



# **Buffalo Sabres**

**Daily Press Clips**

*December 14, 2013*

## **Flames-Sabres Preview**

Associated Press

December 13, 2013

Though the Calgary Flames recently had two major off-ice departures, a pair of key additions on the ice could help them continue to turn things around.

A game after Curtis Glencross returned, the Flames could be getting Sean Monahan back Saturday when they seek their first road win over the Buffalo Sabres in almost 18 years.

Calgary's latest game came hours after president of hockey operations Brian Burke fired general manager Jay Feaster and assistant John Weisbrod on Thursday. Burke took over as interim GM.

Though the moves came as a shock to most of the team, the Flames (12-15-4) responded by winning for the fourth time in six games, 2-1 in overtime over Carolina.

Karri Ramo made 29 saves and denied the Hurricanes' Jeff Skinner on a penalty shot in the third period before defenseman Chris Butler scored the winner.

"We reacted the right way (to the front-office shakeup). A lot of things in the game are out of your control," said enforcer Brian McGrattan, who scored the Flames' first goal. "You can only control the things that you do and that's how hard you work and how good your attitude is."

Glencross, who has five goals and four assists in 16 games, returned from a 15-game absence due to a knee injury. Calgary could be getting another key player back as early as Saturday.

Monahan appears close to a return after getting back on the ice earlier this week. The 2013 first-round draft pick ranks second among rookies with nine goals despite being out since Nov. 27 due to a broken foot.

The short-handed Flames have produced only 17 goals over their last eight games, but they've gotten a much-improved effort in their own end. They allowed an NHL-high 3.64 goals per game through the first 25 but have given up nine in the past six.

Ramo has gone 3-1-0 with a 1.48 goals-against average in his last four starts, while Reto Berra has turned away 52 of 55 shots in two starts this month.

It's uncertain who will get the nod in the first of back-to-back contests to open a five-game road swing, though either player should have a good chance to earn the team's first victory in Buffalo since March 15, 1996. Calgary has gone 0-5-3 with one tie - losing eight straight by a 28-12 margin - in its last nine visits.

NHL-worst Buffalo (7-23-2), however, has scored 54 goals - by far the fewest in the league this season.

The Sabres have been especially inept in the offensive zone of late, scoring 14 times while losing nine of 11. They finished with a season-high 41 shots Thursday but only Tyler Ennis could convert in a 2-1 loss at Ottawa.

Ennis has scored in three of his past four games.

"We just gotta get maybe a little bit more net presence for some of those shots to take away the eyes of the goaltender so he can't see it as well," interim coach Ted Nolan told the team's official website. "But overall, the guys are competing and they're working."

Leading scorer Cody Hodgson is expected to be a game-time decision due to an undisclosed ailment that forced him out Thursday.

Buffalo's Ryan Miller has gone 2-2-0 with a 1.98 GAA in his last four starts.

The Sabres have won two of three at home after winning twice in their first 14 games there.

## **Surge in shots gives Sabres sign of hope**

By Amy Moritz

Buffalo News

December 14, 2013

In the end, it looks like another 2-1 loss, an all-too common result for the Buffalo Sabres. The result in Ottawa on Thursday marked the 11th time in 32 games that the Sabres scored just one goal.

But consider the Sabres threw a season-high 41 shots on Senators goaltender Craig Anderson. They generated breakaways, odd-man-rushes and plenty of scoring opportunities. The feel of the game, and the feel in the room, was remarkably different than after all those other one-goal performances.

It was an encouraging performance with a frustrating outcome, but one that seems to have the Sabres in a good state of mind heading into today's 2 p.m. game with the Calgary Flames at First Niagara Center.

"We're seeing signs of a different team as of late with the work ethic and the process that we're sticking to," captain Steve Ott said. "Obviously we didn't get the results we wanted to accomplish but all in all very encouraging with our play. Most nights you play like that you're gonna win."

In the last two games, the Sabres fired off 77 shots on goal with only two finding the back of the net.

But the shots on goal are progress. Heading into Thursday's game, the Sabres had been averaging just 25.5 shots a game.

You can't score if you don't shoot.

The shots are finally starting to come and with them opportunities just begging to be finished.

