



Buffalo Sabres

Daily Press Clips

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Try as he might, Pegula just doesn't get it

By Jerry Sullivan
The Buffalo News
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Terry Pegula prefaced his remarks at the groundbreaking for the HarborCenter project on Saturday by taking a jab at himself. "At least I can do something without Kim helping me," the Sabres owner said.

Check that. Kim Pegula, who has a background in public relations, might have stopped her husband right there.

"I'm a little confused," Terry said next. "I'm sitting on the stage between Mayor [Byron] Brown and Ted Black, yet I look over there, and I'm wondering, is something backwards here?"

That one went over like a slap shot to the face. There was a stunned silence, and then some uncomfortable laughter. Pegula finished with a lame comment about Brown and Black, the Sabres' president, starting a law firm.

At least no one booed, which amounts to progress with our NHL team nowadays. Of course, the room was mainly populated by politicians and various other civic and hockey dignitaries, who had gathered to pose with shovels and cheerlead for the \$172 million project on the Webster Block.

It was a happy occasion for the city, to be sure, a chance to celebrate real progress on the waterfront, a generous venture that will go a long way toward realizing Pegula's vision of a Hockey Heaven at the foot of Washington Street.

But it also provided further evidence of the owner's fumbling grasp of basic public relations. Pegula has been an evasive figure over the last year or so. He didn't bother to comment after the Sabres missed the playoffs last year. He still hasn't commented on his decision to fire Lindy Ruff two months ago.

Hearing Pegula utter clumsy, off-color remarks on the big day, you understood why Black and his PR troops would be reluctant to set him loose in public. The Black and Brown stuff was fairly harmless. I'm not suggesting that Pegula is racist, just guilty of dubious judgment.

Whether it was intended or not, it sounded as if Pegula was making a comment about the darkness of the mayor's skin. ("Boy, we got a dark mayor here!").

Some of the politicians were rolling their eyes, believe me.

In a brief, contentious gathering with the media later, I asked Pegula what exactly had been the point.

"Inside joke," he said.

Very inside, evidently. Pegula wasn't any more revealing in the rest of his three-minute press session, which began with a team executive asking for our cooperation and urging the media to ask questions only about the HarborCenter project.

Pegula doesn't have a clue. It would have been one thing if he had already gone on record about firing an admired coach who had been on the job for 16 years, or offered the slightest comment on his team's putrid showing at any point during the season.

He said this wasn't the time for discussing Ruff's firing. He was right. The proper time was two months ago, when he did it.

Cooperation? Here's a deal, I told Pegula. We'll avoid asking hockey questions if you cooperate and assure us you'll talk after the season this year.

"We'll see," he said. "Yeah, we'll see, that's what I said."

I tried to give Pegula the benefit of the doubt when he came here. He created genuine optimism when he bought the team and began spending big money on the arena and the roster. It's great that he and his wife wanted to invest their money in one of our most precious and undeveloped resources.

But there's an aloof, even flippant, quality to the man. It's as if Pegula feels he should be above criticism from the media. He has only reinforced the suspicions I had on his first day in town, when he said the writers from our newspaper were partly responsible for the Sabres' struggles.

Reasonable fans understand that criticism is part of the deal. Pegula said winning the Cup was his only goal. He said it would take three years. The Sabres will likely miss the playoffs for the second year in a row.

It's not mean or negative to suggest his team has fallen short of the mark, or to expect Pegula to be man enough to face the heat now and then. Black speaks for the club on a weekly basis. Darcy Regier does, too. The players stand in their spiffy new locker room and face the music after losses.

Fans can be very forgiving in this town. They're not happy with the team, and for good reason. But they respect a guy who'll take a hit and doesn't run from trouble. Pegula is the one who made the promises and swore his allegiance as a fan. He's not your typical owner. Fans deserve more from him.

Pegula arrived like a conquering hero two years ago. I remember the outpouring of emotion in those early days. He made it sound Saturday as if he had distanced himself emotionally from the team. But Sabres fans want to believe that the owner is one of them.

He can still be a hero in this town. The HarborCenter project will sail along over the next year, an escalating monument to the Pegulas' commitment to Buffalo.

They should be applauded for resurrecting the Rigases' vision for the Webster Block and proving things can get done quickly in this town.

But it's reconstructing the rubble of the team that is most vital. Pegula needs to take a hard look at his hockey operation and figure out how to build the Sabres back into a contender. It starts with recognizing that replacing Regier is another long overdue local reconstruction project.

The HarborCenter project will make the city an international hockey destination, a gathering place for the sport on every level. But the notion of Hockey Heaven is mainly about the NHL team, about restoring the Sabres to the level of a legitimate Stanley Cup contender.

Regier won five playoff series in his first two years in Buffalo. Assuming the Sabres miss the playoffs again, it will be five series wins in the last 14 years. And still, they pretend to be closer to the ultimate goal.

I imagine the owner isn't the only one who's confused and wondering if something is backwards here.

Opportunity knocks for Sabres rookie Ruhwedel

By John Vogl
The Buffalo News
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Chad Ruhwedel's flight back to Boston was awful. The pain of losing Thursday in college hockey's Frozen Four shook him more than any turbulence he'd encounter, and he and his UMass Lowell teammates exited the plane ride from Pittsburgh knowing their fantasies had just been extinguished.

While Ruhwedel was airborne, however, another dream presented itself. He turned on his phone, saw messages from his adviser and mother, and learned that the Buffalo Sabres wanted him – immediately.

Shaken from the loss and mesmerized at the news, Ruhwedel decided to take a timeout and headed to campus with his coach, Norm Bazin. They weighed the benefits of staying at school for his senior year against the opportunity to go pro, a lengthy discussion that ended with Ruhwedel preparing for another plane ride.

This one went much more smoothly. Ruhwedel landed in Buffalo on Saturday morning armed with a two-year, \$1.85 million contract, and a few hours later he was on the ice for the Sabres' 1-0 victory over Philadelphia.

"It's been pretty incredible," Ruhwedel said in First Niagara Center. "The team had a tough loss in the Frozen Four a couple days back, and fortunately enough Buffalo gave me a call and gave me a good opportunity.

"When you have a good opportunity, sometimes you just have to take it and run with it. These chances don't come around very often. Every kid dreams of this."

The 22-year-old began dreaming of it while growing up in San Diego, and his growth at UMass Lowell made it a reality. The free agent defenseman was named a first-team All-America on Friday, capping a season that made teams take notice.

The Sabres were one of them.

"He's someone that our scouting staff identified fairly early on in this season," General Manager Darcy Regier said. "We followed him through the year and expressed an interest from the start of the year with his representative and just kind of stayed with it. It came down to a number of teams, but he decided to sign here."

The No. 1 reason was playing time. Competition for college free agents is fierce, so teams need to provide extra incentives. Some clubs offer roster spots. The Sabres offered immediate playing time.

Buffalo needed a defenseman after Tyler Myers broke a bone in his leg Thursday. Rather than call up a prospect from Rochester, they offered the gig to Ruhwedel.

“It’s what you have to do to get the player signed now,” Regier said. “You have to make a commitment to put him on your roster, and so you have to have a comfort level with them playing some games here.

“My comfort level is good with him. He’s an older player and so he’s not someone just coming out of junior. He’s had a real good collegiate career and obviously has been recognized as a top defenseman in the country. We think he’ll be fine, and we’re excited to have him in the organization.”

