



Buffalo Sabres

Daily Press Clips

November 2, 2013

Ducks-Sabres Preview

By Alan Ferguson

Associated Press

November 1, 2013

The Anaheim Ducks haven't earned favorable results in most of their recent visits to Buffalo but appear to have a good opportunity to get one Saturday night.

The Ducks will try to keep the Sabres - owners of the NHL's worst record - winless at home while bouncing back from having their three-game win streak snapped.

Anaheim (10-3-1) is 1-4-1 with two ties in its last eight trips to Buffalo, scoring no more than two goals in all but one of them, but will face a team that's 0-7-1 at home this season. The Sabres (2-12-1) are also off to the worst overall start in franchise history after their third straight loss Thursday, 2-0 to the New York Rangers.

The Ducks are 3-2-1 on an eight-game road trip, which ends Monday against the Rangers, after blowing a chance for two points Thursday in Boston. They wasted a pair of one-goal leads, allowing a power-play tally with 2:50 left in regulation, and didn't record a shot in overtime before missing all three shootout attempts in a 3-2 defeat.

"That's three games in a row that we've taken a penalty in the last two minutes of the game," coach Bruce Boudreau said.

The Ducks had won each of their previous three games by one goal and scored in the final five minutes of regulation to win the last two.

"When we have a 2-1 lead going into the third period with less than five minutes remaining, you have to come out with two points," defenseman Bryan Allen said.

Anaheim was playing its first game without veteran forward Teemu Selanne, who is expected to miss at least two weeks. Selanne needed surgery after losing several teeth to an inadvertent high stick in a 3-2 win over Philadelphia on Tuesday.

The Ducks have lost the last three meetings with the Sabres but haven't faced them since a 2-0 defeat Feb. 29, 2012, when Ryan Miller stopped 43 shots. Miller, though, is 1-10-0 this season and has lost his last six starts while posting a 3.58 goals-against average.

However, Miller has faced a league-high 405 shots, including 46 on Thursday to match the most he's seen this season. The Sabres were outshot for the fifth straight game - their opponents have 80 more in that span - and gave up a power-play goal for the eighth time in 10 contests.

"If we want this to stop, it will stop," Miller said. "Everyone has to increase their intensity. When everyone wants this to stop, it will. You have to work your way out of it.

"We have to play hard and work hard for each other. We have to have the right approach. We're searching. Enough is enough."

Matt Moulson didn't have a shot after scoring two goals in his debut with the team, a 4-3 loss to Dallas on Monday. Moulson was acquired Sunday along with two draft picks in a deal that sent Thomas Vanek to the New York Islanders.

Buffalo's eight-game winless streak at home is its longest to open a season and second-longest in any single season behind a 12-game drought Jan. 27-March 10, 1991.

Sabres' Kaleta, Tropp ready to get back to work

By Amy Moritz

Buffalo News

November 1, 2013

Patrick Kaleta is eager to return to the Buffalo Sabres' lineup.

The forward has been watching his teammates struggle and slide through the worst month in franchise history while he served a 10-game suspension for a hit to the head of Columbus Blue Jackets defenseman Jack Johnson.

Now Kaleta just wants the opportunity to do his part to help breathe life into his team.

"I'm just going to try and infuse some energy in the lineup and bring hard work, hard work and hard work," Kaleta said. "Try to play passionate and like I said bring some hard work."

Sense a theme?

Hard work is something the Sabres have lacked. It was particularly evident in Thursday night's 2-0 loss at the New York Rangers and became a point of emphasis in Friday morning's practice at First Niagara Center as the team prepared for tonight's game with Anaheim.

That hard work "looks like on the ice when you're winning one-on-one battles constantly, supporting guys, supporting the puck," captain Steve Ott said. "You tend to break out easier, you tend to puck retrieve better as well. All those things are from work.

"When you have to support somebody, you have to get there. You have to put the work in, the extra 10 steps to get there. That's something watching video today, we lacked a lot of. We've seen a lot of it over the last month or so of our first periods, our hesitation and our slow starts."

Hard work and competing have been the buzz words around the Sabres and they return two key players who can help in those areas.

