goalies in Michal Neuvirth and Braden Holtby, but neither has played well. Neuvirth had a 1-4-1 record in seven starts with a 3.05 GAA and .889 save percentage. Holtby, who was spectacular in the postseason last year, was 1-4-0 with a 4.74 GAA and .857 save percentage.

“Neuvirth is a good solid goaltender,” GM George McPhee said. “Holtby played really well in the playoffs. It's time for these two guys to play. Give them lots of games and see how they do. And right now it's not going the way they had hoped.”

The Caps were not interested in Roberto Luongo, as was rumored. The Caps were scared off by Luongo's contract, but their position could change if their goaltending does not.

## **Raffi answers bell**

Coyotes forward Raffi Torres wasted little time making himself available to Blackhawks tough guy Jamal Mayers, who was intent on settling an old score.

Torres traded punches with Mayers on his first shift in a blowout loss to Chicago. The fight was in response to Torres' filthy hit on Marian Hossa last season in the playoffs. Torres ended up getting suspended for the final 21 games.

“I understand that if I'm going to go out there and run around and give some hits, then I'm going to have to answer the bell sometimes,” Torres said. “That's a perfect example.”

## **Quotable**

Panthers coach Kevin Dineen on the torrid pace that comes with a short season: “Pitchers and catchers are going to spring training. I saw a commercial for the Masters the other day. My clock is all messed up. Things are happening fast and furious.”

## **Around the boards**

- In case you lost track, the Pittsburgh Tribune-Review counted 52,142 fountain drinks, 33,289 nachos, 26,633 pretzels, 22,258 hot dogs, 22,118 chicken sandwiches and 20,380 hamburgers were given away in the Penguins' first four home games. Another 8,680 jerseys, 18,950 T-shirts and 8,776 hats were sold at half-price.

- The Devils plan to honor longtime goaltending coach Jacques Caron, who played a big role in shaping Martin Brodeur, next month. “He's so positive and such a good hockey person,” Brodeur said. “He survived all the turmoil of 11 coaches and always stayed around with me. He definitely made my life easier.”

- Kings winger Dustin Penner has been a healthy scratch four times in nine games this season, leading to questions he could be going elsewhere. He's a former 30-goal scorer with size, but his reputation for being lazy is a turnoff for many teams.
- Nashville took a four-game winning streak into Minnesota after outscoring their opponents, 9-0, at even strength. Goalie Pekka Rinne is off to a great start with a 1.81 GAA and .933 save percentage. They could be a brutal team to play against if they can find consistent scoring.
- Injuries have left the Oilers thin down the middle, which could lead to defenseman Ryan Whitney getting shipped out. Last week, he was a healthy scratch for the first time in his career. He was smoked by Jaromir Jagr for the deciding goal against Dallas and was minus-6 despite getting limited ice time .

## **HAMILTON: Life without Myers**

By Paul Hamilton

WGR 550

February 10, 2013

Uniondale, LI (WGR 550) -- The Sabres played right to script, sloppy hockey led to a late goal in the first period and the Islanders tied the game.

After Thomas Vanek scored at 9:11, I don't think they had another scoring chance on Evgeni Nabokov.

The Vanek goal was because of hard work, there just needs to be more of it in the offensive zone. Right before the goal, they had a real nice breakout with Cody Hodgson coming in down the right wing. He couldn't get the puck through to a wide open Jason Pominville, but Jordan Leopold stuck with it and wound up behind the net. He got the puck to the paint and again Vanek wouldn't be denied from scoring his 11th goal in 11 games.

"It was just a rebound in front and I found it quick and just got it off," Vanek said of his goal.

The late goal by the Islanders was a product of bad luck by Christian Ehrhoff who had a real tough period. Ehrhoff fell backwards losing John Tavares of all players, who came out the other side to find a wide open rebound and a wide open net.

"I didn't think I fell," Ehrhoff joked after the game. "I didn't fall by myself."

Ehrhoff is getting booed every time he touches the puck since he wouldn't negotiate with the Islanders when traded here from Vancouver. He allowed Tavares to skate right by him and the kid would've been gone had Ehrhoff not tripped him.

Tyler Myers is not playing this game, but it hasn't helped the Sabres defensively. They're on a pace to give up 45 shots with most of the period being played in their end due to poor decisions and turnovers. With so much action there, they did block 11 shots.

Things really didn't improve in the second period, but it's still tied.

Ehrhoff is having his worst game of the season, yet he got himself up ice, beat David Ullstrom and got in alone on Nabokov and netted his first.

The Sabres were no better in their own in and the Islander goal with 2:25 left in the period proved it. Mike Weber took a play off the back wall and let Casey Cizikas lift his stick and find a wide open Colin McDonald for his first goal.

The Sabres put maybe three minutes of pressure on Nabokov with a good forecheck, but then it was all back in their own end forcing Miller into 13 saves. Weber does have four blocked shots after 40 minutes.

Early in the third, Tavares got in alone in the right wing side and hit the post clean.

Buffalo got the lead back when they finally went to the net. The kid Mikhail Grigorenko pretty much sat in Nabokov's lap allowing Alex Sulzer to power a shot by him.

Buffalo spent a little more time in the offensive zone in the first half of the third.

Miller has had to make saves again, but the scoring chances haven't been a prime.

"They pressured," Miller said. "They are a good skating team. They have a lot of good talent on that team and they use it pretty effectively and they carried the puck the majority of the night."

Vanek had a chance to put the game away stealing the puck and walking straight in. He beat Nobokov clean, but hit the cross bar

Somehow, the Sabres held off a final rush to win it. They gave up 43 shots.

"The higher quality stuff, we had 2-on-1s, if you broke down the high quality stuff, we might have had the edge," Lindy Ruff said. "We've had a long week. Collectively we looked a little sluggish, but I think we benefitted from the extra practice."

## **Sabres Myers a healthy scratch**

By Paul Hamilton

WGR 550

February 10, 2013

Uniondale, LI (WGR 550) -- Tyler Myers has run out of rope with Lindy Ruff. The defenseman has struggled mightily this season and with Andrej Sekera coming back, Myers will be a healthy scratch tonight in Long Island for the second time in two seasons.

The big defenseman is frustrated, but not surprised, "I'm embarrassed and I should be. Two years in a row now, it doesn't feel very good, but silver lining I responded the way I needed to last time and that's what I have to do the second.

Myers put two pretty good games together against Ottawa and Florida, but then he went right back down the drain again vs Montreal. Myers is -9 in his last six games with no points. He knew he was improving, but then was disappointed, "I was on the right track and then...it's just all mental for me. I make a mistake, I'm too hard on myself and put too much pressure on myself in the long run so I think I just need to relax, take a step back and start enjoying myself." So the question is, how does he do that? "It's tough, it's not an easy process, but I think just taking a look at my game and finding out what are the things I have to do to just make a solid game for me, nothing special, nothing fancy."

So what is Myers going to do moving forward? He said, "It's a game, I know I have to make some changes and I think just keeping it simple is a good place to start."

Pat Kaleta will also be back with Matt Ellis and Cody McCormick the forwards scratched.

You remember Kaleta got a neck injury when he turned and let Toronto's Mike Brown hit him from behind to draw a penalty. Brown left his feet and should've been suspended for that reason, but Ruff said Kaleta can't be doing that anymore, "He does have to stop that. We've had discussions and I'll have another one with him again today. Really, you can't put yourself and in his case, he can't put himself in that position. I still think there's a little bit of an onus on the player that's attacking, but there's an onus on the player that's going to receive that hit too, especially in Pat's case, not to put your head in that position." Ruff added, "Drawing penalties in that fashion isn't what we want. Drawing a penalty and injuring yourself for a couple of weeks doesn't make any sense."