Ruhwedel was nearly flawless in his debut. The 5-foot-11, 188-pounder skated 13 minutes and attempted four shots. It’s a continuation of a stellar season with the River Hawks in which he recorded seven goals, 23 points and a plus-16 rating in 41 games.

“He handled it perfectly,” said Sabres blue-line mate Mike Weber, who marveled at Ruhwedel’s quick acclimation. “About 12:30 I met him, said, ‘Hey, how you doing? I’m Mike and I’m your partner, so let’s have a good one.’

“He was solid out there, made a lot of smart plays. ... He’s only going to get better.”

Ruhwedel was still running on adrenaline after the game, which was viewed by his mom, Robin, and sister, Evan. He anticipates being a little calmer today when the Sabres host Tampa Bay.

“Getting a good skate in warm-up kind of helped me out, cooled me down,” Ruhwedel said. “Trust me, I had a lot of questions before, and Weber answered all of them. The coaching staff was great, made me feel right at home. They just said, ‘Play your game, go out there and have fun.’ That was the most important thing. I tried to do that.

“After you get that first shift out of the way, it’s hockey, so you get used to it. It was a lot of fun.”

Sabres notebook: Pegula says franchise still has goal of Cup

By Mike Harrington

The Buffalo News

April 14, 2013

After the ceremonial groundbreaking for his new HarborCenter project, Buffalo Sabres owner Terry Pegula said Saturday the franchise's goal of the Stanley Cup is unwavering but begrudgingly admitted it is going to take far longer than the three-year plan he had initially hoped for to get close.

"I just look at it optimistically. We'll move forward and do the right thing," Pegula said in his first comments to the media since Jan. 19, the day before the season opener. "One team wins the Stanley Cup every year. We will build toward that goal. We're daily working on that goal."

Pegula then noted it was 39 years between Cups for the Boston Bruins, who got one for owner and Western New York native Jeremy Jacobs in 2011.

"I don't know how long," Pegula said. "How can you guarantee anybody anything? You do your best every year. When's the last time the New England Patriots won the Stanley Cup? Or the Super Bowl?"

Reminded the Pats don't regularly miss the playoffs like the Sabres, Pegula's only response was, "Well, hey."

Sabres vice president Mike Gilbert tried to deflect reporters' hockey questions a couple of times, especially when Pegula was asked about the Feb. 19 firing of longtime coach Lindy Ruff. Pegula has not commented publicly on the dismissal of the longest-tenured coach in the NHL.

"I don't need to answer that now. This is a different topic today," Pegula said.

Reminded that fans had yet to hear from him on the subject, Pegula shot back, "Why don't you figure that one out?"

Pegula admitted the Sabres will likely need a youth movement as part of their rebuilding and that it's difficult for all parties involved, especially fans, to endure tough times.

"I was a fan. But I'm still the owner of the team," Pegula said. "This is a business now. It's a little different. You've got to take the emotion out of it."

...

Jhonas Enroth made 29 saves – and got a fortuitous bounce on a Danny Briere shot off the crossbar with one second left – to get the Sabres' first shutout of the season and third of his career in their 1-0 win over the Philadelphia Flyers. After going nearly 16 months without a win, Enroth is 3-0-1 in his last four starts with a 1.46 goals-against average and .955 save percentage.

"It gives me a little breathing room I think, especially from you guys," a smiling Enroth told reporters. "You guys are the ones that were talking about it. A couple tough games where I

played well and lost. For sure, it gives me breathing room and looks a little bit better in the stats.”

It was the first shutout for Buffalo against the Flyers in the regular season since Dominik Hasek made 31 saves in a 3-0 win over Philly here on Dec. 4, 1998.

Christian Ehrhoff got the game’s only goal at 17 seconds of the third period, firing a shot off the backboards that ricocheted home off the leg of Flyers goalie Steve Mason.

“Sometimes you get a good bounce off the boards,” Ehrhoff said. “They did a good job being in shooting lanes and I just tried to get it back in front of the net. Fortunate bounce for me and for us and I’m happy with it.”

...

Interim coach Ron Rolston admitted the Sabres are in experimentation mode and that included switching Tyler Ennis to left wing with Cody Hodgson and Thomas Vanek and putting Marcus Foligno at center with John Scott and Drew Stafford. Foligno, who had not played center since his junior days in Sudbury, Ont., won 6-of-8 draws.

“I like how you’re in the battle a lot and counted on down low to get pucks to your wingers and get them down low,” Foligno said. “When you got big guys down low, I feel like I’m able to match that and take pucks off people.”

“The biggest thing is get my feet moving. I’m not going to be able to be as skilled skating-wise but just doing little things to make plays.”

...

The Quebec Remparts were eliminated from their junior playoff series Friday night so that means No. 1 draft choice Mikhail Grigorenko is free to come back to the NHL or make his debut in the AHL with the Rochester Americans. General Manager Darcy Regier said that decision will come in the next day or two.

“He’ll come back, and we’ll make a decision whether we’re going to play him here or we’ll play him in Rochester,” said Regier. “We’ll wait for him to finish up, up there with meetings with [Quebec coach] Patrick Roy and whatever they want to do, and then we’ll bring him back here.”

...

Sabres center Kevin Porter assisted on Ehrhoff’s goal and has six points (three goals, three assists) in his last six games. ... The Flyers have lost four straight and scored just three goals in those games to drop to 12th in the East, and are going to miss the playoffs for just the second time in 18 years. ... Former Sabres co-captain Briere returned to the Flyers’ lineup after missing 10 games with a concussion. He played 18:51 and had three shots.

Looking back on a trade that fell through

By Bucky Gleason

The Buffalo News

April 14, 2013

You're not going to find any real data on trade rumors that became reality. Not even NHL stats whiz Benny Ercolani could keep such records. If you consider all the conversations, add media speculation, multiply by 100 million for social media, and the accuracy rate hovers around 0.00001 percent.

Although most are easily dismissed and quickly forgotten, some leave you wondering about what might have been. General managers don't talk about trades that didn't happen, of course, because nobody wins. One gets blamed for even considering such a deal and the other is criticized for not pulling the trigger.

Just for fun, let's turn back the clocks 17 months and revisit discussions between the Ducks and Sabres. The two camps definitely talked trade in November 2011 before backing off, going their separate ways and missing the playoffs. Anaheim and Buffalo have since gone in opposite directions.

To be clear, exactly what the two teams discussed was never made public. Ducks GM Bob Murray was looking to shake up his roster after a miserable start and showed up last season in First Niagara Center for a closer peek at the Sabres. It was widely reported that he was dangling scoring winger Bobby Ryan as trade bait.

Other big names tossed around included Ryan Getzlaf and Jonas Hiller for Anaheim and Thomas Vanek, Drew Stafford and Ryan Miller for Buffalo. Was a package in the works that would have included players, prospects, draft picks or all of the above? Anything was possible. Like so many potential trades, it amounted to nothing.

More telling than the Ducks and Sabres' failure to make a trade was how the two teams proceeded after talks broke down.

Murray thought his team was stale, fired coach Randy Carlyle and snapped up Bruce Boudreau shortly after he was sent packing by the Capitals. The Ducks climbed back into the playoff race with a 15-2-4 tear in the middle of the season. A late-season tumble was their doom en route to a 13th-place finish in the West.

