



Buffalo Sabres

Daily Press Clips

December 19, 2013

Bruins-Sabres Preview

By Alan Ferguson

Associated Press

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The short-handed Boston Bruins bounced back quickly after their season high-tying win streak came to an end. They'll try to keep heading in the right direction during a home-and-home series against the last-place Buffalo Sabres.

The Bruins will seek their sixth victory in seven games Thursday night while trying to deny the Sabres a rare win streak.

Boston (23-9-2) is missing six players, most notably forward Loui Eriksson (concussion). Shawn Thornton is appealing his 15-game suspension, and Chris Kelly (leg), Dougie Hamilton (lower body), Daniel Paille (concussion) and Adam McQuaid (lower body) are also out.

"With the injuries we have, we're really relying on everybody right now," center Gregory Campbell said. "It's not about coming in and just playing. It's about actually trying to contribute. We need help from (the minor league call-ups) and from veterans. Everybody has to be at the top of their games in the situation we're in."

Milan Lucic played in a 2-0 victory over visiting Calgary on Tuesday after reportedly being involved in an altercation in his native Vancouver following a 6-2 loss Saturday that snapped Boston's four-game win streak. Lucic had two goals and an assist in the Bruins' only meeting with Buffalo this season, a 5-2 victory Oct. 23.

Torey Krug scored a pair of third-period goals as Boston improved to 2-0-1 in its last three games against the Sabres (8-23-3) and earned its second straight win in Buffalo.

The Sabres enter this matchup having earned at least one point in a season-high three consecutive home games, going 2-0-1, and in four of their last five (3-1-1). They had their highest scoring output of the season at the First Niagara Center in a 4-2 comeback win over Winnipeg on Tuesday.

Buffalo scored three goals in the third period with Matt Moulson putting his team ahead for good with a power-play score at the 2:31 mark. The Sabres were 0 for 21 when trailing after two periods.

"The one thing we've tried to work on is our consistency," coach Ted Nolan said. "If you keep going, usually good things happen. It was nice to see the team rewarded for never giving up and continuing to work. We got the breaks when we needed them."

Buffalo recorded its only back-to-back wins Nov. 12-15, and Cody Hodgson will try to help the team do it again by adding to his four goals and two assists in his past six matchups with Boston. Hodgson had an assist Tuesday after missing two games with a lower-body injury.

The Sabres also got defenseman Alexander Sulzer back after a five-game absence due to an upper-body injury, leaving Cody McCormick as the team's only injured player. McCormick is expected to miss the next four to six weeks because of an upper-body ailment.

Bruins leading scorer David Krejci has three goals and five assists in his last eight games against the Sabres. He also has 13 points in his last 12 overall (three goals, 10 assists), and was credited with assists on both of Zdeno Chara's goals Tuesday.

The Bruins and Sabres will wrap up their two-game set Saturday night at the TD Garden.

A taste of offensive success has Sabres wanting more

By Amy Moritz

Buffalo News

December 19, 2013

They worked hard, got to the net and finished their plays. It added up to four goals and a win in regulation for the Buffalo Sabres.

Now, it's time to do it again. And again. And again.

The Ted Nolan philosophy is about consistent hard work with an emphasis on consistency.

So when the Sabres took the ice for practice Wednesday after a 4-2 win over the Winnipeg Jets on Tuesday, it was more of the same – drills on getting in front of the net and extra time spent on the power play.

Goals aren't going to score themselves and practice is all about developing the habits that will hopefully lead to more goals, including tonight when the Sabres host the Boston Bruins at 7 in First Niagara Center.

"I really strongly believe you just keep doing things on a consistent basis," Nolan said. "It might not show up today, it might not show up tomorrow, but eventually it will. We've been working on it now for a little bit and last night to see the reward for it was good. We have to go back to work again and see what happens."

"I think he stressed it a little more just in the past three days about just being net-front presence," Marcus Foligno said about the last few practices with Nolan. "We didn't have it enough. People who were shooting the pucks, too, just are making smarter shots. You want to put them in places where the guy in front can tip them or get a rebound. We did a lot of things in drills where you're shooting but you follow it to net and you've got to get a rebound."

