



# **Buffalo Sabres**

## **Daily Press Clips**

*January 28, 2014*

## **Capitals-Sabres Preview**

By Eli Kaberon  
Associated Press  
January 28, 2014

With an offensive outburst in their last game, the Washington Capitals finally put an end to their long losing streak.

The Capitals will look to build on that performance Tuesday night when they visit the Eastern Conference-worst Buffalo Sabres.

Washington (23-21-8) scored a combined eight goals during its seven-game losing streak, so it was a surprise to see it light up the scoreboard Saturday night in Montreal. Alex Ovechkin got the scoring started in the second period with the first of the Capitals' four goals in an 8:45 span en route to a 5-0 win.

"It's a big win, a good win for the boys," Ovechkin said. "It brings some confidence back."

As relieved as it might have felt, Washington left some good scoring opportunities on the ice. The Capitals went 0 for 8 on the power play against the Canadiens, and have converted just 1 of 32 chances with the man advantage in their last nine games.

"The game of hockey, there's such a fine line. There's so many different subplots every single night," coach Adam Oates said. "It was one game, we scored some goals, but we have to face a great goalie again (on Tuesday), so here we go again."

It's unclear, however, if U.S. Olympian Ryan Miller will be in net - he hasn't started on back-to-back nights in seven chances this season - and the Capitals certainly have to be wishing he'll get a breather. Miller has stopped 77 of 79 shots he's faced from Washington this season in two shootout wins, denying all nine Capitals skaters he's seen in the tiebreaker.

Buffalo (14-30-7) snapped Columbus' franchise-record eight-game winning streak with a 5-2 victory on Saturday, but couldn't earn its first back-to-back wins since mid-December. Miller stopped 31 of 33 shots he faced in Pittsburgh on Monday but got no help in the Sabres' 3-0 loss.

Coach Ted Nolan was particularly discouraged with his team's effort in the first period, but it was the second when a pair of turnovers led directly to the Penguins' first two goals.

"We're a team where we can't have glaring mistakes," Nolan said. "It's very demoralizing."

The Sabres average just 26.4 shots - second-fewest in the league - but had scored at least three goals in six straight games before getting shut out in Pittsburgh.

Jason Chimera and Ovechkin have combined for seven of the Capitals' 13 goals over their past eight games, while Cody Hodgson has recorded four goals and three assists in the Sabres' last seven.

The Capitals have dropped three of their last four games in Buffalo and have scored a total of 17 goals in their last 10 visits.

## **Fleury, Penguins beat Sabres 3-0**

By Dan Scifo

Associated Press

January 27, 2014

PITTSBURGH (AP) -- The Pittsburgh Penguins are still determined to finish as the NHL's best team - despite a recent slump.

The Penguins rebounded from a loss on Saturday and beat the league's worst team on Monday night as goaltender Marc-Andre Fleury stopped 24 shots for his fourth shutout, a 3-0 win against the Buffalo Sabres.

"When you play 82 every one isn't going to be perfect, but we're trying to be the best, not just into late June, but every game," Penguins head coach Dan Bylsma said.

Chris Kunitz scored his 26th goal and Deryk Engelland netted his fourth, equaling a career high. Tanner Glass scored his first goal in 26 games, a late empty-netter that sealed it for the Penguins, who won for the 15th time in 16 games at home.

Sidney Crosby, who leads the NHL with 74 points, added two assists to extend his points streak in games against Buffalo to 16 games, matching his longest streak against any team.

Fleury, who leads the NHL with 29 wins, registered his 27th career shutout, tied for second in the league. He helped preserve the win, denying Buffalo's Brian Flynn two minutes into the third period before following it up with a right-pad stop on Matt Moulson on a partial breakaway a couple minutes later.

"The first one was pretty close, and I was worried he might have cut across, so I tried to take his options away," said Fleury, who is one victory away from reaching the 30-win mark for the fifth-straight full NHL season.

"Moulson, I was trying to be patient because I know he has good hands," he added.

Fleury was better on the play, giving his team a sorely-needed lift after a slow start to the period.

"We chipped some pucks out in the beginning of the third period, kind of sitting back, and they shoved it right back at us," Bylsma said. "Marc got stuck with those two glorious chances against. the two great saves he had to make."

The Penguins are in command of the Eastern Conference, leading Boston and Tampa Bay by seven points in addition to a 15-point cushion on the New York Rangers in the Metropolitan Division entering Monday.

But Pittsburgh has struggled recently with a lackluster home effort last Monday against Florida - 15th in the 16-team Eastern Conference - and a 3-0 loss Saturday at Dallas.

It wasn't perfect, but the Penguins were able to turn it around on Monday.

"We still had times when we weren't getting pucks deep, turning it over, and giving them chances to get back into the game," Kunitz said. "Our goalie made a few great saves, a few that went through his body, could've hit somebody and went in the other way."

Goaltender Ryan Miller stopped 31 shots for last-place Buffalo, which has lost seven of nine.

The Sabres, who scored at least three goals the previous six games, won for the first time five games on Saturday, scoring a 5-2 victory at Columbus and stopping the red-hot Blue Jackets' franchise-record eight-game winning streak, but they couldn't sustain the momentum.

"We're a team that we can't have glaring mistakes," Sabres coach Ted Nolan said. "It's very demoralizing. We woke up in the third period and made a push, but not good enough."

The Penguins, after a scoreless opening period, scored at 14:16 of the second.

Brian Gibbons, who missed five games with a lower-body injury, hit the post on a one-timer from Crosby. The red goal light behind the net momentarily turned on before Kunitz swept the rebound into a partially empty net.

Engelland scored later in the period, forcing a turnover in the Sabres' zone before lifting a pass from Glass over a sprawled Miller.

That was good enough for the Penguins, who continue to try and perfect their stride despite leading the Eastern Conference.

"We still need to get better as a team and grow," Kunitz said. "We have 30-some games before the playoffs to make sure we're running on all cylinders, and make sure we're the best team going into the playoffs."

NOTES: Penguins' F Evgeni Malkin played in his 500th NHL game, becoming the 15th player in team history to reach the milestone. ... The Penguins are 27-2-1, and a perfect 18-0 at home when scoring first. ... Pittsburgh has won 40 of its last 48 home games dating back to last season. ... Chuck Kobasew, who played on Pittsburgh's top line the past four games, was a healthy scratch on Monday in addition to Andrew Ebbett and Robert Bortuzzo. Buffalo scratched Drew Stafford, John Scott, and Alexander Sulzer ... Buffalo plays the second half of a back-to-back Tuesday at home against Washington. ... Pittsburgh opens a two-game West Coast swing Thursday at Los Angeles ... The two teams meet for the third and final time this season next Wednesday at Buffalo.

## **Penguins dominate Sabres to pick up easy win**

By Mike Harrington

Buffalo News

January 27, 2014

PITTSBURGH — Form didn't hold Saturday in Columbus. It certainly did here Monday. Two nights after surprising the NHL's hottest team, the Buffalo Sabres were simply outclassed by one of the league's best.

The Pittsburgh Penguins shackled the Sabres, 3-0, before 18,563 in Consol Energy Center that saw a game which didn't feel all that close.

Ryan Miller kept the Sabres afloat in a scoreless first period that saw them get outshot, 15-5. The Sabres were noticeably better in the final 40 minutes - the shots were even at 19-19 - but second-period goals by Chris Kunitz and Deryk Engelland put the Penguins in control and Tanner Glass scored an empty-netter with 27.4 seconds left.

Marc-Andre Fleury made 24 saves, including on-the-doorstep jobs in the third period against Brian Flynn and Matt Moulson, to post the shutout. The Sabres were blanked for the seventh time this year and denied a bid to win two straight on the road for the first time since October.

Buffalo returned home immediately after the game and will host the Washington Capitals tonight at 7:30 in First Niagara Center.

Miller was again sharp, even if his presence in goal was a bit of a pregame surprise. He was coming off the sparkling, 36-save showing in Columbus that led the Sabres to a 5-2 win and ended the Blue Jackets' eight-game winning streak, but poor career numbers against the Penguins had observers wondering if one-win backup Jhonas Enroth might play.

Miller entered game just 7-11-3 against Pittsburgh - with an .888 save percentage that was his worst against any opponent and a 3.26 goals-against average that was second-worst.

"It doesn't really cross my mind. To me, every game is independent and every game is new," Miller said. "They've had a good team here for a while. I suppose that's kind of how it's gone. I felt fine."

