



Buffalo Sabres

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Montreal at Buffalo

Associated Press

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Since winning his first game as an NHL coach in 16 years, Ted Nolan and the Buffalo Sabres haven't tasted victory since.

His team won't have an easy assignment Wednesday night when the Sabres try to prevent the visiting Montreal Canadiens from matching their longest win streak of the season.

As part of a massive shakeup Nov. 13 that included the firing of general manager Darcy Regier and coach Ron Rolston, the Sabres brought back Nolan on an interim basis for his second tour of duty behind the bench. Nolan previously coached Buffalo for two seasons before leaving over a contract dispute in 1997 after he was named NHL coach of the year.

Nolan guided the Sabres to a 3-1 victory over Toronto in his first game two days after he was hired, but his team has been outscored 15-5 in four straight losses since.

Buffalo (5-19-1) dropped to 2-10-1 at home with Sunday's 3-1 defeat to Detroit. Cody Hodgson opened the scoring with his team-leading eighth goal, but Steve Ott failed to convert a penalty shot with the game tied in the second period.

"We can't just get by and feel like 1-1 is good," said Ryan Miller, who made 32 saves. "We have to go for it at home, especially with a team playing three in four nights."

With the league's worst record, the Sabres have several areas in dire need of improvement but none more than an offense averaging an NHL-low 1.64 goals.

The power play ranks near the bottom of the league at 14.9 percent and is 3 for 15 since Nolan took over.

"We're not setting the league on fire so we have to make sure we simplify our game and that's in all aspects of it, whether it's 5-on-5 or power play," Nolan told the team's official website. "We just have to make sure we do the simple things, get shots on net, create some rebounds."

One player Nolan needs more from is Matt Moulson, who scored two goals in his Sabres debut Oct. 28 after he was acquired from the New York Islanders, but has none in 11 games since.

Moulson has six goals and two assists in his last seven games against the Canadiens - all coming with the Islanders.

Miler has done his best to keep Buffalo in most games, posting a .919 save percentage that would rank as his best since 2009-10. He is 8-2-1 with a .937 save percentage in his past 11 starts versus Montreal.

The Canadiens (13-9-2), however, enter his matchup having scored 12 goals during a three-game win streak, one shy of their season best set Oct. 10-17.

Max Pacioretty scored twice and Tomas Plekanec also tallied while helping keep scoring leader Sidney Crosby pointless in a 3-2 victory over Pittsburgh on Saturday.

"Every aspect of his game was excellent," coach Michel Therrien said of Plekanec. "He's a smart player. He's playing the right way. He's always in a good position on the ice. He's doing a lot of good things. I'm confident putting guys like that on the ice."

Carey Price stopped 29 shots in the win and will be back in net Wednesday looking to improve on his 2-5-4 record in his last 11 starts against Buffalo. Price, though, has a 2.05 goals-against average in those games.

The Sabres won three of five meetings against the Canadiens last season and are 4-1-1 in the last six in Buffalo.

Nolan preaches trust and communication to Sabres

By Amy Moritz

Buffalo News

November 26, 2013

It goes by many names. Call it faith. Call it trust. Call it support.

Whatever description you use, the Buffalo Sabres have lacked it. And for interim coach Ted Nolan, it's been an indication of the root problems – communication and consistency.

“There’s glimpses of playing well and then we collapse. ... Right now, I don’t think we have too much faith in one another and we have to work on that,” Nolan said as his team prepared to host the Montreal Canadiens at First Niagara Center tonight.

“That’s one of the symptoms of the problem. I think having faith in one another and support – it all comes down to communication. If you don’t talk, you don’t know who has who. Even if there are 17,000 people in the rink, you should be able to hear your defensemen calling out who has who. We’ve just got to be louder. Our communication has to be much better.”

If you want to see if teammates have faith in each other, check out their play in the defensive zone. That’s where players tend to press and second-guess themselves and each other.

The Sabres have struggled all season to be consistent in their own zone. The problem comes when a player decides to help out a teammate, one that doesn’t necessarily need to be helped, leaving opponents open for scoring opportunities. More often than not, the opposition is cashing in.

“In the D-zone you have to have trust that your teammate is going to do the right job and do his job well,” Sabres captain Steve Ott said. “When you see a lack of trust it means there’s duplicate work going on. ... You really have to focus on letting the guy do his job and supporting him properly instead of running in there because once you run in there with double coverage, you blow coverage and leave somebody else open.”