"Earlier in the season we weren't getting any chances," said Tyler Ennis, who led the team with seven shots and scored the only goal on Thursday. "We were just getting outplayed flat out and not generating much. Now, we're generating a lot. We're outplaying teams. When you're getting chances and the puck's not going in, it's a lot better than when you're not getting chances."

"There's a lot of positives you can take from it because you are getting the chances," said Drew Stafford, who had six shots. "It's frustrating on the other hand. We're not burying it. That's costing us wins. But the bottom line is there's a good feeling in here because we're making progress and we're competing and the work is there. Earlier in the year, we didn't feel we were in a lot of games. Now, we're definitely getting closer."

Closer yes, but how do they finish? How do they turn those opportunities into results?

Since he took over as interim coach, Ted Nolan has discussed his vision of the building process. It started with living the ideas of trust and accountability. The next step was being competitive throughout the lineup on a consistent basis.

Next up – get pucks to the net.

Check.

Now it's about getting traffic in front of the net to create more and better chances to score from rebounds, second efforts and deflections.

“There's a point where you start getting shots and there's a point of how do we get the shots past the goaltender,” Nolan said. “We have to get more net-front presence. Every goaltender in this league is pretty good. So we have to make sure we set some screens in front and make it a little bit tougher for the goaltender.

“I know it's a little bit late in the season to start doing that, but it's where we are right now. The first thing is to get some trust in the players and get them to compete at a certain level. Then you get them to shoot some pucks at the net. Then you can't just shoot it, you have to shoot with a purpose and get some screens. You have to start jamming the net. Drew Stafford is starting to get those chances now. We've just got to get some people in front of the net and good lord willing the puck will start going in.”

## **Sabres notebook: Flames' volatile season mirrors Buffalo's**

By Amy Moritz

Buffalo News

December 14, 2013

The Calgary Flames may not be the West Coast doppelganger of the Buffalo Sabres, but the two clubs certainly have some things in common.

Both are struggling to find ways to win as the Flames find themselves second from the bottom in the NHL's Western Conference while the Sabres are in the basement of the Eastern Conference.

Both have struggled to be playoff teams.

And both are now searching for general managers.

While the Sabres are a month into the new regime with Pat LaFontaine as president of hockey operations and Ted Nolan as interim coach, the Flames come to Buffalo for today's 2 p.m. game at First Niagara Center just a few days into their GM search.

Brian Burke, Calgary's president of hockey operations, fired GM Jay Feaster and assistant GM John Weisbold on Thursday. Burke challenged the Flames to play more aggressively.

The Flames failed to hold a third-period lead in their game Thursday with Carolina, but they did come back to earn an overtime win.

It was Chris Butler who scored the game-winner with an assist from Paul Byron – both former Sabres who were traded to Calgary in the summer of 2011 for Robyn Regeher and Ales Kotalik.

“It was a tough morning,” Butler said after Thursday's game. “Obviously, kind of surprising when Burke comes down to the locker room and delivers that type of news. Jay's been such a good guy to all of us here. It's tough to see a guy like that go. He's pretty responsible for bringing a lot of guys in. We certainly wish him the best, and it's nice to get a win today.”

...

Cody Hodgson did not practice on Friday and was a scratch from Thursday's game in Ottawa with a lower body injury.

“Cody is still a little sore,” Nolan said. “He didn't feel very well so one more day.”

The coach added that there is a possibility for Hodgson to be in the lineup today.

Also missing from practice was forward John Scott. While his play in Thursday's loss was uninspiring – two penalties, a minus-2 and no ice time after midway through the second period – he was absent for a much happier reason.

“John, I’m happy to say he’s a brand new daddy again,” Nolan said. “I’ll let John say all the good news, but he’s a proud man today for sure.”

...

Fans attending today's game can purchase holiday ornaments autographed by one of the Sabres players for a \$20 donation to benefit the Buffalo Sabres Foundation.

The ornaments, which are sold gift-wrapped to keep the autograph hidden from the buyer, will be sold on the 100 level pavilion starting at noon.

...

Youth hockey teams ages 8-16 in Western New York and Southern Ontario are invited to submit entries to become one of the HarborCenter's teams of the month.

Nominations must be made through the Facebook page ([www.facebook.com/harborcenter](http://www.facebook.com/harborcenter)) by midnight, Jan. 12. Entries will be selected based on on-ice accomplishments, scholastic achievements and community involvement.