Go to the net and good things will happen. Just ask Foligno, who broke out of a 12-game scoring slump Tuesday night by directing in a shot from Cody Hodgson.

"It's been a long time coming," Foligno said. "Hopefully it's the start of something that can keep going here. Anytime you can contribute it's huge. For myself and for the team, to get guys who haven't been scoring to score last game was something that we needed."

It wasn't just Foligno who got on the score sheet. There were 12 different players who picked up points. On a night with four goals, no player had a multiple-point night.

"I looked at the event summary sheet after the game and I saw a bunch of "1s" throughout the lineup," said Steve Ott, referring to the total number of points

players recorded on the stat sheet. “And when you see a bunch of “1s” that means your team had a complete game. ... It’s nice to see because it grabs confidence for all the guys.

“There’s a lot of guys who could use a point right now. I’m sure it feels good to spread the love throughout the lineup and I think that it really helps us for the character stuff in the dressing room, knowing that everybody chipped in to have a successful night.”

Ott ended his streak of 12 games without a goal. Also ending prolonged point droughts – Brian Flynn (first assist in 30 games) and Mike Weber (first assist in 29 games).

Sometimes NHLers Matt Ellis and Kevin Porter got in on the action on the fourth line. For Ellis, it was his first goal in his last 33 NHL games while Porter’s assist was his first for the Sabres in 15 games.

And while the balanced scoring was key for the confidence in the room, the ways in which the goals were scored pleased Nolan most.

“I liked that three of the goals we scored were right from pretty close in,” Nolan said. “You look at the National Hockey League, almost 88 percent of the goals that are scored are within that close area because goaltenders are so good now. The only way you’re going to score on them is off deflections or good screens or a heck of a shot. We want to make sure we have our chances by getting some bodies in front.”

Sabres aim for second straight as they host Bruins

By Brian Hunter

NHL.com

December 18, 2013

BRUINS (23-9-2) at SABRES (8-23-3)

TV: NESN, MSG-B, BELL TV

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

Season series: This is the second of five games this season between the Boston Bruins and Buffalo Sabres. It's also the start of a home-and-home that concludes Saturday at TD Garden. Milan Lucic and Torey Krug each scored twice as Boston won 5-2 in Buffalo on Oct. 23.

Big story: The Sabres have won consecutive games just once this season -- the finale of the Ron Rolston/Darcy Regier era against the Los Angeles Kings on Nov. 12 and the first game with Ted Nolan and Pat LaFontaine in the fold against the Toronto Maple Leafs on Nov. 15. They have a chance to do it again Thursday and make a statement against one of the NHL's top teams.

Team Scope:

Bruins: With defenseman Adam McQuaid not yet ready to return, Boston recalled David Warsofsky from Providence of the American Hockey League on Tuesday and reassigned Kevan Miller. Had Miller played in a 10th game, he couldn't have been sent back to the AHL without having to first pass through waivers.

One guy on the blue line the Bruins never have to worry about is Zdeno Chara, who's versatile enough to set up in a forward slot on the power play. That's where he scored both goals in a 2-0 win Tuesday against the Calgary Flames, with Tuukka Rask recording a 21-save shutout.

"It wasn't pretty all the time, it was kind of just pucks bouncing all over the place but we got the goals and power plays, stepped up, and [Chara] got those goals we needed and killed a couple of penalties too there," Rask said.

"It wasn't pretty, but it was a good effort from everybody and we need that."

Sabres: Ryan Miller was flawless Tuesday, save for a 36-second stretch early in the second period when Winnipeg Jets forward Mark Scheifele beat him twice. Buffalo rallied, however, as Steve Ott halved the deficit midway through the second and the Sabres erupted for a three-goal third and a 4-2 victory.

Matt Moulson's 12th goal of the season, on the power play, was the game-winner. He has six goals and 13 points in 21 games for the Sabres since being acquired from the New York Islanders for Thomas Vanek.

"I've really come to admire him not only as a player, but as a man. He's a true pro," Nolan said. "He comes to work. He has a great demeanor about him. He seems to really enjoy the game. He's one of those guys you like to have on your team for sure."

