



# **Buffalo Sabres**

**Daily Press Clips**

*December 31, 2013*

## **Sabres-Jets Preview**

By Nicolino DeBenedetto

Associated Press

December 30, 2013

Ryan Miller may be providing a spark for the NHL-worst Buffalo Sabres at home, but he's not expected to get a chance to carry that success onto the road.

With Jhonas Enroth scheduled to spell Miller, the Sabres will try to win on the road for the first time in almost two months Tuesday night against the Winnipeg Jets.

Miller is 5-1-1 with a 1.65 goals-against average over his last seven games, and all of those victories have come at home behind a 1.34 GAA and .962 save percentage.

The 2010 Vezina Trophy winner was fantastic again Sunday, making a season-high 49 saves before turning aside all six shootout attempts in a 2-1 win over Washington. That's expected to be Miller's final performance before the United States roster for the Olympics is revealed Wednesday.

"You have to project further out and we need Jhonas to be ready," Miller told the team's official website of his scheduled day off. "And it's an Olympic year. We're factoring in the possibility of more travel and playing time for maybe both of us. The idea is to balance it out a little more."

Enroth, a likely selection for Sweden at Sochi, hasn't been nearly as effective as his teammate. He's 0-5-2 with a 2.87 GAA in eight games - seven starts - since making 44 saves in a 3-1 win at Florida on Oct. 25.

Interim coach Ted Nolan, though, isn't putting much blame on Enroth.

"If you look at the goaltending we have, we have pretty good goaltending," he said. "So if we play honestly in front of them, we'll have good chances (to win)."

Buffalo hasn't done that on the road since beating San Jose 5-4 in a shootout on Nov. 5. Since then, the Sabres have been outscored 30-12 during a nine-game skid (0-7-2) away from home.

Visiting Winnipeg (18-18-5) may not end their troubles, either.

The Sabres have lost four in a row on the road to the Jets, including all three meetings in Winnipeg after they relocated from Atlanta. However, Buffalo rallied with four unanswered goals to beat the Jets 4-2 at home Dec. 17.

Enroth has a 2.00 GAA while losing both of his meetings, but this will be his first appearance at MTS Centre.

The Jets are aiming for a three-game winning streak and some consistency.

Blake Wheeler came up with the heroics Sunday, scoring with 1.1 seconds left in overtime for a 2-1 win at Colorado. That came two days after Winnipeg beat Minnesota 6-4 following a 2-5-1 stretch that included the defeat at Buffalo.

"I think we've definitely learned from the past that we're going to treat every game as if we're going to play the best team in the league," left wing Eric Tangradi said. "We know that if we don't play our best game, we're not going to win hockey games in this league.

"We have to play a full 60 minutes."

Another big performance from Wheeler would also help.

The right wing's 10 goals are among the league leaders for this month, and he's scored seven of them in four straight games at home. A goal Tuesday would make him the first Jets/Thrashers player to score in five straight home games since Slava Kozlov did it with Atlanta from March 16-April 1, 2009.

Wheeler has one goal in each of his last two home meetings with the Sabres, but came up empty on two shots at Buffalo earlier this month.

## **Depressing cloud over Sabres is clearing**

By John Vogl

Buffalo News

December 30, 2013

It's difficult to say which is harder to believe: all the stuff that happened to the Sabres in 2013 or the fact they're ending the year feeling good about things.

This calendar year was as mind-blowing as they come for Buffalo's hockey team. In order, there was:

- The lockout.
- The firing of coach Lindy Ruff.
- The trades of numerous veterans, including captain Jason Pominville.
- Booming.
- A 23rd-place finish.
- An organizational policy of "suffering."
- Historically bad hockey.
- More booming.
- The trade of Thomas Vanek.
- The firing of General Manager Darcy Regier and coach Ron Rolston.
- The return of coach Ted Nolan and Pat LaFontaine as newly created president of hockey operations.

"A lot's happened," defenseman Tyler Myers said with a laugh and eye roll Monday.

The most shocking development was the appearance of three coaches behind the Buffalo bench. The Sabres had only one in the previous 16 years. The move from replay-watching Rolston to hockey-playing Nolan is why the Sabres headed toward tonight's game in Winnipeg bubbling like champagne.

The players were drowning in video and skating on egg shells while Rolston was in charge. Nolan's doctrine that good things come to those who work hard has reminded everyone that hockey is supposed to be fun.

“It’s refreshing,” center Tyler Ennis said after practice at Riverside Park. “You could see the change in our play. We’re competing. We’re in games. We’re playing well, and it can only get better. There’s lots of room for improvement, but we’re moving in the right direction.”

The Sabres are 5-2-2 in their last nine games, which qualifies as a torrid run during 2013. Buffalo has won just 32 of 87 games this year, going 32-45-10 with an 11-24-4 record this season.

