



Buffalo Sabres

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Sabres-Kings Preview

By Taylor Bechtold

Associated Press

November 6, 2013

Following a key injury and failed comeback effort, the Los Angeles Kings have lost their momentum on this home-heavy portion of the schedule.

Perhaps a date with the NHL's worst club can get things going back in the right direction.

With Jeff Carter uncertain to return, the Kings seek their fourth win in five home games Thursday night against a Buffalo Sabres team trying to win consecutive games for the first time.

Los Angeles (9-6-0) won four of six to begin a stretch of eight of nine on its own ice, but came up short in a 4-3 loss Saturday in which it outshot visiting Nashville 38-17.

The Kings faced a two-goal deficit heading into the third period before rallying to even things up on a Mike Richards' power-play score with 8:42 remaining. The Predators, though, went back ahead with 3:56 left.

"We had a lot of shots, but maybe we should have got a little bit more bodies in front of them," said center Anze Kopitar, who has two goals and two assists in the last two games.

Kopitar and Richards, who has three goals and six points in the last six games, will try to continue that production with Carter possibly missing his second straight contest.

According to reports, the high-scoring forward was expected to miss at least a week after sustaining a lower-body injury in a 4-3 overtime victory over San Jose on Oct. 30.

Carter, who paced the Western Conference with 26 goals last season, is tied for the team lead with five and ranks among the NHL leaders with a 62.1 faceoff percentage.

His likely absence certainly hurts a Los Angeles offense that sits near the top of the league with 32.9 shots per game but hasn't been able to finish on its opportunities with 2.6 goals per game.

The Kings also could be without center Jarret Stoll, who played only a minute in the second period Saturday before leaving with an upper-body injury.

Los Angeles figures to have an easier time breaking through against a Buffalo team that has allowed among the most shots (36.4) and goals (3.1) per game in the league.

Ryan Miller, 2-10-0 with a 3.09 goals-against average, has faced an NHL-high 38.0 shots per game and needed 47 saves to give the Sabres (3-13-1) a 5-4 shootout win at San Jose on Tuesday. He's 4-0-1 with a 1.58 GAA in his last five starts against the Kings.

"To go on the road and play a team like San Jose and come in here and get two points is a big thing for us," coach Ron Rolston said. "It's our obligation now to build on that as a team."

Cody Hodgson, who sealed the win by scoring in the fourth round of the shootout, leads the Sabres with five goals and eight assists. Defenseman Henrik Tallinder has scored in consecutive games for the first time since 2006.

Los Angeles' Jonathan Quick may get a chance to bounce back after stopping only 13 of 17 shots against the Predators. Buffalo ranks 29th in the NHL with 1.71 goals per game.

While the Kings have won six of eight at home against the Sabres, they've dropped six of the last eight matchups overall.

In the most recent meeting, Kopitar provided their only scores in a 4-2 home loss Oct. 8, 2011.

Sabres' Stafford wants to reverse slow start

By John Vogl

Buffalo News

November 6, 2013

LOS ANGELES — Drew Stafford hasn't lost faith in himself, even if plenty of others have. He knows he can be a difference maker and positive influence when given the right opportunity.

He and the Buffalo Sabres hope their signature game can be a springboard toward better times.

Stafford shined during the Sabres' 5-4 shootout win over San Jose on Tuesday. He had one goal, two points, brought speed to the offense and balance to the penalty kill while matching his season high with 26 shifts.

While the night wasn't perfect, it was fun for a change. He and his teammates want to carry that feeling into tonight's game against the Los Angeles Kings in Staples Center.

"It's got to start somewhere," Stafford said. "You can take all the positives you want from a loss, but when you win one, that can make it even better."

Stafford, in his eighth NHL season and third year of a four-year deal that pays \$4 million annually, has mirrored the organization in having a rough season. He hasn't found a home under coach Ron Rolston.

Part of it is Stafford's doing. For instance, he had a front-row seat at the top of the crease when Dallas opened the scoring last week. As a result, he played a season-low 6:13 in the Stars' victory.

Drops in desire have been noticeable at times, but the Dallas incident may have been a carryover from the previous game, when Stafford was penalized for no apparent reason. The Sabres were penalty-taking fiends against Tampa Bay, but Stafford worked hard short-handed to keep Buffalo close. When crunch time came and the Sabres needed a tying goal at five-on-five, Rolston pinned Stafford to the bench without explanation.