Cody Hodgson explains the trust factor as part of building speed into the game, making your team difficult for opponents to play against. It’s part instinctual and part acquired habit.

“Any time you have trust in guys, it builds speed in the game,” Hodgson said. “You almost know what a guy is going to do with it before he gets the puck. You can already start doing your job because you can count on the other guy to do the easier play. ... It’s just being consistent and knowing what your teammate is going to do. You anticipate that from repetition and doing it over and over again.”

Trust also helps build chemistry, something that isn't just needed among linemates and between defensive pairs. That chemistry needs to be fluid so that the unit on the ice at any given time can work together. And while it may be easy to point to the Sabres' lack of offense (they are last in the league in goals scored with 44), the real key to turning the tide in Buffalo begins in the Sabres' own zone.

"Offense, obviously, can be a sometimes thing but defense you have to have every game," Ott said. "You have to be sound in those positions. And scoring goals, it should come. We're all offensively capable of doing so, we're creating plays but defense is not a sometimes job. It's an everyday battle and you have to be good at it. The good teams in this league are usually strong defensive teams that find a way to score from there."

The last two days of practice have focused a lot on defensive zone play and on communication. Nolan said that it's not growing by leaps and bounds, but that he sees it growing every day.

Ott sees it, too, and understands the importance of sticking with the process and using practices to get better bit by bit.

"It's not going to be a two-day miracle job to be a defensively sound team," Ott said. "We have to do it daily and continue to work and hopefully continue to see progress throughout weeks."

Sabres notebook: Canadian TV deal to boost salary cap

By Amy Moritz

Buffalo News

November 26, 2013

With the biggest media deal in the history of the National Hockey League, Rogers Communications is in, TSN is out and the salary cap is going to get a huge bump.

On Tuesday the NHL and Rogers Communications announced a 12-year deal for the company, which owns SportsNet, to be the exclusive carrier of the league in Canada.

The \$5.2-billion deal begins next season and runs through 2025-26. It is the largest media rights agreement in league history. The agreement ends regional blackouts in Canada, vastly increases the wealth of teams and pushes TSN, the Canadian equivalent of ESPN, out of the NHL game.

Rogers will have editorial control over all platforms of media, including the franchise "Hockey Night in Canada." That will remain on CBC with an agreement reached between the network and Rogers for the next four years.

"We think this deal is historic and forward thinking," Commissioner Gary Bettman said at a news conference in Toronto. "It is a partnership to grow the game, to build and promote the brand and to put our players" in the spotlight more than ever before. "But most important in this deal, the fans win."

Bettman noted that every game involving a Canadian team in the national window – Wednesday, Saturday and Sunday – would be shown nationwide, ending blackouts and regionalization.

But the piece of the story that will most directly affect the Buffalo Sabres is the price tag and its impact on hockey-related revenue.

The television deal will roughly add \$433 million a season in hockey-related revenue, with 50 percent going to the players. And as hockey-related revenue rises, so does the salary cap.

The salary cap for the current season is \$64.8 million, with the Sabres spending around \$57 million.

For next year, they are only on the hook for about \$30 million with seven unrestricted free agents (most notably Ryan Miller, Steve Ott, Matt Moulson and Henrik Tallinder) along with six restricted free agents (notably Tyler Ennis and Marcus Foligno).

The salary cap is expected to jump to the \$70 million range, which gives the Sabres lots of room to play with in signing their own free agents or in pursuing other free agents or big trades.

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The other headline news of the day in the NHL came from a class-action lawsuit filed by 10 former players in Washington, D.C.

All-Star Gary Leeman, who played from 1983-96 for Toronto, Calgary, Montreal, Vancouver and St. Louis, leads the lawsuit.

Three former Sabres have joined – Richie Dunn, Morris Titanic and Rick Vaive – along with Bradley Aitken (Pittsburgh, Edmonton), Darren Banks (Boston), Curt Bennett (St. Louis, New York Rangers, Atlanta), Warren Holmes (Los Angeles), Robert Manno (Vancouver, Toronto, Detroit) and Blair James Stewart (Detroit, Washington, Quebec).

The lawsuit claims the NHL knew, or should have known, about the scientific evidence of the effects of repeated head injuries. It also contends the league continues to put players at risk by allowing fighting, enforcing and creating a culture of violence.

