



# **Buffalo Sabres**

## **Daily Press Clips**

*February 25, 2014*

## **Hurricanes-Sabres Preview**

Associated Press

February 24, 2014

(AP) - Ryan Miller was a no-show at Buffalo Sabres practice Monday because the star goalie was still traveling from the Sochi Games.

Though Miller was scheduled to return later in the day and start Tuesday night when Buffalo hosts Carolina, his absence could be something the Sabres will have to get accustomed to with the NHL trade deadline approaching March 5.

A person familiar with discussions told The Associated Press that general manager Tim Murray continues to pursue offers for Miller with the intention of trading him by next week.

"Tim is testing the waters as hard as he can," the person said, speaking on the condition of anonymity because Murray declined to speak to reporters Monday.

Miller isn't the only player with an uncertain future on a Sabres team that, at 15-34-8, remains in last place coming out of the NHL Olympic break.

Captain Steve Ott, veteran winger Matt Moulson and defenseman Henrik Tallinder are also in the final years of their contracts and could be used as trade bait by a team intent on building through youth.

Following practice, interim head coach Ted Nolan said it would be safe to assume the Sabres will be active in making trades.

"I think that's the key right there, not knowing," Nolan said. "We can't worry about who might be gone, who might be coming in. Today is the day we have to work with what we've got. And tomorrow, whatever we've got here, then we'll work with that, too."

Nolan also had a different take on his thoughts regarding Miller. After previously saying he favored the Sabres retaining Miller, Nolan said the decision was out of his hands.

"My thoughts don't really count right now," Nolan said. "Certainly, what Ryan Miller means to this team and this town, no question you'd like to keep him. But it's business. And we have to look forward to rebuilding this organization."

With a 14-22-3 record, Miller accounts for all but one of Buffalo's victories. His .923 save percentage ranks seventh among goalies with 30 or more starts.

The Sabres are in a tough spot as far as goaltending entering their game against the Hurricanes (26-22-9). Aside from Miller, backup Jhonas Enroth was also at the Olympics as a backup to Swedish starter Henrik Lundqvist.

Nolan made the decision to have Miller start against Carolina because the U.S. has been off since a 5-0 loss to Finland in the bronze medal game Saturday. Sweden played Sunday when it lost the gold medal game to Canada.

The trade deadline has become a hot topic of discussion in the Sabres locker room.

"I think you guys in the media as a whole have been telling me I've been getting traded since the first day I got here," said Moulson, scheduled to return after missing four games with an upper-body injury.

"Sometimes it's a little stressful. But I think when you tell yourself to control what you can control, it kind of calms me down a bit. I'm going to go out there and play hard, and whatever happens, happens."

The game against Carolina was originally scheduled to be played Jan. 7, but postponed after a blizzard hit Buffalo.

The Hurricanes also return from the Olympic break out of the postseason picture but are within three points of a playoff spot. Sixteen of their final 25 games come on the road, including a five-game trip that begins Tuesday.

"I think the best way to look at it is to look at it as five one-game road trips and approach each game with what we can control and what we can do, and not worry about the long-term trends," defenseman Jay Harrison said. "You can only win one at a time."

Carolina is 8-4-4 in its last 16 games away from home, including a 5-3 victory at Buffalo on Jan. 23 against Enroth in the teams' lone matchup this season.

The Hurricanes are 8-1-2 in the last 11 meetings, including 4-0-1 in Buffalo.

Eric Staal tops Carolina with 45 points but had only one in his final five games before the break.

## **AP source: Sabres still shopping Ryan Miller**

By John Wawrow

Associated Press

February 24, 2014

**BUFFALO** — Ryan Miller was a no-show at Buffalo Sabres practice Monday because the star goalie was still traveling from the Sochi Games.

Though Miller was scheduled to return later in the day and start Tuesday, when Buffalo hosts Carolina, his absence could be something the Sabres will have to get accustomed to with the NHL trade deadline approaching on March 5.

A person familiar with discussions told The Associated Press that general manager Tim Murray continues to pursue offers for Miller with the intention of trading him by next week.

"Tim is testing the waters as hard as he can," the person said, speaking on the condition of anonymity because Murray declined to speak to reporters Monday.

The person said the team's first option is trading Miller, who is in the final year of his contract and eligible to become an unrestricted free agent. Option No. 2, the person added, would be making a bid to re-sign Miller if a trade can't be completed.

Murray, who took over the Sabres last month, had previously not ruled out trading Miller or anyone else on the roster.

"This team's in last place right now," Murray said, during his inaugural news conference on Jan. 9. "Everybody can be traded."

That means Miller isn't the only player with an uncertain future on a Sabres team that, at 15-34-8, remains in last place coming out of the NHL Olympic break.

Captain Steve Ott, veteran winger Matt Moulson and defenseman Henrik Tallinder are also in the final years of their contracts and could be used as trade bait by a team intent on building through youth.

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Nolan also had a different take on his thoughts regarding Miller. After previously saying he favored the Sabres retaining Miller, Nolan said the decision was out of his hands.

"My thoughts don't really count right now," Nolan said. "Certainly, what Ryan Miller means to this team and this town, no question you'd like to keep him. But it's business. And we have to look forward to rebuilding this organization."

In 11 seasons in Buffalo, the 33-year-old has set franchise records with 283 wins and 539 games played.

This season, Miller has been the team's MVP.

With a 14-22-3 record, Miller accounts for all but one of Buffalo's victories. His .923 save percentage ranks seventh among goalies with 30 or more starts.

Miller won the NHL's Vezina Trophy in 2010, the same year he earned MVP honors at the Vancouver Games, where he played a key role in leading the United States to a silver medal.

At Sochi, he was relegated to a backup role behind Los Angeles' Jonathan Quick.

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"I think you guys in the media as a whole have been telling me I've been getting traded since the first day I got here," said Moulson, who was acquired in October in a trade that sent Thomas Vanek to the New York Islanders.

"Sometimes it's a little stressful. But I think when you tell yourself to control what you can control, it kind of calms me down a bit. I'm going to go out there and play hard, and whatever happens, happens."

## **Sabres back to work back-to-back**

By Mike Harrington

Buffalo News

February 25, 2014

The Olympic flame has been doused in Sochi, so we now return you to your regularly scheduled hockey season.