Join Brian Koziol for the pregame at 6:00 when he'll be joined by Lindy Ruff, Tyler Myers, Steve Ott and Marcus Foligno.

## **Sabres Pardy Should Get More Time**

By Howard Simon

WGR 550

February 10, 2013

A new mapping system of how NHL players are used may offer some insight as to why Last July the Buffalo Sabres traded Derek Roy to the Dallas Stars for Steve Ott. The Sabres also acquired defenseman Adam Pardy in the deal and I, like many of you, figured he was just a throw in.

It was the same way I felt about Alexander Sulzer when he came to the Sabres as part of the Cody Hodgson for Zack Kassian deal.

As is the case with Sulzer, perhaps Pardy will turn out to be more than just a throw in. He certainly brings an element of size to the corps of blue liners. Pardy stands 6 foot 4 and weighs 226 pounds.

He brings physical play on defense as well, as evidence by his game in Ottawa this past Tuesday. I thought Pardy was solid in his own end and the fact that Tyler Myers had one of his better games this season may have been due in part to Pardy's presence alongside him.

I was surprised Lindy Ruff opted to sit Pardy for Thursday's game with Montreal. Ruff had to find a spot for Christian Ehrhoff, who was returning from an injury, but Jordan Leopold seemed like the logical candidate to take out of the lineup.

Pierre LeBrun from TSN/ESPN.com wrote a column about the Sabres this week and spoke to some people around the league in an effort to find out why the Sabres were off to a slow start.

One NHL scout told LeBrun part of the problem is the Sabres defense which the scout said was "too soft." Tell me something I don't know.

With Robyn Regehr sidelined by injury, the physical presence pretty much comes down to Mike Weber and the occasional hit from Myers. The lack of physical play on the back line is one reason why so many Sabre fans were excited to see Brayden McNabb make it up to Buffalo last season.

Pardy brings a good amount of NHL experience with him. He played in 183 NHL games over the last four seasons with the Calgary Flames and the Dallas Stars. The Newfoundland native even has six playoff games on his NHL resume, coming in 2009 with the Flames.

He won't bring much offense. Pardy has managed just 4 goals and 29 points in those 183 games but the Sabres don't need offense right now. They need someone to stand opposing forwards up at the blue line and knock some guys down in one on one battles, in addition to better decision making. Pardy showed all of that during his appearance in Ottawa.

## **Rewarding Inconsistency**

By Matt Spielman

Jamestown Post-Journal

February 9, 2013

The Buffalo Sabres have become comfortable with inconsistency and, in some cases, are even rewarding it.

Just prior to the start of this shortened season, owner Terry Pegula decided that he likes the direction the team is going under Darcy Regier and rewarded the general manager with a new long-term contract.

That move, in essence, gave head coach Lindy Ruff an extension too — because as long as Regier is the GM, Ruff will be the coach.

What Pegula has seen in the two years since he purchased the team that says he should keep his management team in place is questionable.

At the end of Pegula's first season in charge, albeit abbreviated, the Sabres folded after leading a playoff series 3-2 over the Flyers and fell in seven games.

That offseason, Pegula made a splash laying out big money for Regier to bring in defenseman Christian Ehrhoff for 10 years and forward Ville Leino -- who just happened to be the player that knocked the Sabres out of the playoffs -- for six years. Those moves didn't exactly pay off, as Ehrhoff had a difficult time transitioning to the Sabres early in the season and Leino had arguably his worst season as a pro. With the way Tyler Myers is playing this season, the seven-year \$38.5 million extension signed prior to the 2011-12 season is looking like another Regier misstep.

The Sabres' recent history is plagued by giving players long-term contracts and allowing players to become too comfortable with their jobs to keep performing at a high level. It seems that certain players are able to play under the weight of a long-term contract for big money and other players are not. It's not that the Sabres shouldn't give out long-term contracts; it just seems that their GM oftentimes gives them to the wrong players.

Drew Stafford hasn't come close to matching the 30-goal output he poured in before his four-year, \$16 million extension. Jochen Hecht did relatively nothing on a four-year, \$14.1 million prior to this season. Other than Ryan Miller's Vezina-trophy, Olympic silver-medal winning season in 2010, he hasn't lived up to his five-year, \$31.25 million deal. Tim Connolly's time in Buffalo is probably the best example of overpaying one of their own for very little production — and Regier did it twice! First, in 2006, after Connolly had produced 125 points with the Sabres up to that point in his career, Regier signed the center to a three-year, \$8.7 million contract — admittedly not a bad deal. At the trade deadline in 2009, just when fans thought Connolly's injury-plagued days in Buffalo were over, Regier came out with an announcement — not that Connolly had been traded, but he had in fact been re-signed for two years and \$9 million more. Paul

Gaustad won faceoffs, something this year's Sabres team sorely misses, but that skill did not warrant the contract with which he was rewarded.

And the one long-term contract Regier has signed that is a fairly productive deal — seven years, \$50 million for Thomas Vanek — he was forced into by an Edmonton Oilers offer sheet and the emotional fallout for failing to extend Daniel Briere and Chris Drury.

A lot could be said of Regier and Ruff for about the first 10 years of their run, but the last six have been difficult. Regier certainly has an eye for young talent, and his drafting has been above average during most of his tenure. But there comes a time when a coach's message turns stale for that young core group of players and when that happens, and the coach isn't held accountable, the GM has to be blamed as well. Ruff's career would probably benefit from a change of scenery, just like some players' careers would. Several coaches have been hired and fired since Ruff took over, and many of those coaches have seen success in the league.

A team's talent can be judged from the high marks of a season and their heart can be judged in the low marks. Wins over Boston and Montreal early this season have shown that the Sabres can compete with anybody in the NHL when players are giving 100 percent and showcasing their talent. But too many losses to below-average teams like the Panthers and Maple Leafs also show that Ruff isn't always getting the most out of his players.

If Regier doesn't notice that inconsistency, it's time for both of them to go.

## **NHL Game Summary - Buffalo at NY Islanders**

The Sports Network

February 9, 2013

Final Score: Buffalo 3, NY Islanders 2

Uniondale, NY (Sports Network) - Alexander Sulzer scored the go-ahead goal in the third period and Ryan Miller delivered a stellar performance in net, enabling the Buffalo Sabres to come through with a 3-2 win over the slumping New York Islanders at Nassau Coliseum.

Miller recorded 41 saves, as well as a game-saving stop of John Tavares on a penalty shot with 3:53 left to play, as Buffalo earned its second straight victory despite being outshot by a 43-15 margin on the night.

"Ryan made the big saves when we needed them," said Sabres head coach Lindy Ruff.

Thomas Vanek contributed to the triumph with his league-leading 11th goal of the season along with an assist. Christian Ehrhoff also tallied a goal for the Sabres and Cody Hodgson added a pair of assists.

Tavares did register a goal in the first period, but Evgeni Nabokov managed just 12 saves as the Islanders suffered their fourth consecutive defeat. Colin McDonald netted New York's other goal, with Brian Strait notching two assists in the setback.

Sulzer snapped a 2-2 deadlock with a one-timer 7:35 into the final period, a blast that caromed off Nabokov's shoulder and trickled into the net for the defenseman's third goal of the season.

The Islanders had a golden opportunity to draw even later on, when Tavares was taken down after breaking in alone on Miller and was awarded the penalty shot. The standout young center, who hit the right post on an uncontested rush with the score still tied at 2-2 early in the frame, tried to sneak a backhand through Miller's glove side, but the veteran netminder stoned the attempt before smothering the puck to preserve the Sabres' lead.