“We believe that this is a lawsuit without merit,” Bettman said in Toronto. “We have been extraordinarily proactive on player safety.”

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Speaking of concussions, Daniel Briere returns to Buffalo tonight with the Montreal Canadiens. The 36-year-old forward missed 10 games after suffering a concussion against Nashville on Oct. 19. It was his third concussion since January 2012.

Briere signed a two-year deal with Montreal in the offseason after playing six years with Philadelphia.

Sabres aim to deny Canadiens a fourth straight win

NHL.com

November 26, 2013

CANADIENS (13-9-2) at SABRES (5-19-1)

TV: RDS, TSN-HABS, MSG-B

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

Season series: The Montreal Canadiens and Buffalo Sabres, longtime Northeast Division rivals, square off for the first time as Atlantic Division foes. This will be the first of four this season after the Sabres took three of five last season. Their last matchup in April 2013 was a 5-1 Canadiens victory, which clinched a playoff berth for Montreal.

Big story: The Sabres have trouble scoring, while the Canadiens don't give up many goals. Buffalo has scored an NHL-low 44 goals and is the only team to average fewer than two goals a game (1.6). Montreal allows the second fewest goals in the league at 2.1 per game.

Team scope:

Canadiens: Montreal comes in winners of three in a row, all over current playoff teams, beating the Minnesota Wild, Washington Capitals and Pittsburgh Penguins. Max Pacioretty had two goals in the 3-2 win against Pittsburgh on Saturday.

"There's obviously going to be times where things don't go our way. ... We've played some good teams and had some success last week, and now we have to build on that moving forward," defenseman Josh Gorges said after practice Monday.

During the winning streak, Montreal has scored three power-play goals. They rank in the top five in power-play percentage and much of that has to do with puck-moving defenseman Andrei Markov running the point.

"Everybody sees the big shot from P.K. [Subban] but [Andrei Markov] controlling things back there, when he wasn't healthy obviously it was a big hit to our power play," Brian Gionta said Monday. "When he's back, it makes it look so easy. He's the real key to it. Everything goes through him. The way he sees the ice is unbelievable."

Sabres: Don't blame the losing streak on Ryan Miller, who started and kept Buffalo in three of the four losses. Miller allowed nine goals but has stopped 100 of 109 shots (.927 save percentage). In his 18 starts, Miller has faced 30 or more shots 16 times.

"There's glimpses of playing well, then we collapse. We just got to learn to do it on a consistent basis and having faith in one another. Right now, I don't think we have too much faith in one another and we have to work on that. When things aren't going well, that's usually what happens," interim head coach Ted Nolan told the Sabres website Monday.

Who's hot: The Sabres have scored five goals in four games, but Tyler Ennis has figured in on three of those with two goals and an assist. ... Pacioretty has five goals and is a plus-5 in his past three games. Goalie Carey Price hasn't allowed more than two goals in his past five starts.

Injury report: Forward Cody McCormick (upper body) is the only player on injured reserve for Buffalo. ... Montreal is also fairly healthy with defenseman Davis Drewiske (shoulder) on IR and winger Rene Bourque questionable with a lower-body injury.

Sabres' No. 1 scoring line providing little offense

By Bill Hoppe

Olean Times Herald

November 27, 2013

BUFFALO – Just under eight minutes into the Sabres' 3-1 loss Sunday, winger Drew Stafford created one of the struggling team's few highlight-reel goals this season by stealing the puck from Detroit's Darren Helm above the left circle and dishing to an open Cody Hodgson in the slot.

The center then waited for Jonas Gustavsson to go down before tucking the puck past the outstretched goalie.

It was only the Sabres' 41st goal in their 25th game. That's a paltry 1.6 per contest.

The Sabres would score 134 goals over 82 games at their anemic pace, 17 fewer than the worst offense in NHL history, the 1997-98 Tampa Bay Lightning.

"It's definitely disappointing because we have a lot of skill in here, a lot of guys that are capable of scoring goals," Stafford said Tuesday after the Sabres prepared for tonight's tilt against the Montreal Canadiens inside the First Niagara Center. "It just hasn't happened yet."

Stafford comprises one-third of perhaps the league's worst No. 1 line.

To wit:

- Stafford has two goals this season and one in his last 19 games. He has a 3.1 shooting percentage (65 shots).
- Left winger Matt Moulson has zero goals in 11 games after scoring twice in his rollicking Oct. 28 debut.
- Hodgson, the team's top scorer with eight goals and 17 points, has two points in five games under interim coach Ted Nolan.