## **Flames go for two straight since front-office shakeup**

By Brian Hunter

NHL.com

December 13, 2013

FLAMES (12-15-4) at SABRES (7-23-2)

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

Last 10: Calgary 5-4-1; Buffalo 2-7-1

Season series: This is the first of two games this season between the Calgary Flames and Buffalo Sabres. They haven't played since Nov. 4, 2011, when Jhonas Enroth stopped 29 shots and led the Sabres to a 2-1 win in Buffalo.

Big story: Two teams with new regimes face off at First Niagara Center. The Flames will play their second game since firing general manager Jay Feaster and assistant GM John Weisbrod on Thursday. The Sabres also replaced their GM and coach in November and are 3-8-1 since Pat LaFontaine and Ted Nolan rejoined their former organization.

Team Scope:

Flames: What was supposed to be a normal game day with the Carolina Hurricanes in town turned out to be anything but in Calgary on Thursday. It started with a press conference by president of hockey operations Brian Burke announcing the dismissals of Feaster and Weisbrod and concluded hours later with Chris Butler scoring with 3.6 seconds left in overtime to give the Flames a 2-1 win, their fourth in six games.

"I think we've been giving less and less turnovers and that's the key," goalie Karri Ramo, who made 29 saves, said in the Calgary Sun. "Other teams don't get too many odd-man rushes and too many breakaways. I think that's one key and our penalty kill has been really good lately.

"You cut the chances down and scoring goes down too."

Sabres: Like its opponent, Buffalo has done a decent job of late keeping the goals against down, not having allowed more than three in a game since Nov. 21. Over that span of eight games, however, the Sabres have only scored 10 non-shootout goals and as a result have only won twice.

In Ottawa on Thursday to complete a home-and-home against the Senators, the Sabres got a power-play goal by Tyler Ennis and 30 saves from Ryan Miller but in a familiar refrain came up just a little short in a 2-1 loss.

"When you see guys doing the right things in the right place, they tend to start scoring," Miller said in the Buffalo News. "Hopefully, they can carry some confidence. These were good games for us."

Who's hot: Ramo has won three of his past four starts for the Flames, allowing just one goal in each victory. ... Ennis has three goals and one assist in his past four games for the Sabres.

Injury report: Calgary defenseman Dennis Wideman (hand) and forwards Curtis Glencross (sprained MCL) and Sean Monahan (foot) are on injured reserve. ... Buffalo forward Cody Hodgson (undisclosed) was not in the lineup Thursday and his status is uncertain. Defenseman Alexander Sulzer (undisclosed) is on injured reserve.

## **Flames' Burke vs. Sabres' Lafontaine in GM search**

By Wes Gilbertson

Calgary Sun

December 14, 2013

BUFFALO — During Saturday's matinee at First Niagara Center, the spotlight will be on Michael Cammalleri and Mark Giordano, Ryan Miller and Matt Moulson.

The biggest battle between the Buffalo Sabres and Calgary Flames, however, isn't being waged on the ice.

It's Brian Burke vs. Pat LaFontaine.

Once a star centre for the Sabres, LaFontaine is still settling into his new role as president of hockey operations in upstate New York, with the need to find a GM to replace recently-fired Darcy Regier undoubtedly atop his to-do list.

Burke launched a talent search of his own Thursday, firing Flames GM Jay Feaster and insisting he wouldn't dilly-dally in his efforts to fill the empty office.

“There's another team doing a search,” Burke said. “Time could be of vital essence here.”

Now that Burke and LaFontaine are competing for candidates, here are five hockey minds who have been mentioned in the rumour mill as possibilities in both cities ...

**Jim Benning, Boston Bruins**

A lot of folks figure Benning is the frontrunner in Buffalo, so Burke will have to move fast on this one. Benning was a longtime scout for the Sabres, but he also has roots in the Wild Rose Province, having grown up in Edmonton and patrolled the blueline for the Alberta Junior Hockey League's Fort Saskatchewan Traders during his playing days. The 50-year-old Benning has a strong reputation for drafting and developing young players, and it's hard to argue with his success alongside Peter Chiarelli in seven-plus seasons as assistant GM for the Bruins, including a Stanley Cup win in 2011.

