



Buffalo Sabres

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Sabres-Coyotes Preview

By Jordan Garretson

Associated Press

January 29, 2014

The Phoenix Coyotes are hoping to use a long homestand to make up some ground in the Western Conference playoff race.

Following an impressive performance in the opener, they will try to knock off the scuffling Buffalo Sabres for just the second time in eight meetings.

The Coyotes were in position for a wild-card spot last month after an 18-8-5 start. Since Dec. 14, however, they're 7-10-5 while averaging 2.32 goals after previously scoring 3.2 per game. They were 2-4-0 on a season-high six-game homestand Dec. 31-Jan. 11.

Phoenix, 15-8-3 on its own ice, is hopeful this stretch of five straight home games proves to be more successful after opening it with a 3-0 victory over Los Angeles on Tuesday.

"We caught a team at the right time, but that being said, I thought we played the right kind of game to take advantage of it," coach Dave Tippett said after his club defeated a Kings squad playing for the second straight night and sixth time in nine days. "We kept getting pucks deep, we put some pucks at the net and it was a pretty solid game throughout our lineup."

Antoine Vermette had a goal and an assist after recording a hat trick in Sunday's overtime loss in Vancouver. He has six goals and two assists during a five-game point streak, though he hasn't scored a goal over his last seven games versus Buffalo.

Shane Doan recorded his 500th career assist to help back Thomas Greiss' second shutout in three starts for Phoenix (25-18-10), which stands ninth in the West.

"We've put ourselves into an average spot in the league. We have to be better than that if we want to make the playoffs," Doan told the team's website. "We have to find a way to climb and keep climbing and hopefully this is a step in the right direction. We have to get even better."

Buffalo (14-30-8), 5-15-3 away from home, comes off its seventh defeat in eight games overall with a 5-4 overtime loss to Washington on Tuesday. The Sabres rallied to tie three times, including twice on goals by Cody Hodgson. Tyler Ennis and Matt Moulson each tallied two assists.

"I think we had a lot of character in that room," said Hodgson, who has six goals and four assists in nine games since coming back from a thumb injury. "We showed a lot of guts battling back."

For all of the Sabres' recent struggles, they've won five of six in Phoenix and six of seven in the series, including a 2-1 home victory Dec. 23 on Mark Pysyk's overtime goal. Ryan Miller stopped 36 shots and is undefeated in five starts against the Coyotes with a 0.98 goals-against average.

Mike Smith lost to Miller last month but has a 1.48 GAA in his last four matchups with Buffalo, going 3-0-1. However, he's allowed 15 goals in his last four starts overall.

Phoenix has scored a power-play goal in 11 of its last 12 games.

Not much is going right on Sabres' blue line

By Mike Harrington

Buffalo News

January 30, 2014

The Buffalo Sabres' defense corps continues to be a revolving door. Who's playing well? You decide. The proof is in the numbers.

Entering tonight's game in Phoenix against the Coyotes, the Sabres are just 1-4-3 in their last eight games and have allowed an eye-popping 31 goals. The Sabres entered Wednesday's play as the only NHL team with just two wins in their last 10 games (2-4-4).

Interim coach Ted Nolan has shuffled around healthy scratches and even his pairings, splitting up Henrik Tallinder and Tyler Myers for the first time this season in Tuesday's 5-4 overtime loss to Washington. Not much is going right lately.

Mark Pysyk, who was averaging nearly 20 minutes a game, has been sent to Rochester to keep playing over the Olympic break. Brayden McNabb, a plus-1 player over 12 games, is also in the AHL. Most observers certainly feel those two would be an upgrade over the likes of Mike Weber, Jamie McBain and Alexander Sulzer.

Especially with Pysyk gone the last five games, the play in the defensive zone has suffered. There were sloppy passes, dropped coverages and just enough faulty goaltending to magnify the mistakes. McBain was brutal Monday in Pittsburgh and sat out the Washington game. There's a chance he could return tonight, with Weber or Tallinder possibly getting scratched.

The Sabres were off Wednesday for travel, so insight on Nolan's thought process will have to wait until today.

Weber is the NHL's worst-rated defenseman with a minus-28. Myers is second-worst at minus-22. When your team doesn't score goals, plus-minus ratings suffer. But the Sabres are finding the net pretty regularly lately, averaging three goals over the last eight games. They just can't keep the puck out of their own net.

