



# **Buffalo Sabres**

## **Daily Press Clips**

*March 29, 2014*

## **Hasek enjoying retirement in return to Buffalo**

By John Wawrow

Associated Press

March 28, 2014

BUFFALO, N.Y. (AP) -- Having spent several years going back and forth on retirement, The Dominator insists this time he is, indeed, done.

Though Dominik Hasek still enjoys playing pickup hockey a few times a week in his native Czech Republic, the closest he intends to come to an NHL rink these days will occur Saturday. That's when the Buffalo Sabres will induct their former star goalie into the team's Hall of Fame before playing the Tampa Bay Lightning.

Not even the prospect of joining the last-place Sabres (20-45-8), who are in desperate need of experienced goaltending help after trading Ryan Miller last month, is enough to lure the 49-year-old Hasek back into the crease.

"Thank you, but no thank you," Hasek said with a smile Friday. "Hockey was part of my life. I enjoyed it. But not any more as a professional player."

He played his last game three years ago for Moscow Spartak of Russia's Kontinental Hockey League. As recently as a year ago he considered playing one more season. Then last summer, after receiving no enticing offers, Hasek elected to finally hang up his pads.

Actually, Hasek said, his equipment is somewhere at home, still packed in the Spartak bag - just as he left it following his final game.

"The hockey career is something that's behind me," said Hasek, noting he suits up as a defenseman when playing with friends. "There are new goals in life, and always something new to prove."

He proved plenty during a 16-season NHL career during in which Hasek established himself as one of the game's best.

Hasek was a two-time MVP, a six-time Vezina Trophy winner as the league's top goalie, won two Stanley Cups (both with Detroit in 2002 and '08) and led the Czech Republic to a gold-medal championship at the 1998 Winter Games at Nagano.

His 2.20 career goals-against average still ranks as the best among NHL goalies playing a minimum 500 games, and he still ranks among the top 10 in several statistical categories.

Though he also played for Chicago, Detroit and Ottawa, Hasek enjoyed the prime of his career in Buffalo from 1992-2001.

Buffalo is a place, and the Sabres a team that remain dear to him.

"It was an honor for me to play for this organization, and this is something I'll never forget," Hasek said. "The Sabres are always staying in my heart."

Hasek still has ties to Buffalo, where he established his charitable foundation, "Hasek's Heroes," shortly before forcing his trade to the Red Wings in June 2001. He stays in touch with organizers of the foundation, which provides on- and off-ice support for children from low-to-moderate income families.

Hasek also keeps tabs on the Sabres, and is disappointed with how the team is performing during what's been a tumultuous season. The Sabres are rebuilding from scratch under new general manager Tim Murray and interim coach Ted Nolan, who is expected to sign a contract extension within the coming week.

Nolan is no stranger to Hasek. The two had a strained relationship during Nolan's first stint as Sabres coach from 1995-97.

To Hasek, whatever differences the two had are in the past and made it a point to have a chat with Nolan following practice.

"I know there were some questions of the relationship between me and him, but what can I say?" Hasek said. "I'm looking forward to seeing him today and I wish him good luck to improve the Sabres."

Nolan was pleased to meet up with Hasek.

"I still don't know what really transpired back then. But back then is back then," Nolan said, adding whatever tensions that existed between them were blown out of proportion. "He looks well, and he's all happy and excited about being back here. We had a nice talk."

Hasek will return to Buffalo next season, when the Sabres intend to retire his No. 39 by hanging his banner in the rafters alongside six former Sabres greats, including Gilbert Perreault.

"When you play hockey, you never think about having your jersey retired or about individual awards," Hasek said. "I want to be remembered as a competitor who gave the team the chance to always win."

## **Lightning-Sabres Preview**

By Jeff Bartl  
Associated Press  
March 28, 2014

Buffalo's victory over the Tampa Bay Lightning three weeks ago was surprising to say the least, but it certainly didn't do much to inspire the last-place Sabres to earn many more.

Tampa Bay, on the other hand, has bounced back nicely in its chase for home-ice advantage in the first round of the playoffs.

The Lightning seek a fourth victory in five road matchups with the Sabres on Saturday night.

Marcus Foligno, Cody Hodgson and Tyler Myers had a goal and an assist apiece in Buffalo's 3-1 win over Tampa Bay on March 6. The Sabres (20-45-8), though, have been outscored 34-12 while dropping 10 of 11 since, including Thursday's 6-1 loss to Nashville.

Buffalo's 3-1 win over Edmonton on March 20 marked the only time it has scored more than two goals in that stretch.

"It's just one of those things (that) in order to rebuild and to retool, you rebuild and retool with the right people, and it's never changed from 20 years ago to today," coach Ted Nolan said. "You need the right people with the right makeup with the right character with the right drive and ambition. You don't just show up."

