



# **Buffalo Sabres**

**Daily Press Clips**

*October 23, 2013*

## **Bruins-Sabres Preview**

By Jordan Garretson

Associated Press

October 22, 2013

With the Buffalo Sabres off to the worst start in franchise history, some are questioning the job security of coach Ron Rolston.

Considering Wednesday night's matchup against the stingy Boston Bruins poses a significant challenge for the offensively-inept Sabres, there's a good chance the speculation will continue.

Buffalo (1-8-1), still seeking its first home victory, clings to a shootout result over the New York Islanders on Oct. 15 as its only win.

Rolston had his interim tag removed in May after taking over for the fired Lindy Ruff in February. Buffalo is 16-19-6 under Rolston dating to Feb. 21, with seven of those victories coming in shootouts.

He has mostly deflected any talk regarding his job.

"I'm always up. You have to be positive," said Rolston, who previously served as the head coach of USA Hockey's National Team development program. "That's our job, to be positive around here and work hard every day. That's what we can control. The results will take care of themselves if you do those two things."

Saturday's 4-2 loss to Colorado was only the third multi-goal game this season for the Sabres, whose 1.2 goals per game is the league's lowest average. They were scoreless on three power-play chances, falling to 3 for 35 (8.6 percent) on the season.

The defeat also saw Buffalo's opening-period struggles continue, as Rolston's squad was outshot 14-3 in the first 20 minutes. The Sabres are being outscored 13-1 in the first compared to 14-11 in the second and third.

"I don't think we've consistently done enough things to create the identity that we want," Rolston said. "Second and thirds, for example, when we have slow starts we seem to pick it up at the end and we start to do some of the things we're supposed to do consistently."

Buffalo's struggles appear likely to continue against a Bruins (5-2-0) team that allows 1.4 goals per game. Boston has also won all three of its road contests by a total score of 11-3 after a 5-0 victory at Tampa Bay on Saturday.

David Krejci - who tied for fourth on the team in 2012-13 with 10 goals - tallied his first of this season to extend his points streak to four games. Twelve different Bruins each recorded one point against the Lightning.

"Everybody showed up from the drop of the puck tonight, and obviously it shows on the result," said Patrice Bergeron, who scored his second of the season.

Tuukka Rask stopped 23 shots for his first shutout, but he struggled the last time he faced Buffalo. He surrendered a career-high six goals in a 7-4 home loss on Jan. 31.

Thomas Vanek, who has 18 points over his last 12 games against the Bruins, accounted for three goals and two assists.

Ryan Miller is 5-2 in his last seven starts versus Boston with a 1.83 goals-against average.

Jarome Iginla, who has yet to tally a goal with the Bruins despite 24 shots in seven games, has scored in three of his last four against Buffalo.

These teams have split 28 meetings since Nov. 8, 2008.

## **Bruins backup goalie may start vs. Sabres**

By Amy Moritz

Buffalo News

October 22, 2013

Opposing teams are starting to feel rather confident about defending the Buffalo Sabres offense.

Just ask the Boston Bruins.

Reports from Boston media outlets indicated the Bruins may give backup goaltender Chad Johnson his first start of the season when they meet the Sabres at First Niagara Center tonight.

“We’ll probably give him a shot there at some point, and Buffalo may be one of the games we give him,” Bruins coach Claude Julien said to Boston media after the team’s practice Monday.

The schedule has allowed Tuukka Rask to start all seven of Boston’s games this season. He has a 1.29 goals-against average with a .954 save percentage and a 5-2-0 record.

But with the Bruins playing three games in four days, including going back to Boston on Thursday to host the NHL-leading San Jose Sharks, tonight might be the night for Johnson.

“There’s been a lot of breaks in this first month, and obviously you want to get Tuukka on a roll,” Johnson said. “For myself, it’s just about having good practices. Now we have some back-to-backs coming up and you just try to be ready. It’s just sort of getting comfortable, for myself and the team getting accustomed to how I like to play.”

Johnson has played in 10 NHL games with the New York Rangers and the Phoenix Coyotes. He has a career mark of 3-2-2 with a 1.97 goals-against average, a .929 save percentage and one shutout.

...

The Sabres had three days between games, and after an off day Sunday went to work on basics at practice Monday and Tuesday.

“You know when things aren’t going well, really the most simple solution is to make everything easy, make everything something you’re comfortable doing,” goaltender Ryan Miller said Tuesday. “We talked about it for a while, but we really have to harp on it and lean on getting pucks deep and getting to work. We see a big difference in our offense when we get pucks deep. It’s going to help out

our back end, too. Our 'D' will have a little bit less pressure and will be able to jump up and help a little bit more.

“People are probably sick of hearing me say it, but it's a chess game you've got to play. You gotta set it up first. You gotta get the puck deep. You gotta make teams work and then you can stretch it out with passing plays. That's what we're looking for.”

...

Clarence native Kevyn Adams was named vice president and director of the HarborCenter Academy of Hockey, a premier hockey training and development program to be housed at the new facility. The academy will have a full-time staff of coaches to lead both on and off-ice programs for players and coaches.

Also announced was the expansion of the Buffalo Junior Sabres Youth Organization. The Junior A team, which plays in the Ontario Junior Hockey League, will have dedicated space at HarborCenter where it will practice and play its home games.

The organization will expand to include a total of seven teams across multiple age groups – two teams at the Pee Wee level (minor/major), two at the Bantam level (minor/major) and teams at the 16U and 18U level.

Larry Playfair was named the president of the Junior Sabres while Michael Peca will be the general manager and coach.

...

There was full participation at Tuesday's practice with Corey Tropp still wearing the red noncontact jersey as he slowly returns from a broken jaw. ... Patrick Kaleta was at practice, returning from New York where he had his meeting with NHL Commissioner Gary Bettman to appeal his 10-game suspension. A ruling on the appeal is expected today. Should Bettman uphold the suspension, Kaleta has the option to appeal to a neutral arbitrator.

## **Ott wants to step up production**

By Amy Moritz

Buffalo News

October 22, 2013

Steve Ott would be a lot more worried if he wasn't getting scoring chances.

