



# **Buffalo Sabres**

**Daily Press Clips**

*Friday, February 15, 2013*

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## **Sabres coach Lindy Ruff takes blame**

Associated Press

February 14, 2013

BUFFALO, N.Y. -- In taking responsibility for the Buffalo Sabres' sputtering start, coach Lindy Ruff remains confident the team can dig itself out of an early-season hole.

It begins with him.

"It's on me to clean up this mess," Ruff said Thursday. "And I'm not done trying."

Ruff was both upbeat and defiant in the face of mounting criticism directed toward him, while assessing a team that's lacked identity and consistency in getting off to a 5-8-1 start.

"We'll find it," Ruff said. "It'll come. I'm confident it'll come."

The Sabres returned to practice after getting a day off on Wednesday. It was their first two-day break between games since the first week of the season, and came after the Sabres closed a stretch in which they played 14 games in 24 days.

Buffalo now prepares to open a three-game homestand on Friday, when it hosts Northeast Division-leading Boston (8-1-2).

Very little has gone right for the Sabres, who have lost two straight and are 3-8-1 since opening the season with two wins. They're last in the league in having allowed 48 goals. Their power play has gone 1-for-27 in its past seven games.

And they're getting very little offense from anyone beyond their top line that features winger Thomas Vanek. Despite failing to register a point in his past two games, Vanek still leads the NHL with 23 points and 11 goals.

And Ruff has already done plenty in trying to shake things up with little noticeable effect. He's tried juggling line combinations, held team meetings and benched players -- most notably defenseman Tyler Myers, who returned in a 2-0 loss at Ottawa on Tuesday after sitting out the two previous games.

Rather than focus on what's gone wrong, Ruff is emphasizing the positive.

Though unhappy with the lack of discipline the Sabres showed in being penalized eight times against Ottawa, Ruff was pleased how the team didn't give up a power-play goal. Though the Sabres failed to score against the Senators, they still managed a season-best 42 shots.

"We were close," Ruff said. "It's my job not to let the player slip back from the way they played that game."

In a shortened 48-game season, the Sabres are already running out of room for error in their attempt to avoid missing the playoffs for a second straight year and fourth time in six seasons.

"Any time you get off to a slow start is disappointing, even more so in a shortened season," center and captain Jason Pominville said. "You've got to pay attention to details. And at times, when we do it, we're a really good team. And at times we don't, we're an average team."

The lack of a balanced scoring attack has been the Sabres' most pressing issue for much of the season. The top line of Vanek, Pominville and center Cody Hodgson has combined to score 22 of Buffalo's 39 goals. Second-line center Tyler Ennis has five goals, but the rest of the team is struggling.

Drew Stafford is enduring the most notable slump. The three-time 20-goal scorer has just five assists this season, and hasn't scored in 17 games, dating to last season.

Stafford has been so snake bitten that he fanned on a one-time attempt while facing a wide-open side in the loss to Ottawa on Tuesday. Stafford did not make himself available to reporters on Thursday, leaving his teammates and Ruff to answer for him.

"It's tough. You want to see him do well," linemate Marcus Foligno said. "When he gets one, I'm pretty sure there'll be plenty more coming after it. Hopefully, he can crack it tomorrow."

Ruff is remaining patient with Stafford, hoping he will find his groove on his own.

"I'm trying my best to keep Drew in the right place, so he doesn't get too frustrated," Ruff said. "For him, it's just to keep working, to bear down on some of those opportunities."

Ruff is also attempting to lead by example by remaining upbeat.

"The team will feed off my energy," Ruff said. "We talked about getting the team in the right mood today. And that's up to me."

## **Bruins-Sabres Preview**

Associated Press

February 14, 2013

The Boston Bruins have already taken advantage of the slumping Buffalo Sabres on the road this week.

Another visit could keep the Bruins rolling away from home.

Boston looks to make it five straight road wins Friday night when it faces the Sabres for the third time this season.