After 16 days with no NHL games, the league gets back in action tonight in First Niagara Center as the Buffalo Sabres and Carolina Hurricanes meet in the first contest following the conclusion of the Olympic tournament in Russia.

The makeup of the Sabres-Canes Jan. 7 postponement is the only NHL game tonight. The rest of the league drops the puck Wednesday with four games — including the Sabres' home contest against Boston — and then 12 more on Thursday.

The Sabres also host San Jose here Friday, providing a backbreaking start to the post-Olympic schedule with three home games in four nights.

“Add one more game to an already very condensed schedule,” defenseman Tyler Myers said after practice Monday. “It’s not going to add too much more stress. It’s a makeup game that adds a back-to-back to start but I think all the guys are feeling pretty good going in. I’m glad we’re doing it right off the bat.”

“It’s going to be hard hockey the rest of the way,” said captain Steve Ott. “The league takes a big step right about now and we have to be ready right away for this.”

Reporters swarmed Ott and Matt Moulson in the Buffalo dressing room Monday. Both are good candidates to be dealt prior to the March 5 trade deadline. So is goaltender Ryan Miller, who landed in Buffalo around noon Monday on his return from Sochi.

Miller flew back with Jhonas Enroth and Henrik Tallinder, with none of them attending practice. Miller is slated to get the start tonight.

General Manager Tim Murray was in the stands watching practice and figures to be busy remaking the roster heading into the deadline. Murray is expected to discuss the subject with reporters today.

“People have been saying it’s going to happen for a long time, ever since I got here,” Moulson said, referring to a trade. “You just control what you can control. Obviously I don’t have a clue if I’m going to be traded or where I’m going to go so I don’t think I can really think about that.”

Moulson said he's had a couple of conversations with Pat LaFontaine, the team's president of hockey operations, but is leaving any contract talk to his agent.

"I've definitely enjoyed my time here. I think this team is going to be good," he said. "They have the right guys in place that are going to make this team good and the owners that are willing to have a successful team. I've enjoyed my time here. My family has enjoyed our time here and let's see what happens."

"The Stanley Cup winner from last year or the year before, they're all different teams," Ott said. "It's so hard nowadays to keep any group of guys together. In our case, when you're in 30th place, 'the upstairs' definitely wants to make an impact and change the group in here to have success."

Interim coach Ted Nolan said he assumes there will be changes made prior to the March 5 trade deadline and it's likely there will be big ones.

"Right now the only thing I'm concentrating on is coaching," Nolan said. "Timmy is very good at what he does. Pat LaFontaine, Craig Patrick and all the people we have, I'll let them do that stuff and I'll worry about coaching."

The Sabres enter tonight's game last in the NHL's overall standing, with a 15-34-8 record good for just 38 points. They are nine points behind Edmonton (20-33-7) in the battle for the league's worst record and the best lottery position for the No. 1 pick, although Buffalo has three games in hand.

The Sabres have just three regulation wins in their last 20 games, going 6-9-5 in that stretch. Buffalo dropped its final four games prior to the Olympic break and will be trying to avoid losing five straight in regulation for the second time this year.

The Sabres have scored an NHL-low 104 goals in 57 games (although the standings credit them for 110, counting six shootout winners). With a meager pace of just 1.82 goals per game, the Sabres are on pace to finish with 150 and almost certain to shatter their franchise low for a full season of 190, set in 2002-03.

In fact, they are on pace for the worst offensive season in the NHL's expansion era dating to 1967. That mark is 151, set by the 1997-98 Tampa Bay Lightning.

Carolina enters the game 26-22-9 for 61 points and is three behind Detroit for the final wild-card slot in the East. The Canes have a game in hand on the Red Wings that they will make up tonight.

## **Let Nolan finish job with Sabres**

By Bucky Gleason

Buffalo News

February 25, 2014

Ted Nolan was asked Monday if he thought Latvia's performance at the 2014 Olympics in Sochi would affect his "interim" status with the Sabres. Predictably, he wasn't biting. Nolan turned his attention toward resuming the season and fulfilling obligations outlined when Pat LaFontaine hired him.

"Would I like to stay? Certainly," Nolan said after an hour-long workout in First Niagara Center. "Would I like to continue? No question, but the No. 1 thing is that Pat asked me to come in and do this, and I'm going to do it to the best of my ability. Hopefully, it's good enough to stick around."

Nolan said had not been offered a contract extension Monday, but he's not going anywhere. Whether the Sabres make it official this week, next month or after the season, retaining him should be a formality. They would be wise to lock him up for the foreseeable future and continue developing a young team into a winning one.

This is a no-brainer.

Nolan never lost his gift of inspiring players and getting them to exceed their own standards. His knack for maximizing potential was evident again during the Winter Games, when a collection of nameless, faceless Latvians reached the quarterfinals and nearly knocked off a Canadian team that was one of the best ever assembled.

You could almost hear NHL executives second-guessing themselves during the Olympics for not hiring Nolan during his time away. His absence was one of the great injustices in sports, but it was as if people forgot what made him effective. LaFontaine had the sense to know Nolan would help change the culture.

The Sabres are similar to Latvia. They lack skill and experience. They're learning how to win. If they adopt the same attitude Latvia had, they're bound to improve. It begins with believing in themselves and one another. They could have all the faith in the world, but it's useless unless GM Tim Murray finds Nolan more talent and depth.

Canada had a lineup stocked with NHL all-stars whose combined contracts amounted to \$149 million. They had some of the best coaches in the business, including Lindy Ruff. Latvia had one NHL player making \$894,000, Sabres rookie Zemgus Girgensons, and a coach, Nolan, who for years was inexplicably pushed aside by the establishment.

Latvia gave Canada all it could handle and was the last team to score against Canada, which more than the U.S. team could say before taking a vacation in Sochi. Can imagine the tenor north of the border if Latvia pulled off the upset and sent the Canadians home without a medal?

The Latvians were one shot here, one save there, from making it happen. They played with intelligence. They blocked shots. They were resourceful and disciplined. They had great goaltending. They played harder than Canada. They gained confidence under Nolan and threw a good scare into an entire country before talent took over.