"The type of role I've been playing, I'm just trying to make sure my penalty killing is good and making sure I'm getting pucks in, playing a good defensive role the best I can," Stafford said. "But to get on the offensive side of things – because I feel like that's the kind of player I am – to produce and get on the score sheet that way is definitely huge.

"Hopefully, I can continue to build and keep producing."

The Sabres need production from Stafford. Goals have been few and far between on the youth-laden squad. As a former 30-goal scorer who's also topped 20 twice, he needs to accomplish more than two goals and five points in 17 games.

Stafford's paltry numbers have earned him a spot on the fourth line, but his performance Tuesday helped him escape it.

"We're trying to get him different looks, different opportunities to get himself going," Rolston said. "The veterans have to help out with the development of some of these players."

The vets and rookies can take a lot from the rare victory. They built 3-1 and 4-3 leads in the third period against an NHL powerhouse. More impressively, they didn't let the Sharks pull ahead despite a furious rally in the rollicking building.

"We played an unbelievable team and we came out with a win," center Marcus Foligno said. "We expect to play hard like this, and this was a huge game, a confidence-builder. It was fun, and we've got to keep that going."

They've got back-to-back tests to see if the good times will roll. The Kings boast a 9-6 record. Buffalo visits Anaheim on Friday, and the Ducks entered Wednesday's games atop the Western Conference at 12-3-1.

"To go on the road and play a team like San Jose and get two points was a big thing for us," Rolston said.

"It's our obligation now to build on that as a team. I liked our effort, and it all goes back to that. It goes back to execution and effort. If we can do that for 60-minute spans, we're going to win hockey games."

Sabres notebook: NHL confirms no-goal call was correct

By John Vogl

Buffalo News

November 6, 2013

LOS ANGELES — The Sabres not only got away with one, the NHL says it's justice that they did.

San Jose feels it beat Buffalo in overtime Tuesday night, but the standings and the league tell a different story. The Sharks did indeed push the puck over the goal line during their 5-4 shootout loss to Buffalo, but referee Mike Leggo didn't see it and officials in Toronto didn't have time to review the play.

With that, Buffalo enters tonight's game in Los Angeles with a victory over one of the NHL's elite teams in the previous game.

The play in question came with three minutes left in OT. San Jose's Tyler Kennedy pinged the post, and Tommy Wingels pushed the rebound under goaltender Ryan Miller and over the goal line.

Defenseman Tyler Myers quickly kicked it back out. Leggo blew the whistle and signaled no goal. Officials in Toronto didn't notice the puck went in until after play had resumed, which was too late to change anything, so there was no call to the refs.

The NHL told Elliotte Friedman of CBC that the goal didn't count because of Rule 78.5, which in part reads a goal is disallowed "when the referee deems the play has been stopped, even if he had not physically had the opportunity to stop play by blowing his whistle."

"Had we called a goal against Buffalo it would have been wrong because it shouldn't have been a goal," Mike Murphy, NHL senior vice president of hockey operations, told Friedman. "We should have done the headsets because any controversy would have died. This type of play is not a rarity.

"The optics would have been better if we got him to put on the headset and asked what he was seeing."

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It appears the Sabres won't miss Teemu Selanne's farewell season after all.

The Anaheim Ducks' legend needed oral surgery after taking a high-stick to the mouth Oct. 29. The 43-year-old, who said over the summer that he was coming back for one final season, was scheduled to miss at least two weeks. Buffalo hosted the Ducks on Saturday and will visit Anaheim on Friday, with both games falling in the absence window.

Selanne accelerated his return date, though, and came back for Wednesday's home game against Phoenix.

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The Sabres will get their first look at old friend Robyn Regehr since trading him to Los Angeles last season. Buffalo acquired two second-round draft picks for the veteran defenseman.

Regehr has found a home in L.A. and re-signed for two years at \$3 million per season. The 33-year-old is fifth on the Kings in ice time at 19:33 per game. He has two assists in 15 outings.

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The sun was shining in Southern California, and the Sabres got to enjoy it thanks to the collective bargaining agreement. Each team needs to schedule four days off, with up to two on the road, for every full calendar month.

"There's rules, and we haven't really had a day off," coach Ron Rolston said. "You can't count a travel day as a day off. We have to do what we have to do.

