



Buffalo Sabres

Daily Press Clips

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Bruins-Sabres Preview

Associated Press

February 26, 2014

The Boston Bruins return from the Olympic break looking to pick up where they left off, but they'll have to do it without Tuukka Rask.

With Rask resting in Boston, the Atlantic Division-leading Bruins go for an eighth win in 10 tries Wednesday night against the last-place Buffalo Sabres.

Boston (37-16-4) had five players compete at the Olympics in Sochi, and Patrice Bergeron (Canada) is returning with a gold medal while Loui Eriksson (Sweden) earned silver and Rask (Finland) got bronze.

Coach Claude Julien also won gold as an assistant with Canada.

"I'm ready to go here, and I'm looking forward to getting back with my team and getting back into games," Julien told the team's official website. "Right now I feel no effects, and if anything, the excitement over there really energized me coming back, and I'm looking forward to trying to accomplish the same thing here with this Bruins team."

The Bruins had put together a 7-1-1 run, and entered the layoff by romping Ottawa 7-2 on Feb. 8.

Bergeron and Eriksson are expected to be available, but Rask is being rested before likely returning against Washington at home Saturday.

"Bergy and Loui are meeting us at the plane. They're going to come and play," Julien said. "With Tuukka, I'll use (Chad) Johnson tomorrow and (Niklas) Svedberg will back him up. So we've left Tuukka behind."

Johnson has won five straight starts behind a 1.80 goals-against average, making 26 saves against the Senators earlier this month. However, he's given up six goals on 39 shots while splitting two games at Buffalo this season.

The Bruins haven't played the Sabres (16-34-8) since a 4-1 home victory on Dec. 21, behind David Krejci's goal and assist. The center has nine points over his past eight meetings with the Sabres.

He had three in five games for the Czech Republic in Sochi.

Milan Lucic is also looking to continue his scoring surge, recording four goals and setting up five others in eight games before the break. The left wing has three goals and one assist in this season's three meetings with the Sabres, finding the net Dec. 21.

Buffalo owns the fewest points in the NHL, but it's trying to win back-to-back games for the first time since beating the Bruins on Dec. 19.

Christian Ehrhoff put them in position to match that feat, scoring his second goal with 44 seconds left in regulation to cinch Tuesday's 3-2 win over Carolina.

It's unclear if Ryan Miller, who had 36 saves, will be back in net or even on the roster.

General manager Tim Murray acknowledged he's shopping around the 2010 Vezina Trophy winner in the hopes of dealing him before next Wednesday's trade deadline.

"I'm trying to take the approach to take things as they come right now and be positive and play hockey," Miller said. "It's a lot of fun to play and win. I'm going to try to enjoy these kind of moments where you can help make a difference."

Miller has done plenty of that at home against the Bruins, going 19-5-4 with a 2.14 GAA in 28 games, including the playoffs.

Backup Jhonas Enroth is 0-4-2 with a 3.85 GAA in seven games against Boston, making 35 saves Dec. 21. That's part of his 14-game losing streak (0-10-4) in 16 appearances since beating Florida on Oct. 25 - his only win of the season.

Ehrhoff scores 2 as Sabres beat Hurricanes 3-2

By John Wawrow

Associated Press

February 25, 2014

BUFFALO, N.Y. (AP) -- Ryan Miller was more concerned about overcoming jetlag than thinking about providing a memorable send-off in what could potentially have been one of the goalie's final games for the Buffalo Sabres.

A little over a day after returning to Buffalo from the Sochi Games, and with his future uncertain, Miller stopped 36 shots and even contributed to the offense with two assists in a 3-2 win over the Carolina Hurricanes on Tuesday night in the NHL's first game after its Olympic break.

"I wasn't really getting to far ahead or thinking about that kind of stuff," Miller said when asked about his future.

Before the game, general manager Tim Murray acknowledged he's shopping the goalie with the intention of dealing him before the league's trade deadline on March 5. Miller is on the block because he's in the final year of his contract, and Murray is unsure whether the 33-year-old is prepared to re-sign with a team that's rebuilding through youth.

"I'm trying to take the approach to take things as they come right now and be positive and play hockey," Miller added. "It's a lot of fun to play and win. I'm going to try to enjoy these kind of moments where you can help make a difference."

Despite feeling "a little bit goofy" from jetlag, Miller was certainly the difference by stopping the first 20 shots he faced in a game in which Buffalo was outshot 38-18.

"It just shows what kind of goaltender we have in Ryan Miller," interim coach Ted Nolan said. "I don't think we had too much reason to say we were the better team tonight outside of Ryan Miller stealing that game for us."

Christian Ehrhoff scored twice, including the go-ahead goal with 44 seconds left. Tyler Ennis also scored for Buffalo, which snapped a four-game skid, and won for only the third time in its past 14 games (3-8-3).

Both of Miller's assists came on Ehrhoff's goals. That made him the NHL's first goalie to have that many since Vancouver's Cory Schneider had two in a 5-4 overtime loss to Tampa Bay on Dec. 11, 2010, according to STATS.

Ehrhoff's decisive goal came after he circled the Hurricanes' net, and then stopped and spun in the right circle, where he attempted to feed the puck through

the crease to teammate Marcus Foligno. The puck instead glanced off the stick of Hurricanes defenseman Justin Faulk and floated in over goaltender Cam Ward.

Eric Staal and Alexander Semin scored for the Hurricanes, who lost to Buffalo in regulation for the first time in seven meetings, dating to a 1-0 loss at Carolina on Nov. 18, 2011.

The teams got an early start coming out of the NHL's two-week break. The game was originally scheduled to be played Jan. 9, but postponed after a blizzard hit Buffalo.

Hurricanes coach Kirk Muller found little fault in his team's performance.

"Miller was the first star, and there's your answer right there," Muller said. "That was a complete, solid game on our part for 60 minutes. We did everything we had to do."

Everything, of course, except score more than Buffalo.

Miller put on a show.

Early into the second period, he got a piece of Faulk's snap shot from the left circle, and then recovered in time to turn aside Manny Malhotra's attempt to convert the rebound in front.

Miller had Hurricanes forward Jeff Skinner looking up to the rafters and shaking his head midway through the second period. That reaction came after Skinner got off a hard shot from the right circle on a partial break, only to have Miller snag it with his glove.

"We had a lot of chances," said Staal, who beat Miller through the legs on a 2-on-1 break. "When it's a close game, you have to be able to bury them. And tonight, Miller made a lot of good saves."

Following the game, Miller spent time surrounded by fans at the penalty box, where he took part in a television interview. He then got a cheer from the few remaining fans inside the arena as he headed to the locker room about 10 minutes after the game ended.

Whatever might happen over the next week, Miller has enjoyed his 12 years in Buffalo.

"I love this area. The fans have always been great," he said. "If it happens that I'm traded, I'm preparing to play somewhere else. It all just comes to it's going to be hockey."

NOTES: Sabres LW Matt Moulson (upper body) returned to the Sabres' lineup after missing four games before the break. Also back was Buffalo C Cody McCormick, who missed 24 games with an upper-body injury. ... Buffalo also snapped an eight game home losing streak, during which it had gone 0-5-3. ... As a result of the rescheduled game, the Hurricanes opened a five-game road trip, their longest of the season.

Sabres interested in keeping Nolan

By John Wawrow

Associated Press

February 25, 2014

BUFFALO, N.Y. (AP) -- The Buffalo Sabres have had discussions to lift the interim tag from coach Ted Nolan's title. Goalie Ryan Miller's future in Buffalo beyond next week appears less certain.