The Bruins (8-1-2) won 3-1 at Buffalo (5-8-1) on Sunday, getting third-period goals from Patrice Bergeron and Milan Lucic. However, they failed to build on that at home two days later, falling 4-3 in a shootout to the New York Rangers after scoring the final three goals in the third period to salvage a point.

Boston has been getting plenty on the road, winning four in a row there since a 4-3 overtime loss to the Rangers on Jan. 23.

The team will try to continue that success during this five-game trip, which includes visits to Winnipeg, Tampa Bay, Florida and Long Island after facing the Sabres.

"It's not going to be an easy road trip for all the obvious reasons," coach Claude Julien said. "Buffalo is certainly going to want to bounce back from their loss to us less than a week ago. Winnipeg; we have yet to win a game in that rink yet. Certainly a good challenge for us."

The venue hasn't mattered much for Brad Marchand, who leads the Bruins with seven goals with three coming in four road games, including one at Buffalo earlier this week before tallying again versus the Rangers.

Of the center's eight goals in 15 career meetings with the Sabres, half have come in seven visits to First Niagara Center. Marchand also has four goals in the last three overall matchups.

Tuukka Rask may get a chance to redeem himself against the Sabres. He's 0-2-1 with a 3.62 goals-against average and was pulled twice in his last four starts at Buffalo. He wasn't very good at home on Jan. 31, either.

In his worst performance of the season, Rask stopped 25 of 31 shots in a 7-4 loss. He's been impressive in three games since, however, going 2-0-1 with a 1.31 GAA and a shutout.

Backup Anton Khudobin had 25 saves against the Sabres on Sunday.

Buffalo is 3-8-1 since opening the season with back-to-back wins and seemingly showing promise after missing the playoffs last season.

They fell 2-0 at Ottawa on Tuesday following Sunday's defeat to the Bruins.

Coach Lindy Ruff is trying to remain positive in the face of mounting criticism directed toward him.

"It's on me to clean up this mess," said Ruff, who is in his 15th season at the helm. "And I'm not done trying. The team will feed off my energy. We talked about getting the team in the right mood. And that's up to me.

"We'll find it. It'll come. I'm confident it'll come."

Thomas Vanek continues to be one of the few bright spots, leading the NHL with 11 goals and 23 points. He was kept off the scoresheet the last two games, and only managed one shot on goal versus Boston.

The left wing was much better in last month's meeting, tying his career high with five points while beating Rask for a hat trick. His 28 goals and 54 points in 46 meetings with Boston are his highest totals against any opponent.

## **Stafford zeroes in on ending drought**

**By John Vogl**

Buffalo News

February 15, 2013

Drew Stafford's goal is to stay upbeat. So far, it's the only goal he's got.

Stafford is in the worst slump of his career. The drought has come when the Buffalo Sabres could really use his help. As the team dwells near the basement of the NHL, Stafford has a zero in the goal column.

In a twist, the doughnut is eating him. The right winger is saying all the right things, but it's obvious the lack of production weighs heavily. It's evident in his body language and the forced grin mixed with grimace that accompanies his words.

"It's hard not to let the negativity creep in there, the body language," Stafford said Thursday. "It's tough, but you've got to nip it in the bud right away and get back to work. That's what I've been trying to do."

Stafford has gone 17 games without a goal, including all 14 this season, as the Sabres welcome Boston back to First Niagara Center tonight. It's really nothing new. He's had plenty of droughts in his seven-year career. He's gone five games or more without a goal 25 times, including 16- and 15-game slumps in 2008-09.

Last season, he had six disappearing acts. He suffered through a 13-game famine from November to December and also experienced three seven-game slides, a six-gamer and one five-game drought.

It's likely none have been as frustrating as this one.

The 27-year-old alternate captain hoped he was past this type of thing. So did the Sabres, who gave him a four-year, \$16 million deal prior to last season.