Who's hot: Jarome Iginla and David Krejci assisted on both of Chara's goals Tuesday. Iginla has two goals and four points in his past three games, while Krejci has two goals and eight points in his past six games. ... Moulson has goals in consecutive games for the Sabres. Tyler Ennis has three goals and two assists in his past six games. Matt Ellis had his first NHL goal since Jan. 13, 2012 to ice the win Tuesday.

Injury report: Boston forward Daniel Paille (concussion) has missed the past four games. McQuaid (groin), fellow defenseman Dougie Hamilton (lower body) and forwards Chris Kelly (ankle) and Loui Eriksson (concussion) are on injured reserve. ... Buffalo forward Cody McCormick (upper body) is on injured reserve and expected to miss 4-6 weeks.

Fourth line giving Sabres strong minutes, creating energy and offense

By Bill Hoppe

Olean Times Herald

December 19, 2013

BUFFALO – Today’s NHL is too fast-paced to play two or three lines consistently, interim Sabres coach Ted Nolan said. A balanced attack is needed.

“You need that fourth line to eat up some minutes for you,” Nolan said Wednesday after the Sabres prepared for tonight’s tilt against the Boston Bruins inside the First Niagara Center.

In the best performance by the Sabres’ fourth line in a long time, the hardworking combination of Kevin Porter, Matt Ellis and Brian Flynn ate up about 10 strong minutes in Tuesday’s 4-2 win against Winnipeg.

“They give us what we needed,” Nolan said. “They’re reliable. They’re safe. They’re creating some energy. They got the puck in the opposition’s zone. They wore out their defense a little bit for us. Everything we asked. Plus they got us a goal.”

That late goal, Ellis’ first NHL score since Jan. 13, 2012, sealed only the Sabres’ eighth win all season.

Following the game, Nolan called the trio the “so-called fourth line” and “one of four for us.”

“It is a nice feeling,” Ellis, who was recalled from Rochester on Friday, said about Nolan’s compliment. “In the short period of time I’ve been here so far you get to learn things pretty quick. It seems like with Ted, if you do the little things well and you come to compete, battle and work hard he’s going to play those guys.

“It’s nice to be a part of that. I thought (Tuesday) our line did a real nice job and we were rewarded. We were a big part of the victory. It was fun to be there pulling on the same rope that the rest of the team was.”

How did they pull that rope?

“Smart, simple hockey, playing the game the way it should be played,” said Ellis, who’s playing center.

Porter, who was recalled Tuesday, added: “We just kept it simple trying to get pucks deep, pressuring their D and trying to get turnovers. That’s going to be our game.”

The Sabres haven’t gotten much from the fourth line the last two seasons. On a team struggling to score goals, the meager production has been killer.

Ellis and Cody McCormick both had zero goals in limited action last season. Patrick Kaleta had one. Tough guy John Scott only has one in his career.

A few goals here and there would make a huge difference.

“Especially in a stretch now where’s this club’s looking for offense, you need to score by committee,” Ellis said. “It’s not going to be one or two guys a night lighting the lamp. You need a little bit from everyone.”

Ellis, just two games into his first NHL stint since February, is already making a strong case to stay.

Welcoming him back “truly is awesome,” Sabres captain Steve Ott said.

“No matter what, you still want to be in the NHL,” Ott said. “You dream about the NHL. There’s nothing like it. But that’s his unselfishness and his character and his work ethic to want to be in there to be a helper (in Rochester).”

“To see him back up here, I think every guy was welcoming because we know how much effort he’s put in over the years here in this organization.”

Flynn created Ellis’ 17th NHL goal by pumping a shot on net. Porter grabbed the rebound before Ellis batted his pass out of the air in front.

“That was definitely a memorable one for me, to be part of a big victory here, to come in and be part of something that’s starting to change in the right direction with the way the team’s playing,” Ellis said.

Tonight’s game will be the 32-year-old’s 200th with the Sabres, a milestone he never expected.

“I guess it’ll be a proud moment,” said Ellis, who wasn’t aware of the mark. “When I landed here off of waivers six years ago now, I didn’t know what to expect coming in. I didn’t know how long a stay I was going to have. I’ve been able to carve out a pretty good career here in Buffalo.”

“This is a place I’ve grown, my family has grown. This is home. I’ve had a lot of good moments in this locker room. It’s a real sense of pride to suit up for 200 games within this organization. This organization has treated me and my family extremely well over the years.”