That's the update general manager Tim Murray provided Tuesday evening during a news conference in the press box before the Sabres' 3-2 win against the Carolina Hurricanes.

Murray revealed he's had discussions with Nolan about keeping him on as the team's full-time coach beyond this season.

"We're along that path," Murray said. "We have discussed the possibility of moving forward. That's all I'll say."

Following the game, Nolan declined to shed further light on the status of talks when informed of Murray's' comments.

"We'll keep it as that," Nolan said. "I won't say anything more."

Nolan is back for a second stint in Buffalo after being hired as the team's interim coach in November, when coach Ron Rolston and general manager Darcy Regier were fired. The changes were made after the Sabres got off to a franchise-worst 4-15-1 start.

The Sabres remain in last place in the NHL standings, but have shown marked improvement under Nolan, who has gone 12-19-7.

Nolan was hired by Pat LaFontaine, who took over the same day as the team's president of hockey operations. In hiring Nolan, LaFontaine said he would let the team's next GM determine whether to retain him beyond this season.

Murray was hired last month, and indicated he was open to working with Nolan.

Nolan also enjoyed a successful stint at the Sochi Games, where he coached Latvia to an eighth-place finish - the country's best in five Olympic appearances.

As for Miller, Murray said he's shopping the star goalie with the intention of trading him before the NHL's trade deadline on March 5.

"Our goal right now, I think, on both sides is to pursue a proper trade," Murray said. "The route we're looking at is to get value from him and put him in a position to succeed."

Murray said more than two but fewer than 10 teams have contacted the Sabres regarding Miller, but added it's too early to determine whether a deal can be reached.

The 33-year-old Miller is in the final year of his contract and eligible to become an unrestricted free agent this summer.

Murray said the Sabres would be interested in re-signing Miller if a deal cannot be completed.

Murray said Miller is open to being traded to a contender rather than remaining in Buffalo with a team that's rebuilding through youth.

"I don't think signing here is his first choice at his age and where we're at as a 30th-place team," Murray said. "But I wouldn't say he's got no interest."

Miller acknowledged his days in Buffalo might be numbered after he stopped 36 shots and added two assists in the win.

"I don't want to close anything off right now, but I know they're kind of looking around for an opportunity," Miller said. "And I think that's probably the best for everybody."

With the victory, Miller upped his franchise record totals to 284 wins and 540 games played. He was also the NHL's 2010 Vezina trophy-winner. That was the same year Miller earned MVP honors at the Vancouver Games, where he played a key role in leading the United States to a silver medal.

Murray is also open to shopping several other veterans who are also in the final years of their contracts. It's a group that includes captain Steve Ott, veteran winger Matt Moulson and defenseman Henrik Tallinder.

Miller's choice to say goodbye

By John Vogl

Buffalo News

February 25, 2014

The lack of NHL trade activity has surprised Tim Murray. Judging by the candid comments from the Sabres' general manager Tuesday night, things won't be quiet much longer.

That's especially true in Buffalo, where the kindling is in place and a fire sale is ready to ignite. Ryan Miller and Steve Ott should keep their cellphones close.

The trade deadline is a week from today, and Murray is ready to deal. In fact, it's his option of choice in regards to Miller.

"Our goal right now, I think on both sides, is to pursue a proper trade," Murray said before the Sabres' 3-2 victory over Carolina in First Niagara Center on a late goal by Christian Ehrhoff.

Miller's exit has been forecast for the better part of a year, but it has never seemed so inevitable.

"I know they're kind of looking around for opportunity," Miller said. "I think that's probably best for everybody."

Re-signing with the Sabres is not Miller's first option, and Murray doesn't plan to discuss contract extensions with any of his pending free agents.

"The route we're looking at is to get value for him, to put him in a position to succeed," said Murray, who called the goaltender a "good soldier" during his 12 seasons in Buffalo. "Players that treat you right and have played well and hard for you over the years, you try to do what's best for them, too, as long as it fits into what you're doing."

"By trading Ryan to a contender, a good team that is maybe lacking only his position, I think that we've certainly not done a disservice to him and we've helped the organization in our own right."

Murray said he's had conversations with more than two teams and less than 10 about Miller, who made 36 saves and was named First Star in potentially his final appearance with the Sabres. There were 28 scouts from 22 teams on the seating chart for Tuesday's game, including representatives from St. Louis, Washington and Minnesota, three oft-mentioned suitors of Miller.

"There are enough really good teams, teams that consider themselves contenders, that are kicking around the idea of trading for a good goalie," Murray said.

"There's a possibility that with more talks something concrete could happen."

While Miller is the Sabres' most notable trade target, he's hardly the only one. Ott, Matt Moulson and Henrik Tallinder are among those who also have expiring contracts. Murray said he's discussed 10 to 12 players with seven or eight teams.

"There's been a lot of teams that expressed interest in other players, Steve Ott obviously being one that has generated a large interest," said Murray, who seemed pained by the thought of getting rid of the hard-working captain. "Steve Ott is the type of player that I've looked for for 21 years in drafting. ... That's not the type of player I want to trade away. That's the type of player that I want to bring in.

"Unfortunately, when I got here, he's at his age and he's an unrestricted free agent. ... We're not a playoff team, so that changes the dynamic, obviously."

The Sabres are 30th in the 30-team NHL, and nearly everyone expects the roster to be blown up, including the players.

"No one's safe on this team," Ott said.

Murray has been in Buffalo for only a month and half, which makes him an objective observer of the Sabres' roster. He doesn't have the emotional attachment that comes from drafting or acquiring a player, so moves will be about what's best for the organization above all else.

"We think we've got lots of value here," Murray said. "Now if we can get value for them is the other question."

With a long list of players potentially going out, who can fans expect to come in?

"A perfect world, if teams would give me two real good young players that are two years or so into their development, that would be outstanding," Murray said, "but I don't think teams are going to bend over backwards to make life easier for us.

"If it's draft picks it's draft picks, and then we'll turn them into assets and players. But ideally young players that are a little bit along into their development would be great."

Ted Nolan has an increasingly good chance to be the coach who develops those players. Nolan, who has held an interim tag since stepping behind the bench in November, has been part of talks regarding a contract extension. "We are discussing it, we have discussed it, so we're along that path," Murray said. "We have discussed the possibility of moving forward. That's all I'll say."

Fans may have had last look at Miller at his goaltending best

By Mike Harrington

Buffalo News

February 25, 2014

I really hope everyone got a good look at Ryan Miller in his classic Blue and Gold Tuesday night. We already know Miller won't play tonight against Boston, as Jhonas Enroth gets his return-from-Sochi start.

But in what was a remarkable 8-minute meeting with reporters in the press box shortly before the opening faceoff, general manager Tim Murray just about ensured Miller is on his way out of town. And the GM let a big cat out of the bag: It's Miller's choice.

Enroth will play tonight and thus should play Friday against San Jose. Ditto for Monday in Dallas in the final game before the trade deadline. No way should Miller be in the action anymore.

"I'm going to be 34 this year and let's be realistic," Miller admitted after making 36 saves to steal a 3-2 win over Carolina. "There's only a handful of guys who played effectively longer into their 30s.

"I'd like to be one of those guys, but there's no guarantees. I'm not going to close anything off because maybe as we go through, some things change here. The things they're going to have to do are probably going to come during the trade deadline and maybe I'm one of them."

