



# **Buffalo Sabres**

**Daily Press Clips**

*October 8, 2013*

## **Lightning-Sabres Preview**

By Jeff Mezydlo

Associated Press

October 7, 2013

A lack of production has plagued the Buffalo Sabres during the worst three-game start in club history.

Eager to improve offensively, the Sabres try again for that elusive first victory Tuesday night against the visiting Tampa Bay Lightning.

After Buffalo (0-3-0) tied for 22nd with an average of 2.46 goals per game last season, it's been outscored 7-2 through the first week of 2013-14. Veteran Thomas Vanek and 19-year-old Zemgus Girgensons have scored for the Sabres, who hoped the early sledding wouldn't be this rough even with three teenagers and five rookies in the lineup.

The Sabres haven't gone this long without a win to start a season since beginning 0-5-0 with two ties in 1999-2000.

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Buffalo's two goals match the inaugural 1970-71 team for the fewest over the first three games. The Sabres opened with a 2-1 victory that season, but scored once while losing the next three.

Their 0-for-13 performance on the power play is the worst to open a season since the 1997-98 team went 0 for 16 through the first four.

Vanek scored in the third period of Saturday's 4-1 loss at Pittsburgh as the Sabres managed 21 shots, including 12 in the final 40 minutes.

"We didn't generate a lot," coach Ron Rolston said. "We just have to be a lot simpler than we are right now. We pass up opportunities when we do get them."

Ryan Miller has helped keep the Sabres competitive in the two games he's played, stopping 77 of 80 shots. Rolston hopes to have Miller in net after the former Vezina Trophy winner missed Saturday's loss with a lower-body injury.

Miller allowed three goals in splitting two starts last season at Tampa Bay (1-1-0), but has a 3.06 goals-against average while dropping his last two against the Lightning at home.

Buffalo outscored Tampa Bay 6-4 while winning two of three last season. Vanek has gone five straight without a goal against the Lightning, but has six assists during that span.

Tampa Bay went 0 for 5 on the power play and allowed two short-handed goals in a 3-1 loss at Boston on Thursday, but killed four of five penalties and converted its only chance with the man advantage in Saturday's 3-2 shootout win at Chicago.

The Lightning were outshot 12-0 in the first period and 39-16 for the game, but rallied from a 2-0 deficit with third-period goals from Martin St. Louis and Teddy Purcell. Valtteri Filppula added the shootout's lone score.

"I was looking for the police when we left the locker room because I thought we'd get arrested for stealing," coach Jon Cooper said. "We stole two points."

Steven Stamkos added two assists and Ben Bishop made 37 saves.

"A comeback win in this building says a lot about this team," said Bishop, who is expected to split time with Anders Lindback. "We know we have a lot to work on. We can play a lot better than that, but it's always good to get two points on the road."

Stamkos has five goals and five assists in his last 10 games versus Buffalo. St. Louis, however, has been held to one of each in his last five against the Sabres.

## **Miller's view: Confidence will cure Sabres' ills**

By John Vogl  
Buffalo News  
October 8, 2013

Ryan Miller has been able to observe the Sabres from ice level and watch them from afar. The unique combination helped the goaltender see the faults that have contributed to Buffalo's 0-3 start.

The Sabres have been a hesitant, on-their-heels group so far. Miller is certain that will change, though maybe not in time for tonight's home game against Tampa Bay.

"I think we're going to start making some quicker decisions," Miller said Monday in First Niagara Center. "We need a little bit of confidence. We have a good group of guys that can move the puck. I think we're just a little bit timid. We're waiting for something good to kind of happen, but I think we're putting ourselves in decent places.

"We need to control the puck a little more, and these guys have the skill to do it. They're going to start stepping up. It just takes a little bit of confidence, a little bit of time, and I think we can start seeing some improvements there. It's definitely something we can do."

Miller may get his third vantage point on the Sabres tonight. He started the first two games but was unable to dress Saturday in Pittsburgh because of a sore groin. He didn't practice with the team Monday but did get on the ice for a workout after the session ended.