Check the standings these days, and the Ducks had a 27-9-5 record, first in the Pacific Division and second in the conference, after a 24-3-4 start. Getzlaf and winger Corey Perry, their top two scorers, signed long-term (too long?) contract extensions. They kept Ryan, who still isn't playing at full capacity but was third on the team in scoring.

The Ducks added veteran defenseman Sheldon Souray, who had more goals (seven) and points (16) while Stafford struggled with five goals and 15 points for Buffalo. Souray has proven two years after his fallout with Edmonton that he can still play. Anaheim added Daniel Winnick, a serviceable bottom-six forward.

Anaheim has been riding goalie Viktor Fasth, who had a 14-4-1 record with a 2.17 goals-against average and .923 save percentage. He has shared the net with Hiller, who has a career 2.53 goals-against average .917 save percentage while making \$1.725 million less than Miller, who has a career 2.59 GAA and .915 save percentage.

The Ducks have the 21st highest payroll after accounting for \$3.625 million in salaries (for a full season) by trading for Ben Lovejoy, Matthew Lombardi and David Steckel. The Sabres fell from eighth to 15th in payroll after dumping \$12.3 million in salaries by trading away captain Jason Pominville, Robyn Regehr and Jordan Leopold.

Buffalo retained GM Darcy Regier and coach Lindy Ruff after last season, and the Sabres had another miserable start this year. Ruff was kicked to the curb. The Sabres appear to be keeping Regier through the rebuilding process even though he built the team that eventually crumbled. Make sense?

Vanek and Miller have one full season remaining on their contracts. Vanek sounds like he can't get out of Buffalo fast enough. Miller will likely be gone, too, if the Sabres can move him before next season. Their trade values decrease with every day they draw closer to next season. It's nowhere near what it was 17 months ago.

Anaheim clinched a playoff spot, which was a formality after its great start. The Sabres had a 0.251 percent chance of reaching the postseason, according to sportsclubstats.com, before playing the Flyers on Saturday. You can't help but wonder if things would have been different if trade rumors in November 2011 became reality.

Howard staying

The chances of him landing there were slim, anyway, but Miller might as well scratch Detroit from his list of eventual destinations after he leaves Buffalo. The Red Wings were finalizing details on an extension with Jimmy Howard.

The Red Wings for years didn't spend big money on goaltenders because they would rather distribute the dough to the rest of their players. Howard is set to sign a six-year deal worth \$31.8 million. It's high for them but reasonable for him.

"It's really, really, really close. Pretty much just the little stuff," Howard told reporters in Motown. "I wanted to be here. I get along great with everyone here, and I believe in this organization and I want to get the job done."

Howard is finishing up the final year of his current deal, which paid him \$2.25 million that was prorated to about \$1.3 million with the shortened season. He'll take a \$5.3 million cap hit starting next year, which is 11th-highest among NHL goalies.

It's a good deal for the Syracuse native, who had a 2.41 GAA and .917 save percentage in 226 career games. He had a 2.39 GAA (20th) and a .918 save percentage (16th) this season. He appeared in 34 of the Red Wings' first 40 games this season.

Smyth nears end of line

Ryan Smyth has another year and \$2.25 million remaining on his contract with the Oilers, but he'll have a hard time convincing anyone he has treads left in his 37-year-old wheels.

The proud winger, who entered the weekend with 1,190 NHL games on his resume, had not scored in 24 straight games, had only one assist to show for 15 games and had two goals and 10 points all season.

Sometimes, the hardest part for players is coming to the realization that they can no longer keep up with the kids.

Edmonton could bring him back as a mentor to its younger players, but it's more likely they'll buy out his deal and offer him a job.

Elias miffed at Devils

Patrik Elias is one among many who do not subscribe to GM Lou Lamoriello's policy of not negotiating contracts during the season. Elias would rather stay in New Jersey, but it looks like he'll test the open market.

"Who wouldn't want to talk about it during the season? Then you would see they have interest. And, if you like the offer, why wouldn't you sign?" Elias told said. "But that never came up here. If it had happened it would've been great, but it didn't happen. It's getting kind of late now."

Lamoriello lost Zach Parise to free agency last season because he refused to work on an extension. His basic rationale is that players would be distracted by contract talks. He did make an exception for Martin Brodeur, however. For some players, a team refusing to talk contracts can become a burden.

"It's also a distraction," Elias said. "There is also pressure on you to play well because you know free agency is coming up. So that's pressure for some guys. It depends on how you handle it."

Quotable

Blues coach Ken Hitchcock on the additions of defenseman Jay Bouwmeester and former Sabre Leopold: "Solid, responsible, smart, patient. Smart and patient would be the key, and that allows us to be better in our own zone. ... [Bouwmeester] gets a lot of the name recognition, but Leopold has added a ton to us."

Around the boards

- Anze Kopitar entered the weekend without a goal in nine straight games and just one in 13 games. Jonathan Quick had an .897 save percentage. Dustin Penner is coming back from injury. Not to worry, Kings fans. They'll be ready when the postseason comes around. By the way, Regehr is on the top defense pairing with Drew Doughty.
- Winnipeg's top line of Bryan Little between Andrew Ladd and Blake Wheeler combined for four goals, 15 points and plus-11 during its three-game winning streak last week. In the previous five games, all losses, they had one assist and were minus-21.

- NHL.com and NHL Network asked 10 hockey writers and television personalities to name the top general manager in the league. Ken Holland had five first-place votes and 74 points overall to lead the league. Eighteen different GMs had at least one vote among the top eight. You might find this shocking, but Regier did not.
- Now with the playoffs a fantasy and a strong start a memory, the Hurricanes will turn their attention to getting depth among their forwards. Their top line of Eric Staal centering for Jiri Tlusty and Alex Semin combined for 33 even-strength goals. The other 16 forwards who have played this season had combined for 32.
- The Flames like what they see in 22-year-old defenseman T.J. Brodie, who has been logging many of the minutes Bouwmeester left behind. He was averaging about 24 minutes over six contests leading into the weekend, which was more than Bouwmeester averaged in his first five games with the Blues.

Pegulas help officially break ground for HarborCenter

By Jay Rey

The Buffalo News

April 13, 2013

Terry Pegula took a break from the disappointing season his Buffalo Sabres are having to bring the city a bit of good news.

Pegula – who is seldom seen or heard around Buffalo – was in town on Saturday to take part in a ceremonial groundbreaking for the organization's \$172.2 million hotel and ice rink complex that will rise across from First Niagara Center.

Pegula told the 100 or more people in attendance that the Sabres organization would be aggressive in attracting hockey players, coaches and personnel to Buffalo, where his new HarborCenter will serve as a first-class venue in which to play, train and learn about the game.

"In February 2011, when Kim and I bought the Sabres, we talked to each other about what NHL ownership means to a community where your team is located," said Pegula, who was accompanied by his wife Saturday.

"We also discussed, how can our ownership affect and help the people in the region in which we live?" Pegula said. "Since our core business is hockey, we thought, 'Why couldn't we start and build a facility that would attract hockey players, coaches and professionals and create a teaching facility that would be aligned with the Sabres organization?'"

HarborCenter will include two ice rinks, a 200-room hotel and an 845-space parking garage. It also will have a 12,000-square-foot sports bar and 8,000 square feet of retail space.

Work is under way at the site, which is bounded by Washington, Perry, Main and Scott streets.

The opening of the rinks is scheduled for September 2014. The hotel is expected to debut in the spring of 2015.