LaFontaine couldn't have played his hand any better. He was right when he gave Nolan the "interim" tag because giving him a long-term contract would have undermined his search for a general manager. LaFontaine all along knew Nolan, if given enough time, would win over any general manager he hired.

Murray shouldn't need to see much more. He'll have a major say on who coaches his team along with LaFontaine and Craig Patrick. Anyone in the Sabres' dressing room would attest that Nolan is a major upgrade over Ron Rolston. The atmosphere around the team is far more upbeat than it was before the changes.

The Sabres' record could be worse next year if they lose veteran free agents Ryan Miller, Steve Ott and Matt Moulson and aren't able to replace them. They'll be left with more young players who can benefit from Nolan's positive influence and no-nonsense approach. It's a matter of when, not if, they get better results.

It starts with effort. He kicked John Scott out of practice Monday after watching him fumble around with the puck and go through the motions. Scott, who stormed off the ice, might as well keep walking. Nolan doesn't need his attitude, not after watching Latvians give everything they had without making a dime.

For years, the rap on Nolan was that X's and O's weren't his strength, as if developed players without understanding the game. It was unfair. Nolan never coached an abundance of talent in the NHL. In 1996-97, when the Sabres won a title under him, their top two scorers were Brian Holzinger and Derek Plante.

Dominik Hasek played a huge role in their success, of course, but that team was effective because it outworked teams all season. They also won a playoff round that year. Nolan was named Coach of the Year, and his reward was a one-year contract offer and a pay cut. If he won the division with that team, imagine what he would do with more talent.

Clearly, he knows the game. He took the lowly New York Islanders to the playoffs in 2006-07. If you remember, they played five tough games against the Sabres before Buffalo's talent took over. Coaching wasn't the Islanders' problem at the time, and it's not the issue with the Sabres now.

Murray needs better players, so Nolan can complete the job LaFontaine gave him.

## **Nolan plans on starting Miller in goal**

By Mike Harrington

Buffalo News

February 25, 2014

Buffalo Sabres interim coach Ted Nolan is expecting to start Ryan Miller in goal tonight against Carolina, even though Miller didn't arrive back in Buffalo from the Olympics until Monday afternoon.

The Sabres and Hurricanes are the only NHL teams playing tonight so it's a short turnaround for the veteran goalie from the nine-hour time difference of Russia. And Miller was not yet in town to practice with the team Monday.

"That will be like playing at 4 a.m. for him," joked Nolan. "It will be a different challenge but hopefully he has some sleep and will be somewhat awake at some point."

"I'm sure it will be tough," said defenseman Tyler Myers. "Having done a couple of those overseas trips, it's never a good feeling right when you get back. We're going to have to help him out as much as we can."

Nolan said it crossed the team's mind to recall a goalie from Rochester before it decided to stay with Miller. Still, Nolan did not 100 percent eliminate the thought of a callup of Matt Hackett or Nathan Lieuwen from the Amerks so Miller and backup Jhonas Enroth could get another day of rest after the long flight.

"It still could be crossed," Nolan said.

...

The Tampa Bay Lightning have ruled star forward Steven Stamkos out of their upcoming four-game road trip — and Stamkos said Monday he is now targeting his return from a broken leg to come March 6 at home against the Sabres.

Stamkos said an X-ray taken of his surgically repaired right tibia Monday "looks really good" and he has another evaluation March 5. He broke the leg Nov. 11 when he crashed into the goalpost during a game in Boston and the injury prevented him from playing for Team Canada in Sochi.

Stamkos had 14 goals and nine assists in 17 games before the injury. He had a career-high 60 goals and 97 points in the 2011-12 season.

Stamkos pushed to return to the Olympics but was ruled out Feb. 5 and teammate Martin St. Louis went in his place.

"I think now it was kind of a relief for that whole thing to be over and done with," Stamkos said. "Just to get all that stuff out of the way and to focus on one thing and that's getting back and playing for Tampa."

...

Sabres enforcer John Scott was expected to be a healthy scratch tonight anyway but he's certainly deep in Nolan's doghouse now after getting tossed out of practice Monday.

Observers heard a loud bellow from Scott, who smashed his stick on the boards, tossed it on the ice and then slammed the bench door as he exited the rink midway through the workout. Scott had been working out on defense with Henrik Tallinder still not back from the Olympics.

Nolan's conversation with Scott on the ice was muted and not any indication there was an issue. In fact, Scott's eruption had observers thinking there was an injury involved.

Scott was not in the locker room during the time reporters were inside and the real issue was not learned until Nolan met the media a few minutes later.

"He just fumbled the puck a few times in practice and I didn't like it," Nolan said. "In order for us to get better here, we have to practice better. He just had one of those moments I didn't like so I sent him off."

...

Like the Sabres, Carolina had four players in the Olympics and all four should be in the lineup tonight.

Tuomo Ruutu earned a bronze medal playing for Finland. and ranked tied for second among all skaters with a plus-6 rating. Had had five points in six games and was tied for third in the tournament with four assists.

Former Buffalo defenseman Andrej Sekera was fourth in the tournament in time on ice per game (24:05) and earned two assists in four games for Slovakia. Justin Faulk skated a total of 9:12 in two games for Team USA, while Alexander Semin registered an assist and was (+2) in five games for Russia.

Sekera had his first career three-point game here on Jan. 23 as the Canes posted a 5-3 win in Buffalo in his first game against his former team.

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Carolina has won four straight against Buffalo and is 5-0-1 in its last six against the Sabres. Buffalo's lone win in that stretch was a 3-2 overtime triumph here on March 9, 2012 on a power-play goal by Jason Pominville. ... The Sabres haven't lost five straight to the Canes since they were the Hartford Whalers in 1989. ... The Sabres are reminding fans that tickets from the Jan. 7 postponement will be honored at the gates tonight.

## **Sabres, Hurricanes restart NHL season**

By Mike G. Morreale

NHL.com

February 21, 2014

HURRICANES (26-22-9) at SABRES (15-34-8)

TV: NHLN-US, SPSO, MSG-B, BELL TV

Last 10: Carolina 6-4-0; Buffalo 2-7-1

Season series: The second of three games between the Carolina Hurricanes and Buffalo Sabres. The game was originally scheduled for Jan. 7 at First Niagara Center but had to be postponed until Feb. 25 due to a snowstorm. In the first game Jan. 23, Alexander Semin scored two goals and Andrej Sekera had a goal and two assists to give Carolina a 5-3 win.

