



Buffalo Sabres

Daily Press Clips

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Panthers-Sabres Preview

Associated Press

January 8, 2014

The Buffalo Sabres may own the fewest points and victories in the NHL, but they've played extremely well at home over the last month.

A matchup Thursday night with a Florida Panthers team against which they've had success recently could give the Sabres a solid chance of winning six in a row on their own ice for the first time in nearly seven years.

Buffalo (12-26-4) lost its first nine home games and had three wins in 16 such contests over the first two months. The Sabres, though, are 6-0-1 in the last seven at First Niagara Center, beating New Jersey 2-1 on Saturday for their fifth consecutive home win.

Their first chance at winning six straight in Buffalo since Jan. 17-Feb. 15, 2007, was scheduled for Tuesday night against Carolina, but the game was postponed because of a snowstorm.

Goaltender Ryan Miller has been a big part of the turnaround. He's 6-0-0 with a 1.29 goals-against average in his last six home starts and has a 1.73 GAA in his past nine overall.

"The guys definitely feel the energy," Miller said of playing at home. "It's important to hear that the crowd's behind you."

Miller, though, has struggled in Buffalo against Florida (16-21-6). He's alternated wins and losses in his last eight starts while posting a 3.00 GAA, and will give way to backup Jhonas Enroth on Thursday.

Enroth's only win this season was a 3-1 victory at Florida on Oct. 25. That result improved the Sabres to 6-2-2 in the last 10 meetings.

Enroth won't have towering defenseman Tyler Myers in front of him. The 6-foot-8 Meyers will be serving the first of a three-game suspension for unnecessarily extending and launching himself into the head of New Jersey's Dainius Zubrus on Saturday.

"That's just one of the disadvantages of being as tall as I am. It just comes with the territory," Myers, who leads Buffalo defensemen with four goals, told reporters Monday before the suspension was announced. "I don't want to change anything just because of that. If things come out of it because of my height then I'll deal with it."

Buffalo, trying to win two in a row for just the third time in 2013-14, will also be without defenseman Henrik Tallinder because of an upper-body injury.

"Those are two guys that play a lot of minutes so guys are going to have to step up and play those minutes," defenseman Mike Weber told the Sabres' official website. "I think with that, stepping up in the right situation, you're not going to replace a (Myers) with the offensive abilities that he has. Someone's got to step up and just play solid minutes."

The Sabres may be able to get by without Meyers and Tallinder against Florida, which is tied for 26th in the NHL with 46 road goals. The Panthers opened a three-game trip Monday with a 2-1 loss to Montreal.

Florida managed 11 total shots in the first two periods before putting 16 on net in the third en route to its fifth loss in seven games.

"The third period was better from us," left wing Sean Bergenheim, who scored for the sixth time in six games, told the Panthers' official website. "We showed that we have that push. We know that we have that push but we don't want to have to put ourselves in that situation."

Colleagues call Sabres GM candidate Murray a hockey man

By John Vogl

Buffalo News

January 8, 2014

When Cory Clouston interviewed to become coach of the Binghamton Senators, he knew General Manager Tim Murray only in passing. It didn't take long for Clouston to see how much Murray knew about hockey and its players.

"He's a very, very smart hockey man," Clouston said by phone Wednesday. "There's no one I've ever met that knows players as well as Tim and can analyze their strengths and weaknesses. He's very good at projecting players."

The rebuilding Sabres have plenty of young players who need to be analyzed. Murray's skill at doing it is why he's favored to become Buffalo's next general manager.

Murray, according to a source, was in town Wednesday night to meet again with the Sabres' brass. He's one of two finalists for the vacant GM job, and it's possible his hiring could come before the Sabres host Florida tonight in First Niagara Center.

Managing a team is the next logical step for Murray, who's been in the NHL since joining Detroit as a scout in 1993. He went to Florida in 1994 and ascended to director of amateur scouting before being hired as director of player personnel for Anaheim in 2002. His three-year stay with the Ducks included a Stanley Cup finals appearance.

Murray served as the assistant director of player personnel for the New York Rangers for two seasons. He joined Ottawa in 2007, serving as assistant general manager for the NHL club and GM of its minor-league affiliate.

One of Murray's first acts was to hire Clouston, who spent two seasons as Binghamton's coach and another three as the bench boss in Ottawa.

"Tim, from the management side of it, worked his way up," said Clouston, who coaches Prince Albert of the Western Hockey League. "He knows that game very well. The fact that he has paid his dues and he has worked in many different areas is going to bode very well for his success."

The 50-year-old Murray helped Ottawa reach the playoffs in four of his first six seasons, and the Senators are in the postseason race this year. Binghamton was champion of the American Hockey League in 2011 and leads its division this year.