Miller has done just about all he can for this franchise. Murray used the phrase "good soldier" when referring to him and said there are contenders interested. It's widely believed the St. Louis Blues, currently second overall in the NHL, are at the top of that list. The Sabres are known to covet 23-year-old Jake Allen, a top prospect goalie with the Chicago Wolves of the AHL, in a potential Miller deal with the Blues.

Memo to Murray: You want Allen or anyone else, get Miller off the ice. Starting today. You can't blow this trade by getting him banged up now.

Miller, ever the competitor, knows a seat on the bench could be in the offing.

Naturally, he wants no part of it.

"I want to continue to play and get a rhythm and keep enjoying the fact I'm playing in the NHL," Miller said. "It's not something where you want to shut it down and just sit and watch. Every game is kind of a blessing. You've got an opportunity to play at the highest level. It wouldn't be my choice."

Trading Miller clearly isn't Ted Nolan's choice either. Nolan was as down in the mouth as we've seen him during his postgame briefing, even though his team had won. He clearly knows what's coming.

As for Murray, there wasn't a raised eyebrow or other body language to decipher. Murray just put it all out there:

- No need to pay attention to the any of those Internet "insiders" when Miller's own GM says, "I don't think signing here is his first choice at his age and where we're at." That's pretty much your answer.
- Murray said he's negotiating an extension with Nolan. Good move. Get it done today, tomorrow or the next day. Sooner the better.
- Murray is just like Nolan in that he apparently loves captain Steve Ott. But there's too many teams, especially playoff contenders, who like the sandpaper finish Ott can add to their lineup to keep him.

Still, when Murray drops a gem like "Steve Ott is the type of player that I've looked for for 21 years," it's the first negotiating salvo.

You better believe the Sabres are trading Ott – and you better believe in that talking period allowed before July 1, they're going to be all over bringing their captain back too.

With the "For Sale" sign clearly up for pretty much anybody except Zemgus Girgensons, the press box was one busy place.

As far as telling you which teams had scouts in the house, it's easier to tell you which ones didn't.

That list would include Florida, the New York Rangers and Islanders, Anaheim, Phoenix and Calgary. I have never seen such a scout troop upstairs.

St. Louis has long been the top target for Miller, but you wonder about Washington and Minnesota, too.

And maybe even a trip home to Detroit, where Jimmy Howard's health remains a question.

It's pretty obvious why the goalie market is tight. If you're a strong team expecting a deep playoff run, chances are pretty good you already have a solid No. 1 in net. So someone is going to have to take a real chance by moving in Miller and moving out their current guy.

What's Miller going to do over the next week?

“Prepare to play hockey,” he said. “If it’s going to be here, it’s been my home for 12 years. I love this area. The fans have always been great. I feel at home in this community, lot of friends. Enjoy that. If it happens I’m traded, I’m preparing to play somewhere else. It all just comes down to it’s going to be hockey. I’m looking forward to any of those challenges.”

Any scout watching Tuesday had to be impressed with what they saw from Miller, especially just off the plane from Russia. It should be their last look.

Sabres notebook / Ehrhoff finds some offense in 3-2 victory

By Amy Moritz

Buffalo News

February 26, 2014

Christian Ehrhoff wasn't looking to add offense to his game, but when your team is struggling to score, you don't pass up opportunities, and he scored on two of them.

Taking advantage of some holes in Carolina's forechecking, Ehrhoff skated the puck into the Hurricanes zone, held it and found the right angle to throw the puck on the net to give the Buffalo Sabres a 3-2 win Tuesday night.

There were 18,719 at First Niagara Center to watch the first NHL game back from the Olympic break, thanks to a necessary rescheduling from the January blizzard.

And the fans were treated to a steal by Ryan Miller, who kept the Sabres in game as the Hurricanes dominated play and shots on goal, 38-18.

"It had a lot to do with Millsie again," Ehrhoff said. "He made some huge saves for us. He was very sharp. He was our best player again tonight and it wasn't our best effort. It was a little sloppy at times, a little rust coming off the break probably. We have to make sure tomorrow we are cleaner on our plays."

Ehrhoff scored his fifth and sixth goals of the season.

The defenseman gave the Sabres a 1-0 lead at 5:54 of the second period when his shot from the blue line trickled past Carolina goalie Cam Ward for a power play tally.

With the score tied, 2-2, he skated into the Hurricane's zone to score with 44 seconds left in regulation giving the Sabres the win.

"I don't want to force it," said Ehrhoff, who now has seven points in his last seven games. "You've got to find the right time of when to do it. Today a couple of times I got the opportunity and especially on the last play, the way they forecheck, I saw a hole and just skated into it."

Eric Staal evened the game for the Hurricanes at 16:52 of the second.

In the third, Tyler Ennis pushed a puck that was sitting on the goal line into the back of the net to again give the Sabres a one-goal lead. And again, the Sabres gave it up when Alexander Semin scored with four minutes left in the period. "We were a little rusty ... but I think they got a little frustrated when Millsie kept throwing the pucks aside and saving them," Ennis said. "They got a little loose, and we capitalized. We got better as the game got on but still a little rusty."

...

Just in case there was any concern, all is well in the relationship between John Scott and interim head coach Ted Nolan. On Monday, Nolan tossed Scott out of practice. Tuesday morning, Scott was at the morning skate and Tuesday night he was in the lineup, playing defense with Jamie McBain as Henrik Tallinder got a rest from returning from the Olympics.

“I’m surprised that that happened. It was kind of a weird event,” Scott said. “I’ve never seen that happen before in my career. It was definitely something new, but it’s OK. We’re fine now. I know exactly where he’s coming from. He doesn’t want lackadaisical practices, and I was terrible yesterday. I couldn’t make passes or anything.”

“It was one of those days where nothing was going right. I understand his decision. I totally get what he’s doing and I would have done the same thing probably.”

And any issues were taken care of immediately on Monday.

“It was ironed out as soon as he came off the ice,” Scott said. “I went and talked to him and apologized. We had a talk. Everything’s fine. We’re moving on, playing a game tonight.”

“I was perfect with John Scott yesterday,” Nolan said. “In this sport sometimes you have those moments, but it’s forgotten right afterwards.”

...

Ryan Miller became the first NHL goaltender to record two assists in a game since Cory Schneider did it on Dec. 11, 2010. He is the first Sabres goaltender to pick up two assists since Darren Puppa who had a pair on Jan. 14, 1991 against Toronto. ... The assists were the eight and ninth of Miller’s career and his first since March 20, 2011 against Nashville. ... With two assists Drew Stafford now has 11 points (six goals, five assists) in his last eight games. ... Ennis also extended his point streak to three games. He has seven points (two goals, five assists) in his last seven games.

...

The Bruins are coming to town tonight to open their post-Olympic schedule and they will do it without their starting goaltender.

Tuukka Rask will not make the trip, staying in Boston after returning from Russia. Rask led Finland in their bronze-medal win over the United States.

Chad Johnson will get the start for the Bruins with Niklas Svedberg serving as the backup.

Also returning from Russia are Loui Eriksson (Sweden) and Patrice Bergeron (Canada). They did not practice with the Bruins on Tuesday but are expected to play in Buffalo tonight.

Bruins get back to work against Sabres

By Brian Compton

NHL.com

February 25, 2014

BRUINS (37-16-4) at SABRES (16-34-8)

TV: NBCSN, TSN2

Last 10: Boston 7-1-2; Buffalo 3-6-1

Season series: This is the fourth of five games between the Boston Bruins and Buffalo Sabres. The Bruins have scored nine goals in two victories against the Sabres and most recently earned a 4-1 win on Dec. 21 at TD Garden.