While Kaleta comes off his suspension, Corey Tropp returns from injured reserve after breaking his jaw in a preseason game against Toronto.

"Both those players work. Let's be honest here," Ott said. "Corey Tropp's all heart, all work. Patty Kaleta, the same thing."

It's been a long road back for Tropp, who has played in just a handful of games over the past year.

Last season in the opener with Rochester, he scored two goals then tore ligaments in his right knee. He returned to play five more games at the end of the season, but the organization shut him down as Tropp still was recovering his step and strength after surgery.

“He’s missed like a year and a half of hockey or close to it with the injuries he’s had,” Sabres coach Ron Rolston said of Tropp. “He has a good attitude but it’s probably going to take him a little bit to get to where he wants to be, I would imagine, but you can see the energy he brings to the table for us.”

The hope is that energy can translate into some goals. In 2010-11 with Portland, his first season in the AHL, he had 40 points (10 goals, 30 assists) in 76 games.

In 2011-12 he played 27 games in Rochester (9 goals, 13 assists) and 34 games with Buffalo (3 goals, 5 assists).

“He gets to the hard areas,” Rolston said. “He plays a pretty north-south game and he gets to the net so he’ll be around there to have opportunities. And he can finish. He’s got a good release around the net and he’ll be there a lot.”

Tropp has been forced to learn patience and has talked about how he’s been humbled over the last year with his injuries.

But his sideline view of the games has helped him see what’s lacking with the team and where he might be able to be of assistance.

“I’ve been watching a lot of games. It’s never easy. It’s frustrating,” Tropp said. “Every guy works hard all summer to come in and set themselves up for success during the season. Right now, we’re in a hole, but we still have 60-something games left. We’ve just got to keep pushing through.

“We’ve got to find a way to make teams respect us and it starts with the work. That’s what it comes down to. It can’t be one period or five minutes here at the end of the game to catch up. It’s got to be from the drop of the puck on and it’s got to start to carry over every single day.

“We can’t play good in the third period then not turn it on until two games later in the second period. It’s got to start early. I think the message is clear. It’s getting to the point where it’s enough talking. It’s time to do it.”

Sabres notebook: Numbers are as bad as team's play

By Amy Moritz

Buffalo News

November 2, 2013

The hashtag set the tone for the month: #suffering. So here is the official tally on October for the Buffalo Sabres.

The 2-12-1 mark is tied for the second-fewest points earned in a month (with a minimum of 10 games) by the Sabres. Buffalo notched only four points in November 2002 (1-10-2). This is the third time the team has managed just five points in a month along with November 1971 (1-7-3) and October 1986 (1-7-2).

The Sabres have the worst goal differential in the league at minus-20. They've scored just 23 goals, good enough for second worst in the NHL (Philadelphia has scored just 20), while they've given up 43 (tied for second-worst with Calgary, both trailing Edmonton, which has surrendered 54).

Shots on goal have also been a losing battle. The Sabres have outshot their opponent just once this season, a 30-26 edge over Colorado on Oct. 19. The Avalanche, however, won that game, 4-2.

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The shots on goal disparity was pretty significant in Thursday's 2-0 loss to the New York Rangers in Madison Square Garden.

The Rangers held a 46-29 advantage, including 19-6 in the first period. The coaching staff is telling the team to shoot more. The players know they have to shoot more.

And yet there seems to be a disconnect.

"It's a mentality right now for us, wanting to make a better play, I think," Sabres coach Ron Rolston said. "I think that's the same with a lot of our turnovers now through the neutral zone. We want to make a better play than is there and we're not taking what is there.

"That's one area right there you've got to take what's there on those shots. We had real good looks where we didn't get pucks down to the net.

"A team like the Rangers, they shoot from everywhere. When they get 40 shots they're shooting from the snack bar – any possible area, they're shooting from. And the more you do that, the more you're going to put the other team's defense on their heels a lot because they have to battle. Pucks are going to be around there and they've got to box out and get lanes to the net. It causes a lot more than that initial shot."

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John Scott said he would not appeal his seven-game suspension for his hit to the head of Boston's Loui Eriksson on Oct. 23.