"He treated me with a lot of class," said Don Nachbaur, who coached one season in Binghamton and is now with Spokane of the WHL. "Highly organized, really understood the players. You couldn't bring up the name of a player, whether it

was in the American League or the National Hockey League, that Tim didn't have a book on. I think he's a tremendous judge of talent, and that goes back to his scouting days."

Praise for Murray's evaluating skills has been universal. The Sabres are rebuilding through the draft, so getting picks right is crucial. Players drafted under Murray's watch include All-Star defenseman Erik Karlsson and Ottawa regulars Mika Zibanejad, Zack Smith and Robin Lehner.

More importantly for Sabres fans, Murray and the Senators haven't been wed to their youngsters. Ottawa sent Stefan Noesen, a first-round pick in 2011, and Jakob Silfverberg, a second-round selection in 2009, to Anaheim as part of a deal for high-scoring forward Bobby Ryan.

Darcy Regier's hesitance to move the players he drafted helped contribute to his downfall and November firing as Buffalo's general manager.

Murray has spent much of his career alongside his uncle, Bryan, who is Ottawa's GM. They also worked together in Detroit, Florida and Anaheim.

"Bryan is such a hockey guy that's been all around it, and now Tim has been around Bryan for so many years," Kurt Kleinendorst, who coached Binghamton to its 2011 Calder Cup, said by phone. "If he gets this opportunity, he'll do a nice job because he's a hockey guy."

The Murrays are from Shawville, Quebec, an English-speaking town in the French province. Tim is known as an edgy guy who isn't afraid to challenge the opinions of others.

"He'll smile a little bit. He'll be grumpy often," said Kleinendorst, coach of the Minnesota Wild's AHL affiliate in Iowa. "He's a very quiet person, but then again he can be very intense."

Folks in Buffalo could soon see for themselves.

It's all about trust for LaFontaine

By Bucky Gleason

Buffalo News

January 8, 2014

The word on the street in recent days suggested Tim Murray was making his way to Buffalo to become general manager of the Sabres. It was certainly plausible with rumors flying, anticipation growing over a possible announcement and Pat LaFontaine holed up in meetings for two days.

LaFontaine has been looking for a GM for nearly two months since he arrived with Ted Nolan with the idea they could bring the organization back from the dead. They're older and wiser men now than they were 16 years ago, but age and time has not changed the principles of either man.

Nolan, for example, still believes in instilling confidence and getting more from his players through a stronger work ethic over Xs and Os. For all the qualities people see from a mile away in LaFontaine – his infectious personality, selfless attitude and charm – he has an insatiable need to trust people around him.

LaFontaine has been that way for decades. He talked incessantly about the importance of trust during his Hall of Fame career. His trust in Alexander Mogilny was vital to their magical 1992-93 season. A lack of trust between him and the Sabres led to his departure four years later. He left the Islanders in 2006 as an adviser because trust broke down.

He used the word “trust” dozens of times in interviews after taking over as Sabres president of hockey operations. His first move was hiring Nolan because there was nobody he trusted more to coach young players. He talked about having the trust from ownership and how building organizational trust was a top priority.

With him in particular, it's all about trust.

It's precisely what the organization needed after suffering the damage inflicted from years of mistrust that trickled down from the top of the hockey hierarchy. And that's why all the talk, or any talk, about Murray having the inside track is so troubling. It goes against what LaFontaine has been preaching for years.

The Sabres need a sound personnel evaluator with experience. Murray is among the best currently available. He has been around the NHL for two decades. He has worked for several organizations. He should have his brain around the salary cap. He should be fine when it comes to contracts and trade talks.

Murray's resume is solid enough, but that's not the issue. The issue is whether he can be trusted as the organization moves forward. That's the question that LaFontaine needs to answer. For what it's worth, I trust that he'll make the right decision. The final call hadn't been made as of Wednesday night.

LaFontaine had been quiet in recent days, an indication that he wasn't ready to speak publicly about his GM search. Fair enough. If he wasn't ready to discuss his biggest decision since his arrival, you can safely assume he didn't want prospective candidates talking about the process, either.

The Murray-to-Buffalo reports originated in Ottawa and raced across Canada. You certainly can't blame the media for doing their jobs and passing along information they heard. It may not have been Murray, who was scouting the World Junior Championships, but somebody other than LaFontaine who was leaking stories.

Who? Why? It doesn't matter.

Somewhere between Ottawa and Buffalo, whether it was Murray speaking to his uncle, Sens GM Bryan Murray, or someone else in his inner circle, the chain of trust was compromised. If I were running the show, and any breach was linked to Tim Murray, talks with him would be suspended immediately.