"This facility will improve Buffalo's visual image. It will bring business to Buffalo," Pegula said. "It will create a venue families can recreate at, and it will create a world-class teaching and training facility."

"This is not a small task," he added. "Many will be involved, but it will succeed."

Cliff Benson, chief development officer for the Sabres, thanked local officials for moving quickly on the project and talked about how the idea was conceived one day while he and the Sabres owner stood on the balcony of Pegula's office.

"Do you want to do something to change the waterfront?" Benson asked him.

"Yes," Pegula told him.

"He didn't say 'Yes, but.' He didn't say, 'Yes, what will it cost?' – although he did ask me that later," Benson said.

“He didn’t say, ‘Yes, will it make money?’” Benson said. “He simply said, ‘Yes,’ and what happened from there has been a great experience for the Sabres organization.”

The groundbreaking ceremony was held prior to Saturday’s Sabres game, under the cover of a large tent on the 1.7-acre construction site.

The Pegulas, Sabres President Ted Black, Mayor Byron W. Brown and Erie County Executive Mark C. Poloncarz used shovels fashioned from hockey sticks to dig into a pile of dirt.

Afterward, members of the media surrounded Pegula, anxious to ask questions about a losing Sabres season that saw the firing of the head coach, the trading of the team’s captain and ongoing questions about the direction of the franchise.

But the Sabres kept the focus on the groundbreaking for HarborCenter, which also brought out former Sabres, including Pat Lafontaine, Danny Gare and Michael Peca, as well as Rep. Brian Higgins, D-Buffalo.

“We knew this could be a great project for this community,” said the mayor, who selected the Sabres proposal for the Webster Block in August following a competitive bidding process.

“But the magnitude of this project even has exceeded my wildest expectations of what we were going to be able to bring to the community,” Brown said. “This is tremendous progress, not just for downtown Buffalo and the waterfront, but for all of Buffalo and all of Western New York.”

As a youth hockey coach, Poloncarz said he is looking forward to playing tournaments in downtown Buffalo rather than in Cleveland or Toronto.

“This is emblematic of exactly what’s going on in this community,” Poloncarz said. “We are seeing hundreds of millions of dollars of redevelopment going on from the private sector, because people are putting their faith in the City of Buffalo and Western New York and it starts right here in front of First Niagara.”

But like his team’s season, Pegula’s event wasn’t entirely without drama.

Firefighters picketing outside the arena with a bullhorn could be overheard during the ceremony, while Pegula’s remarks about two people onstage with him – Brown and Ted Black – led to an uncomfortable moment.

“I’m a little confused, I’m sitting on the stage between Mayor Brown and Ted Black, yet I look over there, and I’m wondering, is something backwards here?” he said.

There was a silence and then bewildered laughter before Pegula started again.

“Ted said they’re going to start a law firm, Brown and Black,” he continued.

Afterward, Sabres spokesman Michael Gilbert said it was an inside joke among the three men and the remark had no racial overtones.

Sabres deliver on promise to give more in win over Flyers

By John Vogl
The Buffalo News
April 13, 2013

The Sabres proved embarrassment can be a powerful motivator.

One game after delivering one of the worst performances in years, Buffalo responded this afternoon with an intense, well-rounded 1-0 victory over Philadelphia. Jhonas Enroth backstopped the Sabres with 29 saves, while Christian Ehrhoff scored the only goal just seconds into the final period.

The Sabres had an immeasurably better effort than their previous game, a 5-1 debacle against Montreal on Thursday. They promised more, and they delivered.

The Sabres broke a scoreless tie with just 17 seconds gone in the third period. After a faceoff in the Flyers' zone, Ehrhoff took a hard slap shot from the point. It went wide left, but the carom came directly to the front near the post, hit goaltender Steve Mason and trickled in.

Enroth made a huge save with 50 seconds left to preserve the shutout, stopping Wayne Simmonds in the slot.

Patrick Kaleta opened the game with a one-sided beatdown of Flyers defenseman Oliver Lauridsen. The 6-foot-6, 220-pound rookie started the fight with a couple of cross-checks, but he probably wishes he hadn't. Kaleta unleashed 13 straight left hands to drop Lauridsen to the ice before he ever through a punch.

Kaleta exhorted the crowd on the way to the penalty box, drawing a loud ovation.

The rest of the first period was uneventful, which in the case of Chad Ruhwedel's shifts was a good thing. The Sabres signed the college free agent from UMass Lowell just prior to the game. He left school after a junior season that featured getting named a first-team All American.

Jhonas Enroth turned aside 10 shots in the opening 20 minutes, while Mason stopped Buffalo's six attempts. Enroth made the best save of the period, sliding across the crease to thwart Simmonds, who batted the puck out of the air toward the cage with nine minutes left.

Buffalo outshot Philly, 9-8, during the second period and outchanced them, too. Mason was sharp in keeping the game scoreless.

The goalie's first big stop came on Drew Stafford with six minutes gone. With the Sabres short-handed, Kevin Porter's pass during a two-on-one set up Stafford all alone. Mason easily covered the quick shot.

He stopped the new line of Cody Hodgson centering left wing Tyler Ennis and right wing Thomas Vanek twice, with Mason's glove doing the work both times.

A tic-tac-toe play by all three linemates put Hodgson alone near the slot, but Mason covered up with 10 minutes gone. Less than three minutes later, the goalie got a piece of a rocket by Vanek.

The wall put up by Mason continued through the final minute. Another odd-man rush concluded with Steve Ott setting up Porter, but Mason got his arm on the blast to send the teams toward intermission still deadlocked.

Interim coach Ron Rolston juggled all his lines, with Ennis getting pulled from center and Marcus Foligno moving to the middle as the biggest switches. Porter opened between Ott and right wing Brian Flynn. Jochen Hecht centered Nathan Gerbe and Kaleta. Foligno was flanked by John Scott and Stafford.

Enroth stops 29 in Sabres' 1-0 win over Flyers

By John Wawrow

Associated Press

April 13, 2013

BUFFALO, N.Y. (AP) -- Sabres goalie Jhonas Enroth chalked up his first shutout in nearly two seasons as having more to do with skill than good fortune.

In stopping 29 shots in a 1-0 win over the Philadelphia Flyers on Saturday, Enroth brushed aside a question regarding Danny Briere's shot that deflected off the crossbar with 1 second remaining.

"I'm going to stick with good," Enroth said, with a wink. "I think we worked really hard. Everyone was better out there, so I think we deserved the luck."

Buffalo not only got a break on Briere's shot which banked wide as the final horn sounded, but also on its only goal.

Christian Ehrhoff scored 17 seconds into the third period after a faceoff to the left of the Flyers net.

Given the puck at the point, Ehrhoff's shot sailed five feet wide of the net, caromed off the end boards and banked in off the back of Flyers goalie Steve Mason's skate.

"Fortunate bounce for me, and it was the only goal in the game so happy with it," Ehrhoff said. "Sometimes it just happens that way. Not really that surprised."

The Sabres (17-19-6) ended a two-game skid to stay on the fringes of the playoff race by moving into a tie for 10th with New Jersey in the Eastern Conference.

The Flyers (17-21-3) slipped further out of contention in losing their fourth straight - a stretch in which they've combined for just three goals.

"Yeah, it's the way things are going these days around here," Briere said, of his shot from the left circle that went off the crossbar. "All the offense that we have up front, it's been frustrating in that regard. I wish I had an easy answer."