Scott has served four games of his suspension, which was handed out Thursday. He wants to move on from the incident. This is the first time the six-year NHL veteran has been suspended by the league.

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Joel Armia, who has missed 14 games with a hand injury, still has not practiced. Rolston said he is close to being cleared to play but probably will not be placed on the Sabres roster.

"He's probably within a week, I would imagine," Rolston said. "We'll probably send him down. He's got to play some games. It would be tough throwing him right into this league."

Angry Ducks look for improved play in Buffalo

NHL.com

November 1, 2013

DUCKS (10-3-1) at SABRES (2-12-2)

TV: FS-W, MSG-B

Last 10: Anaheim 7-2-1; Buffalo 2-7-1

Season series: This will be the first meeting between the Anaheim Ducks and Buffalo Sabres since Feb. 29, 2012, when Ryan Miller made 43 saves in a 2-0 Sabres win. Buffalo has won the past three between the teams, with the Ducks' last win coming in 2010. The teams also meet Nov. 8 in Anaheim.

Big story: The Ducks play game No. 7 on a season-high eight-game, two-week road trip. So far they are 3-2-1. After Buffalo, the Ducks will end the trip Nov. 4 at Madison Square Garden against the New York Rangers.

Team scope:

Ducks: Anaheim blew two one-goal leads Thursday in a 3-2 shootout loss against the Boston Bruins which ended a three-game winning streak.

"The guys are disappointed," Ducks coach Bruce Boudreau said. "They want to win every game. That's why the record is what it is right now and they're not going to be happy with a shootout loss. We wanted that extra point so I would expect nobody to be happy."

The Ducks had been 2-0 in games decided after 60 minutes this season.

"You can't get too high and you can't get too low," Ducks forward Corey Perry said. "You get your one point and it's unfortunate we didn't get the second one, but you take this and you build off of it. I think we did a lot of good things and we just could tighten up in a couple of areas."

Sabres: Buffalo lost 2-0 against the New York Rangers on Thursday. It was the 12th time in 15 games they scored two goals or fewer and the eighth time they scored one goal or fewer. Miller made 44 saves in the loss.

"I understand we've got younger guys but you have to have a certain control of the game where you have to play together and work hard for each other and get out of situations," Miller said. "It's up to us to dig out of this and have the right attitude and right approach. It's been a lot of games searching, trying to figure it out. Enough is enough."

The Sabres have scored 23 goals in 15 games for an average of 1.6 per game.

“Ryan made some extraordinary saves. He really kept us in the game. It could have been more than 2-0,” forward Matt Moulson said.

Who's hot: Moulson, who had two goals in his Sabres debut Monday, has six goals in his past six games.

Injury report: The Ducks will be missing a lot of bodies as Teemu Selanne (mouth), Luca Sbisa (ankle), Sheldon Souray (wrist), Matt Beleskey (upper body), Viktor Fasth (lower body), Jakob Silfverberg (hand) and Saku Koivu (head) all are on injured reserve. ... The Sabres will be without Corey Tropp (jaw) and Mike Weber (upper body) due to injuries, while John Scott is suspended.

Plethora of picks could key Sabres' rebuild

By Corey Masisak

NHL.com

November 1, 2013

There are 25 players who have scored 30 goals in a season at least three times since the start of the 2006-07 season.

Not counting 2012-13, when only Alex Ovechkin scored at least 30 goals, this group of players all scored at least 30 three times in a six-season span. Six of those players have been traded in the past 15 months, including two who moved in the same deal Tuesday when the New York Islanders sent Matt Moulson and two draft picks to the Buffalo Sabres for Thomas Vanek.

Among deals where proven offensive commodities switched sides, it is the biggest trade since Marian Hossa went to the Atlanta Thrashers from the Ottawa Senators for Dany Heatley in 2005. Rick Nash and Marian Gaborik essentially were traded for each other (eventually), but that doesn't count.

There has been plenty of debate about the Moulson-Vanek transaction, and it's likely going to continue for years to come. Let's be clear though: The Islanders are better in 2013-14 because of this trade, but this deal was an undeniable long-term victory for the rebuilding project in Buffalo.