He's apparently well enough to be in the lineup because emergency recall Matt Hackett left the ice in the middle of practice and packed his bag for Rochester. Miller likely will be the backup to Jhonas Enroth, but he was going to huddle with athletic trainer Tim Macre to see if starting tonight was a possibility.

"I was a little tight after the last game, and I just wanted to be cautious early in the season," Miller said. "I felt better than I kind of anticipated, so I'll see if I can make myself available. But no practice, and after a couple days off I'm not sure what the right course of action will be.

"I just want to make sure it's not going to be something that's going to turn into weeks. I thought it'd be a day or two, and it took about a day longer. It's just not something you want to creep into your body, your game, your mind-set. Get it out, get it done. You don't want groin stuff to pop up."

The Sabres don't want their losing streak to linger, either. Their best effort was a shutout loss to Ottawa, while they were outclassed by Detroit and Pittsburgh.

"I'm just worried about the process of winning right now," coach Ron Rolston said. "We have to get to that point before we worry about the rest. We've got to have a process of playing well period-to-period, and then the results will come. The results

are going to come with the process, but if the process isn't there, you're not going to have results."

The season debut of Marcus Foligno could help.

After missing the first three games with a shoulder injury, the big left winger is healthy and ready to create offense on a team that has scored just twice.

"This is a time to really establish myself and help out the team," Foligno said. "We need to get back on track here. We really can't let things slide. It's the first three games, I get that, but at the same time it was definitely tough to watch us lose.

"I know I can bring that presence where guys feel a little bit more comfortable just with the forecheck. We got pucks in, and there wasn't too much of an effort getting them back. There were times when the boys played great, but we just need that energy where you just keep going and going and going. It's what the fans like to see, and it wears on their defense."

The forecheck has been lacking because the Sabres rarely have the puck. When they get it, they usually give it back.

Rolston spent the first 15 minutes of practice running elementary passing drills.

"It's hockey school stuff, but we've got to get better with our hands," the coach said. "A portion of our problems, even in our zone, is just making a pass and catching a pass to get out of the zone. That's part of it, and that's why we worked on it."

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Center Cody Hodgson sat out practice with a lower-body injury. Rolston listed him as day-to-day but expects him to be in the lineup.

In order to have exactly four forward lines and four defense pairs, Rolston used left wing John Scott as a defenseman. The enforcer used to be a blue-liner, but Monday's move was only temporary.

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The Sabres announced the first two stops for their "Road Crew," with the team set to host parties in San Jose and Los Angeles next month.

The first event will be Nov. 4 in San Jose, while the festivities in L.A. will be Nov. 6. For a \$10 donation to the team's foundation, participants can mingle with Danny Gare, Rene Robert, Rob Ray and members of the broadcast crew, and get food and drink specials.

**Miller feeling better, wants to be cautious early in season; Hodgson misses practice, too**

By John Vogl

Buffalo News

October 7, 2013

The Sabres had officially concluded practice when Ryan Miller skated onto the ice. After stretching and testing his sore groin, the goaltender took shots from the stragglers who remained in First Niagara Center.

The session went better than Miller anticipated, but he's still not sure if he'll be ready to start Tuesday when the Sabres host Tampa Bay. Miller, who didn't dress for Saturday's loss in Pittsburgh, will talk today with athletic trainer Tim Macre before making a decision.

"I was a little tight after the last game, and I just wanted to be cautious early in the season," Miller told The News. "So far, so good. I felt better than I kind of anticipated, so I'll see if I can make myself available. But no practice today, and after a couple days off I'm not sure what the right course of action will be.

"I just want to make sure it's not going to be something that's going to turn into weeks. I thought it'd be a day or two, and it took about a day longer. It's just not something you want to creep into your body, your game, your mind-set. Get it out, get it done. You don't want groin stuff to pop up."

Cody Hodgson also sat out today. Coach Ron Rolston said the center is day-to-day with a lower-body injury, but Rolston expects Hodgson to be in the lineup Tuesday.