Big story: NHL players and coaches were back at work this week following the break for the 2014 Sochi Olympics. Players from both sides were glad to get back on the ice after some much-needed rest in preparation for the stretch run. Carolina returned to practice Thursday and Buffalo was back on the ice Friday following the return of coach Ted Nolan, who coached Latvia in Sochi. The Sabres and Hurricanes will play 25 games over the course of 48 days to close out the regular season.

"It has been a long break, but we're not that far removed," Carolina captain Eric Staal told the Hurricanes website. "The rust comes off a lot quicker here than a summer break."

Team Scope:

Hurricanes: A five-game road swing will take the Hurricanes through Buffalo, Dallas, Los Angeles, Anaheim and San Jose. Carolina, which has won seven of the past 11 games, dropped a 4-1 decision to the Montreal Canadiens in its final game before the Olympic break. The Hurricanes are sixth in the Metropolitan Division and trail the fifth-place Washington Capitals by two points with two games in hand. The Hurricanes are three points behind the Detroit Red Wings for the second and final wild card playoff spot.

"With the way we are in the standings and how tight it is, we're going to have to step into this road trip and go with it," forward Jordan Staal said. "It's going to be a really big test for us."

Carolina coach Kirk Muller is looking forward to getting back to work.

"It's a restart button for everybody," Muller told the Hurricanes website. "Our goal is to make the playoffs, and we're going to need everybody."

Sabres: The Sabres begin a three-game home stand and are looking to snap a four-game winless streak (0-4-0). Nolan arrived in Buffalo on Thursday evening following his team's 2-1 loss to Canada in the quarterfinal round. Zemgus Girgensons, who played for Latvia, told the Sabres website he was proud of the effort his country exhibited against heavily favored Canada.

"We believed in ourselves since the first day we got there and even before. Just looking at the paper, I knew that's the best team Latvia probably has had in a long time," Girgensons said. "I was hoping we can accomplish something good."

Nolan feels Girgensons will take a lot from his Olympic experience into the final quarter of the NHL season.

"We had some pretty good leadership on that team so Zemgus being around that, being so young, I think [for] his growth, it's almost like adding another year on to his experience," Nolan said.

Who's hot: Hurricanes left wing Jeff Skinner ranks tied for sixth in the NHL with six game-winning goals. He also leads his team with 23 goals. ... Drew Stafford has six goals and nine points in the past seven games for the Sabres.

Injury report: Hurricanes defenseman John-Michael Liles (lower body) is questionable. ... Defenseman Tyler Myers (lower body) and forwards Cody McCormick (upper body) and Matt Moulson (ribs) have been out for the Sabres but appear ready to get back in the lineup.

## **Trade targets? Stamkos' return?**

By Katie Strang

ESPN.com

February 25, 2014

Now that the Sochi Winter Olympics have come to a close, with Canada again bringing home the gold medal, the NHL will resume play with an action-packed schedule and a trade deadline a little more than a week away. With less than seven weeks remaining until the end of the regular season, here are the top storylines to watch:

### 1. Who will make the biggest splash on trade deadline day?

There isn't much time for general managers to wheel and deal before the March 5 deadline, so don't be surprised if conversations really begin to heat up with the NHL players back on North American soil. The market is taking shape, separating the buyers from the sellers. Penguins GM Ray Shero has never been shy at the trade deadline, and with top winger Pascal Dupuis on the shelf, he may be an aggressive shopper. St. Louis is a team to keep an eye on as well, with the Blues remaining the odds-on favorite to go after a goaltender like Buffalo's Ryan Miller. The Bruins also would like to shore up their blue line to address the absence of defenseman Dennis Seidenberg, who is out for the season with a torn ACL.

### 2. Where will Thomas Vanek land?

With the Islanders a whopping 12 points back of the last wild-card spot in the Eastern Conference and star center John Tavares done for the rest of the season with a knee injury suffered at the Olympics, the team will be looking to move Vanek. The 30-year-old winger, who rejected a lucrative long-term deal from the Islanders earlier this month, surely will be one of the most coveted rental players on the trade market. Though there will be no lack of interest for his goal-scoring ability -- Vanek has recorded two 40-goal seasons -- his \$5.75 million cap hit may be prohibitive to some, even pro-rated for the remainder of the season.

### 3. Will Ryan Miller remain with the Buffalo Sabres?

With the Sabres in dead last with a dreadful 15-34-8 record and Miller set to hit the market as an unrestricted free agent this summer, he is the top target for playoff contenders looking to bolster their goaltending. This will be the first significant test of Tim Murray's tenure as Sabres general manager, the enormous pressure to fetch a solid return for their franchise player. Goalies can be difficult to move, and Miller does have a limited no-trade clause, so he has some say in where he could end up.

### 4. Will the Rangers move captain Ryan Callahan?

This was the most buzz-worthy development heading into the Olympic break, and you can bet the rumors and speculation will only intensify as the deadline nears. Callahan emerged from a disappointing U.S. Olympic performance unscathed -- a relief for the Rangers, who have seen him suffer numerous injuries because of his rugged, physical style of play -- which means he may still be on the block. A source told ESPNNewYork.com on Sunday that no progress has been made toward a contract extension for the 28-year-old captain, so this one may go down to the wire. The Rangers are currently second in the Metropolitan Division with 23 games left to play. Trading their captain would be a risky move, but GM Glen Sather has never been afraid to be bold.

#### 5. When does Steven Stamkos return to the ice?

It had to be gut-wrenching for the former No. 1 overall pick to watch Team Canada win Olympic gold without him, but Stamkos stayed home at the advice of the Tampa Bay Lightning's medical staff because of a broken leg that had not fully healed. That may turn out to be the best thing possible in the long run for the Lightning, who sit in second place in the Atlantic Division and third in the conference. Whenever Stamkos returns, he'll provide a huge boost with his lethal shot and proven offensive acumen. Stamkos practiced with the Lightning last week and said he felt "definitely very close" to being cleared to play. Tampa Bay faces the Predators in Nashville on Thursday for its first game out of the break.