Moulson has been John Tavares' linemate/buddy/mentor since the Islanders drafted Tavares and signed Moulson about a week apart in 2009. They've had great chemistry together, and Moulson has played a significant part in helping Tavares become a wonderful player and mature into someone who handles the "face of the franchise" tag about as well as anyone.

The only way the Islanders aren't better with Vanek is if Tavares goes into a funk without Moulson around and that's not very likely. Vanek is a different type of player than Moulson. He's perceived to have more natural skill and to be streakier than the dependable Moulson.

The table to the right shows the Corsi-for percentage for Moulson with and without Tavares on the ice at even strength, and the Corsi-for percentage for Vanek with and without the team's No. 1 center (Cody Hodgson replaced Derek Roy in the role last season). Moulson relied on Tavares a little more than Vanek did on his center (and Moulson also saw a greater chunk of his ice time at even strength with Tavares).

Even if Vanek is an upgrade from Moulson, Sabres fans who mentally have prepared for a rebuild should be ecstatic. Just getting a first- and second-round pick for Vanek would have been a good haul (it's a better return than what Gaborik or Jarome Iginla fetched).

Adding Moulson, who also is a pending unrestricted free agent and could be worth another first- or second-round pick if the Sabres opt to move him, is a nice bonus.

The Sabres played their way into the dire present situation, but they have a chance to build a Stanley Cup contender ... and in short order.

General manager Darcy Regier has earned criticism for free-agent signings, but his work in building a war chest of top draft picks is stunning and unprecedented in recent NHL history. The Sabres have made or hold a total of 17 first- or second-round picks in a four-year span from 2012 to 2015.

No team has made more than 15 selections in the first two rounds in a four-year span in the past two decades. The Washington Capitals had 15 from 2004 to 2007 (and 19 in five years with 2008 added on). The Colorado Avalanche had 15 from 1997 to 2000, including an astounding seven of the top 53 picks in the 1998 NHL Draft.

Regier might not be done at 17. Moulson, Ryan Miller and Steve Ott all could bring at least a second-round pick in return, and all three are pending UFAs. The Sabres are trending toward a top-three pick in the 2014 NHL Draft, which will produce a player expected to be of the franchise variety.

It could get really interesting in Buffalo in the offseason. It is natural for a franchise to want to do all it can to improve after a season spent at the bottom of the NHL standings, but the 2014-15 season is going to be a different one.

Just as some NBA teams see Andrew Wiggins and Julius Randle on the horizon in the 2014 draft, next season will be the countdown to Connor McDavid in the NHL. McDavid could be more than just a great player and already looks to be the best prospect since ... Tavares? Sidney Crosby? And he's playing just down the road from Buffalo with the Erie Otters of the Ontario Hockey League.

Teams like the Capitals, Pittsburgh Penguins and Chicago Blackhawks endured multiple seasons of heavy losses, but ask fans of those teams if they'd go through that again. The Sabres have Hodgson signed long-term and four teenagers gaining NHL experience now.

Add in someone like Sam Reinhart or Aaron Ekblad in June, and taking a run at McDavid in 2015 could give the Sabres the players who headline the movie, and all of these other picks can fill in the gaps in supporting roles.

The Penguins made the playoffs in Crosby's second year. The Blackhawks won the Stanley Cup in Year 3 with Jonathan Toews and Patrick Kane. That type of timeline is attainable for the Sabres because of Regier's work hoarding high-level draft picks.

They aren't likely to be anywhere near the Super 16 this season, but it might not be as far away as it seems right now. Meanwhile, the Islanders are hoping Vanek gives them a boost from fringe playoff team to solid postseason contender in the mess that is the Metropolitan Division.

Vanek accepts Sabres' decision

By Bruce Garrioch

Ottawa Sun

November 1, 2013

Thomas Vanek is making himself at home in his new home.

The Islanders' winger is getting used to life playing beside of superstar John Tavares, but he made it clear he never had any serious contract talks with the Sabres despite talk the club was willing to make him the NHL's highest paid.