If he or anyone else can't be trusted to keep quiet about the biggest opportunity of his career, when can they be trusted? It's a question LaFontaine will answer for himself at the appropriate time. It's also something he will consider several times before making the final call.

Murray is known for having a good eye for talent. The Sens have done a very good job in the draft. It's what the Sabres need, given their abundance of picks. But other candidates are equally equipped to evaluate players. Ultimately, decisions will be made in conjunction with LaFontaine, his GM, and other hockey minds.

According to reports, the Bruins want Jim Benning to stick around until the completion of the 2014 Winter Olympics in Sochi. It would give him about a week to get acquainted with the Sabres before the NHL trade deadline. That's all true, but I'm not sure why it matters. If it matters at all, it's minimal.

Any general manager worth hiring already knows the Sabres' issues. Ryan Miller is scheduled to become an unrestricted free agent. If he's not interested in signing an extension for reasonable money, the Sabres need to get whatever they can for him before he walks away for nothing. It's hockey, not nuclear physics.

Anyway, the Sabres have so many other problems that the next GM, whether he's hired today or after the season, couldn't possibly fix them by the deadline. They're loaded with third- and fourth-line players. You know what you get for bottom-six forwards? Other bottom-six forwards and low draft picks.

In NHL circles, the sterile term for such deals is "junk for junk," and anybody can make them. LaFontaine doesn't need a general manager now. He needs the right general manager later, whether it's Murray or somebody else, who can turn around the organization in the next few years. He's one piece among many.

LaFontaine will get it right. Trust me.

Sabres notebook: Non-game night turns into movie night

By Amy Moritz

Buffalo News

January 8, 2014

So what do you do when you're an NHL player and your game is called off because of a blizzard?

Watch movies.

That was the most popular answer given in the Sabres dressing room Wednesday afternoon when players were asked what they did with their unscheduled night off.

A few players made it to the rink in the morning, but most chose to stay home after getting a text that there would be no morning skate.

Steve Ott was ready to stay home until he looked in his cupboards and found a lack of carbs for his pre-game meal. At this point in the day, the game had not been postponed.

"I actually went to Wegmans to grab some spaghetti and stuff because I knew my pasta place was probably closed," Ott said. "So I took a chance. It was a miserable chance to be honest with you. I had to guess on a left turn. Thought I was gonna be toast, but made it through it. It was actually pretty unbelievable driving in that stuff."

Marcus Foligno started to drive, then thought better of it.

"I started the car, got the snow off, looked both ways before exiting the driveway and I couldn't even see five feet in front of me so I went back in my driveway and I called it a day," Foligno said. "I watched some movies and that was pretty much it. You have to prepare like it's going to be a game, so I kinda had a big lunch and maybe didn't eat as much at night. Just movies, hung out on the couch and watched some other games."

Jhonas Enroth made it downtown in the morning and the weather conditions made him recall his minor league days in Portland.

"It was definitely weird," Enroth said. "I remember when we used to have blizzards in Maine. It was a flashback to my AHL time."

And then there was Ryan Miller who just tried to stay upright and his biggest challenge was "trying to find a place for the dog to not get blown away while getting him outside. That's about it. Myself included. Lot of wind, a lot of snow and a lot of cabin fever. It's just good to get back to the rink and have something

to do today. It's good to get back on schedule and I hope everyone is safe and warm."

...

Tyler Myers was surprised at his three-game suspension, but said after Wednesday's practice he understood the reasoning.

Myers will miss the next three games for his hit to the head against New Jersey's Dainius Zubrus. Last night's postponed game just pushes his suspension to the next three games on the Sabres schedule, meaning he is eligible to return against Toronto Jan. 15.

He received an extra game as a repeat offender, having sat for three games for boarding in 2012. Myers' suspension hearing was done via phone.

"I was pretty surprised ... but they explained that it doesn't matter the kind of hit it is anymore. If there's any contact to the head it's going to be two-five games," Myers said. "They gave me two and then they gave me one for being a repeat. It is what it is. I like the fact that on the phone call that everyone recognized that it wasn't my intention to target his head. After I saw the video, it's clear that there is contact to the head. Fortunately he's OK.

"I like the fact they acknowledged it wasn't my intention to target that area and that I was trying to make a clean hit. At the same time, I still wasn't expecting three. It is what is and I'll just work hard until I'm back."

Nolan accepted the suspension as part of the NHL's effort to cut down on head injuries and joked about last night's non-game in regard's to the defenseman's punishment.

"We have to get the head hits out of the game," Nolan said. "The league does a great job on that. I'm just wondering if last night's game counted as one of the games."

Just in case you missed the humor, no, it does not count.

...