Still, Nolan has kept the trio intact, only breaking it up for Thursday's 4-1 loss in Philadelphia.

In the recent past, if the Sabres' top scoring combination was struggling, players would've been dispersed.

But Nolan wants to be "consistent with our message and our delivery."

"In the past where if the line doesn't score in a game, everything's blown up," Stafford said. "To have a little bit of continuity and consistency, continuing to let

us practice together and try to develop some chemistry. It's great. I really appreciate that."

Hodgson likes building "some stability within the team."

"Playing with guys consistently just builds the same kind of trust in your teammates," he said. "You know what they're going to do. They're going to read off that so you don't have to read and react. You can just know what our team's going to do and go from there."

Moulson said Nolan's "showing a lot of faith in us."

"We better prove him right," he said. "Nothing comes easy in the NHL. You got to continue to work for what you have. Obviously, we have to do more."

It appeared Moulson would do much more following his arrival from the New York Islanders in the Thomas Vanek trade.

But the 30-year-old, one of the NHL's best net-front presences, is mired in the second-longest goal drought of his career. He went 13 games without scoring last season, although he finished with 15 in 47 games. He had six goals in 11 contests before the deal.

"I got to figure some things out with my game and make sure ... I'm getting those dirty goals in front," Moulson said. "I think you just have to find a way when you're in a slump or something I've been in. I've been in lots of slumps in my career. You continue to work. It seems like you get a dirty goal off your leg or something, all of a sudden, boom, it sparks something."

Stafford believes the line could spark something if it starts playing better defensively.

"It starts in our own end," he said. "If we're spending 30, 40 seconds in our own end, you're out of gas by the time you can get any offense going. We're trying to start there, be more solid there and that can lead to more zone time in the other team's end."

Simplifying might help the line, too.

"My simple philosophy in life is if it ain't working, you ain't working hard enough," Nolan said after reuniting the line Saturday. "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."

Sabres' Ted Nolan on Mikhail Grigorenko's two games: 'I like what I saw'

By Bill Hoppe

Olean Times Herald

November 26, 2013

BUFFALO – Anybody will notice 19-year-old center Mikhail Grigorenko's skill set, interim Sabres coach Ted Nolan said.

"He sees the ice very well," Nolan said this afternoon following practice inside the First Niagara Center. "He's a big man. He has a tremendous shot."

But Nolan also sees "a young kid" within all that talent.

"A young kid that's finding his way," he noted.

That's why Nolan's exercising patience with the rookie, who's pointless in two appearances under the new coach.

"It all comes to maturity before he'll be able to really demonstrate that skill set at the National Hockey League level," Nolan said. "Since we put him with (Zemgus) Girgensons and Luke Adam, they seem to be age group where they feel comfortable with one another. So I like what I saw, and we'll continue to evaluate."

Grigorenko's compete level has been questioned throughout his 42-game NHL career.

"He's competing. He's trying," Nolan said. "As long as you compete and you try, you got to like it."

Nolan wasn't even playing Grigorenko at first. He scratched the Russian twice before the NHL denied Grigorenko's conditioning assignment to Rochester.

Grigorenko then approached Nolan and Pat LaFontaine, the president of hockey operations.

"I just told them, 'You never saw me play,' which is true," Grigorenko said.

Grigorenko, a fourth-liner much of this season, has skated 12:22 and 11:04, taking a regular shift.

"The last two games my compete was really good," Grigorenko said. "I skated well."

He added: "That gives you confidence, through all game long you play with the same players."

Buffalo Sabres's new coach Ted Nolan stresses simplicity

By Mike Ashmore

The Trenton Trentonian

November 26, 2013

PHILADELPHIA —The eye test backs it up, and the standings certainly do as well: The Buffalo Sabres are the worst team in the National Hockey League.

But there is hope. As a result of having won just five of their first 25 games, posting a 5-19-1 mark that's good for an NHL-low 11 points, the organization recently cleaned house. GM Darcy Regier and head coach Ron Rolston are out, replaced by names from Buffalo's past; Pat LaFontaine was named the team's President of Hockey Operations, while Ted Nolan was brought back behind the bench as head coach for the first time since the 1996-97 season.

His players said that Nolan almost immediately simplified things in order to generate better results.

