



Buffalo Sabres

Daily Press Clips

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Red Wings-Sabres Preview

By Kevin Chroust
Associated Press
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The Detroit Red Wings didn't expect to be keeping close company with the Buffalo Sabres when they switched to the Eastern Conference.

Since Nov. 3, that's exactly what they've done as the first-year Atlantic Division foes have combined for 13 points in the last three weeks.

The Red Wings and Sabres are two of four NHL teams with seven points or less in that span, and they'll face off Sunday in Buffalo.

Detroit (10-7-7) has seven points over its last nine games - a 1-3-5 span. The Red Wings failed to add to that total in Saturday's 4-2 home loss to Ottawa.

"Bottom line is you've got to be mentally tough and you've got to find a way to win games, and we didn't find a way tonight," Detroit coach Mike Babcock said.

Detroit and Ottawa each went 2 for 8 on the power play.

"You deserve what you get," Babcock said. "You can't be in the box all night. No one gets into rhythm like that."

Pavel Datsyuk and Darren Helm scored power-play goals for Detroit, while Henrik Zetterberg got his sixth assist in the last four games.

Datsyuk has eight points in his last five games against Buffalo.

Detroit's Jimmy Howard allowed four goals on 29 shots, falling to 0-2-4 in his last six starts. Backup Jonas Gustavsson will start against the Sabres. He's 1-3-2 in seven career games against Buffalo, including six starts.

Despite the poor nine-game stretch, the Red Wings are still 16 points ahead of the Sabres (5-18-1), thanks to a strong start to the season. Detroit opened with a 2-1 home win against the Sabres to improve to 10-1-1 against them since Feb. 13, 2003.

The Red Wings are also 5-1-0 at Buffalo since Dec. 10, 2003.

The Sabres have lost three in a row and have six points in the last three weeks. They've scored only twice in two games after Thursday's 4-1 loss at Philadelphia.

The loss dropped them to 1-3-0 under interim coach Ted Nolan.

"We have to play a certain way, and by doing stupid things like we have been, it's going to be ugly games," Nolan said. "I've seen enough in four games. We have to change some things, and players have to do it or it's going to be a long year.

"You have to do simple things. You can't have turnovers, can't have foolish penalties, can't be muscled off the puck."

Buffalo's Ryan Miller allowed three goals on 45 shots. He's faced an average of 40.7 shots in his last seven starts, going 3-4-0 in that span.

Detroit hasn't been kind to Miller in 11 career starts. He's 2-7-2 with a 3.53 goals-against average and .896 save percentage and has never held the Red Wings to fewer than two goals.

Red Wings forward Todd Bertuzzi missed the Ottawa game with an upper-body injury, while Daniel Alfredsson missed his fifth straight with a groin injury. Defenseman Jakub Kindl only played one shift in the third period because of a hip injury.

Buffalo forward Cody McCormick is expected to miss a week with an upper-body injury.

Sabres' top wingers not scoring on chances

By John Vogl

Buffalo News

November 23, 2013

It's not a secret the Sabres need help scoring. It's also not a secret who needs to supply the help.

Matt Moulson and Drew Stafford, expected to make up two-thirds of Buffalo's top line this afternoon against Detroit, have goose eggs in the goal column lately. Moulson is stuck in a 10-game drought. Stafford has gone seven games without a goal and has just one in the past 18.

That's obviously trouble for a team languishing at the bottom of the NHL.

"We've got to bear down, myself especially," Moulson said Saturday. "It seems like we're getting those in-tight shots, and you've got to find a way to score in this league. Myself, I think I've had some good looks over the last couple games and haven't been able to put it in. I've got to keep working to get those chances. Good chances don't come easy in the NHL."

In Buffalo, goals don't come easily. The Sabres are averaging just 1.67 goals per game to rank 30th in the 30-team league. Carolina is 29th at 1.91. No one else is under two.

"My simple philosophy in life is if it ain't working, we're not working hard enough," coach Ted Nolan said in Bud Bakewell Arena at Riverside Park. "We've just got to get back and do things that maybe we don't want to do sometimes. That's go up the wall, dump it in and go get it. Sometimes we want to carry it in and make a nice play, but that's not going to be here in this type of day and age."

Stafford and Moulson have the size to play a dump-and-chase style. They are expected to be reunited with center Cody Hodgson after one game apart. The trio has no goals on its last 48 shots.

"We need to put it away," said Stafford, who has 20 shots in the last seven games. "We are getting the chances, myself included. It's just a matter of taking that little extra second and just find a spot instead of shooting to get shots."

Moulson scored twice in his Buffalo debut Oct. 28 but hasn't found the net since. He's taken 19 shots during the 10-game drought and missed several point-blank chances.

He's mired in the second-worst slump of his career, trailing only a 13-game slide last season.

“You’ve got to have a pretty short-term memory in any sport, whether you have a good day or a bad day,” Moulson said. “Once you break out of it – get one off your leg or a cheesy one – all of a sudden the floodgates open.”

Hodgson, who has three goals and six points in nine games this month, sees good things in Moulson’s game. The center expects the three-time 30-goal scorer to work out of the slide.

“He competes hard,” Hodgson said. “That’s a big thing. A lot of guys that are goal scorers, they can find easy plays. Matt works for everything. He works to get open. He works to get position in front of the net. I like that. I like playing with him.

“Overall, all of us could be better, but I enjoy playing with those guys.”

It’ll take a lot of work for the Sabres’ top line to shine today in First Niagara Center. Though Buffalo will have the last line change, the team’s No. 1 unit will likely face a heavy dose of perennial Selke Trophy candidate Pavel Datsyuk.