It would be the last good chance for New York, which had its fate sealed when Brad Boyes was whistled for hooking Hodgson with 1:20 left to play.

"We came close and we had a bunch of opportunities," said Tavares. "Sometimes it's bad luck, but I think as many opportunities as we had, we've got to put them in when we can."

Miller was also sharp against a barrage of shots by the Islanders early on, coming up with seven saves in the game's nine minutes, and Vanek continued his hot streak to begin the scoring near the midway stage of the first period.

The veteran wing poked a loose puck centered in front of the crease by Jordan Leopold through the legs of Nabokov to give Buffalo a 1-0 edge at the 9:11 mark of the opening session.

New York, which outshot the Sabres 15-4 in the period, finally broke through just prior to the first intermission, when Tavares skated around the net to knock in a rebound after Miller made the initial save on a shot by Strait.

The Sabres regained the upper hand with 7:39 left in the second period, with Ehrhoff beating Nabokov one-on-one after cradling in a heads-up pass from Hodgson. The Islanders tied it just over five minutes later, however, when McDonald fired home a wrister off a behind-the-net feed from Casey Cizikas for his second career NHL goal.

#### Game Notes

Defenseman Lubomir Visnovsky and forward Josh Bailey both made their season debuts for the Islanders. Visnovsky finally reported to the team earlier in the week after attempting to remain in the Russian Kontinental Hockey League following the resolution of the lockout, while Bailey had been sidelined with a knee injury sustained while playing in Germany during the work stoppage ... Forward Patrick Kaleta and defenseman Andrej Sekera each returned to the Buffalo lineup after missing time with injuries, with Kaleta sidelined five games with a neck sprain and Sekera three due to a bone bruise in his foot ... Defenseman Tyler Myers, a league-worst minus-nine on the season, was a healthy scratch for the Sabres ... Sulzer's game-winner came in his 100th career NHL game ... McDonald's only other NHL goal came while with Edmonton at Vancouver on Nov. 28, 2009 ... The Islanders went 0-for-3 on the power play and have failed to score in 22 chances with the man advantage during their four-game skid.

## **Miller saves Sabres in win over Islanders**

By John Kreiser

NHL.com

February 9, 2013

UNIONDALE, N.Y. -- It's been an up-and-down season for Buffalo Sabres goaltender Ryan Miller. Saturday night was definitely one of the ups.

Miller stopped 41 shots, and Alexander Sulzer scored the go-ahead goal 7:35 into the third period as the Sabres defeated the New York Islanders 3-2 despite being outshot 43-15.

The Sabres had allowed four or more goals in each of their past six games. Miller is the only reason it's not seven in a row.

"Every season you're going to have a couple of games like that," Sabres coach Lindy Ruff said. "Our puck movement wasn't good, we got caught in our end a few times, but Ryan made the big saves when we needed them."

Miller did get a little help from his goal posts in the third period. A rocket from the right circle by John Tavares rang off the right post, and Tavares' backhand on a penalty shot with 3:53 left also drew iron and stayed out.

"I just wanted to not give him a lot of room," Miller said. "He wanted me to slide a little bit back to the blocker side. He made a nice move, and I tried to take him as far as I could, push him outside, and I got a good bounce."

Tavares said, "I just didn't put it in. It hit the post and stayed out. I got the room that I needed and it just was not enough."

The win gave the Sabres back-to-back victories after they went 3-6-1 in their first 10 games.

"We need to win all different ways," Miller said. "We just need to win. Tonight it worked out a little bit better for me. We got some good bounces and I was able to get in the way a little bit more than in the last few games."

The Sabres had not had a shot on goal in the third period before Steve Ott carried into the New York zone and left a drop pass for Sulzer at the left point. The defenseman's high shot went past a couple of bodies in front, hit the shoulder of goaltender Evgeni Nabokov and trickled into the net for Sulzer's third of the season.

NHL scoring leader Thomas Vanek and defenseman Christian Ehrhoff also scored for the Sabres, who've won their past two games. Tavares and Colin McDonald had goals for the Islanders, who've been outscored 14-5 in dropping four in a row, including three at home.

"We created opportunities," Tavares said. "That's the way we have to play. We just have to be better than the goaltender."

New York was scoreless on its three power plays and is 0-for-22 with the man advantage during the losing streak after going 9-for-24 during a 4-2-1 start.

The Islanders dominated the first period, outshooting Buffalo 15-4 and keeping Miller busy, but the Sabres turned one of their few offensive forays into the game's first goal. Vanek fired home his 11th of the season at 9:11 after he and Cody Hodgson whacked away at a loose puck following a shot by Jordan Leopold that hit a body in front.

New York kept the pressure on and was finally rewarded when Tavares scored his sixth of the season with 41.1 seconds left in the period. Tavares was just off the left post when Brain Strait's point shot caromed off Leopold in front; the forward picked up the loose puck and slid it into the net before Miller could go from right to left.

"He got a good bounce on that one, so maybe the [penalty shot] evened things out," Miller said with a smile.

The second period followed the same script: long periods of domination by the Islanders, followed by a Sabres goal. Buffalo went eight minutes without getting a shot on Nabokov, but took a 2-1 lead at 12:21 when Hodgson's pass from just inside the Islanders' blue line sent Ehrhoff in alone. He snapped a 10-footer past Nabokov's blocker for his first of the season and a 2-1 lead.

The Islanders continued to press and tied it on a goal by their fourth line. Casey Cizikas pickpocketed Buffalo defenseman Mike Weber behind the net after Strait intentionally fired wide. Cizikas wheeled out behind the net and found McDonald, whose one-timer beat Miller cleanly at 17:35. It was his second NHL goal, first with the Islanders.

"They did a nice job with their forecheck," Miller said. "We were moving the puck, trying to do close support, but they'd put two guys on it, working and jamming, and they pressured us. They're a good skating team, there's a lot of good talent on that team, and they used it pretty effectively. They definitely carried [the play] most of the night."

Tavares' postgame frustration was evident – and understandable. The Islanders had 82 shot attempts to 37 for Buffalo, won more faceoffs (29-27) and were credited with more hits (17-13). The only place they didn't win was on the scoreboard.

"We hit three posts and had a lot of great chances," he said. "Sometimes it's bad luck, but I think that as many opportunities as we had, we've obviously got to put them in when we can."

The game marked the Islanders debut of defenseman Lubomir Visnovsky, who was acquired from the Anaheim Ducks on Draft Day but had not reported to the team until this week. He played 20:34, had three shots on goal and was plus-2. Forward Josh Bailey also played for the first time this season after knee surgery.

"I was pleased with his game for a guy who hasn't played for the last three, four weeks," Islanders coach Jack Capuano said.

## **Miller steals win on Long Island**

Sabres.com

February 9, 2013

**BUFFALO** – Going back to the minors was difficult at first, Adam Pardy said. Other than Buffalo 3 – NY Islanders 2  
Saturday, February 9, 2013  
Nassau Coliseum

### **GAME RECAP**

Make no mistake about it: Ryan Miller stole a game for the Buffalo Sabres.

Miller made 41 saves, and got some help from his goalposts, as the Sabres headed back to Buffalo with a 3-2 win over the New York Islanders on Saturday. The Sabres have now won two games in a row for the first time since the start of the season, leaving them at 5-6-1 as they hit the quarter-mark of the 48-game season. Buffalo only managed 15 shots on Islanders goaltender Evgeni Nabakov, but Alexander Sulzer's third-period goal was the game winner. New York had a chance to tie the game with 3:53 left in the third, but John Tavares rang his penalty shot opportunity off the left post, after being hooked from behind on a breakaway attempt by Christian Ehrhoff.