Marcus Foligno will return after missing the opening three games with a shoulder injury.

## **Lightning hope for strong finish to road trip**

NHL.com

October 7, 2013

LIGHTNING (1-1-0) at SABRES (0-3-0)

TV: NBCSN, TSN2

Season series: The Buffalo Sabres won two of their three games against the Tampa Bay Lightning last season. Thomas Vanek of the Sabres and Steven Stamkos of the Lightning each had three points in three games.

Big story: Playing their fourth game in seven days, will the Sabres be able to generate any offense? They have two goals in three games, and already have lost two one-goal games.

Team Scope:

Lightning: This will be the third stop on a three-game road trip before a seven-game homestand for the Lightning. The first two legs saw them play the reigning Eastern Conference champion Boston Bruins and the Stanley Cup champion Chicago Blackhawks. They've played well in both, with a 3-2 shootout win against the Blackhawks on Saturday after trailing 2-0 halfway through the third period. Ben Bishop had 39 saves in the win.

"We needed Ben Bishop to stand tall if we had any chance of coming back and he did," Lightning coach Jon Cooper told the team's website. "We got one goal and then we were opportunistic on our power play and we snuck out with a win."

Sabres: Despite excellent play from goalies Ryan Miller and Jhonas Enroth, it hasn't translated into wins for the Sabres. That was the case Saturday in a 4-1 loss to the Pittsburgh Penguins in which Enroth made 31 saves but got no offensive support.

"Limiting that team to as many chances as we did, I thought Jhonas played great, but overall, it's the same story," Cody Hodgson told the Sabres' website after the game. "We need to generate offense. One goal isn't enough."

Miller, who sat out Saturday with a lower-body injury, is questionable for the game Tuesday. He has stopped 77 of 80 shots in two games this season.

"Our goalies have stood on their heads all three games," defenseman Mike Weber said. "And it's unfortunate that we can't be better in front of them to limit some of their shots and some of their chances. It all comes down to us finding a way to get some offense going, generate some offense and bear down and score goals."

Who's hot: Stamkos had two assists in the Lightning's defeat of the Blackhawks on Saturday.

Injury report: Forward Ville Leino (fractured rib), and defenseman Henrik Tallinder (upper body) will be out for the Sabres, while Miller (lower body) is questionable. Marcus Foligno, Nikita Zadorov and Corey Tropp are on injured reserve. ... The Lightning will be without defenseman Brian Lee and Mattias Ohlund, both on IR while recovering from knee surgery.

## **Tampa Bay at Buffalo**

CBS Sports

October 7, 2013

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## **Team USA/Team Canada Olympic Goalie Power Rankings: Week 1**

By Allan Muir

Sports Illustrated

October 7, 2013

### Team USA

1. Ryan Miller, Buffalo Sabres: He's stopped 77 of the 80 shots he's faced in two games behind a porous Buffalo defense, reminding everyone how well he responds when facing waves of pressure, but he's now day-to-day with a lower-body injury.
2. Craig Anderson, Ottawa Senators: He bested Miller in Saturday's goaltending duel and boasts a .948 save percentage through two appearances, but the Sabres' keeper gets the nod at No. 1 based strictly on my eye test.
3. Jimmy Howard, Detroit Red Wings: Played well in his first two starts before being victimized by turnovers and general sloppiness in 4-1 loss to the Bruins. Looks like the No. 3 stopper he seems destined to be in Sochi.
4. Jonathan Quick, Los Angeles Kings: He was pulled from just his second start — ostensibly to spark a momentum shift — but Quick wasn't particularly sharp while allowing four goals on 27 shots against the Jets on Friday.
5. Tim Thomas, Florida Panthers: It'll take more than a couple of games to scrape off the rust that accumulated during his year-long sabbatical. He's been inconsistent through two starts, but his familiar competitiveness was in ample evidence. Despite being overlooked for a camp invite, he's in the mix.