“When you’ve got players in this league that are great at playing defensively, you have to make sure you outwork them,” Moulson said. “They’ve got some pretty good players over there.”

It’s been a struggle for Hodgson’s line to keep the puck. Opponents are attempting 16.5 shots per game when he is on the ice, while he and his mates are averaging 11.6.

The Red Wings, who flew in for the 5 p.m. start following Saturday night’s home game against Ottawa, haven’t been as dominant with the puck this year. Detroit averaged nearly five more shots per game than its opponents over the previous five seasons, but it had just a 0.2 edge per game heading into Saturday.

“More possession time will allow us to play in their end instead of defending,” Hodgson said. “We’ve got work to do obviously, but we’re getting there.”

Sabres recall Sulzer to provide veteran stability

By John Vogl

Buffalo News

November 23, 2013

Alexander Sulzer was a casualty of the Sabres' youth movement. He's now part of the veteran renaissance.

The defenseman is back up from Rochester and will play this afternoon when Buffalo hosts Detroit. He got the call after coach Ted Nolan and President of Hockey Operations Pat LaFontaine attended the Amerks' 3-2 loss to Utica on Friday.

"One of the reasons we went down was we wanted to see him play," Nolan said after practice Saturday in Bud Bakewell Arena at Riverside Park. "He's a veteran guy. Like I've said, we've got a lot of young talent here, and we've got to make sure they mature at the right pace. This guy's a veteran guy that's been around for a while, and he could have some stability back there for us.

"That's what we're looking for. We're running around in our defensive zone too much. We just need guys to stay back. We've got one of the better goaltenders in the world, so we just have to make sure we protect back there."

Nolan pulled Sulzer aside for a chat at the blue line to outline the veteran's role.

"I'm an older guy, even if I don't want to admit it," said Sulzer, 29. "He just wants me to be as calm as I usually play and just be solid."

Sulzer is in his third season in the organization and has played 33 games for the Sabres, putting up six goals, six assists and a plus-5 rating. He had two goals and seven points in 10 games for the Amerks.

Sulzer practiced alongside Christian Ehrhoff. The other pairs were Henrik Tallinder and Tyler Myers, Brayden McNabb and Mark Pysyk, and Jamie McBain and Mike Weber.

"I'm just excited to be back and get the chance again, just trying to play my game and prove that the decision early in the year was wrong to send me down," Sulzer said. "It's a complete new start. Like he's mentioned many times, it's a clean slate for everybody. Everybody deserves that.

"Things didn't really work the way they were before, so they're just trying to look at their options and evaluate after that. I really appreciate the chance."

...

The Sabres will be without Cody McCormick for at least a week. The center was injured Thursday in Philadelphia and played just one shift after taking a shot off his wrist.

“In the modern day you’ve got to say upper body or lower body,” Nolan said. “Pick your choice. He’s got one of them.”

Buffalo was already thin at center, so the absence of McCormick forced Nolan to make a position switch. Erstwhile right wing Brian Flynn practiced in the middle of left wing Marcus Foligno and right wing Corey Tropp.

“One thing you notice about him is he’s a very intelligent player,” Nolan said of Flynn. “The fourth-line position, we’ve got to make sure we’ve got reliable guys there to eat some good minutes and give our top guys some rest. He seems like a very reliable young man.”

The Sabres’ other lines featured Cody Hodgson centering for left wing Matt Moulson and right wing Drew Stafford, Ville Leino in the middle of Tyler Ennis and Steve Ott, and Mikhail Grigorenko flanked by Zemgus Girgensons and Luke Adam.

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Buffalo will get to avoid longtime tormentor Daniel Alfredsson. The Red Wings forward and former Ottawa captain is expected to miss his sixth straight game with a groin injury.

His replacement, Gustav Nyquist, scored twice in his season debut Thursday. Red Wings General Manager Ken Holland said the 24-year-old is in Detroit to stay. Nyquist was sent to the minors because of salary-cap constraints.

“This is the team I want to be a part of,” Nyquist said. “My goal was to make the team out of training camp. Unfortunately, I didn’t do that, but I couldn’t think too much about it. ... I had a lot of opportunities to develop and be part of a great team down there, and I just tried to work hard and get better.”

Sabres' Girgensons learns to wing it at new positions

By Amy Moritz

Buffalo News

November 22, 2013

He started as a center. Then the Buffalo Sabres organization wanted to make Zemgus Girgensons a winger.

Then Ted Nolan took over as interim coach and wanted him back at center, playing three games at the position.

But wait! Now he's back at the wing.

Head swiveling isn't just a skill for defenders. It's necessary when looking at Girgensons' spot in the lineup.

The 19-year-old played on the left side of the second line with Cody Hodgson at center and Tyler Ennis at right wing for the Sabres in their 4-1 loss at Philadelphia on Thursday night.

The Sabres had the day off on Friday and will return to practice today before Sunday's home game with the Detroit Red Wings.

When Nolan was hired, the only player on the roster he had worked with was Girgensons, who he had coached for the Latvian national team at the World Championships last spring. At the time, Nolan said he wanted to move Girgensons back to his natural position at center.

After three games and days of discussions, Nolan revamped his opinion.

"We're looking at is this kid going to be a center iceman for us or is he going to be a winger?" Nolan said on Wednesday when he announced the move after practice. "The consensus right now seems to be leaning toward the wing position. So if we're going to ask him to be a winger, we better play him in that position.