The Lightning (40-24-9), meanwhile, haven't scored fewer than three goals since that home loss to the Sabres, going 6-0-4 to sit two points behind Montreal for second place in the Atlantic Division with two games in hand.

Steven Stamkos, who returned from a broken leg in the loss to Buffalo, has seven goals and three assists over his last eight.

Ryan Callahan scored twice and veteran defenseman Sami Salo scored his first career shootout goal in the 13th round as Tampa beat the New York Islanders 3-2 on Thursday.

"First and foremost, we got two points and that's what we needed," coach Jon Cooper said. "They're not all a Picasso, but we have to be better."

Callahan played his first game with Tampa Bay in the loss to Buffalo after being acquired from the New York Rangers in exchange for former captain Martin St. Louis. He has four goals and four assists since joining the Lightning.

Both of Callahan's goals Thursday came from in close.

"He makes a living in that area," Cooper said. "Wherever there is paint on the ice, he does a heck of a job. Clearly, we needed him and he was really good for us."

Ben Bishop made 25 saves and nine more in the shootout to improve to 6-0-1 with a 2.65 goals-against average over his last seven starts. The Lightning play Detroit on Sunday, and it's unclear if Bishop or backup Anders Lindback will get the nod in this one.

Bishop won the first two meetings with Buffalo by 3-2 scores on Oct. 8 and Oct. 26.

It's uncertain who will be in net for the Sabres. Matt Hackett started Thursday but gave up four first-period goals and was pulled in favor of rookie Nathan Lieuwen, who allowed two goals on 19 shots through the final 40 minutes.

Rookie defenseman Rasmus Ristolainen scored his second career goal Thursday as an emergency replacement due to an undisclosed injury to Myers, who officially is considered day to day.

## **Hasek, Nolan have 'nice talk' in first conversation since falling out 17 years ago**

By Stephen Whyno

Canadian Press

March 28, 2014

BUFFALO, N.Y. - Dominik Hasek and Ted Nolan shook hands, talked and put years of bad blood behind them.

The all-star goaltender and the head coach met the first time Friday since a falling out 17 years ago cost Nolan his job with the Buffalo Sabres.

Nolan was brought back to coach the Sabres earlier this season, and Hasek is being inducted into the team's hall of fame Saturday night. The six-time Vezina Trophy-winning goaltender was at First Niagara Center Friday, and the two former adversaries appeared to have put their past problems behind them with what Nolan called a "nice chat."

"I still don't know what really transpired back then," Nolan said. "But back then is back then. He looks well, and he's all happy and excited about being back here and we had a nice talk. We had some good times. Everybody looks at even one incident, and one incident doesn't form a relationship.

"In the media I guess sometimes we blow things way out of proportion and make it look worse than it really was, and it wasn't that much. People have disagreements all the time."

Hasek, who spoke to reporters before Nolan, didn't deny there were disagreements between him and his former coach back in 1997, when the goaltender pulled himself from one game claiming a knee injury and later deemed himself not healthy enough to start another.

"Whatever happened, what can I say about it?" Hasek said. "Sometimes you feel different way than the other person, sometimes you feel that your decision is better than his decisions. But I think on the ice that one or two years that we were together we done a good job for this organization."

Under Nolan, and with Hasek between the pipes, the Sabres went from last place in 1995-96 to first in 1996-97. That second season Nolan won the Jack Adams Award as NHL coach of the year, and Hasek won the Hart Trophy as league MVP and Vezina Trophy as the top goaltender.

"If you look what Dominik did for this organization and even when my time was here — we had a lot of wins, but a lot of wins were based on his goaltending," Nolan said. "He's a world-class goaltender."

Being a world-class goaltender is in Hasek's past, and now he's more than ready to push aside past problems with Nolan to focus on the present.

"Ted Nolan, he was my coach," the 49-year-old said. "I know there was some questions (about) the relationship between me and him, but what can I say? I believe he's the coach right now and he will help the team to improve. ... I wish him good luck to improve the Sabres."

## **Hasek's place in NHL goaltending history is finally coming into focus**

By Stephen Whyno

Canadian Press

March 28, 2014

BUFFALO, N.Y. - Dominik Hasek is not a goaltender anymore.

He hasn't taken his customary place between the posts since his last game on Feb. 27, 2011 for Spartak Moscow of the KHL. He has thought and talked about playing since, but never followed through.

"My equipment is still in the same bag," he said.

Even when the 49-year-old plays with friends once or twice a week, Hasek plays as a defenceman. Forty years as a goalie was enough.

And it's unlikely the man nicknamed "The Dominator" can capture the kind of performances that made him one of the best goaltenders in his era, alongside Patrick Roy and Martin Brodeur.

Hasek played his final NHL game five years ago, and then officially retired in 2012. It's taken time since he left the league for his true place in NHL history to come into focus.

Six Vezina Trophies as the league's best goaltender, two Hart Trophies as MVP, one Olympic gold medal, six first-team all-star selections and two Stanley Cups — one as a starter — don't even tell the whole story. Few goalies during the 1990s and 2000s could do what Hasek did to opponents.