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Scott practiced at defense Wednesday, meaning the winger’s likely out tonight.

Ellis, Porter have instant impact for Sabres

By Matthew Collier

WGR 550

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For Buffalo Sabres forward Matt Ellis, the last seven days have been the opposite of the famous Jay-z line: "It was all good just a week ago."

A week ago, things weren't as good. Ellis was captain of the Rochester Amerks, about to lead them into a mid-week game against the Lake Erie Monsters.

They had dropped the previous two games to the defending Calder Cup champion Grand Rapids Griffins and were hoping to gain some momentum heading into the Frozen Frontier game – a Friday night match-up with Lake Erie played outdoors at Rochester's baseball stadium Frontier Field.

The Amerks won last Wednesday's game against Lake Erie. Then Ellis' Best Week Ever began.

On Friday night, he opened up the scoring in front of more than 11,000 at Frontier Field. The game eventually landed in a shootout, in which head coach Chadd Cassidy tabbed him for his first shootout attempt ever.

It just so happened to be the clincher to give the Amerks a 5-4 win.

While the team was standing on the ice celebrating, Cassidy let Ellis know he'd be headed to Buffalo for the first time in almost a year.

Then on Tuesday night, Ellis deflected a shot into the Winnipeg Jets' net for his first goal since late 2012.

"It's been a bit of a whirlwind," Ellis said, sitting under his Sabres nameplate. "Last weekend was an emotional one, starting with the outdoor game, which was a great experience and very enjoyable game. To get a recall here was the icing on the cake. Any time I get to pull this jersey over my head there's a lot of pride and thankfulness that goes along with it. I haven't taken a day of my career for granted."

Ellis was paired with Brian Flynn and Kevin Porter against the Jets. The line not only generated a goal but was on the ice for six shots for and only four shots against.

"They gave us what we needed," interim head coach Ted Nolan said. "They were reliable, they were safe, they created some energy, they had the puck in the opposition's zone, they worked their defense a little bit. It was everything we asked and then it was a bonus that they gave us a goal."

Porter added speed to a Sabres fourth line that was regularly getting beat up in the shot differential category. During his time in Rochester, the 27-year-old forward scored six goals in 13 games.

He said the time in Rochester playing big offensive minutes helped him be in tune to get back on the scoresheet – a place he was unable to find in nine games in the NHL earlier this year.

“You go down there and you get some confidence,” Porter said. “When you score some goals, you get that touch back a little bit. That definitely helps. When you're here for a bit and don't get as many chances and you don't score as many goals, you kind of lose sight of that and lose some of that confidence.”

Porter played well in his stint with Buffalo last season, posting solid defensive numbers (only Marcus Foligno had fewer shots on goal against per 60 minutes than Porter last season) and adding nine points in 31 games.

The Sabres have strung together five games in a row with positive shot differentials. When they face the Bruins, that streak may end. Boston averages 29.9 shots per game for and 28.7 against compared to Buffalo's 26.2 for and 33.9 against.

“We just can't turn the puck over,” Porter said. “We have to get it deep. The more we get it deep and pressure their D and have offensive zone play, we're going to get more shots.”

“I looked at the shots against previous to me being here,” Nolan said. “A lot of shots, I don't know if the opposition earned them or if we just gave it to them. There were a lot of turnovers.”

It's unclear how long Ellis, Porter, Flynn will be together. Cody McCormick is expected to return in 4-to-6 weeks and Nolan said Mark Pysyk will be returning to Buffalo soon.

If the line keeps performing like they did against Winnipeg, it will be hard to break them up. Of course, Winnipeg is 23rd in the NHL in puck possession and one of the West's worse teams. So they'll have to do a lot of proving against Boston.

MOULSON SETTLING IN AS A SABRE

By Chris Ryndak

Sabres.com

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Buffalo Sabres wing Matt Moulson's first few weeks in Buffalo were a whirlwind, but he's now had time to settle in not only with the team, but with the city as well.

Offensively, things are coming around, too. He scored the game-winning goal on the power play early in the third period Tuesday night in the Sabres' 4-2 win over the Winnipeg Jets. He's scored in back-to-back games.