Randy Cunneyworth has been promoted to be a special assistant and player development coach for the Rochester Americans. Cunneyworth was hired by the Sabres organization as a pro scout in November. In his new role, he will serve as a liaison between the Amerks and Sabres in areas of player development and scouting.

"This is an exciting opportunity to fully utilize all of Randy's expertise as a hockey coach and mentor," Pat LaFontaine, the Sabres' president of hockey operations,

said in a press release. “Randy will work to ensure that the link between the Sabres and Amerks grows even stronger. Our goal is to make sure that the Amerks continue to thrive in developing and harnessing talent at the AHL level to be a reliable pipeline of NHL-ready players for the Sabres’ roster in the future.”

...

The Sabres are still waiting to hear from the NHL regarding the rescheduling of Tuesday’s game with Carolina. ... Cody Hodgson and Villie Leino both practiced with the team Wednesday, wearing red non-contact jerseys. Both are still expected to be out of tonight’s lineup. ... The Sabres are 6-0-1 in their last seven home games and have won five straight at First Niagara Center for the first time since the 2011-12 season.

Cunneyworth now a special assistant coach for Amerks

By Kevin Oklobzija
Democrat and Chronicle
January 8, 2014

Not everything in the world of professional hockey makes sense. Today's move by the Buffalo Sabres makes complete sense.

The Sabres shifted Randy Cunneyworth out of the scouting department and back onto the organization's coaching staff, where he belongs.

Cunneyworth was named special assistant and player development coach for the AHL's Rochester Americans. He'll be hands-on on the ice during practice and will also serve as a liason to the Sabres.

He actually started those duties in earnest on Monday, when he was on the ice with the Amerks at Bill Gray's Regional Iceplex at MCC.

"This is an exciting opportunity to fully utilize all of Randy's expertise as a hockey coach and mentor," said Pat LaFontaine, Sabres president of hockey operations, in a statement from the club.

Cunneyworth was hired as a pro scout in November when Darcy Regier was still the Sabres general manager.

Cunneyworth knows the Amerks franchise better than probably anyone in the organization. He played for the team under coaches Mike Keenan, Joe Crozier and John Van Boxmeer in the early 1980s when breaking into pro hockey, and then again in closing out his playing career in 1999-2000 (as a playing assistant coach for Brian McCutcheon).

He then moved right behind the bench for the 2000-01 season, his first of eight seasons as Amerks head coach. He had a 306-273-61 record; no one ever had a longer consecutive run behind the Rochester bench.

His greatest attribute as coach was his ability and willingness to make every player better. You have no idea how much time he spent with Marek Zagraban, Jaroslav Kristek and Jiri Novotny.

OK, so that trio of Sabres draft picks didn't make it (Novotny is, however, on the Czech Olympic team). Cunneyworth wasn't willing to accept they wouldn't be NHL players until he took them down every available avenue.

Guys like Jason Pominville, Paul Gaustad and Chris Thorburn were among the players who improved greatly under Cunneyworth's guidance in Rochester.

When the Sabres never promoted him after eight seasons with the Amerks, he knew it was time to move on. He was hired by John Anderson as an assistant coach with the NHL's Atlanta Thrashers for the 2008-09 and '09-10 seasons. In 2010-11, he coached the AHL's Hamilton Bulldogs, then then next seasonj was promoted to the Montreal Canadiens as an assistant coach under Jacques Martin.

When Martin was fired 32 games into the season, Cunneyworth was promoted to interim head coach and went 18-23-9 record in 50 games.

The Canadiens did not retain Cunneyworth for last season.

* * * * *

There has already been speculation that Cunneyworth's appointment to the Amerks coaching staff means Amerks head coach Chadd Cassidy is on thin ice (so to speak).

I'd say that's absurd. Look at this roster, the number of games played without top-6 forwards and top-4 defensemen, and I'd say having a points-earned percentage over .500 (.531 going into tonight's game) isn't all that bad.

Plus, I think progress is easy to see: the Amerks for the first month or more spent oodles of time in their own zone. Now, much more of the game is played in the other end. The forechecking system is effective when players do as directed.

When key veterans get healthy, and rookies like Joel Armia and Dan Catenacci start to make larger contributions, then the Amerks should start winning at a more consistent pace.

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Fans that care only about the Amerks should be troubled by the full LaFontaine statement regarding Cunneyworth's new role.

"Randy will work to ensure that the link between the Sabres and Amerks grows even stronger. Our goal is to make sure that the Amerks continue to thrive in developing and harnessing talent at the AHL level to be a reliable pipeline of NHL-ready players for the Sabres' roster in the future."

No where in that club-issued statement is "winning atmosphere" mentioned.