A quick look at each blueliner:

Myers: He came back strong from his three-game suspension with three points in his first two games, including a two-goal game against Columbus. But he has no points in the last five games and a minus-7 rating in that stretch.

Christian Ehrhoff: He's got eight points in the last nine games and his ice time remains high, with no games under 21 minutes since mid-November and a team-high 24:05 for the season. But his defensive play can be an adventure, and he

gave the puck away up the middle of the ice to lead to Washington's second goal Tuesday. Myers and Ehrhoff have to be Buffalo's best on a given night for the team to have a chance.

Chad Ruhwedel: He's looked pretty decent for the most part in three games since getting the call from Rochester and has been a good partner for Ehrhoff. He's plus-2, has five shots on goal and is averaging 18:46 a game. More play like that and he's not likely to see the press box – or the AHL – anytime soon.

Tallinder: He was on the injured list for eight games and has been spotty since his return. A bad giveaway led to Pittsburgh's second goal Monday. He played 21:46 and was better Tuesday while paired with Alexander Sulzer. The breakup of the Tallinder-Myers pairing was a relatively significant subplot Tuesday.

“It just wasn't going very well the previous three or four games,” Nolan said. “I thought Tyler was playing exceptionally well when Tallinder was out. We just thought to mix it up would bring that back to Myers and give Tallinder a little bit of time to get back his game.”

Weber: He apparently will escape a call from the NHL's Department of Player Safety for his high hit on Washington's Nicklas Backstrom in the final minute of regulation Tuesday. Weber overplayed Alex Ovechkin on Mike Green's overtime winner and has struggled in his own end all year. Nolan didn't even want to talk about him after Tuesday's game. Say nothing if you have nothing nice to say.

McBain/Sulzer: They're proving to be place-fillers. McBain has 10 points and can produce on the power play but has often been brutal on five-on-five play and was completely outclassed on several plays Monday in Pittsburgh. Sulzer has been weak in his end of the ice as well.

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The Coyotes officially announced Wednesday what had been expected for months, that they will change their name to the “Arizona Coyotes” for next season. The team, remember, plays in suburban Glendale and that city asked for the change as part of the franchise's new ownership.

The Sabres have not played in Glendale since a 2-1 overtime win on Jan. 8, 2011. Drew Stafford got the winning goal that night.

They have won their last three there, not losing since Jan. 21, 2008.

The Coyotes are 2-0-1 in their last three games but just 6-8-3 since the infamous “Butt Goal” loss in Buffalo on Dec. 23.

That came when Pysyk was credited with an overtime winner after the puck landed in the jersey/pants of Phoenix goalie Mike Smith and was carried into the net.

Coyotes continue homestand by facing Sabres

By Eric Goodman

NHL.com

January 29, 2014

SABRES (14-30-8) at COYOTES (25-18-10)

TV: MSG-B, BELL TV, FS-A PLUS

Last 10: Buffalo 2-4-4; Phoenix 4-5-1

Season series: This is the second and final game between these cross-conference clubs. The Buffalo Sabres defeated the Phoenix Coyotes 2-1 in overtime on Dec. 23 in Buffalo, on a blooper-reel goal credited to Sabres defenseman Mark Pysyk. On that bizarre play, Coyotes forward Martin Hanzal knocked a loose puck into the back of his goalie Mike Smith's hockey pants and then Smith slid backward toward his goal unaware it was trapped in his equipment, surrendering the game-winner when the puck came loose and ended up in the net.

Big story: This will be the Coyotes' first home game since the team announced Wednesday they will officially be renamed the Arizona Coyotes at the start of the 2014-15 season. Coyotes center Mike Ribeiro is one goal away from reaching 200 in his NHL career.

The Sabres have been successful in Glendale recently, riding a three-game winning streak with their last loss at what is now known as Jobing.com Arena coming on Jan. 21, 2008.

Team Scope:

Sabres: Buffalo has lost seven of its past eight games (1-4-3) with just under a 1.75 goal differential, including a 5-4 overtime defeat at the Washington Capitals on Tuesday. While interim coach Ted Nolan's team has been keeping the games close, they have not yet found the right formula to get them over the hump and, with 36 points, remain last in the NHL.