The Sabres have been generating more and more offensive chances the past few games and they were finally able to break out with a four-goal performance against Winnipeg. Moulson's goal came when he parked himself in front of the net and deflected in a point shot by defenseman Christian Ehrhoff.

"Obviously when pucks are going in, you feel pretty good about yourself and when that confidence is there, it feels like they're going in more and more," Moulson said. "We just have to keep getting pucks there, keep getting guys there and keep getting those dirty goals and eventually we'll get that confidence in scoring."

Moulson's made a big impression on interim coach Ted Nolan, who joined the team on Nov. 13.

"I've really come to admire him not only as a player, but as a man. He's a true pro," Nolan said. "He comes to work. He has a great demeanor about him. He seems to really enjoy the game. He's one of those guys you like to have on your team for sure."

The Sabres acquired Moulson and two draft picks from the New York Islanders on Oct. 27 for co-captain Thomas Vanek. Moulson scored on his first shot as a Sabre the next night and added a second goal later in the game. He's currently atop Buffalo's scoring leaderboard with 12 goals and 22 points through 32 games. He has six goals and seven assists in his 21 games as a Sabre.

A few days after arriving in Buffalo, the Sabres traveled downstate to play the New York Rangers. While they were there, Moulson told reporters he was able to go home to grab some personal items, including a winter jacket.

Since then, he's brought back most everything he'd need to prepare for the cold months ahead.

"I don't think I brought too many clothes. I usually wear the same things over and over again," he said. "But I don't mind the snow at all. I obviously grew up with a

lot of snow so it's kind of a nice change to see some snow. I have to get my daughter acclimated to the cold weather and snow though."

Moulson and his wife had their second child just a few weeks before he was traded. Initially, it was difficult for him to be away, but now his family is settled in Western New York.

He credits members of the organization and his teammates' families for helping with the transition.

"I think everyone here, all the wives and other families here and [owners] Terry and Kim [Pegula] have made my family feel extremely welcome," he said. "I know they do that with everyone so it definitely makes it a lot easier to concentrate on hockey when you're treated so well and you enjoy being where you're being."

Moulson grew up a few hours away in Mississauga, Ont. and said he attended both Bills and Sabres fans as a kid. He's been to one Bills game this year and was able to see a victory.

"I'm 1-0 right now," he said. "One game, one win."

Through various trips across the border, Moulson was pretty familiar with the area before he started playing for the Sabres. However, there are still a few things he's learning about.

"I think the one thing I definitely did not know about Buffalo was all the good restaurants. There's a lot of good food in Buffalo," he said. "I thought it was all chicken wings – and great wings, obviously – but there are a lot of other great restaurants. It's been a lot of fun to get around and see all of them."

His sister attended Niagara University to play hockey, but he says she never told him about Western New York's wide variety of fine dining options.

"I don't think she could afford too many restaurants when she was in college," he said with a smile. "She told me about Chippewa Street, but that's about it."

Moulson was drafted in the fourth round of the 2004 National Lacrosse League Entry Draft by the Rochester Knighthawks. Although he ultimately made the decision to play hockey professionally instead, he said he still follows the NLL.

"Hopefully I'll be able to get to some [Buffalo] Bandits games and Rochester's not too far by, so who knows? Maybe if we get some time, I'll make my way up there," he said.

The Bandits open their season on Dec. 28 at First Niagara Center against the Philadelphia Wings.

26 Matt Moulson – 63 Tyler Ennis – 28 Zemgus Girgensons
82 Marcus Foligno – 19 Cody Hodgson – 27 Matt D'Agostini
9 Steve Ott – 23 Ville Leino – 21 Drew Stafford
32 John Scott – 12 Kevin Porter – 65 Brian Flynn – 37 Matt Ellis

10 Christian Ehrhoff – 52 Alexander Sulzer
20 Henrik Tallinder – 57 Tyler Myers
6 Mike Weber – 4 Jamie McBain
5 Chad Ruhwedel

30 Ryan Miller
1 Jhonas Enroth

DOWN ON THE FARM

By Kris Baker

Sabres.com

December 17, 2013

The AHL's Rochester Americans moved up in the standings last week, earning two victories in three tries, including a thrilling shootout triumph over a division rival.