"I think he's just one of those players, he's going to look as good to me at the wing as he does at center ice. So we have to figure out how we're going to best utilize his skills and his skill set.

"A nice powerful winger like him, he's only 19 years old. When he turns 22, 23, he's going to be a man in that position. So he can be a very powerful winger for us."

Where will Girgensons find himself today? Probably on the wing. But, hey, you never know. And if there's any confusion on his part, Gigrensons isn't saying anything. He's just going with the flow.

“It’s just experience,” Girgensons said. “The coaching staff knows I can play the wing, center. I never say I can’t play a position. It’s just better for me. I can be an all-around player wherever the team needs me.

“A lot of players like center better but it really comes down to how many players a team has at center, how they do there and where the team needs me. ... You just have to be happy you’re in the league and accept the role you have and whatever you can do.”

Certainly the Sabres would like to see more offensive production out of everyone.

Girgensons has one goal this year – against Detroit in the season opener on Oct. 2. He has just one point in the last seven games, an assist on Jamie McBain’s goal in Toronto.

Under Nolan, he has averaged just over 14 minutes of ice time in 21 shifts a game.

He was a slow starter for the Rochester Americans last year as one of only two 18-year olds playing in the AHL. He finished with six goals and 11 assists in 61 games but led the Amerks in the playoffs, scoring three goals with a plus-2 rating as Rochester was swept by Toronto in the series.

So for Girgensons, taking time to warm into a season isn’t all that new.

“I pretty much had the same season last year in Rochester,” he said. “The start was tough. You stay with it, keep working hard and the chances will come and you can get some goals.”

...

When the NHL blocked the Sabres’ move to send Mikhail Grigorenko to the Amerks for a conditioning stint, the 19-year-old forward asked the coaching staff multiple times to put him back in the lineup.

They relented in Philadelphia on Thursday and Grigorenko centered the line of Luke Adam and Drew Stafford. Grigorenko’s best period was in the first, including a backcheck on Jakub Voracek that snuffed out what would have been an excellent scoring chance.

“I was trying my best and skating a lot,” Grigorenko said. “Our line played really well defensively but we lost the game so we were upset about that. I just had to work as hard as I could. Skate and battle and try to make some offense. ... They gave me a chance so hopefully they liked the game. We’re just going to go game by game and see.”

Buffalo Sabres brass scouts Amerks

By Kevin Oklobzija
Democrat and Chronicle
November 23 2013

Pat LaFontaine says the Rochester Americans will be a vital part of future success for the Buffalo Sabres, one reason he has been in town two of the past three nights.

"They're our bloodline, our lifeline," LaFontaine, the Sabres president of hockey operations, said during the first intermission of Friday's Amerks game vs. the Utica Comets.

LaFontaine was given control of the hockey department on Nov. 13 and his visits to Rochester are part of his organizational review.

"Assessing and analyzing top to bottom," he said.

That includes draft picks, veterans and the coaching staff in Rochester.

An overhaul of the NHL front office can often mean changes throughout the organization. LaFontaine said he gave coach Ted Nolan the "interim" tag so whoever is hired as general manager can make his own decision. Nolan made the trip Friday with LaFontaine.

Amerks coach Chadd Cassidy and assistants Chris Taylor and John Wroblewski were hired by the Regier regime.

LaFontaine said "you take a more patient approach" when evaluating staff members. "I think everybody's deserving of a chance first," he said, "and then you can evaluate."

He said he has conducted at least one interview for the general manager's job this week but wouldn't reveal the name(s). He did say his original short list has grown.

LaFontaine said "character is the No. 1 thing" he will want when it comes time to signing veterans for Rochester.

That's the same blue print fired general manager Darcy Regier used this past off-season when the organization signed Mike Zigomanis, Matt Ellis, Drew Bagnall and Jamie Tardif.

He also said the Amerks must play the same systems as the Sabres, something Cassidy and fired Buffalo coach Ron Rolston wanted to do.

Red Wings aim to continue domination of Sabres

By Brian Compton

NHL.com

November 24, 2013

RED WINGS (10-7-7) at SABRES (5-18-1)

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

Last 10: Detroit 2-3-5; Buffalo 3-7-0

Season series: This is the second of four meetings between the Detroit Red Wings and Buffalo Sabres this season. Detroit earned a 2-1 victory against Buffalo at Joe Louis Arena on Oct. 2. The Red Wings have won three home games since.

Big story: Detroit travels to Buffalo after going 1-2-0 on a three-game homestand, including a 4-2 loss to the Ottawa Senators on Saturday night. The Red Wings, who are 10-1-1 in their past 12 games against the Sabres, have one win in their past nine games (1-3-5) and have fallen to fifth place in the Atlantic Division. The Sabres are beginning a three-game homestand. They are 1-3-0 under interim coach Ted Nolan.

Team Scope:

Red Wings: Detroit's Pavel Datsyuk erased a 2-1 deficit via the power play 1:08 into the third period, but Bobby Ryan scored less than three minutes later and Clarke MacArthur added an insurance goal with 4:02 remaining to hand the Red Wings another loss on home ice. Detroit is 1-2-6 at Joe Louis Arena since Oct. 15. Backup goaltender Jonas Gustavsson is expected to get the start Sunday.

"It never feels good when you lose, especially at home," center Darren Helm told Fox Sports Detroit. "We've got a big game tomorrow that we have to have a big effort for."

Sabres: Buffalo will be looking to end a three-game losing streak. The Sabres' woes continued with a 4-1 loss to the Philadelphia Flyers on Thursday at Wells Fargo Center, a game that saw the Sabres commit eight penalties and give the Flyers a pair of 5-on-3 situations.