Nolan was pleased with the Sabres' performance in the third period Tuesday as center Cody Hodgson tied the game with a backhander, but admitted he wants to see a more complete effort.

"To control the third period the way we did, you're happy at one point," Nolan said. "But on the other side, there's little parts of our game that we need to continue to work on and make corrections on. That was a big lesson learned in a bad situation."

Coyotes: Coach Dave Tippett's team will officially represent the entire state of Arizona next season due to the name change, but it will try to make one more

Stanley Cup Playoff appearance playing as "Phoenix," based out of Glendale, Arizona. The Coyotes kicked off their five-game homestand with a 3-0 win against the Los Angeles Kings on Tuesday, gaining two much-needed points against their fellow Western Conference competitor. Thomas Greiss, who earned the shutout, will get a second straight start.

The Coyotes will not change their uniforms next season, but will feature shoulder patches on the home and away uniforms to showcase the name "Arizona." Coyotes co-owner, president and CEO Anthony LeBlanc is excited his team will now play for the entire state as he explained at the press conference Wednesday.

"We want to be recognized as not just the hockey team for Glendale or Phoenix, but the team for the entire state of Arizona and the Southwest," LeBlanc said. "We hope that the name 'Arizona' will encourage more fans from all over the state, not just the valley, to embrace and support our team."

Who's hot: Hodgson has four goals and an assist in his past four games for the Sabres. ... Coyotes center Antoine Vermette is in the midst of a five-game point streak with six goals and two assists over that span.

Injury report: Sabres forwards Cody McCormick (upper body), Kevin Porter (lower body) and Matt D'Agostini (upper body) are on injured reserve, although D'Agostini skated at practice Tuesday in a non-contact jersey. Forward Drew Stafford (upper body) is questionable after sustaining the injury at the Columbus Blue Jackets on Jan. 25. ... The Coyotes reported no injuries as of Wednesday afternoon.

Ryan Miller's U.S. goalie mask made and painted in Michigan

By Paul Costanzo
Detroit Free Press
January 29, 2014

For the second straight Olympic Games, the work of the Warwicks and Ray Bishop will be prominently on display.

U.S. goaltender Ryan Miller (Michigan State) will be sporting a new mask, which — like the one he wore on his way to an MVP performance and a silver medal in 2010 in Vancouver — was built by Warwick Mask in Port Huron and painted by Bishop Designs in Grand Blanc.

“We get a lot of Olympic goalies; we’ve been very fortunate,” said Gary Warwick Sr., owner of Warwick Mask. “Being a small company, we don’t have a lot of NHL goalies, but we have enough that we have really good ones. We get recommended to them by the equipment manufacturers or other goalies.”

Warwick and his son Gary Warwick Jr. also made the mask for Jaroslav Halak, who will be playing for Slovakia. The U.S. will play its first game of the Olympics against Slovakia on Feb. 13.

Bishop painted three Olympic masks this year: Americans Miller, Jimmy Howard of the Detroit Red Wings and Brianne McLaughlin of the women’s team.

In 2010, Warwick and Bishop teamed up to create Miller’s mask, which garnered plenty of attention for its design and also for the “Miller Time” slogan on the back of the helmet, which had to be covered up because of an International Olympic Committee rule barring advertisements, propaganda and demonstrations. A small Bishop Designs logo also had to be covered.

Still, the mask proved to be a benefit for both companies.

“It threw the design even more into the limelight, and people were talking about it everywhere,” Bishop said. “Right now, social media is blowing up with the new design. It’s awesome. ... It’s kind of hard to describe (seeing your work at the Olympics), it’s really neat. It’s almost like a surreal kind of thing. You know you did it, and you know you put the work into it. I put my heart into these things, and I don’t care if it’s for a 5-year-old, a piece of me goes into everything I paint.

“To see it on a global scale, it’s mind-boggling. It makes you feel good, and it’s kind of hard to comprehend sometimes. I’m not Mr. Big Stuff or anything like that, but I am very blessed, very honored to be able to do it. I’m pumped up and humbled all at the same time. It’s weird.”

The Warwicks have been working with Miller since he was a teenager, even before he headed to MSU and became a star. Over time, the mask has evolved.