Interim coach Ted Nolan said he simply wanted to play his best against the best.

"I just know how good he is," Nolan said of Miller, who made 31 saves. "You play him as often as you can."

It was also a chance for Miller to play in front of Penguins coach Dan Bylsma, who will be Team USA's coach in the Sochi Olympics.

“You can’t always go by highlights, box scores,” Miller said. “It’s a chance for them to scout but for us it’s another game and for me another chance to keep building my game regardless of who’s coaching.

“I know they’re paying attention most nights anyway. I don’t think it makes that big of a difference but it’s a little different perspective when they get to see me in person.”

“The strength of the US team right from the very start of this summer and our talks is in the goaltending position,” said Bylsma, who will choose between Miller and Los Angeles’ Jonathan Quick for the No. 1 slot. “Jokingly I had a few offers for trades from other teams to get at least one of our guys. We have a great strength there.”

Miller certainly backed Nolan’s faith, again keeping his positioning strong in the crease and square to shooters.

“The first period we were just in awe watching them do their thing,” Nolan said. “The second period we started playing our game. ... The one thing we want to try to do is at least compete. You can always do that. Skill is skill but when you don’t work, that’s not good.”

The Penguins capitalized on open giveaways by Jamie McBain and Henrik Tallinder for their goals.

“We can’t have glaring mistakes as a team,” Nolan said. “It’s very demoralizing.”

McBain, in particular, had a brutal night in his own zone and seems like a candidate to watch tonight from the press box.

Said Nolan, when asked if McBain struggled: “Ya think?”

Kunitz scored at 5:44 of the second after Miller stoned Sidney Crosby in front but McBain whiffed on an easy clear out of the zone. The puck went to Brian Gibbons, and he hit the post before Kunitz finally potted a back-hander.

The assist gave Crosby a 16-game points streak (9 goals, 16 assists) in games vs. Buffalo dating to Dec. 29, 2007.

Engelland made it 2-0 at 12:05. He snuck in from the right point to take a nifty feed from Glass and chip a shot home from Miller’s left after Tallinder lost the puck along the wall.

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The Capitals will be without center Mikhail Grabovski when they meet the Sabres tonight. Grabovski suffered an ankle injury Friday in New Jersey and didn’t make the trip to Buffalo after practice Monday. Grabovski is third on the Caps in both goals (12) and points (33).

## **Penguins' Orpik sets his sights on gold and a Cup**

By Mike Harrington

Buffalo News

January 27, 2014

PITTSBURGH — Brooks Orpik is less than two weeks away from going to his second straight Olympics for Team USA. He's about 2½ months away from starting a run at his second Stanley Cup with the Pittsburgh Penguins.

At age 33, in his 10th full NHL season, the former Amherst resident learned plenty about dealing with a tight schedule four years ago when he won a silver medal in Vancouver. The goals this year are another run at gold and another run at the Cup.

"Everybody is in such good shape now I don't think the physical grind is as much as people think," Orpik said before Monday's 3-0 victory over the Buffalo Sabres. "It's more of the mental grind.

"It's not like college or juniors and when you play teams at the bottom of the standings, you can get by at 80 percent. You see young guys struggling with that sometimes. We know we have to be sharp every night."

Orpik has one goal and 11 points in 44 games this year and will likely play in Sochi with his Pittsburgh defense partner, Paul Martin. Orpik is fully recovered after missing eight games due to a concussion after the infamous attack he absorbed from Boston's Shawn Thornton, who was suspended for 15 games.

The Penguins are atop the Eastern Conference but had a rare off night Saturday in Dallas as they suffered a 3-0 loss to Lindy Ruff's new team. They also stumbled against lower-level opponents earlier this season with a loss in Edmonton and a 5-1 stinker at home against Florida that snapped their 13-game home winning streak.

"Our attention to detail is a big thing," Orpik said. "This league is so good. Buffalo has the worst record in the league and they go into Columbus, who's won eight in a row. There's just no easy games. You can wind up losing two, three pretty quickly and that snowballs.

"We played Florida last week and Florida is nowhere near us in the standings and they came in here and pumped up, 5-1. Let your guard down a little bit that teams can really embarrass you."

The tight schedule makes practice time tough to find this time of year.

"It's more managing your energy," Orpik said. "That makes it really tough I think with a young team where you need to spend every day teaching guys things. We have a pretty veteran team here now as opposed to a few years ago. Now it's more making sure you're getting your rest and then having a sharper practice instead of walking on the ice without a purpose."

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Drew Stafford sat out the game with what Sabres interim coach Ted Nolan called a recurrence of the upper-body injury he missed four games earlier this month. Stafford initially suffered what's believed to be a shoulder injury on a hit he delivered to Matt Cooke Jan. 2 in Minnesota and was injured again in the third period Saturday in Columbus.

Ville Leino, who also didn't finish that game due to a hit from Columbus defenseman Jack Johnson, was able to return Monday. Linus Omark replaced Stafford in the lineup with John Scott and Alexander Sulzer.

Leino played on a line with Steve Ott and Cody Hodgson. Omark went on a line with Matt Ellis and Zenon Konopka.

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It was first game in the Consol Energy Center for Buffalo interim coach Ted Nolan, as the Penguins still played across the street in old Mellon Arena when he was the coach of the New York Islanders.

Following the pregame skate, Nolan regaled a couple dozen reporters about his team playing in old NHL arenas and had them chuckling with his memories of Penguins owner Mario Lemieux. Nolan played 18 games with the Pens during the 1985-86 season, Lemieux's second in the league. It was the last as a player for Nolan, who was also a teammate of Wayne Gretzky in junior hockey in Sault Ste. Marie, Ont.

The Consol Center is widely referred to as "The House that Mario Built". There's a statue of Lemieux in front, a giant mural of him in the concourse, his No. 66 hangs from the rafters and there's a Suite 66 at ice level with several pieces of memorabilia from his career.

"I remember a lot," a smiling Nolan said when asked his memories of Lemieux. "I remember sitting down next to Mario and they had a poster night. I asked him to sign it and he asked for who and I said, 'to me.' I still got it at home. It's 'To Teddy.' That's it. When you have a chance to play with him and watch him in practice ... I spread that story around quite a bit."

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Penguins standout Evgeni Malkin played his 500th career game. He entered the game with 611 career points in his first 499 contests, including 51 points in 41 games this season. ... Sabres defenseman Christian Ehrhoff tied his career high with three points Saturday at Columbus.

## **Capitals hope to continue offensive output vs. Sabres**

By Sean McCullen

NHL.com

January 27, 2014

CAPITALS (23-21-8) at SABRES (14-30-7)

TV: NBCSN, TSN2

Last 10: Washington 3-5-2; Buffalo 3-4-3

Season series: This is the third and final game between the teams. The Buffalo Sabres have won the first two games against the Washington Capitals this season, each by way of a 2-1 shootout victory. On Dec. 29, Buffalo goalie Ryan Miller made 50 saves in regulation and overtime before stopping all six Washington attempts in the shootout.

Big story: Washington's offense came to life in Alex Ovechkin's return to the lineup Saturday night, when the Capitals beat the Montreal Canadiens 5-0 at Bell Centre. The NHL's leading goal scorer, who had missed two games with a lower-body injury, scored his 36th goal and assisted on another. But the Capitals didn't rely on their scoring star to break out of a scoring funk, getting goals from three unlikely sources -- John Erskine, Jay Beagle and Casey Wellman each scored his first goal of the season.

Team Scope:

Capitals: Even with the five-goal outburst Saturday against the Canadiens, Washington has scored 13 goals in its past eight games.

A big reason for the recent offensive struggles has been a slumping power play. The Capitals are 1-for-23 with the man advantage in the past five games, including 0-for-8 against Montreal. Their power-play unit was tied with the Pittsburgh Penguins for tops in the NHL as recently as Jan. 15, but has fallen to fourth as a result of the slump.

"I don't think anything has really changed (with the power play). I think it's our execution," coach Adam Oates said after practice Monday. "Maybe guys are a little tired, using them too much in other situations. A little stale. Teams are really conscious of us, throwing different wrinkles at us. Good goalies making saves. Missing chances. A little bit of everything."

Although it didn't count as a power-play goal, Ovechkin scored to put Washington ahead 1-0 early in the second period against Montreal as Canadiens forward Lars Eller was exiting the penalty box.

The win against Montreal snapped a seven-game losing streak (0-5-2).