Buffalo's blue line will have a different look after the team promoted defenseman Alexander Sulzer from the Rochester Americans of the American Hockey League on Saturday. It is Sulzer's second stint with the Sabres this season.

"I'm an older guy, even if I don't want to admit it," Sulzer, 29, told the Sabres' website. "I am now and he [Nolan] just wants me to be as calm as I usually play and just try to be solid. It's just when it gets scrambly a little bit that not everybody starts running around, that we just play in the zone like Teddy wants

us to play and just don't freak out if one mistake happens. If one happens, everybody else makes up for it and then we're going to be fine."

Who's hot: Red Wings captain Henrik Zetterberg has six assists in span. ... Sabres center Tyler Ennis has two goals and two assists in the past five games.

Injury report: Datsyuk did not make the trip after taking an elbow to the head Saturday. Red Wings general manager Ken Holland told Mlive.com that Datsyuk was kept home due to a possible concussion. Detroit defenseman Jakub Kindl (hip) played one shift in the third period Saturday and Red Wings coach Mike Babcock did not provide an update after the game. Right wing Daniel Alfredsson (groin) has missed five straight games but is expected to play against the Sabres. Right wing Todd Bertuzzi (upper body) did not play Saturday. Rookie defenseman Danny DeKeyser (separated left shoulder) is out 3-6 weeks and is on the long-term injured reserve list. ... Sabres forward Cody McCormick (upper body) did not practice Saturday and is expected to miss at least one week.

Ex-Flyer Ville Leino on the mend with Sabres

By Eric Goldstein
South Jersey Times
November 23, 2013

PHILADELPHIA – When Ville Leino departed the Philadelphia Flyers after the 2011 season and signed a lucrative contract with the Buffalo Sabres, the young left-winger was pegged as a rising star.

He had just completed his first full season in the NHL as the left winger on the Flyers second line and played an instrumental role in the team's magical run to the Stanley Cup Finals.

All signs pointed to a bright future ahead for the crafty and skilled Swedish forward.

When Leino returned to the Wells Fargo Center on Thursday night with the Sabres, he was no longer young nor a rising star. Instead, he was a 30-year-old veteran just trying to regain his goal scoring touch and play-making form and stay on the ice after back-to-back frustrating seasons marred by injuries.

Since the two parties agreed to a six-year, \$27 million deal in the summer of 2011, things haven't worked out quite like Leino or the Sabres envisioned.

"It's been tough (since joining the Sabres) but I am just looking forward and not back," Leino said. "I just keep working hard and the past is behind me. I just concentrate on getting better and better every day."

It's not been a rosy past, at least not in Buffalo. In his first season with the organization, Leino played in 71 games and registered eight goals and 17 assists, which was less than half of his production the year before in Philadelphia.

Last season, which was shortened to 48 games due to the lockout, Leino played in just eight games after suffering hip and upper body injuries. Then he broke a rib in the team's first game of the year against the Red Wings and missed another 11 games.

Just now he is starting to feel like himself again.

"I've been feeling good and feeling better each game," Leino said. "I have missed a lot of games but these last two games I have felt the best I have in two years."

It's shown.

Leino had an assist in Tuesday's 4-1 loss to the St. Louis Blues and assisted on the Sabres' only goal against the Flyers. Still, he has just three assists and no goals in

11 games this season for the Sabres, who are struggling as well and have the lowest point total in the league.

The team fired its coach and GM a couple weeks ago and is in full rebuilding mode. The Sabres also have one of the youngest teams in the league, including four teenagers at times and many other players under 23.

“At this point it is getting to (the young guys) that it is hard to play in the NHL,” Leino said. “It’s very easy for their self-confidence to go down so we all have to keep our heads up. That is the only way out of this.”

It was a different story for Leino when he was with the Flyers. After arriving in Philadelphia late in the 2009-2010 season in a trade with the Detroit Red Wings, Leino had two goals and two assists in 13 games. Moved to the second line the next year with Scott Hartnell and Danny Briere, he blossomed.

Leino scored 19 goals and dished out 34 assists during the regular season and then erupted in the playoffs. He netted seven goals and 21 assists in four playoff rounds to set the franchise record for most points by a rookie in a single postseason.

“He is a really, really good player,” said Ian Lappieriere, who played with Leino on the Flyers team that reached the finals and is now the Flyers assistant coach. “He is really good on the puck and especially in today’s game possession that is really key. He just has to find a way to stay healthy and I am sure his luck is going to change. Hopefully it’s going to turn around for him.”

Leino believes that it is and he will return to being the same player that left the Flyers three years ago. It all comes down to avoiding the injury bug.

“It’s frustrating how things have gone so far since coming to Buffalo, sure, but you can’t let it affect you,” Leino said. “I just have to build myself back up. It’s about getting back into shape and playing hard and being able to play my game.

“The same goes for the rest of the team. All of us have to keep working and never give up.”

Things aren't getting better in Buffalo

By Pat Hickey

Montreal Gazette

November 22, 2013

They are known as trap games — contests you should win on paper, but which have the potential to go wrong on the ice.

It might be because your guys are overconfident and take the opposition lightly. It might be the night when everyone has a bad game. Or it might be the night when the sad sacks on the other side get tired of losing.

The Canadiens face one of those trap games Wednesday night when they shuffle off to Buffalo. The Sabres have the worst record in the NHL and there have been no signs of improvement in the week since head coach Ron Rolston was fired and Ted Nolan was named interim coach

Nolan was a 3-1 winner in his first game against Toronto, but since then the Sabres have lost three in a row and have been outscored 12-4.