"I had a conversation with Buffalo towards the end of last year and I said, 'I understand we're going young but I still hope we can get some other good players in free agency and then still be competitive while we work on the young guys,'" said Vanek, who was dealt for Matt Moulson last Sunday.

"That's not the direction they went in and I never once got a contract offer from them. That story. I'm not sure where it came from."

Vanek said he wasn't thrilled to leaves Sabres but is excited about the challenge with the Islanders. He had hoped Buffalo would have provided a little more support around some of the young players they plan to use for the rebuild.

"I wouldn't say happy. It was a place I really enjoyed. There was nothing about Buffalo I didn't like," said Vanek before the game against the Senators. "I guess with the approach they are taking with the rebuild I just didn't seem to fit there."

"I understand rebuilds. You can still rebuild with some younger guys but bring in other good players and teach them the right way. They made a choice to move on without me and that's the way this business works."

High-energy wingers Corey Tropp and Patrick Kaleta hoping to ignite struggling Sabres

By Bill Hoppe

Olean Times Herald

November 2, 2013

BUFFALO – Injuries have severely limited Corey Tropp’s time here. The ferocious Sabres winger tore up his right knee last season waiting out the NHL lockout in Rochester. Then he broke his jaw during a Sept. 22 preseason fight in Toronto.

Tropp has played just 36 NHL games, the last coming April 5, 2012. Still, the 24-year-old has developed a good feel for this blue-collar city.

“I think this is a city, if you’re working hard, that’s all they ask,” Tropp, who should return for tonight’s home tilt against the Anaheim Ducks, said Friday. “It doesn’t matter if you’re winning or losing. But they’ll respect us as a club if we’re coming out every night competing hard, working our tails off.

“I think (that’s) the message that needs to be sent. As long as everyone’s effort’s there, we got to leave the rink feeling good about ourselves. We got to find a way.”

Fifteen games into the season, the lowly Sabres are a pathetic 2-12-1, the NHL’s worst team. Their efforts, of course, have been iffy, even downright terrible. They just finished their worst October since going 1-7-2 in 1986-87.

The First Niagara Center, where the Sabres are winless, has become an angry building, with booing and chanting for general manager Darcy Regier’s dismissal a nightly staple.

The reeling Sabres need a spark badly. They might get two tonight.

In addition to Tropp, high-energy agitator Patrick Kaleta will likely return from his 10-game suspension for hitting Columbus’ Jack Johnson in the head Oct. 10.

“Both those players work, let’s be honest here,” Sabres captain Steve Ott said. “Corey Tropp’s all heart, all work. Patty Kaleta, same thing.”

Sabres coach Ron Rolston said both players looked good Friday and are available.

But will they play?

“We’ll see,” Rolston said following practice.

Then he smiled.

“It’s been a long road back,” Tropp said.

Tropp secured regular duty late in 2011-12, showcasing a gritty style and scoring touch.

But Tropp hurt his knee after scoring twice opening night last season. The Michigan native returned for five late-season AHL games, but he hadn't fully recovered.

Then Jamie Devane pummeled Tropp during a scary fight in the Sabres' fifth exhibition game.

"I can't try to get back what I lost in one game," said Tropp, who noted he won't change his style.

Rolston expects an adjustment period for Tropp, who practiced Friday on the right wing with Ott and center Marcus Foligno.

"It's probably going to take him a little bit, too, to get where he wants to be, I would imagine," Rolston said. "But just out on the ice you can see the energy he brings to the table for us."

What does Tropp bring to the table?

"He gets to the hard areas," Rolston said. "He plays a pretty north-south game and he'll get to the net. So he'll be in the area there to have opportunities, and he can finish. He's got a good release around the net, and he'll be there a lot."

Kaletka, meanwhile, had a hard time watching the Sabres play for three weeks.

"It stinks sitting there watching your teammates going out and playing and you not being able to help out," the winger said. "You sit there and ... not being able to do anything hurts you as a person because you're a team and you battle through everything together."

"So, yeah, I guess you could say I've been antsy and ready to go for as long as I could remember."

Kaletka, who's been suspended twice in his last 21 games, insists he's become a calmer and more complete player over the years.