There's no doubt the frustration level is high. Ott expected more production through the first 10 games and the co-captain would love to help lead the Buffalo Sabres out of their offensive funk.

The team is averaging a league-worst 1.2 goals per game. At 1-8-1 the Sabres are in the basement of the Atlantic Division facing traditional rival Boston tonight. And Ott? He has just one assist.

"Absolutely, it's concerning after 10 games to only have one assist and that's something for myself I want to help produce and help contribute to this team," Ott said. "Obviously with everybody chipping in, it makes a huge difference in the wins and loss column."

But he's not going to panic about his offensive numbers just yet.

"You know what, I don't get frustrated so much on goals as I would be on scoring chances. And why I say that is I feel I'm getting scoring chances," Ott said. "I've had a lot of chances on net, and when the chances aren't there, then it's a problem somewhere. For myself, I know I'll score soon. It's just percentage-base on the amount of chances you get."

His lone point this season came Oct. 10 against Columbus when he had the first assist on Thomas Vanek's goal in a 4-1 loss.

While Ott's primary role is not as a goal scorer, he has been a consistent offensive contributor in his NHL career. Last year, he netted nine goals for the Sabres in a shortened season. In 2009-10 he had an NHL career-high 22 with Dallas.

For the first time as a professional, Ott is a captain, sharing duties with Vanek. Could that be adding some pressure?

"No. I don't think so," Sabres coach Ron Rolston said.

"He's able to handle that. He's been a leader his whole career. Just having a 'C' shouldn't change that."

Ott doesn't think so either.

"You know, no because I've always done the things that I've always had to do," he said. "That's the same with Vanek and myself. This is nothing new for us. We've

always led in our own way. Nothing's really changed in the essence of, 'Oh, you have a letter on your jersey now.' You want more. Absolutely. You want success and we want accountability. That's something we're aiming for ourselves and then spreading it from player to player."

But the slow start has been cumbersome, especially for the veterans. Getting those scoring chances may be an optimistic sign, but breaking out of the slump to capitalize on those chances is another puzzle to solve.

"Oh for sure. I think you squeeze your stick a little bit more on some of the plays," Ott said. "That does happen. But for myself, I've been consistent my whole career, since junior on. Some times you do go a little while and you get slumping but you know what, you work your way out of it. The only way to do so is through the work ethic. I'm a firm believer in the work ethic takes care of offensive output."

"Of all our veterans we expect them to create offense," Rolston said. "I think some of those guys have had slow starts. They'd like to have a better start but that's behind them now, so they have to start tomorrow."

The opportunity for a fresh start comes against a Boston team that is tied for third in the Atlantic Division after winning its last two games.

The Bruins have scored 20 goals in seven games while surrendering just 10. Add in the tradition of a rivalry game, and how the Sabres start becomes a crucial element to success.

"We're hesitating," said Ott, whose team has been outscored, 13-1, in first periods. "We're sticking one toe in the water and feeling the game out. Then we realize, 'Oh wow, we can play with them,' and then we get going. That's not good enough."

"We need to be a team that comes out with energy — young, youthful energy — and go from there and get our chances that way."

## **NBCSN profiles Sabres-Bruins rivalry**

By Greg Connors

Buffalo News

October 22, 2013

A new show on NBC Sports Network called "NHL Rivals," which premieres tonight at 11, features the history of on-ice battles between the Buffalo Sabres and Boston Bruins.

From Brad May's "May Day" goal in the 1993 playoffs to Milan Lucic's collision with Ryan Miller in 2011, the two teams share plenty of history.

Among those interviewed in the show are May, Miller, Phil Housley, Matthew Barnaby, Brad Park, Larry Playfair, Lindy Ruff, Dominik Hasek, Thomas Vanek and Rick Jeanneret.

Ruff, now coach of the Dallas Stars, remembers the rivalry both as a coach and player. "It was about looking over there and seeing which guys you'd have to worry about beating the crap out of you," he says.

Says May: "It was so easy to get up for those games. You couldn't sleep in the afternoon, or you'd sleep with the lights on."

The program is produced by Mark Levy, who has won 22 Emmy Awards for his work on the Olympics, according to NBC. "NHL Rivals" airs tonight at 11, then Wednesday evening at 6:30, prior to NBCSN's broadcast of the Sabres' home game against Boston, part of the network's "Wednesday Night Rivalry" series.

## **Leo Roth: Sabres fans are getting restless**

By Leo Roth

Democrat and Chronicle

October 22, 2013

The smell of Buffalo Sabres hockey is back in the air. Ah, breathe in and cough.

Through 10 games of the NHL season, the Sabres have a 1-8-1 record, good for a mighty three points. They've been outscored 28-13. They are winless (0-5-1) at home. And I think Ville Leino just got injured again.

In the surest sign things aren't going as smoothly as ice that's just seen the Zamboni, the natives are beyond restless, and it's not even Thanksgiving.

The target of their ire is one that's been the target of their ire for years now, general manager Darcy Regier, who has been on the job around 15 years, which in the world of professional sports equates to 150 years.

On the heels of two seasons out of the playoffs and the memory of the Stanley Cup contenders long faded, there are "Fire Darcy" T-shirts, digital "Fire Darcy" images making the rounds of social media, "Fire Darcy" petitions and there's even an official Facebook page "TO HAVE DARCY REGIER FIRED!" It's approaching 5,000 likes.

Tonight's game has been designated the "FANS DELAY TO FIRE DARCY." The game is being carried on three networks, making it potentially the largest viewing audience for a Sabres game for the remainder of 2013. Here's the request making the rounds:

**"If you have tickets to Wednesday's game, DO NOT ENTER THE ARENA UNTIL AFTER THE OPENING FACEOFF. If our arena is EMPTY at the start of the game, it will be an EMBARRASSMENT TO DARCY and the organ"eye"zation for the EMBARRASSMENT THEY HAVE PUT ON THE ICE FOR THE LOYAL FANS OF BUFFALO. We can send a message to the entire North American Hockey Community. SHARE THIS MESSAGE."**

You have to applaud these die-hard Sabres fans, but in all seriousness, what's more embarrassing than the state of the team itself? And if you really want to make a statement, don't go to the games at all.