#### 6. Which team comes out on top in the West?

One of the most entertaining battles to watch will be the big dogs -- Anaheim, Chicago, San Jose -- slugging it out in what has been a dominant, competitive Western Conference. The Blues and Blackhawks are tied with 84 points in the race for the Central Division title, though the Blues have three games in hand. Also, don't sleep on a young and exciting Colorado Avalanche team, a squad that had been scorching hot in the weeks prior to the Olympic break.

#### 7. Does Sidney Crosby secure the Hart Trophy?

Adding another Olympic gold medal to a laundry list of honors in what has already been an illustrious career for the 26-year-old, Crosby has proven yet again that he is capable of shouldering the type of expectations reserved for the league's biggest superstar. After missing time last season with a broken jaw and losing out to Alex Ovechkin, Crosby is pacing the field this season with an impressive campaign. Crosby leads the NHL in both assists (50) and points (78), though Ovechkin has posted a league-leading 40 goals.

#### 8. Where will the Islanders end up?

Tavares' injury was not a devastating blow to Team Canada, which steamrolled the competition to win the gold medal, but it was absolutely crushing for an Islanders team that was fighting to keep their playoff hopes alive. With Tavares out and Vanek likely to be moved, the Islanders will be without two of their top

three forwards (Kyle Okposo rounds out that top-line trio), and they might not have defenseman and pending unrestricted free agent Andrew MacDonald around much longer, either. That will open the door for some youngsters, but it might also mean a tumble down the standings and another top-five draft pick. The good news for general manager Garth Snow is that he can retain the team's first-round pick that was surrendered in the Vanek-Matt Moulson deal with Buffalo, should the Islanders finish in the bottom 10. The bad news is that Snow may have to instead give up a first-rounder in the 2015 draft, a class that features highly touted prospect Connor McDavid.

9. Can Detroit hold onto a playoff spot in the East?

Nice to see coach Mike Babcock win gold with a star-studded Canadian squad during the Olympics, especially considering the raw deal he's gotten leading an injury-decimated Red Wings team this season. Credit to Babcock and the Wings, who have pushed on despite their unfortunate list of hampered stars and unrelenting ailments, but they were hit by another tough loss in Sochi when it was revealed that captain Henrik Zetterberg would have to undergo back surgery that will sideline him for eight weeks.

10. Did Ted Nolan earn himself an extension in Buffalo?

One of the most captivating Cinderella stories of the Olympics was the surprising performance of the Latvian team under coach Ted Nolan. Leading a group that was given virtually no shot in Olympic play, the Latvians ousted Switzerland and gave Canada quite the scare in the quarterfinal round. A big part of that was the leadership of Nolan, whose ability to turn a group of underdogs into believers may convince Murray he has his guy in Buffalo. In January, Murray hinted at a potential extension for Nolan. Could that be in the works once NHL play resumes?

## **Trade deadline looms as NHL resumes play**

By Mike Brehm

USA Today

February 24, 2014

After a 16-day break for the Olympics, the NHL jumps back into action Tuesday night.

The Carolina Hurricanes visit the Buffalo Sabres in a snow makeup game, there are four games Wednesday and a full slate Thursday.

Non-Olympians have been practicing for a week, and Olympians have been trickling home on NHL charters, based on when they were eliminated. Swedish and Canadian players, who played in Sunday's gold medal game, are expected to return to practice today.

General managers have nine days to assess their teams before the trade deadline.

And teams also have to deal with a host of Olympic-related injuries.

A look at some teams:

### New York Islanders

They received the most devastating injury news when center John Tavares, their leading scorer and the No. 3 scorer in the league, suffered a torn knee ligament that will end his season.

The Islanders had an uphill battle without him because they are 12 points out of a playoff spot with 22 games to go. Could his absence push them to trade Thomas Vanek? They gave up draft picks and Matt Moulson to land him and would like to get something back for the soon-to-be unrestricted free agent if they don't think he'll re-sign.

### Detroit Red Wings

Captain Henrik Zetterberg had back surgery after he aggravated an earlier condition at the Olympics.

Pavel Datsyuk's knee seemed to hold up well at the Olympics as he was the best player for Russia.

The Red Wings, who have been banged up all season, sit in eighth place, and their 22-year playoff streak is on the line.

"We've got to get ready for the playoffs," coach Mike Babcock said after winning gold with Canada on Sunday. "I don't quite know how we're going to do it, but we're going to do it."

### Buffalo Sabres

Ted Nolan's coaching reputation got a bump when he led Latvia to the quarterfinals and stayed tied with Canada until late in that game.

But the Sabres are far out of a playoff spot, and new general manager Tim Murray has to decide what to do with unrestricted free agents Ryan Miller, Steve Ott and Moulson.

### Washington Capitals

Nicklas Backstrom's positive doping test — he takes the allergy medicine Zyrtec-D and had an elevated level of pseudoephedrine in his system — won't affect his ability to play in the NHL because the substance isn't on the league's banned list. But how will his psyche be after he was denied an opportunity to play in the gold medal game?

Also, captain Alex Ovechkin also didn't have a good Olympic experience, and now his father is dealing with heart issues.

### Pittsburgh Penguins

Just as people began wondering about the effectiveness of Penguins linemates Sidney Crosby and Chris Kunitz because of their lack of goals in Sochi, both scored in the gold medal game.

The question is whether general manager Ray Shero will trade for another winger to replace injured linemate Pascal Dupuis.

### Chicago Blackhawks

The defending champions had 10 players at the Olympics, including six in the gold medal game.

But before you worry about fatigue, remember that the Blackhawks had a heavy representation at the Vancouver Olympics in 2010 and won the Stanley Cup that spring. Those players weren't dealing with a 10-hour time difference, though.

## **Sabres ready for hectic schedule following Olympic break, know changes are coming**

By Bill Hoppe

Olean Times Herald

February 25, 2014

BUFFALO – Trade rumors have dogged Matt Moulson since the Sabres acquired the winger almost four months ago. But with rosters frozen for 16 days during the NHL's Olympic break, Moulson briefly got away from the noise, rehabbed his rib injury and relaxed a bit.