Big story: The Bruins play for the first time since Feb. 8. They're aiming to build on their Atlantic Division lead which has them seven points ahead of the second-place Tampa Bay Lightning. Boston entered the Olympic break having earned points in nine of 10 games.

Buffalo takes the ice for the second time in as many nights after returning to action Tuesday. The Sabres earned a 3-2 victory against the Carolina Hurricanes at First Niagara Center.

Team Scope:

Bruins: Boston coach Claude Julien ran practice Tuesday for the first time since helping Canada win its second straight gold medal at the Olympics. Julien was an assistant on coach Mike Babcock's staff.

"I'm ready to go here, and I'm looking forward to getting back with my team and getting back into games," Julien told the Bruins website.

"Right now I feel no effects, and if anything, the excitement over there really energized me coming back, and I'm looking forward to trying to accomplish the same thing here with this Bruins team."

Sabres: Ryan Miller spent much of the 2014 Sochi Olympics watching from the United States' bench, but he saw plenty of action Tuesday. Miller made 36 saves in what could be one of his final starts in a Buffalo uniform with the NHL Trade Deadline set for March 5. He can become an unrestricted free agent this summer.

"I've been practicing pretty hard for about 12 days," Miller said after also adding two assists in the win against the Hurricanes. "I feel like I didn't lose too much as far as practice rhythm and stuff, but it was good to get in a game. I had the one game over there in Sochi (a 5-1 win against Slovenia on Feb. 16), so I kind of

stayed a little more on top of things than most of the boys I think, just because they had the long break.

"I feel all right. Just a little bit jet-lagged, but not bad."

Who's hot: Bruins center David Krejci (two goals, three assists), left wing Milan Lucic (two goals, three assists) and right wing Jarome Iginla (two goals, five assists) have four-game point streaks. ... Sabres defenseman Christian Ehrhoff scored twice Tuesday, including the game-winner at 19:16 of the third period. Ehrhoff has eight points (four goals, four assists) in his past eight games. Forward Drew Stafford has 11 points (six goals, five assists) in his past eight.

Injury report: Bruins defenseman Adam McQuaid (leg) is doubtful, but the team is hopeful he'll be ready to go by the weekend. McQuaid has missed nine straight games. Defenseman Dennis Seidenberg (knee) is out for the season. ... Sabres center Zenon Konopka (finger) is day-to-day.

Ehrhoff, Miller give Sabres win against Hurricanes

By Joe Yerdon

NHL.com

February 25, 2014

BUFFALO -- Christian Ehrhoff scored twice, including the game-winner with 43.4 seconds left in the third period, and Ryan Miller made 36 saves to give the Buffalo Sabres a 3-2 win against the Carolina Hurricanes at First Niagara Center on Tuesday.

Ehrhoff circled the Hurricanes net and fired a wrist shot that glanced off defenseman Justin Faulk into the goal in the NHL's first game after the break for the 2014 Sochi Olympics.

"Sometimes the hockey gods are good to you," Ehrhoff said. "I had Marcus [Foligno] on the back door there and just got a lucky bounce in, and obviously it was a big goal in the last minute."

Ehrhoff gave the Sabres a 1-0 lead on a second-period power play. His fifth goal of the season was a shot from the blue line that glanced off goalie Cam Ward's glove and trickled over the goal line at 5:54. Ward was screened on the shot by Sabres forward Matt Moulson.

"I think the German head coach for the national team was in the crowd tonight, so maybe he wanted to put on a good show for him and he did," Sabres coach Ted Nolan said of Ehrhoff. "He played well for us."

Drew Stafford assisted for his 10th point in the past eight games. Miller had an assist on each of Ehrhoff's goals, the goaltender's first two points of the season.

"I played forward for a little while when I was a kid," Miller said. "I can't remember a time [when I've done that]. It's pretty amazing. The boys walked up the ice and their first opportunity it went in. It's great to see they get rewarded for putting pucks to the net because we need to see more of that."

Miller's performance came on a night when Sabres general manager Tim Murray spoke before the game about the likelihood of the goaltender being traded by the March 5 NHL Trade Deadline.

"I'm not going to close anything off because maybe as we go through, some things change," Miller said. "The things that they're going to have to do, they're probably going to come during the trade deadline, and maybe I'm one of them, and they're going to come during the draft and during free agency. So it's going to be tough to correlate seeing what they're going to do, what they can do, and what I might need to do with my career. I don't want to close anything off right now, but I know they're kind of looking around for opportunities. That's probably the best for everybody."

Hurricanes captain Eric Staal tied the game 1-1 with 3:08 to go in the second period. Staal broke in 3-on-2 with Alexander Semin and Faulk but never passed and shot through Miller's five-hole for his 15th goal of the season.

"We had lots of chances," Staal said. "We had plenty of 2-on-1s, 3-on-1s, chances right in front of the net, rebounds, second-chance opportunities. The looks are there, you want to have that killer instinct, especially when it's a close game, to bury them. Tonight, Miller made a lot of good saves."

Carolina held a 21-9 shot advantage through two periods. That trend continued into the third, but Buffalo grabbed the lead with 7:47 left when Tyler Ennis poked a loose puck in the crease into the net to make it 2-1. A shot from Moulson squirted through Ward's pads and slid unattended before Ennis tapped it in for his 14th goal of the season.

"I got excited when I saw the puck just lying there," Ennis said. "I was happy no one else really saw it. Good feeling to see the puck just sitting there and it was a big goal."

Carolina outshot Buffalo 38-18 in the game.

"It's a tough pill to swallow right now for everybody," Staal said. "We definitely had the better of the chances for pretty much every period. We gave up some good ones and they capitalized. Miller was good. You want to bear down on some of the looks you got, and he got the better of us on a lot of those grade-A chances."

The Hurricanes tied it 2-2 with 4:00 left when Semin fired a wrist shot by Miller for his 15th goal of the season.

"Points are huge every night," Hurricanes coach Kirk Muller said. "You can't let them slip away, no matter what reason. We played well enough to win tonight and we walk away with zero. That's tough to start our road trip."

Carolina visits the Dallas Stars, Los Angeles Kings, Anaheim Ducks and San Jose Sharks in the next week.

Ward stopped 15 shots in his first start since Dec. 31.

"I thought he battled, I thought he competed hard, and made some real good saves when he needed to," Staal said of Ward. "It was just a real unfortunate bounce on the winning goal for them with under a minute to go."

GM Tim Murray looking to trade Ryan Miller, goalie understands long Sabres career might end soon

By Bill Hoppe

Olean Times Herald

February 26, 2014

BUFFALO – The Sabres could still realistically re-sign franchise goalie Ryan Miller, rookie general manager Tim Murray said. That, however, isn't "the route we're looking at right now."

"Our priority right now on both sides is to pursue a proper trade," Murray said Tuesday in a brutally honest interview prior to Miller's 36-save performance in the Sabres' 3-2 win against the Carolina Hurricanes.

The trade deadline hits one week from today. Murray sounds ready to deal and improve the NHL's worst team.

The rebuilding Sabres want to put Miller, a 33-year-old former Vezina Trophy winner, "in a position to succeed," Murray said. He called Miller, one of nine upcoming unrestricted free agents on the roster, a "good soldier."

"Players that treat you right, play well and hard for you over the years, you try to do what's best for them, too, as long as it fits into what you're doing," Murray said. "By trading Ryan to a contender ... I think that certainly we've certainly not done a disservice to him and would help the organization in our own right."