Nolan has a reputation for being a players' coach, but after a mistake-filled, 4-1 loss Thursday in Philadelphia, he was talking tough.

“By doing stupid things like we have been, it's not going to work,” Nolan told Mike Harrington of the Buffalo News. “The gloves are officially off. You've got to do certain things to play. If you don't, you're not.

“When you constantly do the same thing over and over and over again, and lose for the same reasons, it doesn't take a rocket scientist to figure it out. We have to do simple things. We have to play a grind-out kind of game. We can't have turnovers. We can't take the foolish penalties. We can't get bounced off the puck and outmuscled in corners.”

The Sabres are in rebuilding phase, but it's the veterans who were taking those foolish penalties. Tyler Myers was whistled off twice and Ville Leino took a slashing penalty in the offensive zone. Cody McCormick took a delay-of-game penalty and the Sabres found themselves short two men when they were called for having too many men on the ice while killing Myers's tripping penalty early in the second period.

“Penalties are going to stop or the people doing it aren't going to be in the lineup. It's as simple as that,” Nolan said. “You can't hope anymore. We've seen enough.”

Nolan needs the veterans because he put an abrupt end to a youth movement by dumping three rookies. Nikita Zadorov is back with the junior London Knights, while Johan Larsson and Rasmus Ristolainen were sent to the American Hockey League's Rochester Americans,

“Everybody is telling me the young guys are the problem,” Nolan said. “The young guys ain't here anymore, so we don't have that excuse anymore. We have to look ourselves in the mirror and we have to bring what each and everybody has on this team to bring.”

Sabres' Tyler Myers confident he's finally regaining old form

By Bill Hoppe

Olean Times Herald

November 24, 2013

BUFFALO – Tyler Myers needed some advice. Just four games into the season, the struggling Sabres defenseman had already compiled a wretched minus-7 rating. He was starting to lose ice time.

For all the preseason hubbub over his productive summer, the 23-year-old hadn't showcased any improvements in his wobbly game.

So following his minus-3 performance in the Sabres' 4-1 loss to Columbus on Oct. 10, Myers reached out to Jim Corsi, the goalie coach.

Myers and the affable Corsi, a former NHL netminder, "had a really good conversation," he said.

"He's a guy that's a really good person to talk to try to sort things out," Myers said Saturday after the Sabres prepared for this afternoon's tilt against the Detroit Red Wing inside the First Niagara Center.

That talk, Myers said, "was the turning point for me, especially defensively."

"It really flipped the switch it seemed like," he said inside the Riverside Ice Rink.

Myers played almost 25 minutes the next contest. He hasn't been more than a minus-1 in a game since.

Most importantly, the 6-foot-8 Myers is slowly recapturing his confidence and aggression. He's looking like a slick puck-moving defenseman again.

"Personally, I really like where my game's going," said Myers, who scored a power-play goal in the crease early in Thursday's 4-1 loss in Philadelphia.

Interim Sabres coach Ted Nolan said Myers "has to be aggressive."

"Those type of guys, they're big and they can use their big stick and they can use their big body, protect the puck and move it out of our zone," Nolan said. "He's such a fluid skater, with that reach he can do a lot of things for us."

Reaching this point has been a long, arduous process that started long before Myers' talk with Corsi.

For years – whether it was trying to duplicate his dynamic 2009-10 Calder Trophy season or living up to his seven-year, \$38.5 million contract – Myers "was

putting a tremendous amount of pressure” on himself, he said. His mistakes consumed him.

“I was worried about outside pressure,” he said. “I was worried about all the things I shouldn’t have been worried about. Anytime I made a mistake I just let it pile on me and pile on me. It ended up really hurting me. I thought I started to turn it around toward the end of last year.”

Myers began working with Barbara Meyer, a sports psychologist, during the offseason, something he said has made “a huge difference.”

“It’s been a process, for sure,” said Myers, who has two goals, six points and a minus-10 rating in 24 games. “It’s not like that has been happening overnight here.”

Meyer has worked with Myers to help him “react to things when they happen” and change his mindset.

“I think the biggest help has been when something bad happens, when a mistake is made, when you have a rough one, don’t worry about it,” Myers said. “There’s 82 games.”

He has 58 games left this season with Nolan, who replaced Ron Rolston, a big Myers supporter, four contests ago.

So far, Myers has impressed Nolan, who loves aggressive hockey.

“I’ve seen a world-class defenseman,” Nolan said. “This kid has got everything. He’s got size. He’s got ability. He’s got reach, and he’s got something that very few players have. We got a good one here. We just got to make we get his confidence back to where it was and continue to move forward with him, because those guys are to find.

“So I really like what we saw. There’s a few things in his game we got to correct. Outside of that he’s going to be a great one.”

Myers said he’s still getting to know Nolan. But their first conversation made him feel comfortable.

“He told me that it’s a game of mistakes and at my age I’m going to make mistakes and to not worry about it, just to keep playing,” Myers said. “I think for me just to hear that just made me feel that much more comfortable to take a little bit more risk and to start getting back to my game.

“I think it was in the right direction before. But I think hearing that triggered a little bit more in me to be a little bit more aggressive.”

Sabres want Alexander Sulzer to provide veteran stability; Cody McCormick placed on IR

By Bill Hoppe

Olean Times Herald

November 24, 2013

BUFFALO – As a 29-year-old veteran of 107 NHL games, defenseman Alexander Sulzer gives the struggling Sabres some much-needed stability, interim coach Ted Nolan said.