LaFontaine has twice spoken directly about the Amerks since he has been hired as Sabres hockey ops president, and development has been the only thing he mentioned.

While that is clearly the No. 1 function of the Amerks, especially as the Sabres rebuild, at least Regier would say a winning environment in Rochester enhanced prospect development.

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Right winger Mike Zigomanis won't be returning to the ice anytime soon, though he is making progress.

He suffered an upper body injury from an illegal charge by Lake Erie's Mikael Tam in the Dec. 20 game and appears to be at least two weeks away from game action.

He may begin skating soon. "I feel a lot better; I'm definitely improving," he said this morning.

Right winger Jamie Tardif continues to skate on his own and there could be an outside chance he can play this weekend.

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The AHL will announce the All-Star roster on Thursday afternoon.

I'd say Luke Adam will be enjoying a homecoming (the game will be played in St. John's, Newfoundland) and Brayden McNabb also must go. It would be very easy to make a strong case for Phil Varone as well.

The format is new for this season. The AHL team will play Farjestad from the Swedish league.

Sabres welcome Panthers after weather-aided break

By John Kreiser

NHL.com

January 8, 2014

PANTHERS (16-21-6) at SABRES (12-26-4)

TV: FS-F, MSG-B, BELL TV

Last 10: Florida 5-4-1; Buffalo 5-3-2

Season series: The Florida Panthers are making their first of two visits to First Niagara Center in a 12-day span. The Buffalo Sabres defeated the Panthers 3-1 at BB&T Center on Oct. 25.

Big story: The Sabres are back on the ice after an unexpectedly long break; their scheduled home game against the Carolina Hurricanes on Tuesday was postponed due to the weather. The Panthers play the second of a three-game trip and had a two-day break after a 2-1 loss to the Montreal Canadiens on Monday.

Team Scope:

Panthers: The good news for coach Peter Horachek has been the production from the "Killer B" line of rookie Aleksander Barkov, Sean Bergenheim and Brad Boyes. They produced the goal in Montreal, generated most of the scoring chances, and have been carrying the attack. The bad news is the lack of scoring from other lines. Horachek said after practice Wednesday the other three lines have to produce for the Panthers to get back into the Stanley Cup Playoff race.

"In the past and earlier we were getting contributions from all lines and different lines each night," Horachek told the media. "We're hopefully going to get a little more consistency out of the other lines."

Sabres: Thanks to the snow, Buffalo had two extra days to enjoy a 2-1 home victory against the New Jersey Devils played Saturday. But the enjoyment was tempered when defenseman Tyler Myers was handed a three-game suspension for an illegal check to the head of New Jersey forward Dainius Zubrus.

The Sabres are also without Henrik Tallinder (upper body), meaning the rest of the defense will have to find a way to cover nearly 40 minutes of ice time.

"Those are two guys that play a lot of minutes, so guys are going to have to step up and play those minutes," defenseman Mike Weber told the media Wednesday. "I think with that, stepping up in the right situation, you're not going to replace a [Myers] with the offensive abilities that he has. Someone's got to step up and just play solid minutes."

Who's hot: Barkov has a goal and six assists during a six-game point streak. Boyes has two goals and six points in his past four games, and Bergenheim has six goals in Florida's past six games. ... Sabres goaltender Ryan Miller is 3-1-1 in his past five decisions and has allowed nine goals in that stretch.

Injury report: Florida defensemen Alex Petrovic (upper body) and Dylan Olsen (lower body), and forward Jesse Winchester (hand) are out. ... Buffalo center Cody Hodgson (wrist) and forward Ville Leino (lower body) are skating at practice with a non-contact jersey. Forwards Drew Stafford (upper body) and Cody McCormick (upper body) are out.

Tim Murray to meet with Sabres owner over GM's job

By Bruce Garrioch

Ottawa Sun

January 8, 2014

Tim Murray has one hurdle left before being introduced as the GM of the Buffalo Sabres.

League sources told the Ottawa Sun the Senators assistant GM is scheduled to meet with owner Terry Pegula and club president Pat LaFontaine Wednesday night to get the stamp of approval to take over the struggling franchise.

As the Sun reported first on Monday, Murray is the frontrunner for the job that came open in November when Darcy Regier was fired.

If that meeting goes as planned and Pegula agrees with LaFontaine's choice of Murray, then the two sides have to get a contract in place. At this juncture, it appears Murray could be named the team's GM as early as Thursday morning.

"The Sabres want somebody with a scouting background and Tim Murray has a strong scouting background," said a league executive Wednesday morning.

While the two sides have been trying to get together since Monday, weather issues in Buffalo have delayed the 50-year-old Murray's ability to travel to the city. The club's game against the Carolina Hurricanes Tuesday at home was postponed because of a snowstorm.