"I'm just trying to stick with it, stay positive and continue to work," Stafford said. "It's one of those things where if you continue to get frustrated, let negativity creep into your game, creep into your life, it makes it that much harder. It's obviously very difficult, especially when you're losing as well."

Stafford's frustration came to the forefront Tuesday during Buffalo's 2-0 loss in Ottawa. He called for the puck on an odd-man rush, received a perfect cross-ice pass, looked at the empty net ... and fanned on the shot.

Stafford paused in disbelief and muttered to himself before following the play to the other end. After the whistle, he slowly trudged to the bench. Once he arrived, he put his head down on the boards in anguish.

“It’s been how many games, you know?” he said with a shoulder shrug and pained smile. “It’s frustrating. That’s a golden opportunity, golden chance.”

Stafford has had plenty of chances. He has 40 shots, which put him in the top 30 in the NHL entering Thursday’s schedule. Everyone in the top 65 had scored, except him.

“It’s tough, obviously, the situation that he’s in,” linemate Marcus Foligno said. “He’s all around the net. There’s no shortage of that. When he gets one, I’m sure there’ll be plenty more coming after it.”

Tyler Ennis, the center for Stafford and Foligno, says he’s impressed by the right winger’s effort and positive attitude. Like Foligno, Ennis sees one goal leading to more.

Now it’s up to Stafford to see it. He spent the team’s off day Wednesday with his fiancée and their dog, just trying to forget about hockey and slumps. He hopes the recharge time will allow his brain to clear.

“It’s the hardest thing in the world, but it’s part of the job,” Stafford said. “It’s part of being a professional hockey player. You have to deal with stuff like that.

“You can’t show up to the rink the next day and be moping around because that just brings everyone else down. It’s times like these that a good thing I like to say is, ‘The game reveals your character.’

“Good or bad, you always have to make sure that you’re always having the right attitude because guys feed off that. The streak that I’m on here that I haven’t scored, if I’m moping around the locker room that’s just bringing other guys down. It’s part of my role, as well, as a leader on this team to bring that attitude and bring that work habit where I have to show up and continue to get better.”

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## DOUGHNUT HOLES

Drew Stafford has had many goal-less slumps during his seven-year career, but he’s in the midst of his longest ever.

### Games Dates

17 April 3, 2012 – present

16 Feb. 6 – April 3, 2010

15 Nov. 28 – Dec. 26, 2009

13 Nov. 5 – Dec. 3, 2011 11 Oct. 25 – Nov. 26, 2008

## **HARBORcenter will be a hockey destination**

Editorial

Buffalo News

February 15, 2013

The plan by the Buffalo Sabres to significantly upgrade the team's proposed hockey destination on the waterfront is worthy of support and the tax incentives being requested.

In a recent News article, the team made clear that HARBORcenter – two indoor ice rinks, a hotel, parking ramp and restaurant on the Webster Block parking lot north of the Sabres' First Niagara Center home – is intended to draw participants from the region and beyond to a hockey “center of excellence.”

The new rinks will comply with National Hockey League standards. The expectation that HARBORcenter will become the new home for the Junior Sabres and a Division I hockey team, likely Canisius College, sounds like a winner. The facility will draw not only hockey and figure skating enthusiasts, professional and amateur, but also will be available for city schoolchildren and local organizations.

This is the kind of out-of-the-box thinking that will benefit downtown and add value to Erie Canal Harbor. But it comes with a hefty price tag.

In unveiling the latest plans, Sabres officials said the entire complex will cost about \$170 million, nearly 40 percent more than the \$123 million that was referenced in the agreement filed with the Buffalo Common Council last week.

Sabres owner Terry Pegula is spending quite a bit of his own money on the project. Still, the fact that project sponsors are seeking sales, mortgage and partial property tax credits from the Erie County Industrial Development Agency, valued at about \$27 million, and additional tax credits related to cleaning up the site through the state's brownfield program, should be no surprise.