**Paul Fenton, Nashville Predators**

Fenton skated in 411 NHL contests, including 31 with the Flames in 1991. He's been employed by the Predators since their expansion season, but David Poile has had the top job in Nashville for just as long and isn't going anywhere, so Fenton will have to leave Music City to score a promotion. “I believe that I'm ready,” he told reporters when asked about the opening in Buffalo. “I'm hoping somebody else does.” Poile, who has a history with Burke because both are

involved in building the Olympic team for USA Hockey, will put in a good word for his the 53-year-old Fenton.

Michael Futa, Los Angeles Kings

Proof that the Kings don't want to lose Futa, they reportedly stalled when Buffalo asked for permission to interview him. It's hard to imagine it would be any different for their Pacific Division foes from Calgary, but it's certainly worth a try. With the Flames likely to finish near the bottom of the standings, Burke wants a GM who can "hit a homerun" with a high pick in the 2014 NHL Draft, and the 46-year-old Futa — the director of amateur scouting in Los Angeles — should be as knowledgeable about the top prospects as any other guy on this list.

Claude Loiselle, Toronto Maple Leafs

When Burke promoted Loiselle from a scouting role to serve as his assistant GM in Toronto, he praised his "knowledge of the business side of the game." The Sabres will reportedly chat with the 49-year-old Loiselle about their vacancy and, given his relationship with Burke, it seems like a no-brainer that he'll also get an interview with the Flames. Burke will want a sidekick who shares his philosophy on the game, and Loiselle — known as a hard-nosed forward during his 13-year NHL career — could be that guy. Toronto's vice-president of hockey operations, Dave Poulin, has also been mentioned in Calgary.

Brad Treliving, Phoenix Coyotes

You'd be crazy to want to leave the desert to instead spend your winter months in Calgary (or Buffalo), but Treliving is likely willing to shovel a ton of snow for his first crack at a GM job. Question is, would the Coyotes let him leave? The 44-year-old from Penticton, B.C., has now been Don Maloney's right-hand man in Phoenix for the past seven seasons and Maloney told the Buffalo News, "Brad is a very, very important person in our organization. We'd have to think very long and very hard about granting permission during the course of a season."

## **Sabres confident offense improving, finally going to start scoring**

By Bill Hoppe

Olean Times Herald

December 14, 2013

BUFFALO – In Thursday’s 2-1 loss in Ottawa, Sabres winger Drew Stafford generated three strong scoring chances and a season-high six shots, yet endured his 15th consecutive goalless game.

The 28-year-old missed the net on a glorious opportunity against a stickless goalie, drew a penalty after zooming to the crease and got stymied on a late breakaway by Craig Anderson with the Sabres down a goal.

No one embodies the Sabres’ scoring struggles more than Stafford entering this afternoon’s tilt against the Calgary Flames inside the First Niagara Center.

Thirty-two games into the season, Stafford has two goals on 77 shots, a 2.6 shooting percentage. The Sabres, meanwhile, have 50 goals as a team, just 1.6 a game.

But Stafford and the offense finally appear poised to bust out.

“It’s got to turn around sooner or later, and when it does,” Stafford said Friday, “it’s going to be pretty awesome.”

Despite scoring only two times in the last two games, the Sabres have pumped 77 shots on goal. They’re creating prime chances and sustaining an attack for probably the first time this trying season.

“There’s a point where you start getting shots, and then there’s a point of how to get the shots past the goaltender,” interim Sabres coach Ted Nolan said. “We have to get more net-front presence in front of him.”

He added: “We just got to get some people in front of the net, and good Lord willing the puck will start going in.”

Of course, they’re showcasing an alarming lack of finish. Still, when you’re on pace to become the worst offense in NHL history, you take progress where you can find it.

Eventually, players believe, the puck has to start going in the net.

“It’s statistics,” Sabres center Tyler Ennis said. “When you get that many good chances and create that much, they’re going to go in.”

Stafford has taken the attitude the offense will improve.

“Dwelling on things you’re not going to go anywhere,” he said. “Your tires are going to be stuck in the mud for a long time. I’m just trying to stay positive.”

The offense could be the last part of the puzzle. Goalies Ryan Miller and Jhonas Enroth have been strong all season. The defense has improved greatly under Nolan, trimming the shot totals dramatically.