Though they remain in last place in the NHL, they’re no longer acting like a bottom-dwelling club. They’re smiling and having a good time, which is a night-and-day departure from the brooding that went on when the primary goal was the No. 1 draft pick.

“Even with the position we’re in right now, it seems to be quite a positive room,” Myers said. “The direction we’re headed is one I think everyone is excited about.

“It’s a completely different feel in the room. I don’t think we’ve had this feeling in the room for quite some time now, not even just looking at this year but last year was a tough year as well. The atmosphere right now within the group, all the guys are pretty happy about it.”

So many changes happened at once, including the recall of veterans to replace unprepared teenagers, that it’s tough to say what had the biggest impact. The safe money is on Nolan.

“It’s almost like he’s been a breath of fresh air,” Myers said. “With as many changes that occurred, it almost gave us the feeling of a new beginning. We’ve really embraced that, and it’s helped out a lot.”

Nolan says the attitude on the team now and when he walked in the door Nov. 13 is “like two totally different people.”

“We’ve adjusted the feel-good part,” he said. “They’ve been putting their time and effort in. When you do that you feel good about yourselves. I think they feel good about themselves.

“We’ve got a long ways to go.”

The Sabres still have flaws, with an inability to score at the top of the list, but at least depression is no longer of them.

“You can still have a bright future and have the pain not be not as much,” Ennis said. “We’re moving in the right direction. We’re looking forward to a really good 2014.”

## **Jets host Sabres in search of third straight win**

By Jon Lane

NHL.com

December 30, 2013

SABRES (11-24-4) at JETS (18-18-5)

TV: TSN, MSG-B

Last 10: Buffalo 5-3-2; Winnipeg 4-5-1

Season series: The Buffalo Sabres and Winnipeg Jets will play for the final time this season. Buffalo won the first game 4-2 on Dec. 17 at First Niagara Center.

Big story: The Sabres have been on a roll on home ice, winning their past four games, including a 2-1 shootout win against the Washington Capitals on Sunday, and are 5-2-2 overall in their past nine. Interim coach Ted Nolan believes the two-game road trip, which takes them to Winnipeg and St. Paul for a game against the Minnesota Wild, will say a lot about their recent development.

"We've got a long ways to go. We adjusted [to] the feel-good period part. Now we just have to pay a little bit more attention to details," Nolan said. "If you look at the goaltending we have, we have pretty good goaltending. So if we play honestly in front of them, we'll have good chances [to win]."

The Jets play host to the Sabres looking to generate momentum of their own. They have won two straight for the first time since Nov. 25-27; they beat the Colorado Avalanche 2-1 on Sunday and the Wild 6-4 on Friday.

"What I'd like to see more of in the second half is to see us build off the two games we just played," Jets coach Claude Noel said. "The games I've seen in the last two games makes me believe we're heading down the right road in the second half of the season."

Team Scope:

Sabres: Buffalo goalie Ryan Miller was named the NHL's Second Star of the Week ending after going 2-0-1 with a 1.55 goals-against average and .961 save percentage to help the Sabres earn five out of a possible six points. Miller, though, will get the night off in Winnipeg; Jhonas Enroth will get the start.

"You have to project further out, and we need Jhonas to be ready," Miller told the Sabres website after practice Monday. "And it's an Olympic year. We're factoring in the possibility of more travel and playing time for maybe both of us. The idea is to balance it out a little more."

Jets: Winnipeg backup goalie Al Montoya made 33 saves in the win against Colorado. Ondrej Pavelec was pulled after seven minutes of the Jets' win Friday after he allowed three goals on six shots, but Noel is sticking with him as his top goalie.

"We'll go game by game," Noel said. "I thought Al played a pretty good game. Pavelec is still our No. 1 goalie. He's a competitor. ... This is a little bump for him. I think it's a bit of adversity, and it's healthy."

Who's hot: Sabres forward Matt Moulson has a goal and three assists his past five games. Center Zemgus Girgensons has points in three of five. ... Jets forward Blake Wheeler has 14 points (10 goals) in December with three multigoal games. Defenseman Jacob Trouba has eight points in the past 13 games.

Injury report: Sabres left wing Ville Leino (undisclosed) is questionable after he was injured on a hit by Washington's Tom Wilson on Sunday, according to The Buffalo News. Center Cody Hodgson (left thumb, wrist) hasn't practiced since sustaining the injury Dec. 19. Centers Kevin Porter (lower body) and Cody McCormick (upper body) are on injured reserve. ... The Jets have four players on IR: defensemen Grant Clitsome (undisclosed) and Paul Postma (blood clot, leg), right wing Matt Halischuk (fractured forearm) and center Jim Slater (sports hernia surgery).

## **Sharp, Miller, Neal named 'Three Stars' of week**

NHL.com

December 30, 2013

NEW YORK – Chicago Blackhawks left wing Patrick Sharp, Buffalo Sabres goaltender Ryan Miller and Pittsburgh Penguins left wing James Neal have been named the NHL's "Three Stars" for the week ending Dec. 29.