"He mentally and physically intimidated you," said St. Louis Blues coach Ken Hitchcock, who beat Hasek in the 1999 Cup final with the Stars. "I think there were games that you knew you were never going to score on him, and I think it was very discouraging at times. I think that's a great quality. I'd never seen the guy quit on a puck, I'd never seen the guy give up on anything. And that's hard to play against."

Hasek's .922 save percentage is the best of any goalie since the league started keeping track in 1982-83. His 2.02 goals-against average is the best in the modern era, slightly lower than Ken Dryden and Brodeur.

Brodeur has many more shutouts, but when Hasek was on his game, he had the ability to almost will teams to win.

"He makes a team believe," ex-Sabres and current Stars coach Lindy Ruff said in a phone interview. "You just start believing that with him in goal you can win any given night."

Ruff recalled times when Hasek was so locked in that "we really only had to score one. And if we got two, it was almost guaranteed-win night."

Hasek, who is being inducted into the Sabres' hall of fame Saturday night and will be the first NHL player to have the number 39 retired next season, wanted victories more than trophies or honours.

"I want to be remembered as a competitor who gave the teams always (the chance) to win the game," Hasek said Friday at First Niagara Center. "As a great goalie, as the person or goalie who gave the team (a chance) to always win the game. That's what was hockey for me. I enjoyed my time, I enjoyed when I played here and any time I step on the ice my goal is to win the game and try to help my teammates win the game."

Hasek will forever trail Brodeur (three Cups with the New Jersey Devils) and Roy (four, two each with the Montreal Canadiens and Colorado Avalanche), and one of his two in Detroit came as Chris Osgood's backup. But Hasek could potentially have won another title in 1999, had it not been for Brett Hull's controversial skate-in-the-crease overtime series winner in Game 6.

A Cup there would have burnished Hasek's legacy even more, but it's not something that he laments 15 years later.

"It's part of the life," he said. "Sometimes you win, sometimes you come close and you don't win it the whole way. It was an unfortunate night for us, it was something disappointing, but for me it wasn't end of my life."

Far from it. In fact, Hasek teamed up with Hull to win the Cup in 2002 with the Red Wings, posting six shutouts along the way.

"Winning a Stanley Cup anywhere, it's hard," said Sabres coach Ted Nolan, who spoke with Hasek Friday for the first time since Nolan was fired in Buffalo in 1997. "It's hard and all the stars have to line up. They didn't quite line up here but he went and lined it up in Detroit pretty well."

In 1999, Hasek had two shutouts and a playoff-best .939 save percentage in almost getting the Sabres their first championship in franchise history. Stars centre Joe Nieuwendyk won the Conn Smythe Trophy, but it easily could've gone to Hasek even in a losing effort.

"We were a huge underdog, obviously, going through the playoffs," Ruff said. "I thought that our team really fed off of Dom's performance for the most part. He would've been able to take a team that wasn't supposed to get there and win it."

Hasek's dominant prime lasted six seasons, from 1993-94 through 1998-99, when he led the league in save percentage every single time and came away with five of

his six career Vezinas. Asked about those years, Hasek smiled and brushed off the notion that it might've been the best stretch any goalie has ever played.

"I don't think about this that way," Hasek said. "I got a chance to prove, to become starting goalie and after that I had, I don't know, six, seven years, which we had great teams, we made it every year to the playoffs except one of nine years."

Hasek proved much more than that, something that will more than likely be validated with induction to the Hockey Hall of Fame in November.

"For me it's a no-brainer," Ruff said. "I think he definitely stands as one of the best. He was on the cutting edge of the way a lot of goaltenders play. Always looking for a way to be better. He could take a team a long ways with the way he played."

Hasek isn't carrying teams anymore, instead living back home in the Czech Republic and working "a little bit" in hockey and also in business. As much as he'd appreciate it, making the Hall of Fame was never his goal, and that's not his focus even now.

"There are new goals in life and always something new to prove. The hockey career is something what is behind me," Hasek said. "What great years, what fantastic things to do something what you enjoy, what you love to do, and be very well paid and be around the people who you love and spend great time with them. However it's part of the life that every professional player has to retire some day, and you wake up and you enjoy your life different ways."

## **Bolts Play Buffalo In First Of Back-to-Backs**

By John Vogl

Buffalo News

March 28, 2014

It won't be game plans or power plays that transform the Buffalo Sabres from laughingstock to contender. It'll be a major personnel overhaul.

"In order to rebuild and retool, you rebuild and retool with the right people," coach Ted Nolan said. "It's never changed 20 years ago to today. You need the right people with the right makeup with the right character with the right drive and ambition."

There are few signs those people are in Buffalo.