“We’re not giving up 50 shots a game anymore,” Stafford said. “But at the same time, we’re not putting the puck in the net. That really is the last missing piece, and once that goes, I think we’re going to start winning a lot of games.”

The slick Ennis has finally started scoring, compiling three goals and four points in the last four games, including the lone score Thursday. He had four goals in the first 28 games.

Nolan often watched Ennis play in junior years ago, although he hadn’t seen much of the 24-year-old in the NHL prior to taking over the Sabres on Nov. 13.

“What I remember is exactly what I’m seeing right now, a dynamic player,” Nolan said. “He had some tremendous agility. ... He’s starting to use his skill set to his ability. It’s starting to pay off for him.”

Ennis, who recently switched back to center, feels he “finally got that swagger back with the puck, flying around through the neutral zone with the puck and making plays.”

He loves that Nolan allows him to be creative instead of making him follow a rigid system.

“I still got to stay within the lines and play the system,” Ennis said. “I think with my creativity I need to be kind of free to do some different things, and Ted has kind of allowed me to do that. It’s a little liberating.”

Stafford, meanwhile, might be playing his best hockey since late 2011-12. He’s noticeable on the ice again, making two or three plays a game.

He hasn’t been rewarded on the score sheet, though. His career-long goal drought is 16 games.

“It’s tough because you want to get rewarded for your play,” said Stafford, who hasn’t scored since Nov. 5. “I feel as though my overall play has been there. I feel like I’m playing well. Unfortunately, the offensive side of things aren’t there.”

The law of averages, Stafford said, might help him start scoring.

“I’m a big believer in the percentages and the science behind it,” he said. “For myself, individually, it’s been about a year of getting a lot of shots and my shooting percentage is lower. Over my career I’ve been about a 10 percenter, and it’s always come back around. It’s just happened to be a lot longer than usual ... for a lot of other guys in here as well. It’s not just me, it’s pretty much everybody.”

## **Matt Ellis scores Amerks' shootout winner in 'Frozen Frontier,' earns recall to Sabres**

By Bill Hoppe

Olean Times Herald

December 14, 2013

ROCHESTER – From a skill perspective, Chadd Cassidy had better options six rounds into Friday's wild shootout. But the Americans coach wanted Matt Ellis, his trusted captain, to try to win the "Frozen Frontier," an outdoor game played in 18-degree temperatures.

"With the game on the line, I want it on his tape because good things happen to good people," Cassidy said. "There's nobody that's worked harder for the opportunities that he's gotten than Matty."

Ellis, who had already had a goal and an assist, rewarded his coach's faith, scoring the winner in the Amerks' crazy 5-4 win against the Lake Erie Monsters, a game they rallied from a two-goal deficit in regulation and the shootout.

"He did exactly what we needed him to do tonight and exactly what I expected him to do," Cassidy said.

Somehow, Ellis' night got better after the memorable game.

The Sabres recalled the 32-year-old center following the game, the Times Herald has learned. They host the Calgary Flames this afternoon inside the First Niagara Center. Interim Sabres coach Ted Nolan was reportedly watching Friday.

Ellis hasn't played in the NHL since the Sabres waived him in February.

Incredibly, Ellis had never taken a professional shootout attempt before.

What was his strategy?

"Use the move that works in practice and not lose the puck," said Ellis, who used his forehand to beat goalie Calvin Pickard. "I was excited to get the tap. I figured that move finds a way to get in the back of the net against our goalies the odd time in practice. I figured I'd go that route as well."

Ellis' goal capped a night that will quickly become part of Rochester lore.

They trailed 3-1 following the first period before rallying to take a 4-3 third-period lead.

Then, Lake Erie's Matt Hunwick scored on a six-on-four with one-tenth of a second left, stunning the 11,015 fans at Frontier Field.

“It’s emotional,” Ellis said. “It’s one of those things, you’re watching the clock. You’re waiting for the buzzer to go.”

Mike Zigomanis kept the shootout alive and Johan Larsson tied it before Cassidy called on Ellis.

“What a game,” Cassidy said. “You saw a little bit of everything out there tonight. I was really proud of our guys’ effort coming back from two goals down on not (an) ideal situation with the ice. Guys kept battling, we started playing the right way.”