As for Regier, I'm pretty sure his conscience is clear after he went out of his way after last season ended to prep the fans for "some suffering." A veteran pre-trade housecleaning signaled that the organization had made a serious decision to rebuild from the ground up with young players, and I mean young as in 18- and 19-year olds.

“I understand what we’re talking here and I understand our fan base,” Regier said. “I would think people will be willing to give up some suffering to win a Stanley Cup. We want to make that as short as possible, that’s the goal.”

Since owner Terry Pegula and president Ted Black were in on this rebuilding-from-Ground-Zero strategy, then rumors that Regier is about to be fired are just that, rumors. Of course in sports, as in ancient Rome, throwing someone to the lions is always a way to placate the masses and present the image of real change.

I’m not saying Regier should stay. By any logic, he should’ve been let go when coach Lindy Ruff was shown the permanent penalty box door last season. But what good does the move do at this juncture? It’s a long season. Let it play out. Maybe even snag the No. 1 overall pick in the draft.

Then again, if Pegula and Black are pondering a GM switch, then the sooner the better. It would give that person time to assess things, such as what to do with impending free agents Ryan Miller, Thomas Vanek and Steve Ott before the trade deadline.

If I’m on a seat as hot as Regier, I’m working the phones like it’s a telethon.

The Edmonton Oilers could be interested in moving the No. 1 overall pick in the 2012 draft, Nail Yakupov, though such a thing seems premature. The Oilers need goaltending but Miller, who has a no-trade clause, would have to remove Edmonton from the list of teams he doesn’t want to be traded to.

Now, Vanek to Minnesota does make sense. It’s where he played his college hockey and his wife is from.

If there’s any consolation about watching this Sabres team, it is the potential for better days ahead. To know that there are the likes of defensemen Rasmus Ristolainen and Nikita Zadorov, both 18, and forwards Zemgus Girgensons and Mikhail Grigorenko, both 19, in the system. Overall, the roster includes 15 players 23 years old or younger.

It’s asking a lot of fans to pay good money to support such a product and the cost of tickets, merchandize and beer have not dropped accordingly. So if the natives want to be restless and print up FIRE DARCYNOW T-shirts, more power to them.

Personally, I find shooting pucks at the garage door is good therapy.

## **Sabres seeking first division win as Bruins visit**

By Tal Pinchevsky

NHL.com

October 22, 2013

BRUINS (5-2-0) at SABRES (1-8-1)

TV: NBCSN, TSN2, RDS2

Season series: This is the first of five meetings this season between the Boston Bruins and Buffalo Sabres, two longtime division rivals who are now adversaries in the new Atlantic Division. While these teams are off to very different starts in 2013-14, they've always played each other close no matter the circumstances. Buffalo took last season's series 3-2-0 and holds an 11-7-5 edge since the 2009-10 season.

Big story: The Bruins and Sabres found themselves in two very different situations entering this season. Boston came within two wins of winning the Stanley Cup before refashioning its roster and arguably making it better. Buffalo finished 12th in the Eastern Conference and is now rebuilding the franchise around a bumper crop of prospects. Those different directions are reflected in their early-season performance as the Bruins have won three of their past four games and Buffalo lost its first seven games and still has yet to win in regulation or overtime.

Team Scope:

**Bruins:** An early-season favorite to make another long playoff run, Boston has remained consistent in the early parts of the season. On Saturday they faced the Tampa Bay Lightning in a rematch of their season-opening win.

The Bruins may have executed their best team performance of the young season in a 5-0 victory. David Krejci opened the scoring with his first goal of the season 92 seconds into the game and 12 players collected a point as Boston limited Tampa Bay to 23 shots while scoring five goals on just 22 shots.

"We had a good start, obviously, but we scored the goals the way we wanted to score them," coach Claude Julien said. "Offensively it was nice to score some goals. I thought the pace and the tempo of our game was good tonight too. We were moving the puck quickly and we skated from start to finish."

**Sabres:** The Sabres made no secret of the fact that they were rebuilding entering this season, but despite their record, the team has been tough against division rivals. In three games, they are 0-2-1 within the division but have lost each game by a single goal.

They faced off against one of the League's top teams, the Colorado Avalanche, on Saturday night. Outshot 14-3 in the first period, the Sabres allowed opening-period goals to Ryan O'Reilly and Gabriel Landeskog and quickly found themselves in a hole.

But they found their form in the final 40 minutes, outshooting the Avalanche 27-12 in the final two periods and getting goals from Cody Hodgson and Marcus Foligno in a 4-2 loss. The Sabres especially carried the play in the third, outshooting Colorado 16-4.

"I think we came on strong in the second and third," Hodgson said. "We started playing with the puck more and started making some real positive things happen. We know we can play. It's not a question of that. It's not putting ourselves behind the eight-ball right away."

Who's hot: Krejci and Reilly Smith are enjoying four-game point streaks for Boston, during which they have a goal and three assists. Tuukka Rask has allowed one goal or fewer in five of seven games and boasts a 1.29 goals-against average. ... Foligno has two goals in his past three games.

Injury report: The Bruins report no injuries. ... For the Sabres, forwards Ville Leino (ribs), Corey Tropp (jaw) and Cody McCormick (lower body) are out while forward Patrick Kaleta is serving a suspension for a hit on defenseman Jack Johnson of the Columbus Blue Jackets.

## **Compher making a name for himself at Michigan**

By Bob Snow

NHL.com

October 22, 2013

Reference the name Joseph Taylor Compher on the campus at the University of Michigan and it's likely few eyebrows will rise.

Mention J.T. Compher, however, especially among the school's hockey community, and the name quickly is gaining momentum as one of the Wolverines' star players.

One of 10 freshmen and 12 NHL draftees on the 2013-14 roster, the 18-year-old from the Chicago suburb of Northwood, Ill., was ranked No. 34 by NHL Central Scouting in its final ranking of North American skaters heading into the 2013 NHL Draft.