Given the jobs it will create and the outside dollars it will attract, the approval of the project by the ECIDA's policy committee on Monday was the right call. The full board will vote next Tuesday and should add its approval. The Common Council will hold a public hearing on the sale of the Webster Block to HARBORcenter for \$2.2 million next Tuesday.

Objections that have been raised to the project involve traffic congestion and the building's architectural style. However, among the points to be considered is the 845-space parking ramp that will be available for use by guests of One Canalside (the former Donovan State Office Building), and by employees of the Buffalo Niagara Medical Campus, who will also be able to park there and ride Metro Rail to work. The ramp will also provide a convenient parking place for visitors to Erie Canal Harbor.

And while the building is not in step with the Erie Canal theme on the waterfront, it will fit in with its neighbors, First Niagara Center, the HSBC Atrium and One Canalside.

This is the kind of project that has been too rare in Buffalo. It involves a significant investment of private money, it has definite benefits for this community and it should draw visitors (and their money) from outside the region.

## **Report: Sabres ticket price hike leads NHL**

Business First

February 14, 2013

Despite a labor dispute that wiped out nearly half the season, National Hockey League fans, on average, are paying more to watch games with the Buffalo Sabres leading the way in increased costs.

That is according to research done by Team Marketing Report, which regularly tracks the costs of attending major professional sporting events.

Using a weighted average of season-ticket prices for general seating areas, TMR concluded that the Sabres increased ticket prices 26.7 percent to an average of \$46.15 per seat. Still, Buffalo has the seventh-lowest ticket costs in the NHL.

Conversely, Buffalo's average premium seat cost of \$84.83 is second lowest behind Detroit (\$66.48) and well below the NHL average (\$145.33).

The Sabres, who are nearly sold out for all 24 home dates in the shortened season, have a season-ticket base of 15,400. Capacity at First Niagara Center is now just over 19,070.

The study noted that the last time the NHL had a lockout, which wiped out an entire season, prices dropped significantly across the league. Not this time, however, as the league average is up 5.7 percent to \$61.01.

The examination of ticket prices is part of the Fan Cost Index, a calculation of tickets, concessions, merchandise and parking based on a proverbial family of four attending a game. The FCI across the league is an average of \$354.82, up 7.9 percent. For a Sabres' game at First Niagara Center, the FCI amounts to \$286.62, up 24.1 percent — also the biggest spike league wide.

Toronto retains the top prices with an average ticket for the Maple Leafs at \$124.69. The Dallas Stars have the cheapest tickets at \$36.09 per seat.

## **Ruff ready to 'clean up' struggling Sabres: 'It's on me'**

By Bill Hoppe  
Olean Times Herald  
February 15, 2013

BUFFALO – Lindy Ruff's mood belied his team's plight. The Sabres coach was smiling and brimming with energy during a frank nine-minute chat with the media Thursday following a 70-minute practice inside the First Niagara Center.

"It is on me," Ruff said about the challenge of fixing the Sabres' poor 5-8-1 record, which has them mired in 15th place in the Eastern Conference. "I understand that. I understand this is on me to clean it up, and how I deal with my players, that's my business."

Clearly, Ruff, who's been much more upbeat with the media this year, is trying to be the positive face of the club and deflect blame from his players, several of whom are experiencing terrible seasons.

It's a difficult balance, no doubt. Ruff usually has no problem criticizing his players. Aside from a few positives, there's been little to like about the Sabres' first 14 games.

"We'll find it," Ruff said confidently after the Sabres prepared for tonight's game against the Boston Bruins, the start of a three-game homestand. "I mean, we've gone through it. We knew we were a little young down the middle. But it will come. I'm confident it'll come. It's all on me to clean this mess up. I'm not done trying. I think the attitude of the players has been awesome. The attitude today on the ice was great. The way we went into the Ottawa game (a 2-0 loss Tuesday) was great."