“We make chin slings for him now; we’ve gone away from a chin cup,” Warwick Jr. said. “You’ve got the chin strap, but the chin cup is gone, and your face wedges in around a piece of padding. Another thing we’ve done is we’ve changed the design of the helmet. ... He’s changing stuff, pretty much yearly. We also went to the Unequal padding (a composite that is fortified with Kevlar) which absorbs and deflects most of the impact before it gets to the head.”

The paint job on the helmet also has evolved, although it still features many of the same ideas. Bishop said that Miller is very involved with the process and will provide ideas and even sketches to help with the design.

“Basically, it’s the same theme,” Bishop said. “I changed up a few things — you grow as an artist over four years — and Ryan had some ideas of the way he wanted to go with it. It’s similar in a lot of ways but different in other ways.

“We wanted to stay with Uncle Sam and the eagle. The last time, I did an eagle, but I wanted to go a little further with it. I wanted to make it better. I really like Ryan’s choice for the dark (blue) background. I was a little concerned at first, because I wanted to make sure the artwork popped on it, but Ryan was right on with the color.”

Sabres' Weber on Pittsburgh NHLers: 'There's a lot of us now in the league'

By Seth Rorabaugh
Pittsburgh Post-Gazette
January 28, 2014

Labeling Mike Weber (above) as a Western Pennsylvania product would be accurate. At the same time, it would be a bit of an understatement.

Growing up, Weber lived for portions of his life in Cranberry, Mars and Center and other northwest suburbs of Pittsburgh.

(For the record, he identifies himself as a Cranberry native.)

At this moment, Weber calls Western New York home as a member of the Buffalo Sabres.

While the Sabres have had a dreadful season with a 14-30-7 record, the rugged defenseman has enjoyed some personal success. He has appeared in 37 games already this season, a total approaching his career best of 42 and was named an alternate captain earlier this season.

Prior to his team's game against the Penguins last night, Weber talked about the journey from Cranberry (Mars and Center) to the NHL.

What's your road to the NHL been like?

"It's been a long one. You grow up, you watch [Mario] Lemieux, [Jaromir] Jagr and seeing players like that, you don't know if you have what it takes. You always dream you want to be there. You don't know if you have what it takes. Though the years, I found a way to make my dream kind of come true. It's just a lot of hard work. You have a lot of people telling you you can't do it. You find a way to battle. My parents did a good job. Playing on two teams, I'd play on a AA team back home then they'd drive me across the border into Ohio. I played in Youngstown there for a AA team. Just trying to get as much ice time as I possibly could."

"There's a local coach, Bob Hawthorne, he coached a Beaver County AA team for a lot years, won a lot of state championships and things like that. He always let me come out for extra ice team. You remember people like that that helped you out. A junior B coach here at the time for the Pittsburgh Junior B Penguins and gave me a chance at 14 years old to play. From there, drafted into the OHL (by the Windsor Spitfires) and got an eye-opener and realized that I could make this a job. 15, 16 years old when I went to Canada. It's been awesome. I get goosebumps every time that airplane touches down at [Pittsburgh International Airport], coming home and playing in the NHL."

Was there a stigma against kids from Pittsburgh or other areas of the country that didn't produce as many players compared to places such as New England or the Upper Midwest?

"I think so. Now, you're starting to see more and more coming up from out of Pittsburgh. It's an exciting thing. It's one of those things that people don't realize how hard it is to get to the level and how hard you have to work and how many sacrifices you have to make family-wise and friendship-wise and kid-wise. You're moving around a lot. If you want to play this game hard you have to move around and do anything to find your way [to the NHL]. I remember getting told a lot of times, it's tough for a kid to make it from Pittsburgh. There's a lot of us now in the league so it's nice."

Do you keep tabs on other Pittsburgh-area players like the Blue Jackets' R.J. Umberger or the Avalanche's Nate Guenin?

"Those guys are a lot older than me but I've obviously met them and talked with them. Those were the guys that were first breaking through when I was a kid that were drafted and getting into the NHL and those were the guys you looked up to. If they could do it, I could do it."

You're almost in between those older guys and some of the younger players such as the Blackhawks' Brandon Saad or the Rangers' J.T. Miller.