"You'd like to practice, but also with the schedule in an Olympic year, you've got to make sure your guys are physically ready to play. You're in the double-edged sword of you've got to prepare, but you've also got to make sure they have the energy to play another three in four nights."

Patrick Kaleta adjusting to life in AHL

By Kevin Oklobzija
Democrat and Chronicle
November 6, 2013

ROCHESTER, N.Y. - Patrick Kaleta said it was not easy coming to grips with his demotion to the Rochester Americans, but the veteran winger vows to revamp his game and get back to the NHL.

Kaleta was placed on waivers by the Buffalo Sabres on Saturday and assigned to the Amerks on Sunday after he went unclaimed.

Sabres general manager Darcy Regier said that in order for the oft-suspended right winger to be an effective player in the NHL, he must find a way to play within the rules.

Kaleta is coming off a 10-game suspension for an illegal hit to the jaw of Columbus Blue Jackets defenseman Jack Johnson. He has been suspended four times in his six-year NHL career, including twice since March.

"The past couple days have been really hard for me," Kaleta said Tuesday after his first practice with the Amerks. "I have no doubt in my mind I am going to get better."

He will work not only with the Amerks coaching staff but also with newest Sabres pro scout Randy Cunneynworth, who was his first pro coach (with the Amerks in 2006-07).

Kaleta's game has always been based on a hard-charging, swift-skating, attack-on-the-forecheck style. And while body checking is still a big part of pro hockey, the NHL has become even more vigilant in punishing hits to the head and hits on vulnerable opponents.

MORE: Why Kaleta was suspended

Over the years, Kaleta, 27, has built a reputation as a player who doesn't always back away from a dangerous hit.

He says he must now err on the side of caution. If there's a chance the opponent is vulnerable, he'll need to let up or avoid contact.

"Part of hockey is playing physical and playing the body," Kaleta said. "It's taking out those 50/50 plays. It's about becoming an effective hockey player. I'm not effective sitting out (serving a suspension)."

The suggestion has been made that the NHL might have had a hand in the Sabres' decision to waive Kaleta and send him to the Amerks. There has never been any proof or confirmation.

Asked if he has a guess on whether the NHL was involved, Kaleta said, "My guess is my guess."

Amerks coach Chadd Cassidy said Kaleta isn't playing in Wednesday's game against the Hamilton Bulldogs. Since Kaleta hasn't played since Oct. 10, Cassidy wants to allow him to fully acclimate. He'll play Friday against the Binghamton Senators.

"He's probably not going to be an offensive dynamo, but he's a guy that can certainly help your team out and be a good forechecker," Cassidy said. "He's got to be a physical presence but he's got to learn to play the right way."

Kaleta has scored one goal in his past 65 games with the Sabres, dating to the 2011-12 season. But he did produce 10 goals and five assists in 55 games in 2009-10.

He broke into pro hockey with the Amerks in 2006-07 and hasn't played in the American Hockey League since January 2008.

In 306 career NHL games, Kaleta scored 27 goals and 24 assists. He had six goals and 13 assists, plus 242 penalty minutes in 87 games with the Amerks.

He made it clear he's not here just for rebuilding his own game.

"If I can somehow help out other guys and improve their careers as well as mine, then it's going to be a positive experience," he said.

Kings try to deny Sabres second straight road win

By Davis Harper

NHL.com

November 6, 2013

SABRES (3-13-1) at KINGS (9-6-0)

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

Last 10: Buffalo 3-7-0; Los Angeles 6-4-0

Season series: This is the first of two meetings, with the second coming in Buffalo on Nov. 12. The Buffalo Sabres and Los Angeles Kings rarely face one another -- the most recent meeting came more than two seasons ago -- though the Sabres are 3-0-1 against the Kings since the 2008-09 season.

Big story: One of these teams is coming off a loss, and the other a win. Can you guess which is which? The answer may surprise you.

The Sabres won their third game of the season on Tuesday night, a back-and-forth, shootout affair with the San Jose Sharks at the SAP Center, to start a three-game California road trip. The Kings have been off since Saturday, when their comeback bid against the Nashville Predators came up short in a 4-3 defeat.

Kings defenseman Robyn Regehr will face his former team for the first time since Buffalo traded him to Los Angeles on April 1, 2013, for two second-round draft picks.