"Ever since the change, it's just been getting back to the basics," said defenseman Tyler Myers, who won the Calder Trophy as the league's top rookie in 2010.

"That's been talked about a lot since Ted came in, but it's a process. It's not easy getting out of a hole like this. We just have to stick with it and make sure we're competing each and every night to try to get to the point where it becomes a habit for us."

While the results haven't changed immediately – Buffalo won its first game under Nolan but has since dropped its last four – this was more about changing the culture for a struggling franchise.

"He just wants us to work hard," said controversial forward John Scott. "If you're not going to work hard, you're not going to play. It's one of those things where he comes in and is just kind of feeling out what kind of players he has and what kind of team he has...that's the easiest way to put it, he's just making everyone accountable for themselves."

It may be Nolan who has the biggest challenge, however. The former Jack Adams Award winner hasn't been in the NHL since a two-season stint with the Islanders ended in 2007, and is faced with evaluating his players without having had the luxury of being with them in training camp.

"It's tough halfway through," he said. "The guys are already set in their ways and doing certain things. With those habits, it's difficult sometimes. But we're patient with them, and hopefully within a very short period of time, we'll see some change."

Nolan finds chemistry with 'Age Group' line

By Matthew Collier

WGR 550

November 26, 2013

Buffalo Sabres' interim head coach Ted Nolan now knows everyone's name. During the first few games, he quipped that he was forced to say, "Hey you!" on the bench.

Now he's got it though. And now he can start hunting for players' skill sets that gel together.

At a glance, putting 19-year-old Mikhail Grigorenko with 19-year-old Zemgus Girgensons and 23-year-old Luke Adam on a line might appear to be the antithesis of what Nolan griped over when he took the reins from Ron Rolston. The Sabres' interim honcho said he was partial to the veteran players and felt it unfair that under-20s had to face the league's best.

But he's been forced per the NHL to give Grigorenko a shot – they rejected Buffalo's attempt to send him to Rochester for a few weeks.

"Anyone can see his skill set," Nolan said following Tuesday's practice. "He's a big man and has a tremendous shot. It all comes down to maturity before he'll be able to demonstrate the skill at the National Hockey League level.

"Since we put him with Girgensons and Adam, they are the same age group where they feel comfortable with one another"

Adam was having a super year in Rochester, leading the Rochester Amerks in goals at the time of his call up. And Girgensons is 19 going on 29 – especially now that he's got the Movember look going.

It turns out the unexpected linefellows – all of which consider themselves natural centers – turned in a darn good performance against the Detroit Red Wings. Girgensons was dominant at times, once ringing a blazing shot off the post and another having a partial breakaway that was thwarted by a should-have-been penalty.

Adam played a different type of game vs. Detroit than we've ever seen from him in the NHL. He back-checked hard, threw his body around and added some life to the ice.

"It comes with maturity, it comes with age, experience, all those things," Adam said. "I feel a lot more comfortable getting pucks on the walls, winning battles, getting pucks out. It's so important at the NHL level to be good at the blue lines."

The results of the line didn't show up in the form of a goal, but it did in puck possession numbers.

Here are their Corsi % from BUF vs. DET (Corsi % is percentage of total shot attempts taken while on-ice)

Girgensons: 54.5%

Grigorenko: 55.6%

Adam: 50%

Why the success? In part it was because Cody Hodgson, Matt Moulson and Drew Stafford took the brunt of future Hall of Famer Henrik Zetterberg's line. It also could be good old fashioned chemistry. Girgensons and Adam spent all last year together in Rochester – though not often on the same line.

“I think a lot of it is about the off-ice chemistry,” Girgensons said. “You know the guy and you feel comfortable. He's been in the NHL before, but he's not a super-vet. It's easier to play with a guy who's younger too. It takes off the pressure.”

They were only bettered by the Brian Flynn, Corey Tropp, Marcus Foligno line in Corsi percentage – but spent more time on ice by about five minutes each.

How long will Nolan keep them together? It's hard to say. He told WGR on Tuesday that and Hockey Ops President Pat LaFontaine are spending countless hours analyzing the roster. There's a good argument to be made that Tropp could use more minutes and that others are deserving of losing minutes. So shake-ups are probable.

At least against Montreal, it appears the Age Group line will be back together again. We'll see if they keep playing above their youth.

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Nolan's lines were identical to those vs. Detroit. Still no signs of Cody McCormick.