"Those are the young guys now that are coming up. That's huge for Pittsburgh. Saad gets a Stanley Cup. It's real exciting obviously what Lemieux and those guys what those guys have done for the city in the aspect of getting kids involved in hockey. They've got a beautiful arena now. Talking to my dad, there's arenas and [remodeled arenas] and things going up all over the city. They've got more kids than ever playing hockey so it's exciting."

What are your earliest memories of hockey?

"I remember listening to this guy [Root Sports announcer Paul Steigerwald] call all the games. A lot of times, if you couldn't see the games, I remember listening to [WDVE-FM] to the games on my way from practice or on the way to tournaments."

What has this season been like? Your team hasn't had much success but you're having some individual success by playing in more games and being named an alternate captain.

"Statistically, it hasn't been the best. It's tough. We were finding a way to lose games and not scoring at all. It's tough to stay on the positive side of things. Lately we've been coming around. I'm a guy, I try to keep it as level as I can. There's going to be a lot of ups and downs in your career. You've got to try and find a way to keep it pretty level and come to the rink everyday with a willingness to put your skates on and find a way to make your self better and your team better."

Sabres' Christian Ehrhoff piling up points again, admits he might've been pressing earlier

By Bill Hoppe

Olean Times Herald

January 30, 2014

BUFFALO – Sabres defenseman Christian Ehrhoff never expected he would experience so much losing after signing his massive 10-year, \$40 million contract almost three years ago.

Back then, Ehrhoff thought he was joining a team built to contend for the Stanley Cup. These days, he's playing for the NHL's worst outfit.

To some observers, the German has looked uninterested at times this season. To interim coach Ted Nolan, Ehrhoff, one of the Sabres' few remaining stars, began "just trying too hard."

"Maybe I was," Ehrhoff said Tuesday when asked if he had been pressing. "I'm always trying to help out the team. Yeah, maybe I relaxed a little bit since he said that."

Ehrhoff, whose Sabres play in Phoenix tonight against the Coyotes, reacted swiftly to Nolan's words.

Twelve days ago, hours after Nolan said he wanted Ehrhoff to lead and "get back to what makes him effective and not take the world upon his shoulders," the alternate captain played one of his best games this season, skating more than 29 minutes in a 4-3 shootout loss to Columbus.

The 31-year-old minute-muncher has been performing much better lately. He had a goal and three points in Saturday's 5-2 win in Columbus and scored after zooming in from the point in Tuesday's 5-4 overtime loss to Washington.

"Last couple games he's been really good for us and his compete level's really improved," Nolan said Tuesday morning.

Believe it or not, with eight points in his last nine games, Ehrhoff's enjoying his best offensive stretch ever with the Sabres. It's a big reason their anemic offense has busted out, scoring 24 goals in the last eight games.

Ehrhoff, the Sabres' top skater at 24:06 a game, has four goals and a team-high 19 assists in 51 games this season. He averaged 14 goals and 47 points during his last two seasons in Vancouver.

"I don't judge my game on the points," said Ehrhoff, who's had a steady string of partners recently. "But ... we've scored some more goals and on the way I've

picked up some more points, too. I think I'm still making the same plays I was making before. But now, obviously, it shows a little more on the score sheet."

Still, the scoring hasn't translated into wins. The Sabres have lost seven of the last eight contests (1-4-3).

"It's definitely very frustrating," Ehrhoff said about the constant losing. "It's not what I had in mind when I signed here. But ... I'm trying to make the best out of the situation, try to stay positive and just take it day-by-day."

With seven years left on his contract, Ehrhoff's name isn't mentioned much in trade rumors. But the Sabres have already paid him \$22 million and he has a salary cap-friendly \$4 million hit.

Has he thought about his future?

"That's not really in my hands," Ehrhoff said. "So there's not much to think about."

Ehrhoff has felt much better about the Sabres' future since Nolan and president of hockey operations Pat LaFontaine joined the team Nov. 13.

"I think Pat and Ted, they got a lot of experience," Ehrhoff said. "They know what they are doing. They got a good feel for developing young players. Obviously, I hope for a quick turnaround. It's just in the future no one knows."

In the immediate future, Ehrhoff plans to take his wife and two young daughters to Disney World and the Caribbean during the Olympic break next month.

Germany didn't qualify for the Sochi Games.