Sabres captain Jason Pominville sees a distinct attitude adjustment from last season.

"When we had a tough stretch last year, looking back on it, I think we got down on ourselves too much," Pominville said. "There was a lot of negativity around. This time around we're just trying to stay upbeat, more positive, sticking with it. I think it's everyone's job to try to push each other to be better."

Ruff believes "the team will feed off my energy." He spent much of Wednesday's off day reviewing video and was loud throughout Thursday's long session, the Sabres' first full practice since last Friday.

"I came in here (Wednesday), we had a couple good meetings, we talked about things we got to get going a little bit better, talked about getting the team in the right mood today, and that's up to me," Ruff said, adding Thursday's practice was "what we needed."

But Ruff knows the Sabres are running out of time just 26 days into the season. Incredibly, they've already played 29 percent of the 48-game schedule. Nine conference opponents have played fewer times, too.

“I’m concerned after every time we lose because it’s a shortened season,” Ruff said. “At the same time, you have an opportunity every night to knock somebody off that’s right around you, which gives you a chance to catch up. But you have to win games. You focus on trying to get points.”

Sabres winger Marcus Foligno added: “You really can’t say, ‘Oh, we’ll wait for tomorrow.’ We got to take advantage of what we got now and really capitalize on certain situations.”

In an age of parity, with a slew of players underperforming, the Sabres haven’t had a strong 60-minute effort or a game in which “you kind of go, ‘Boy, that was a little on the easier side,’” Ruff said. He thinks his team nearly played a complete contest Feb. 3 at home against Florida, a game they lost 4-3 after leading 3-1.

The Sabres’ weaknesses have been discussed constantly for weeks. Most notably, their defense has performed horrendously and they rarely score if Thomas Vanek’s not on the ice.

Issues that have dogged them for years – defensive breakdowns, protecting leads and secondary scoring – keep popping up.

That’s normal, though, Ruff said.

“I think you cycle through that every season,” he said. “It’s no different than St. Louis. (They started) 6-1, everybody thought they were the best team in the league and they lose five straight. Then you cycle through some of the issues and you’re trying to adjust. You go to those hot spots and you’re trying to adjust. It’s almost the same every year. Sometimes it’s a little bigger; sometimes it’s a little less.”

The Sabres have been receiving little from their top line recently. Vanek’s pointless in two straight games for the first time this season. Pominville’s endured four straight pointless contests while Cody Hodgson, their center, is at two.

Not coincidentally, the Sabres have scored one goal in the last two games.

Still, it’s hard to find fault in a line that’s produced 22 goals and 49 points.

Right now, all eyes are focused on winger Drew Stafford, who’s still searching for his first goal despite pumping 40 shots on net, the most of any played with zero scores. An epic miss – he whiffed on a glorious chance Tuesday facing an open net during a three-on-two break – only magnified his struggles.

“I think everyone saw the highlight of him missing, just heeling what would’ve been a wide-open one-timer you’d almost think was right in the wheelhouse,” Ruff said.

Ruff’s confident Stafford will catch fire. The 27-year-old’s a notoriously streaky scorer. He scored seven goals in 10 games in March. He scored 19 times over a 25-game stretch,

including two hat tricks against Boston, during his career-best 31-goal season in 2010-11.

“I try to do my best to keep Drew in the right place so he doesn’t get too frustrated,” Ruff said. “ ... We’ve seen him go from where he’s at this year, the same as last year, he gets on a run, it’s incredibly hot. ...

“For him, it’s just to keep working, it’s to bear down on some of those opportunities, and he has been around the net more for maybe those ones that aren’t going to be pretty.”

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Ruff still worries winger Ville Leino (hip) won’t play this season. The Finn went down late in training camp.

“Probably we’re making a little headway,” Ruff said. “But we’re still in the same spot. So I have no better news to give you.”