Sabres: After breaking out with five goals Saturday against the Columbus Blue Jackets, the Sabres were shut out Monday by the Penguins in a 3-0 loss.

The Sabres are last in the NHL in goals. Their 91 goals are 24 fewer than the Calgary Flames, who are 29th in the League.

Coach Ted Nolan wasn't pleased with Buffalo's effort in the second period, when the Sabres allowed two Pittsburgh goals, including one off a turnover in their own end.

"We're a team that we can't have glaring mistakes. It's very demoralizing," he said. "I think it demoralized us for a little bit. We woke up in the third period, we made a push, but not good enough."

Goalie Ryan Miller has started four of the past five games, so Jhonas Enroth could be in net against the Capitals.

Who's hot: Washington defenseman John Carlson has two goals in his past five games. ... Buffalo center Cody Hodgson has eight points (four goals, four assists) in eight games since returning from a hand injury.

Injury report: Capitals forward Mikhail Grabovski (ankle) will not play. Defenseman Jack Hillen (fractured left tibial plateau), who has been out since Oct. 3, has resumed skating. No time frame has been set for Hillen's return. ... Sabres right wing Drew Stafford (upper body) did not play Monday after he was injured Saturday against Columbus. He is day-to-day. Forwards Cody McCormick (upper body) and Matt D'Agostini (upper body) are on injured reserve.

## **Fleury, Penguins blank Sabres**

By Wes Crosby

NHL.com

January 27, 2014

PITTSBURGH -- Ryan Miller had one of his better games against the Pittsburgh Penguins, but he still couldn't outperform Marc-Andre Fleury.

Fleury made 24 saves to earn his fourth shutout of the season and lead Pittsburgh to a 3-0 win against the Buffalo Sabres on Monday at Consol Energy Center.

With Pittsburgh leading 2-0 early in the third period, Fleury made two key saves to keep Buffalo off the board.

Brian Flynn found himself alone in front of the Pittsburgh net 2:33 into the period and forced Fleury to sprawl out of position on a wrist shot. Flynn collected his rebound and sent it through the crease, where it slid under Fleury's pad and clear of the net.

Matt Moulson had a similar opportunity 1:41 later after Tyler Ennis delivered a pass from the right boards to send Moulson in alone against Fleury. Moulson deked to his right and came back to his left before attempting a wrist shot, but Fleury flashed his right pad to keep the puck out of the net.

"We haven't played them in a while, especially with the new coach," Fleury said. "It wasn't maybe the most entertaining game to watch, but they came out hard. It was good. Nobody panicked. Everybody played their game. It was a good win."

Tanner Glass scored an empty-net goal with 27.4 seconds left to seal the win for the Penguins.

The Penguins dominated play through the first two periods, but it didn't show on the scoreboard until Chris Kunitz scored the game's first goal 5:44 into the second.

After Sidney Crosby backhanded a shot that caused Miller to fall forward, Brian Gibbons' shot at an open net hit the left post. The puck ricocheted to Kunitz to the right of the net, and he backhanded a shot over Miller, who was still down on the ice, for his 26th goal.

"We should want to go out and have our best shift every single time we step on the ice," Kunitz said. "It shouldn't matter who the opponent is; it shouldn't matter what the score is. We should go and try and get better every single night. We have to grow as a team and get better in those areas."

Kunitz, who trails Crosby by one goal for the team lead, tied his career high for goals in a season, matching his output from the 2011-12 season. With an assist, Crosby extended his scoring streak against the Sabres to 16 games (25 points).

Deryk Engelland stretched Pittsburgh's lead to 2-0 with 7:55 remaining in the second. He forced a turnover in the Sabres zone and dropped the puck off to Glass, who sent a pass through to forward Craig Adams.

Adams moved the puck to Engelland, who was skating on the fourth line Monday, up from his usual spot on the blue line, and Engelland finished the play with a wrist shot for his fourth goal of the season.

Sabres coach Ted Nolan wasn't pleased with Buffalo's effort in the second period.

"We're a team that we can't have glaring mistakes. It's very demoralizing," Nolan said. "I think it demoralized us for a little bit. We woke up in the third period, we made a push, but not good enough."

Miller, who entered Monday with a 3.26 goals-against average and .888 save percentage in 23 career starts against the Penguins, allowed two goals on 10 second-period shots after denying Pittsburgh of a goal on 15 shots in the first.

"Every game is independent; every game is new," Miller said. "They've had a good team here for a while, and I suppose that's kind of how it's gone."

Pittsburgh controlled the first period, but Miller ensured the game remained scoreless entering the first intermission. Buffalo faced the NHL's top-ranked power-play unit (24.3 percent) after defenseman Henrik Tallinder was called for delay of game midway through the first, but Miller made stops on clear opportunities from Crosby, James Neal and Evgeni Malkin, who played in his 500th NHL game Monday.

The Sabres held a 4-3 shot advantage 7:24 into the period, but allowed 10 unanswered shots during an 8:45 stretch, which included a power play, that allowed Pittsburgh to control the pace. The Penguins finished the period with a 15-5 lead in shots.

Pittsburgh lost games to the Florida Panthers and Dallas Stars over the past week, and Penguins coach Dan Bylsma said he thought the team did a better job of not looking past its opponent Monday night.

"I'm never going to look at a game, Florida and/or Dallas and say, 'Chalk it up,'" Bylsma said. "You can look at a lot of different things ... the standings, the points and the gap and traveling from Long Island to Dallas. Sometimes that happens in the course of a season where you look at that and we didn't play well; we didn't play well in Dallas.

"We got back home here and came out on the better side of the game and played the right way."

## **Goalie Ryan Miller plays well against Penguins, Sabres still lose**

By Bill Hoppe

Olean Times Herald

January 28, 2014

PITTSBURGH – Despite one win in 15 starts this trying season, it appeared Buffalo Sabres goalie Jhonas Enroth would get Monday's nod inside the Consol Energy Center.

The backup possesses strong career numbers against the mighty Penguins, who give franchise netminder Ryan Miller fits like no other team.

Besides, the Washington Capitals, a team Miller has dominated lately, are visiting the First Niagara Center tonight.

But Ted Nolan coach doesn't care about Miller's awful numbers against Pittsburgh.

"I just know how good he is," the interim Sabres coach said early Monday afternoon, "and you play him as often as you can."

So Miller made his 24th career start against the Penguins, a 3-0 loss before a standing-room only crowd of 18,563 fans.

Miller played well enough to win, stopping 31 shots, including all 15 he faced during the first period.

"The first period, I mean, we just stood and watched," Nolan said. "We didn't compete. The one thing we want to try to do is at least compete. Skill is skill. When you don't work, that's not good."

The Sabres got going during the second period, but Chris Kunitz and Deryk Engelland scored, giving the Penguins all they needed for their 15th home win in 16 tries. Tanner Glass added an empty-net score.

"The second period we decided to start working," said Nolan, whose club has dropped six of its last seven. "The first one we were in awe of just watching them do their thing."

Buffalo's offense, which had 20 goals in six games entering Monday, pumped 24 shots on Penguins goalie Marc-Andre Fleury, including 19 in the final 40 minutes. They've been blanked seven times in 51 contests this season.

Still, with Miller, even a single score might've given them a chance. Miller said he wasn't thinking about how poorly he had played against the Penguins in the past.

"It doesn't cross my mind," said Miller, who began the night with an awful .888 save percentage against the Penguins and is now 7-12-3 versus them. "Every game's independent and every game's new. They've had a good team here for a while."

If Miller needed extra incentive, Penguins coach Dan Bylsma is Team USA's Olympic coach at the upcoming Sochi Games. Miller could be the starting goalie.

"It's a chance for them to kind of scout me, I guess," Miller said. "That's kind of what they've been doing is try to see us in person, how we handle ourselves. You can't always go by highlights, box score and tape. ...

"For us, it was another game, and for me, it's another chance just to keep building my game, regardless of who's coaching. I know they're paying attention most nights anyway. I don't think it makes that big of a difference."

Seconds after Miller stoned superstar Sidney Crosby in front, Kunitz opened the scoring at 5:44, capitalizing after Jamie McBain whiffed on a clearing pass.

McBain struggled all night.

"You think?" Nolan replied when asked if the defenseman had a rough night. "He had a rough one."

Engelland scored in close at 12:05 after Henrik Tallinder turned the puck over along the wall.

"I thought the second period we starting playing our game outside of those two glaring turnovers," Nolan said. "I mean, they were glaring turnovers. That's how they got their two goals."