"It's going to be a little tough, a little sad once the Olympics start to see those great games," said Ehrhoff, who played in the last three Olympics.

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The Sabres flew to Phoenix on Wednesday morning and didn't practice.

NHL Combine to Buffalo?

By Cooper Calzonetti

WGR 550

January 29, 2014

The \$172 million HarborCenter located downtown is not yet completed but is already making big news. NHL Commissioner Gary Bettman told the Associated Press yesterday that there is a possibility of the NHL Combine being moved from Toronto to Buffalo and the new HarborCenter.

The new facility which will be connect to the Sabres Arena is set to open its doors in October. What the HarborCenter will hold inside are two ice rinks, 11 locker rooms, a high-performance training facility, and multiple classrooms. All keys elements that could be put to good use for the all prospects and member of NHL Organizations. Along with the top of the line hockey facilities, the HarborCenter will also include a full-service hotel.

The NHL Combine is held in May. The NHL will highly consider the move to the HarborCenter due to facilities and and the on and off the ice evaluations which can all be held under one roof.

(716) Food and Sport: HarborCenter's new urban bistro

By Andrew Kulyk

Artvoice

January 29, 2014

Move over, RealSports in Toronto. There's a new kid on the block, and it pretty much blows you away.

This afternoon at First Niagara Center, details on the latest component of the fast developing HarborCenter were unveiled to the public and the press, and from the looks of things this will be a dynamic piece of the emerging Canalside neighborhood.

"(716) Food and Sport" is the name of the new sports restaurant and bistro that will be an important part of HarborCenter. The two level themed restaurant will be located on the corner of Scott St and Washington St. It will be approximately 13,000 square feet in size, have three bars and seating for 350 patrons. Each of the bar tops will be illuminated and be designed to replicate that of a hockey rink. This will be just one of many unique architectural and design enhancements which will include custom graphics and art which will embrace the "716" theme.

With 55 high-definition sets throughout the facility, the signature viewing experience will be a 38 foot video screen which will hang over the main bar and will be visible from both levels. It will be the largest such screen in the continental United States.

Dominic Verni is the restaurant's General Manager, and offered more insight as to what the customer experience will be like for patrons coming to the new establishment, when it opens its doors this fall. "Our celebration of food will be highlighted by Western New York culinary favorites featuring locally produced ingredients. Our menu will be complimented by craft beers and signature cocktails, will feature 40 beer selections with over 20 varieties on tap. Our celebration of sport will include being Buffalo's premiere destination before and after all sporting events in downtown Buffalo. It will be the best destination to watch all major televised events, providing a unique and exciting viewing experience."

HarborCenter President John Koelmel gave a construction update on the facility, while offering high praises to the construction crew who continue to keep the project on schedule despite the harsh weather conditions and the challenging winter. "We are still looking to open the entire facility in the fall of this year, except the hotel which will open the following spring." Koelmel did say that there is no firm date set for the opening of (716) Food and Sport, except that they hope to tie in the date with the opening of the facility, and offered a range of time from September to November depending on the overall construction progress.

Koelmel indicated that there is one more piece of the HarborCenter project which is still under review, and that is the retail tenant mix that will occupy the space

abutting Main Street. “That is still taking shape. While it will only represent only 1% of the total square footage, we think it will benefit the district positively, and disproportionately so,” said Koelmel. Both Koelmel and Verni also stated that there are no immediate plans to provide seasonal outdoor dining at the restaurant, despite the presence of an ample sized plaza and pedestrian space outside their door bordering Scott Street,, one of the only such spots within the entire HarborCenter footprint. “We are working the with the Erie Canal Harbor Development Corporation, where there are some exciting plans to present outdoor dining options along the new canals and in other sites in the district,” said Koelmel. “At some point we might introduce this here at 716 but right now we can tell you that there will be plenty of such experiences nearby, and we want our restaurant to compliment that array of dining choices for people who come down here.”

Once open, (716) Food and Sports will create 150 new jobs. “We’re putting a 10 pound project into a 5 pound site. It is an experience that will knock your socks off,” Koelmel promised.

(716) HarborCenter's latest connection

By James Fink

Business First

January 30, 2014

Calling it the “last major piece of the HarborCenter puzzle,” the name and details of the 13,000-square-foot, two-story restaurant that will help anchor the project has been unveiled.

