



Buffalo Sabres

Daily Press Clips

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Sabres-Rangers Preview

By Jordan Garretson

Associated Press

October 30, 2013

Having matched their worst-ever start, the Buffalo Sabres hope Matt Moulson can provide a spark.

If his Buffalo debut was any indication, he should be able to help - provided he isn't traded again.

Moulson and the Sabres will face a New York Rangers club looking for its first home victory Thursday night.

The Sabres (2-11-1) come off a 4-3 home defeat to Dallas on Monday as they were unable to knock off Lindy Ruff, their winningest coach, after firing him in February.

Moulson's debut provided a bright spot, with the forward scoring two goals after being acquired from the Islanders on Sunday in exchange for Thomas Vanek and a pair of draft picks. It's unclear how Moulson fits into Buffalo's plans past this season as his contract expires after 2013-14.

For now, however, he appeared to fit in nicely on the team's top line with Cody Hodgson and Tyler Ennis.

"I'm just going to take it day by day," said Moulson, who has six goals in his last five games. "If it's for however long, a long period of time, a short period of time or whatever they have planned, I'm going to play and compete, play my game and try to help this team get wins."

Buffalo's early game woes continued Monday as the club entered the second period down 3-1, though the Sabres scored twice in the second 20 minutes. They've been outscored 19-2 in the first period, compared to 21-20 in the second and third.

The Rangers (4-7-0) made their long-awaited home debut Monday - a result of ongoing renovations at Madison Square Garden - and lost 2-0 to Montreal. They sandwiched two road wins around that contest, the most recent a 3-2 victory over the Islanders on Tuesday.

"It feels good for everyone," said forward Benoit Pouliot, whose winning goal was his second goal in three games. "After last night's loss we came in here ready to play."

New York's two other scores came from Chris Kreider and Ryan McDonagh on power plays. The club had been 1 for 15 on power plays over their previous five games.

"We've worked a lot on our power play, talked a lot about it, and when you execute on something you've talked about and focused on specifically I think it's that much more rewarding," Kreider told the team's official website.

More opportunities could be available against the Sabres, who have allowed five goals on 24 power-play chances over the last seven contests.

Buffalo has scored one goal on 20 power-play chances away from home.

Both teams are among the lowest-scoring in the league, with New York totaling 18 goals and Buffalo 23.

Center Derek Stepan, who has seven points to trail Brad Richards (nine) for the team lead, has two goals and two assists in his last three meetings with the Sabres.

New York has won five of the last seven matchups.

Patient Pysyk performing as top pair defenseman for Sabres

By John Vogl

Buffalo News

October 31, 2013

The Sabres have three rookies playing defense. Nikita Zadorov gets attention for being an aggressive hitter who's not afraid to take chances. Rasmus Ristolainen generates looks for being a smooth big man drafted eighth overall.

Then there's Mark Pysyk.

"He's the one who's ready," Buffalo blue-liner Henrik Tallinder said Wednesday.

Indeed, while this year's first-round picks have created a buzz, Pysyk has quietly settled in as possibly Buffalo's best defender. He's near the top in several team and league categories as the Sabres visit the Rangers tonight in New York.

The 21-year-old has been playing top-pair minutes all season. Pysyk averages 20 minutes, 20 seconds of ice time per game, trailing only defense partner Christian Ehrhoff (24:44) and fellow blue-liner Tyler Myers (21:33) on the Sabres. More impressively, Pysyk is third on the NHL's rookie list behind Nashville's Seth Jones (24:42) and Winnipeg's Jacob Trouba (21:15).

"And he's really consistent with it, which is the toughest thing to do for a young player," Ehrhoff said after practice in First Niagara Center. "It's impressive."

Pysyk has been victimized for only four of the opponents' 41 goals this season, a big reason why he's tied for the team lead in plus/minus with Ehrhoff and newcomer Matt Moulson. They're plus-1, the only three guys on the team with a positive rating.

Pysyk is fifth on the Sabres in Corsi rating, which tracks how many shots are directed at the opposing goalie versus how many a player's own goalie faces whenever that player is on the ice. Though he's at minus-3.78, it's much better than the rating of Myers (minus-16.09), Mike Weber (minus-26.16) and Ristolainen (minus-29.76, worst on the team).