“We’re running around the defensive zone a little bit too much,” Nolan said Saturday after the Sabres prepared for this afternoon’s game against the Detroit Red Wings inside the First Niagara Center.

That’s why Nolan and Pat LaFontaine, the president of hockey operations, watched Sulzer play Friday in Rochester. The Sabres recalled him following the game.

“We got a lot of young talent,” Nolan said inside the Riverside Ice Rink. “We got to make sure they mature at the right pace. He’s a veteran guy that has been around for a while. He can add some stability back there.”

Sulzer, who’s played 33 games with the Sabres, including one during a brief recall earlier this season, has two goals and seven points in 10 appearances with the Americans in his first AHL stint since 2009-10.

The Sabres waived him shortly before the season started.

“I’m an older guy, even if I don’t want to admit it,” Sulzer said. “He just wants me to be calm on the ice and just play the zone. Don’t freak out when a mistake happens.”

Sulzer practiced Saturday beside Christian Ehrhoff, his old partner. The two Germans formed a strong duo late in 2011-12.

To make room on the 23-man roster, the Sabres placed forward Cody McCormick, who left Thursday’s 4-1 loss in Philadelphia early, on injured reserved.

“Cody’s banged up a little bit,” Nolan said. “I guess modern day you’ve got to say, ‘upper body or lower body.’ Pick your choice. He’s got one of them. He’s out at least a week.”

Meanwhile, John Scott practiced as a defenseman much of Saturday, meaning the tough guy’s likely out against Detroit, a team that rarely fights. Brian Flynn, a regular winger like Scott, centered the fourth line with Marcus Foligno and Corey Tropp, a healthy scratch last game.

“He’s a very intelligent player,” Nolan said about Flynn. “He said he played eight games at center ice last year. With the fourth-line position, we got to make sure we have reliable guys.”

Nolan also put the top line of Matt Moulson, Cody Hodgson and Drew Stafford back together Saturday.

The three players haven’t scored since Nolan took over four games ago.

“My simple philosophy in life is if it ain’t working, you ain’t working hard enough,” Nolan said. “You just got to ... do things maybe you don’t want to do sometimes, and that’s go up the wall, dump it and go get it. Sometimes we want to carry it in and make a nice play.”

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LaFontaine told reporters Friday in Rochester he interviewed at least one person for vacant general manager’s job last week. He wouldn’t reveal the name. LaFontaine said he’s added to his original list of candidates.

Ted Nolan showing faith in Sabres' Drew Stafford despite struggles

By Bill Hoppe

Olean Times Herald

November 22, 2013

BUFFALO – The past is history, Ted Nolan has said. The interim Sabres coach doesn't care about it. Heck, he hasn't even reviewed video of his new team's sorry start.

Sabres winger Drew Stafford has two goals in 24 games this season, zero in the last seven contests.

But Nolan has been giving Stafford, a fourth-liner at times earlier this season, big minutes and opportunities. The 28-year-old is averaging 20:03 in four games under Nolan. He skated 21:28 in Thursday's 4-1 loss in Philadelphia, the most of any Sabres forward.

"I'm extremely grateful," Stafford said Tuesday inside the First Niagara Center. "It's one thing, though, that I'm trying to earn that. I feel as though I have, and it's up to me to continue to earn minutes. I'm not asking for anything. I don't want anything given to me. I want to be able to earn that spot and those minutes."

Yes, Nolan doesn't care about what transpired earlier this trying campaign. But why give someone producing very little offense so much ice time?

"You have to show respect," Nolan said Saturday. "One thing with Stafford, he's been around for a while, and you have to give him players like that respect, let them show what they have."

Stafford called Nolan "really personal" and a coach who "expects and demands a lot out of the players."

"But he's also very nurturing and keeps things very simple in a way," Stafford said. "He breaks it down to the point where it's not really hard to figure out. It's a pretty simple game, compete and make sure that you're giving all your effort out there. He demands a lot out of the players. For someone like me, it makes you want to go through a wall for a guy like that."

Stafford skated on the right wing beside Mikhail Grigorenko and Luke Adam on Thursday. He had been playing with Cody Hodgson and Matt Moulson.

Sulzer back with Sabres

By Pat Malacaro

WGR 550

November 23, 2013

Buffalo, NY (WGR 550) -- The Buffalo Sabres got back to practice on Saturday morning at Bud Bakewell Ice Rink after having Friday off, and Alexander Sulzer joined the team after being recalled from the AHL earlier that morning. The veteran was with a familiar face on the blue line as he and Christian Ehrhoff worked together during paired drills.

The two German born players have been matched up with the blue and gold in the past. Ehrhoff had instant chemistry with Sulzer after he was acquired at the 2012 trading deadline. Head coach Ted Nolan has not been around the team for that long, but admitted that it is one of the reasons for the call up. He had a chance to see Sulzer in action last night against the Utica Comets. The bench boss wanted to see "what kind of influence he has with the young players down there [in Rochester] and see what kind of guy he really is." He added that from what he has been told, and what he saw Sulzer passed those two tests.

At twenty-nine-years-old Sulzer becomes the third oldest Sabre on the blue line. Just Henrik Tallinder and Ehrhoff are older, and that is one thing Nolan likes about Sulzer, adding "he's a veteran guy, and like we said, we've got a lot of young, young talent here. And we've gotta make sure that they mature at the right pace...he can have some stability back there for us." He also thinks that he can help settle the backend down, which has been "running around in our defensive zone a little too much."