“It was good to just go home and train and get healthy again and spend some family time,” Moulson said Monday inside the First Niagara Center.

Moulson and the Sabres better be recharged. They're diving headfirst back into the season.

Teams are free to make moves again. Tonight's tilt against the Carolina Hurricanes, a contest rescheduled after a Jan. 7 snow postponement, starts a stretch of three home games in four nights.

“It's going to be a little difficult getting back into it after that much time off as a whole team,” Sabres defenseman Christian Ehrhoff said.

Then the trade deadline hits at 3 p.m. March 5.

“It's a business,” interim Sabres coach Ted Nolan said. “We have to look forward to rebuilding this organization.”

By next week, the rebuilding Sabres, the league's worst team, could be radically overhauled.

“Jobs are on the line when you're in a place like this,” said Moulson, who will return tonight after missing four games.

Ehrhoff added: “There's a lot of rumors surrounding this team. When you're in last place, there has to be changes made.”

Most of those rumors involve Moulson, franchise goalie Ryan Miller and popular captain Steve Ott, three of the Sabres' nine upcoming unrestricted free agents.

By now, Moulson's used to hearing his name.

“People have been saying it's going to happen for a long time,” he said. “You just control what you can control. I obviously don't have a clue if I'm going to be traded, where I'm going to go.”

The 30-year-old said he hasn't had any contract talks with new Sabres general manager Tim Murray but has spoken to president of hockey operations Pat LaFontaine a couple of times.

Moulson, a three-time 30-goal scorer, is confident the new regime will make the Sabres better.

"They have the right guys in place that are going to make this team good and the owners that are willing to do anything to have a successful team," he said. "I've enjoyed my time here. My family's enjoyed our time here. We'll see what happens."

What will happen tonight in net isn't clear.

Miller didn't practice Monday but has returned after representing Team USA at the Sochi Games in Russia. He played once. Backup goalie Jhonas Enroth and defenseman Henrik Tallinder, who won silver medals with Sweden, were on Miller's flight from Russia.

Nolan said Saturday Miller would start tonight.

"We're banking on it," he said Monday.

Can Miller really play after returning from a nine-hour time difference without a full practice? Imagine if he injures himself and loses trade value.

"It'll be a different challenge, but hopefully he has some sleep and he's somewhat awake at that point," Nolan said.

Sabres forward Matt Ellis added: "He's one of the most prepared athletes that I've come across in my career. ... If Ryan's in the cage and he gets the call, he's a professional. He'll be ready."

Nolan acknowledged later on it has crossed the team's mind to recall a goalie from Rochester.

"It still could be crossed," he said.

Nolan said the team doesn't plan to summon any skaters right now. The Sabres assigned defenseman Chad Ruhwedel and forward Phil Varone to the AHL before the break.

Twenty-five games are left in the worst season in franchise history. The Sabres have missed the playoffs the last two campaigns and four of the last six. In all those years, however, they stayed in the hunt until late.

They were essentially eliminated in October this season.

What are Nolan's goals for these final six weeks? He wants to set a strong foundation for the future.

"You don't win championships like the Chicago Blackhawks do overnight," he said. "It takes a little time. It takes some growth and it takes a certain amount of working commitment by your athletes. What we're going to try to do is set that stage now and continue building it over the summertime and get some more guys in here that are willing to do that."

Defenseman Tyler Myers said the Sabres "can't take it year to year."

"We have to start moving in the direction to where we're getting better each day," he said. "I don't think anybody in the room here is going to shut it down or not take these last 25 games seriously. It's a matter of coming in and ... trying to get out of a position we don't want to be in."

Ellis added: "It's time for us to really solidify kind of an identity as a team."

## **Ted Nolan orders Sabres tough guy John Scott off practice ice**

By Bill Hoppe

Olean Times Herald

February 24, 2014

BUFFALO – About halfway through this morning’s practice, Sabres tough guy John Scott broke his stick on the boards, left the First Niagara Center ice and stomped down the hallway to the dressing room.

What happened?

Interim Sabres coach Ted Nolan ordered Scott off the ice.

“He just fumbled the puck a few times in practice and I didn’t like it,” Nolan said. “In order for us to get better here we have to practice better. He just had one of those moments, and I didn’t like it and so we sent him off.”

Scott, a winger who’s been practicing as a defenseman, likely wasn’t going to play Tuesday against Carolina. He might’ve played his last game with the Sabres, though.

In other news, Sabres goalie Ryan Miller didn’t practice today but Nolan believes he’s back in Buffalo after representing Team USA at the Sochi Games.

Will Miller still play Tuesday?

“We’re banking on it,” Nolan said.

He added: “It’ll be a different challenge, but hopefully he has some sleep and he’s somewhat awake at that point.”

Nolan said backup goalie Jhonas Enroth and defenseman Henrik Tallinder, who won silver medals with Sweden, were on Miller’s flight.

Nolan acknowledged it has crossed the team’s mind to recall a goalie from Rochester.

“It still could be crossed,” he said.

Nolan said the team doesn’t plan to recall any skaters right now.

Meanwhile, Nolan, fresh off an impressive Olympic effort coaching Latvia, said today he hasn’t been offered an extension.

“Would I like to stay? Certainly,” he said. “Would I like to continue? No question. But the No. 1 thing is Pat (LaFontaine) asked me to come in and do this. I’m going to do it to the best of my abilities. Hopefully, it’s good enough to stick around.”

General manager Tim Murray might address the media Tuesday.

## **Sabres Moulson likes Buffalo and wouldn't mind staying**

By Paul Hamilton

WGR 550

February 24, 2014

Buffalo, NY (WGR 550) -- Matt Moulson knows how this business goes, but he also wouldn't mind sticking around and being a Buffalo Sabre in the future.

Moulson has already been traded once this season when he came from the Islanders in the Thomas Vanek trade. He said there have been no talks with his agent about a contract extension, but he has spoken to Pat LaFontaine a few times telling him that he and his family like it here. Moulson said, "I've definitely enjoyed my time here. I think this team is going to be good, I think we have the right guys in place that are going to make this team good and the owners that are willing to do anything to have a successful team, so I've enjoyed my time here, my family's enjoyed their time here and we'll see what happens."