### **FIRST STAR – PATRICK SHARP, LW, CHICAGO BLACKHAWKS**

Sharp led the NHL with six goals and tied for second with seven points as the Blackhawks (27-7-7, 61 points) earned five out of a possible six points to maintain first place in the Central Division. He began the week by scoring two goals in a 5-2 victory over the New Jersey Devils Dec. 23. Celebrating his 32nd birthday, Sharp (3-1-4) recorded his third career hat trick, including the game-winning goal, in a 7-2 triumph over the Colorado Avalanche Dec. 27 to become the first player in Blackhawks history – and second NHLer in the last 22 seasons (Pavol Demitra: Nov. 29, 2002) – to post three goals on his birthday. He capped the week by scoring his 22nd goal of the season, tied for fourth in the League, in a 6-5 shootout loss to the St. Louis Blues Dec. 28. Sharp ranks second on the Blackhawks and tied for eighth in the NHL with 22-19-41 in 41 games this season, including 11-6-17 in his past 10 outings.

### **SECOND STAR – RYAN MILLER, G, BUFFALO SABRES**

Miller posted a 2-0-1 record with a 1.55 goals-against average and .961 save percentage to help the Sabres (11-24-4, 26 points) gain five out of a possible six points. He opened the week with 36 saves in a 2-1 overtime victory against the Phoenix Coyotes Dec. 23. He then recorded 39 saves, plus another two in the shootout, in a 4-3 loss to the Toronto Maple Leafs Dec. 27. Miller finished the week with a career-high 49 saves and stopped all six shootout attempts in a 2-1 win over the Washington Capitals Dec. 29, improving to 3-0-0 all-time in games in which he has faced 50 or more shots (also Jan. 8, 2010: 48 saves on 50 shots; Nov. 5, 2013: 47 saves on 51 shots). The 33-year-old East Lansing, Mich., native has played in 28 games this season, posting a 10-17-1 record with a 2.69 goals-against average and .927 save percentage.

### **THIRD STAR – JAMES NEAL, LW, PITTSBURGH PENGUINS**

Neal (4-4-8) led the League with eight points as the Penguins (29-11-1, 59 points) won two of three games to remain in first place in the Eastern Conference. He was held off the scoresheet in a 5-0 loss to the Ottawa Senators Dec. 23, but broke out with 1-2-3, including the overtime winner, in a 4-3 victory over the Carolina Hurricanes Dec. 27. Neal (3-2-5) then recorded his fourth career hat trick and first five-point game in a 5-3 win over the Columbus Blue Jackets Dec. 29. According to the Elias Sports Bureau, he also became the first Penguins player to register at least five points in a game in which he factored all



of his team's goals since Jan. 19, 2010, when Sidney Crosby posted 2-4—6 in a 6-4 triumph over the New York Islanders. The 26-year-old Whitby, Ont., native has played in 21 games this season, totaling 14 16—30, including 13-14—27 in his past 15 outings.

## **Miller has been one of Sabres' few highlights**

By Tim Campbell  
Winnipeg Free Press  
December 31, 2013

### ABOUT THE SABRES

The Sabres come to Winnipeg for the New Year's Eve game with a good feeling. They were outshot 50-17 by the Washington Capitals on Sunday night but rode the excellent goaltending of Ryan Miller (49 saves) and won the game in a six-round shootout, 2-1.

Miller has been one of the few highlights for a poor Sabres team this season. Though 10-17-1, he's managed a .927 save percentage and a 2.69 goals-against average.

Buffalo, 4-9-1 vs. the Western Conference this season, is 2-0-1 in its last three games and 4-1-1 in the last six.

That span includes a Dec. 17 win over the Jets, 4-2, which was followed by a victory over the Boston Bruins.

Though pointless on Sunday, LW Matt Moulson is the Sabres' leading scorer this season with 26 points.

### WINNIPEG JETS

31 Ondrej Pavelec

35 Al Montoya

2 Adam Pardy

5 Mark Stuart

7 Keaton Ellerby

8 Jacob Trouba

9 Evander Kane

12 Olli Jokinen

14 Anthony Peluso

16 Andrew Ladd  
17 James Wright  
18 Bryan Little  
22 Chris Thorburn  
26 Blake Wheeler  
27 Eric Tangradi  
33 Dustin Byfuglien  
39 Toby Enstrom  
40 Devin Setoguchi  
44 Zach Bogosian  
55 Mark Scheifele  
59 Eric O'Dell  
67 Michael Frolik

#### **BUFFALO SABRES**

1 Jhonas Enroth  
30 Ryan Miller  
3 Mark Pysyk  
4 Jamie McBain  
6 Mike Weber  
9 Steve Ott  
10 Christian Ehrhoff  
17 Linus Omark  
19 Cody Hodgson

20 Henrik Tallinder

21 Drew Stafford

23 Ville Leino

26 Matt Moulson

27 Matt D'Agostini

28 Zemgus Girgensons

32 John Scott

37 Matt Ellis

52 Alexander Sulzer

57 Tyler Myers

63 Tyler Ennis

65 Brian Flynn

82 Marcus Foligno

## **Sabres goalie Ryan Miller to rest tonight, happy with backup Jhonas Enroth playing regularly**

By Bill Hoppe

Olean Times Herald

December 31, 2013

BUFFALO – Sabres goalie Ryan Miller will take a well-deserved break tonight in Winnipeg, giving way to backup Jhonas Enroth for the 13th time this season.