"A lot of people can say I haven't changed, but you can tell that they haven't watched the team then," he said. "People that have watched the team have seen me change over time. It's just as simple as (I now play the) penalty kill. That's it."

Perhaps an infusion of energy will help the Sabres start the game better.

Their first-period numbers are staggering. Opponents have outscored the Sabres 20-2 during the opening 20 minutes and outshot them 210-107.

Yes, you read those numbers correctly.

Cody McCormick, who centered Kaleta and Mikhail Grigorenko on Friday, the Sabres' fourth line, believes better mental preparation could help.

"You can go into a game lackadaisical or you can kind of mentally prepare yourself, and I think we can take a few minutes before every game and break down what you have to do mentally," McCormick said. "Then ... it's us coming out with a little more drive and not waiting to see what the other team's going to do, us dictating. That goes with preparation."

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John Scott told the Times Herald he has accepted his seven-game suspension and won't appeal. The NHL issued the long ban Thursday for hitting Boston's Loui Eriksson in the head last week.

The tough guy said he wants to put it to rest.

Scott skated as a defenseman Friday beside rookie Nikita Zadorov, a strong sign the Russian will sit his second straight game tonight.

Watching, Rolston said, will help the 18-year-old.

"Get some perspective on things," he said about sitting Zadorov.

Rolston lauded Zadorov earlier this week, hinting the Sabres might keep him all season. Scratching him doesn't change his opinion, Rolston said.

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Rookie winger Joel Armia, out since breaking his hand during the preseason, is about a week away from returning and will be sent to Rochester when he's healthy, Rolston said.

"He's got to play some games there," Rolston said. "It would be tough throwing him right into this league."

Sabres get two back that will compete

By Paul Hamilton

WGR 550

November 1, 2013

Buffalo, NY (WGR 550) -- I just don't think I should be walking into an NHL locker-room after game 15 and hear players talking about not competing. We all know this team is young and is going to struggle, but compete is something they can control.

In practice on Friday many drills were designed to compete. When will we see it consistently in games and what will it look like? Steve Ott said, "It looks like on the ice when you're winning one-on-one battles constantly, supporting guys, supporting the puck. You tend to break out easier and you tend to puck retrieve better as well and all those things are from work. When you have to support somebody you have to get there. You have to put the work in and the extra 10 steps to get there."

I really don't think they're all that aware of it because many times I hear from players that they're not playing that poorly. They then get into a video session and according to the captain, the tape doesn't lie, "Watching video today we lacked a lot of that. We've seen a lot of it over the last month or so of our first periods of our hesitation or our slow starts and a lot of that is based off that."

Corey Tropp is ready to come off of IR from a broken jaw. He is on the right wing with Ott and Marcus Foligno. After the Ranger game Ron Rolston said, "Corey Tropp will play Saturday, at least I know he'll compete all the time." Whether it's Tropp or Pat Kaleta, who will also return Ott agreed, "Both those players work, let's be honest here. Corey Tropp's all heart, all work, Patty Kaleta, same thing. Those two guys they want to come back into the lineup and it's nice to create that competitive balance within a team knowing that we're pushing for spots on the roster."

Tropp missed almost all of last season and was hurt in preseason this year. Rolston said, "He's lost a year in a half of hockey basically or close to it with the injuries he had so he's got a good attitude, but it's going to take him a little bit too."

In his last 33 AHL games Tropp has scored 11 goals. He actually had 11 in 28 games and then blew out the knee. Rolston thinks that the goals can translate to the NHL, "Yes I do because he's a player that gets to the hard areas, he plays a pretty north/south game and he'll get to the net, so he'll be around there to have opportunity and he can finish. He's got a good release around the net and he'll be there a lot."

Ryan Miller was angry and emotional after the Rangers game and a team meeting that followed. He said, "When everyone wants this to stop, it'll stop. We seem to be making more situations for ourselves than even the other team can create. It's on us to dig out of it and start having the right attitude and right approach. It's been a lot of games searching, trying to figure it out. Enough's enough."

In 34 NHL games Tropp has three goals and five assists.