### Team Canada

1. Marc-Andre Fleury, Pittsburgh Penguins: Renewed, refreshed and refocused after being rejected for a spot at Canada's summer camp, Fleury bolted out of the gate with a pair of great starts. He stopped 47 of 48 shots while anchoring the Pens' to over the Devils and Sabres.
2. Mike Smith, Phoenix Coyotes: He was better in a 4-1 loss to the Sharks on Saturday than he was in his 4-1 opening night win over the Rangers, but that might not be a good thing. Smith has always elevated his play while under heavy fire. He needs to prove he can be just as focused when the chances come less frequently, as they will behind a stout Canadian defense in Sochi.
3. Roberto Luongo, Vancouver Canucks: He played well enough behind a disengaged Vancouver squad in their opener, then rebounded nicely for a win at home against Edmonton. Luongo is a notoriously slow starter, so it'll be interesting to gauge his next few appearances.

4. Carey Price, Montreal Canadiens: Brutal in an opening night loss to the Leafs, much improved in a 22-save performance against the Flyers on Saturday. Tempering that excitement: it was the Flyers he beat.

5. Corey Crawford, Chicago Blackhawks: He has an .875 save percentage through his first two starts because he's simply not making the stops he needs to make. Clearly not the start he was looking for.

## **Buffalo Sabres Offense Leaves Lot to Be Desired**

By Michael Straw

Yahoo Sports

October 6, 2013

One of the biggest question marks surrounding the Buffalo Sabres enter this season centered on the offense and whether or not it would be able to score enough goals to win games.

People knew it would be an issue, but no one expected it to be this big of a problem.

They're sound enough at the back end to win some and Ryan Miller is guaranteed to play well enough to steal a handful, but if there is no one who can put the puck in the back of the net, the Sabres won't be winning a thing.

Through the first two games of the season, Buffalo has 54 shots and one goal while allowing 80 shots to be fired at its goaltender who has allowed only three by. When your goaltender gives you that solid of a performance in two games, you better win at least one, if not both, of those games.

There's only so much a goaltender can do. At some point, pucks have to find twine.

Against Ottawa on Oct. 4, Buffalo had opportunity after opportunity; open net after open net, but not one shot was able to find the back of the net. Even the team's top offensive player, Thomas Vanek, had nine shots - a few being of the high-quality scoring chance variety -- that night yet failed to score once.

"We played well, but we didn't get the job done offensively," said Vanek.

When looking for a place to point a lot of blame for Buffalo's anemic start to the season on offense, the power play would be a good place to start. Through the first two games, Buffalo is 0-11, and has struggled mightily to even put consistent pressure on opponents.

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The team has stressed getting the power play to improve from where it was last season where it ranked 29th out of 30. Instead of improving though, the power play, which is 0-for-11 through two games, seems to be just as bad, if not worse, as last season. It's like the team has regressed in an area where many didn't think was possible.

After the Ottawa game, head coach Ron Rolston wasn't pleased with his team's performance, and made sure people were away of his feelings.

"We don't have enough guys playing the right way right now early in the season," he said. "So we're back to... back to square one."

When you're a team as young as the Sabres are (second-youngest in the NHL), it's obvious that there are going to be some growing pains that accompany the youth. That's when the veterans on the team need to step up even more than they are originally expected to.

One of those veterans is forward Drew Stafford.

Through two games, Stafford has a grand total of two shots on the season which isn't going to help a team score goals when you don't put pucks on net. Stafford is a former thirty goal scorer, and the team needs him to get back to that level of hockey if they are going to right the ship before it's thrown too far off course.

Another player who has disappeared is Tyler Ennis. A play-making forward, Ennis is a player who needs to be productive in order to earn himself a new contract after this season. So far, he's been nowhere to be found in the offensive zone.

Maybe the Monstars stole Stafford and Ennis' talents in order to give hockey a try.

One would expect a level of frustration to accumulate as the team fails to find the back of the net, but Rolston and the players on the team don't sense that it's happening yet through the first couple games of what is a long season. It may be safe to assume, however, that if the offense struggles continue, frustration will set in much sooner than later.