As soon as Moulson arrived, many assumed he would be moved again since he's an unrestricted free agent. The winger said, "You guys in the media as a whole have been telling me that I've been getting traded since the first day I got here so it's something that comes with the business. As a player, you realize decisions have to be made, so sometimes it's a little stressful, but I think when you tell yourself to just control what you can control, it calms me down a little bit."

Another reason Moulson would like to stay a Sabre if possible is the changes that have been made bringing in Pat LaFontaine, Craig Patrick, Tim Murray and Ted Nolan. Moulson said, "I think they've put a lot of great people in spots where they're going to help this team succeed and with passionate owners like the Pegula's, this team's obviously going to have success in the near future." Moulson added, "I think they'll do a great job and I think it's definitely a place that myself and my family would feel welcomed."

Christian Ehrhoff didn't sound as convincing. He's more in wait and see mode and isn't any more optimistic. The defenseman said, "It's tough to say right now, I definitely feel comfortable with the staff they've installed here, but I haven't figured out the direction yet and I think it's really going to show coming into the trade deadline and then the draft and obviously free agency so that's going to give us a better idea where we're heading. I hope we make some improvements because obviously that's not a fun place to be where we are right now."

Ehrhoff knows what the NHL trade deadline is all about. He feels there will be moves, "I expect changes and obviously there has to be some changes made. We're in last place in the NHL and that's not where we want to be, so when you're in a situation like that you know there's going to be changes and we'll all see how that plays out in the next 10 days."

Ehrhoff confirmed to me that he has the same no movement clause that Ryan Miller has, he can give the Sabres a list of eight teams he will not accept a trade

to. With \$22-million of the \$40-million in his contract already being paid by the Sabres in the first three years of his 10 year deal, his contract makes him an easy trade. The defenseman said, "I don't get nervous, I know how the business works and deals and trades are part of the business and if the team feels that's where they need to go, then I'll accept it, so you just have to be professional about it."

Ted Nolan thought Ryan Miller would for sure play goal Tuesday against Carolina, but Nolan said Miller didn't get back to Buffalo until around noon, so there's a chance that could change.

## **Sabres Miller not back in time for practice. Nolan throws Scott out of the workout**

By Paul Hamilton

WGR 550

February 24, 2014

Buffalo, NY (WGR 550) -- The Sabres practiced again today without Olympians Ryan Miller, Jhonas Enroth and Henrik Tallinder. Ted Nolan said Miller got back to Buffalo at around noon.

They also went another defenseman short during Monday's workout when John Scott was thrown out of practice by Ted Nolan. Nolan said, "He just fumbled the puck a few times in practice and I didn't like it. Like I've said, in order for us to get better here we have to practice better and he just had one of those moments and I didn't like it so I sent him off."

"That's the plan right now", is what Nolan said when asked if Miller will play Tuesday against the Hurricanes. As far as if it's been discussed bringing in a Rochester goalie Nolan said, "It crossed our minds a little bit and it still could be crossed."

Nolan also said there are no plans to bring back Mark Pysyk or Brayden McNabb from the Amerks. That could change if the Sabres do make some trades.

## **SABRES STILL PLAN TO START MILLER ON TUESDAY**

By Chris Ryndak

Sabres.com

February 24, 2014

The Buffalo Sabres practiced again on Monday and, once again, did so without three of their Olympic athletes.

Ryan Miller, Jhonas Enroth and Henrik Tallinder took the same flight home from Sochi according to interim coach Ted Nolan and were expected to arrive in Buffalo at around noon.

Nolan is “banking on” Miller starting between the pipes Tuesday night against the Carolina Hurricanes at First Niagara Center. One of the biggest issues the players face upon returning from Russia is the time zone changes.

“Maybe it’ll be like playing at 4 a.m. for him,” Nolan said of Miller. “It’ll be a different challenge, but hopefully he has at least some sleep and he’s somewhat awake at that point.”

However, it’s possible that the plan could change.

Depending on how both goaltenders feel leading up to the morning skate on Tuesday, it’s possible that the Sabres could recall a goaltender from their American Hockey League affiliate in Rochester.

Nolan also said that as of now, they don’t plan on bringing up any skaters from the Americans.

“What we’ve got today is what we’ve got for tomorrow,” he said.

With 25 games remaining, Nolan has set some goals for the team moving forward so that they can finish the season on a positive note.

“I think moving forward, setting a strong foundation of where we’re going to go to down the road,” he said. “You don’t win championships like the Chicago Blackhawks do overnight. It takes a little time, it takes some growth and it takes a certain amount of work and commitment by your athletes.”

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Matt Moulson, who is set to become an unrestricted free agent on July 1, knows that it’s possible he could be moved by the time the NHL Trade Deadline rolls around on March 5 at 3 p.m.

“I think you guys in the media as a whole have been telling me I’ve been getting traded since the first day I got here,” he joked after practice.

Moulson was acquired from the Islanders with two draft picks for Thomas Vanek on Oct. 27.

He said that he's only going to concentrate on the aspects of the business he can control, which is primarily his performance on the ice.

A native of Mississauga, Ont., he said his experience as a Sabre so far has been a very positive one.

"I've definitely enjoyed my time here," he said. "Like I said before, I think this team is going to be good. I think they have the right guys in place that are going to make this team good and the owners are willing to do anything to have a successful team. I've enjoyed my time here. My family's enjoyed our time here. We'll see what happens."

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John Scott left practice early. The 6-foot-8 forward has been practicing as a defenseman while Tallinder is overseas.

"He just fumbled the puck a few times in practice and I didn't like it," Nolan said. "In order for us to get better here, we have to practice better. He just had one of those moments and I didn't like it so we sent him off."

After being dismissed, Scott snapped his stick and stormed off to the dressing room, slamming the bench door behind him.