The busy week began on Wednesday with Jamie Tardif scoring a pair of goals - including one via penalty shot - as Rochester downed Lake Erie 4-2. Kevin Porter and Mike Zigomanis provided single markers, while Matt Hackett had a light night in the Amerks crease, stopping 16 of the 18 shots sent his way to earn the victory. Defenseman Chad Ruhwedel contributed two assists for his second multipoint game of the season.

The Amerks and Monsters reconvened Friday as 11,015 fans braved the frigid temperatures to enjoy a classic outdoor battle at the 2013 Frozen Frontier.

Matt Ellis produced a goal and an assist in regulation and later added the shootout winner as Rochester earned their second-straight victory, a 5-4 decision over Lake Erie. Jerome Gauthier-Leduc, Phil Varone and Colton Gillies also scored for Rochester, while Joel Armia contributed an assist and three shots on goal. Hackett was again solid with 26 saves for the Amerks.

With the magical victory behind them, the Amerks packed their gear and headed east on the I-90 for a Saturday night tilt against rival Syracuse. Nathan Lieuwen stopped 26 of 27 shots to earn the game's number three star, but Brett Connolly's first-period goal would hold up the rest of the way resulting in a 1-0 shutout loss to the Crunch. Johan Larsson posted five of the Amerks' 27 shots in the loss.

Sitting in second place in the North Division standings, the Amerks (12-11-2-2) will faceoff with the team one point ahead of them on Wednesday when they host the Toronto Marlies for a 7:05 p.m. start at Blue Cross Arena.

ECHL

Fort Wayne goaltender Andrey Makarov turned away 34 of 35 shots Saturday to earn the game's number two star as the Komets downed Kalamazoo 4-1. The Russian rookie has won eight of his first 13 pro starts, racking up a 2.85 GAA and .910 save% along the way.

Shawn Szydlowski picked up an assist for his first point of the year in Fort Wayne's Saturday victory. The third-year pro has played 13 games this season, totaling 20 shots on goal, nine penalty minutes and a minus-four rating in addition to his one point.

Jonathan Parker collected two assists last week as the Colorado Eagles won two of three contests versus the Las Vegas Wranglers. Parker has 14 points (4+10) and a plus-two rating in 16 games since being dispatched to the Eagles back on Nov. 5.

Elmira forward Colin Jacobs went without a point last week as the Jackals won twice and lost once. The WHL product has scored once on 10 shots on goal through his first seven coast league appearances.

Greenville goaltender Connor Knapp was a scratch in both of team's contests last week. The 6-foot-6 stopper has three wins in 10 starts for the Road Warriors, amassing a 2.31 GAA (9th in league) and .934 save% (3rd).

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.

Sabres notebook: Players put smiles on some young faces

By Amy Moritz

Buffalo News

December 19, 2013

As a parent blessed with a healthy family, Steve Ott understands his good fortune. He also knows that as a professional hockey player he can help ease the pain, if but for an afternoon, for some families who aren't as fortunate.

Ott and the rest of the Buffalo Sabres spent Wednesday afternoon at Women & Children's Hospital. Players and staff attended the holiday party for Stone's Buddies, an organization that provides for chronically ill children who receive treatment at the hospital.

The Sabres' captain said it is hard to imagine what some of the families are going through.

"Having a 7-year-old daughter, I could never put myself in their situation or their shoes," Ott said. "To try and put a smile on somebody's face and bring some joy to the holiday season, it's something small we can do. All in all it's just heartfelt, it's special to be in our situation to be able to do that."

Marcus Foligno made a short visit to Women & Children's Hospital during training camp but the 22-year-old in his third year with the Sabres said there is something special about sharing time around the holidays.

"Kids always get excited," Foligno said. "I remember when I was a little kid getting excited at Christmas time and it is tough for the kids to be in the hospital during Christmas. It definitely brings a lot of the guys closer and brings us closer to the community when we do things like that. For us, it's about seeing the kids and hoping to bring them a good smile and maybe sing some songs with them."