Miller, just back from representing Team USA at the Sochi Games, said he's "discussed the timeframe" with the team. He wants to be realistic. Only of handful of players perform effectively into their 30s. Naturally, he wants to be one of them.

"But there's no guarantees," Miller said. "I'm not going to close anything off because maybe as we go through some things change. The things that they're going to have to do they're probably going to come during the trade deadline, and maybe I'm one of them. ..."

"It's going to be tough to correlate seeing what they're going to do, what they can do and what I might need to do with my career. I don't want to close anything off right now, but I know they're kind of looking around for opportunities. That's probably the best for everybody."

Murray said he's listening to offers for Miller but not shopping him. Less than 10 teams but more than two are interested, he said.

"I think there's enough really good teams that consider themselves contenders that are kicking around the idea of trading for a good goalie," Murray said. "I think there's a possibility with more talks something could happen."

Miller will simply prepare to play hockey this next week.

“If it’s here, it’s been my home for 12 years,” he said. “I love this area. The fans have always been great. I feel at home in this community, a lot of friends. So enjoy that. If it happens that I’m traded, I’m preparing to play somewhere else.”

Miller, of course, isn’t the lone high-profile veteran available. Steve Ott, a gritty and versatile captain, will also be unrestricted and has generated a lot of interest, Murray said. He noted he’s spent his entire 21-year career looking for players of Ott’s ilk.

“That’s not the type of player I want to trade away; that’s the type of player I want to bring in,” he said.

But Murray said the 31-year-old Ott has every right to pursue other opportunities.

Murray characterized the trade market as “very quiet, quieter than I guess I was really expecting.” He said he’s spoken to seven or eight GMs about 10 to 12 players.

“We think we’ve got lots of value here,” he said. “Now, if we can get value for them is the other question.”

What does he want back?

“Ideally, if teams would give me two good, young players that are two years or so into their development, that would be outstanding,” he said.

Could the Sabres scratch some of their available players so they don’t get injured?

“When I do, you guys will probably be the first one to know when they’re not playing,” interim Sabres coach Ted Nolan said.

Miller would want to keep playing.

“It’s not my choice,” he said. “It’s not something I want.”

Meanwhile, Murray said the Sabres are discussing a contract extension for Nolan.

“We’re along that path,” he said.

Nolan wouldn’t comment, however.

“We’ll just keep it at that,” he said.

Nolan was noticeably down despite the victory, the Sabres' first in five tries. Perhaps the reality of losing Miller has hit him.

Once again, Miller was the Sabres' difference-maker. They only sprinkled 18 shots on Carolina goalie Cam Ward before 18,719 fans inside the First Niagara Center.

"I don't think we had too much reason to say we were the better team tonight outside of Ryan Miller stealing that game for us," Nolan said.

Miller felt the nine-hour time difference from Russia, though.

"I'm a little bit goofy and feeling a little bit weird," he said.

Christian Ehrhoff scored his second goal of the contest with 44 seconds left. Tyler Ennis also scored.

Miller assisted on both Ehrhoff goals, the first-two assist game by a Sabres goalie since Daren Puppa on Jan. 14, 1991.

When was the last time Miller had two helpers?

"I played forward for a little while as a kid," he joked.

The Sabres host Boston tonight.

Sabres tough guy John Scott subs as defenseman; Cody McCormick returns from finger injury

By Bill Hoppe

Olean Times Herald

February 26, 2014

BUFFALO – A day after Ted Nolan told him to leave the ice for practicing poorly, John Scott said he and the interim Sabres coach are “fine now.”

In fact, the tough guy, a regular winger, played defense Tuesday, his natural position.

“I’m surprised that that happened,” Scott said prior to the Sabres’ 3-2 win against the Carolina Hurricanes inside the First Niagara Center. “It was kind of a weird event. I’ve never seen that happen before in my career. It was definitely something new. It’s OK. We’re fine now.”

Scott smashed his stick and stomped off the ice to the dressing room Monday.

“Obviously, I wasn’t happy,” said Scott, who subbed for Henrik Tallinder and played beside Jamie McBain. “No one likes getting sent off from practice. I was having a tough practice and just kind of maybe overreacted a little bit and got a little upset. But it happens. Move on.”

Scott said he and Nolan ironed it out “as soon as he came off the ice.”

“I went and talked to him, apologized,” he said. “We had a talk. We’re moving on.”

Nolan added: “I was perfect with John Scott (Monday). In this sport sometimes you have those moments but it’s forgotten right afterwards.”

Nolan tried to downplay everything.

“It wasn’t so much I threw him off,” he said. “He just banged his stick. I just asked him to stay in until he cooled a little bit.”

Still, Scott said he understands “exactly where he’s coming from.” He said he was “terrible” Monday.

“I couldn’t make passes or anything, and it was just one of those days where nothing was going right,” Scott said. “I understand his decision. I totally get what he’s doing. I would’ve done the same thing probably.”

He added: “It’s a new start, kind of a clean slate. Everyone kind of had a good laugh about it afterwards. The guys are giving me a hard time today.”

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Hard-nosed forward Cody McCormick, the Sabres' most prolific fighter, understands injuries accompany his role.

"For me, I think if you're not hurt, you're not really playing in my role," McCormick said. "I think everybody that's in my role is bumped or bruised, something like that."

McCormick has been hurt most of the season, missing 32 games, including 24 straight with a finger injury before returning Tuesday, his first action since Dec. 14.

He said he was being fitted for a finger brace. Can he still fight? He has seven this season.

"I don't think the gloves are ever glued on," he said. "But at the same time, it might not be something I'm trying to do right away."

xxx

Backup goalie Jhonas Enroth, who just represented Sweden at the Sochi Games with Tallinder, should start tonight against Boston, Nolan said. Tallinder said he'll play, too. Both won silver medals Saturday.

A weary Enroth backed up Ryan Miller on Tuesday. Enroth dressed for five Olympic games behind New York Rangers goalie Henrik Lundqvist, his idol.

"It was a great experience, for sure, practicing and playing with Lundqvist," Enroth said. "So I picked up a couple things he does and stuff like that. Obviously, I wish I got one game."

Tallinder enjoyed seeing athletes from other sports.

"It's fun to see how they prepare for a contest that they're in," he said. "It's just completely different."

Note: Sabres center Zenon Konopka underwent hand surgery during the Olympic break, according to TSN. Konopka, who's been practicing, has been dealing with the injury all season. ... Former Sabres winger Linus Omark, whose contract was terminated last week, has signed a one-year deal with Lulea of the Swedish Hockey League.

Sabres Hang On For 3-2 Win Over 'Canes

By Dan Cave

WGR 550

February 25, 2014

Ryan Miller stopped 36 shots and picked up assists on both of Christian Ehrhoff's goals, including the game-winner, in a 3-2 victory over the Hurricanes at First Niagara Center on Monday. Head inside for more.

After a scoreless opening period, the two sides traded goals in the second. Buffalo grabbed the 1-0 lead on a power play goal courtesy of Christian Ehrhoff, his fifth tally of the season. Ryan Miller picked up a secondary assist, good for his his eighth career assist and first in nearly two years.

Carolina fired 21 shots at Miller over the first two periods, but finally beat him on Eric Staal's 15th. After taking a pass from Justin Faulk, Staal came streaking in and beat Miller from the near faceoff circle with a wrist shot that found its way between the goaltender's pads.