The Sabres almost had two goals early in the third period.

Brian Flynn put the puck through the crease in close early. Then Matt Moulson fell down in front of Fleury all alone.

The power play went scoreless in three tries, meaning the Sabres haven't scored on the man advantage in nine straight games in Pittsburgh (zero of 21). Jason Pominville had their last power-play score here way back on Feb. 1, 2010 at "The Igloo," the Penguins' old arena.

## **Penguins' Brooks Orpik on Olympics: players more concerned with family safety**

By Bill Hoppe

Olean Times Herald

January 28, 2014

PITTSBURGH – Penguins defenseman Brooks Orpik, a member of Team USA's Olympic squad, said athletes aren't that concerned about their own safety for the upcoming Sochi Games.

"It's more they're concerned over their family members going because they're not in the village," Orpik said Monday prior to the Penguins' 3-0 win against the Buffalo Sabres inside the Consol Energy Center. "We've been pretty assured they're going to be safe where they are. It's one of those unfortunate things. That's just the way it is, not just because it's Russia. I think that's just the world we live in now. No matter where you are there's always some amount of risk."

Orpik said he follows the news closely, so it's been hard to ignore all the warnings about terrorist attacks. The United States is moving two war ships to the Black Sea and the State Department issued an updated travel alert for the region last week.

Still, the 33-year-old Amherst native said he couldn't tell his father to stay home for the Olympics.

"I never brought it up because he would've just ignored it," Orpik said. "There was no way he was missing it. He was going for sure."

Orpik's wife will also be going overseas. Players have been told to limit their traveling party. He said he had more family at the 2010 Vancouver Games.

Four years ago, Orpik said he learned to appreciate Ryan Miller's skill level "a lot more" as the Sabres goalie backstopped the U.S. to a silver medal.

"Of any goalie I've ever played with, he's by far the most prepared in terms of how he prepares himself before games mentally and physically," Orpik said. "He's definitely a pretty intense guy. On the flip side of this, he's also really, really nice person, a pretty soft-spoken guy. But when it comes to hockey, not just goalies, he's one of the most prepared athletes I've seen."

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Having spent more than five years out of the NHL, Ted Nolan walked into the Consol Energy Center, the league's newest arena, for the first time Monday.

"It's beautiful," the interim coach said following Buffalo's morning skate.

Of course, as a Penguins winger for 18 games in 1985-86, Nolan was familiar with Pittsburgh's old Civic Arena. "The Igloo," which closed in 2010, is now a parking lot across the street.

Nolan loves historic arenas.

"The old Olympia, I go back that far," said Nolan, who also played for Detroit. "The Checkerdome in St. Louis. Those are classics. I think that's what made our game so good is the historical part of it."

Nolan even has a keepsake from his Penguins days, a poster of the legendary Mario Lemieux.

"I remember a lot," he said. "I remember sitting down next to Mario. They had a poster night. I asked him to sign it. He asked for who and I said, 'To me,' and I still got it at home. It's 'To Teddy.' That's it. (It's special) when you have a chance to play with a guy like him and watch him every day in practice."

Lemieux wasn't the only superstar Nolan played beside. He was Wayne Gretzky's junior teammate in Sault Ste. Marie and Steve Yzerman's teammate in Detroit.

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Sabres winger Drew Stafford (upper body) missed Monday's game after re-injuring what shelved him four games recently. Stafford won't be sidelined as long as last time, Nolan said. He left Saturday's 5-2 win in Columbus.

Winger Linus Omark returned after sitting two straight games and four of the last five as a healthy scratch.

With Stafford out, Zemgus Girgensons moved to the right wing beside Tyler Ennis and Matt Moulson, a spot the rookie has previously occupied.

Nolan said Monday afternoon he might have Ville Leino, who left Saturday's game early, replace Stafford.

Why put a player with zero goals on the No. 1 combination?

"Because of his maturity and expectations," Nolan said. "You expect a little bit more from a guy like him than Linus."

Instead, Leino skated on the right wing with Cody Hodgson and Steve Ott. Omark played left wing on the fourth line with Zenon Konopka and Matt Ellis.

Tough guy John Scott and defenseman Alexander Sulzer sat as healthy scratches.

## **HAMILTON: Sabres showed too much early respect**

By Paul Hamilton

WGR 550

January 27, 2014

Pittsburgh, PA (WGR 550) -- It was pretty obvious which team had more talent in the first period. Most of the period was played in Buffalo's end as Ryan Miller stood on his head and Marc-Andre Fleury had five shots against him and no scoring chances.

Right off the bat Deryk Engelland came in from the point forcing Miller into a big save. Pittsburgh's most dangerous player of the period was Jayson Megna. He had at least three good opportunities including one where he walked right in from the right circle only to be foiled by Miller. Magna only played three minutes, but was effective.

Buffalo never got any offensive pressure, but the Sabres at least outthit Pittsburgh 16-9. Zemgus Girgensons had three of those body checks. Miller's best save in the first came on a Pittsburgh power play. He got across the crease quickly to save a cross ice pass to Sidney Crosby for a one-timer.

It was all different for the first five minutes of the second. Buffalo was all over Fleury, who finally had to do something.

Matt Moulson caused a turnover to a wide open Girgensons. Instead of taking the shot, the rookie tried to slip it back to Moulson who had fallen. A few minutes later, Ville Leino split the defense, but was stopped by Fleury as was Steve Ott who shot the rebound right back into him. Zenon Konopka had his best chance for his first Sabre goal when his tip from the point was stopped.

Tyler Ennis won a battle behind the net and found Moulson all alone in front, but Fleury made his biggest save of the game. It amazes me how Fleury can stand there and basically do nothing for over an hour of real time and be as sharp as he was to start the second.

The Crosby line got Pittsburgh back on track. Brian Gibbons sprung Crosby free in front, but Miller made a great save on the backhand. Crosby went back across to Gibbons who hit the post with a wide open net staring at him. Chris Kunitz had Miller down and backhanded his 26th into the empty net. Early in the play, Jamie McBain fanned on a clearing attempt. McBain struggled throughout this game.

After the game, I mentioned to Ted Nolan that McBain had a rough game overall. "Ya think?," Nolan said. "Yeah, [McBain] had a rough one."

Less than two minutes later, Ville Leino did a switch and grabbed Craig Adams coming in. Henrik Tallinder, who had turned the puck over didn't read the switch and left Deryk Engelland coming in from the point for an easy goal.

The Sabres came out strong again in the third and Fleury was stellar. Brian Flynn was wide open in front, but Fleury stopped the first shot. Flynn had a wide open net on the rebound, but put it through the crease and out the other side.

Matt Ellis followed that up by shooting wide coming open down the slot. Ennis again hit Moulson in front alone and he couldn't deke Fleury. Marcus Foligno finished the stretch by hitting Fleury in the mask with a hot slapper.

The problem tonight is what Nolan spoke about during the broadcast -- his team showed Pittsburgh way too much respect early in the game.

"First period, I think we were in awe, just watching [the Penguins] do their thing," said Nolan.

"They have a good team and everybody knows it. At the same time, you show them some respect, but you can't just be afraid of them," said Henrik Tallinder. "You gotta play. They're human beings over there too."

"I think we might have sat back a little bit," Tyler Ennis added. "They have a lot of firepower and maybe we were giving them too much respect. You gotta play these guys really hard and I think we played harder in the second and third. Fleury just made some good saves."

## **Penguins Shut Down Sabres 3-0**

By Dan Cave

WGR 550

January 27, 2014

Marc-Andre Fleury turned aside 24 shots and the Penguins got second-period goals from Chris Kunitz and Deryk Engelland in a 3-0 win over the Sabres at CONSOL Energy Center on Monday.

After a scoreless first, the Penguins got on the board at 5:44 of the second period on Kunitz's 26th of the season. Ryan Miller kept the puck out initially, robbing Sidney Crosby point blank. However, a Jamie McBain turnover led to another Penguins chance and Kunitz rattled home a Brian Gibbons rebound that went off the post.

Pittsburgh went up by two goals 6:21 later thanks to another Sabres giveaway. Henrik Tallinder coughed up the puck along the boards and Engelland was able to keep it in the Buffalo zone. Moments later, Engelland regained possession and beat Miller for his fourth. Tanner Glass added a late empty-netter for the Pens, making it 3-0.