With the way the goaltending and, for the most part, the defense has been, Buffalo is just a couple goals from talking about the successful start to the 2013-2014 season. Instead, it's a team looking for answers.

Buffalo's effort through two games against very good teams in Detroit and Ottawa has been good, and again, it's only two games into the year with, obviously, plenty of hockey still to be played, but it's already at a point where you have to sit and ask yourself just what needs to be done to get this offense rolling and see some production from the players.

## **Sabres Notebook: Goaltending not the issue**

By Mike Repertorio

New York Hockey Journal

October 7, 2013

After a season-opening, 2-1 loss to Detroit, Buffalo was looking forward to picking up their first win in front of their home crowd. After all, their goaltending was exceptional Wednesday, as Miller turned aside 32 Red Wing shots and their defense, although not perfect, was improved from last season.

On Friday, playing host to the Ottawa Senators, the Sabres had their chances. And Miller, again, put up an incredible performance. But it was a sloppy game by both teams.

Turnovers led to countless chances for each side to get a goal. And while Miller pushed every Senators attack away, so did Craig Anderson. It wasn't until the 1:35 mark of the third period that the first, and only, goal of the game was scored. Despite setting a career high in saves with 45, Miller found himself with another loss.

Two nights later, Buffalo found themselves in Pittsburgh, playing a "depleted" Penguins roster. With James Neal and Kris Letang out due to injury, Pittsburg had to "rely" on Sidney Crosby and Evgeni Malkin offensively.

And while the Penguins would score four (one empty net goal), the Sabres goaltending was still a strong suit. Jhonas Enroth made his first start of the season, which featured a plethora of highlight-reel saves. Unfortunately, the defense didn't make his night any easier and neither did the offense.

Again, Buffalo couldn't get anything going. When they did have the puck, their zone entry was weak and passing equally inefficient. Getting beat on their dump and chase attempts doomed Buffalo, who was only able to get one puck past Marc-Andre Fleury.

Overall though, after the first week of play, the Buffalo Sabres are 0-3. Offensively, they have only scored two goals and have gone 0-for-13 on the power play. And although they have been perfect on the penalty kill this season, they have to start getting pucks in the net if they are going to win. Defensively, things need to change as well.

Sabres goaltenders have saved 108 of 113 shots thus far. That is an average of nearly 38 shots per game. The 'D' needs to tighten up and make the opposition earn their shots.

This team, and I will say it again, can win this season. But to do so, they have to make it tougher for the opposition. The hits and blocks are there on the stat sheet, but Buffalo needs to send a message, wear the opposition down, make them earn every inch of ice, make them fight hard in every puck battle and don't make their goalie's night an easy one.

After the game, Ron Rolston was preaching playing a simpler game and just keeping at it. "They've got to keep working, everyone's got to keep working. ... It's your job," the coach said. "It's going to be hard, there's a lot of good hockey teams."

#### Week in Review

Wednesday October, 2 - at Detroit Red Wings

2-1 Loss

Goals: Zemgus Girgensons

Assists: Brian Flynn

Friday October, 4 - vs Ottawa Senators

1-0 Loss

Goals: None

Assists: None

Saturday October, 5 - at Pittsburgh Penguins

4-1 Loss

Goals: Thomas Vanek

Assists: Cody Hodgson

#### Weekly 3 Stars

1. Ryan Miller | G - two games, 77 saves, two goals against
2. Jhonas Enroth | G - one game, 31 saves, three goals against
3. Zemgus Girgensons | C - three games, one goal (first NHL goal), five hits, two blocked shots

#### The Week Ahead

Tuesday October, 8 - vs. Tampa Bay Lightning

Thursday October, 10 - vs. Columbus Blue Jackets

Saturday October, 12 - at Chicago Blackhawks

## **Youthful Sabres focusing on solving long list of problems**

By Bill Hoppe

Olean Times Herald

October 8, 2013

BUFFALO – This is a new era for the rebuilding Sabres, a struggling team featuring five rookies, three of them teenagers.