"You want to play the most you can," Pysyk said. "You've got to earn it, and hopefully I can continue to play these minutes."

He's not taking anything for granted. Pysyk, drafted 23rd overall in 2010, struggled in Rochester early last year during his first pro season. He continually improved and played 16 games for the Sabres after the lockout ended. He went back to the Amerks for their short playoff series, but he has no desire to leave the NHL again.

“It’s a fun game, obviously, a fun lifestyle, a fun career,” Pysyk said. “Playing in the NHL is a dream of everybody, and you want to make sure that what you did today makes sure you’re going to be here tomorrow.

“The nature of the game and the business is it could be gone any second. Obviously, a lot of things can happen pretty quickly, so you’ve got to enjoy every game.”

Pysyk excels by playing a calm, poised game. His father, Terry, always remained levelheaded while making decisions, and Pysyk picked up the trait.

“He’s patient as a defenseman,” Tallinder said. “Usually, when you’re young you try to force things, try to go where the puck is. He has a lot of poise, trying to get in the right position where the play comes to him. That’s really remarkable for Mark at his age.”

“It’s part of his character,” said Ehrhoff, who described his partner as easygoing. “He doesn’t get too worried, and that helps him on the ice.”

The next step is to help the team get some victories. The Sabres have the worst record in the NHL at 2-11-1 as they visit the 4-7 Rangers.

“We’ve got to start winning here, have a little more team success,” Pysyk said. “It’s fun to be in the NHL, but it’s going to be a lot more fun once we start winning.”

...

Based on practice, Zadorov is in line to be the healthy scratch among defensemen tonight. The three pairs were Pysyk and Ehrhoff, Tallinder and Myers, and Ristolainen with Jamie McBain. Zadorov skated with suspended forward John Scott.

Scott, though not playing, will be busy in New York. He has a hearing with NHL disciplinarian Brendan Shanahan to discuss last week’s head shot on Boston’s Loui Eriksson. Scott has already sat three games, while Eriksson has yet to return to the Bruins because of a concussion.

...

The Sabres and their fans will miss the farewell tour of one of the top scorers in NHL history.

Teemu Selanne needed oral surgery after taking a high-stick in the mouth Tuesday night, and Anaheim said the forward will miss two weeks. The Sabres host the Ducks on Saturday and visit Anaheim on Nov. 8.

The 43-year-old announced over the summer he was coming back for a final season, his 22nd in the NHL. Selanne has been a star since Day One, bursting into the league with 76 goals in his rookie year of 1992-93 – a goal total that tied Buffalo's Alexander Mogilny for tops in the league that year. Selanne has 678 goals (which ranks 11th all time) and 1,437 points in 1,398 games with Winnipeg, Anaheim, San Jose and Colorado.

Rangers get homestand started against Sabres

By Tal Pinchevsky

NHL.com

October 30, 2013

SABRES (2-11-1) at RANGERS (4-7-0)

TV: NHLN-CA, MSG, MSG-B, BELL TV

Last 10: Buffalo 2-8-0; New York 4-6-0

Season series: This is the first of three meetings in this in-state rivalry. The Buffalo Sabres took two of three games against the New York Rangers last season, although four of the past 11 contests between these clubs have gone to extra time.

Big story: New York opens a four-game homestand after playing 10 of its first 11 on the road while Buffalo closes out October in the thick of a stretch that sees them play six of eight on the road. Both clubs have struggled with inconsistency and scoring. New York has won two of its past three games but ranks 29th in the NHL with 1.64 goals per game. The only team scoring fewer goals per game is Buffalo (1.57).

Team Scope:

Sabres: The biggest news for Buffalo took place off the ice this week, as co-captain Thomas Vanek was dealt to the New York Islanders for wing Matt Moulson and two draft picks. Moulson registered three consecutive 30-goal seasons with the Islanders and made his Sabres debut Monday against the Dallas Stars. It didn't take long for the newest Sabre to make his mark, as Moulson scored 3:26 into the contest, tying the game 1-1 just 27 seconds after Vernon Fiddler opened the scoring.

Dallas scored the next three goals before the Sabres staged a comeback late in the second, with Moulson earning his second goal of the night with 2:43 remaining in the period. Despite outshooting the Stars 9-5 in the third, Buffalo was unable to earn the equalizer and skated away with a 4-3 loss.