No surprise that the Buffalo Sabres tabbed Compher early in the second round, with the 35th pick.

"That was right around where I expected," Compher told NHL.com. "I had interviewed with them a couple of times as well as other teams. But I knew they were one of the teams interested in me and I'm happy to be with the organization."

A teenager in years only, Compher's budding hockey career already was mature beyond his age before draft day and his first shift at Michigan two week ago.

His play on the international stage and in two seasons at the United States National Team Development Program put Compher on many NHL radar screens.

There was no shortage of highlights over those two seasons.

In 2012 he helped the United States win the gold medal at the World Under-17 Hockey Championship. In 2012-13 he was second on the USNTDP under-18 team in scoring with 18 goals and 31 assists in 55 games, and went on to help the U.S. win the silver medal at the 2013 IIHF World Under-18 Championship, with his seven points in seven games tying him with Tyler Motte for the team scoring lead.

Compher and Motte now are linemates at Michigan, and each already has made a huge impact in the first four games of the young season.

"They talked about my intensity," Compher told NHL.com about Buffalo's scouting feedback. "I wanted to be a two-way player who was tough to play against. They talked to me at the [summer] development camp and told me to keep my intensity up and be hard to play against every shift."

Last weekend the No. 5 Wolverines travelled to Durham, N.H., for a series against the ranked the University of New Hampshire.

On Friday Compher set up Motte on a nifty needle-threading pass across the slot for a power-play goal in a 1-1 final. The next night Compher again set up Motte, this time for the game-winner with 1:37 left in overtime, for a 3-2 win

After four games Michigan is 3-0-1 and Compher has five assists in four games.

"Didn't surprise me," Michigan coach Red Berenson said of Compher and Motte after the Friday finish. "They are good young players and played here before with the [USNTDP]."

Before Michigan's first game, a 3-1 defeat of Boston College in which Compher assisted on the game's first goal, Berenson said, "I expect some of them will be impact players and we're going to need them to be."

Compher has been all of that.

"Michigan has that tradition and education along with the new Big Ten [Hockey League]," Compher said about his decision to remain in Ann Arbor, where the USNTDP also is based. "And having coach Berenson here was a huge factor. He knows how to turn people into NHL players and win national championships. I've only been here a short time, but the message is play with intensity and within the system but we can still make plays and play hockey without things like the traps."

Berenson's mantra for his freshmen is, "You were all brought here for a special reason. Don't try to do too much, but don't be afraid to make plays. You're here for a reason, so play that way with confidence. Keep improving so we can keep winning games."

No shortage of confidence in Compher's focus for improving within those parameters.

"I always liked playing defense, but scoring became a focus," he said. "Making sure I got shots on net and was producing. I really wanted to be an offensive player. I wanted to be one of the guys that was counted on to score."

Compher was a plus-player in his two seasons with the USNTDP and his plus/minus number has remained on the positive side so far at Michigan, with a plus-1 in four games.

"I've always been a two-way guy," Compher said. "I want to make sure my defensive abilities are taking time and space away from the opponent and frustrating their skill guys. But like I've said, I want to be an offensive player by

bearing down and getting more shots on net and taking opportunities when they are there will help me produce more offense."

How does NCAA play compare so far to his previous stops?

"It's a little quicker here so you need to be quicker on your opponent's stick and get him off his game," Compher said. "Once I got into a few shifts I really felt I could play at this level. I told myself to be comfortable with the puck; I had played at a comparable level in [international play]. I was also told a million times before I got to college, 'Don't play like a freshman; play like you deserve to be on the ice, trust yourself to be confident with the puck.'"

In just two weeks, the 5-foot-11, 185-pounder is playing well beyond the level of a college freshman.

One major reason is a quiet internal motivation, borne in part by his father's recovery from prostate cancer two years ago.

"He's healthy and back to work, golfing, and goes for a run pretty much every day and goes walking with my mom," Compher said. "I knew last year he was doing better, but having a healthy family and knowing everything is all set at home makes it a lot easier to come out here and play at Michigan."

Another major reason?

"Being at Michigan you can go see a football game or basketball game," he said. "I love this experience. Everywhere you go people are talking about the football or hockey team."

Not to mention a growing familiarity with the name Joseph Taylor Compher.

## **Paille: It's difficult to watch Sabres hit rock bottom**

By Joe Haggerty  
CSN New England  
October 22, 2013

WILMINGTON – It's been four years since Daniel Paille last suited up as a member of the Buffalo Sabres, and it's fair to say there's been a lifetime of memories separating his Buffalo career from his successful time in Boston.

Paille never truly found a comfortable role with the Sabres in the five seasons he logged games in Buffalo, but then almost immediately evolved into a vital penalty killer and key member of the NHL's best fourth line along with Gregory Campbell and Shawn Thornton. Paille's skating speed and gritty competitiveness make him an effective energy player for the Black and Gold, and also put him into plenty of offensive situations for a bottom-six forward.

Those attributes made him a first round pick with the Buffalo organization, and saw him develop his game along with many up-and-coming NHL players with the Sabres. So the 29-year-old Paille still has old teammates with the Sabres like Thomas Vanek and Ryan Miller among others, and that means he stays aware of the happenings in Buffalo.

Those happenings are not good.

"My first couple of years there [the Sabres] had some good runs, and even my last years there we went down to the last day of the season before we didn't make [the playoffs]. The talent was definitely there," said Paille. "Unfortunately they're back in a [rebuilding] situation right now, and it's not too great for the city. Hopefully for the sake of the city of Buffalo they can put up a good game, even if they don't make the playoffs.

"It's difficult for me to watch because the people of Buffalo deserve a lot of good things. They are definitely people that are passionate, and really support the Bills and the Sabres. I saw it really turn over to the Sabres when I was there. I still go to Buffalo and get recognized everywhere they go. It's a community that cares about the team. It's just like us [in Boston] except we're in a bigger city."