Other candidates -- including Brad Treliving of Phoenix -- have been told they are out of the running.

Once Murray's move to Buffalo is official, Senators GM Bryan Murray could promote director of player personnel Pierre Dorion and director of player development Randy Lee into assistant GM roles.

Bryan Murray has been working on a contract extension with the Senators that will likely be done by the end of the month.

Preview: Florida Panthers at Buffalo Sabres, 7 p.m., Thursday

By Harvey Fialkov
South Florida Sun Sentinel
January 8, 2014

When/Where: 7 p.m., First Niagara Center, Buffalo, N.Y.

TV: FSN; Radio: 560-WQAM

Scouting report: The Panthers are coming off a 2-1 loss to the Canadiens in which they were outshot 25-11 after two periods and are 2-1-1 in their past four games. The Sabres won the first meeting 3-1 on Oct. 25 in Sunrise with Steve Ott nailing the game-winner in the third period. G Jonas Enroth had 44 saves. U.S. Olympics projected starting goalie Ryan Miller is back in net. He's 14-9-2 with a 2.93 GAA vs. Florida. The Sabres-Hurricanes game was postponed Tuesday because of a blizzard in Buffalo. At 12-26-4 the Sabres are the worst team in hockey, but are 5-1 in shootouts and 6-0-1 in their last seven home games. Panthers D Dylan Olsen (lower body), F Jesse Winchester (hand) are out. Sabres D Tyler Myers (suspended) is out.

Sabres grateful for snow day; Swedish Olympian Jhonas Enroth to start in goal tonight against Panthers

By Bill Hoppe

Olean Times Herald

January 9, 2014

BUFFALO – Steve Ott noticed he didn't have any food for a pregame meal Tuesday. The Sabres captain figured his "pasta place" was probably closed, too.

So even with a ferocious snowstorm battering the area, Ott "took a chance" and drove to a Wegmans supermarket for some spaghetti.

"It was a miserable chance, to be honest with you," Ott said Wednesday after the Sabres prepared for tonight's game against the Florida Panthers inside the First Niagara Center. "I had to guess on a left turn, thought I was going to be toast. But I made it through it. It was actually pretty unbelievable driving in that stuff."

Of course, Ott and his teammates could stay home Tuesday after the NHL postponed their contest against Carolina.

"I think the league made a great call by absolutely keeping everyone safe," said Ott, who spent the day watching movies by a fire with his wife and daughter.

Interim Sabres coach Ted Nolan added: "It was just one of those days it wasn't worth playing a hockey game."

Sabres center Zenon Konopka said the reality of the storm hit "pretty quick" when his mother, who was in Buffalo, called him four or five times and asked if he had turned on the local television stations.

"I was like, 'OK, mom, I got it. I know not to drive on the roads,'" Konopka said. "It was kind of funny. Eventually, we went out for a bit. But it was pretty funny having your mom, when you're in your 30s, calling you four times."

With a loaded schedule, an extra day off "certainly ain't going to hurt," Nolan said.

Backup goalie Jhonas Enroth was scheduled to start Tuesday, so he'll go tonight, Nolan said.

"It'll be just like 'Groundhog Day,'" he said. "We'll just do it all over again (this) morning. So he'll have his turn."

Enroth might get another turn during the next month's Sochi Games. The 25-year-old was one of three netminders named to Sweden's Olympic squad Tuesday. Sabres defenseman Henrik Tallinder also earned a spot.

“It’s something you’ve been thinking about pretty much every day the whole year,” Enroth said. “It’s motivation and it’s going to be a great experience.”

He added: “Very excited. Very honored. I’m super excited to go to the Olympic Games.”

Players tapped their sticks and cheered as Nolan mentioned the Sabres’ Olympians before practice started.

How did Enroth find out he had made his first Olympic team?

“They emailed me,” he said. “So I just woke up to a nice little email. It was very exciting.”

Enroth acknowledged last month his poor record – he’s 1-8-3 in 13 appearances, his lone win coming Oct. 25 in Florida – might’ve been hurting his chances.

Still, he’s sporting a 2.60 goals-against average and .910 save percentage.

“I think pretty much the whole season I’ve been playing fine except for maybe one game in Anaheim,” Enroth said.

Enroth might’ve secured his spot in May, when he backstopped Sweden to a gold medal at the world championship. Sweden’s Olympic coach Par Marts, coached Enroth in the spring and in junior hockey.

“Obviously, the coach trusts me still,” Enroth said. “I’ve had that coach for a couple of years so we know each other pretty well. Winning the gold there last year definitely helped me.”

Now, imagine if Enroth plays a game against teammate Ryan Miller, one of Team USA’s goalies.