The last-place Sabres are 1-10 in their last 11 games, including a no-show, 6-1 debacle Thursday in Nashville. The Predators shellacked the Sabres with a 4-0 first period, made more disturbing to the coach because the players know they're supposed to be competing for their future.

"They don't give away contracts in the National Hockey League, and they certainly don't want people who are in bottom place," Nolan said.

The Sabres have nine games left on their schedule, starting with tonight against Tampa Bay in First Niagara Center. They have only 12 goals in the last 11 games, remaining on pace to be the worst offensive team since the NHL expanded from the Original Six.

"These are the type of games you're going to find out character," Nolan said. "When you go through some tough moments, that's when character really comes to the forefront – good or bad."

Injuries have played a role in the latest slide, with youngsters coming up to play significant roles. Nolan worries about them because there are few veterans willing to set a path for the new guys to follow.

"When you have a situation like we do, you expect those guys are the ones that will pull an inexperienced team or younger team out of it once in a while," Nolan said. "You don't put them deeper into it. That's what some guys did."

"You don't want them learning what they can learn from that first period. Habits are easy to form, good or bad, and that first period was totally unacceptable."

...

Zemgus Girgensons, who's been out since March 6 because of a lower-body injury, is set to return. He's expected to center for Cody Hodgson and Brian Flynn.

Ville Leino, who left Thursday's game with lightheadedness after skating just 58 seconds, is undergoing tests to determine the cause.

"It was strange what happened to him, so we'll get some doctors to look at him," Nolan said. "It was nothing. He just started not feeling very well. When something like that happens out of the blue, you've got to make sure you're careful with it."

Left wing Marcus Foligno began Thursday's game on the top line with center Tyler Ennis and right wing Drew Stafford. Foligno ended it on the fourth line.

"He can't be pulling up on the blue line," Nolan said of the 6-foot-3, 223-pounder. "You've got to drive that net. You're a big man. Big men don't play a small man's game. You've got to drive. You've got to hit."

"I watched him cut to the center of the ice enough in the first two periods."

Foligno practiced on the third line Friday with center Johan Larsson and right wing Matt D'Agostini. Tyler Myers skipped the workout and will miss his second game since crashing into the goal post Tuesday in Montreal.

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Goaltender Matt Hackett earned the start in Nashville after turning aside 68 of 71 shots during his first two appearances with the Sabres. He gave up four goals on 15 shots against the Predators and was mercifully pulled by Nolan after 20 minutes.

"It's not fun," Hackett said. "I've had a few good games, and then I would take a step back. It's embarrassing for me, and I want to play better than that."

The coach is giving him another chance. Hackett will be in the net again tonight.

"The one thing I really like about him is his competitive spirit," Nolan said. "He's a feisty guy, and he wants back in."

## **Hasek makes peace with the past**

By Amy Moritz

Buffalo News

March 28, 2014

The infamous “no goal” of the 1999 Stanley Cup final still stings for Buffalo sports fans.

Not so much for Dominik Hasek.

Make no mistake, the goaltender was disappointed in the result. All great competitors are. But does it still sting?

“Not so much,” Hasek said. “It’s part of life. You cannot win every game. You cannot win the championship all you want. You try to do the best but sometimes you don’t win.

“We came so close. I know it was disappointing for everyone in the locker room, in the city, but it’s part of your life. Sometimes you win, sometimes you come close and you don’t win it the whole way. It was unfortunate night for us. It was disappointing. ... I believe one day Buffalo will win the Cup. It will be with some other people and this city deserves to win one day. I don’t know when it’s going to happen but one day it will happen.”

Hasek met the media Friday morning in preparation for tonight’s induction into the Buffalo Sabres Hall of Fame. He will be honored in a pregame ceremony at First Niagara Center, around 6:50 p.m.

He also spoke with Ted Nolan for the first time since the two parted ways in 1997.

Nolan and Hasek had some moments of acrimony in the 1996-97 season. The Sabres won the Northeast Division but there was talk that Hasek backed then-General Manager John Muckler, who was feuding with Nolan, causing a riff within the organization.

Hasek ended up not playing for the Sabres in the playoffs with a knee injury and Buffalo was bounced by Philadelphia in the second round.

But all that is water under the bridge.

“I still don’t know what really transpired back then,” said Nolan, who talked with Hasek after the Sabres practiced Friday afternoon. “You know back then is back then. But he looks well. He’s all happy and excited about being back here and we had a nice talk. We had some good times and everybody looks at one incident. One incident doesn’t form a relationship. In the media sometimes I guess we blow things out of proportion and make it worse than it really was and it wasn’t that much. People have disagreements all the time.”

“Whatever happened it’s, what can I say about it,” Hasek said at his news conference before meeting with Nolan. “Sometimes you feel different way than the other person. Sometimes you feel that your decision is better than his decision but I think on the ice the one or two years we were together we’d done a good job for this organization and I’m looking forward to seeing him today and I wish him good luck to improve the Sabres.”