Miller, fresh off a career-best 49-save effort in Sunday's 2-1 shootout triumph against Washington, is fine with sitting. The Sabres, like all NHL teams, have a loaded schedule this Olympic campaign.

Their tilt against the Jets, the start of a two-game road trip, begins a stretch of 19 contests over 38 days until the break.

With 28 appearances through 39 games, Miller's on pace to play 59 times, his lowest total in a full season since 2008-09, when an ankle injury shelved him five weeks.

Miller, of course, wants to play as much as possible.

"But you have to know there are moments where you have to build yourself up off the ice and you have to take a little bit of a mental break and do your work in the gym, do your work on the ice that maybe you don't as much if you're playing," Miller said Monday inside the Riverside Ice Rink.

Resting regularly has helped Miller. He hasn't started more than five straight games all season.

"You get a rested Ryan Miller, you're going to get a better player," interim Sabres coach Ted Nolan said.

Miller's recent play – 2-0-1 with a 1.55 goals-against average and .961 save percentage – earned him the NHL's second star of the week, the league announced Monday.

The 33-year-old made 36 saves in last Monday's 2-1 overtime win against Phoenix and 39 stops on Friday's 4-3 shootout loss in Toronto. He also stopped eight of the nine shootout attempts he faced, including all six Sunday.

Miller's 10-17-1 with a 2.69 goals-against average and .927 save percentage overall, numbers that would almost certainly be better if the Sabres had supported him throughout the rough season.

He's a virtual lock to start for Team USA at the Sochi Games in February. Enroth, meanwhile, could be one of Sweden's three netminders.

“We need Jhonas to be ready,” Miller said. “It’s an Olympic year. We’re factoring in the possibility of more travel and playing time for maybe both of us. So the idea is to balance (playing time) out a little bit more and looking at the trend in the NHL.

“The season started thinking more about making playoffs and how that all shapes up and adds up. It means that both guys have to carry a load. You need energy to win games. You want to sustain that all year.”

A single game, even one as busy as Sunday’s, shouldn’t make the Sabres rethink their goaltending schedule, Miller said.

“You can’t just go off of one game,” he said. “You have to think about the entire season. You start to get too high on one game, you start to kind of lose the plan and lose the overall game plan. So the idea is to keep energy at a high level so you can have more game where you can factor in.

“Just learning from my past, I played 76 one year, and it didn’t do a whole lot for us.”

He played in all but six of the 82 games in 2007-08, when former coach Lindy Ruff quickly lost faith in veteran No. 2 Jocelyn Thibault and began running his franchise goalie ragged.

Miller’s play suffered. He had a career-low .906 save percentage while losing a career-high 27 games in regulation.

In years past, Miller said, he used to “get too emotionally involved.”

These days, “If I’m calm and I kind of just let everything happen, I’m more in the play and able to read situations and things work out better for me,” he said.

“So I’m just trying to dial down the emotion a little bit,” Miller said. “Not that I’m not going to be passionate about playing. Just dial it down, try not to get too involved in bad calls or caught up in what the referee’s doing or whatever the guys are doing on the ice. Focus on my game, and then dial my focus up where I’m just trying to read plays, settle myself in the net, be a little more composed on plays.”

## **Why are the Sabres better under Ted Nolan?**

By Matthew Collier

WGR 550

December 31, 2013

It's not that the Buffalo Sabres have gone from the worst team in the NHL to competing for the Stanley Cup since interim head coach Ted Nolan took over, but it's hard to challenge the idea that they've been better. It has shown up in the records. Ted Nolan is 7-9-3, Rolston was 4-15-1. It's shown up visually with the team playing more competently in both zones. And it's shown up in multiple players who were struggling under Rolston and are now playing closer to up to snuff.

Along with the improvement in record and overall play has come a flood of questions to players about why things are different/better.

But are Nolan's motivational tactics really the difference? On the surface, that seems pretty dubious. After all, shouldn't NHL players be able to motivate themselves? When the players say that Nolan has them more jazzed up to play, aren't they suggesting they weren't giving it their all before?