Thomas Vanek scored his 11th goal in 11 games for Buffalo, and Ehrhoff finished off a give-and-go with Cody Hodgson in the second period for his first of the season. Vanek and Hodgson each finished the night with two points. In the win, Vanek extended his league lead in both goals (11) and points (23).

### **BEHIND THE NUMBERS**

Last Sabres win when outshot by 28+ was 3/29/88 (3-1 W at Quebec), 47-19 shots... Alexander Sulzer played in his 100th career NHL game... Dating back to last season, Vanek has 34 points (13+21) in his last 21 games... Steve Ott now has streaks of three games in both assists (3) and points (1+3)... 151st game all-time between Buffalo and New York; Buffalo leads the series with a 74-55-22 record. Buffalo is 33-32-11 against the Islanders on the road.

### **NOTABLE**

Tyler Myers was a healthy scratch for the Sabres. [Click here](#) for his reactions following the morning skate... Patrick Kaleta and Andrej Sekera were both back in the lineup after missing time with injuries... Kaleta missed five games with a neck injury, and Sekera was out for three with a bruised foot... Cody McCormick and Matt Ellis were also healthy scratches... Robyn Regehr (lower body, 6 games) and Ville Leino (hip, 12 games) remain on IR.

### **BUFFALO'S REAL-TIME STATS LEADERS:**

Time on Ice: Ehrhoff/Leopold, 25:25

Shots: Ennis/Vanek, 3

Blocked Shots: Mike Weber, 5

Hits: Steve Ott, 4  
Faceoff Wins: Cody Hodgson, 9  
Total Faceoffs: Hodgson, 18 (9-9)

#### BUFFALO'S RECORD WHEN...

- \* Scoring first: 4-3-0
- \* Tied after the first period: 3-3-1
- \* Tied after the second period: 3-2-0
- \* Outshot by an opponent: 3-6-0

#### SPECIAL TEAMS

The Sabres were scoreless in two power play attempts, and are now 15.6% (7/45) on the season. Buffalo killed off all three Islanders man advantage situations, improving to 79.2% (38/48) after 12 games.

#### UP NEXT

- \* Sunday vs. Boston, 7 p.m.
- \* Tuesday @ Ottawa, 7:30 p.m.
- \* Friday vs. Boston, 7 p.m.

## **Tavares, Isles get piped down**

By Zach Braziller

New York Post

February 9, 2013

That 4-2-1 start seems as ancient and empty as Nassau Coliseum.

After last night's gut-wrenching 3-2 loss to the Sabres, the Islanders find themselves in a familiar position: the Atlantic Division basement.

Their fourth straight loss was the most frustrating of the bunch. Buoyed by center Josh Bailey's return from a knee injury and defenseman Lubomir Visnovsky's debut, the Isles virtually lived in the Sabres' zone and outshot their opponents 43-15.

"We deserved better tonight, there's no question," coach Jack Capuano said. "Right now, it doesn't feel like anything is going our way."

Though Buffalo goaltender Ryan Miller was very good in making 41 saves, the Isles (4-6-1) failed on three power-play opportunities, missed the net on numerous uncontested chances and had John Tavares hit the pipes twice in the final period.

Tavares clanged the crossbar from the right circle on a whistler of a shot that beat Miller early in the period. Later, on a penalty shot, his backhand dinged off the right post. Also in that agonizing final period, Matt Moulson had an open net on his own rebound, but Cody Hodgson saved the goal with a reaching deflection.

"We hit three posts and we had a bunch of other opportunities," said Tavares, who notched his sixth goal of the season in the first period. "Sometimes it's bad luck, but I think with as many opportunities as we had, we got to put them in when we can."

The Sabres (5-6-1) made their chances count, scoring three times on just 15 shots. Defenseman Alexander Sulzer got the game-winner, sending a blast that caromed off and over Evgeni Nabokov's shoulder and trickled past him midway through the final stanza.

After enjoying such success a man up, the Islanders power play has hit the skids. They have failed to capitalize on 22 straight opportunities, though the unit had more pep with Visnovsky at the point. In his first game on the Island, the blue-liner — who lingered in his native Slovakia after the end of the NHL lockout — got off three shots on goal and recorded 20:34 of ice time.

"I was pleased with his game for a guy who hasn't played for the last three, four weeks," Capuano said of Visnovsky, who was acquired in a draft-day deal with Ducks.

During the four-game losing streak, the Islanders have outshot three of their four opponents but mustered just five goals.

“As long as they work and continue to work, as a coaching staff that’s all you can ask,” Capuano said. “They’ll get results. I felt the effort for 60 minutes was there. Miller made some big saves when he had to, and that was the difference in the game.”

Though the Islanders offered mostly positive outlooks after the game, with the impact of their two new players and their overall intensity, Tavares wasn’t in the mood to consider the notion of a moral victory.

“We got to win hockey games, we have to get results,” Tavares said. “Playing the way we did tonight is great, and that’s the way we have to play, but we got to find a way to get the points we need.”

## **Frustrated Islanders have plenty of chances in 3-2 loss to Sabres**

By Arthur Staple

Newsday

February 9, 2013

Jack Capuano and a few of his players felt the same way: If the Islanders play more games the way they played Saturday night against the Sabres, they will win plenty of games.

Here's the question, though: When?

The Islanders dominated most of the 60 minutes, generating chance upon chance upon chance. All it added up to was a fourth straight loss, a 3-2 defeat that was pretty well sealed when John Tavares, the best player on the ice in the game, deked Sabres goaltender Ryan Miller to the ice on a penalty shot, flipped a backhand over the prone Miller and watched it clang off the goal post with 3:53 to play.

"I just didn't put it in," said Tavares, who scored his team-leading sixth goal with 41.1 seconds left in the first but didn't convert any of his other 10 shot attempts. "I got the room I needed, made the move and I just didn't score."

Lots of Islanders could have said the same. They outshot the Sabres 43-15 and led in shot attempts by an 82-37 margin.

With the score 2-2, Matt Moulson was denied with an open net early in the third thanks to an alert defensive play by Sabres center Cody Hodgson. Barely 15 seconds later, Kyle Okposo couldn't find the puck with a yawning net, and Tavares rang a shot off the same post at 3:27 of the third.

Any of those chances could have given the Islanders the lead. Instead, Alexander Sulzer's unscreened slap shot clicked off Evgeni Nabokov's arm and into the net at 7:35 of the third, and the Sabres somehow managed to make it stand up the rest of the way.

"The coaches were happy with the way we played," said Colin McDonald, who tied the score at 2-2 with 2:25 left in the second on a quick shot from the slot, his second NHL goal and first as an Islander. "A game like that where you play so well for so long, we just didn't get that goal when we needed it. But if we keep playing that way, we'll win games for sure."

That is not happening now, and time is slipping away. Monday's visit by the Hurricanes marks the one-quarter pole of this shortened season. The Islanders sit last in the Atlantic Division, tied for 13th in the Eastern Conference and running out of time for moral victories.

"We were definitely better than we've been," Capuano said. "Right now it doesn't feel like anything is going our way."

Lubomir Visnovsky's debut was strong in parts, though he wore down as the game went along. He improved the power play's zone time and shot rate, but it still was 0-for-3, bringing the futility streak to 0-for-22 on the power play in the last four games.

"I feel pretty good," said Visnovsky, who had three shots on goal and was a plus-2 in 20:34. "Sometimes if we play more simple, we are more effective."