The Sabres return home on Tuesday to face the Washington Capitals at 7:30 p.m. Hear the call on WGR 550 and the Buffalo Sabres Radio Network.

### 1st Period

Goals

None

### Penalties

10:00 - BUF - Henrik Tallinder (2 min., delaying game - puck over glass)

13:22 - PIT - Tanner Glass (2 min., high-sticking)

### 2nd Period

Goals

5:44 - PIT - Chris Kunitz (26) (Brian Gibbons, Sidney Crosby)

12:05 - PIT - Deryk Engelland (4) (Craig Adams, Tanner Glass)

### Penalties

7:13 - PIT - Jayson Megna (2 min., high-sticking)

### 3rd Period

Goals

19:32 - PIT - Tanner Glass (3) (EN) (Craig Adams, Sidney Crosby)

### Penalties

9:14 - PIT - Chris Kunitz (2 min., slashing)

### Goaltending

BUF - Ryan Miller - (31 saves, 33 shots)

PIT - Marc-Andre Fleury (24 shots, 24 saves)

### Power Plays

BUF - 0 of 3

PIT - 0 of 1

### Three Stars

1.) PIT - Marc-Andre Fleury (24 saves)

2.) PIT - Chris Kunitz (1 G, 0 A)

3.) PIT - Tanner Glass (1 G, 1 A)

## **Sabres stay with Miller in goal**

By Paul Hamilton

WGR 550

January 27, 2014

Pittsburgh, PA (WGR 550) -- Many felt that despite playing just one game and having a day off the ice that Ryan Miller would sit against the Penguins.

Miller is 7-11-3 with a 3.26 goals against vs Pittsburgh. Ted Nolan said numbers mean nothing to him, "No, I just know how good he is and you play him as often as you can." Nolan added, "We looked at it, especially this year going into the Olympics and monitoring our playing time between both goaltenders and if you look at Miller's numbers lately, it's been pretty effective so, he's a little bit more well rested."

Nolan elected to keep the team off the ice on Sunday. He said, "It's a lot of hockey and if you don't take care of the nutritional part and the rest part, it doesn't matter how much practice, it's not going to be effective, so yesterday was a good day to rest."

Drew Stafford reinjured his shoulder against Columbus. He won't play tonight and Nolan didn't know how long he'd be out. John Scott and Alex Sulzer will also sit.

The Sabres penalty killing was near the bottom of the league for a while. In their last 24 games Buffalo's killed off 60 of 67 penalties which is 89.6%. Overall Buffalo's 12th in the NHL. Nolan said, "Your number one penalty killer is usually your goaltender and last game Miller was sensational. When he plays well and we've got guys going for the shots lately too. Matty Moulson, he was out there the other night blocking shots, so when you block shots and have a good goaltender, you get good results." Nolan said there are a few more factors too, "We're getting more desperate and we're playing a little bit more gritty."

Pittsburgh is the Eastern Conference's best team by seven points over Boston and Tampa Bay. The Pens have won four of six games, but lost in Dallas on Saturday 3-0.

Special teams have been stellar for this group and they're number one in the NHL on both the power play and the penalty kill.

Marc-Andre Fleury has played in nine of 11 games for the Penguins. He has given up 12 goals in his last four games.

Evgeni Malkin has been back nine games from injury and scored five goals and five assists for 10 points.

Chris Letang has been back on defense for the same length of time and has seven points.

Former Sabre Taylor Pyatt told me today that he was so excited when Pittsburgh claimed him off waivers. In 10 games he has two goals.

Pittsburgh has gotten a lot of key players back, but losing Pascal Dupuis hurts.

Ted Nolan played the final 18 games of his career in Pittsburgh. He was on the same team with Mario Lemieux and of course was in awe, "I remember a lot. I remember sitting down next to Mario and they had a poster night and I asked him to sign it. He asked for who and I said, 'To me' and I still got it at home, it's to Teddy, that's it."

## **What stats say the Sabres should do about...everyone? Part 4: Goalies**

By Matthew Collier

WGR 550

January 27, 2014

The Buffalo Sabres have new life. With the firing of Darcy Regier and hiring of Tim Murray, every player is being evaluated. Murray says he already has an idea of what he thinks of each player. Do you know what you'd like to see the Sabres do with each guy?

Well, what do the stats say? In Part 3 of 4, we explore what the numbers (and skill sets, contracts and intangibles) hint about what the Sabres should and will do with their goalies.

Ryan Miller

What stats say:

In a world of inconsistent goaltenders, Ryan Miller stands amongst a small group of netminders who have sustained success year after year.

When we analyze his statistics, there's something very important to keep in mind: Over Miller's career, the league has changed. Out of the lockout, the NHL called an incredible amount of penalties, sending save percentages into the basement. After 2007, the league returned to its old dead puck ways and save percentages went back up to where they were before the lockout and even beyond.

So the only way to analyze how much better or worse Miller has been than his peers is to compare his overall save percentages to the league average and look at his Even Strength save percentages, which would have gone unaffected by fluctuations in power plays.

To properly study his save percentages, one can not simply say that a goalie "ranked X in save percentage." Why? Because every goalie faces a different number of shots. A netminder who takes on 2,000 shots can not be compared to one that takes 1,000 – except in terms of value to their team.

How can we do that? Goals prevented above average. (Shots faced) X (Goals per 1,000 above average)

05-06: 18.2

06-07: 10.7

07-08: -5.7

08-09: 17.3

09-10: 36.2

10-11: 6.1

11-12: 4.6

12-13: 3.9

13-14: 13.7

Total: 105 Goals Save Above Average

Per season: 11.7

For his career, Miller is only behind Tim Thomas, Henrik Lundqvist, Martin Brodeur and Robert Luongo in Goals Saved Above Average.

In terms of consistency, it's better gauged by Even Strength save percentage because bad luck can play a big role in penalty kill save %. Even the best goalies see their PK save % jump up and down.

To demonstrate the inconsistency/luck factor of PK save percentages, look at a few of Lundqvist's PK percentages:

2008-09: .913

2009-10: .883

2010-11: .873

2011-12: .905

Here are Miller's 5v5 save percentages (League Average is .918) vs. PK

Moral of the graph is that Miller has been absurdly consistent at 5v5 and one of the league's best goalies since the lockout.

On the ice:

The ups and downs of Miller's mental state have been documented ad nauseum. Most of it is just the daily narrative. During a down time, he's "mentally soft." During an up time, he's "getting it together mentally." When he's down, he's "average," when he's up he's "playing like he did during his Vezina year."

It's exhausting.

In reality, every goaltender goes through ups and downs. That's why most stat folk agree that you need at least 5,000 shots to have a good grip on whether a goalie's success or failure is who they are or just small sample size variation.

What you see from Miller over his career is that he is an elite competitor who is as committed to being great as any athlete on Earth. He's extremely athletic and durable as well as intelligent and diligent about details.

The emotional part of the game, it seems, gets to him on occasion – we can only speculate as to how much that affects him or his teammates. In the past, his disdain for losing has come across as selfishness and he has been prone to an outburst here or there in post-game interviews.

Contract: UFA 2014

Verdict:

If you could be guaranteed you would get 11 goals above average per season for the next five or six years, you'd sign up to pay Ryan Miller \$50 million. But that's impossible due to his age. At 33, it's likely Miller is looking at three or four more seasons in his prime, then age will catch up. There have been goalies who take their prime into their late 30s, but it's much harder to predict than the 27-33 age seasons. That doesn't mean the Sabres have to trade him, but if they do try to re-sign Miller, they should be wary of anything past four years.

If there are bidders and Miller's interests appear elsewhere, the Sabres can not afford to lose him to free agency for nothing and should deal him.

Jhonas Enroth

What the stats say:

Enroth has been a dead-on league average goaltender in terms of save percentage over his 69 total NHL starts. The league's save percentage since he came into the league is .913 and his career save percentage is .913. Before this season, Enroth's Even Strength save percentage was a solid .926. However, it's fallen off to .915 in 2013-14.

Take the wins and losses and throw them out of the window. In his best win-loss season, where he went 9-2-3 in 2010-11, his save percentage was a mediocre .907. This year, his save percentage is .910 and he's 1-10-4. The explanation is easy: His team scored more goals in 2010-11. At last check, Enroth's job is to stop as many shots as possible, not score goals.

Also, Enroth has been a quality goalie more often than not. In 60% of his career starts, he's finished the game either allowing 3 goals or fewer or with a .914 save

percentage of higher (something Rob Vollman deemed a “Quality Start”). The league's best goalies come in at 65-70%.