We'll never know how much Nolan's hardest-working-team message has impacted the Sabres' play, but there are things that the statistics suggest about why the team has played better. It shouldn't be a surprise that the stats say circumstance and luck have played just as much of a role as Nolan's tweaks.

### Opponents

Rolston couldn't have landed a tougher schedule if he'd tried. Call it an excuse if you want, but quality of competition plays a huge role in the ups and downs of any team's results.

To grade the opponents' strength, you could use their records, but sometimes records can be deceiving this early in the season. For example, the Detroit Red Wings and New Jersey Devils have had an inordinate amount of shootout losses. Are they not playing well simply because they're losing in the breakaway contest? If they're controlling play more often than not, there's a good chance they'll be good in the long run.

A better measure of how a team has played is their puck possession statistics. The stat of choice is called Corsi Percentage, which measures a team's shot attempts against the opposition's shots. The best teams in the league are Chicago, LA, San Jose, St. Louis and Boston. So, you get the idea. Good teams control play.

Under Rolston, the Sabres only played three of 20 opponents who had a sub-50% Corsi%, which is average. With Nolan as coach, nine of the 19 games have been

played against teams with under 50% Corsi% including four games against the league's second worst possession team Toronto.

Rolston quality of opponents: 52.0% Corsi%  
Nolan quality of opponents: 46.8%

To understand the context of those numbers, the average opponent for Rolston would have ranked 7th in the NHL in Corsi%. The average team Nolan faced would rank 27th.

The final five teams that Rolston played before he was fired were the Ducks, Sharks, Kings, Ducks, Kings. The Sabres aren't the only teams that got blasted by the top Western Conference teams. Those three clubs are 34-10-7 against the East this year.

Rolston is blue, Nolan is red

Bye-bye young guys

One of the first moves Pat LaFontaine made when he took over as head of hockey operations was to send several of the Sabres' young players out and bring up more experienced players – some NHL vets, some with more minor league experience.

Rookie Rasmus Ristolainen was sent to the AHL, 2013 draft pick Nikita Zadorov was sent back to juniors and 19-year-old Mikhail Grigorenko was allowed to go play in the World Junior Championship.

In their place, we've seen the season debuts of Luke Adam, Brayden McNabb, Matt Ellis, Matt D'Agostini, Linus Omark and Alex Sulzer.

Here's how the young guys vs. the old guys compare in puck possession:

Player Corsi For Corsi Against Corsi %

D'Agostini 151 131 54

Ellis 59 65 48

Adam 92 92 50

McNabb 64 68 48

Omark 17 22 44

Sulzer 100 134 43

TOTAL 483 512 49

Zadorov 63 93 40

Ristolainen 204 321 39

Grigorenko 124 188 40

TOTAL 391 602 40



It proved true what LaFontaine and Nolan preached from the beginning: That it was unfair to the prospects to have to face NHL competition so soon. While Ristolainen, Zadorov and Grigorenko have plenty of upside, they weren't ready to face the L.A. Kings. They were getting pummeled night after night.

### Ryan Miller

Thus far, Nolan has received an unsustainable, amazing performance out of his star goalie. During his time with Rolston, Ryan Miller posted a .910 save percentage. With Nolan it's been .943. Seeing as Miller's highest career figure is .929, it's hard to believe Miller will keep up his incredible roll. It's possible that some percentage of the netminder's success has been because of an improved performance out of the team's defense. But Miller has had better defenses in the past and never managed .943 – which would be the highest single season mark ever if it was kept up for the full year.

Miller's incredible play has covered up for an offense that hasn't really improved. In fact, in non-shootout goals, under Rolston the Sabres scored 33 in 20 games. Under Nolan they've scored 31 in 19 games.

### Moulson-Ennis-Girgensons

Opponents and having more NHL ready players were two things that couldn't be credited to Nolan's coaching savvy. The top line of Matt Moulson, Tyler Ennis and Zemgus Girgensons has turned out to be a genius move by the new coach.

In the last 11 games, Girgensons' possession statistics are superb. He has eight points and a Corsi% of 51.3%. When he's been on the same line as Moulson, he's had a 52.5% Corsi%, which puts their combo amongst the better ones in the league (if it continues, of course). Ennis and Moulson each have six points in the last 10 games. It's been the most successful line of the season.

Ennis at the center position has always made more sense than at the wing. Was it a Rolston decision or a Regier decision to have him at wing? It's hard to say, but it's clearly been part of Ennis' success and the coach deserves credit for that.

### Tyler Myers

Before we pat Nolan on the back for the improved play of Tyler Myers, here's a quick reminder that he was better right off the bat under Rolston.

That said, Myers has been more aggressive and has had a positive effect on the team of late. The 6-foot-8 defenseman has been stepping up in the play, driving toward the net and even working offensively behind the net. The results have shown up in his shots on goal statistic.