The Islanders as a group were effective Saturday night, there is no denying that. From Tavares' line on down to a new, younger fourth line of Casey Cizikas, Matt Martin and Josh Bailey, nearly all of the Islanders were pulling together.

That's not what counts now, however.

"You can't accept losing," Moulson said. "There are things to build on, but we have to find a way to win that game."

## **Sabres 3, Islanders 2**

By Travis Betts

February 9, 2013

The New York Islanders out-shot Buffalo 43-15, but lost a nailbiter 3-2 to the Sabres on Saturday at Nassau Coliseum.

Josh Bailey made his season debut and Lubomir Visnovsky made his Islanders debut in the loss, which dropped the Islanders to 4-6-1.

John Tavares twice beat Sabres goalie Ryan Miller, only to see a pair of third period attempts carom off the post. His second shot off the iron came on a penalty shot late in the third period, with his club trailing 3-2.

Despite the final result, Islanders Head Coach Jack Capuano was pleased with the effort his team showed.

“Our battle level (compared to) the Rangers game was night and day,” Capuano said. “Our guys left everything they had on the ice tonight and just came up short.”

Visnovsky recorded 20:34 of ice time in his first game as an Islander, posting a plus-2 rating with three shots on goal. Bailey led all players with seven shots in 12:48 of ice time, but did not find the score sheet.

“I felt good,” Bailey said after the game. “I felt good conditioning-wise and good with the puck. It was a good start. Hopefully I can build off it. Vish played a great game as well. You look at him and you can see he’s definitely going to help our squad.”

The Islanders controlled the play early, holding a 15-4 advantage in shots on goal in the first period, but it was Buffalo’s Thomas Vanek who drew first blood with his league-leading 11th goal of the season. Cody Hodgson took a whack at a loose puck in front of Evgeni Nabokov, but Vanek finished off the play at 9:11.

The Islanders knotted the game at one on John Tavares’ team-leading sixth goal of the season. Brian Strait took a shot from distance, and Tavares, who was circling behind the Buffalo goal, picked up the rebound to Miller’s left and punched it in at the 19:18 mark.

All six of Tavares’ goals have come in the last seven games.

The Sabres re-established their lead 12 minutes into the second period on Christian Ehrhoff’s first tally of the season. Ehrhoff and Hodgson executed a give-and-go on the rush, and Ehrhoff’s wrist shot went top shelf over Nabokov.

Colin McDonald tied it up again for the Islanders late in the middle period on his first goal as an Islander. Casey Cizikas’ backhand feed to the slot hit McDonald for a one-timer through traffic at 17:35. Strait earned the secondary helper on the play for his first career two-assist game.

“I think when you get a guy like Visnovsky in the lineup, you are able to create more four-man attacks,” Capuano said. “Buffalo did it all night. That’s something that we want to have in our attack. We feed off one-another. I thought our D activated well and got some chances. We were real good in the offensive zone with our gaps and keeping pucks in and getting pucks to the net.”

The Sabres took a 3-2 lead on a tip-in at 7:35 of the third. Alexander Sulzer deflected Steve Ott’s one-timer from the point through a screened Nabokov for the game-winning goal.

Despite outshooting Buffalo 14-4 in the final frame, the Islanders never found the equalizer, dropping their fourth straight game.

“You don’t want to talk about how well we played when we lose,” Bailey said. “You’d rather come in here and talk about how we played poorly but found a way to win. We’ve got some things to build off of, but still at the end of the day we have to get the two points.”

The Islanders are back in action on Monday, Feb. 11, when the Carolina Hurricanes make their first visit of the season to Nassau Coliseum.

#### New York Islanders

##### Forwards

26 Matt Moulson - 91 John Tavares - 24 Brad Boyes  
40 Michael Grabner - 51 Frans Nielsen - 21 Kyle Okposo  
41 David Ullstrom - 10 Keith Aucoin - 13 Colin McDonald  
12 Josh Bailey - 53 Casey Cizikas - 17 Matt Martin

##### Defensemen

47 Andrew MacDonald – 3 Travis Hamonic  
14 Thomas Hickey - 2 Mark Streit  
37 Brian Strait - 11 Lubomir Visnovsky

##### Goaltenders

20 Evgeni Nabokov  
39 Rick DiPietro

#### Buffalo Sabres

##### Forwards

26 Thomas Vanek - 19 Cody Hodgson - 29 Jason Pominville  
82 Marcus Foligno - 63 Tyler Ennis - 21 Drew Stafford  
9 Steve Ott - 25 Mikhail Grigorenko - 36 Patrick Kaleta  
32 John Scott - 55 Jochen Hecht - 42 Nathan Gerbe

##### Defensemen

6 Mike Weber - 44 Andrej Sekera  
10 Christian Ehrhoff - 3 Jordan Leopold  
33 T.J. Brennan - 52 Alexander Sulzer

##### Goaltenders

30 Ryan Miller  
1 Jhonas Enroth

## **Bruins-Sabres Preview**

By Niccolino Dibenedetto

Associated Press

February 10, 2013

Only the weather and the Buffalo Sabres have been able to keep the Boston Bruins from piling up points this season.

Red-hot Thomas Vanek and the Sabres have another opportunity to continue that success.

After a major storm kept the Bruins from playing for a third straight win, they'll try to avenge their only regulation defeat of the season Sunday night in Buffalo.

Boston (7-1-1) has been one of the league's best teams in the early going, recording at least one point in all but one of its Eastern Conference-low nine games.

The Bruins were scheduled to host Tampa Bay on Saturday, but the game was postponed to an undetermined date after a major blizzard coated the Northeast.

The only time Boston failed to get at least one point in the standings was a 7-4 loss to Buffalo (5-6-1) at home Jan. 31, when they gave up four unanswered goals in the third period.

Boston followed that up with back-to-back road victories, rallying to beat Montreal 2-1 on Wednesday in the team's most recent appearance.

Tyler Seguin and David Krejci did all the scoring for the Bruins in the opening 2:05 of the third period after coach Claude Julien juggled his lines, putting Seguin with Krejci and Milan Lucic.

"We needed to create more scoring chances," Julien said. "That Krejci line's been awesome for us but (Wednesday) they weren't able to generate much, so I said, 'Let's move guys around here and give them a little spark,' and it worked out."

Krejci had a goal versus the Sabres on Jan. 31, but he has just two with four assists in 15 career regular-season visits to Buffalo.

Seguin has 11 points in 11 meetings with the division rival, assisting on one of Brad Marchand's two goals in the last matchup. Marchand's status for this game is unclear after he sat out Wednesday with an upper-body injury.

He leads the team with five goals, and he has that many in the past seven games against the Sabres.

The extended layoff due to the storm could mean another start for Tuukka Rask, who has stopped 41 of 42 shots with a shutout over the last two games after surrendering a career-high six goals in the loss to the Sabres.

Rask is 0-4-1 with a 4.25 goals-against average in his last six starts versus Buffalo.

Vanek had the second of his two five-point games this season against the Bruins, scoring three goals and assisting on two others. His 28 goals and 54 points in 46 meetings with Boston are his highest totals against any opponent.

The foe hasn't made much of a difference this season for Vanek, who leads the NHL with 11 goals and 23 points.

He continued his stellar season with a goal and an assist in a 3-2 win over the New York Islanders on Saturday, Buffalo's second straight following a three-game skid.

Ryan Miller was the real hero for the Sabres, stopping a season-high 41 shots as his team was outshot 43-15.

"Every season you're going to have games like that," coach Lindy Ruff said.