So Paille is fully aware of how bad things are with the Sabres this season. They've bottomed out in the new Atlantic Division with a 1-8-1 record and have scored a brutally impotent 13 goals in those 10 games.

The Buffalo crowds have begun chanting "Fire Darcy" during the games at the First Niagara Center in clear displeasure at the job done by the longtime Sabres general manager. Players like Vanek and Miller are expected to be traded away to contenders in the middle of a clear rebuild, so there's a fair level of uncertainty to go along with everything else.

But that being said Paille won't be underestimating a Sabres club that's been backed into a corner after an awful start to the season. Buffalo is already heading to a point where they need to win games before they play themselves out of the playoff picture, and that should breed some desperation on Wednesday night.

"Nowadays anything can happen on any given night," said Paille. "It's only 10 games in, so I don't think anybody should give up on a team whether it's us or anybody else. There's still plenty of time left in the season."

The Bruins will hope to be sharp all-around as the San Jose Sharks will be waiting for them back in Boston on Thursday night at TD Garden in the second half of a back-to-back for the Black and Gold.

## **Popular rookie Mark Pysyk quickly developing into one of Sabres' top defensemen**

By Bill Hoppe

Olean Times Herald

October 23, 2013

BUFFALO – First, as Mark Pysyk was sitting in his stall talking to a reporter Tuesday, Zemgus Girgensons approached the defenseman, extended his hand and smacked his roommate across the cheek.

“What’s that about?” Pysyk said as Girgensons scurried off.

Girgensons, the likable Pysyk said, was “going to get it bad.”

“He might get a tape ball,” he said.

Moments later, a laughing Nikita Zadorov approached Pysyk and slapped him again.

Three Sabres rookies. Two slaps. Lots of laughs.

“I think it’s a tight group and ... what you’re seeing in the locker room is the future,” coach Ron Rolston said Tuesday after the Sabres prepared for tonight’s tilt against the Boston Bruins inside the First Niagara Center.

But forget about the future. The popular Pysyk is already a major part of the Sabres. Just 29 games into his NHL career, the 21-year-old has morphed into one of the struggling team’s top players.

Pysyk, a calm and cool customer on and off the ice, has been one of the 1-8-1 club’s few bright spots, skating more than 20 minutes a night, mostly beside No. 1 defenseman Christian Ehrhoff.

“We’ve developed some really good chemistry,” Ehrhoff said about Pysyk, his partner since opening night. “He’s really poised. He doesn’t do things in a hurry. We use each other well. I’ve enjoyed playing with him so far.”

Rolston lauded Pysyk on Monday, using a question about leadership to mention his fine play.

“The first phase is you have to be consistent and you have to be capable, and that’s where your leadership comes from,” Rolston said. “So guys like Mark Pysyk, he goes out every night, he’s going to give you the same thing every single night.”

That’s an efficient, steady game devoid of any flashiness. Pysyk’s at his best when he’s going unnoticed.

“You wouldn’t even know some nights he’s out there,” said Rolston, who also coached Pysyk in Rochester last season. “But he’s a lot of times one of our better guys back there.”

Pysyk added: “I don’t know if that’s a sign of leadership for me yet or whatnot, but I’m just trying to be consistent.”

Sabres defenseman Henrik Tallinder, Pysyk’s partner some of the preseason, said the youngster “plays very mature, never leaves where he’s supposed to be.”

“As a defenseman, the hardest thing for a young guy is maybe be patient and wait for the play to come to you instead of trying to go to where the play is,” Tallinder said. “He’s very patient and efficient and good at positioning himself.”

Part of Pysyk’s productivity comes from his maturity. He almost always maintains the same demeanor, never looking angry or rattled.

“Just great personally, calm, great guy to hang around with,” Tallinder said. “Just easygoing and soft-spoken.”

Rolston and teammates said they’ve never seen the Edmonton native lose his cool.

“He’s a fun kid to be around, that’s for sure,” Sabres co-captain Steve Ott said. “He’s got the tools to be a heck of a defenseman for a long time. His experience is changing daily, but his emotional level, his highs aren’t high, his lows aren’t lows. That’s probably what’s making him a complete defenseman every single day.”

Does Pysyk, the 23rd overall pick on 2010, ever get rattled?

“That’s a tough question,” he said. “I don’t know. I don’t really get rattled that easily. I try to be smiling and happy as much as possible. That’s my comfort for me, obviously, upbeat kind of energy instead of moping around.”

Still, Pysyk’s only human, you know. He acknowledged “every game there’s a play or something that rattles me.”

“But I think that my way of dealing with getting rattled is just not showing it and moving on,” he said.

His personality, Pysyk said, might come from his father, someone he called a “pretty patient man.”

“If he ever gets rattled, (he) thinks things through,” Pysyk said. “He doesn’t react on his adrenaline. It’s obviously different playing hockey than just living a normal

life. ... There's no point in being miserable all the time. Things could be a lot worse. On your worst day it's just fine. You got to enjoy it while you're here."

Given Pysyk's age and that the 31-year-old Ehrhoff's just starting the third season of a 10-year contract, the two could skate together for a long time.

"I still feel like a kid, I think, a little bit every time I go out there," Pysyk said. "It sort of hits you that it's the NHL, playing in the NHL with Christian Ehrhoff. It's pretty cool. I don't know how long it'll last, but I'm enjoying it right now."

Notes: Rolston wouldn't say if the 18-year-old Zadorov, fresh off his NHL debut, would play again tonight. The Russian defenseman has been skating beside Jamie McBain, his partner much of Saturday. ... Ville Leino, out since cracking a rib opening night, practiced again Tuesday. The winger hopes to return later this week. Tonight is unlikely, however. "It's hard to say percentage-wise, but I'm getting close," Leino said. "I don't have that much pain anymore."

## **Struggling Sabres still searching for identity**

By Bill Hoppe

Olean Times Herald

October 22, 2013

BUFFALO – Nine losses in 10 games. Twelve goals, or 1.2 a contest. Wretched start after wretched start.

Twenty-one days into the season, the Sabres (1-8-1) possess no identity whatsoever.