Hasek becomes the 42nd member of the team’s Hall of Fame. Next year he will be the seventh player to have his jersey hung from the rafters when his No. 39 is retired.

It’s another honor in a decorated and prolific career for the goaltender who has two Hart trophies and six Vezina trophies on his resume.

Hasek played for the Sabres from 1992-2001, coming to the organization from the Chicago Blackhawks.

He left the Sabres in 2001 and spent four seasons with the Detroit Red Wings – winning two Stanley Cup championships (2002, 2008), and one with the Ottawa Senators. At the time of his retirement in 2008 he ranked in the top 10 in several statistical categories.

Don’t forget the five NHL All-Star Games and the 1998 Olympic gold medal.

But Hasek said he never played hockey for the individual awards or for the chance to one day have his jersey hanging in the rafters. The honors from the Sabres are humbling and put his hockey career in perspective for Hasek.

“There are new goals in life and always something new to prove,” he said. “The hockey career is something behind me. What great years. What fantastic things, to do something you enjoy, you love to do and be very well paid and be around people you love and spend great time with them. However ... every professional player has to retire one day. You wake and you enjoy your life different ways.”

## **Lightning try to extend point streak against Sabres**

NHL.com

March 28, 2014

LIGHTNING (40-24-9) at SABRES (20-45-8)

TV: SUN, MSG-B

Last 10: Tampa Bay 6-0-4; Buffalo 1-9-0

Season series: This is the fourth game between the Tampa Bay Lightning and Buffalo Sabres. The Lightning won the first two by identical 3-2 scores, with the Sabres winning the most recent, 3-1 March 6.

Big story: Having not yet having clinched a Stanley Cup Playoff berth, the Lightning are hoping to improve a run of points in 10 straight games to solidify their positioning. If Tampa Bay, in third place in the Atlantic Division, can move up a spot, that would mean home-ice advantage in the first round.

Team Scope:

Lightning: A 3-2, 13-round shootout win against the New York Islanders on Thursday gave Tampa Bay two points, but coach Jon Cooper wasn't satisfied with the effort.

"We've got to be better than we were [Thursday] night going into Buffalo because they have obviously shown they haven't mailed in the season," Cooper said after the win. "[The Sabres] are battling their butts off. They beat us a few weeks ago, so we have to be better than we were [Thursday] or it's going to be tough in Buffalo."

Tampa Bay has picked up points in each of its past three road games. After Saturday, the Lightning will play two of their final eight regular-season games away from home.

Sabres: Buffalo has lost 10 of its past 11 games, including their past three at First Niagara Center. Goals have been hard to come by with 12 in those 11 games, including three times being shut out. The Sabres will get forward Zemgus Girgensons back in the lineup after he missed the past 11 games with an undisclosed injury, and coach Ted Nolan said he hopes that will help offensively.

"The one thing we've been experimenting with is Cody Hodgson going on the wing, so we might put Cody on an off wing with Girgensons, and if you look at last time when he was in, the people who played with him had benefited from him," Nolan said after practice Friday. "So maybe this can get Cody some pucks and some chances."

Hodgson has 16 goals this season but hasn't scored since March 6.

Who's hot: Lightning forward Valtteri Filppula has a 10-game point streak (four goals, 10 assists). Forward Ryan Callahan has three goals in his past four games. ... Buffalo has scored three goals in three games, and forward Brian Flynn has two assists.

Injury report: Lightning defenseman Mattias Ohlund (knee) and Brian Lee (knee) are on injured reserve. ... Sabres forwards Chris Stewart (ankle), Torrey Mitchell (lower body), Zenon Konopka (back) and Ville Leino (upper body), defensemen Alexander Sulzer (upper body) and Tyler Myers (upper body) and goalies Michal Neuvirth (lower body) and Jhonas Enroth (leg) are out.

## **Sabres prepare to honor Dominik Hasek**

By Joe Yerdon

NHL.com

March 28, 2014

BUFFALO -- Dominik Hasek was one of the top goalies in the NHL for most of his career. He may have been the best in the world during his nine seasons with the Buffalo Sabres.

The Sabres will induct Hasek into their Hall of Fame on Saturday night; they announced Friday that they will retire his No. 39 next season. Returning to the city where he made his biggest mark as a professional to be honored is something he's taken to heart.

"I'm very excited to be invited to Buffalo to be invited to go into the Buffalo Sabres Hall of Fame, to be among these 51 or 52 people, I'm very appreciative," Hasek said. "To be back in Buffalo to meet and see some friends and people I worked with and spent such a great time with, it always means something for me."

Hasek joined the Sabres on Aug. 7, 1992, when he was acquired from the Chicago Blackhawks. For the next nine seasons, Hasek earned his nickname of "The Dominator" by winning the Hart Trophy as the NHL's most valuable player twice and the Vezina Trophy as the League's top goalie six times.