So he's been decent. Can he be a No.1 starter if Ryan Miller leaves? Or will he always be a league average goalie?

Since starts come few and far between, there's a factor that muddies the water: Workload. Broad Street Hockey studied how goalies performed in back-to-back games this season. It showed a huge gap between back-to-back games and with at least one day of rest. (as another aside, this stat should suggest Ryan Miller is even better than his numbers show considering Lindy Ruff used him for 20-plus games in a row sometimes)

We also have to keep in mind that Enroth is still young by goalie standards.

Here's how Enroth's .926 Even-Strength Save Percentage in 1,187 shots compares to others' during their age 23 and 24 seasons:

Lunogo: .931 (3,377 shots)

Lundqvist: .930 (2,441)

Fleury: .928 (2,105)

Quick: .926 (2,308)

Rask: .926 (1,223)

Price: .925 (3,250)

Lehtonen: .925 (2,742)

Ward: .922 (2,886)

Pavelec: .916 (3,058)

On the ice:

Enroth is small, which seems to open him up to critics. But his problems don't exactly connect completely to being short. Goals do often get scored glove high on the Sabres' netminder, but that's where many goals are scored these days. Every goalie seems to play a cut-the-angle, butterfly style that forces shooters to snipe the top corner.

The biggest struggles from Enroth have been seeing pucks from the point and general concentration. Does his height play a role in seeing long shots? Maybe. It could also be that he hasn't perfected the art of anticipating those shots or found his style of looking around defenders.

In terms of concentration, there will simply be “bad goals.” Not ones that you might like back. Just gosh darn ugly goals that have no business going in the net. They don't happen all the time, but enough to impact his small sample stats.

Contract: UFA 2016

Verdict:

Enroth is far from perfect, but he's also far from proven (whether that means bad or good). He's been average on horrible teams and at a young age for a netminder. If the Sabres trade Ryan Miller, he should take over starting 50-60 games next season to find out whether he can be a true No. 1.

Matt Hackett

Acquired in the Jason Pominville trade, he was thought to be the future if Miller left. Well, pump the breaks. Hackett may have lost his starting job in Rochester. Backup Nathan Lieuwen has started three of the last four games after the prospect netminder struggled.

Hackett has tremendous athleticism, but there are concerns about his makeup. He has a long way to go before he is mature enough to handle the bright lights of the NHL.

Nathan Lieuwen

He wasn't expected to make a huge impact on this year's Amerks season, but Lieuwen has done nothing but produce solid starts. He has a .922 save percentage in 17 games, following up a .919 in four games last year.

He's tall, gangly (6-foot-5) and soft spoken.

Goalies are the most unpredictable when it comes to prospects. Could Lieuwen, a sixth-round pick, turn into Buffalo's long-term guy? Hey, some fifth-round pick dude from Michigan State turned out to be alright over the last eight years, so...maybe?

## **SABRES UNABLE TO SCORE IN PITTSBURGH**

By Chris Ryndak

Sabres.com

January 28, 2014

PITTSBURGH – Ryan Miller made 31 saves on 33 shots, but it wasn't enough as the Buffalo Sabres fell to the Pittsburgh Penguins 3-0 at Consol Energy Center on Monday.

The Penguins, who sit atop the Eastern Conference standings, are 17-0 when scoring first at home and have been dominant at Consol Energy Center.

Buffalo wasn't happy with the effort they put forth in the first 20 minutes.

"The first period, we just stood and watched," Sabres interim coach Ted Nolan said. "We didn't compete. The one thing we want to try to do is at least compete."

Miller stopped all 15 shots he saw in the first period. The Sabres were outshot 15-5 in that opening frame. Miller said it took the team some time to find its legs but thought their play improved as the game wore on.

"Just a comfort-level thing. We just kind of dipped the toe in the water and once we figure out it was a hockey game, it was a normal kind of hockey game, we looked better," Miller said.

Chris Kunitz opened the scoring 5:44 into the second period, capitalizing on a failed clearing effort by the Sabres. The goal came seconds after Miller made a big save on Sidney Crosby and then Brian Gibbons hit the left post. The rebound off the post came to Kunitz, who backhanded it into the back of the net.

Then Deryk Engelland made it 2-0 by putting in a Tanner Glass feed from the left corner with 7:55 remaining in the second.

"The second period, we decided to start working. The first one, I think we were in awe just watching them do their thing and I thought in the second, we started playing our game. Outside of those two glaring turnovers – they were just very glaring turnovers and that's how they got their two goals."

Tanner Glass added an empty-net goal with 27.4 seconds left in regulation.

Marc-Andre Fleury made 24 saves to earn his fourth shutout of the season.

The Sabres were coming off a win Saturday night in Columbus that snapped the Blue Jackets' eight-game winning streak. Against the Penguins, they were unable to capitalize on their chances and build off of that victory.

“I think we might’ve sat back a little bit. They have a lot of fire power and maybe we were giving them too much respect,” Sabres center Tyler Ennis said. “You have to play these guys really hard and I think we played harder in the second and third. Fleury made some good saves.”

The Sabres had a few quality chances in the third. About three minutes into the third with Fleury out of position, Brian Flynn backhanded a shot parallel to the goal line and across the crease.

“Phil [Varone] made a great pass,” Flynn said. “I just tried to go quick five-hole before he could drop but he made a save, it popped out to me and I kicked it up to my backhand. I didn’t have a very good angle. Just a tough play, but one of the ones I’d like to have back.”

Then, Matt Moulson put a point-blank shot into Fleury’s right pad just over four minutes into the third.

“Matty and I each had a good one on the doorstep that, in games like this, you have to put away if you want to win these games,” Flynn said.

The missed chances may have weighed on the team as the game wore on, according to Nolan.

“We had a number of chances. We just didn’t capitalize on them,” he said. “We’re a team where we can’t have glaring mistakes. It’s very demoralizing. It demoralized us for a little bit and we woke up in the third period, we made a push, but not good enough.”

The Penguins penalty kill, the League’s best, killed off all three of Buffalo’s opportunities with the man advantage. Buffalo ended up with only three shots on goal during those power plays.

Pittsburgh is 25-for-25 on their penalty kill since Dec. 19 have killed off 22-straight Buffalo power plays during the past 10 games the two teams have played in Pittsburgh.

With the Winter Olympics fast approaching, the matchup also provided Penguins coach Dan Bylsma and Penguins general manager Ray Shero an up-close look at Ryan Miller, one of the players they’re evaluating for Team USA.

For Miller, he said he knows that USA Hockey brass is always watching anyways and he tired to treat this game as he would any other.

“It’s a chance for them to kind of scout me, I guess. That’s kind of what they’ve been doing, is try to see us in person and how we can handle ourselves,” he said. “You can’t always go by highlights, box scores, tape. So it is a chance to scout, but

for us, it was just another game. And for me, it's another chance to just keep building my game, regardless of who's coaching.

I know they're paying attention most nights anyways. I don't think it makes that much of a difference, but maybe just a little bit different perspective when they get to see me in person. ”

The Sabres will have little time to dwell on the loss. They host the Washington Capitals on Tuesday at 7:30 p.m. at First Niagara Center. Then, they embark on a two-game road trip that takes them to Phoenix on Thursday and Colorado on Saturday.

The game against the Capitals will be nationally televised on NBCSN.

## **STAFFORD OUT AS SABRES LOOK TO WIN IN PITTSBURGH**

By Chris Ryndak

Sabres.com

January 27, 2014

PITTSBURGH – Visiting teams don't typically have a lot of success at Consol Energy Center.

On home ice, the Pittsburgh Penguins have gone 14-1 in their past 15 games. They're 39-10 at home over the past two seasons and no team has more wins at home during that stretch.

However, in the past two seasons, only three teams have beaten the Penguins twice at Consol Energy Center: the Boston Bruins, the Philadelphia Flyers and the Buffalo Sabres. The Sabres won on both April 2 and 23, 2013.

Buffalo hopes to pick up their first victory in Pittsburgh this season Monday night.

"That's an understatement that tonight will be a challenge," Sabres defenseman Chad Ruhwedel said after the team's morning skate. "They're a quality hockey team, a lot of really good players on that side. But we played really well the other night in Columbus and we're just going to try to keep the ball rolling."

The game can be seen nationally on NBCSN at 7:30 p.m.