SABRES FOCUS ON IMPROVING POWER PLAY

By Chris Ryndak

Sabres.com

November 26, 2013

Buffalo Sabres interim coach Ted Nolan has been on the job for almost two weeks now and continues to work on getting players settled in on his systems and the types of things he expects from them.

In addition to even-strength play, the power play is an aspect of the game the team looks to continue to improve on. The Sabres are 3-for-15 with 25 shots on goal with the man-advantage in the five games since Nolan was put in charge.

The team spent time working on the power play Tuesday morning at First Niagara Center in preparation for their home game against the Montreal Canadiens on Wednesday at 7 p.m.

The first unit featured Matt Moulson, Cody Hodgson and Tyler Ennis up front with Tyler Myers and Christian Ehrhoff at the points. Ville Leino, Steve Ott, Drew Stafford, Brayden McNabb and Mark Pysyk made up the second unit, with Luke Adam rotating in and out.

Nolan said that in order to be successful, the units need to keep making simple plays and generate more traffic in the areas around the crease.

“We’re not setting the League on fire so we have to make sure we simplify our game and that’s in all aspects of it, whether it’s 5-on-5 or power play,” he said. “We just have to make sure we do the simple things, get shots on net, create some rebounds. A majority of the goaltenders in this league will stop you even if you have a point-blank shot from the slot. We have to create some traffic in front of it.”

The team spent time working on maintaining possession in the offensive third with the man advantage and reading the types of defensive coverage they’re facing.

“You just have to take what they give you. Every team is pretty much the same,” Leino said. “They pressure when they don’t have possession, they’re trying to block shots and so on.”

Nolan has talked about how the trust level on the ice may not be very high at the moment, but he said Tuesday that he’s seen progress in that regard the past few days.

“I see it growing, not on leaps and bounds, but I see it growing every day. The guys are getting a little bit more comfortable in what’s expected and using their

ability, which they have, he said. “Ville Leino’s, I think, a really highly skilled player but he was playing a little bit differently than what his skill set is. So we’ve got to get him back to that. I think it all has to do with comfort zone.”

One of the first changes Nolan made to the lineup when he took over behind the bench on Nov. 13 was moving Leino back to center ice.

“It’s been pretty good. It’s a lot more work in the defensive zone so you don’t really get to rest at all but it’s been better,” Leino said. “I think last game for me was pretty good even though there was not a lot of goals or so, but it’s been better and I feel more comfortable.”

In trying to foster an atmosphere in which players can thrive out of familiarity, the Sabres once again practiced with no changes to the line combinations or defensive pairings. Left wing Matt Moulson has skated almost exclusively with center Hodgson since the team acquired him from the New York Islanders on Oct. 27. Stafford has been their linemate as of late.

“The more you play with guys, the more you feel comfortable out there,” Moulson said. “I know it’s definitely the case with myself, I think. The more you get to know guys, their tendencies, it makes reading and reacting a lot easier out there.”

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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

MAKING HIS CASE

By Kris Baker – SabresProspects.com

Sabres.com

November 26, 2013

Sudbury Wolves forward Nicholas Baptiste (2013, third round) gave Hockey Canada decision makers much to think about Monday, using his speed and energy to produce an assist and several other scoring chances as Team OHL dropped a 3-2 shootout decision to Team Russia at the Subway Super Series. The game was played in front of a standing-room only crowd at the Sudbury Arena where Baptiste's Wolves play their home games.

Baptiste had his powerful game on display throughout, starting with a steal and a shot on goal in the game's fourth minute. He secured the helper on his first shift of the second period when he sped down the left side, made a move to his backhand, and slid a beautiful pass across the crease to Niagara IceDogs forward Carter Verhaeghe (TOR) to tie the game at 2-2.

The Subway Super Series is one of many evaluation vehicles used by Hockey Canada to formulate their roster for the 2014 IIHF World Junior Championship. Baptiste's Monday effort, along with his 18 goals through the Wolves 25 games this season, should put him in the mix for a checking-line role when Canada announces their Selection Camp roster in early December. The Canadians open the tournament in Malmo, Sweden on Dec. 26 versus Germany.

For more on all the youngsters in the Sabres pipeline, check out Kris Baker's web site - sabresprospects.com. You can also follow him on Twitter @sabresprospects for in-game updates throughout the week on any Buffalo prospects that are in action.