Team scope:

Sabres: Too often this season, the youthful Sabres have played well but responded poorly when the opposition capitalizes. Against San Jose on Tuesday, the Sabres weren't perfect, conceding first and ultimately allowing four goals on 51 shots, but Buffalo responded positively to every setback. When San Jose scored a late equalizer, the Sabres kept battling through overtime and Cody Hodgson sealed it in the shootout.

"We just wanted to play hockey, play a good, solid [game], the way we want to play. Don't get down on ourselves because, yeah there were some mistakes out there from our side, but don't get down after that. What do we do after the mistakes are made?" veteran defenseman Henrik Tallinder said. "And I thought that was the biggest step in my eyes -- to see what we did after the mistake and I thought we did it like nothing happened and we stood up for ourselves."

Kings: Los Angeles is looking to rebound after suffering its third loss in eight games at Staples Center on Saturday. Despite outshooting the Predators 38-17, the Kings lacked a killer instinct around the net. That is perhaps a symptom of

skating for the first time this season without center Jeff Carter, who is on injured reserve with a lower-body injury. Tyler Toffoli started his first game of the season in his place, taking five shots and assisting on Mike Richards' third-period goal in 19:23 of ice time.

Jonathan Quick conceded four goals on 17 shots, and Los Angeles' slumping penalty kill allowed two goals.

Who's hot: Hodgson has a goal and two assists over his past two games for the Sabres. ... Anze Kopitar has 10 points (three goals, seven assists) over his past 10 games for the Kings. Kopitar has two goals and six assists in five career games against the Sabres.

Injury report: Buffalo defenseman Mike Weber (upper body) is on injured reserve. Left wing John Scott is serving a suspension. ... In addition to Carter, Kings center Jarret Stoll (upper body) is questionable.

NHL's Mike Murphy explains Sabres-Sharks phantom goal

By Elliotte Friedman

CBC

November 6, 2013

Spoke this morning with NHL Senior Vice-President of Hockey Operations Mike Murphy about last night's "phantom goal" that would have given San Jose a 5-4 overtime victory over Buffalo. Instead, the Sabres scored an impressive shootout win, probably their high point of the season so far.

The league views this under the prism of Rule 78.5 -- the world-famous "Intent to Blow." If the referee intends to blow his whistle to stop the play, that supersedes everything.

Here is what Murphy said:

"We have in a week two, three or four plays when the puck goes in the net as the whistle goes. What we look for is how strong a referee's signal is, how committed he is to his call.

"We don't want to undermine the referee... have people watching saying, 'See, see, see, they don't agree,' so before we put him on the headset we're looking to see how strong he is on his call."

The one thing that drives the NHL crazy about these things is people judging it in slow motion. You'd be better off sword-fighting a swarm of gnats, because technology makes that too simple, but Murphy and his co-workers do try to work through this stuff at real speed.

This is what he saw:

"[Referee Mike] Leggo waves it off when the puck hits the post and starts to come to the net as a scramble develops. [In the NHL's video review room in Toronto] we're still looking at the puck off the post, then see the play with Leggo approaching net, putting the whistle in his mouth and he waves aggressively.

"The optics would have been better if we got him to put on the headset and asked what he was seeing... We spoke after the game, I told him it did go in, we probably would get some pushback and should have gotten him over [to the headset] for the optics of the review."

Interestingly, the review would have happened before the league office actually knew the puck was in the net. It's not uncommon to review shots off the post or wild scrambles near the line, but like San Jose's broadcast team (Buffalo's didn't show it), Murphy and his mates didn't realize it was a goal until after play resumed. A goal cannot count in that situation.

Despite all this, Murphy is adamant it was the right call under Rule 78.5.

"Had we called a goal against Buffalo it would have been wrong, because it shouldn't have been a goal," he said. "We should have done the headsets, because any controversy would have died. This type of play is not a rarity."

NHL says no-goal call in Sharks-Sabres right under 'intent to blow'

By Brian Stubits

CBS Sports

November 6, 2013

On Tuesday night the Buffalo Sabres went into San Jose as the biggest underdog the NHL had seen in years and yet they came out as victors. Only problem is most feel on Wednesday morning they shouldn't have.

The Sharks scored what appeared to be the game-winner in overtime only it didn't count. It seemed like the problem was that the play, where Tommy Wingels shoved the puck across the line under Ryan Miller, wasn't recognized at first by either the San Jose or Buffalo broadcasts and thus Toronto missed it too.