In 19 games under Nolan, Myers has 38 shots on goal. During Rolston's time, he only had 24 in 20 games. It's possible that Myers will always just be who he's going to be, which is a defensively inconsistent, offensively freakish, semi-head case defenseman who drives fans nuts at times but is at his best when he's jumping up into the play and creating offense.

The original point about opposition may play a huge role in why Myers' numbers are better, but the bottom line is they are better. In 13 of Rolston's 20 games, Myers posted a negative Relative Corsi – which basically says he was one of their worst possession players - in 13 of 20 games. Under Nolan, he's had a positive Relative Corsi in 13 of 19 games.

How big of an improvement is it? Hard to say in such a small sample, but it's an improvement.

### Conclusions

- A favorable schedule has clearly played heavily in Nolan's favor
- The team's offense has not improved at all (33-31 in goals for Rolston, 6-6 in PP goals)
- The team's defense is better in large part because of the demotion of rookies and Ryan Freaking Miller
- The emergence of Zemgus Girgensons and improvement of Tyler Myers have not only made the team more effective, but provided some excitement and optimism for fans

None of this is to say Sabres fans shouldn't be happy with the direction or the job Nolan has done, simply that sometimes circumstances are just as or more responsible for winning or losing as line combinations and motivational speeches.

## **Sabres Miller helps decide when he'll rest**

By Paul Hamilton

WGR 550

December 30, 2013

Buffalo, NY (WGR 550) -- Ryan Miller faced 50 shots Sunday against Washington. After a short practice on Monday, Ted Nolan said Jhonas Enroth will play New Year's Eve in Winnipeg. That puts Miller in goal Thursday in Minnesota. Ted Nolan said, "We'll go one game at a time, Jhonas will play the next game for sure."

Miller hasn't played as much this season, even after Nolan said he was going to ride him. Nolan said, "If you look at the performance of Ryan last night, the rest that he had for the Christmas break and the week before if you get a rested Ryan Miller, you get a better player and the same thing with Jhonas so, it's a combination of both."

The goaltending schedule is put together by Jim Corsi and Miller. Miller said, "I've had a fair amount of input. It's not as apparent early in the season, you get a little more rest and breaks, but you have to project further out, we need Jhonas to be ready and it's an Olympic year and we're factoring in possibly more travel and playing time for maybe both of us, so the idea is to balance it out a little bit more. Both guys have to carry a load, you need energy to win games, so the idea is to keep him involved and playing and I thought he's handled things really well."

It's new territory for Miller. My thought was is he playing enough? Miller said, "Yes, this is fine. Just learning over the years, you want to play as much as possible, but you have to know there are moments you have to build yourself up off the ice. You have to take a little bit of a mental break and do your work in the gym, do your work on the ice, maybe you don't do as much if you're playing." Miller added, "I played 76 games one year and it didn't do a whole lot for us."

Steve Ott, Brian Flynn and Ville Leino didn't practice on Monday before leaving for Winnipeg. Nolan said, "Ville was the only guy that didn't feel too well again today so we gave him a day off. Ott was just a rest day and Flynn was a rest day also."

## **MILLER NAMED NHL'S 2ND STAR OF THE WEEK, ENROTH TO START IN WINNIPEG**

By Chris Ryndak

Sabres.com

December 30, 2013

Buffalo Sabres goaltender Ryan Miller was named the NHL's Second Star of the Week after going 2-0-1 with a 1.55 goals against average and a .961 save percentage for the week ending Dec. 29. He stopped a career-high 49 shots Sunday night in Buffalo's 2-1 shootout win over the Washington Capitals.

The Sabres will stick with their goaltending schedule and give Miller the night off against the Winnipeg Jets on Tuesday. Jhonas Enroth will get the nod in Winnipeg.

"You have to project further out and we need Jhonas to be ready," Miller said after practice at Riverside Ice Arena on Monday. "And it's an Olympic year. We're factoring in the possibility of more travel and playing time for maybe both of us. The idea is to balance it out a little more."

As far as the Olympics go, Miller reiterated that he has not yet heard from Team USA regarding the Winter Olympic roster. USA Hockey is expected to announce its roster on New Year's Day. Enroth is a candidate to back up Henrik Lundqvist for Team Sweden.

While Enroth has only one win this season, Miller has been impressed with the 25-year-old netminder's play.

"I think he's handled it really well in kind of a situation where I thought he's had some good nights and he just hasn't gotten the win," he said. "But I thought he's played really solid."

Miller has played as many as 76 games in a season. Since the team can rely on Enroth to give them quality starts, Miller is able receive proper rest to keep his energy levels up to where he feels they need to be.

"Learning over the years, you want to play as much as possible, but you have to know there are moments where you have to build yourself up off the ice," Miller said. "You have to take a little bit of a mental break and do your work in the gym, do your work on the ice that maybe you don't do as much if you're playing."

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The Sabres are clicking at home, having won their past four games at First Niagara Center. But they'll try to find a way to mimic that success on the road this week.