"I had great years here in Buffalo. I say thank you that I was traded to this city, to this organization in '92 from Chicago," said Hasek, who had 234 wins and a team-record 55 shutouts with the Sabres. "I got a chance to prove, to become starting goalie and after that I had, I don't know, six, seven years, which we had great teams, we made it every year to the playoffs except one of nine years. We had a few good runs, especially '98 and '99 when we made it all the way to the Finals. Unfortunately [we] never made it all the way. But still, it was honor for me to play for this organization and this is something I never forget."

During the 1998-99 season, he helped lead the Sabres to the Stanley Cup Final against the Dallas Stars. The Stars won the Stanley Cup in six games when Brett Hull scored the series-clinching goal in the third overtime. The game-winner was controversial because Hull had his foot in the crease when he fired the puck past Hasek, something the 49-year-old has no bad feelings about today.

"It's part of the life. You cannot win every game, you cannot win the championship -- you want, you try to do the best, but sometimes you don't win, Hasek said. "We came so close. I know that goal, it was disappointing for everyone in the locker room, in the city, but it's part of your life. Sometimes you win, sometimes you come close and you don't win it the whole way.

"It was unfortunate night for us, it was something disappointing, but for me it wasn't end of my life. Now, it's something we never won here in Buffalo for me, so it was disappointing. But life goes on and there are different things. I believe one day Buffalo will win the Cup. It will be with some other people and this city deserves to win one day. I don't know when it's going to happen, but one day it will happen."

Hasek's special night in Buffalo comes during a poor season for the Sabres, one that has Ted Nolan in charge of the team as interim coach.

"If you look what Dominik did for this organization, even with my time here, we had a lot of wins but a lot of wins were based on his goaltending," Nolan said. "He's a world-class goaltender. So to come back here to the city of Buffalo and get recognized for what he has or what he's going to be, it's a good honor. It's good to see him back."

Hasek and Nolan had what could be labeled as a contentious relationship when Nolan coached the team from 1995-97. But both say any issues from the past are gone.

"Whatever happened, what can I say about it? Sometimes you feel a different way than the other person, sometimes you feel that your decision is better than his decisions," Hasek said. "But I think on the ice that one or two years that we were together we done a good job for this organization, and I'm looking forward to seeing him [Friday] and I wish him good luck to improve the Sabres."

There were rumors that Hasek didn't approve of bringing Nolan back to the team when his contract ended after the 1996-97 season. There was also speculation Nolan was angry with Hasek because he wasn't able to play for most of the 1997 Stanley Cup Playoffs after suffering an injury during Game 3 of the Eastern Conference Quarterfinals against the Ottawa Senators.

Backup goalie Steve Shields stepped into the starting role and helped beat the Senators in seven games. The Sabres lost in five games to the Philadelphia Flyers in the Eastern Conference Semifinals and Nolan was replaced by Lindy Ruff during the summer.

Nolan said he spoke to Hasek on Friday afternoon. It was the first time the two have done that since 1997.

"I still don't know what really transpired back then, but back then is back then," Nolan said. "We had a nice talk. We had some good times and everybody looks at one incident, and one incident doesn't form a relationship. In media, I guess, sometimes we blow things way out of proportion and make it look worse than it really was. It really wasn't all that much. People have disagreements all the time."

Hasek was traded by the Sabres to the Detroit Red Wings on July 1, 2001, and went on to win the first of two Stanley Cup championships with the organization in 2002. He also won as the backup to Chris Osgood in 2008. Now all that's left for the Czech Republic native is to be inducted into the Hockey Hall of Fame. He'll be on the ballot for the first time this summer.

"The hockey career is something that is behind me," Hasek said. "What great years, what fantastic things to do something what you enjoy, what you love to do, and be very well paid and be around the people who you love and spend great time with them. However, it's part of the life that every professional player has to retire some day and you wake up and you enjoy your life different ways. I appreciate to be one day, maybe, in the Hockey Hall of Fame. It was never my goal when I was playing hockey. I appreciate, however there are new goals in my life."

## **Atop the League in St. Louis, From the Bottom in Buffalo**

By Jeff Z. Klein  
New York Times  
March 28, 2014

Ryan Miller has been to Sochi and back this year, but in some ways that considerable mileage was nothing compared with the distance he covered going from the Buffalo Sabres to the St. Louis Blues. Miller, one of the N.H.L.'s best goalies, was traded from the last-place Sabres to the first-place Blues on Feb. 28.

“Now with the Blues, there’s good energy,” said Miller, who still sounds as if he cannot quite believe how things have changed. “It’s night in, night out. We’re in games.”

Going into Saturday’s game against the Dallas Stars, the Blues have 107 points and are challenging for the Presidents’ Trophy, which goes to the team finishing first over all in the regular season. The Sabres, who drafted Miller in 1999 and for whom he had played since 2002, have 48 points, 11 fewer than the next-worst team.