“It’d be cool, definitely unique,” Miller said. “It’s not something a whole lot of teams, many teams I’ve seen, have a chance to do.”

Nolan added: “It’s pretty cool, and two powerful nations.”

Miller said he’s “really proud” of Enroth.

“I think he’s been playing good hockey here,” Miller said. “It’s been a tough situation for him as well. He’s had some really nice outings. He just hasn’t had the good fortune of getting too many wins to show for it. But he’s been solid every time. I think he’ll be great for his team.”

Sabres back going after being snowed in

By Paul Hamilton

WGR 550

January 8, 2014

Buffalo, NY (WGR 550) -- The Sabres got an unexpected day off when the NHL postponed Tuesday's game due to the weather.

Every player I spoke with on Wednesday felt it was the right decision for the safety of everybody involved. Steve Ott said, "I think the league made a great call by absolutely keeping everybody safe, not only the fans, but the trainers that come in, the doctors that come in, there are so many, the ushers all those people that have to come work on a day like that would've been treacherous."

Ott never got to the arena, but he did get out for a brief moment, "I got the text in the morning and then I noticed I didn't have any pregame meal stuff so I actually went to Wegmans to go grab some spaghetti and stuff because I knew my pasta place was probably closed, so I took a chance and it was a miserable chance to be honest with you. I had to guess on a left turn and thought I was going to be toast, so it was pretty unbelievable driving in that stuff."

Ott said he had a good day of family time watching movies.

Ryan Miller wasn't scheduled to play. He said, "I was trying to find a place for the dog not to get blown away while getting him outside and that's about it. It was a lot of wind, a lot of snow and a lot of cabin fever, so it's good to get back to the rink and have something to do today."

Jhonas Enroth was supposed to be in goal and he won't lose the start as Ted Nolan said he'll play Thursday. Enroth did get to the arena in the morning. He said, "It was definitely weird, I think the organization made the right call as it was pretty crazy weather last night around six." Enroth said this wasn't a first for him, "I remember we used to have blizzards in Maine, so it was a little bit of a flashback to my AHL time."

Being from the Sioux in Canada, Ted Nolan's very familiar with bad weather. He said, "Coming from Northern Ontario when you know it's not going to be too good, so we knew early on and were just waiting for official word around 2:00. It was just one of those days where it wasn't worth playing hockey."

Both Cody Hodgson and Ville Leino skated Wednesday in no contact red jerseys. Leino isn't ready yet, but Hodgson's broken thumb is very close according to Nolan, "Right now it's up to Cody. We're going to see how he feels. Today was the first day that he practiced with the team. He said he felt great, so hopefully he feels like that for a couple days in a row and if he does that, we'll get him in."

Sabres Myers didn't think he'd get three games

By Paul Hamilton

WGR 550

January 8, 2014

Buffalo, NY (WGR 550) -- With Tuesday's game being postponed, Tyler Myers still has to sit three games for his hit to the head of Dainius Zubrus.

Myers is disappointed it was three games, but he knew he'd get sat down, "I liked the fact that they acknowledged that it certainly wasn't my intention to target that area and that I was trying to make a clean hit, but at the same time I still wasn't expecting three."

As soon as Myers hit connected with the head, there would be a suspension. Myers said, "There was a conversation after the phone call where he explained that it doesn't matter what type of hit it is any more, if there's any contact to the head it's going to be two to five games. He also explained that they gave me two and then gave me one for being a repeat offender."

Ted Nolan didn't seem too surprised by the suspension, he knew it was a hit to the head. "It's one of those things that we have to get the head hits out of the game and the league does a great job on that."

The team only has 20 healthy players. Nolan said there will be no call ups.

Sabres might have new GM

WBFO 88.7

January 8, 2014

The Buffalo News is reporting that the Buffalo Sabres have decided on Tim Murray as their next general manager.

WBFO News spoke with News sportswriter Mike Harrington who says the move follows a methodical search conducted by Sabres president of hockey operations, Pat LaFontaine.

"This organization has wallowed too long in being insular and not having enough objective views from the outside. So that's one thing LaFontaine has done, he's kept his cards close to the vest, but because he hasn't been in the NHL for awhile he needed a good, honest evaluation of the Sabres from the outside. And I think that no matter who he got, he was going to get that (an assessment of his team) and that's been a real key point to this search," said Harrington.

The current assistant general manager of the Ottawa Senators, Tim Murray would fill the vacancy created when Darcy Regier was fired nearly two months ago.

Murray has spent time working in player personnel departments with the Anaheim Ducks, Florida Panthers and New York Rangers. He is the nephew of Ottawa Senators' General Manager Byran Murray.