Tyler Ennis put the Sabres back in front at 12:13 of the final period, poking home a loose puck resting near the goal line. After stopping Matt Moulson's attempt, Cam Ward lost sight of the puck and Ennis pounced to give Buffalo the 2-1 advantage. It was a short-lived lead, however, thanks to Alexander Semin. Less than four minutes after Ennis' goal, the Carolina forward carried the puck up ice and snapped a shot past Miller's glove and into the net, making it 2-2.

A Hurricanes miscue in front of their own net put Buffalo back ahead, this time for good. Ehrhoff's pass toward the crease deflected off Faulk's stick and into the Carolina net, giving the Sabres a 3-2 lead. Miller recorded another assist on the goal, his second of the evening.

The Sabres stay at home to face the Boston Bruins at 7:30 p.m. on Wednesday. Hear the call on WGR 550 and the Buffalo Sabres Radio Network.

1st Period

Goals

None

Penalties

7:50 - BUF - John Scott (2 min., tripping)

11:32 - BUF - Tyler Myers (2 min., interference)

2nd Period

Goals

5:54 - BUF - Christian Ehrhoff (5) (PPG) (Drew Stafford, Ryan Miller)

16:52 - CAR - Eric Staal (15) (Justin Faulk)

Penalties

4:53 - CAR - Riley Nash (2 min., tripping)
6:40 - BUF - Brian Flynn (2 min., delay of game - puck over glass)
14:50 - CAR - Brett Bellemore (2 min., tripping)
17:57 - BUF - Marcus Foligno (2 min., high-sticking)

3rd Period

Goals

12:13 - BUF - Tyler Ennis (14) (Matt Moulson, Drew Stafford)
16:00 - CAR - Alexander Semin (15) (Andrej Sekera)
19:16 - BUF - Christian Ehrhoff (6) (Ryan Miller)

Penalties

1:42 - BUF - Matt D'Agostini (2 min., holding)
5:46 - CAR - Riley Nash (2 min., hooking)

Goaltending

CAR - Cam Ward (16 saves, 18 shots)
BUF - Ryan Miller (36 saves, 38 shots)

Power Plays

CAR - 0 for 5
BUF - 1 for 3

Three Stars

- 1.) BUF - Ryan Miller (36 saves, 2 A)
- 2.) BUF - Christian Ehrhoff (2 G, 0 A)
- 3.) BUF - Tyler Ennis (1 G, 0 A)

Murray Discusses Miller, Nolan

By Dan Cave

WGR 550

February 25, 2014

Sabres GM Tim Murray met the media prior to Tuesday's home matchup against the Carolina Hurricanes. While much of the conversation was focused on the upcoming trade deadline, Murray also provided a glimpse into Ted Nolan's current status.

"We are discussing it and we have discussed it, so we're along that path, yes," said Murray when asked about a contract extension for Nolan.

Regarding Miller, the Buffalo general manager mentioned that there has been interest from "more than two teams, less than 10 teams" and also acknowledged that a trade could be beneficial for both parties.

"Players that treat you right, you try to do what's best for them too, as long as it fits into what you're doing" Murray said. "By trading Ryan to a contender, a good team that maybe is lacking only his position, I think that we've certainly not done a disservice to him and we've helped the organization in our own right."

"Our goal right now, I think on both sides, is to pursue a proper trade," he added.

Earlier on Tuesday, speculation surfaced that the Sabres might be focusing on resigning Miller, rather than looking for a trade partner.

"It's realistic, but it's not the route we're looking at right now," Murray noted. "The route we're looking at is to get value for [Miller], to put him in a position to succeed."

Murray had some thoughts on whether the goaltender wants to stick around for a rebuild. "I know what I think [Miller's] first choice would be, and I don't think signing here is his first choice at his age and where we're at," he said. "But I wouldn't say he's got no interest."

If the Sabres were to deal Miller before next week's deadline, it remains to be seen what kind of package could be sent Buffalo's way. "Ideally, in a perfect world, if teams would give me two real good young players that are two years or so into their development, that would be outstanding," said Murray. "But I don't think teams are going to bend over backwards to make life easier for us. It's going to be the determination made, what the best deal is offered, and if it's draft picks -- it's draft picks. And then we'll turn them into assets and players."

Murray also briefly spoke about his current captain and what the future may hold for Steve Ott.

"Steve Ott is the type of player I've looked for, for 21 years," he said. "The type of person and the type of player, the way he plays the game, the way he conducts himself, that's not the type of player that I want to trade away. That's the type of player I want to bring in. Unfortunately, when I got here, he's at his age and he's an unrestricted free agent, so he has every right to pursue other opportunities."

Sabres Miller will play

By Paul Hamilton

WGR 550

February 25, 2014

Buffalo, NY (WGR 550) -- Ryan Miller will be in net as the NHL season starts again tonight. Miller doesn't speak on game days, but I kidded him that I hadn't seen him yawn yet. He laughed and said, "I'm wide awake now, it's later I'm worried about."

Miller gets tonight and the plan right now is for Jhonas Enroth to play Wednesday against the Bruins. Ted Nolan said, "He's doing OK, coming from that far of a distance, the time zone is probably the toughest part so he's a pro and he'll fight through it." Nolan added, "You're a little bit foggy coming from that travel so hopefully he'll knock the fog out from the pregame skate and be real good for us tonight."

Ted Nolan has been trying to get this team better and more consistent since he walked in the door. The head coach said nothing changes even though they haven't played in almost three weeks, "It hasn't changed at all, what we have to do is try to get better here and if we're going to be a playoff team, we have to know what that requires, the work ethic and the kind of players that we need to do that, so it will be a great evaluation going forward."

Usually coming out of the Olympic break you see fast hockey and sometimes sloppy hockey too. Nolan said, "It maybe will be a little rusty in the beginning, but I think the energy should be there. Stevie (Ott), he looks fresh as a daisy on the ice, I mean he looks really good the last couple of days. Tyler Ennis looks really good, Matty Moulson looks fresh and eager to go, so that rest did a lot of players well." Ennis said, "The legs feel good, the lungs feel good, but the game's going to be different, it was a long break so it's going to be important that we try to shake the rust off as quick as possible."

The Sabres have the worst record in the NHL and are now nine points in back of Edmonton. Buffalo went into the break with four straight losses and one win in seven. The Sabres have lost seven straight home games with the last win here coming January 4th against New Jersey. Many are wondering what this team has to play for. Ennis said, "I'm approaching it as a new season, a fresh start. We're determined to improve every day, continue to compete every night. We've been playing well some games and then we'll let up a period, but I think it's important for us to really play well for 60 minutes and get that consistency going."

Nolan said Henrik Tallinder had just gotten back so he'll sit him a game and use John Scott on defense with Jamie McBain. Zenon Konopka had finger surgery over the break and is scratched. It's not clear if that's the reason he's out.

Carolina is 6th in the Metropolitan Division, five points out of third and the playoffs. The Hurricanes trail Detroit for the final wild card playoff spot by three.

Coming into the break Carolina had won six of nine games.

You might remember Andrej Sekera came back for his first game against Buffalo on January 23rd and had three points including the game winning goal. In his last nine games he has eight points.

Eric Staal has one point in five games.

Conflicting reports on Miller's future

By Zac Hirschbeck

WGR 550

February 25, 2014

As the March 5th NHL trade deadline approaches, speculation surrounding the Sabres plans continues to grow. For now, most of the media's attention is devoted to longtime goalie, and pending UFA Ryan Miller.

Yesterday afternoon, AP writer John Wawrow spoke to a source that claims the Sabres are still actively shopping Miller. The source, who was speaking on the condition of anonymity, believes new general manager Tim Murray continues to attempt to trade Miller.