At one point during Monday's long practice, the Sabres, who've done little right while losing their first three games, went through a pass-heavy drill.

Simply dishing the puck can be an arduous task these days.

"We need to get better there," coach Ron Rolston said inside the First Niagara Center after the Sabres prepared for tonight's tilt against the Tampa Bay Lightning. "That's why we're doing them. It's hockey school stuff. But we need to get better with our hands."

Other than goaltending, the Sabres need to improve everywhere, especially in the goal-scoring department.

They have just two scores – that's .67 a game – an NHL low among teams that have played at least three games.

"Two goals is unacceptable," said Sabres winger Drew Stafford, who has only four shots on goal despite averaging 18:41 on the ice through three appearances.

It's still very early, but the Sabres could challenge their all-time low for goals in a full season – 190 by the wretched 2002-03 club – this year. Their power play is a league-worst zero of 13.

Yikes.

So six days into the season, the growing pains many believed the youthful Sabres would experience appear more severe than expected.

"That just comes with territory," Stafford said. "You look at some of the experience we do have, in some way it should balance it out. ... You got some teenagers in here that are playing with a pretty big load on their shoulders right now with people expecting them to step in just seamlessly."

"It's hard. It's going to be a process. There's going to be some growing pains. There's going to be some tough times."

Right now, however, Rolston's not fretting about earning that first win; he's worrying "about the process of winning."

“We have to get to that point before we worry about the rest,” Rolston said. “We’ve got to have a process of playing well period to period. The results are going to come with the process. But if the process isn’t there, you’re not going to have results.”

The lack of results hasn’t affected the dressing room, Stafford said.

In years past, he said, too many highs and lows accompanied the Sabres’ wins and losses. Now, they’re “just trying to keep an even keel.”

“It leaves a bad taste in your mouth starting the way we did,” Stafford said. “You have to take whatever positives you can out of the games and continue to build and continue to get better because as soon as you start to let some of that negativity creep in, it’s only going to bring you down.”

Rolston added: “I like where we’re at in the room, yeah. ... I’ve liked our younger guys so far, where they’re moving, and I like the vets’ attitude. It’s been real good so far.”

Sabres goalie Ryan Miller, who could return from a groin injury tonight, has seen a team performing a little timidly.

“It just comes with getting a little confidence,” Miller said. “With a young team sometimes you just kind of need to build toward that. I think that this group of guys, we build that confidence, we’ll be moving the puck, doing the things we need to do.

“I don’t doubt we’ll be playing the way we need to play. It’ll be a little bit of a process here, and we’re trying to keep the young guys in the right place mentally and also trying to go out there and take charge.”

So far, no one has taken charge. Stafford said the Sabres are “not quite there yet.” Once they start performing better in their own zone – “more communication, making sure everyone’s on the same page,” he said – they’ll generate more offense.

“We’ve been stuck in our own end against some pretty good teams,” Stafford said. “I don’t want to use that as an excuse just because we’re playing these teams that have some of the best players in the league, it goes for every night, every team we play against. We have to make sure that we’re solid with our support and communication and everything else will go from there.”

## **Sabres' Ryan Miller could play Tuesday; Marcus Foligno set to return**

By Bill Hoppe

Olean Times Herald

October 7, 2013

BUFFALO – Ryan Miller wants to act cautiously. The Sabres goalie doesn't want his mild groin injury dogging him all season.

"Three games into the season I didn't want to create a bigger issue out of it," Miller said today after taking some shots the ice. "(I'm) just trying to get myself to the point where I don't have to worry about the rest of the year instead of having something that keeps coming back. So I'm just going to try to be smart moving forward, so I can play the way I need to play."

Miller could play Tuesday when the Sabres host Tampa Bay.

"We're going to see," Sabres coach Ron Rolston said. "He's going to let us know where he's at. He's close. It's just how he's moving out there."

The 33-year-old Miller, who missed Saturday's 4-1 loss in Pittsburgh, didn't practice fully today. Instead, he took shots for around 15 minutes after most of his teammates had left the First Niagara Center ice.