Miller made 38 saves in Boston last month, beating the Bruins for the seventh time in eight starts. That includes winning all four meetings at home behind a 2.17 goals-against average with one shutout.

## **B's shovel off to Buffalo**

By Steve Conroy  
Boston Herald  
February 10, 2013

BUFFALO — Another game, another waste of time and energy for the Buffalo Sabres. At 3 p.m. yesterday, sanity prevailed. That's when the NHL finally announced last night's game at the Garden between the Bruins and the Tampa Bay Lightning was postponed to a later date.

The game originally was scheduled for 1 p.m. yesterday then pushed back to 7 p.m. due to the winter storm. With public transportation not available and a travel ban in effect until 4 p.m. yesterday, the decision seemed like a wise move.

A makeup date has not yet been released.

“Although both clubs and the assigned on-ice officials are in Boston, travel conditions remain too hazardous for fans, security personnel and TD Garden staff to get to the arena,” according to a league statement.

Whether it helps the Bruins to play Tampa Bay at a later date remains to be seen. The B's are a little banged up with Brad Marchand (shoulder), Shawn Thornton (concussion) and Daniel Paille (eye) of questionable health. On the other hand, the Lightning were sputtering after coming out of the gate strong, having dropped their last three games.

The Bruins were planning to fly out last night to Buffalo for a game against the Sabres tonight. Buffalo handed the Bruins their only regulation loss of the season, 7-4 at the Garden on Jan. 31.

There could be bad blood between the Bruins and Sabres, left over from the first meeting. Six-foot-8, 270-pound Sabres behemoth John Scott pummeled Thornton, who has been out of the lineup ever since that one-sided scrap. The B's didn't see a need in that game to avenge it — and Thornton himself said he felt no need for any retaliation — but we'll see if any Bruin wants to take on Scott. Scott sees minimal minutes and it would not be a good tradeoff for the Bruins.

Buffalo coach Lindy Ruff also ruffled feathers in that first meeting by calling a timeout with 14 seconds left to put Scott back on the ice. Marchand, for one, called the timeout “disrespectful.”

“Yeah, (Ruff) wants to be a big shot, and that's not the best play to do,” said Marchand. “That's pretty disrespectful. If he wants to be like that, that's fine. We just have to move on.”

Ruff's explanation was the Bruins put fighter Lane MacDermid on the ice to finish the game, so he had to counter with his fighter.

Bruins coach Claude Julien wasn't wild about that explanation, considering it implied he put MacDermid on the ice to wreak late game-havoc against Buffalo's skilled players. Despite the B's well-known physical type of game, pulling a maneuver like that is not Julien's history.

Another curiosity to tonight's game is what line combinations Julien rolls out. In the B's 2-1 win in Montreal, his move of Tyler Seguin up to the line with David Krejci and Milan Lucic produced a win and they practiced a bit together on Friday. While potent offensively, each member of this trio has had issues in the past while in their own in end of the ice.

## **After extra day off, Bruins ready for Sabres**

By Brian Compton

NHL.com

February 10, 2013

BRUINS (7-1-1) at SABRES (5-6-1)

TV: NESN, MSG-Buffalo

Last 10: Buffalo 3-6-1.

Season series: This is the second of five meetings. The Sabres earned a 7-4 win against the Bruins on Jan. 31 at TD Garden.

Big story: Boston received an unexpected extra day off Saturday as a blizzard that crushed much of the northeast forced its game against the Tampa Bay Lightning to be postponed. A makeup date has yet to be announced.

Team Scope:

**Bruins:** Boston is off to a tremendous start, earning points in eight of its first nine games. The Bruins have won back-to-back games since that aforementioned 7-4 loss to the Sabres and are coming off a 2-1 win at Montreal last Wednesday night. Both of Boston's tallies came in the first 2:05 of the third period, and Tuukka Rask did the rest in a 20-save performance.

"He's had the right attitude," Bruins coach Claude Julien said of his goaltender, who improved to 6-1-1. "With the high expectations, he's just doing his job. He's a normal goaltender, which might be a surprise to a lot of people. But he's so easy going. There are no issues."

**Sabres:** It's hard to win a hockey game when you're outshot 43-15, but the Sabres did just that with Saturday night's 3-2 victory against the New York Islanders at Nassau Veterans Memorial Coliseum. Alexander Sulzer broke a 2-2 tie less than eight minutes into the third period, while Ryan Miller made 41 saves to help end a streak that saw Buffalo allow four or more goals in six straight games.

"Every season you're going to have a couple of games like that," Sabres coach Lindy Ruff said. "Our puck movement wasn't good, we got caught in our end a few times, but Ryan made the big saves when we needed them."

**Who's hot:** Bruins center David Krejci is averaging a point per game for the Bruins with three goals and six assists in nine games. Meanwhile, Rask is boasting a 1.96 goals-against average and .922 save percentage in his eight appearances. ... Sabres winger Thomas Vanek had a goal and an assist Saturday night and leads the National Hockey League with 23 points (11 goals, 12 assists) in 11 contests.

**Injury report:** The Bruins are expected to be without Shawn Thornton (concussion), Dan Paille (eye) and Brad Marchand (shoulder). ... Sabres defenseman Robyn Regehr (lower body) is questionable.

## **Austrian homecoming did wonders for Sabres' Vanek**

By John Wawrow

Associated Press

February 9, 2013

BUFFALO, N.Y. (AP) -- If not for the NHL lockout, Thomas Vanek would have missed a rare opportunity to return home to play in his native Austria.

The time off and the brief but sweet homecoming last fall did wonders for the Buffalo Sabres' play-making forward. It was a European vacation Vanek credits for rekindling his passion for the game and helping him rediscover his scoring touch.

"Spending five weeks at home, I got to see how big the game had grown. I went back and every rink was sold out," Vanek said by phone after the Sabres practiced at Long Island on Friday, a day before they were to face the Islanders. "And it just kind of made me realize how fun this game could be and how many people are following it. I think that's the biggest lesson I got taught."

Vanek's newfound perspective has been on display through the first three weeks of the NHL season. He's off to the most prolific start of his eight-year career, and finds himself leading the league with 10 goals and 21 points.

As he often does, Vanek pays no attention to the numbers he puts up. A four-time 30-goal-scorer, he's also known for being streaky which leaves Vanek worried about when the next dry spell might surface.

"There's no way I can keep this pace up," said Vanek. "I know that. And I'm fine with that."

What's notably changed is his outlook.

"Hockey was always fun here in Buffalo from Day 1. But sometimes, when you're in the tough times, missing the playoffs, I think you kind of forget," he said. "And that's what made me realize over there that you've got to work hard, but at the same time enjoy it, because before you know it, your ride might be over."

The ride, for now, is showing no signs of slowing for Vanek, only the sixth Sabres player to reach 20 points through his first 10 games of a season.

Vanek has five multiple-point games already. He is coming off an outing in which he scored two third-period goals - including a game-tying tally with 2 seconds left - in rallying the Sabres to a 5-4 shootout victory over Montreal on Thursday.

The win snapped a three-game skid. Still, the Sabres have only won twice in nine games (2-6-1), and would do themselves a big favor to follow Vanek's lead.

"It's really about winning the next game already," coach Lindy Ruff said. "It's about putting this one behind us and focusing on getting better, getting on a run, because we've got some ground to make up."

Ruff has plenty to be concerned about, including resurfacing questions about his job security. The one worry he doesn't have is the production he's getting out of Vanek.

"He's had a history of running some hot streaks, and I think this is the best streak he's ever put together," Ruff said. "I think any time you get that confidence, get off to that great of a start, I think he's fed off it."