Briere was playing his first game after missing 10 with a concussion.

And he couldn't provide a spark to a team that's lost four straight in regulation for the first time since a fourth-game skid from Feb. 26-March 6, 2011.

As for its offensive struggles, Philadelphia's failure to score two or more goals in regulation over four games is the team's worst stretch since a four-game span from Jan. 24-30, 2003, according to STATS LLC.

The power play isn't helping. The Flyers failed to convert on three chances and are 0 for 16 in six games.

"Nobody likes the position we're in. It's tough to take," general manager Paul Holmgren said. "Scoring three goals in the last four games is, I'm sure, real tough to take for the players, too. We just have to dig in now and play hard."

Much of the Flyers offensive struggles on Saturday had to do with Enroth, who earned his third career shutout and first since Nov. 18, 2011. All three of his shutouts have come in 1-0 wins.

Enroth was in position to stop Wayne Simmonds' shot from the slot with 50 seconds left.

His best stop came 10 minutes earlier, when he kicked out his left pad to stop Simon Gagne driving to the net after being set up alone in front.

Enroth was briefly shaken up on the play, after teammate Mark Pysyk rolled over top the goalie while chasing Gagne from behind.

Mason finished with 20 saves in making his third appearance since being acquired in a trade with Columbus. He was particularly sharp in the second period, when he stopped the Sabres on three separate 2-on-1 rushes.

The Sabres won despite a lineup that was thinned further of veteran talent.

With defenseman Tyler Myers set to miss the rest of the season with a broken bone in his leg, Chad Ruhwedel made his NHL debut shortly after signing a two-year contract with Buffalo. Ruhwedel was an undrafted free agent, who just completed his college career at UMass Lowell.

"It was pure adrenaline," said Ruhwedel, who logged 13 minutes on 18 shifts. "It was surreal. These guys made my job a lot easier."

NOTES: Ruhwedel had 63 points (15 goals) in 110 career games at UMass Lowell. He replaced Tyler Myers in the lineup, after the defenseman was ruled out for the remainder of the season after he broke a bone in his leg blocking a shot in a 5-1 loss to Montreal on Thursday. ... Flyers C Maxim Talbot and D Bruno Gervais were both healthy scratches. Gervais missed only his fourth game of the season. ... Before the game, a ground-breaking ceremony was held for a \$172 million hockey/entertainment complex Sabres owner Terry Pegula is building across the street from the team's home.

Pegula scales back Sabres title expectations

By John Wawrow

Associated Press

April 13, 2013

BUFFALO, N.Y. (AP) -- Buffalo Sabres owner Terry Pegula's objective to build a Stanley Cup contender remains the same. It's his three-year timeline that's proving unrealistic.

With Buffalo in jeopardy of missing the playoffs for a second straight year, Pegula said Saturday it's unclear how long it might take to rebuild the Sabres.

"You know, I don't know how long," Pegula said, before referring to Boston Bruins owner Jeremy Jacobs, who is from Buffalo. "Jerry Jacobs down the road took 39 years to win a Stanley Cup. So I don't know how long. I'm not going to guarantee anybody anything, you know. You do your best every year."

The Sabres haven't been anywhere near good this season. They fired longtime coach Lindy Ruff after a 6-10-1 start in February, and are retooling their roster after trading away three veterans - including captain Jason Pominville - over the past month.

And Pegula's comments - his first since the season began in mid-January - are a substantial turnaround for the owner. He had previously talked openly about the prospect of the Sabres winning a title within three seasons after he purchased them in February 2011.

"One team wins the Stanley Cup every year. We will build toward that goal," Pegula said. "We're daily working that goal."

Pegula spoke only briefly to reporters after taking part in a ground-breaking ceremony for a \$172 million downtown hockey/entertainment complex he is building across the street from the Sabres home.

Pegula wasn't in a mood to say much about his slumping Sabres, who hosted the Philadelphia Flyers later in the afternoon. He declined answering a question about firing Ruff, and a team spokesman reminded reporters on several occasions to ask questions only regarding the ground-breaking ceremony.

Pegula did draw parallels to his team and the plot of land on which the HARBORCenter complex will be built. He noted several construction proposals for the property had previously fallen through.

"I've always said nothing is as good as it looks or bad as it seems. And there's always good in something bad," Pegula said. "I'm aware that along the way, this waterfront property has had its up and downs. Our plan for the Sabres is similar. I'm going to proceed into the future with that plan."

Sabres sign UMass Lowell D Ruhwedel

Associated Press

April 13, 2013

BUFFALO, N.Y. (AP) -- The Buffalo Sabres have signed undrafted rookie free-agent defenseman Chad Ruhwedel (ROO-wee-dell) to a two-year contract after he completed his college career at UMass Lowell.

Hours after being signed Saturday, Ruhwedel made his NHL debut, playing in Buffalo's home game against the Philadelphia Flyers. He had 23 points (seven goals) in 41 games this past season in helping Lowell reach the Frozen Four, before losing to Yale in a semifinal game on Thursday.

Overall, he had 63 points (15 goals) in 110 career games for the River Hawks.

The Sabres had an immediate need at defense. Tyler Myers will miss the remainder of the season after breaking his leg in a 5-1 loss to Montreal on Thursday.

Flyers forward Danny Briere returned after missing 10 games with a concussion.

Sabres Blank Flyers 1-0

By Dan Cave

WGR 550

April 13, 2013

Jhonas Enroth and the Sabres fought off a last-minute flurry by the Flyers, hanging on for a 1-0 victory on Saturday. Enroth stopped all 29 shots he faced for the win.

Fireworks occurred almost immediately after the opening faceoff in the form of a one-sided fight as Patrick Kaleta pummeled Oliver Lauridsen. A little over a minute later, both Steve Ott and Jay Rosehill were sent to the penalty box for unsportsmanlike conduct. The bad blood cooled off as the scoreless first period came to an end, however, and the game slowed down well into the second.

Christian Ehrhoff finally broke the goose eggs on the scoreboard just 17 seconds into the third. The defenseman put Buffalo ahead 1-0, blasting a shot that bounced off the backboard before Flyers goaltender Steve Mason inadvertently deflected the puck into the net. Enroth was busy in the game's closing minutes, peppered with shots by Philadelphia, but the Buffalo goaltender stood tall en route to the shutout win.

The Sabres return to the ice against the Tampa Bay Lightning on Sunday at 5 p.m. at the First Niagara Center.

1st Period

Goals

None

Penalties

1:31 - PHI - Oliver Lauridsen (5 min., fighting)

1:31 - BUF - Patrick Kaleta (5 min., fighting)

2:51 - PHI - Jay Rosehill (2 min., unsportsmanlike conduct)

2:51 - BUF - Steve Ott (2 min., unsportsmanlike conduct)

7:44 - BUF - Bench minor (2 min., too many men on ice, served by Thomas Vanek)

2nd Period

Goals

None

Penalties

0:53 - PHI - Oliver Lauridsen (2 min., roughing)

14:05 - BUF - Christian Ehrhoff (2 min., interference)

3rd Period

Goals

0:17 - BUF - Christian Ehrhoff (5) (Kevin Porter, Steve Ott)

Penalties

2:21 - BUF - Marcus Foligno (2 min., high sticking)

Goaltending

PHI - Steve Mason (20 saves, 21 shots)
BUF - Jhonas Enroth (29 saves, 29 shots)

Power Plays

PHI - 0 of 3

BUF - 0 of 1

Three Stars

- 1.) BUF - Jhonas Enroth (29 saves)**
- 2.) BUF - Christian Ehrhoff (1 G, 0 A)**
- 3.) BUF - Steve Ott (0 G, 1 A)**

Pegula Addresses On-Ice Product at Groundbreaking

By Dan Cave

WGR 550

April 13, 2013

Taking part in Saturday's official groundbreaking ceremony for the \$172 million HARBORcenter project, Buffalo Sabres owner Terry Pegula addressed the media and took just a few questions about his team's performance and its future.