John Koelmel, HarborCenter president, said the (716) not only represents the region’s area code but also symbolizes what will be the restaurant’s culinary forte, local foods and craft beers.

“This is proof that the HarborCenter is much more than just a 20-story hotel and rink,” Koelmel said. “It has helped raise the bar and further define excellence.”

The \$172 million project, privately financed by Buffalo Sabres’ owner Terry Pegula, is due to open this fall. The HarborCenter, located just across from First Niagara Center, will be anchored by a pair of hockey rinks, a 205-room Marriott hotel, a 750-car parking garage and now, the sports-themed (716) restaurant. The rinks, garage and (716) are slated to open this fall with the Marriott scheduled to welcome its first guests in May 2015.

HarborCenter is designed to host more than 500,000 people annually, most coming for amateur and youth hockey tournaments to visiting teams playing either the Jr. Sabres or Canisius College. The Sabres are lobbying the National Hockey League to shift its summertime scouting combine from Toronto to downtown Buffalo, beginning in 2015.

USA Hockey is bringing its annual prospects game to First Niagara Center this September and September 2015, with some of the spillover making its way into the HarborCenter.

Central to all that is (716), which HarborCenter officials say will be a destination regardless of whether people are headed to their building or the First Niagara Center or just coming to Canalside and downtown Buffalo.

“It represents far more than our area code,” said Dominic Verni, (716) general manager. “It represents our community. It will celebrate both food and sport.”

Among the signature amenities inside the 360-person seating capacity restaurant will be a 38-foot video screen and a bank of 55 big screen televisions strategically located around (716). Some booths will come equipped with their own TVs and even the bathrooms will have mirrors embedded in the mirrors,’

The food menu is still being formulated, Verni said.

Verni did say a wide variety of beers, including many locally crafted microbrews, will be featured.

The bar tops will be designed to look like hockey rinks and illuminated with a special color scheme.

Patrons can enter either from main doorway at the corner of Scott and Washington streets or from the second level of the parking garage. Guests will be able to walk into First Niagara Center through (716) and the HarborCenter.

Verni said (716) will likely hire at least 150 people.

Other HarborCenter details Koelmel discussed included:

- The building's retail component is still being worked on.

"It amounts to about 1 percent of a 650,000-square-foot building, but we want it to be a benefit to the (Canalside) district," Koelmel.

- (716) will not have an outdoor patio. Koelmel said other Canalside restaurants will be developing outdoor patios and he doesn't want to interfere with those plans.

"For us, it's about the greater good of Buffalo and Western New York," Koelmel said.

- Koelmel confirmed at least one of the HarborCenter rinks will be open for public skating before Buffalo Sabres' home games.

- Talks are underway to bring several new hockey tournaments to the HarborCenter.

"The idea is to bring new visitors to Buffalo and Western New York," Koelmel said.

HarborCenter announces Details of 716 Restaurant

By Morgan Culhane

WGRZ

January 29, 2014

BUFFALO, N.Y.- HARBORCenter announced details Wednesday regarding (716) Food and Sport, a new 13,000 square foot dining establishment, set to open in Buffalo this fall.

The two-story restaurant located on the corner of Scott St and Washington St., aims to be a prime destination for food and sports lovers.

(716) will include 55 big screen TVs and a 38-foot video screen, which will be the largest restaurant screen in the continental United States.

True to it's Buffalonian inspired name, (716) will emphasize dishes with locally produced ingredients as well as an extensive collection of craft beers and signature cocktails.

"(716) is our code, and we're creating an experience to epitomize it," said restaurant general manager Dominic Verni. "These are three digits that identify our area and represent the pride and passion that Western New Yorkers have for our area, as well as the deep love we have for both food and sport. Combining both food and sport at our state of the art destination will create the premier fan experience."

The love for food and sport is illustrated throughout the design of the restaurant. (716) will feature in-booth televisions with dedicated sound and bar tops designed to replicate the ice of a hockey rink. Seating 360 guests, including 135 bar stools, the restaurant will also feature an exclusive VIP area on the second floor.

Besides providing a new location for sports enthusiasts to watch their favorite sports, (716) is expected to bring 150 jobs to downtown Buffalo.