Vanek opened the season with a career-best five-point game in a 5-2 win over Philadelphia, and has at least a point in nine of the 10 games he's played.

Whether it's on power plays or breakaways, from his knees or during shootouts, Vanek has scored in nearly every situation this season playing on a line rounded out by Jason Pominville and center Cody Hodgson.

There was the goal Vanek scored to cap his eighth career hat trick in a 7-4 win over Boston on Jan. 31. Driving in on the Bruins net on a 2-on-0 break, Vanek hit the brakes at the top of the crease and waited for Tuukka Rask to commit before shoveling the puck in over the fallen goalie to make it 6-4.

And then there were Vanek's two goals against Montreal. After scoring on a power-play with 12:03 left to cut the Canadiens lead to 4-3, he capped a scramble in front by diving in head first to poke a loose puck through goalie Peter Budaj's legs to force overtime.

As if that wasn't enough, Vanek scored one of Buffalo's two shootout goals to clinch the win.

"It's awesome to watch. He's been finding a way. He's been magical," forward Steve Ott said. "He wants to win in this dressing room, and he's proven it to all of us."

Vanek is playing with more patience. That's something he also got out of playing on the much larger ice surfaces in Austria, where the extra space allowed him to be more creative.

"By playing the game over there, I kind of got my hands back, my vision," Vanek said. "I think patience comes with confidence and, obviously, I'm feeling pretty good about my game."

Already more than a third of the way to matching the 61 points he had last season, Vanek is maintaining a day-at-a-time approach.

"I know it's a good streak that I'm on, but I don't look at it like a hot streak," Vanek said. "It might be over tomorrow or the next day. But even if it is, there's a lot more games coming after that."

## **Vanek playing more, staying red-hot *Ruff increases his shifts, but guards against overuse***

By Mike Harrington  
Buffalo News  
February 9, 2013

When you compare ice-time numbers to the previous seven seasons of his NHL career, Thomas Vanek has seen a huge bump in his playing time.

When you compare them to the elite forwards in the NHL, Vanek isn't necessarily getting the kind of time you would expect. But Buffalo Sabres coach Lindy Ruff, who already has expanded his star's use in the first quarter of the season, is really starting to ride his red-hot winger.

Vanek played a season-high 23 minutes, 56 seconds in Thursday's shootout win over Montreal – his most ice time since Jan. 11, 2011 – and scored two third-period goals to tie the game. That came two nights after Vanek played 20:15 in a loss at Ottawa.

Vanek had not played more than 20 minutes in back-to-back games since December 2008. Last year, in fact, his ice time was over 19 minutes just once in the final 32 games as he was clearly battling a string of injuries.

If Vanek hits the 20-minute mark in tonight's game against the New York Islanders in Nassau Coliseum, it will mark the first time he has done that in three straight since October 2005. Back then, he was in games 3-4-5 of his career. Now, he's a 29-year-old veteran leading the NHL in goals (10) and points (21).

"I've always said I'm happy with what I get," Vanek said this week. "My ice time has been fine. I'm not going to demand more. You take whatever they give you and you go out there."

Early in his career, "when I got 12-14 minutes, you take those and make the most of it. Now if it's 22, then you deal with 22. Our line is getting plenty of ice time, plenty of chances. By upping the ice, it doesn't always mean more production."

Vanek has never averaged more than 17:21 per game for an entire season and his most even-strength time has been 14:01 (both figures came in 2010-11). So this year's numbers of 19:47 and 15:02, respectively, are quite a boost.

Still, they don't rate all that highly compared to other big-name players. Vanek is just 42nd in total ice time among NHL forwards and only 41st in even-strength time.

New Jersey's Ilya Kovalchuk is a runaway leader at 26:02 (no one else is over 21:52), and 35 others average at least 20.

Game situations often dictate ice time and there was quite an uproar after Sunday's loss to Florida when Vanek's 19:15 was nearly two minutes less than 35-year-old Jochen Hecht's 21:08; Hecht doesn't have a goal in 11 games. Ruff is in a situation where he's getting little scoring outside of his top line of Vanek, Cody Hodgson and Jason Pominville, so he knows Vanek's ice time needs to be higher than it's been in the past.

"There's no optimal amount," Ruff said. "I've tried really hard to put them in some situations that would really be to their advantage. I think that line has done a helluva job."

The difference in some cases with Vanek's ice time is the fact he has rarely killed penalties in his career. But Ruff is even trying to edge up that part of his game. Vanek totaled just 50 seconds of PK time the first five games this year, but has totaled 2:43 in his last four.

Still, there are inherent risks to more penalty-killing work. Vanek is pretty fearless and wouldn't be adverse to stepping in front of a shot while killing. That, of course, is a big injury risk.

And the Sabres have to be concerned about the beating he's taking in front of the net, especially on the power play. There were at least three blatant cross-checks to the back Vanek took Thursday night that were not called against the Canadiens, even as he was flattened on the play.

One issue about penalty killing is that Pominville and Hodgson do it regularly. So Vanek often needs to get ice time with other players immediately after Buffalo is short-handed while his linemates rest from work on that unit.

"I've been trying to stick him on right wing or left wing with another line right after a penalty kill to get him that extra shift," Ruff said.

"Maybe 5-6 years ago, I was pressing more to get on it," Vanek said. "But Lindy has been using me the shift after if I'm not PKing with a different line. It's not something I'm overly concerned about."

One thing that's clear is Vanek and Ruff are concerned about finding a point of diminishing returns, where Vanek's increased ice time leads to a sudden decrease in production.

"You've got to be careful," Vanek said. "There's a lot of games. If you overplay, you can get injured easier. There's times you'll ramp it up to using three lines and use some guys more often. Overall, I still like the idea of having four lines that can play."

"Part of being dynamic as a line is they've had real good energy and their shifts have stayed short," Ruff said. "They haven't got caught on the ice very many times. They make great plays and they still look fresh."

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After canceling their scheduled practice in First Niagara Center, the Sabres left Buffalo on Friday morning in advance of the snowy weather and worked out for about an hour in the afternoon at the Coliseum. Defenseman Adam Pardy has been returned to Rochester on loan after Christian Ehrhoff came back into the lineup Thursday following a one-game absence.

Andrej Sekera is expected to return to the lineup tonight, meaning one of the six defensemen who played in the Montreal game could sit.

Another option would be for the Sabres to dress seven and use T.J. Brennan mostly as a power-play specialist. Patrick Kaleta (neck) also practiced fully and has been cleared to play.

## **Sabres can't rely on Vanek's sizzling production forever**

By Bill Hoppe  
Olean Times Herald  
February 10, 2013

UFFALO – Follow Sabres superstar Thomas Vanek's dynamic run closely. Enjoy watching the nifty goals, the points and knowing each time he steps on the ice something special could happen.

This might be a once-in-a-lifetime experience. NHL players just don't score at Vanek's torrid pace anymore.

The slick Austrian already has 10 goals and 21 points through 10 appearances, a stat line from eras past. He's on track for 47 goals and 99 points in only 47 games. That's 172 points over a full 82-game season.

"When he's riding a hot stretch, sometimes he's unstoppable," coach Lindy Ruff said Thursday after Vanek scored twice in the third period before netting the shootout winner in a 5-4 triumph over Montreal.

No Sabres player has cracked the 50-goal or 100-point mark since Pat LaFontaine scored 53 goals and 148 points and Alexander Mogilny tallied 76 goals and 127 points in 1992-93.

Vanek, of course, won't be reaching those record numbers. It's also highly unlikely he'll keep up his current exploits. It's just not realistic in today's ultra-tight game. Vanek's notoriously streaky, too.