The 50-year-old Murray was reportedly among a pool of candidates that included former Sabres scout Jim Benning who currently works for the Boston Bruins. Wikipedia even lists Murraray as "a candidate for the role of GM of the Buffalo Sabres."

Social media also weighing in on the news. TSN has tweeted @TSNBobMcKenzie: "Pending successful negotiation of contract with Buffalo, Ottawa assistant GM Tim Murray will be next GM of the Sabres."

Murray Has a Fan Inside Sabres Dressing Room

WKBW

January 8, 2014

BUFFALO, NY - (WKBW) The Buffalo Sabres appear to be in the final stages of their general manager hunt. Canada's Rogers Sportsnet, TSN and the Ottawa Sun all report that Senators Assistant General Manager Tim Murray is the frontrunner to land the Sabres GM job.

There's one man inside the Sabres dressing room that knows Murray a little better than others. Buffalo Center Zenon Konopka played for the Sens during the 2011-12 season. He spoke with Eyewitness Sports Anchor Shawn Stepner after Wednesday's practice.

"He's a really good person, really sharp guy," Konopka said. "If we get him in here we're pretty lucky to grab him. He's been in the business for a long time. He knows the ins and outs. Hopefully we can finalize that."

Murray was named Ottawa's Assistant GM in July of 2005. He's also worked for the Red Wings, Panthers, Ducks and Rangers.

"He was connected everywhere. He understood the players, coaches," Konopka added. "He had a pulse of the team, which isn't the norm in this league. He's tough but fair."

MYERS REACTS TO 3-GAME SUSPENSION

By Chris Ryndak

Sabres.com

January 8, 2014

The Buffalo Sabres will be without Tyler Myers for the next three games. The defenseman received a two-minute penalty on Saturday for illegally checking New Jersey Devils forward Dainius Zubrus in the head. The NHL Department of Player Safety then scheduled a phone hearing with Myers for Monday and later announced that they had handed down a three-game suspension.

He received two for the hit and an extra game for being a repeat offender. He was suspended three games in March 2012 for boarding.

Initially, Myers didn't think he would receive three games this time around.

"I was pretty surprised but there was a conversation after the phone call where he explained that it doesn't matter what type of hit it is anymore. If there's any contact to the head, it's going to be 2-5 games," he said after practice Wednesday at First Niagara Center.

"I liked the fact that on the phone call that everyone recognized that it wasn't my intention to target his head. After I saw the video, it's clear that there is contact to the head. Fortunately he's OK and came back into the game and there are no problems there."

Buffalo will also be without Henrik Tallinder on Thursday when the Florida Panthers come to town.. Myers plays an average of 21:46 per night, second on the team. Tallinder is sixth, playing 19:20 each night on average, so other defensemen will have to play bigger roles for the Sabres.

Defenseman Mike Weber said they'll have to look down the lineup to play key minutes on the penalty kill as well.

"Those are two guys that play a lot of minutes so guys are going to have to step up and play those minutes," Weber said. "I think with that, stepping up in the right situation, you're not going to replace a [Myers] with the offensive abilities that he has. Someone's got to step up and just play solid minutes."

Center Cody Hodgson skated with the team for the first time since sustaining an upper-body injury on Dec. 19 albeit in a red non-contact jersey.

Sabres interim coach Ted Nolan hopes Hodgson will be able to return to the lineup soon.

"Right now it's up to Cody. We're going to see how he feels," Nolan said. "Today was the first day he practiced with the team. He said he felt great some hopefully he feels like that for a couple days in a row. And if he does that then hopefully we'll get him in."

Ville Leino, who has missed two games with a lower-body injury. "Also skated in a non-contact jersey and the Sabres staff will continue to evaluate in throughout the week.

The Sabres were back on the ice after having their game Tuesday night against the Carolina Hurricanes postponed due to inclement weather.

"You don't want to put anyone in danger. Fans coming to the game, the workers coming to the arena to work, all those [people]," Nolan said. "The game of hockey is nice to watch, but we need to make sure we do it where everybody can get there safely."

A make-up date as yet to be announced.

Ryan Miller will have some company at the Winter Olympics in Sochi next month. Miller was named to Team USA on New Year's Day and on Tuesday, three of his teammates were announced to national rosters.

Tallinder and goaltender Jhonas Enroth will represent Sweden. Zemgus Girgensons will play for Team Latvia under the guidance of Ted Nolan, who also coaches the Latvian team.

Miller was especially happy to hear his fellow netminder had been named to the Swedish team and said he would look forward to a potential goaltending duel against Enroth and Sweden.

"It'd be cool. It'd be definitely unique," Miller said. "It's not something many teams that I've seen have a chance to do. We'll see how it works out, but it'd be nice."

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