“I think we’re still in the process,” Sabres coach Ron Rolston said this afternoon following practice inside the First Niagara Center. “I don’t think we’ve consistently done enough of the things to really create the identity that we want. Those are the things that we talk about when we do play during spans of the game, second, third (periods), for example.

“When we have slow starts, we seem to pick it up at the end and we start to do some of the things we’re supposed to do consistently, and we’re just not doing that enough.”

Pin a lot of the Sabres’ struggles on the veterans, said co-captain Steve Ott, who’s still goalless.

“(We must) continue to do the right things, even when it is frustrating times, where the record, you want more, you want more,” Ott said. “You have to stick with the process. I even find myself getting away from it sometimes because you want to do more. You want to try to help out, and consistency’s probably your best asset.”

In other news, Ville Leino, out since cracking a rib opening night, practiced again today. The winger hopes to return later this week. Wednesday’s home tilt against Boston is unlikely, however.

“It’s hard to say percentage-wise, but I’m getting close,” Leino said. “I don’t have that much pain anymore.”

Meanwhile, Rolston wouldn’t say if 18-year-old defenseman Nikita Zadorov, who made his NHL debut Saturday, would play against the Bruins. The defenseman skated with Jamie McBain again today.

## **Sabres Looking For Better Start vs. Bruins**

By Stu Boyar

WGRZ

October 22, 2013

BUFFALO, N.Y.-Not only are the Sabres off to the worst start in franchise history at 1-8-1 but they've had miserable starts in their last two games, both losses both at home.

And, the team heard it loud and clear from the fans.

Last Thursday, the Sabres lost to Vancouver 3-0 and Saturday night Colorado beat the Sabres 4-2.

Colorado outshot the Sabres 9-0 to start the game. The Sabres first shot on goal came with 5:50 remaining in the first period.

Getting off to a better start has been a focus for awhile now and that continued at practice Tuesday.

Head coach Ron Rolston told 2 On Your Side's Stu Boyar, "We've talked about it a lot. I think now everyone's aware of it. Now it's being able to go out early on and do it. We talked about it today even at the start of practice, that's why we started with a game today in practice so its been a focus of ours. Its a mindset that the guys have to have."

After recent losses, Rolston has called out his veteran players.

Thomas Vanek says, "When you're 1-and-8 or 1-8-and-1 or what, he can call out everybody. Its not just young guys, old guys, it's collectively again and as a team we haven't been good enough."

Cody Hodgson added, "I think we need more from everybody. Its not one or two guys its collectively as a team we can all do a lot better and make sure our team wins. Right now we're not getting it done for we have to figure out a way to do it."

Wednesday night the Boston Bruins make their first appearance of the season at the First Niagara Center. The Bruins are 5-2 this year and are riding a two game winning streak.

The Sabres and Bruins have had a great rivalry going back to the old Adams Division days.

Vanek said, "Rivalries, obviously the Bruins are one of them but its more of a rivalry when the teams are closer in the standings. Obviously for us its a building block against a very good team so if we can get a win and then build off that that would help."

"It's awesome,' added Marcus Foligno, about the rivalry. "It's a lot of fun. Its easy to get up for those games. It gets heated and last season we had a good series against Boston and we're looking for another one against them this year so the first game is always huge. It sets the tone for the year and we're looking forward to playing against that team. They're obviously a really good team so you have to respect them in areas but we have to make sure that we are playing our game the start is huge."

Wednesday night's game against the Bruins has a later start time than the majority of games this season. Face off is scheduled for 8pm at the First Niagara Center.

## **SABRES FOCUS ON FASTER STARTS**

By Chris Ryndak

Sabres.com

October 22, 2013

The past two days, the Buffalo Sabres have been able to take advantage of a rare break in the schedule to take on a pair of focused practice sessions.

On Monday, the team worked on defensive zone play and moving the puck up ice. Tuesday, their attention turned to the offense and the power play. Practice started with a three-on-three game in the neutral zone between the forwards with the nets turned along the boards.

Players appeared to be more vocal than in previous practices and coach Ron Rolston said fostering that type of environment is important.

“We tried to today to create different atmospheres for that,” he said after practice at First Niagara Center. “That’s our job to continue to do that and get that mindset in practice so they come out there and right away, they’re engaged in the practice so we don’t start slow.”

Slow starts have been an issue for the team this season. Through 10 games, they’ve been outshot 138-77 in first periods alone. Buffalo has been outshot 33-10 in the first period in each of their past two games as well.

“We’ve talked about it a lot. I think everyone’s aware of it now,” Rolston said. “It’s just being able to go out early on and do it. We talked about it today even at the start of practice. That’s why we started with a game today in practice. It’s been a focus of ours and it’s a mindset that the guys have to have.”

In addition to having better starts, the players are working on maintaining a positive outlook, despite the team’s 1-8-1 record.

“With a lot of young guys, we’ve just got to stick together,” Marcus Foligno said. “That’s the biggest thing. You can’t pout, get negative. It’s just going to spread and definitely take this team down even further. Right now, just stay positive. Get back to the basics and go from there.”

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The first power-play unit featured a slightly different look as it featured four forwards. Foligno, Thomas Vanek, Cody Hodgson and Tyler Ennis joined defenseman Christian Ehrhoff on the unit for special teams work. Foligno worked primarily as the center and Hodgson shifted in and out on the left point.

“It puts a little more onus on Ennis and myself to play defense if something breaks down, but that’s not a problem,” Hodgson said. “I think putting Marcus in

the middle is going to help us because he's got such a cannon of a shot. He's going to pull guys to the middle more."

The second power-play unit comprised of Mikhail Grigorenko, Steve Ott, Drew Stafford, Jamie McBain and Tyler Myers.

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Ville Leino skated again with the team. He's still on the injured reserve list as he recovers from a cracked rib sustained on Oct. 2 and the coaching staff continues to monitor his progress.

"He looks like he's moving around well right now," Rolston said. "We haven't had a lot of pounding yet, but that's going to come, so we're trying to get him in shape too, in terms of game shape and skating shape again."