Well if you're to believe the NHL on Wednesday, it wouldn't have mattered had the folks in Toronto seen the video anyway. It still wouldn't have counted. Senior Vice President of Hockey Operation Mike Murphy told Elliotte Friedman of the CBC that the infamous intent to blow the whistle was in play.

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...

"Had we called a goal against Buffalo it would have been wrong, because it shouldn't have been a goal," he said. "We should have done the headsets, because any controversy would have died. This type of play is not a rarity."

Indeed, the optics of it do look bad. What makes it even worse is how it sounds; the whistle comes in well after the puck is in the net. If there was intent to blow the whistle while the puck was in the crease after hitting the bar then it sure took the referee a long time to actually blow the whistle and sadly to say, it doesn't look like he was fumbling with it in his hands or anything.

Sometimes it's OK to simply admit a call was missed. It happens so fast on the ice it's forgivable every once in a while, because this reasoning just don't seem to fit the play here. While it would sting the Sharks, mistakes happen, the Sabres sure know a thing or two about that.

In the end it doesn't seem like the biggest deal in the world, one point isn't going to keep the Sharks out of the playoffs nor will the extra point help the Sabres to anything better than last place this season. However in the Pacific Division one point, and especially one Regulation/Overtime Win, could loom large.

NHL's awful 'intent to blow' rule is applied, disaster ensues

By Sean Gentile

Sporting News

November 6, 2013

Wherever the San Jose Sharks end up in the standings—maybe they win the Western Conference, maybe they squeak into the playoffs—the NHL should cross its fingers and hope they wouldn't be helped by another point.

Tuesday night, the Sharks scored a goal that should've beaten the Buffalo Sabres (considering that it was the Sabres, they should've scored a bunch more, but that's San Jose's fault).

That's a goal.

Oh man, that's **really** a goal.

But when is a goal not a goal? In the moments between a referee's visual observation and the act of forcing air into a whistle and creating a sound. That can often take several seconds (It cannot).

So, we have this: "The referee was in the act of blowing the whistle to stop play. The action is not reviewable," according to David Pollak of the San Jose Mercury News.

It's not referee Mike Leggo's fault, really. Missed calls happen. More than anything, this is a failure of rule application and the league's video review process.

Leggo probably shouldn't have blown the whistle at all, and beyond that, it's tough to argue that much time could elapse between the decision to blow a whistle and actually blowing it. Most importantly, he blew the whistle after the puck crossed the line. While the puck was in the net, his whistle wasn't at his lips. Watch (and listen to) the video again. Doesn't seem to be much intent there.

The "intent to blow" rule is debatable, at best, when applied correctly. At its worst, it's a catch-all for referee error. If you're going to fall back on something as nebulous as intent, as the league has, at least make it arguable.

The other, more correctable issue, is that the video review process tanked, too. From Barry Petchesky at Deadspin:

The Sharks didn't protest. San Jose's TV feed didn't show a definitive replay until minutes later. Buffalo's broadcast didn't show it at all. Since the officials didn't realize there was anything worth reviewing, they didn't consult Toronto.

This can't happen. There's a video goal judge in each arena, and while he and the War Room are usually dependent on TV broadcasts, the NHL owns and controls the overhead camera that in this case showed a clear goal. It should have been flagged, reviewed, and the goal and game awarded to the Sharks.

The biggest question of all: Why can't the game still be awarded to the Sharks? The concept of intent to blow shouldn't come up at all; it's farcical. So what's stopping the league from saying, "Yep, Tommy Wingels scored, and the Sharks won"?

Forget the slippery slope argument—this specific concept would come up in exactly one instance: when the league clearly blows a goal call in overtime. The rest of the game, under correct circumstances, wouldn't exist; there are no other variables to consider. There would be if it happened in the second period, but it didn't.

Strike the rest of the overtime stats from the record. Give San Jose another point. The end.

Circumstances conspire against Sharks in overtime call

By David Shoalts

Toronto Globe and Mail

November 6, 2013

The fans in San Jose won't like this but an apparent goal by their Sharks at the two-minute mark of overtime Tuesday night – which cost the Sharks a point after they went on to lose 5-4 in a shootout with the Buffalo Sabres – was missed because of a series of circumstances and not because anyone at the NHL's video room in Toronto was asleep in front of the screen.