The winger had eight goals and 15 points in the first 10 games last season before finishing with 26 and 51. He had nine goals and 12 points in the opening 10 games of 2008-09 before finishing with 40 and 64.

Vanek had a career-high 43 goals and 84 points in 2006-07.

So far, Vanek, who was held pointless for the first time this season in Tuesday's 4-3 loss in Ottawa, hasn't shown any signs of letting up. Ruff's finally giving Vanek more ice time, skating him more than 20 minutes the last two games, including 23:56 on Thursday.

But Ruff knows Vanek and linemates Cody Hodgson (five goals and 10 points) and Jason Pominville (six goals and 14 points) will eventually cool off.

That's why the Sabres' secondary scoring must improve quickly. Their production's too top heavy entering tonight's tilt against the Islanders in New York.

The top line has scored 62 percent of the Sabres' 34 goals. Vanek alone has 29 percent.

The Sabres' top three goal producers last season – Pominville, Vanek and Drew Stafford – combined 76 for goals, 36 percent of the team's 211 scores.

Slowly, the secondary production has been increasing a bit recently.

With a goal and three points Thursday, center Tyler Ennis is up to four goals and nine points. Steve Ott, who scored his first goal since opening day on Thursday, is the only other forward with two goals.

Most notably, Stafford, a 31-goal scorer in only 62 games two years ago, has zero this season.

“There’s no question that we need that, myself included,” Stafford said about the secondary scoring earlier this week. “(I) would fall into the category of secondary scoring. It needs to happen; it needs to happen right now. Obviously, Thomas and Jason and Cody, that line has been all-world for us right now. ... We need it and we need it right now.”

What’s happened to Stafford, who scored 20 times last season? Ruff believes he’s not getting to the crease enough.

“You got to get in that prime area, that little square area in front of the net,” Ruff said earlier this week. “You can’t go by the net. You got to stop around the net. There was a few situations where the puck’s gone to the net and he’s watching and going wide where we got to get inside.”

Stafford has been focusing on getting to “those dirty areas” around the net.

“I’ve been through it before. Everyone’s been through it,” he said. “It’s something when you get that puck on your stick, you got to be thinking shoot more, keep it simple and try and get in front of the net a lot more.”

Stafford acknowledged earlier this week he’s “extremely frustrated.” He yelled loudly after missing a breakaway during Wednesday’s practice.

“I feel as though I’m doing the best to get the opportunities,” Stafford said. “I’m working. I’m doing what I can to get there. It’s just not going. On top of that, we’re losing games. It makes it even more of a challenge, even more frustrating. But now’s the time when you need to focus on the things you can control like effort, your work habits.”

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Defenseman Andrej Sekera (bruised foot, three games) pronounced himself ready to play after the Sabres skated Friday in Long Island.

“It’s good now,” he told reporters. “I’m ready to roll.”

Ruff called Sekera “a lot closer” to returning.

Meanwhile, winger Patrick Kaleta (neck, five games) has been cleared to play and could return tonight, Ruff said.

Defenseman Robyn Regehr (lower body, six games) had his first full practice Friday.

The veteran “could be ready soon,” Ruff said.

The Sabres returned Adam Pardy to Rochester on Friday. The defenseman played one game.

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The Sabres practiced in Long Island on Friday after leaving Buffalo early to beat the blizzard battering the northeast.

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Vanek’s the sixth player in team history to reach the 20-point mark in 10 or fewer games played.

## **Sabres agree to drop reserved street parking**

By Jill Terrei and John Vogl

Buffalo News

February 9, 2013

The Buffalo Sabres learned during their home opener Jan. 20 that they oversold season-ticket parking spaces in their arena ramp.

On game day mornings since then, the Sabres used orange cones stamped to reserve five to seven public parking spaces on Illinois Street for people who paid to be in the ramp.

But the practice ended Thursday afternoon.

“Going forward, we won’t be putting cones out in Illinois Street,” said Sabres spokesman Michael Gilbert. The city was unaware of the practice until a constituent called Thursday, said Parking Commissioner Kevin Helfer.

“No one called me, no one asked me permission, nor would we ever grant that,” Helfer said Friday. “The bottom line is they never asked permission, and the bottom line is they cannot do it.

“I’m glad it’s over with,” he said.

The spaces on the cobblestone street are designated for metered parking at \$2 per day, but the meter heads were removed, leaving the parking there free.

The spots are occupied at various times by people working in the arena or visiting nearby bars and restaurants such as Lagerhaus 95 and Cobblestone.

Non-Sabres employees such as SportsService concession workers or security guards typically use those spaces legally for free, but the club needed to block them to accommodate season-ticket holders, Gilbert said. The move forced people who normally park there either to pay to park in a ramp or lot, or seek street parking elsewhere. Neighboring Mississippi Street has a two-hour limit, making it unsuitable for arena employees working longer shifts.

Fillmore Council Member David A. Franczyk, who represents the Cobblestone District, said he would be more concerned if the Sabres had blocked off a larger number of spaces but said the organization probably should lease space for people who paid to be in the ramp and leave the public spaces for the public. “Seven doesn’t seem like a lot, but that’s a public street,” he said.

## **State legislators thankful to Pegula for touting fracking's advantages**

By Robert McCarthy

Buffalo News

February 9, 2013

When Terry Pegula appeared before the Western New York legislative delegation 15 months ago to make a pitch for hydraulic fracturing, his audience agreed few others were better versed in the controversial subject.

The Buffalo Sabres owner, after all, had amassed a multi-billion-dollar fortune over the years in extracting natural gas from the ground in Pennsylvania and other places.

But even though Pegula has now left the natural gas business to become a full-time hockey team owner, it was obvious during that November 2011 meeting – according to those who were there – that he remained convinced of the science and economics behind hydraulic fracturing, more commonly known as fracking.

“For me, it was very informative,” Assemblywoman Crystal Peoples-Stokes, D-Buffalo, said Friday. “He had these scientists there to explain the science of fracking in ways I never heard before. Personally, I was very grateful.”

Sabres officials confirmed a Gannett News report on Friday indicating Pegula hosted the meeting at First Niagara Center for almost all of the local delegation. Spokesman Michael Gilbert said Pegula had nothing more to add, other than the local legislators seemed pleased to have the opportunity to discuss the controversial natural gas recovery method.

“It was casual, and all very ‘soft,’ ” said Assemblyman Sean M. Ryan, D-Buffalo. “It was kind of like ‘Here’s what we did in Pennsylvania and here’s how it worked out.’

“And to be honest, he was the new owner of the Sabres then,” he added. “More people asked about the Sabres from the Sabres guy than they did about fracking from the fracking guy.”

New York State faces a deadline this month to report on its review of hydraulic fracturing, in which enormous amounts of water, sand and chemicals are injected into shale formations thousands of feet below the surface of the earth to free natural gas. While the process has resulted in an economic boon for places like Pennsylvania, environmental concerns have yet to clear the way for drillers in New York State.

New York’s Southern Tier and its Marcellus Shale formation is seen an especially rich area for natural gas deposits.

Peoples-Stokes said Friday that while Pegula’s presentation opened her eyes to many aspects of fracking, she remains concerned about how to dispose of the chemical-laden wastewater from the process.

Ryan added that Pegula's session underscored the economic benefits that can accrue from the business of fracking.

"He wanted us to understand that hundreds of farmers in Pennsylvania went from poverty to security, and that he felt very proud to have brought that to parts of Pennsylvania," Ryan said, adding he still favors additional environmental regulations before he could support the process.