The Ehrhoff and Sulzer pairing is not the only one being reunited ahead of tomorrow's game against the Detroit Red Wings. Nolan paired Mark Pysyk with Brayden McNabb during five-man unit drills, in addition to being linked during power play drills. The two former Rochester American linemates worked with Ville Leino, Steve Ott, and Drew Stafford on the second PP unit. That is one indication that Pysyk will be back in the lineup after being a healthy scratch on Thursday.

Pysyk admitted that being benched on Thursday was a wakeup call. But after watching from the press box he does not want to experience that again soon. He believes that being paired with McNabb will be good with the chemistry that already exists, adding that "a familiar face, a familiar player...we played last year together a lot in the American Hockey League. So, I am excited to get back with him." Pysyk recorded 18 points (4G, 14A) in 57 games for the Amerks last season, to go along with his plus-8 rating.

Based on the line combinations during the skate, Mike Weber and Jamie McBain appear to be the extra defensemen for Buffalo. Tallinder and Tyler Myers were

paired, in addition to the groupings of Ehrhoff and Sulzer, and Pysyk and McNabb.

Offensively, the fourth line included Corey Tropp, Brian Flynn, Marcus Foligno, and John Scott. Scott worked his way into drills at various times, and looked like the extra forward at practice. Matt Moulson, Cody Hodgson, and Stafford were matched up offensively, in addition to Ott-Leino-Tyler Ennis, and Zemgus Girgensons-Mikhail Grigorenko-Luke Adam.

Nolan also said that Cody McCormick is expected to miss at least a week with an upper body injury. The forward suffered the injury against the Philadelphia Flyers, and was placed on injured reserve to make room for Sulzer.

The Sabres host the Detroit Red Wings at five o'clock on Sunday afternoon. You can hear all of the action on the flagship home of the Buffalo Sabres Radio Network - WGR Sports Radio 550, starting 4 p.m. with pregame coverage hosted by Brian Koziol.

SULZER RECALLED, McCORMICK OUT AT LEAST A WEEK

By Chris Ryndak

Sabres.com

November 23, 2013

Sabres interim coach Ted Nolan is looking for a calming influence on his blue line. After attending the Rochester Americans home game Friday night with president of hockey operations Pat LaFontaine, the decision to call up defenseman Alexander Sulzer was made.

He'll be in the lineup Sunday evening when Buffalo hosts the Detroit Red Wings at 5 p.m. at First Niagara Center.

Sulzer re-joins the Sabres for his second call-up of the season. He last played on Oct. 12 in Chicago, where he logged 19:20 of ice time. With the Amerks this season, Sulzer has appeared in 10 games and has recorded two goals and five assists.

"One of the reasons we went down is we wanted to see him play," Nolan said after practice at Bud Bakewell Arena at Riverside Park on Saturday. "He's a veteran guy and we've got a lot of young talent here. We need to make sure they mature at the right pace. This guy's a veteran guy that's been around for a while and he can have some stability back there for us."

Sulzer skated with the team Saturday morning and was paired with Christian Ehrhoff. The two have played a lot of hockey together since the Sabres acquired Sulzer from Vancouver at the 2012 NHL Trade Deadline. They were a pair last season before a knee injury ended Sulzer's season 17 games in.

"We had pretty good chemistry last year when we played together and I hope we can continue that," Sulzer said.

Sulzer, 29, is a veteran of 107 NHL games and hopes to provide some stability to the defense. He and Nolan had a good chat about that on the ice after practice.

"I'm an older guy even if I don't want to admit it. I am now and he just wants me to be as calm as I usually play and just try to be solid," Sulzer said. "It's just when it gets scambly a little bit that not everybody starts running around, that we just play in the zone like Teddy wants us to play and just don't freak out if one mistake happens. If one happens, everybody else makes up for it and then we're going to be fine."

It looks like rookie Mark Pysyk will be back in the lineup as well. He skated with Brayden McNabb during practice and the duo worked together on the team's second power-play unit. There is some familiarity between the two as they were paired together in Rochester last year.

Pysyk was a healthy scratch on Thursday in Philadelphia and said he was able to see what adjustments he needs to make in his game by watching the action from up in the press box.

“For myself, I need to be a little more patient in the defensive zone and a lot more assertive, stronger on the puck,” he said.

Cody McCormick was absent from practice after missing the third period on Thursday with what the team called an upper-body injury. Nolan said after practice Saturday that McCormick will be out at least a week.

With McCormick injured, the fourth line had a different look. Brian Flynn skated at center with Marcus Foligno on the left wing and Corey Tropp on the right. Nolan said he’s going to give Flynn an opportunity to play down the middle against Detroit.

“One thing you notice about him is that he’s a very intelligent player. He said he played eight games at center ice last year [with Rochester],” Nolan said. “With the fourth line position, we have to make sure we have reliable guys there to eat up some good minutes and give our top guys some rest. He seems like a very reliable young man.”

26 Matt Moulson – 19 Cody Hodgson – 21 Drew Stafford
63 Tyler Ennis – 23 Ville Leino – 9 Steve Ott
72 Luke Adam – 25 Mikhail Grigorenko – 28 Zemgus Girgensons
82 Marcus Foligno – 65 Brian Flynn – 78 Corey Tropp
32 John Scott

10 Christian Ehrhoff – 52 Alexander Sulzer
20 Henrik Tallinder – 57 Tyler Myers
44 Brayden McNabb – 3 Mark Pysyk
6 Mike Weber – 4 Jamie McBain

30 Ryan Miller
1 Jhonas Enroth

Power Play 1
Moulson – Hodgson – Ennis
Myers – Ehrhoff

Power Play 2
Stafford – Ott – Leino
Pysyk – McNabb

Hope appears out of the ruins for local sports fans

By Bucky Gleason

Buffalo News

November 23, 2013

An old friend with a deep passion for Western New York left me a simple text Saturday that didn't require an explanation. It was the quote of the day from some website that read, "Where hope grows, miracles blossom." It was something any long-suffering Buffalo fan could understand.