"That was the most nervous I've been for a game since probably my first game I played in the NHL," Moulson said. "I had butterflies in the stomach and [the first goal] kind of settled me down out there."

Rangers: New York couldn't get home fast enough after opening the season with a 3-6-0 month-long road trip necessitated by the final stages of Madison Square Garden's \$1-billion facelift. After dropping their season opener 2-0 against the Montreal Canadiens on Monday, the Rangers came back the following night when they visited the Islanders and their new arrival in Vanek.

Chris Kreider opened the scoring in the first before the Islanders scored consecutive goals in the second to take a 2-1 lead. Despite being outshot in the third and mustering just five shots in the period, the Rangers stormed back, tying the game on Ryan McDonagh's power-play goal before Benoit Pouliot earned the game-winner off a quick wrist shot in the slot with 6:14 remaining.

"He's a big body so I tried to get in behind him and he made a good play," said Carl Hagelin, who assisted on the game-winner in his first game of the season. "I saw him wide open, pretty easy pass to make and he buried it."

Who's hot: Moulson has seven goals in his past seven games with the Sabres and Islanders. Cody Hodgson has three goal and four points in his past five games. ... New York's goaltenders, Henrik Lundqvist and Cam Talbot, have allowed 12 goals in the past six games. Pouliot has two goals and three points in his past three games.

Injury report: Corey Tropp (jaw) and Mike Weber (lower body) are out for Buffalo while forwards John Scott and Patrick Kaleta are both serving suspensions. ... Ryan Callahan (thumb) and Rick Nash (head) are out for the Rangers while Dominic Moore (upper body) is questionable.

Sabres' Kaleta gets nose job during 10-game ban

Toronto Sun

October 30, 2013

Patrick Kaleta put his league-enforced time off to good use.

The Buffalo Sabres forward, who is serving a 10-game suspension for an illegal hit on Columbus Blue Jackets defenceman Jack Johnson, decided to get a nose job done.

“I think they straightened it out for me,” Kaleta said Wednesday. “My down break left turned into a little fade now.”

After years of sticking his nose into other players' business on the ice, Kaleta needed to get some work done to fix things up sooner or later. The tipping point came when his nose was further damaged in a fight with Jared Boll of the Blue Jackets shortly after he drilled Johnson.

“I'm breathing great now, that's all that matters,” Kaleta said. “Even if it was during games, I would've found a day to have it and then maybe a day to recoup and I would've been back at it.”

Kaleta has played just five games this season, with no points and one major penalty on his ledger.

Sabres' Steve Ott will keep playing fierce style that helped make him captain

By Bill Hoppe

Olean Times Herald

October 31, 2013

BUFFALO – Steve Ott, the high-octane, fun-loving and helmet-licking agitator, won't alter his style now that he's the Sabres' captain.

"I want to play a fine line edge of the game," Ott said Wednesday after the Sabres prepared for tonight's road tilt against the New York Rangers. "But I also can't be a deterrent to my teammates, no difference if I was a captain or was not a captain."

In Monday's 4-3 loss to Dallas, his first game as the Sabres' lone captain, Ott slashed Sergei Gonchar, then earned an unsportsmanlike conduction penalty. The Stars scored on the ensuing power play.

"I wasn't happy with getting an extra penalty and stuff," said Ott, who noted the infraction cost his team. "But you know what? That's going to happen."

Sabres coach Ron Rolston barely let a reporter finish asking a question Wednesday about the gritty winger's style.

"He's got to play his game, but obviously within the realm of the lines and discipline and things like that," Rolston said inside the First Niagara Center. "Don't want to take his game away from him, though."

That game's fierce and, at times, even a bit odd. Ott blew a kiss to Dion Phaneuf and tried to lick Jeff Halpern's helmet last season.

"I think riding on the edge and keeping guys honest on a nightly basis, it's no different than Patty Kaleta or some other guys, even offensively," Ott said. "You have to respect their talent and what they do throughout the game."

Sabres winger Drew Stafford added: "He's a high-energy type of player. He speaks his mind a lot. He's very loud. So he brings a lot to the table."

Zemgus Girgensons called Ott a "hardworking player," something "a captain should be."

"He's leading us on and off the ice," the rookie winger said. "So he's a great example for every single guy in the room."