"Tim is testing the waters as hard as he can," the source said.

Wawrow's source also said the team's first option is trading Miller. If an agreement cannot be reached, option two would be making an attempt to re-sign Miller before he reaches free agency.

This morning, Brian Lawton, who is a former player, agent, and general manager in the NHL, shared his thoughts regarding Miller's status on his Twitter account.

"I am hearing that it is not likely that Ryan Miller will be traded by the deadline and Sabres are turning attention towards re signing him," Lawton said. "The school of thought on Miller is that a deal in the Lundqvist range now would allow the team to trade him in a better market."

Lawton also explained why he believes the Sabres intentions have shifted towards retaining Miller.

"The goalie market is thin. The St. Louis Blues are the only possibility for Miller trade and everyone know it is driving value down."

The Sabres return to action tonight for the first time since the Olympic break. They will take on the Carolina Hurricanes, who currently sit in 12th place and three points out of a playoff spot. The puck drops tonight at 7 PM ET.

AMID TRADE SPECULATION, MILLER TURNS ASIDE 36 SHOTS TO BEAT HURRICANES

By Chris Ryndak

Sabres.com

February 25, 2014

The praise heaped on Ryan Miller by his teammates and coaches isn't anything new.

The Buffalo Sabres goaltender turned aside 36 shots Tuesday night and was named the first star of the game as the Sabres pulled out a 3-2 victory over the Carolina Hurricanes at First Niagara Center.

In Buffalo's first game back from the Olympic break, they didn't come out as strong as they would have liked, but received the goaltending necessary to keep the contest close.

Christian Ehrhoff scored twice, including the game winner with 43.4 seconds left in regulation, but acknowledged that, like in so many other games this year, Miller was the difference.

"It had to do a lot with [Miller] again," Ehrhoff said. "He made some huge saves for us. He was very sharp. He was our best player again tonight."

Ehrhoff now has seven points (3+4) in his past seven games.

Drew Stafford had two assists and he now has 11 points (6+5) in his past eight games and Tyler Ennis scored to extend his point streak to three games. He also has seven points (2+5) in his past seven games.

However, Ennis said it all comes back to goaltending.

"I think [Miller] was 99 percent of that win," he said. "We've got to tip our hat to the guys that competed. We battled and got the win, but [Miller] pretty much got us that one."

Eric Staal and Alexander Semin tallied for the Hurricanes. Cam Ward stopped 15 of the 18 shots he faced.

Miller also played a big role in helping his own cause by picking up two assists. The assists were the eighth and ninth of Miller's career. His last came on March 20, 2011 against Nashville.

According to Elias Sports Bureau, he became the first NHL goaltender to record two helpers in a game since Cory Schneider on Dec. 11, 2010. Miller is the first Sabres goaltender to accomplish this feat since Daren Puppa, who did it on Jan. 14, 1991 against Toronto.

Miller had to think way back as to when the last time he may have had two assists in a game.

“I played forward for a little while when I was a kid,” he joked.

The big twist this time around in Miller’s performance was that he was also able to overcome a nine-hour time zone change.

Miller represented Team USA in the Olympic Winter Games in Sochi, Russia and didn’t return to Buffalo until Monday afternoon. He went through the morning skate on Tuesday and said he tried to take it easy. He didn’t focus as much on stopping pucks in practice as he did making sure he kept his feet moving to avoid cramping up after such a long flight home.

“It’s good to be back. I am a little bit goofy and feeling I’m feeling a little weird, but that’s to be expected with the jet lag,” he said after the game. “I just tried to treat it like the games you play when you’re feeling a little bit sick. Just keep it simple, try not to focus too hard, just keep it loose and just compete and go from there. It’s good to win. It feels good.”

All this also comes with the NHL Trade Deadline looming at 3 p.m. on March 5 and Miller’s future with the Sabres uncertain. The 33-year-old goaltender is set to become an unrestricted free agent on July 1 and could be playing for a different team any time before then.

Sabres general manager Tim Murray spoke with the media before the game and said that they are exploring the possibility of trading Miller.

“The route we’re looking at is to get value for him, to put him in a position to succeed,” Murray said. “By trading Ryan to a contender – a good team that maybe is lacking only his position – I think that we’ve certainly not done a disservice to him and we’ve helped the organization in our own right. Our goal right now on both sides is to pursue a proper trade.”

Miller said after the game that while he has enjoyed his time in Buffalo and he’s open to staying, a trade might be the option that currently makes the most sense for both parties.

“I don’t want to close anything off right now,” Miller said. “I know they’re kind of looking around for an opportunity and I think that’s probably best for everybody.”

Sabres interim coach Ted Nolan knows it’s possible that Miller could be gone any day now.

“It just shows what kind of goaltender we have in Ryan Miller and how important goaltending is,” Nolan said. “I don’t think we had too much reason to say we were the better team tonight outside of Ryan Miller stealing that game for us.”

However, Nolan’s focus also remains on keeping the team as a whole as prepared as possible. If Miller is dealt by the trade deadline, he knows that someone else will have to be ready to fill Miller’s shoes rather quickly. It’s a lesson he learned while coaching Team Latvia in the Olympics.

“With Latvia, I think Team Canada had 57 shots on us,” Nolan said. “Our goaltender did pretty good out of nowhere. Goaltenders come and if that thing happens, we just have to have somebody in there that’s going to stop some pucks for us.”

The Sabres won’t have much time to reflect on this one as they host the Boston Bruins on Wednesday. Ehrhoff said that even though they earned two points against the Hurricanes, they will have to put in a much better effort when the Bruins come to town.

“It wasn’t our best effort. It was sloppy at times and a little rust coming off the break probably,” he said. “We gotta make sure tomorrow we are a lot cleaner on our plays because Boston is a team that waits for turnovers and mistakes.”

Puck drop between Boston and Buffalo is scheduled for 7 p.m.

MURRAY READY TO MAKE TRADES, MARKET 'QUIETER' THAN EXPECTED

By Chris Ryndak

Sabres.com

February 25, 2014

Buffalo Sabres general manager Tim Murray met with the media Tuesday night prior to the team's game against the Carolina Hurricanes at First Niagara Center.

The NHL Trade Deadline is set for March 5 at 3 p.m. and Murray discussed what he's looking for in a trade and the interest several pending unrestricted free agents such as Steve Ott and Ryan Miller have garnered. He also touched on interim coach Ted Nolan's possible future with the organization.

Below is a transcript of his media availability.

What can you tell us, Tim, about where you're at as far as the trade deadline goes and what your thoughts are going into this one?

Very quiet. Quieter than I guess maybe was expecting. I thought that when everybody was back from Sochi that there would be a lot of calls but I guess some guys got back yesterday and maybe they're still jet-lagged. We've got a couple playing tonight so I'll give it a couple more days I guess.

Are you ready to do something?

Yeah, I mean you do your preparation and we've had a good month here of rating our own players, making sure we have them rated properly. So you know the guys that drafted them. Any team that I've been on, we like our players more than other teams and I think probably with me coming in, maybe like them not quite as much or not like rated in our number system, so I think we've come to good numbers for them. We think we've got lots of value here. Now if we can get value for them is the other question.

Are you actively pursuing a trade for Miller?

Actively? No. I'm listening. I mean, we know and you guys know the teams that have interest on certain players and I've talked to those GMs before Sochi obviously and I've talked to a couple that have interest in different players. So I've talked to probably seven or eight GMs and that would entail probably 10 to 12 players so there has been quick talks today.