"I'm good. I'll make myself available as soon as possible," Miller said. "We'll see how we want to handle things. I missed practice today and skating the last few days. So the best course of action is talking to Tim (Macre), our trainer, get a course of action planned out with the coach."

Miller said he "felt something kind tighten up on me early" in Friday's 1-0 loss to Ottawa.

"Then midway through the game it got a little tighter," said Miller, who made 45 saves that night. "I didn't want to take myself out of the game. I just wanted to keep playing. I didn't think it would be a big deal. After you kind of come off the adrenaline of playing and being on the ice and started cooling down it started feeling a lot tighter."

Backup goalie Matt Hackett appeared to be packed and ready to return to Rochester.

In other injury news, winger Marcus Foligno (muscle strain) will return Tuesday.

"I feel pretty good, back to normal in strength there," Foligno said. "So pretty excited."

Center Cody Hodgson (lower body) missed practice but should play against the Lightning. Rolston said he's day-to-day.

"Today was kind of a maintenance for him," Rolston said.

## **Sabres advice**

By Chris Parker

WGR 550

October 7, 2013

The Sabres are off to an 0-3 start. One was a widely entertaining 1-0 loss in the home opener to Ottawa. Sandwiching that game are two roadies in which the Sabres really didn't look like they belonged on the ice with their opponent. Maybe you could take some solace in the fact that despite being outplayed by a wide margin in Detroit, the Sabres were still very much in the game on the scoreboard. Saturday in Pittsburgh was a different story where a 4-1 loss was a truer indication of the separation between the Penguins and Sabres.

Here's what I'm looking at. Three games in and the Sabres have played what I believe will turn out to be three of the top teams in the Eastern Conference. Tough task to be sure. Of course you can point out that you should be able to compete with the best if you want to be the best blah blah blah, but c'mon, right?

We all know the Sabres are very much in a starting over mode. A team with three teenagers in the lineup probably should be overmatched against the top teams. This weeks home games against Tampa Bay and Columbus may offer an opportunity to make a more reasonable assessment of what the early part of the season may hold for the Sabres. Neither the Lightning nor the Blue Jackets are particularly strong teams. Losing and looking bad doing it in these games could tell you an awful lot about what kind of suffering Sabres fans will be doing this year. A couple of wins and at least we'll have something in our pockets prior to being fed to the wood chipper in Chicago Saturday.

Beyond that, who knows? One of the toughest things to gauge is which way young players will go as they feel their way through the infancy of NHL careers. Will they get better as they get more comfortable? You certainly hope so. They could just be overwhelmed and go the other way though, getting their confidence worn down.

Despite the struggles to score goals and, you know, win games, there are a few things to be encouraged about. Zemgus Girgensons looks like a keeper, strong on his skates and appearing confident, it's not hard to see why the Sabres wanted to start him on the wing. He's been a bull down low and working with Brian Flynn and Kevin Porter has been a part of the Sabres best line.

It hasn't been perfect by any means, but I still think Tyler Myers is still trending up. To me, it's all in how confidently he's moving around the ice. When he has struggled, especially last year, you see a player who either looks clumsy or stops trying to move in ways that will result in same. His skating, particularly when being pursued with the puck, looks better than ever. I'm quite confident that the rest of his game will fall in line.

Ryan Miller has been excellent so far. Watching him Friday night against Ottawa was a blast. Here's hoping whatever kept him from dressing in Pittsburgh really is minor.

Mark Pysyk looks smooth and Rasmus Ristoleinen shows some promise too. How much they grow and how fast will determine just how stable the back end of this team will be.

The concerns are many. 2 goals in 3 games is not good. Veterans like Erhoff, Stafford and Vanek will have to be better than they've been so far. Young veterans like Hodgson and Ennis have had no impact. Leino and Tallinder are already hurt.

Should be an interesting week.