Sabres Armia is close

By Paul Hamilton

WGR 550

November 1, 2013

Buffalo, N Y (WGR 550) -- Joel Armia still isn't practicing with the team, but his hand is getting healthier. Ron Rolston said, "He's probably within a week I would imagine." He wasn't a cinch to make the team before he got hurt. Rolston said, "We'll probably send him down, he's got to play some games. It would be tough throwing him right into this league."

Nikita Zadorov was again the extra defenseman and with Buffalo needing to make a roster move, he could go back to London of the OHL. Rolston said, "I want him to get some perspective on things." He's played five games and can play nine until the team must make a decision on him. I asked if they would take the full nine games, "We're just going to keep evaluation him from game to game here and see where he's at."

Corey Tropp will play Saturday against the Ducks as will Pat Kaleta. Tropp forces a roster move.

In practice on Friday the lines were:

Moulson-Hodgson-Ennis

Ott-Foligno-Tropp

Girgensons-Larsson-Flynn (Stafford)

Grigorenko-McCormick-Kaleta (Leino)

Ducks coach Bruce Boudreau took in most of the Sabres practice. He put his team through its paces right after the Sabres.

TROPP, KALETA AVAILABLE FOR SATURDAY

By Chris Ryndak

Sabres.com

November 1, 2013

The Buffalo Sabres have options and they might try some new ones on offense.

Corey Tropp and Patrick Kaleta are both available to return Saturday night against the Anaheim Ducks, according to coach Ron Rolston. Their returns could shake up the lineup.

Tropp is set to come off the non-roster injured list as his broken jaw has healed while Kaleta has finished serving a 10-game suspension by the NHL for an illegal check to the head of Blue Jackets defenseman Jack Johnson.

After Buffalo's 2-0 loss on the road to the New York Rangers on Thursday, Rolston said that bringing in a competitive player like Tropp, specifically, would make for some tough decisions for the coaching staff.

Tropp has not played in an NHL game since the end of the 2011-12 season. He injured his knee in the Amerks season opener last year and missed 72 games because of it. He's been out since Sept. 22 with the broken jaw.

"I can't try to get back what I lost in one game, but I just have to go out and do what I've always done," he said after practice at First Niagara Center. "I think playing hard and creating chances and kind of running around, putting pressure on the D and forcing opportunities that way. If I do that, I'll think I'll be doing my job."

Rolston coached Tropp when both were with the Rochester Americans of the American Hockey League two seasons ago.

"He's got a good attitude, but it's probably going to take him a little bit, too, to get to where he wants to be, I would imagine," Rolston said. "But just on the ice you can see the energy he brings to the table for us."

For Tropp to be in the lineup, Rolston said a roster move would have to be made on Friday to get down to 23 players by Saturday.

Kaleta, meanwhile, said he is ready to return as well and is looking forward to the opportunity to suit up in a game again.

"It's been a bit of a long road here, but I've been working pretty hard," he said. "I'm just going to try to infuse some energy into the lineup and bring hard work, hard work, some hard work, try to play passionate and like I said, bring some hard work."

Tropp also preached the necessity of putting in a solid effort every shift, particularly when it comes to exciting the fan base.

“I think this is a city where if you’re working hard, that’s all they ask. It doesn’t matter if you’re winning or losing. They’ll respect us a club if we’re coming out every night and competing our tails off,” he said. “I think that’s the message that needs to be sent. We might not win every single game, but if as long as everyone’s effort’s there every single night, we gotta leave the rink feeling good about ourselves. We’ve gotta find a way.”

Rolston provided an update on rookie right wing Joel Armia, who broke his hand in a preseason game on Sept. 25. Rolston said Armia is about a week away from returning and that he would likely be assigned to the Rochester Americans of the American Hockey League.

26 Matt Moulson – 19 Cody Hodgson – 63 Tyler Ennis
9 Steve Ott – 82 Marcus Foligno – 78 Corey Tropp
28 Zemgus Girgensons – 22 Johan Larsson – 21 Drew Stafford / 65 Brian Flynn
25 Mikhail Grigorenko – 8 Cody McCormick – 23 Ville Leino / 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