Rolston named Ott and Thomas Vanek co-captains of the rebuilding club earlier this month, with Ott serving on the road and Vanek at home. The coach gave Ott

the captaincy after the hapless Sabres traded Vanek to the New York Islanders on Sunday.

Did Rolston think about naming another co-captain with Ott?

“No, not right now,” he said. “We’re just going to see how things play out and go from there.”

Ott had never worn the ‘C’ in junior or professional hockey prior to this year, although he was an assistant captain for six NHL seasons, he said, five of them in Dallas.

“I don’t think I’m learning very much,” Ott said about his new duty. “I think it’s already instilled in you for a long time.”

The 31-year-old Ott, one of only five Sabres over 30, said he doesn’t feel any extra pressure, calling it “a tremendous honor to wear it on your jersey for the boys.”

“I’ve been playing the same way and doing the same thing in the dressing room,” he said. “Those things aren’t going to change. We all lead in our own way in the dressing room. Every guy in here was probably a leader growing up, if not a captain at one point in their career. It’s pretty evident.

“A lot of guys speak up here. The room’s an open concept in here with all these young guys, whereas some teams I’m sure young guys don’t speak. We need all the boys.”

Ott said “time will tell” what kind of captain he becomes.

“I want to play a hard style that guys, accountability-wise, know that if you’re going, they better be going as well,” he said.

Ott has finally gotten going offensively, scoring twice in the last three games, his first goals this season. Having scored 98 times in 628 NHL contests, Ott wasn’t worried about his offense.

“I just want to make sure my game is (shorn) up, more or less,” he said. “The goals and stuff ... you get your points off hard work and playing the game the right way. I’m a big believer if you play the game the right way, you’ll get your chances.”

He added: “(Goals have) come my whole life. It’s not going to stop 30 years into hockey.”

Notes: Sabres tough guy John Scott has his in-person hearing today in New York for last Wednesday’s head shot on Boston’s Loui Eriksson. Scott has already sat three games for his undetermined suspension. ... The Sabres have hired former

player and Rochester coach Randy Cunneyworth as a scout, according to CBC's Elliott Friedman. ... Anaheim star Teemu Selanne, who's playing his 23rd and final NHL season, won't make his last Buffalo appearance Saturday. The 43-year-old lost four teeth from a high stick Tuesday and is out two weeks after undergoing surgery.

Sabres' Patrick Kaleta just has 'little fade' following nose surgery, mum on why he didn't take suspension appeal further

By Bill Hoppe

Olean Times Herald

October 30, 2013

BUFFALO – Sabres agitator Patrick Kaleta said his battle-scarred nose, which “had a bunch of stuff going on with it,” has a different look following his recent surgery.

“I think they straightened it out for me,” Kaleta said this morning inside the First Niagara Center. “My down break left turned into a little fade now.”

Kaleta said his Oct. 10 fight with Columbus' Jared Boll, seconds after he hit Jack Johnson in the head, was the “last straw” for the nose.

“I'm breathing great now, that's all that matters,” said Kaleta, who was suspended 10 games for the hit.

The 27-year-old winger had to undergo surgery.

“Even if it was during games, I would've found a day to have it and then maybe a day to recoup and I would've been back at it,” Kaleta said.

Kaleta took off his full face shield off this week. He's served nine games and can return Saturday when the Sabres host Anaheim.

NHL commissioner Gary Bettman rejected Kaleta's suspension appeal last week.

Why didn't he take his case to a neutral arbitrator?

“We've had conversations with my agent and the PA,” Kaleta said. “My job now is to come back and be a positive influence for the team.”

Sabres Ennis needs to be a setup guy

By Paul Hamilton

WGR 550

October 30, 2013

Buffalo, NY (WGR 550) -- Part of the reason the Sabres have had trouble winning is they haven't been getting much if anything out of veteran players they're counting on.

Christian Ehrhoff seems like his "Hope tank" is on empty, Steve Ott is finally starting to get on the scoreboard and then we get to Tyler Ennis. Coming into the Stars game he had one goal and no assists in 13 games played.

Ennis was moved to the right wing, a position he's hardly ever played with Cody Hodgson and newly acquired Matt Moulson and their was immediate chemistry.

Just 3.5 minutes in Ennis came streaking down the wing and found Moulson coming down the slot. Just like that, he had his first assist of the season. He also set up another later on and he said there was immediate chemistry, "It felt good, we're offensive guys and we kind of think the same way. I was really just trying to get Matty the puck around the net because he's a multiple 30 goal scorer and a really smart guy and talented player."