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Drew Stafford will not play with an upper-body injury. He missed four games earlier this month with the same injury and Sabres interim coach Ted Nolan said after the morning skate that Stafford re-aggravated it Saturday night in Columbus. Nolan doesn't expect Stafford to miss as many games this time around.

Before the game Saturday, Stafford had been on quite a roll. He recorded three goals and two assists in the three previous games.

Linus Omark is back in for the Sabres but Ville Leino will likely take Stafford's spot on a line with Matt Moulson and Tyler Ennis.

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Ryan Miller will start in goal for the Sabres. Nolan's reasoning is simple: Go with your best goaltender against the best team in the Eastern Conference.

"I just know how good he is and you play him as often as you can," Nolan said. "You look at, especially this year going into the Olympics and monitoring our play

time between both goaltenders. If you look at Miller's numbers lately, it's been pretty effective. He's a little bit more well rested and in return, he's playing much better."

After taking his usual reps during the team's morning skate at Consol Energy Level, Miller skated down to the other end of the ice and started working with the forwards. One by one, each forward skated in on a breakaway. The extra work was for a good reason.

The Penguins are 4-0 in the shootout this season. They've won nine-straight shootouts and 14 of their last 15. Since Feb. 26, 2011, Pittsburgh has won 22 of 25 shootouts.

The Sabres are 6-4 in the shootout this season.

John Scott and Alexander Sulzer are expected to be the team's healthy scratches.

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Nolan played 18 games for the Penguins during the 1985-86 and shared a story with the media about Mario Lemieux, who was only 20 at the time.

"I remember sitting down next to Mario and they had a poster night. I asked him to sign it and he asked, 'For who?' And I said, 'To me,'" Nolan said laughing. "And I still have it at home. It says, 'To Teddy.' That's it."

Lemieux finished that season, his second in the NHL, with 48 goals and 93 assists. He finished second in scoring to Wayne Gretzky, who had 74 more than Lemieux.

## **Penguins shut out Sabres, 3-0**

By Dave Molinari  
Pittsburgh Post-Gazette  
January 27, 2014

It's no accident that the Penguins are 14 places and 41 points ahead of Buffalo in the Eastern Conference standings.

It also is no guarantee.

Of anything.

Sure, the Penguins' 3-0 victory Monday night against the Sabres at Consol Energy Center was completely logical -- even predictable -- but that doesn't mean they had the luxury of assuming that earning a couple of points was nothing more than a 60-minute formality.

For while the Penguins (37-14-2) have only been beaten 16 times in their first 53 games, they've been humbled by the bottom-feeding likes of Florida (twice) and Edmonton.

That means a team like the Sabres, who have an elite goaltender in Ryan Miller and a new-found willingness to compete since Ted Nolan took over as coach, was a viable threat if the Penguins allowed their focus to stray.

Which it clearly did in losses to the Panthers and the Dallas Stars in the past week.

"Everyone talked about them being the last-place team in the conference coming into tonight, but that doesn't really matter," Penguins center Brandon Sutter said. "There really aren't any easy games.

"We expected them to play hard, and lately they've been playing pretty well. They work hard. They might not have the best luck this year, but they're a hard-working team."

And so it was Monday, when the Sabres' problems stemmed from a lack of production, not perspiration.

Specifically, they were unable to get any of their 24 shots past goalie Marc-Andre Fleury, who recorded his fourth shutout of the season and 27th in the NHL.

He had to earn it with a handful of quality stops, most notably on close-range chances by Brian Flynn and Matt Moulson less than two minutes apart early in the third period.

Fleury, smiling, said "it got a little exciting in the third," and Moulson, while crediting Fleury with a strong stop, blamed himself for not getting the puck past him.

"You've really got to bear down when you get chances," he said.

"I didn't get the shot I really wanted but he made a good save."

Chris Kunitz, who celebrated the birth Sunday of his third child, a daughter named Aubrey, gave Fleury the only goal he needed at 5:44 of the second period by flipping a backhander past Miller for his 26th of the season.

"It's nice to help and contribute to your team when you've been focusing on your family," Kunitz said.

"It was nice to have the day off to have the experience with my wife having our third child, but you still have to come to work and try to do your job."

Kunitz got his opportunity to score only because, in the previous few seconds, Miller denied Sidney Crosby on a backhander from close range and Brian Gibbons -- auditioning again for the Pascal Dupuis role on the right side of that line -- put a shot off the left post.

More than 34 minutes remained when Kunitz scored, but precedent suggested the game was pretty much over, because the Penguins are 27-2-1 when opening the scoring, including an 18-0 mark at Consol Energy Center.

Still, every streak has a shelf life, so the Penguins didn't mind when defenseman Deryk Engelland -- again being deployed as a right winger on the fourth line -- threw a shot past Miller from the inner edge of the right circle at 12:05 of the second to put them up by two goals.

"I just tried to get it on net," Engelland said. "And it goes in."

His shot was the last thing to do so until 27.4 seconds remained in the game, and Tanner Glass closed out his second strong showing in a row by hitting an empty net.

Forty-eight hours earlier, he set a franchise record with 13 hits in Dallas.

Against the Sabres, he contributed the goal, an assist and six hits.

"Maybe his best two games of the year," coach Dan Bylsma said.

No one described the Penguins' work against Buffalo in such laudatory terms. It was more a step in the right direction than the completion of a journey to three periods of sound hockey.

"There's still a lot to clean up," Sutter said. "There are still things we can do better. It's all about the turnovers we're making. But it is a step in the right direction.

"Anytime you give the other team no goals, that's definitely a good win.

"It wasn't pretty, but it was a gritty win for our team. Something to build on, hopefully."

## **Penguins bounce back, shutout lowly Sabres**

By Josh Yohe

Pittsburgh Tribune Review

January 27, 2014

It wasn't pretty or artistic. But it might have been just what the Penguins needed.

Playing a conservative game, the Penguins methodically took care of business in a 3-0 victory over the Buffalo Sabres.

Marc-Andre Fleury earned the 27th shutout of his career and fourth this season. He stopped 24 shots.

"It wasn't a great performance, by any means," center Brandon Sutter said of the Penguins' victory. "But it was better. A step in the right direction."

Chris Kunitz, Deryk Engelland and Tanner Glass scored for the Penguins. Sidney Crosby added two assists and leads the NHL with 74 points.

While the Penguins were considerably better defensively — they entered the game allowing 30 goals in their previous nine games — they allowed several quality scoring chances in the third period. Fleury made a number of big saves.

"He was great tonight," Sutter said. "He saved us a couple of times."

Fleury stopped Matt Moulson on a breakaway, and made top-notch saves against Tyler Ennis and Brian Flynn.

"It felt good," Fleury said. "Nobody panicked. Everyone played well tonight."

Coach Dan Bylsma acknowledged that the Penguins "sat back" too much in the first 10 minutes of the third period.

There was nothing wrong with the Penguins' effort against the Sabres. Many players, notably Rob Scuderi, Brooks Orpik and Matt Niskanen, questioned the effort in recent outings.

Although it was hardly one of their better performances, the Penguins enjoyed a significant puck possession advantage. The first period saw both teams struggle to generate offense.

Buffalo controlled play early in the middle 20 minutes, but a couple of strong Fleury saves kept the game scoreless.

Crosby, who has a history of victimizing Buffalo goalie Ryan Miller, was robbed on a backhand attempt. However, the Penguins corralled the rebound.

An instant later, Crosby froze Miller before finding Brian Gibbons by the far post. Gibbons' shot clanged off the post.

The rebound landed on the Kunitz's stick. He scored his 26th goal of the season.

The Penguins entered the game going more than a month without a goal from their third or fourth lines, with the exception of Sutter's empty-netter against the Islanders on Thursday.

Engelland, playing on the fourth line, received a pass from Glass and beat Miller to make the Penguins' lead 2-0.

It was all the scoring the Penguins would need.

“It was boring,” Glass said. “Silent in here. Boring for sure. But I think we did need that kind of game.”

## **Endgame: Penguins 3, Sabres 0**

By Michelle Crechiolo

Penguins.com

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Monday's game against the Buffalo Sabres wasn't the most exciting hockey the Penguins have played, but it was certainly a much better defensive effort than the ones they'd been producing as of late.

Goalie Marc-Andre Fleury made 24 stops to earn his fourth shutout of the season in a 3-0 win over the Sabres. Chris Kunitz, Deryk Engelland and Tanner Glass all scored for the Penguins.