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Ruff on rookie center Mikhail Grigorenko, who skated 11:50 Tuesday after sitting Sunday: “I thought it might’ve been one of his best all-around type games. If we stayed away from penalties, it probably would’ve been a pretty big-minute game for him.”

## **Sabres' Ruff: "It's all on me to clean this mess up"**

By Joe Buscaglia

WGR 550

February 14, 2013

Buffalo, NY (WGR 550) -- Rejuvenated from a day off the ice, the Buffalo Sabres and head coach Lindy Ruff got back to work at First Niagara Center with a bit of a different tone.

Not willing to put the downfalls of the team through 14 games on the players any longer, Ruff instead pointed the finger at himself for how to turn things around this season.

"We'll find it. There's guys. We've gone through it. We knew we were a little young down the middle, but it'll come. I'm confident it'll come," Ruff said after Thursday's practice. "It's all on me to clean this mess up. I'm not done trying."

The Sabres have dropped nine of their last twelve contests and sit in 12th place in the Eastern Conference with only 11 points total. Despite quite a losing streak, Buffalo is only three points out of the playoff picture.

Attempting to look ahead to a three-game home stand, Ruff ran his players through one of their hardest practices of the season -- partially due to not having a break in the schedule like this one until now.

"I think the attitude of the players has been awesome. The attitude today out on the ice has been great," the head coach said. "I liked the energy. We got to work on three or four things that you don't normally. We did a lot of battle drills, a lot of offensive zone stuff to get people in better spots."

Now it's all about translating that mentality in to the games. Once again, Ruff put the onus on himself for making sure his team is mentally prepared.

"The team will feed off my energy," he said. "I came in here, we had a couple of good meetings. We talked about things we gotta get going a little bit better, talked about getting the team in the right mood today. And that's up to me."

The Sabres take on the Boston Bruins at First Niagara Center on Friday. You can hear the complete play-by-play coverage on WGR Sports Radio 550.

## **Sabres lines hold steady from Ottawa game**

By Joe Buscaglia

WGR 550

February 14, 2013

Buffalo, NY (WGR 550) -- After having a day away from on-ice practice Wednesday, the Buffalo Sabres got back to the grind on Thursday with no surprises.

All players on the active roster were participants for a session that included battle drills, neutral zone activities, five-on-five work and some conditioning drills at the end. The lines and defensive pairings even stayed the same from the team's 2-0 loss to the Ottawa Senators.

They were as follows:

Vanek - Hodgson - Pominville

Foligno - Ennis - Stafford

Ott - Grigorenko - Gerbe

Hecht - McCormick - Kaleta

Extra: Scott

Myers - Regehr

Ehrhoff - Sekera

Weber - Leopold

Extras: Sulzer, Brennan

The Sabres were still without forward Ville Leino due to a hip injury that has kept him out the entire season, and has him firmly on IR.

"I ask every day," head coach Lindy Ruff said on Leino's status. "I thought we were making a little headway, but I think we're still kind of in the same spot. I have no better news to give you."

The Sabres will go through their morning skate on Friday, leading up to their next contest against the Boston Bruins on Friday night. It's the first of three straight home games for Buffalo, who will then take on Pittsburgh on Sunday and Winnipeg on Tuesday.

## **Sabres: Shiny objects don't fix the problem on the ice.**

By Chris Parker

WGR 550

February 14, 2013

(WGR Bulldog) You know what's funny to me? That one of the most consistent criticisms of the Golisano ownership group, and really of Larry Quinn specifically, was that he was just a land developer.

The flawed and ultimately failed Bass Pro project had Quinn's fingerprints all over it so it's easy enough to understand why that criticism was leveled as often as it was.

The funny part of this lies in the fact that Thursday morning I heard Sabres President Ted Black on WGR point to the massive investment Terry Pegula is making next door to the First Niagara Center as evidence of how committed Pegula is to Buffalo.