Miller, who can be an unrestricted free agent at the end of the season, may be a rental for the Blues, but they hope he will give them a shot at the first Stanley Cup in their 47-year existence.

St. Louis made the Stanley Cup finals in its first three seasons — 1968, 1969 and 1970 — but has made it as far as the conference finals only once since. Miller reached the conference finals twice with Buffalo, in 2006 and ’07, but conceded, “That was a while ago.”

“I was brought in to be a piece,” Miller added. “I don’t think it’s to a point where I have to do anything other than what I normally do — be a consistent, calm goaltender, play a calm game.”

Miller said he was impressed with how efficient the Blues were under Coach Ken Hitchcock, and how patiently the team was built by General Manager Doug Armstrong.

“St. Louis, they’ve learned some lessons, gone through some battles, built their way up to this through the last four or five years,” Miller said. “It’s nice to come into that.”

Miller was by far the best Sabre this season, standing bravely in the crease against a storm of frozen vulcanized rubber. But no matter how well he played, it did not matter; Buffalo could neither defend nor score.

“Unfortunately, in Buffalo the guys get in a position where it wears on you — your confidence is lower,” Miller said. “When things start to go wrong, it’s almost a here-we-go-again type of thing.”

At the time of Miller’s trade, the Sabres were disintegrating off the ice, too. The team was on its second general manager and coach of the season, and the new president, Pat LaFontaine, was embroiled in a behind-the-scenes power struggle.

When the expected trade finally came, Miller struggled to control his emotions at his farewell news conference, even though he had to give his consent to the deal.

“I’m really going to miss this part of the world,” he said at the time, choking back tears.

It seemed as if a part of Miller wished he could stay, but the outlook was too grim for a 33-year-old goalie with championship aspirations.

“I didn’t feel like it was a situation where the timeline of my career was going to align,” he said. “I didn’t want to take that chance and say, ‘I want to be here no matter what.’ There were too many things that had to happen after this trade deadline, after this summer, that would form a clearer picture. What was the ultimate plan for me? It wasn’t clearly out there.”

LaFontaine suddenly resigned a day after the trade to return to his old job at the N.H.L., and has not spoken about why. Many suggested that he resigned because he disapproved of the Miller trade.

Miller said he doubted that, but like most observers, he found the resignation strange.

“He did a great job of shifting the energy,” Miller said of LaFontaine. “I’m very surprised he’s back to his job at the N.H.L. I don’t know — it’s really weird.”

The move to St. Louis did wonders for Miller, who won seven of his first eight starts with the Blues and is 9-2-1 over all. He stopped the puck almost as efficiently as he did in Buffalo, logging a .918 save percentage compared with .923 with the Sabres. But instead of facing 35.5 shots per game, he was now facing fewer than 25.

“If you can clean up 10 shots a night, you’re getting rid of a goal a game,” Miller said. “The Blues have done a great job as a group all year.”

Miller has covered a lot of mileage this season, going from worst to first. But he still has a fair distance to cover.

“Hopefully,” he said, “I’ll make the saves at the right time.”

## **Lightning-Sabres preview**

By Damian Cristodero

Tampa Bay Times

March 29, 2014

Lightning at Sabres

When/where: 7; First Niagara Center, Buffalo, N.Y.

TV/radio: Sun Sports; 970-AM

Key stats: The Lightning has points in 10 straight games (6-0-4). ... With a league-low 48 points and league-fewest 133 goals, the Sabres are statistically the NHL's worst team. ... Lightning C Valtteri Filppula's 10-game points streak (four goals, 10 assists) entered Friday tied for the league's longest active. ... Buffalo entered Friday with a league-worst 20 home losses. ... Since beating the Lightning on March 6, the Sabres are 1-10-0 and have been outscored 34-12.

## **Dominik Hasek and coach Ted Nolan talk for first time since 1997 with Sabres set to honor legendary goalie**

By Bill Hoppe

Olean Times Herald

March 29, 2014

BUFFALO – They hadn't spoken in almost 17 years, since Ted Nolan's first run as coach ended amid speculation Dominik Hasek, his star goalie, had just quit on the Sabres during the playoffs.

The two, who reportedly feuded, never crossed paths again until Friday.

After Nolan was essentially fired following the 1996-97 season, Hasek kept tending perhaps the best goal in NHL history, piling up awards while winning two Stanley Cups. Nolan, meanwhile, had trouble finding another NHL job.

But Nolan's back coaching the rebuilding Sabres, perhaps days away from receiving a contract extension. Hasek, having finally retired, is being inducted into the team's Hall of Fame tonight.

Time, of course, can heal old wounds. Hasek said he was "looking forward to seeing" Nolan.

"I know there was some question, the relationship between me and him, but what can I say?" Hasek, whose No. 39 will be retired next season, said Friday morning inside the First Niagara Center. "I believe he is the coach right now and he will help the team to improve. The team needs to get better."