Dating back to last season Ennis had gone 15 games without an assist. That just can't happen with a player that has skill. He said, "I like to pass and I'm excited about the opportunity to play with really offensive minded guys, guys that can score. Moulson is a perfect example of that and I just can't wait to get him the puck, but yes, it was a frustrating streak there and I'm determined to make this line work.

One of the biggest reason the Sabres have only won two games is they never have the puck. That changed for the Hodgson line against Dallas and it resulted in two goals. According to Ennis, it just goes to show that they can be successful offensively if they work to keep the puck and work to get it back, "We had the puck a lot, we didn't play much 'D' zone, there was a lot of rush and offensive zone time, so we've got to carry that through to New York."

I've seen Ennis play left wing and center in Buffalo, but never right wing. It's a brand new experience for him, "In my life, about four games. Sometimes I catch myself skating back towards the left side in the 'D' zone instinctively, so I've got to get used to that, but I try to get the puck into Cody's hands and Matt's hands and will continue to get used to it."

Sometimes a left handed shot on the wall has trouble on the opposite wing. Ennis said, "I haven't run into too many problems, I'm actually enjoying it a little bit. I think when I peel it off the wall, I peel it off on my forehand. Sometimes when I'm on the other side I have to take it on and carry it on my backhand."

Ron Rolston ran about a 45 minute practice and he was stressing little details to the players. He was rather animate with Mikhail Grigorenko a few times. Rolston knows teams play the way they practice, "Especially with the younger players especially, being able to come and bring the same thing." I asked Rolston if he's seeing that and his answer was, "Better. There were certainly some guys who weren't very good today, that's for sure."

The Sabres are at Madison Square Garden on Thursday as the Rangers play just their second home game.

Sabres: Tanking is wise, but wrong

By Mike Schopp

WGR 550

October 30, 2013

Everybody knows the score now.

Thomas Vanek was traded and the guy he was traded for might be traded which means almost anyone can be traded. It's draft picks the Sabres want, draft picks and young assets. Having never won the Stanley Cup in 43 years of doing it differently, this team is tanking and the train has left the station.

Oh, tanking won't be their word for it. They can't call it tanking. They'll call it rebuilding, a gentler term with connotations less ugly.

Maybe we'll get to a point in sports where the word tanking is used by the teams themselves. After all, it is getting more popular.

Teams are more willing lately to admit it when they're backing up for higher draft picks. They're not as sanctimonious as they used to be; instead, general managers use words like "suffering" to lay out for fans how they see their teams' futures. For years I've said that the last place the Bills should want to finish is in the middle. Now you have general managers in pro sports saying things like, "the last place you want to be is in the middle," as an NBA GM said in ESPN: The Magazine's Nov. 11 issue (albeit anonymously).

Right is right.

Tanking is a big topic right now in the NBA. The Philadelphia 76ers and Phoenix Suns are two teams considered to be making an effort to be the worst they can be. Maybe Orlando too, and perhaps others. You have the Houston Astros in baseball, the Jaguars and Browns in football. And add to the list the Buffalo Sabres.

I support the Sabres' strategy. The Vanek trade affirmed to fans what for others was already clear, the plan to tank. The Sabres in the arena might as well go ahead and play during the action that shrill beeping sound trucks make when they're in reverse. We can all see it.

Tanking doesn't always work, but sometimes it does, and when you decide to leave your team in the hands of a GM that has tried all other avenues to reach the top, all for him being dead-ends, the least you can ask is that he try something different. This is different.

There is another question worth considering here: Is tanking morally wrong? (I'm using morally in strictly a sports sense here.)

I believe it is.

I don't believe a professional sports team, in competition that the public treats as sacred, should ever be compelled to lose on purpose. It's just wrong. The great author Malcolm Gladwell addressed this in a 2009 ESPN.com chat: "I think, for example, that the idea of ranking draft picks in reverse order of finish -- as much as it sounds "fair" -- does untold damage to the game. You simply cannot have a system that rewards anyone, ever, for losing."