Most of the conversation centered around the plans surrounding HARBORcenter, but Pegula was, at one point, specifically asked about the firing of Lindy Ruff. "I don't need to answer that," he said. "This is a different topic today."

Pegula wouldn't commit to giving an end-of-season press conference once the 2013 campaign comes to a close, saying only "We'll see" when asked if he would address the media again.

Regarding his first two seasons as owner of the team, Pegula acknowledged that, "Sometimes things don't go like you think they're going to go, and you adjust and move forward."

He went on to mention that management remains focused on bringing a championship to Buffalo. "One team wins the Stanley Cup ever year. We will build towards that goal and we're daily working on that goal."

When reminded that he set a three-year goal to win the Cup after taking over the team, he responded by mentioning that, "[Bruins owner] Jeremy Jacobs took 39 years to win the Stanley Cup. You can't guarantee anybody anything. When's the last time the New England Patriots won the...Super Bowl?"

Regarding HARBORcenter, Pegula said the project is moving along faster than expected. The hockey complex is scheduled to open in September 2014. "This is a good idea to help...business in the area. Not only ours, but to help the whole community."

When asked whether he could foresee a college hockey matchup at HARBORcenter between Canisius and his alma mater, Penn State, he said, "Why not?"

Sabres new signee Ruhwedel makes his debut

By Paul Hamilton

WGR 550

April 13, 2013

Buffalo, NY (WGR 550) -- After three seasons at UMass Lowell, Chad Ruhwedel decided to leave school.

Since he was a free agent, many teams were trying to secure his services, but the Sabres got him inked to a two year deal.

Ruhwedel was with the River Hawks at the Frozen Four, but lost in the semifinals.

The first team All American had seven goals and 16 assists for 23 points in 41 games. In his college career the 5'11, 188 pound defenseman had 63 points in 110 games. Ron Rolston said, "I've watched him a little bit on film, but don't have a real solid feel. He's put up some good numbers and he's an All American so he's got some ability."

Buffalo could've sent him to Rochester, but Rolston said, "We want to give him an opportunity here to see what he can do."

Ruhwedel is 22. He has had no practice time with his new team, but is playing. Rolston said, "They have a little more experience and maturity whether it's in the game or in life, especially in college where there's a lot of added responsibility with scholastics and playing, so the maturity level is usually a little bit higher so that will give him an upper hand."

"He's an older player, so he's not someone just coming out of Junior," noted Sabres GM Darcy Regier. "He's had a real good collegiate career and has been recognized as a top defenseman in the country. We think he'll be fine and we're excited to have him in the organization."

The kid didn't look out of place at all in the first period.

On just his second shift, Thomas Vanek found Ruhwedel streaking down the slot. Steve Mason made a real nice save.

The first time he was back in his own zone he got control, quickly turned up ice and banked a perfect pass off the wall to get out of the zone.

He was at the offensive blue line and easily could've put a slap shot towards the net that would've been blocked. He calmly changed course and put a perfect pass on Vanek's stick. Passing has been a huge problem for Buffalo this season and it was nice to see a kid in his first game make a good one.

That didn't last though. Near the end of the period he tried a long pass that was picked off by Sean Couturier which caused some anxious moments around Jhonas Enroth.

Overall, Ruhwedel played seven shifts for 5:06 in the first period, so James Patrick didn't skimp on the ice time.

For the second straight game Pat Kaleta tried to fire up his teammates. Just 1:31 in he absolutely pummeled Oliver Lauridsen. This game was a little better for the Sabres, but still very little passion in the offensive zone. At least they showed up for the first period.

Ruhwedel played less in the second period, but continued to be very solid. He out fought two Flyers in the defensive corner, got the puck around the back wall and out the Sabres went.

Ruhwedel did have another savvy play at the point. Just as in the first period, he realized his shot was going to be blocked, pulled it down and sent a nice pass across to partner Mike Weber.

The rookie wasn't on the power play, but with a few practices I think he could be. Today Drew Stafford is getting a chance there in place of Tyler Myers.

After 40 minutes he had 13 shifts for 8:53.

Early in the third he went to the back wall knowing he was going to get hammered by two Flyers, yet he took a hit to make a play. Overall, he finished with exactly 13 minutes of ice time on 18 shifts with one shot on net.

Ruhwedel was rarely out of position and had an excellent NHL debut. He moved the puck well, never look afraid and showed why he started in Buffalo and not in Rochester.

"I thought he did some real good things," Rolston said about his new defenseman. "I thought he had poise with the puck. He hasn't practiced with us either, I thought he was real good in our zone. It was a positive."

Ruhwedel confessed that he was a little nervous prior to taking the ice for his first-ever game in the NHL. "I got a good skate in warm-up, that kind of helped me out, cooled me down," he said. "The coaching staff was great, they made me feel right at home. They just said, 'Play your game, go out there and have fun.' That was the most important thing and I tried to do that. After you get that first shift out of the way, it's hockey so you get used to it."

The defenseman also got plenty of help on the ice from Mike Weber. "My partner, Weber, he was yelling and talking in my ear the whole time so I knew what to do with the puck. It made it really easy."

Enroth and some luck push Sabres past Flyers

By Bill Hoppe
Olean Times Herald
April 14, 2013

BUFFALO – Sure, the Sabres needed some good fortune to down the Philadelphia Flyers 1-0 on Saturday afternoon. Christian Ehrhoff's pass off the end boards created the game's only goal. Daniel Briere hit the crossbar behind Sabres goalie Jhonas Enroth with just a single tick left in the game.

Still, they deserved their 17th win this season and first in three games. The Sabres, so vile during Thursday's 5-1 home loss to Montreal, earned their breaks before the capacity crowd of 19,070 fans inside the First Niagara Center.

"I'm going to stick with 'good,'" Enroth said when asked if the Sabres performed good and were a little fortunate. "I think we worked very hard ... so I think we deserved the luck."

What changed in less than two days?

"I thought our competitive nature was way better tonight than it was the other night," interim Sabres coach Ron Rolston said. "Guys, you could just tell they were ready and they're competing. I thought we were competing defensively. Our sticks in our zone were exceptional."

Enroth played exceptionally, making 29 saves in his third NHL shutout. The Swede was at his best late, stopping 11 shots in the third period, including several key stops in the waning minutes.

Could Enroth's performance change Rolston's goaltending plan? Could Ryan Miller get a second day off when the Sabres host the Tampa Bay Lightning tonight?

"We haven't talked about it," Rolston said. "It's possible."

The Sabres must check Enroth's health first. The 24-year-old backup hurt his neck late when a teammate hit him. After spending a minute with trainer Tim Macre, Enroth decided to stay in the game.

"It's a little bit sore right now ... but I'm sure it's going to be fine," said Enroth, who was going to be examined.