## **Sabres Search for First Win Tuesday**

YNN

October 7, 2013

BUFFALO, N.Y. - The Sabres face the Lightning Tuesday night. Cody Hodgson did not practice Monday but is expected to play. It's uncertain who will be in goal.

Ryan Miller is day-to-day, he didn't face shots but did test his lower body injury after practice. Jhonas Enroth likely would start his second straight if Miller can't go.

Despite an 0-3 start with a very young hockey club, confidence remains high.

"Young guys, I mean I remember being 19, 20 years old walking in this locker room - it's tough not to be excited every day walking in here," defenseman Mike Weber said. "I'm 25 years old, I'm still excited to walk into an NHL rink every day. Guys are excited to be here, guys are excited for the challenge every single night. Again it's frustrating when things don't go our way and when we're not being able to put the puck in the net, but we are right there. We know we're close."

"I like where we're at in the room," head coach Ron Rolston said. "I think our guys, even our vets are in a good frame of mind. You go into those situations, we've got two rookie defensemen, two rookie forwards, and you're playing some pretty good players so there's going to be some growing pains there, but I've liked our younger guys so far where they're moving and I like our vets attitude, they've been real good."

The lineup should also get a boost as forward Marcus Foligno is ready to return. He missed the first three games with a muscle strain.

"I think the biggest thing we're focusing on is forecheck, maintaining pressure and possession," Foligno said. "That's the biggest thing, get on the forecheck and protect the puck, carry it in. You gotta use the points and get shots on net, get traffic, and that's part of my game so hopefully we open up the scoring a lot tomorrow."

## **FOLIGNO READY, MILLER A POSSIBILITY FOR TUESDAY NIGHT**

By Chris Ryndak

Sabres.com

October 7, 2013

Marcus Foligno will return to the Buffalo Sabres lineup Tuesday night when they host the Tampa Bay Lightning and Ryan Miller may be back as well.

Foligno has yet to play this season after sustaining an upper-body injury on Sept. 22 in an exhibition game against Toronto. He was a full participant in practice at First Niagara Center on Monday.

“This is a time to really establish myself and help out the team and hopefully tomorrow’s a big game for myself and for the team,” Foligno said after practice. “We need to get it back on track here and we really can’t let games slide.”

Miller did not dress in the loss on Saturday in Pittsburgh due to a lower-body injury. He did not practice on Monday and Rolston wasn’t sure if he’ll be ready for Tuesday. His status will depend on his on-ice workouts leading up to the game.

“We’re going to see. He’s going to let us know where he’s at and we’ve got pregame skate tomorrow too,” Rolston said. “He’s close. It’s just how he’s moving out there.”

Matt Hackett served as Jhonas Enroth’s backup Saturday night on an emergency recall.

Cody Hodgson also did not skate. Rolston said he has a lower-body injury, but doesn’t expect him to miss any more time.

“Cody is just kind of day to day, basically. Today was kind of a maintenance [day] for him,” Rolston said. “He should be back in there tomorrow.”

The Sabres focused on passing drills and power-play work at practice. Buffalo is 0-for-13 with the man advantage through three games and Rolston wants to see his team get more pucks to the net. He said he liked what he saw from the power play in practice on Monday.

“It’s hockey school stuff, but we need to get better with our hands right now,” Rolston said. “A portion of our problems, even in our zone, is just making a pass and catching a pass to get out of the zone. That’s part of it and that’s why we worked on [the passing drills].”

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26 Thomas Vanek – 63 Tyler Ennis – 28 Zemgus Girgensons

82 Marcus Foligno – 25 Mikhail Grigorenko – 21 Drew Stafford  
9 Steve Ott – 12 Kevin Porter – 65 Brian Flynn  
22 Johan Larsson – 8 Cody McCormick – 36 Patrick Kaleta

10 Christian Ehrhoff – 3 Mark Pysyk  
6 Mike Weber – 57 Tyler Myers  
4 Jamie McBain – 55 Rasmus Ristolainen  
52 Alexander Sulzer – 32 John Scott

1 Jhonas Enroth  
31 Matt Hackett