Gladwell proposed expanding the draft lottery that hockey and basketball use for non-playoff teams to all teams. Randomize the draft order every year, or almost every year. He writes: "First of all, the principal engine of parity in the modern era is the salary cap, not the draft. And in any case, if the reverse-order draft is such a great leveler, then why are the same teams at the bottom of both the NFL and NBA year after year? The current system perpetuates the myth that access to top picks is the primary determinant of competitiveness in pro sports, and that's simply not true. Success is a function of the quality of the organization."

True true.

This Sabres season -- and perhaps others to come -- presents a challenging exercise for fans. Expectations are being steeply lowered. It won't be a season of comparing the Sabres with the good teams and analyzing why they're not as good. It won't be one of checking out the standings all the time to see how many points out they are with how many games in hand.

Rather, it'll be one of relaxation. Fans will go the arena wondering if tonight's the night they'll see a win. And late in games where wins are possible, anticipation and energy in the building will grow and accelerate. We'll see some young Sabres players improve, and that will be fun too. We'll chill out and talk about the team in front of us with our friends, almost like a baseball crowd would, less intensely engaged with the game and its outcome but no less interested in the team or the sport.

I know it's different. But it's not all bad.

SCOTT FACES HEARING WITH NHL TOMORROW

By Chris Ryndak

Sabres.com

October 30, 2013

The NHL is cracking down on hits to the head and Sabres forward John Scott will find out first-hand how severely he will be penalized for a hit he put on Boston's Loui Eriksson on Oct. 23.

Scott faces a hearing with the NHL Department of Player Safety in New York City on Thursday. The in-person hearing allows for the League to suspend Scott for at least five games. He's already sat out three games.

Since the start of the season, eight players, excluding Scott, have been suspended by the League for a combined 35 games. Four of those suspensions are a result of illegal hits to the head and total 18 games, including a 10-game suspension to the Sabres' Patrick Kaleta for hitting Blue Jackets defenseman Jack Johnson on Oct. 10.

Kaleta has served nine games of the suspension so far. He will miss his 10th game on Thursday when the Sabres take on the New York Rangers at Madison Square Garden at 7 p.m.

"The emphasis right now across all athletics is just the concussion part of things, so that's been a major focus – any contact to the head, and that comes from the NFL," Sabres coach Ron Rolston said after practice at First Niagara Center. "The NHL now has put a huge focus on that. It's kind of been the major topic right now so when it is an emphasis, you'll see a lot of those calls. They're trying to get rid of those and also, obviously, the hits from behind along the boards."

Rolston said that a lot of new systems that have been implemented by teams have led to the increased number of hits that players could be suspended or fined for making. Youth hockey programs are beginning to implement additional penalties for hits to the head and Rolston sees the NHL eventually following suit.

"I think it'll happen more at our level, too is things get stricter, he said. "And we've already see how many guys suspended early on in this season, and the number of games players are missing. Same with the visor now – all the players have to have visors that are coming into the League, so that's going to change things.

"You hope that over the course of whatever it is, five, 10 years that you're going to see some of those changes really affect the game in a positive way."

He also said rule changes made after the lockout that canceled the 2004-05 season brought attention to obstruction, but those penalties aren't called as much anymore.

"Probably right after the last lockout, the emphasis was a lot on what obstruction, hooking, holding and now that's back in the game," he said. "You watch today's game, it's completely different from that emphasis coming out of that lockout. So it

really becomes what is emphasized and then at that point you see a lot of calls from that emphasis.”

The Sabres are currently fourth in the League in hits with 372. Forward Cody McCormick plays a physical game and likes to see that some of the team’s younger players aren’t afraid to throw the body around either.

“For me, every shift I want to play physical, I want to finish all my hits and just have the other team looking over their shoulder, I guess,” he said. “You see it with the young guys, they’re finishing their hits. They don’t care who they’re playing. They’re finishing their hits on their best players and that’s the best things for us.”

One of those young players, 18-year-old rookie Nikita Zadorov, has been a physical presence for the Sabres. He has 17 hits in five games. Rolston cited some of Zadorov’s play as an example of how players, particularly defensemen, can still make open ice hits without crossing the line.

“I think in Florida there, Zadorov had a couple that were out in the middle of the ice, taking the rush. Again, I think a lot of the system stuff has caused a lot of situations like that,” he said.