Enroth was possibly playing for his job March 7. He hadn't won a game in nearly 16 months and was down to perhaps his final chance after two poor starts this season.

His strong effort that night in New Jersey has kept earning him regular action. Enroth has three wins and has allowed only eight goals in his five recent starts. His save percentage is a gaudy .951 in that span.

"He's playing confident right now," Sabres defenseman Mike Weber said. "This is the Jhonas of old, making some unbelievable second and third saves."

Rolston called Enroth's recent outings "really competitive."

"He's been really sharp, focused," Rolston said. "He's been tracking the puck extremely well and just finding those second pucks around the crease."

Does Enroth feel like he's back on top of his game?

"I think I was playing pretty much the same," he said. "I had two bad games this year, so I don't know."

Ehrhoff provided Enroth's only goal support 17 seconds into the third period, when his hard pass from the left point missed Steve Ott beside the net, bounced out and hit Flyers goalie Steve Mason.

"We want to try to get more pucks at the net," Ehrhoff said. "When they do a good job being in the shooting lane, especially in tight game where you don't want to hit shin pads and have them come the other way, sometimes you just try to get it off the end boards back in front."

With only 40 points, the Sabres' playoff chances are still microscopic. Agitator Patrick Kaleta, who fought Oliver Lauridsen ferociously early on, said the 12th-place club will keep fighting until the bitter end.

"Everyone still believes, and that's the way we've got to play," Kaleta said. "There's no give up. There's not a chance in hell that we're going to quit."

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Rolston switched up his lines, moving struggling center Tyler Ennis back to the left wing, a position he played until late last season, beside center Cody Hodgson and Thomas Vanek.

Marcus Foligno, normally a left winger, centered Drew Stafford and tough guy John Scott, who returned from a one-game absence. Luke Adam sat.

"(I'm) just trying to find a different mix right now," Rolston said. "Marcus actually played center in juniors. We've been really impressed with Marcus just in the faceoff circle. He's pretty strong and wins a lot of draws. ... He's a big body, which we really don't have in the middle."

With only six games left, the Sabres plan to keep experimenting.

"I think guys understand where we're at," Rolston said. "They have to do anything they can to make us successful. That might mean moving to a different spot."

xxx

General manager Darcy Regier said top prospect Mikhail Grigorenko, whose junior season with the Quebec Remparts just ended, will either report back the Sabres or go to Rochester in a day or so. The 18-year-old center played 22 NHL games earlier this season.

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Briere returned from a 10-game absence (concussion) Saturday. The 35-year-old former Sabres star told the Philadelphia media last week he's aware the Flyers could buy him out following the season.

NHL debut caps whirlwind 24 hours for Sabres rookie Ruhwedel

By Bill Hoppe
Olean Times Herald
April 14, 2013

BUFFALO – On Friday night, a day after UMass Lowell lost to Yale in the NCAA Frozen Four semifinal, Chad Ruhwedel checked his phone on the tarmac when the River Hawks' flight from Pittsburgh landed in Boston.

"It says, 'Call me immediately' from my advisor, my mom, too," the 22-year-old first team All-American defenseman said Saturday after making his NHL debut in the Sabres' 1-0 win over the Philadelphia Flyers.

The undrafted Ruhwedel knew his strong junior season generated interest from the Sabres, who tracked the San Diego native all season. They wanted him to replace Tyler Myers, who broke a bone in his leg Thursday.

But instead of turning around and flying to Buffalo, Ruhwedel weighed his options.

"It was just happening so fast," said Ruhwedel, who played 13 minutes, mostly beside Mike Weber. "My coach just kind of settled me down. We went back to Lowell, sat down in the office."

Ruhwedel felt comfortable with whatever decision he made.

"I said I was going to commit 100 percent one way or another," said the rookie, who wore No. 5. "Both decisions were great decisions."

Finally, after a "long discussion," Ruhwedel called his agent back.

"I said, 'All right, let's do this,'" he said.

Ruhwedel signed a two-year, entry-level contract Saturday. He landed in Buffalo at 9 a.m. and got to the First Niagara Center about 90 minutes later.

How did Ruhwedel, fresh off an emotional 41-game college season, get through Saturday? Remember, he still hasn't practiced with the Sabres.

"Pure adrenaline," said Ruhwedel, who was energized by Patrick Kaleta's first-period fight. "I was pretty fired up the whole time."

Ultimately, Ruhwedel, 5-foot-11 and 188 pounds, couldn't turn down the Sabres, who wanted to add more right-handed shots to their blue line. Ruhwedel's agent worked hard to start him in the NHL, something that "definitely sweetened the deal," he said.

"It's what you have to do to get the player to sign now," Sabres general Darcy Regier said.

Ruhwedel added: "Sometimes you just have to take it and run with it. These chances don't come along very often. I mean, every kid dreams of this."

The Sabres “just kind of stuck with” their interest all season.

“I felt comfortable choosing them,” Ruhwedel said.

While the Sabres kept tabs on Ruhwedel, Ron Rolston knew little about the prospect. The interim coach watched video and called some NCAA contacts to get more info.

Two hours before the game, Rolston wouldn't say which defender he would put beside Ruhwedel.

“I thought he played with a lot of poise and went through a lot in the last 24 hours,” Rolston said.

Ruhwedel called his NHL introduction “surreal.”

“These guys made my job a lot easier,” he said. “Playing with Weber, he made my life just so easy. I couldn't be thankful enough.”

Weber told Ruhwedel to simply have fun.

“It's a whirlwind for him,” Weber said. “Thursday night he was playing college hockey. Saturday afternoon he's playing in the NHL. ... I can only imagine what was going through his head.”

Weber said Ruhwedel “made me look good out there.”

“He played really solid out there, helped me out a lot, kept it really simple,” he said.

Growing up in California hardly hindered Ruhwedel's development.

“California's getting really big for hockey,” he said. “So I have probably five rinks within 15 minutes of my house. So it's not that hard to get ice. I played for some really good coaches growing up.”

Still, Ruhwedel believes he didn't deserve to be drafted.

He played two years in the United States Hockey League before going to the NCAA.

“I had kind of a slow start growing up,” Ruhwedel said. “I played AA hockey. I developed a lot in juniors playing for the Sioux Falls Stampede.”

He compiled seven goals, 23 points and 20 penalty minutes this season while earning first team Hockey East All-Conference honors.

Prior to the contest, Rolston said the Sabres didn't recall a defenseman from Rochester to give Ruhwedel “an opportunity here and see what he will do.”

ROSEN RECEIVES DUFFETT AWARD

By Kevin Snow

Sabres.com

April 13, 2013

A staple of high school and youth hockey in the region for the past three decades, Bob Rosen was today named as the 28th recipient of the J. Michael Duffett Award, presented annually to the coach whose contributions to amateur hockey in Western New York “best exemplifies the knowledge, teaching, love of the game and gentle humanity of Mike.” Rosen was presented with the award prior to the Buffalo Sabres-Philadelphia Flyers game at First Niagara Center.

Rosen has been a valuable member of the Amherst Youth Hockey Association for 30 years, leading his teams to four national championships during this time. In 1987-88, Rosen’s Amherst Junior “B” squad went 40-0-0, posting USA Hockey’s first undefeated season at that level.