Buffalo will embark on a two-game road trip that starts on New Year's Eve in Winnipeg. After the game, they'll travel to Minnesota to take on the Wild on Thursday. They'll return home for a date with the New Jersey Devils on Saturday.

The Sabres have played both the Jets and Wild already this season at First Niagara Center. While they've gotten a look at what those teams are about, Sabres defenseman Henrik Tallinder said that these next two games will certainly have a different vibe.

"They probably want to set a tone in their home buildings, so they're going to be tough games," he said. "We have pretty good confidence in our team. We're playing decent right now. We can play better. We know that. So we're going to go into those buildings and play our best."

With Buffalo's recent success, Sabres interim coach Ted Nolan is now looking at taking the next step in the team's development.

"We've got a long ways to go. We adjusted [to] the feel-good period part. Now we just have to pay a little bit more attention to details," he said. "If you look at the goaltending we have, we have pretty good goaltending. So if we play honestly in front of them, we'll have good chances [to win]."

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Brian Flynn, Steve Ott and Ville Leino did not practice. Nolan said it was a rest day for Flynn and Ott while Leino is still dealing with some effects of the flu. The Sabres are carrying 13 forwards at the moment but center Cody Hodgson is unavailable as he recovers from an upper-body injury. Hodgson has not practiced with the team since he sustained the injury on Dec. 19.

Nolan said they would dress seven defensemen if Leino is unable to play.

## **WORLD JUNIOR CHAMPIONSHIP: DAY 5**

By Kris Baker

Sabres.com

December 30, 2013

Mikhail Grigorenko produced one assist and a game-high six shots on goal Monday as Russia was defeated by Finland 4-1 at the 2014 IIHF World Junior Championship. Star defenseman Rasmus Ristolainen did not play for Finland due to illness.

Grigorenko earned a secondary assist as Valeri Vasiliev opened scoring at 5:27 of the first period, but that was all the Russians could muster after entering the contest with 18 goals through their first two games. Finland owned the second period of play, securing a 12-5 shot advantage en route to scoring three goals, and was able to add another marker in the final frame while holding off the Grigorenko-led Russian attack the rest of the way.

Defenseman Nikita Zadorov finished with a minus-one rating in defeat for Russia. The hulking defender exhibited his hitting ability at times, but was unable to generate much activity in the offensive zone.

Russian will look to get back on track Tuesday when they face unbeaten Sweden. Finland will complete their round robin schedule versus Switzerland.

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In a Group B shocker, Marvin Cupper stopped all 40 shots sent his way and Frederik Tiffels snagged two goals and an assist to guide Germany to a 3-0 victory over the Czech Republic. The German win was their first ever over the Czechs at the under-20 event. Top draft prospect Leon Draisaitl sat the game out after being issued a one-game suspension following a checking from behind penalty in Saturday's loss to the United States.

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Anthony Rouiller scored the game winning goal in the 51st minute as Switzerland downed Norway 3-2. Fabrice Herzog (TOR) and Mirco Muller (SJS) also scored for the Swiss, who with the win advanced to the tournament quarterfinal while sending Norway to the relegation round.

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Jonathan Drouin (TBL) tied the game with 5:53 to play in regulation and Nic Petan (WPG) scored twice in the final three minutes to thrust Canada to 5-3 come-from-behind victory over Slovakia. The Slovaks got out to a 3-1 lead in the second period before Canada shook off four minor penalties and got it together

with four unanswered goals to close the game in thrilling fashion. Anthony Mantha (DET) earned player of the game honors for Canada with a goal and three assists, while highly-rated 2014 draft prospects Sam Reinhart and Aaron Ekblad recorded one assist each.

The Canadian victory provides a beautiful backdrop entering Tuesday's showdown with the United States (11:30 a.m., NHL Network). Canada would need to defeat the defending gold medalist in regulation to earn the top playoff seed in Group A, while a USA regulation victory or tie will earn them the preferred quarterfinal matchup.

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The final Group B playoff seeds will also be determined Tuesday. If Russia can defeat Sweden in regulation and Finland does the same over the Swiss, there will be a three-way tie for first place, with goal differential in the games between the teams determining the positioning.

Tuesday's action will be rounded out with the Czech Republic battling Slovakia (8 a.m., NHL Network). A Slovakia victory will send the Czechs to the relegation series and place Germany in the quarterfinal.

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For more on all the youngsters in the Sabres pipeline, check out Kris Baker's web site - [sabresprospects.com](http://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 PROSPECTS REPORT**

By Kris Baker

Sabres.com

December 30, 2013

Hometown products Justin Bailey and Sean Malone both continue to heat up for their respective squads; Michigan's J.T. Compher made a speedy return from injury, while Connor Hurley looks to get settled in his new USHL home. It's all in this week's Sabres Prospects Report.