The goal was waved off by referee Mike Leggo and the call was not overturned by the league officials in Toronto who review such plays. None of the Sharks players or coaches argued otherwise. But a few minutes later, the San Jose television broadcast had a replay that showed the puck crossed the goal line before Leggo waved it off.

According to Colin Campbell, the NHL's senior executive vice-president of hockey operations, "we have to prove without a doubt this a good goal, that this went in." And this is where the series of circumstances started, although Campbell said, "At end of day right call was made," even if, he admitted, "it probably didn't look right."

The Sharks-Sabres game was the last one on the schedule Tuesday night, as it was on the west coast. There were two people remaining on duty in the NHL war room in Toronto, a staffer who monitored the various camera angles available to the NHL on several screens and Mike Murphy, Campbell's second-in-command in the hockey operations department, as the supervisor.

The play started when Sharks forward Tyler Kennedy fired a shot from the left slot that hit the far goal post and bounced under Sabres goaltender Ryan Miller, who was lying in the crease. Sharks winger Tommy Wingels poked the puck from under Miller's pad and it headed toward the goal line, just as Sabres defenceman Tyler Myers lunged toward it and swept his legs along the goal line.

The 6-foot-9 Myers was directly between the puck and Leggo, who was standing at the side of the net, close to the right post. Leggo immediately waved his arms, indicating no goal.

After the play, Murphy went over to the NHL staffer's screens for another look. Campbell said Murphy's concern was making sure the first shot by Kennedy hit the post and did not enter the net. He was not concerned with what happened after Wingels poked the puck, Campbell said, "because nothing told him the puck went in. None of the players' hands went up, nothing."

If Murphy thought Wingels pushed the puck over the goal line he could have signalled for a delay in the game while he checked all the available camera angles

on a replay. But he did not because of the lack of reaction from the players plus the fact Leggo waved the goal off.

The NHL video room officials need to show “black-and-white” evidence, as Campbell put it, to reverse a referee’s decision on a goal. They are also sensitive to the issue of delaying games while they review goals.

Campbell said there are constant complaints when “we take six or seven minutes to make a decision and we get screamed at for taking so long.”

A few minutes later, of course, the Sharks TV broadcasters came up with a replay that showed the puck crossed the line just before it was kicked out by Myers, who blocked Leggo’s view of the play. This resulted in Murphy calling Leggo after the game to discuss the play.

Leggo said he never saw the puck cross the goal line and, as a matter of fact, he lost sight of the puck when it went under Miller after the first shot by Kennedy. At that point, Leggo said, he whistled the play dead.

That made the matter of Wingels scoring moot. Leggo may have been a little quick with his whistle (and there have been many, many goals disallowed because of this) but under the rules a referee has the right to stop the play once he loses sight of the puck.

So, Campbell said, “at the end of the day it was a dead play,” which mean Wingels’s goal could not count.

Forgetting about Sabres has helped Amerks star Luke Adam find AHL game again

By Bill Hoppe

Olean Times Herald

November 7, 2013

BRIGHTON – Whatever’s going on with the Buffalo Sabres right now, well, Luke Adam doesn’t care about it. Whatever general manager Darcy Regier or coach Ron Rolston are saying, the 23-year-old Rochester Americans winger isn’t worried about it.

“I’m not focused on what the Sabres are doing,” Adam said Tuesday inside Bill Gray’s Iceplex. “Frankly, I don’t care what’s going on up there, what people are saying or how everything’s going.”

Adam, whose scorching eight-goal, 12-point start has made him one of the AHL’s hottest players through nine games, has successfully been concentrating on two things this season.

“I’m just focused on the Rochester Americans and focused on Luke Adam and what I can control as a hockey player to get me to the next level,” said Adam, who recorded an assist in Wednesday’s 5-3 win over the Hamilton Bulldogs.

Naturally, with the Sabres struggling so much and Adam piling up goals, he’s getting questioned about a possible recall. But the way he sees it, as an AHL player he’s “playing for 30 teams right now.”

“Yes, I am with the Buffalo organization,” Adam said. “But I’m trying to play well so someone takes notice. If it’s not the Sabres, if Darcy doesn’t think I deserve an opportunity or I’m ready for an opportunity there, maybe someone else will give me that opportunity.”

Having cleared waivers prior to the season, no one wanted to give Adam that opportunity. Getting bypassed, Amerks coach Chadd Cassidy believes, left Adam at a career crossroads as he began his second contract, a one-year deal.