For the last 23 years, Rosen has also served as the head coach of the Williamsville North varsity team. Throughout his tenure, the Spartans have captured four state titles, including an undefeated season in 2011. A two-time NYS Coach of the Year winner, Rosen is the active leader for most wins by a high school coach in New York State.

Rosen also served as an assistant coach at Canisius College for five years, coached the New York State team at the 1988 Hockey USA Select-17 National Tournament, and has been involved in the annual the Bowman Cup Showcase event for seven of the past nine years

In 1984, the Buffalo Sabres established the J. Michael Duffett Award in his memory. Mike was a student of the game and a coach with the Buffalo Bisons and the Amherst Hockey Association. A standout player at Nichols School and Clarkson College, he was working in the Sabres hockey department under Scotty Bowman and Roger Neilson at the time of his death after a long battle with cancer.

Ruhwedel leaves UML for Sabres

The Lowell Sun

April 14, 2013

UMass Lowell junior defenseman Chad Ruhwedel left the hockey team to join the Buffalo Sabres -- and suited up in Saturday's 1-0 win over the Philadelphia Flyers.

Ruhwedel, an undrafted rookie free-agent, signed a two-year contract. He played for UML in Thursday's NCAA semifinal loss to Yale.

With defenseman Tyler Myers set to miss the rest of the season with a broken bone in his leg, Ruhwedel made his NHL debut Saturday.

"It was pure adrenaline," said Ruhwedel, who logged 13 minutes on 18 shifts. "It was surreal. These guys made my job a lot easier."

Ruhwedel had 63 points (15 goals) in 110 career games at UMass Lowell.

Ruhwedel was the 15th player in UMass Lowell history to suit up for an NHL team. He had 23 points (7 goals) in 41 games this past season in helping Lowell reach the Frozen Four.

Sabres Break Ground on HARBORcenter

By Joe Messinger

WGRZ

April 13, 2013

BUFFALO, NY - The Buffalo Sabres and HARBORcenter Development LLC broke ground Saturday on the new \$172 million sporting and entertainment complex coming to downtown's Webster block across from First Niagara Center.

Sabres officials, including owner Terry Pegula and family, and local political leaders, including Mayor Byron Brown, Erie County Executive Mark Poloncarz and Congressman Brian Higgins, were on hand as the shovels hit the dirt.

Construction is already under way at the site. The Sabres finalized the purchase of the Webster Block property last month, right before streets started getting blocked off for construction.

Plans for HARBORcenter include two NHL-size ice rinks, a hotel, a two-story restaurant, street-level retail space and an 850-vehicle parking garage. HARBORcenter was designed to complement the historic character of Buffalo's burgeoning canal district, according to the architects who planned the project.

"In the two years since I purchased the Buffalo Sabres, the passionate support of our fans has made it evident that hockey is woven into the fabric of this community in a way that is rivaled by few other areas," said Sabres owner Terry Pegula in a statement released by the Sabres on Saturday. "With HARBORcenter, our goal is to create a destination representative of that passion which will transcend the sport, helping to build downtown Buffalo into a place that visitors can't wait to come back to again."

The two ice rinks, when coupled with the existing rink at First Niagara Center, will make the three-rink complex the first of its kind in the National Hockey League. The main rink at HARBORcenter will have a seating capacity of 1,800, matching the largest spectator capacity for an ice rink in Erie County, except for First Niagara Center, according to the statement.

The project is expected to support around 1,500 construction jobs, and while it is getting tax breaks, it's expected to pump \$200 million into the local economy.

The ice rinks, restaurant and parking facility are scheduled to open in September of 2014. The hotel should be completed by May of 2015.

Pegula 'breaks ground' on HARBORcenter

By Rachel Kingston

WIVB

April 13, 2013

BUFFALO, N.Y. (WIVB) - Buffalo Sabres owner Terry Pegula and his wife Kim's vision for a world-class hockey facility in downtown Buffalo will soon become a reality. Construction of the \$172-million dollar HARBORcenter, planned for the Webster Block, actually started weeks ago.

Saturday, the Pegulas were joined by Sabres alumni and local politicians for the ceremonial groundbreaking.

The 650,000 square feet entertainment center is set to open in September 2014.

"Our plan," said Terry Pegula, "is to build two sheets of ice, a parking garage, a hotel connected to [the First Niagara Center]."

When the Pegula's bought the Sabres two years ago, they were already thinking about creating a place where hockey players, coaches and professionals from all over the world would come to train and learn.

"We talked to each other about what NHL ownership means to a community where the team is located. How can our ownership affect and help the people in the region in which we live?" Pegula said.

Mayor Byron Brown calls it "a unique opportunity to shape the future of Buffalo and its waterfront."

Redevelopment can be seen in every direction of the Webster Block including: Cliff Benderson's transformation of the former Donovan State Office building as well as the expansion of the historic Erie Canal. That was the spot where the Sabres of yesteryear entertained fans in Memorial Auditorium.

Buffalo Sabres Chief Development Officer Cliff Benderson said, "This is a new day, folks. We do get things done in Buffalo. We get them done quickly, we get them done with a spirit of cooperation between private and public. And I think it's time for us to say to the world, This is a better Buffalo, and we're going to get it done."

"We can be proud in Buffalo of the way that we work together. We can be proud of the new Buffalo," Mayor Byron Brown said.

But the cordial mood quickly dissolved when, during a one-on-one interview after the press conference, reporters began to press Pegula for answers about the Sabres' abysmal on-ice performance this season.

"I just look at it optimistically. We'll move forward and do the right thing," Pegula said.

One reporter then asked Pegula about the firing of veteran head coach Lindy Ruff. Pegula has not spoken publicly about that, since Ruff was let go.

"I don't need to answer that now. This is a different topic today," the Sabres' owner responded.

At one point later, Pegula was asked how he has felt, as a fan, watching all that has transpired for the Sabres this season.

"I was a fan," Pegula replied. "I'm still the owner of the team. But, this is a business now. And it's a little different. I've got to take the emotion out of it."

Pegula's Promise Pays Off

By Kendra EAglin

WKBW

April 13, 2013

Buffalo, NY

(WKBW)

Buffalo Sabres owner and developer Terry Pegula received a standing ovation as he announced the groundbreaking of his new HARBORcenter project at a ceremony at the canalside site Saturday afternoon.

"With the Webster Block opportunity comes our commitment to the City of Buffalo that we will build and operate a facility that they'll be proud of," said Pegula.

That \$172 million project will feature two full-sized NHL rinks, a full-service hotel, two-story restaurant, street level retail stores and a five-level parking garage big enough to hold 850 spaces.

HARBORcenter is expected to open in September of 2014 with the hotel scheduled to open by the Spring of 2015.

And as for the economic boost to the city? The project will generate 1,600 local construction jobs over two years and secure 350- full-time jobs when the project is complete.

"This project is an important part of the progress that we are seeing in Buffalo. This project will create hundreds of full time jobs and generate \$4.1 million in state and local taxes annually. \$48 million over the next 10 years," said City of Buffalo Mayor Byron Brown.

While the project will have something for everyone to enjoy Pegula is in the hockey business after all and it was important incorporate the pair of hockey rinks in the project which will serve as an international training ground.

"We're going to invite players from all over the world, coaches and other hockey professionals, people related to the business and probably other sports to learn and train in our facility," explained Pegula.

The hockey rinks will also be used for public skating. Including the First Niagara Center the three hockey rinks will be the first of their kind in the NHL.