Are we still on the same page, we'll talk again later in the week type of thing?
Yep, we are. There has been talk but there's been no specifics.

Is Ryan the most sought-after player that you have and how many people have brought him up?

The most sought after? That's hard to say. There are teams that certainly have told me they have a need for him. There's no question. But in saying that, there's been a lot of teams that have expressed interest in other players. Steve Ott, obviously being one that has generated a large interest. I don't know how you quantify which guys have expressed the most interest in, which players, but there's been interest in a lot of players.

When you look at someone like Steve Ott, he's such a leader and brings so much to the dressing room, it's a real fine line in getting rid of someone like that when you're rebuilding a team.

It is. It is. I mean, Steve Ott is the type of player that I've looked for for 21 years. In drafting and the type of person and type of player, the way he plays the game, the way he conducts himself, that's not the type of player I want to trade away. That's the type of player I want to bring in.

Unfortunately when I got here, he's at his age and he's an unrestricted free agent so he has every right to, whether he's traded or not at the end of the year, to pursue other opportunities or just see how much other team, when they say they want him, how much does that translate into dollars spent or whatever.

But that's not the type of guy that I in the past have been involved in trying to get rid of. It's the type of player that we've been trying to bring into the teams that I've been with. And we're not a playoff team, so that changes the dynamic obviously.

Tim, in regards to your unrestricted free agents, do you anticipate to wait until after March 5, to wait to see if they're still on the roster to determine whether to make a bid at re-signing them before opening talks before then?

Yes.

Back to Ryan, the option of him re-signing before the deadline, is that a realistic option? What are the chances, do you think? And if he's not re-signed, do you want to deal him?

It's realistic, but it's not the route that we're looking at right now. The route we're looking at is to get value for him, to put him in a position to succeed. However you want to describe him here in all the years he's been here as a good soldier or whatever and I think, I've said this before, if you look at the teams I've been with in the past, we've done that.

Players that treat you right and have played well and hard for you over the years, you try to do what's best for them too as long as it fits into what you're doing. By trading Ryan to a contender – a good team that maybe is lacking only his position – I think that we've certainly not done a disservice to him and we've helped the

organization in our own right. Our goal right now on both sides is to pursue a proper trade.

So Ryan has no interest in an extension here, then?

No interest? I don't know if he has no interest. I know what I think his first choice would be and I don't think signing here is his first choice at his age, where we're at – we're the 30th place team. But I wouldn't say he's got not interest, no.

What are you looking for most to come back to you? Draft picks? Prospects? Players?

Both. Ideally, in a perfect world, if a team would give me two real good young players that are two years or so into their development, that would be outstanding. But I don't think teams are going to bend over backwards to make life easier for us so it's going to be the determination that will be made of what the best deal is offered.

If it's draft picks, it's draft picks and then we'll turn them into new assets and players but ideally, young players that are a little bit along in their development would be great.

Is it a little harder to market Miller being that he has a limited no-trade clause?

No because I think the no-trade, there's a few teams that are obvious and they're not going to pursue him anyway as far as where they are in the standings. I think there are enough really good teams – teams that consider themselves contenders that are kicking around the idea of trading for a good goalie. So I think there's a possibility that with more talks, something concrete could happen.

Has it been fun getting ready for this?

I talked to a GM yesterday that I hadn't talked to and he said, 'I bet you're loving it and hating it every second.' I said, 'That pretty well describes it. There's no hate involved, but it's like as I've said, there's a thousand moving parts and you're talking about disrupting some family's lives.'

I mean, I haven't talked about it, but I know every time I walk through the dressing room, they've read about it, they've seen on TV – that's your guys' jobs – and I take no pleasure in knowing that a guy with two kids and a wife has to pick up and leave if they do. But that's what we all signed up for and that's just the nature of it.

Are you close to an extension with Ted?

Close? You guys and your adjectives. I don't know. We are discussing it and we have discussed it so we're along that path, yes.

How many playoff teams do you think think that Ryan might be the final piece for them?

You have to be inside to know that. You've gotta be inside their room. I know that we've had more than two teams call us about him. I don't know if they're kicking tires or if they're serious, but there has been interest from more than two teams, less than 10 teams. Are they all serious? I don't know that. I can't answer that.

The Ted question requires a follow-up. So does that mean you are preparing to lift the interim tag label off of him in that fact that you've had discussions about a contract extension?

We have discussed the possibility of moving forward. That's all I'll say. We've discussed that, yeah.

SABRES RETURN TO ACTION HEALTHY

By Chris Ryndak

Sabres.com

February 25, 2014

There's only one game on the NHL schedule Tuesday night and it's happening in Buffalo.

The Sabres take on the Carolina Hurricanes at 7 p.m. at First Niagara Center for a game that was originally supposed to be played on Jan. 7. However, a snowstorm in Buffalo caused the game to be postponed until Tuesday.

Both teams are coming off a two-week break because of the Olympic Winter Games, but some players have gotten more rest than others.

Ryan Miller, Jhonas Enroth and Henrik Tallinder returned from Sochi on Monday and while Enroth and Tallinder will receive the night off, Miller will start in goal for Buffalo.

Sabres interim coach Ted Nolan is confident that Miller will be able to overcome the time zone change and play a solid game.

"I think the biggest thing is you're a little bit foggy from the travel," Nolan said after the team's morning skate. "So hopefully he'll knock the fog out through the pregame skate today and be real good for us tonight."

Several Sabres used the break to recover from various injuries and three players who missed the team's last game in Ottawa on Feb. 6 will suit up against the Hurricanes.

Forwards Matt Moulson and Cody McCormick and defenseman Tyler Myers are all expected to play Tuesday night.

Moulson missed four games with an upper-body injury and will return to a line featuring center Tyler Ennis and right wing Drew Stafford.

"We've been having some good chemistry lately and I think adding Matty back in the fold will just improve things," Ennis said. "I know we've had a long break and some time off, so hopefully we can get the rust off early."

McCormick has been out since Dec. 18 with an upper-body injury. Tyler Myers sustained a lower-body injury on Feb. 3 but is also ready to go.

"We had a ton of injuries before so it'll be nice to have all the guys around and a full squad," center Cody Hodgson said. "It's just also good that we had a couple good days of real good practice and come out ready."

Zenon Konopka is expected to be Buffalo's scratch at forward.

One day after being dismissed by Nolan from practice, John Scott will find himself in the lineup. With Tallinder not dressing for the game, Scott will be on the blue line, a spot he spent the majority of his career prior to coming to Buffalo. He said he'll be paired with Jamie McBain.

On Monday, Nolan wasn't satisfied with how Scott was performing in practice and sent him off the ice. Scott apologized to Nolan afterward and everything has been ironed out between the two.

"I was perfect with John Scott yesterday. Sometimes in this sport, you have those moments, but it's forgotten right afterwards," Nolan said. "He's in tonight. It wasn't so much I threw him off [the ice], he just banged his stick and I asked him to stay in [the dressing room] until he cooled down a little bit. So everything's good."

Scott said he understands his coach's stance and what Nolan expects from each player.

"Obviously I wasn't happy. No one likes getting sent off from practice but I was having a tough practice and maybe overreacted a little bit and got a little upset, but it happens and you move on," Scott said. "...I know exactly where he's coming from. He doesn't want lackadaisical practices and I was terrible yesterday.

"I couldn't make passes or anything and it was just one of those days where nothing was going right so I understand his decision. I totally get what he's doing and I would've probably done the same thing."

PROJECTED LINEUP

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

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

30 Ryan Miller
1 Jhonas Enroth