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26 Thomas Vanek – 19 Cody Hodgson – 21 Drew Stafford  
9 Steve Ott – 82 Marcus Foligno – 63 Tyler Ennis  
28 Zemgus Girgensons – 22 Johan Larsson – 65 Brian Flynn  
32 John Scott – 25 Mikhail Grigorenko – 12 Kevin Porter  
23 Ville Leino – 8 Cody McCormick – 36 Patrick Kaleta  
78 Corey Tropp (non-contact)

10 Christian Ehrhoff – 3 Mark Pysyk  
20 Henrik Tallinder – 57 Tyler Myers  
61 Nikita Zadorov – 4 Jamie McBain  
6 Mike Weber – 55 Rasmus Ristolainen

30 Ryan Miller  
1 Jhonas Enroth

## **HARBORCENTER coverage:**

### **Ex-NHL'er Adams to lead HarborCenter hockey**

By James Fink

Buffalo Business First

October 22, 2013

With construction progressing on the HarborCenter project, the Buffalo Sabres have turned the focus on some of the amateur hockey programming aspects of the downtown Buffalo complex.

HarborCenter officials announced Tuesday that former National Hockey League player and ex-Sabres' assistant coach Kevyn Adams has been named vice president and director of the HarborCenter's Academy of Hockey. The academy that focuses on both on-ice and off-ice training is, along with Canisius College men's hockey and the Buffalo Jr. Sabres, one of the anchor tenants of the \$172.2 million project.

At the same time, officials confirmed a previously announced deal to bring the Buffalo Regals Tier I team into the HarborCenter fold has fallen apart and in its place, the Jr. Sabres will be adding six youth hockey teams that will play in the New York State Amateur Hockey Association.

"We're in the hockey business now," said John Koelmel, HarborCenter president. "Our commitment is to make this a destination for hockey, not just in Western New York but across the country."

Central to the HarborCenter is a twin-rink complex featuring an 1,800-seat main rink that will be the home base for Canisius' men's hockey team and the Buffalo Jr. Sabres. That rink along with the second one are designed to host a wide range of youth, amateur and adult hockey leagues, tournaments and training sessions. The rinks will be open on a year round basis, Koelmel said.

In addition, HarborCenter will include a 3,500-square-foot off-ice training center and other space that can be used for everything from video sessions and additional training venues. The training center is twice the size of the revamped off-ice facility team owner Terry Pegula had built for the Sabres two summers ago as part of a locker room renovation plan.

The training center is comparable to one Penn State designed for its hockey teams in the Pegula-financed Pegula Ice Arena in State College, Pa.

Nik Fattey, HarborCenter vice president and hockey director, said with 28,000 enrolled USA Hockey players in Western New York alone there is a strong base of support for the building and its facilities.

“This isn’t by accident that this is happening here,” Fattey said.

The HarborCenter and its facilities may help with the ice time crunch impacting many organizations. It is one of two local new rinks due to open within the next year. A twin-rink facility in Lockport is also slated to open in fall 2014.

Fattey said the plan is for the HarborCenter to host at least 20 major tournaments during the peak hockey season. The HarborCenter is pegged to welcome at least 500,000 people annually, many staying in its 205-room Marriott hotel that’s scheduled to open in May 2015.

Fattey added there are more than 60 possible youth, amateur and hockey tournaments that will be pitched either by the HarborCenter organization or in conjunction with Visit Buffalo Niagara.

Also in the works are hiring a half-dozen full-time coaches to work with Adams on teaching youth skaters.

“These coaches will be very visible,” Adams said.

Koelmel said he expects HarborCenter to be a major youth and amateur hockey mecca, similar to ones developed in Toronto and other Canadian cities. Regular visitors are expected to include coaches representing NCAA programs and top development leagues in Canada and the U.S.

Larry Playfair, Jr. Sabres president, said five current members from this year’s squad have been recruited for NCAA Division I teams.

“This new building will be envy of the league and I’m not going to apologize for that,” Playfair said.

## **Kevyn Adams to lead Harborcenter Hockey Academy**

WGRZ

October 22, 2013

Clarence native and former Sabres assistant coach Kevyn Adams is back working for Terry Pegula, leading a key component of the Harborcenter project.

Adams will be the VP/Director of the Harborcenter hockey academy which will serve as a developmental program for coaches and players of all ages.

"It became clear to me as I thought about my next chapter in life... After talking with Terry and Kim Pegula...That their vision matched mine. I am energized. I 'm excited. I'm looking forward to this challenge. I'm looking forward to changing the landscape of hockey and impacting the future of hockey in Western New York."

Adams lost his job with the Sabres when Ron Rolston took over as head coach.

The Junior Sabres will also be expanding their youth programs. Former Sabres Larry Playfair and Michael Peca will be leading that effort.

## **HARBORCENTER envisioned as hockey development destination**

By Kaitlyn Lioni

YNN

October 22, 2013

BUFFALO, N.Y. -- "It's going to be a really special place," said HARBORCENTER president John Koelmel, "The anticipation, the energy is unbelievably positive."

And HARBORCENTER officials are building on that excitement with their vision to make the facility a hockey development destination. Tuesday, they announced programming plans, including the creation of the HARBORCENTER Academy of Hockey.

"We think HARBORCENTER spells opportunity. An opportunity for us to create a rising tide and lift all boats," said Koelmel. The Academy will be led by Clarence native and Stanley Cup champion Kevyn Adams. He said it will be dedicated to helping develop players and coaches with on and off ice programs, making use of HARBORCENTER's high performance training facility and classroom space.

"We're going to combine the world-class facilities of the HARBORCENTER with expert teaching, coaching, instruction, to give players locally and from around the world to come to Buffalo to develop and learn the game of hockey," said Adams.

As part of HARBORCENTER's connection to the community, it's starting a youth-partnership program, hoping to working with as many local organizations as possible - to give them the full academy experience. To do that, they'll be hiring a full-time coaching staff, and have created a program to develop talent from the area.