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9 Steve Ott – 82 Marcus Foligno – 23 Ville Leino
28 Zemgus Girgensons – 25 Mikhail Grigorenko – 65 Brian Flynn
22 Johan Larsson – 8 Cody McCormick – 21 Drew Stafford
78 Corey Tropp – 36 Patrick Kaleta

10 Christian Ehrhoff – 3 Mark Pysyk
20 Henrik Tallinder – 57 Tyler Myers
4 Jamie McBain – 55 Rasmus Ristolainen
61 Nikita Zadorov – 32 John Scott .

30 Ryan Miller
1 Jhonas Enroth

Power Play

First Unit
Moulson – Hodgson – Ennis
McBain – Ehrhoff

Second Unit
Leino/Grigorenko – Ott – Foligno
Myers – Pysyk/Ristolainen

Sabres' Ted Black talks hockey, HARBORcenter, in Hamburg

By Jessie Owen

Hamburg Sun

October 31, 2013

The Hamburg Chamber of Commerce luncheon held at the Armor Inn Saloon on Oct. 24 was highlighted by a visit from Buffalo Sabres President Ted Black, who spoke about the state of the Sabres franchise and gave an update about Buffalo's HARBORcenter.

Black said that the best part of his job is meeting Sabres fans and hearing their stories. "I don't know how things will end up on the ice, but I am really happy to be here," he said.

The relatively new Buffalo resident said that he enjoys the tight-knit community in which he lives and said, "Buffalo is not a small town. It's a big living room."

Black encouraged the audience to do more to spread the word about Buffalo's attractions. "We don't tell the world enough, what a great place this is," he said. "We don't brag about ourselves enough. I see a new Buffalo rising."

He spoke about the new HARBORcenter, a mixed-use hockey and entertainment facility proposed to be completed next fall. This structure will house National Hockey League ice rinks, a hotel, a restaurant, retail space and parking.

"This is the largest privately financed project in Buffalo history," he said. "Think about that. It's amazing." Black also congratulated local business Hamburg Overhead Door for its upcoming work on the HARBORcenter.

He pointed out that Terry Pegula has owned the Sabres franchise for less than the equivalent of two full sports seasons and asked Sabres fans to be patient with the evolution of their hometown team. "You yearn for a change in the sports world and in the business world," he said.

"We said, 'We can do this,' and we took a huge swing and we missed. We thought we could pay our way over the top," he added.

Black said that the franchise has regrouped and is now in the process of building the draft. He added that, while none of the Sabres' plans are sure-fire, "if you want to find success, you have to build through the draft."

Black thanked the Sabres' fans for their dedication and loyalty. "We became a joke in the league," he said. "We were a bottom-feeding team and we have pulled out of that. We have to make trades and we have to peel off good players."

Black said that his goal is to turn the Buffalo Sabres team around. “It’s always awkward when people ask if we’re trying to lose,” he said. “Of course we don’t want to lose; we want to win.

“We all make mistakes and learn from it,” he added. “In business, in sports, in life – you don’t find success with somebody who’s dispassionate and disengaged.”

Black promised that he is fully committed to the Buffalo Sabres franchise and has a plan in place to get the team back on track. “We want to see progress,” he said. “We are not going to hide under a rock; we won’t let these setbacks keep us from what we want to do. We have a strong commitment, from the ownership on down.”

The president said that the team wants to be successful for its fans and local community. “We have an obligation not to give up,” he said. “I know there’s a light at the end of the tunnel. We appreciate the passion you have for us. We can’t do this without you. We can’t lose you and we’ll do everything we can to not disappoint you.”

Black remarked on the Buffalo community’s love of hockey. “The Buffalo market is different than Pittsburgh’s,” he said, alluding to his former affiliation. “Hockey is so much a part of the fabric of this community. There’s really no off season and I love that.”

An audience member asked if the Buffalo Sabres were planning a tribute for the first visit from former Sabres head coach Lindy Ruff, who is now the head coach for the Dallas Stars.

While Black said that the Sabres did not do tributes for former players such as Chris Drury and Daniel Brière, he said, “If you are going to make an exception for someone, it’s Lindy. If you are going to call someone Mr. Sabre, it would be him.”

Black thanked the Hamburg Chamber of Commerce for inviting him to speak and added that he would like to return, at some point. “Meeting fans is my favorite part of my job,” he reiterated. “People are very nice to us and to me. We are going to get there.”