No argument that the Harbor Center, with its hotel and retail offerings as well as a pair of ice rinks is a tremendous looking project that as a city resident, I am extremely excited about. It of course represents a huge commitment to the city and I am grateful to Pegula for doing it.

The question that arises is what exactly does it mean to the Buffalo Sabres fortunes on the ice? I know that it generally feels like nothing ever gets done in Buffalo, but there was competition for the Webster Block. While I favored Pegula's plan because of the hockey rinks and the possibility of youth tournaments and college hockey being played downtown, another project would have been built there. It would have been nice, just without hockey rinks.

I guess having a hockey-centric development next door to the Sabres home increases the likelihood of it really feeling like "Hockey Heaven" down there. That's something, but what does it do for the team on the ice? Does it help lure free agents? Does it make it easier to keep your own players? I can't say no to either of those questions. Will it make them try harder? That's a little tougher to answer.

The bottom line here is that I think the Sabres are working on a slippery slope. As evidence to support how committed Pegula is to building a championship hockey team, they point to his investing in the development of a key parcel of land downtown.

I love the Harbor Center project and generally care more about things that are good for Buffalo, as opposed to only being good for the hockey team. I just think that while many fans are in revolt mode, it may not be the best idea to point to a hotel, restaurant and ice rinks as proof that the hockey team is on the right track.

You know how it feels to me?

"Hey, I know you're upset about this hockey team thing, but look, something shiny."

## **Sabres aim to break through, beat Bruins**

By Adam Kimelman

NHL.com

February 14, 2012

BRUINS (8-1-2) at SABRES (5-8-1)

TV: NESN, MSG-Buffalo

Last 10: Boston 7-1-2; Buffalo 3-6-1

Season series: This is the third of five meetings between the Northeast Division foes this season. The Sabres won 7-4 in Boston on Jan. 31; the Bruins got even with a 3-1 win in Buffalo this past Sunday.

Big story: Can the Bruins keep their six-game road unbeaten streak alive? Or can the Sabres win on home ice for just the second time since opening night?

Team Scope:

Bruins: Tyler Seguin had 29 goals in his second NHL season, and 25 goals in 29 games with Swiss club Biel during the lockout, so the third-year forward certainly knows how to put the puck in the net. So despite scoring just two goals in his first 11 NHL games this season -- and one of those was an empty-netter -- he said he's not worried.

"I know eventually that a couple will go in and I'll go on a roll," Seguin told CSNNE.com. "I just need to stay with it and bear down."

Coach Claude Julien said it's a matter of Seguin "pushing himself" to get more pucks in the net.

"We know we can get more out of him," Julien told CSNNE.com. "It's a matter of pushing him and it's a matter of him pushing himself. He hasn't been a poor player, but I think there is more that's expected of him. I think there's more that he can give us."

Sabres: With just two wins in their last seven games and a 12th-place spot in the Eastern Conference standings, Sabres coach Lindy Ruff said it's on him to fix the problems ailing his team.

"It is on me," he told reporters. "I understand that. This is on me to clean it up."

Ruff is trying to stay positive, and that attitude has spread to the players.

"The attitude of the players has been awesome," he said. "The attitude of the players on the ice today was great. The way we went into the Ottawa game [a 2-0 loss Tuesday] was great. We're disappointed. Do we need to be harder in some situations? Yes. We didn't

quite finish a couple plays we need to finish. Some of them were offensively, some of them were defensively.

"The team will feed off my energy. I came in here, we had a couple good meetings. We talked about things we have to get going a little bit better, talked about getting the team in the right mood today and that's up to me."

Who's hot: Buffalo's Thomas Vanek, the League's leading scorer, has done well this season against the Bruins, with three goals (on just five shots) and two assists in two games.

Injury report: Outside of long-term injuries to Marc Savard and Jordan Caron, the Bruins are healthy. ... Sabres forward Ville Leino remains out with a hip injury.