Buffalo has cornered the market on hope. The Bills and Sabres spent years selling it by the barrel to unsuspecting suckers who failed to realize they were being held over a barrel. They bought false hope because they felt they had no other choice. Alas, if they looked back, they would realize the Bills and Sabres were hopeless.

But now?

Genuine hope in the Bills and Sabres appears to be making a resurgence after being absent from one or both for far too long. There's a sense recently that Buffalo can claw its way from the depths of sports irrelevancy. In a refreshing departure from the past, the Bills and Sabres appear committed to winning rather than taking your money.

Allow me to suggest that this is the dawn of a new and improved – and for some, unfamiliar – era for tortured Buffalo sports fans. They shouldn't be getting their hopes up too high just yet, but both organizations have shown subtle signs of progress. Sunshine is breaking through the darkness. Finally, both teams appear to be in good hands.

Russ Brandon, Doug Whaley and Doug Marrone have helped changed the culture along One Bills Drive, made possible after Ralph Wilson relinquished his hold over the organization after years of holding it back. Pat LaFontaine was a gift from the hockey gods, made possible after the Sabres fired Darcy Regier.

Let's not forget UB, which is having a great year in football and began a new era in basketball under Bobby Hurley. Terry Pegula is building a palace along Jim Kelley Way that will serve amateur hockey. There's talk of a downtown stadium for the Bills. The waterfront has become a project in motion rather than a local punch line.

Is it me or does the future look bright?

Hope alone doesn't win games, of course, and it certainly doesn't win championships. Both teams need to continue making good decisions and create an atmosphere that attracts free agents. They need to draft well and develop better. In certain areas, they need drastic upgrades in talent. Hope is nothing more than a start in the right direction.

It brings people together and builds confidence and competitiveness and chemistry. It comes from the neck up and can make a team infinitely more dangerous than talent from the neck down. Real hope has been so missing for so long that people forget that it was once a quality Buffalo shared year round.

You need to go back more than two decades to find the last time the Bills won a playoff game and the Sabres won a playoff series in the same year. It was 1992-93, back when the Internet was in its infancy and cell phones were the size of toaster ovens, back when Jim Kelly was leading the Bills and LaFontaine was leading the Sabres.

Kids, ask your parents about May Day. Children who were in kindergarten when Brad May scored the winner over the Bruins have since become parents, for heaven's sake. An entire generation has grown up without seeing the Bills and Sabres simultaneously enjoy any measure of success. It hasn't happened in the lifetime of a college sophomore.

Boston, meanwhile, has won a championship in each of the four major sports since 2005. The Patriots and Red Sox have won three titles apiece in the last 11 years. Both were troubled franchises that were rebuilt from the top. They're proof that titles are within reach if intelligent people who understand sports are placed in the right positions.

Let me be clear. The Bills and Sabres aren't fixed by any means. The Bills haven't won a playoff game since 1995 and will likely miss the postseason again this year. The Sabres haven't won a playoff series since 2007 and are on pace to finish with fewer than 20 victories for only the second time in franchise history.

But there are reasons for optimism.

The Bills appear to have their franchise quarterback in EJ Manuel despite the growing pains ahead. Marrone's no-nonsense approach fits Buffalo. Whaley seems to have a nose for talent. They have a nucleus of good young players. If enough things fall into place, they could make the playoffs this year. If not, they're trending in the right direction.

LaFontaine is working from the bottom. He and Ted Nolan are figuring out which players are worth keeping, which could take another month. He could be several weeks away from hiring a general manager after examining his options. They could be years away from the playoffs. But with him comes a belief that he'll make the right decisions.

You can only hope.

PUTTING BREAST CANCER ON ICE

By Clare Lewis

Sabres.com

November 22, 2013

While the Buffalo Sabres battled on the ice in Philadelphia on Thursday night, the Sabres Alumni Association helped to battle cancer. The 10th Annual Fall Wine Festival was held at First Niagara Center to benefit breast cancer charities in the area.

Hundreds turned out to mingle with Sabres alumni while bidding on items in the silent auction and trying their luck at the basket raffle. Each current Sabres player donated a basket, along with several of the alumni. There was also a silent auction featuring autographed jerseys and memorabilia from various professional sports teams and entertainers.

More than 30 local businesses were on hand to allow attendees to sample food and various wines.

The event first began in 2004 and started in part because several wives of Sabres alumni had been affected by breast cancer. Former Sabres Alumni president Larry Playfair has been involved with the Wine Festival since its inception, and said this was a way for the group to help out the cause. "It started slowly but surely. It's grown over time and now it is huge."

Playfair is thrilled to be able to see old friends who attend the event as well as help out a cause that is close to his heart. The alumni visit from all around the country to be a part of the event, giving them a chance to reconnect with former teammates and meet the fans who remember them fondly.

Proceeds from the event will be donated to the ECMC Mammography Bus, Roswell Park High Risk program in the Breast Center, Hope Chest Buffalo/Niagara, Medina Memorial Hospital and the Janis Foligno Foundation.