“It’s kind of a wakeup call, I think, in terms of, ‘I’ve got to make some adjustments to my game if I want to get back to the National League level,’ and so far he’s shown that he’s willing to do that,” Cassidy said.

Adam started clearing his head last season. Prior to his April 2 NHL season debut, his first recall in almost 14 months, he acknowledged he had stopped worrying about the Sabres during the winter.

The Newfoundland native lasted four games, scoring once. It wasn’t a long or memorable stint, but at least he had made it back.

By now, Adam's story is well known. He compiled 29 goals and 62 points with Portland in 2010-11, earning AHL top rookie honors. He quickly became a Calder Trophy candidate after starting 2011-12 as the Sabres' No. 1 center between Jason Pominville and Thomas Vanek.

But following his 10th goal and 20th point on Dec. 17, 2011, Adam endured 20 pointless games before the Sabres finally sent him to Rochester, where he mostly struggled and was almost forgotten about.

"He's already had some of those ups and downs where he got off to a great start, hit some bumps in the road, had to learn how to deal with a little bit of adversity and some situations that he didn't like," Amerks captain Matt Ellis said. "But I'll give him credit, he came back this year with a great, positive attitude, almost like he left the negative energy behind."

Now, Adam "realizes there's certain things he can control," Ellis said.

"What I can control right now is playing well and playing good hockey," Adam said. "If I'm not doing that, then at the end nothing's going to happen anyways."

Adam's play has wowed Ellis, his linemate in Portland.

"For him to have the start he's having, he looks like a new player," Ellis said. "There's kind of an aura about him this year that he is a new player."

It's more than a mental approach, though. Cassidy said Adam has become better-rounded on the ice.

"The offensive side has always come relatively easy for him," Cassidy said. "But I think he's found when he's kind of let his defensive game get away from him he wasn't getting as many offensive opportunities because he was spending so much time in his own zone or not being put on the ice because he was a defensive liability.

"So we found that this year he's committed to playing in the D-zone. He's been a very reliable penalty killer for us. So that's giving him more minutes, and I think all those things just give a player confidence."

Adam, the 44th overall pick in 2008, said he hasn't felt this good in years.

"Just playing with confidence," he said. "I'm almost expecting to go out every night and contribute rather than hoping. So a lot of it is expecting to do well rather than hoping to do well. That's a mindset thing."

Sharks O/T goal that didn't count against the Sabres

By Paul Hamilton

WGR 550

November 6, 2013

Los Angeles, CA (WGR 550) -- I've had a good chance to go back and look at the overtime incident in San Jose Tuesday night.

There's no question the puck went across the line and Sabres defenseman Tyler Myers quickly kicked the puck out of the net. There's also no question all this took place well before the whistle was blown by referee Mike Leggo.

The puck had hit the post behind Ryan Miller and came back under him. The Sharks stayed at it and hit the puck back towards the net. That's where Myers slides in as you can see in the photo. The whistle clearly had not been blown and replays show the ref wasn't even making a move yet with his whistle.

Now, to be fair, the Sharks feed of the game didn't show the replay until after play resumed and the Sabres feed didn't show it at all. Therefore, the folks in Toronto including NHL senior vice president of hockey operations Mike Murphy didn't know about it until it was too late.

Elliott Friedman of CBC had a chance to talk to Murphy who told Friedman about NHL rule 78.5 which says a goal doesn't count when the referee deems the play has stopped, even if he hasn't had the chance to blow the whistle. Murphy told Friedman, "Had we called a goal against Buffalo it would have been wrong because it shouldn't have been a goal. We should have done the headsets because any controversy would have died. This type of play is not a rarity." Murphy then told Friedman, "The optics would have been better if we got him to put on the headset and asked what he was seeing."

I want to roast the NHL for this so badly because there's no way the ref was blowing it down until well after Myers kicked it out, but I can't. The league didn't know the puck went in. They of course would look at the puck hitting the post and coming back out, but things looked over there and I can see why they wouldn't watch further. If they were looking at the Sabres feed, they couldn't watch further so how can you blame them for not reviewing?

The NHL would've also hid behind that rule and can every time since it then becomes a judgment. That's where I have the problem. Either the referee had blown the whistle or he hasn't. It should be as simple as that!

The Sabres get their mandatory day off Wednesday in Los Angeles before facing the Kings on Thursday and the Ducks on Friday.