Luckily, it stopped snowing before the game, although several inches covered the grounds.

“Sure, it was cold,” Ellis said. “But when that adrenaline’s pumping, when that puck’s dropped, you really don’t feel the elements. The snow held off, which was nice, and it wasn’t really windy out there. It was a great experience.”

Ellis said he “felt like a kid again out there.”

“Being able to share this with these guys, the one thing I said to a couple of the guys was, ‘Really enjoy the experience,’” he said. “For me, it’s the first time in 12 years.”

Jerome Gauthier-Leduc, Phil Varone and Colton Gillies scored the Amerks’ other goals. Goalie Matt Hackett made 26 saves.

## **What has happened to the Sabres offense?**

By Howard Simon

WGR 550

December 13 ,2013

With the Buffalo Sabres on pace to become the lowest scoring team in the NHL since the 1967 expansion, you might find it hard to believe that it was only three years ago that Buffalo had a top ten offense.

That's right. The 2010-2011 Sabres ended up 9th in the league in goals scored, a season after they finished 11th in that all important category.

As so many players have left town over those three years, so has the offense. In fact, only three of the top 13 scorers from that 2011 team are still with the franchise: Drew Stafford, Tyler Ennis and Tyler Myers.

The Sabres fell from 9th to 16th in goals per game in 2012, then dropped down to 20th last season before plummeting to dead last this season.

Buffalo is averaging a mere 1.6 goals per game. They have only one player with a double digit goals total, Matt Moulson, with 10. In five on five action, the Sabres have a measly 34 goals in 32 games.

While the Sabres are playing better in first periods, they still aren't scoring much. The first period goal in Ottawa on Thursday was just the seventh time they got on the board in the opening 20 minutes.

Buffalo has been shutout five times, held to one goal in 11 games and managed all of two goals on eight occasions. So that's two or fewer goals scored in 24 of 32 games. Only once all season have the Sabres scored more than three goals in regulation play. They got four on the way to a 5-4 shootout victory at San Jose on November 5th.

The scoring problems are across the board. Captain Steve Ott hasn't scored a goal in the last 11 games. Other droughts include: Drew Stafford- 15 games, Marcus Foligno- 11 games, Brian Flynn- 17 games. Ville Leino has yet to score this season, which for him has been 18 games.

Cody Hodgson has no goals in his last six starts and one in the last 11. Matt Moulson scored twice in his Sabres debut but has only two more goals in the 18 games since then.

That Moulson two goal game was a rarity. Sabres players have produced only three multiple goal games with Hodgson and Mikhail Grigorenko also recording a two goal night.

The defensemen are part of the problem too. Back in that 2010-2011 season when the Sabres ended up 9th in scoring, defensemen accounted for 38 goals. This season, Sabres blue liners are on pace for a combined 25 goals.

## **HODGSON MISSES PRACTICE**

By Chris Ryndak

Sabres.com

December 13, 2013

Buffalo Sabres center Cody Hodgson did not practice with the team Friday morning at First Niagara Center.

He missed Buffalo's game in Ottawa on Thursday with an injury and interim coach Ted Nolan hopes Hodgson will be ready for the team's Saturday afternoon tilt against the Calgary Flames at 2 p.m.

"Cody's still a little sore. He tried to go out for practice today and didn't feel very well so one more day," Nolan said after practice.

After the game in Ottawa, the Sabres were pleased with their effort, but still came up short, falling 2-1 in regulation. In the home-and-home series against Ottawa, Buffalo put 36 and then 41 shots on goal.

"We're not happy with a loss, but I think the feeling here is we want to get right back at it. We know we're right on the edge of a win," Sabres center Cody McCormick said. "We want to play today. We want to get right back at it and pick up off the good things from that game."

Alexander Sulzer has been on injured reserve since sustaining an injury on Nov. 30 in New Jersey and said he's close to returning. He's been skating with the team since Monday. He probably wouldn't be ready for Saturday, according to Nolan.

"It's more like getting practices in and getting my conditioning back in like game situations and stuff," Sulzer said.

Forward John Scott was excused from practice after his wife gave birth.

"I'll let John say all the good news, but he's a proud man today for sure," Nolan said.

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With Hodgson on Scott not on the ice, the Sabres practiced with 11 forwards. Brian Flynn skated up a line with Ville Leino at center and Matt D'Agostini at right wing.