"I got a little excited toward the end of the third," Fleury admitted, who tends to be unlucky when it comes to keeping shutouts. "I was happy to make the saves and keep the zero going."

He had to work to make a number of those saves early in the third. After a relatively uneventful first 40 minutes, the Sabres came out determined to start the final 20 and forced Fleury to make a few tremendous stops to keep them off the board and from getting back into this game.

Their two biggest chances came with Brian Flynn and then Matt Moulson all alone in the slot. Despite that, Fleury was able to keep the puck from crossing the goal line on both occasions.

"The first one was pretty close," Fleury said. "I cut across and tried to take his options away. I was happy I made the save. Then I just tried to get my legs up but didn't want it to bounce off me and I didn't want it to just go in. I was happy it went through."

"(With) Moulson I tried to be patient. He has good hands. It worked all right."

Fleury certainly bailed his teammates out on those plays when they "kind of went to sleep," as Glass said, as defensive-zone breakdowns resulted in those two Sabres finding open seams and having time and space.

"You don't want to leave your goaltender with chances against like that and guys behind you," Penguins head coach Dan Bylsma said. "Marc made three really big saves in the first six minutes of that period and came up big for us. He picked us up when we had a breakdown. You need that from your goaltender. He was there for us tonight in that regard."

While a win is certainly a win, overall, the Pens know they still need to improve.

"I think we were making plays, we weren't necessarily connecting on everything," Kunitz said. "We still have to focus on being a better team, talking defensive zone

and coming out and making too many plays and not turning pucks over. I think we did a great job limiting them to chances, but we still have a lot of games to grow here as a team. We need to get better every single day we come to the rink.”

#### NEW DAD SCORES

On Sunday, Chris Kunitz and wife Maureen welcomed their third child, baby girl Aubrey Ann – who joined brother Zachary and sister Payton. On Monday, Kunitz returned to work and scored a big goal for his team in their win over Buffalo.

"It's nice to help contribute to the team when you've been focusing on your family the last few days," Kunitz said. "It's nice to have the day off and to have the experience with my wife having our third child, but you still have to come to work and try to do your job. Obviously your mind is somewhere else before you get to the rink, but it worked out. Everybody is happy and healthy and we came and got the win tonight."

The goal was Kunitz's 26th of the season, tying his career high set two seasons ago.

The play was started by Sidney Crosby, continued by Brian Gibbons and finished by Kunitz. Crosby nearly tucked a backhand under a prone Miller, but the goalie kept it out. Gibbons recovered it, but his shot banged off the post. Fortunately, it bounced right to Kunitz – who backhanded it into the open net.

Gibbons played the first two games of Pittsburgh's western Canada road trip against Vancouver and Edmonton on that line and started the third against Calgary, but was injured against the Flames and missed the next five games with an upper-body injury. He rejoined the lineup tonight, replacing Chuck Kobasew on the right wing next to Crosby and Kunitz.

#### BOTTOM SIX SCORES

This morning, Tanner Glass – who threw a franchise-record 13 hits in Pittsburgh's last game on Saturday in Dallas – said physicality would be key against the Sabres, especially from the third and fourth lines in order to make room for 'Sid' and 'Geno' to create offense.

And while the bottom six did bring that physicality, they also created some offense of their own as well – which certainly never hurts. Glass had a goal and an assist, Engelland had a goal and Craig Adams earned the primary assist on both, his first points in 38 games.

"Never hurts," Glass agreed with a laugh. "You're not relied upon to do it, but it's still okay to do it sometimes. It feels good to chip in like that."

“It’s always great to chip in instead of Sid and Geno and those guys always doing it,” Engelland agreed. “To get a few from the bottom six is a big thing.”

The defenseman-turned-forward Engelland, skating on the right wing of the fourth line after being scratched against the Stars, combined with Glass and Craig Adams to score a big second-period goal for the Pens.

Engelland created the play and he finished it. It began when he forced a turnover at the blue line and held the zone. Glass, who had drifted out in anticipation of play transitioning, sprinted back in, lifted a defenseman’s stick and carried into the corner. He centered a pass into the slot that Adams tipped back to Engelland, who buried it past Miller.

“It somehow squeaked by (Adams) but ended up on my stick,” Engelland said. “It snuck through and I just tried to get it on net and it goes in. I wasn’t expecting to get the puck there. I was kind of shocked.”

Glass then added an empty-net goal late in the third to cap off yet another impassioned and impressive performance from the gritty winger.

“He’s added his two best games of the year,” Bylsma said of Glass, adding “He had four hits for the first period, physical, makes a great play on the goal for Deryk Engelland. He gets rewarded at the end with the empty-net goal. Two of his better games playing physical, hard and tough to play against.”

## **Buffalo Sabres' HarborCenter is starting to 'go vertical'**

By Jonathan D. Epstein

Buffalo News

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Steel is rising at the Buffalo Sabres' HarborCenter project in downtown Buffalo, as work progresses from the concrete parking ramp and lower levels into the primary feature of the \$172.2 million complex: the floors containing the two giant ice rinks and training facilities.

More than 1,800 tons of structural steel columns and girders are being erected on top of the concrete fifth floor, quickly raising the height of the project by three more stories, as the 650,000-square-foot project continues to advance despite frigid cold temperatures and occasional blowing snow.

The steel was delivered in seven truckloads, with the brown beams laid flat on top of the fifth floor. Workers last week began the task of swinging them up to erect the framework for the fifth, sixth and seventh floors of the hockey and entertainment destination.

With that, the long slow process that has marked the construction so far is speeding up – 10 months after workers broke ground for a facility that Sabres owners Terry and Kim Pegula say they hope will be a major draw for hockey events and tournaments to downtown Buffalo.

“We’re all very, very excited,” said HarborCenter President John R. Koelmel, who was hired six months ago. “The structure will begin to go vertical at a quick and accelerated pace.”

Despite the weather – including the extra cold that shut down construction for one day – Koelmel said the project remains on schedule for the rinks, retail and parking facilities to open this fall, with the hotel opening in the spring of 2015.

The 58,000-pound compressor will maintain the two NHL-sized ice rinks was brought in from Toronto. It’s now installed on the fifth floor, just below where the rinks themselves will be constructed on the sixth floor. More than 125 workers from various trades are now on site.

“We have been at it a very short period of time, but a tremendous amount of work is done... through one of the tougher winters,” Koelmel said, speaking to a group of real estate professionals for a program at the First Niagara Center.

The rinks are the biggest challenge, given their height above the ground and the limited space to work with, Koelmel said. “We’re putting 10 pounds in a five-pound bag over there,” he said. “It’s a parcel of land that’s less than two acres large, but compounding all of that is putting two sheets of ice with minimal if any vibration six stories up.”

The rinks, which will seat 1,800 spectators and include typical amenities, are intended to draw national hockey events and tournaments to Buffalo, while serving as a home for Canisius College's hockey team and the Sabres' youth hockey organization. The facility will also include 5,000 square feet of off-ice training facilities, equipment and staff to develop players and coaches, as well as 11 locker rooms – including dedicated space for Canisius and the Junior Sabres.

Last week, HarborCenter announced that Impact Sports Performance, a sports training facility in Boca Raton, Fla., for both professional and amateur athletes, will operate the Buffalo facility. Impact Sports is also owned by the Pegulas. Additionally, HarborCenter hired former Sabres goaltender Marty Biron as director of goaltending for the HarborCenter Academy of Hockey.

The complex on the former Webster Block in downtown Buffalo also will feature a full-service 205-room Marriott Hotel and a two-story, 13,000-square-foot sports-themed restaurant, with three bars and seating for 350 patrons. The hotel lobby will be on the seventh floor, with 12 floors of rooms above it on the northwest corner. The restaurant will be in the northeast corner of Scott and Washington streets, at ground level. There's also additional street-level retail shops along Main Street and a five-level, 750-space parking ramp.

“As unique and terrific and wonderful as the facility will be, it's only a means to an end,” Koelmel said. “Kim and Terry didn't really want a hotel. They didn't really want a restaurant. What they did want is to create a destination to change the development of hockey talent from around the world.”

Cognizant of concerns from other area rinks, Koelmel reiterated that the Sabres are not trying to poach hockey players and ice time from others throughout the region, but rather hope to bring new opportunities and business that will add to what is already here.

“We're not here to be the shiny new toy that redistributes the existing pie,” Koelmel said. “Our job is to ensure we bring even more to the region... My job is to ensure we deliver an experience that is second to none. You can hold us accountable to do just that.”