"Basically a residence program, like a grad program. Those guys would learn all the tools that they need to become, to hopefully get jobs in hockey afterwards," said Nik Fattey, HARBORCENTER vice president and director of hockey. And the player development will continue with the expansion of the Buffalo Junior Sabres. The youth organization will be adding six new teams, meaning it will represent all divisions from ages 11 to 20.

"It was important for us to identify what age group are kids going to be able to most benefit from the amenities at the HARBORCENTER and we felt that the 11 year old kid is slowly starting to come into his own," said Michael Peca, general manager and head coach of the current Junior A team.

HARBORCENTER officials also plan to attract 20 large-scale hockey tournaments.

## **HARBORCENTER announces new hockey program**

YNN

October 22, 2013

BUFFALO, N.Y. — As construction continues on the Buffalo Sabres' HARBORCENTER project, we're learning more about what will be happening at the mixed-use hockey and entertainment facility once it's complete.

HARBORCENTER president John Koelmel says even though there's no ice yet, they're open for business. Tuesday, plans were outlined for the HC Academy of Hockey and the expansion of the Buffalo Junior Sabres, which will both be part of the new facility. In addition to being a world-class entertainment destination, officials say they envision HC to be known as a development destination too.

The Academy of Hockey will combine state-of-the-art facilities with expert instruction for players and coaches at all levels. They hope to work with as many local organizations as possible to help the upcoming talent grow with a mix of on and off ice programming. As the Buffalo Junior Sabres Youth Organization will call HC home, it will be expanding from one team to seven across multiple age groups to give hockey an even brighter future in Western New York.

"It's going to be a really special place across the street, or frankly, connected to this building. The energy and anticipation is unbelievably positive, not only for hockey but for Buffalo, Canalside, Western New York and the region in total," Koelmel said. The majority of the HARBORCENTER project will be open in the fall of 2014 with the hotel to follow in the spring of 2015.

## **HarborCenter announces plans for Academy of Hockey**

By Mark Scott

WBFO

October 22, 2013

An Academy of Hockey is one of the programs that will be housed at the new HarborCenter in downtown Buffalo. HarborCenter managers say they will also expand the Buffalo Junior Sabres.

HarborCenter, now under construction, will open next year at this time. It will house two ice rinks, eleven locker rooms, retail space, restaurant and parking ramp. A Marriott Hotel will open in Spring 2015.

Tuesday, HarborCenter officials unveiled how those ice rinks will be used. The Academy of Hockey will be run by former Sabres assistant coach and NHL player Kevyn Adams. HarborCenter President John Koelmel says the Academy will house a premier hockey training and development program.

“Hockey is obviously at the core of everything we’re doing at HarborCenter,” Koelmel said. “On its surface, HarborCenter will be a world-class hockey and entertainment destination with amenities that aren’t found in a hockey complex anywhere in the country. However, the lifeblood of the complex will be an environment built to attract, foster and showcase hockey talent at all levels. Our goal is to make HarborCenter an ideal venue for hockey at all levels to converge and allow for the game to grow in a way we haven’t seen before.”

The Buffalo Junior Sabres will also expand from just one to seven age levels and will continue to be overseen by former Sabres players Larry Playfair and Michael Peca.

## **Sabres Pegula brings back Adams**

By Paul Hamilton

WGR 550

October 22, 2013

Buffalo, NY (WGR 550) -- Many were upset when Western New York native Kevyn Adams was fired by Ron Rolston. It was not a move Terry Pegula liked, but he stayed out of it.

What Pegula did do was stay in touch with Adams and now he's back.

Adams has been named Vice President and Director of the HARBORCENTER Academy of Hockey. He will partner with the VP and Director of Hockey for the facility Nik Fattey.

Of course it's never fun when you're let go, especially when you think you have a good relationship with the head coach. Adams said, "I'm a big believer in things do happen for a reason. You have to put yourself out there and the last 17 years of my life have been go here, go there and do whatever you have to do to succeed at the NHL level and I've loved every minute of it, but when this opportunity presented itself, the timing was right, I felt very comfortable with the challenge and look forward to this opportunity."

Once the summer hit Adams wasn't sure if he wanted to stay in the coaching profession. He had numerous conversations with Pegula trying to adjust his life goals. Adams said, "I spent a lot of time thinking about that exact question. I took a deep breath, I've gone back to school where I'm getting my MBA. I contemplated coaching, I had a couple of good opportunities, but the more I talked to Terry and Kim, John Koelmel, the more I understood what's trying to happen here at the HARBORCENTER, the more I sat back and realized I'm from here, my family's happy. I've moved a lot, I got traded five times so this was the right move." In his career Adams played in Toronto, Columbus, Florida, Carolina, Phoenix and Chicago.

One of the things Adams is working on now is hiring fulltime coaches to be on staff to work both in the facility and be out with the minor hockey associations across Western New York. Adams said, "I'm going to look at who's tied in with the Western New York community, where are kids playing, maybe college hockey is looking to go to another level of coaching. There's plenty of guys who live in town who have a lot of hockey experience professionally. So I want to look at the whole big picture and then start to put a staff together." Adams added, "I want this staff to be the guys that are elite, experts and we're not sending them out to the community or having people come here that they're just getting average coaching."

Now that Adams is in this position he has developed a vision, "We are going to combine the world class facilities of the HARBORCENTER with expert teaching,

coaching and instruction to get players locally and from around the world to come to Buffalo and develop and learn the game of hockey.” Adams has very high expectations moving forward, “We want to be known as a developmental destination as premiere as you can find.”

Adams isn’t all about the hockey season either. He feels the off season is just as or maybe even more important, “The development of a hockey player is extremely important in the off season. We will be targeting the elite player that really is trying to take their game to the next level. My task will be to identify world class coaches and experts, bring them to Buffalo, bring them to HARBORCENTER and share their knowledge and expertise with these players.”

Former Sabres Larry Playfair and Michael Peca currently run the Buffalo Junior Sabres., but they’re adding to it. Both will oversee youth partnership and expansion of the Buffalo Junior Sabres Youth Organization encompassing several youth hockey age groups.

HARBORCENTER President John Koelmel declared the facility open for business with the launch of their new web site.