Marcus Foligno remained at center between captain Steve Ott and Drew Stafford. Ott had been centering the line, but Nolan moved Foligno back into the middle prior to the game Thursday in Ottawa.

“We tried Steve Ott there. At center ice, it’s a lot of skating and Steve Ott’s a little bit more effective for us going up and down the wing and being Steve Ott,” Nolan said. “[Putting] him at center ice, we took a little bit away from him.”

In addition to improving their work ethic, the team has begun to limit the opposition’s shots against and they’ve been receiving solid goaltending from Ryan Miller and Jhonas Enroth all year. The players feel as if they’re on the cusp of putting it all together.

“We have to finish. That’s something we’ve talked about. We have to find a way to score,” Ott said. “Those opportunities are coming with consistent chances and consistent chances mean goals. I’m not too worried. If we play like we did last night, nine times out of 10, you’re going to win those games.”

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On the first day of training camp, Ott said that with a younger club, it might take until around the end of December for a team to really gel and develop chemistry. Now that they’re at about that point, Ott said the team is starting to build on some positives.

“I’ve seen this before. It’s taken around Christmastime or just after to get that productivity together and the cohesiveness,” he said. “We’re all starting to feel it together now and that’s something that will hopefully lead us in the right direction coming up here.”

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26 Matt Moulson – 63 Tyler Ennis – 28 Zemgus Girgenson  
9 Steve Ott – 82 Marcus Foligno – 21 Drew Stafford  
65 Brian Flynn – 23 Ville Leino – 27 Matt D’Agostini  
72 Luke Adam – 8 Cody McCormick

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

30 Ryan Miller  
1 Jhonas Enroth

## **Scouting Report: Buffalo Sabres**

By Aaron Vickers

Flames.com

December 13, 2013

CALGARY, AB -- The Buffalo Sabres haven't tinkered much with a lineup that finished 12th in the Eastern Conference a season ago, opting to add from within.

Instead, the majority of the changes have come off the ice. The Sabres relieved coach Ron Rolston and general manager Darcy Regier of their duties in mid-November.

On the ice, youngsters like Zemgus Girgensons have been given an opportunity to flourish in Buffalo while Cody Hodgson has handled a readily expanding role. Veterans, such as goaltender Ryan Miller, could be showcased with aspirations of challenging for a playoff position in 2013-14 dwindling.

This Season: 7-23-2, 16 points (16th in East)

Last season: 21-21-6, 48 points (12th in East)

Notable Additions: D Jamie McBain, D Henrik Tallinder, LW Matt Moulson

Notable Subtractions: LW Nathan Gerbe, D Adam Pardy, D Andrej Sekera, LW Thomas Vanek

Flames Season Series Record: 0-0-0

### WHO'S HOT

#### TYLER ENNIS

Ennis, one of Buffalo's most productive forwards, has three goals and four points in his past four games. The 24-year-old sits second on the team in goals (7) and points (13). The former Medicine Hat Tigers forward and first round pick from 2008 has played the Calgary Flames just once in his career and was held pointless.

### WHO'S NOT

#### VILLE LEINO

Leino has struggled to live up to the six-year, \$27 million contract signed two summers ago. The 30-year-old is still looking for his first goal of the season and has just 15 shots on net to show for his offence. Leino does have five assists in 19 games, but has failed to get on the score sheet in each of his past four outings.

### THREE PLAYERS TO WATCH

#### CODY HODGSON

Acquired in exchange for Zack Kassian at the 2012 trade deadline, Hodgson has been a key cog for the Sabres since arriving on the scene. He was second only to Thomas Vanek in scoring a year ago, while Hodgson leads all Buffalo scorers this season in goals (8) and points (18).

#### ZEMGUS GIRGENSONS

Drafted in the first round of the 2012 NHL Draft, it hasn't taken long for Girgensons to make an impact in the Sabres lineup. After spending last season in the AHL, Girgensons has played 31 games for Buffalo this year, recording three goals and 10 points.

#### MATT MOULSON

Moulson, who joined the Sabres after being swapped for Vanek earlier this season, has acquitted himself well with his new club. The 30-year-old has four goals and 11 points in 19 games in Buffalo, running his season total to 10 goals and 20 points.