### **OHL**

Justin Bailey (2013, second round) emerged from the holiday break Saturday rested and focused, scoring his 13th and 14th goals of the year as Kitchener defeated Erie 6-2. Bailey, who was named the number two star of the game, has collected 25 points this season, including goals in three straight outings and five in his last five.

Justin Kea (2012, third round) buried a wrist shot for his 14th goal of the season on Saturday as Saginaw was upended by Windsor 4-1. Kea, who added an assist in the Spirit's loss to Windsor the following day, has amassed 33 points (14+19) in 37 games this season.

Saginaw received a late Christmas present Saturday when captain Eric Locke (2013, seventh round) returned to the lineup after missing 14 games with a shoulder injury. After skating without a point in Saturday's loss to Windsor, Locke connected for his ninth goal of the year Sunday as the Spirit were again outgunned by the Spitfires 6-5 at the Hockeytown Winter Festival at Comerica Park in Detroit.

Nicholas Baptiste (2013, third round) recorded a pair of assists Saturday as Sudbury doubled up North Bay 4-2. The speedy winger returned to work Sunday, producing another helper on the Wolves' lone goal in a 3-1 loss to Sault Ste. Marie. Baptiste's productive weekend puts him at 45 points (20+25) through 35 games.

Brady Austin (2012, seventh round) recorded a minus-one rating Sunday as London returned from the break with a 2-1 shootout loss to Plymouth in an outdoor contest at Comerica Park. Austin has five goals and 16 points this season while racking up an impressive plus-18 rating for the Knights.

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### **WHL**

Victoria's leading point man Logan Nelson (2012, fifth round) went without a point in his return to action Friday as the Royals pasted Prince George 8-1. The Minnesota native, who had previously missed five games while recovering from an upper-body injury, sat out of the Royals' Saturday night contest.



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## NCAA

J.T. Compher (2013, second round) scored a shorthanded goal Friday as No. 3 Michigan was defeated by Western Michigan 3-2 in overtime in the semifinal of the Great Lakes Invitational at Comerica Park. The marker gives the gritty forward a team-leading 15 points (6+9) through the Wolverines first 16 games, but perhaps the bigger story is his quick return from a foot injury suffered Dec. 16 that prevented him from participating in the World Junior Championship. Compher was unable to get anything going in Saturday's consolation game as the Wolverines were blanked 3-0 by Michigan State.

Jake McCabe (2012, second round) notched an assist Friday as No. 15 Wisconsin bested Alabama-Huntsville 5-0. McCabe, who recorded three shots on goal the following night as the Badgers completed the sweep of the Chargers, continues to lead all Badgers defenders with 12 points (3+9) in 16 games.

Brad Navin (2011, seventh round) was unable to get a point over the weekend in Wisconsin's sweep of Alabama-Huntsville. The checking line forward has three goals and five points this season while appearing in all 16 of the Badgers' contests.

Anthony Florentino (2013, fifth round) recorded two shots on goal Sunday as No. 5 Providence earned a 3-2 victory over host Dartmouth at the Ledyard Bank Classic. The freshman defender has worked his way into a big role for the Friars, posting three goals, eight points, and a plus-15 rating through his first 15 collegiate contests.

Buffalo-native Sean Malone (2013, sixth round) notched a goal and an assist Sunday as Harvard earned a 9-3 exhibition victory over the Russian Red Stars. Malone, who along with the rest of his Crimson mates hadn't skated since a 2-2 tie with Yale on Dec. 7, has a goal and six points in his first season of NCAA action.

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## USHL

In Friday action, Cal Petersen (2013, fifth round) stopped 27 shots to earn the number three star as Waterloo held on for a 2-1 victory over Chicago. Petersen had a shutout going until the Steel put out the extra attacker and scored with 41 seconds left in regulation. Petersen had a lighter workload the next night, stopping 14 of 16 shots sent his way as the Black Hawks rolled Cedar Rapids 6-2. The Notre Dame commit has picked up wins in 15 of 17 starts this season while posting a 2.48 GAA and .919 save%.

Judd Peterson (2012, seventh round) scored the game winning goal with 2:46 left on the clock Friday as Cedar Rapids edged Des Moines 5-4. The St. Cloud State recruit has scored 11 goals in 24 games this season, connecting on 31.4% of his shots along the way. Peterson has already matched his full season goal total from last year, with those 11 goals coming in 46 USHL contests.

Connor Hurley (2013, second round) scored in his Green Bay debut Friday as the Gamblers downed Dubuque 7-5. The goal snapped a 14-game goal drought for the Notre Dame commit. Hurley has notched 15 points (4+11) in 23 games this season between Muskegon and Green Bay.

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#### SHL

Linus Ullmark (2012, sixth round) served as backup for both games last week as MODO returned from the break with a pair of losses. The 6-foot-3 stopper has been solid all year in the MODO nets, amassing eight wins, a 2.05 GAA (3rd in league) and league-best .933 save% through 18 starts.

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