Sabres fans will have two opportunities to help with the organization's holiday community service efforts. Tonight is the final night of the Winter Clothing Drive for the Buffalo City Mission. Fans can donate warm clothing or money to the shelter. On Dec. 28 the Sabres will partner with BlueCross BlueShield of Western New York for a used skate drive at Pure Hockey on Sheridan Drive in Amherst.

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Coach Ted Nolan clarified the Sabres' intentions with defenseman Mark Pysyk, who was assigned to Rochester on Tuesday. Pysyk will not be traveling with the Rochester Americans to Switzerland for the Spengler Cup, which runs from Dec. 26-31.

"He'll be back when they leave," Nolan said.

It's likely the only roster move the Sabres will make. According to the new collective bargaining agreement, there is an NHL roster freeze that goes into effect at 11:59 on Dec. 19 and runs through 12:01 a.m. on Dec. 28. That means a player can not be traded, waived or demoted, although players may be promoted from affiliated clubs during that time.

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The Boston Bruins come to town off a 2-0 home win over the Calgary Flames and are 7-3-0 in their last 10.

While Shawn Thornton continues to sit out for the Bruins while he appeals his 15-game suspension for his attack on Brooks Orpik, Boston avoided losing another player to suspension. Brad Marchand will not receive any additional discipline for his boarding hit on Calgary's Sean Monahan.

Boston will still be without winger Loui Eriksson, who is suffering post-concussion symptoms 11 days after getting hit by Orpik. The Bruins made some roster moves on Wednesday before flying to Buffalo, sending defenseman Kevan Miller and forward Craig Cunningham to AHL affiliate Providence while calling up David Warsofsky. Warsofsky has two goals and 16 points in 26 games for the P-Bruins.

Tyler Ennis and Tyler Ennis: The Syracuse guard and Buffalo Sabres center answer questions

By Donna Ditota

Syracuse Post Standard

December 19, 2013

Syracuse, N.Y. — About 150 miles separate Syracuse from Buffalo. At opposite ends of that Thruway drive live two elite athletes, both of them named Tyler Ennis.

One Tyler Ennis is the hockey center for the Buffalo Sabres. The other Tyler Ennis is a basketball point guard for Syracuse University.

Both are Canadian. The Sabres' Ennis, who is 24, grew up in Edmonton, Alberta. The Orange Ennis, 19, grew up in Brampton, Ontario.

The young, personable athletes know of each other. They've never met. The Syracuse Ennis jokes that he resented hockey because Canadian television showed a barrage of hockey highlights and rarely acknowledged basketball. The Buffalo Ennis said he played basketball as "any other young kid did," but now only watches games with friends.

I asked each of the Tyler Ennises a few questions to help delineate a few things about themselves. Here's what they said:

Do you ever get mistaken for the other Tyler Ennis?

Tyler Ennis (basketball): On Twitter. Never in person. But people always look at me like 'Tyler Ennis is your real name?'

Tyler Ennis (hockey): No, but everyone is coming up to me and saying 'Do you know there's a Tyler Ennis playing basketball in Syracuse, and he's really good?' I really want to get his jersey. It's orange. And I think the whole thing is pretty cool.

You both played on Canadian national teams. What's your best memory of those experiences?

Tyler Ennis (basketball): I would say just traveling, being in another country. I've never been to Brazil or Prague, so just getting to go there was great.

Tyler Ennis (hockey): I think winning was awesome. I got to play for the Under-18s and we won. Got to play for the World Juniors and we won that one.

Have any superstitions?

Tyler Ennis (basketball): Not really. I say a little prayer in my head when I tie my shoes every day. But that's about it.

Tyler Ennis (hockey): Before every game, I have my same routine: I get up, get to the rink. Pregame, I have lunch at the same place every day in Buffalo: Aroma. I call my dad before every game.

How are your hockey skills?

Tyler Ennis (basketball): I don't know if I can skate or not. I haven't skated in like 15 years. I'm not that good. I'm a legitimate lacrosse player, but hockey — I'm not that good.

How are your basketball skills?

Tyler Ennis (hockey): Not great. I really like basketball. I watch it a lot. But I'm very, very average.

Describe the influence of your dad in your sports career.

Tyler Ennis (basketball): My dad's a coach, he also owns CIA Bounce, the AAU team. He comes to a lot of games. He taught me everything, pretty much.