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26 Matt Moulson – 63 Tyler Ennis – 21 Drew Stafford  
9 Steve Ott – 19 Cody Hodgson – 27 Matt D'Agostini  
82 Marcus Foligno / 28 Zemgus Girgensons – 23 Ville Leino – 65 Brian Flynn  
37 Matt Ellis – 24 Zenon Konopka – 8 Cody McCormick

10 Christian Ehrhoff – 52 Alexander Sulzer  
6 Mike Weber – 57 Tyler Myers  
32 John Scott – 4 Jamie McBain

## **SABRES PROSPECTS REPORT**

By Kris Baker

Sabres.com

February 24, 2014

A pair of Buffalo Sabres defensive prospects have been playing a key role in helping the OHL's London Knights put together a seven-game winning streak entering the final week of February.

On Saturday, Nikita Zadorov (2013, first round) scored on the power play with 5:35 left in regulation to thrust London to a 4-3 win over Plymouth. Zadorov's second game winner of the year gives him nine goals in his last 14 games. By virtue of the productive spike, Zadorov has amassed 26 points (11+15) in 28 appearances, eclipsing his total of 25 posted a season ago in 63 games.

London defenseman Brady Austin (2012, seventh round) scored his career-high ninth goal of the year Saturday in the Knights' win over the Whalers. The big defender, who has nine points in his last nine games for a total of 30 on the year, has amassed a sparkling plus-42 rating this season, good for fourth overall in the OHL.

The Knights are getting hot at the right time, with the winning streak seeing them leapfrog Erie for the second position in the Midwest Division standings with nine games left to play. London is poised for a deep playoff run, but regardless of the post-season outcome, Zadorov and Austin are set to gain valuable experience with London hosting the 2014 MasterCard Memorial Cup in May.

### **OHL**

Eric Locke (2013, seventh round) rounded off a busy weekend Sunday by scoring two goals, including one shorthanded and the other for his first game winner of the year, to push Saginaw to a 6-3 victory over Guelph. The night before, Locke led the way with a goal and two assists as the Spirit downed Owen Sound 5-2. The 20-year old captain has 51 points in 40 games, and his seven shorthanded points are tied for tops in the league.

Justin Kea (2012, third round) returned from a hand injury to play in three games, earning points in each en route to collecting a goal and three helpers. On Saturday, Kea scored off a nice deflection to get his 17th goal for the Spirit. The power forward enters the final week of February with 38 points and 84 penalty minutes through 50 games.

Nicholas Baptiste (2013, third round) kept his second half momentum going last Monday, scoring twice and adding an assist to lead Sudbury to a 4-1 win over Mississauga. After being shut out in a Saturday loss to Barrie, Baptiste returned with a goal and an assist Sunday as the Wolves lost for the second-straight night to the Colts. The speedy winger has posted 25 multiple-point efforts to remain among the league's offensive leaders with 38 goals (t-6th in league) and 75 points (16th) in 55 games.

Justin Bailey (2013, second round) sat out for a fifth-straight game Sunday with an upper-body injury. The Rangers are expected to offer a status update for their leading scorer (25 goals and 43 points in 54 games) on Monday.

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#### QMJHL

Mikhail Grigorenko (2012, first round) connected for his second-straight four-point game last Tuesday. He notched a pair of goals, including the game winner with just over three minutes into the third period, and two assists to help Quebec to a 7-5 win over the league's top club, Blainville-Boisbriand. The 19-year old pivot has points in 12 of 15 games since his return to the Remparts, registering 11 goals and 11 assists.

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#### WHL

Logan Nelson (2012, fifth round) connected for a pair of goals Saturday as Victoria doubled Saskatoon 6-3. The two-goal night was Nelson's third of the year, giving the Minnesota-native 49 points (22+27) through 51 games.

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#### NCAA

Sean Malone (2013, sixth round) saw his five-game point streak snapped Saturday as Harvard was blanked 2-0 by Brown. Malone, who recorded an assist in Friday's loss to Yale, has 18 points (5+13) through 27 contests. The Crimson complete the regular season schedule next weekend with a New York road trip to face Colgate and Cornell.

J.T. Compher (2013, second round) notched an assist as No. 10 Michigan was stunned in overtime by Penn State 5-4 on Friday. Compher's 26 points (11+15) leads all Michigan skaters, while his 16 points in 14 conference contests are good for second among all Big Ten scorers

Brad Navin (2011, seventh round) scored his fourth goal of the year Friday as No. 8 Wisconsin earned a 5-2 victory over Michigan State. Navin went without a point Saturday as the Badgers blanked the Spartans, leaving the third-year forward with career-highs of four goals and nine points with four conference games left to play.

Wisconsin defenseman Jake McCabe (2012, second round) produced two assists Friday in the Badgers' weekend opening victory over Michigan State. The two-way stalwart was held pointless the following night but still made a mark, tying his season-high with five shots on goal as Wisconsin pitched a 2-0 shutout. The Eau Claire, Wis.-native has seven goals and 22 points in 30 games this season.

Anthony Florentino (2013, fifth round) finished with a plus-one rating as No. 12 Providence earned the weekend sweep with a 2-1 victory over Massachusetts. Florentino has three goals, eight points and a plus-12 rating this season through 23 outings. The Friars close out their regular season schedule next weekend with a pair of games at Maine.

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#### USHL

Connor Hurley (2013, second round) picked up two assists as Green Bay was defeated by Youngstown 7-3 on Friday. Hurley added another helper Saturday as Green Bay stifled Youngstown 3-0, giving him seven goals and 22 points (including nine power play assists) in 21 games since joining the Gamblers. He previously played 21 games in Muskegon, collecting three goals and 14 points.

Cal Petersen (2013, fifth round) allowed four goals on 21 shots before exiting the game late in the second period as Waterloo got whacked by Omaha 5-0. Named a Western Conference First Team All-Star on Thursday, Petersen is 23-4-3 on the year with a 2.40 GAA and .918 save%.

Judd Peterson (2012, seventh round) missed his fourth game with a lower body injury as Cedar Rapids suffered a 5-2 loss at Dubuque. The St. Cloud State commit remains the RoughRiders' leading goal scorer with 15, while his 29 points place second in team scoring.

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For more on all the youngsters in the Sabres pipeline, check out Kris Baker's web site - [sabresprospects.com](http://sabresprospects.com). You can also follow him on Twitter @sabresprospects for in-game updates throughout the week on any Buffalo prospects that are in action.