Tyler Ennis (hockey): He got me involved in the sport. He was my coach when I was younger. He's been really supportive. I wouldn't be where I am without my father.

What's better, scoring or getting an assist?

Tyler Ennis (basketball): Getting an assist, definitely. I think because getting an assist, you gotta put guys in the right spot and somebody else has to help you as well. Anybody can score on their own. Anybody can throw something up and get it in. To get an assist, you have to make the right pass and somebody else has to do something.

Tyler Ennis (hockey): I'm a pass-first guy, but nothing beats scoring a goal.

Who's tougher: hockey players or basketball players?

Tyler Ennis (basketball): Oh, basketball players. But yeah, hockey players are tough. They fight. My dad played hockey when he was younger. He told me a couple stories about it.

Tyler Ennis (hockey): I gotta go with hockey players. There's more hitting and stuff and guys lose teeth. There's fights. It's really intense.

What's your middle name?

Tyler Ennis (basketball): Cameron

Tyler Ennis (hockey): Foster

What's the hardest thing about living in the US, being that you're Canadian?

Tyler Ennis (basketball): Nothing really. Crossing the border all the time, maybe.

Tyler Ennis (hockey): You guys don't have very good potato chips here. And we have a better selection of candy as well.

What's your best athletic attribute?

Tyler Ennis (basketball): Being fast?

Tyler Ennis (hockey): I'm a quick skater.

What's the best thing about being Tyler Ennis?

Tyler Ennis (basketball): Being able to be here, to play for Syracuse.

Tyler Ennis (hockey): I get to play hockey for my job.

GIVING BACK DURING THE HOLIDAYS

By Clare Lewis

Sabres.com

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December is commonly called the season of giving, and the Buffalo Sabres are taking that to heart. Once again this season, the organization is brightening the lives of many throughout Western New York.

The Sabres started the holiday giving in November with two different drives for local charities. The organization collected food and turkeys to benefit the Food Bank of Western New York in time for Thanksgiving. Then on November 29, the team held a Salvation Army Kettle Drive during their game against the Toronto Maple Leafs.

“As a team, the community looks at us to have extra responsibility, probably because of our visibility and impact,” said Rich Jureller, Buffalo’s Director of Community Relations. “It is important for us to make sure we are community leaders and doing as much as we can to help out and hopefully others will follow suit.”

Each week in December has brought several efforts for the organization.

On December 8, Mark Pysyk, Brian Flynn and Brayden McNabb decorated cookies and spread some holiday cheer with the kids at Camp Good Days and Special Times. On Wednesday (December 18), the entire team will travel to Women & Children’s Hospital of Buffalo for a party with the Stone’s Buddies members. Stone’s Buddies is the organization that provides support for chronically ill children who receive treatment at the hospital.

Members of the Sabres alumni and MSG on-air personalities have also been involved with the Santa Connection at Women & Children’s Hospital of Buffalo, and the Roswell Park Cancer Institute. The program is run through Pat LaFontaine’s Companions in Courage initiative, which builds interactive “Lion’s Den” playrooms in hospitals across the country. Children that are too sick to visit Santa can videoconference him with their Christmas list. The next day, they find one of the gifts they asked for at the end of their bed.

The Sabres have also mixed time-honored community traditions with new ventures.

“We try and keep things fresh. There are some things that year after year will work and people love it and support it,” said Jureller. “We also keep an eye on what other teams are doing around the league and other sports, and try and find ways where we can make more of an impact. That can come in the form of raising more money or simply making a bigger impact and difference within the community.”

Sabres home games at First Niagara Center also provide a time for giving. There is one more night (Dec. 19) left in the Winter Clothing Drive for the Buffalo City Mission, giving fans the opportunity to donate warm clothing or money to this very worthy cause.

The Sabres wives and significant others also sold autographed ornaments at the home games on Dec. 17 and Dec. 19. All ornaments were wrapped and the autograph was revealed after purchase when the ornament was unwrapped. All proceeds from sale went to the Sabres Foundation.

To put a wrap on the holiday season, the Sabres are partnering with BlueCross BlueShield of Western New York is going to hold a used skate drive on Saturday, December 28 at Pure Hockey on Sheridan Drive in Amherst.