Following their "nice chat," Nolan said he still doesn't "know what really transpired back then."

"But back then is back then," he said later Friday after the Sabres prepared for tonight's game against the Tampa Bay Lightning. "He looks well and he's all happy and excited about being back here. We had a nice talk. We had some good times. Everybody looks at one incident. One incident doesn't form the relationship.

"But in the media, I guess sometimes we blow things way out of proportion and make it look worse than it really was. It wasn't that much. People have disagreements all the time."

Those disagreements likely cost Nolan, the Jack Adams Award winner for top coach, his job here after a Northeast Division championship season.

"Sometimes you feel (a) different way than the other person," Hasek said. "Sometimes you feel that your decision is better than his decision. But on the ice, the one or two years we were together, we did a good job for this organization."

Much of that success, Nolan said, can be traced to Hasek's dynamic goaltending.

"We had a lot of wins, but a lot of wins were based on his goaltending," he said. "He's a world-class goaltender. To come back here to the city of Buffalo and get recognized the way he has or the way he's going to be, it's a good honor. It's a good to see him back."

Hasek swears he's retired from hockey. Remember, the 49-year-old left the NHL three times. He hasn't played professionally since his one-year stint in the Russian KHL ended in February 2011.

His goalie equipment hasn't left the bag since then, Hasek said. These days, he plays once or twice a week as a defenseman in a rec league back in his native Czech Republic.

"You wake up and you enjoy your life different ways," Hasek said.

Still, retiring wasn't easy. Hasek wanted to return to the NHL during the summer of 2012. The Sabres' old regime even met with him out of respect.

"I was thinking about playing hockey even one year ago," Hasek said. "Before this season I made the decision I'm not going to play professionally anymore."

Honors are starting to accompany Hasek's post-hockey life.

Pardubice, his old Czech club, retired Hasek's number Dec. 1, an official sign he was done, he said. The Sabres announced Friday that No. 39 would become the seventh number retired in franchise history. Hasek will almost certainly become a first-ballot inductee into the Hockey Hall of Fame in June.

Hasek, who's involved a bit in hockey and in some business ventures, said he has always has new goals and something to prove.

"The hockey career is something that is behind me," he said. "What great years."

Hasek still follows the Sabres from afar.

"The Sabres always stay in my heart," he said. "So I know what's going on."

He added: "I always stay very close to the Buffalo people."

The Sabres' sorry state – they're the league's worst team and have lost 11 of the last 13 games – hasn't shaken his belief "one day Buffalo win the Cup."

"It will be with some other people," Hasek said, "and this city deserve to win one day. I don't know when it's going to happen, but one day it will happen."

The Sabres nearly won a championship in 1998-99, when Hasek backstopped them Game 6 of the Stanley Cup final.

The loss doesn't haunt Hasek, who won the Stanley Cup with Detroit in 2002, a year after he demanded the Sabres trade him.

"For me, it wasn't (the) end of my life," Hasek said about the 1999 defeat.

How does Hasek, who won the Vezina Trophy a stunning six times, want to be remembered?

"As a great goalie, as the personal goalie who gave the team (a chance) to win the game," he said.

## **‘Strange’ ailment forced Sabres’ Ville Leino from game; Zemgus Girgensons ready to return**

By Bill Hoppe

Olean Times Herald

March 29, 2014

BUFFALO – Interim Sabres coach Ted Nolan said what happened to forward Ville Leino early in Thursday’s 6-1 loss in Nashville “was strange.”

Leino experienced some lightheadedness and left the game. He didn’t practice Friday.

“He just started not feeling very well,” Nolan said after the Sabres prepared for tonight’s game against the Tampa Bay Lightning inside the First Niagara Center, their first home tilt following an awful 1-4 road trip. “When something like that happens, you got to make sure you’re careful with it.”

Nolan said doctors were examining Leino, who has zero goals in 52 games this season.

“Hopefully, he’s OK,” Nolan said.

In other injury news, center Zemgus Girgensons will return tonight after a lower-body injury sidelined him 11 games. The rookie practiced beside Brian Flynn and Cody Hodgson, a regular center, Friday. Nolan has been skating the struggling Hodgson on the wing occasionally.

Meanwhile, defenseman Tyler Myers, who crashed into the net Tuesday, didn’t practice Friday and is out tonight. Nolan said Myers is still sore.

Nolan said goalie Matt Hackett will start tonight. Hackett was yanked Thursday following two strong starts.

“We didn’t give him much help, much support last time,” Nolan said. “The one thing I’ve really like about him, I like his competitive spirit. He’s a feisty guy. He wants back in.”

## **Bolts Play Buffalo In First Of Back-to-Backs**

By Missy Zielinski

Lightning.com

March 28, 2014

LIGHTNING (40-24-9, 89 points) vs. SABRES (20-45-8, 48 points)

TV/Radio:

SUN; AM 970 WFLA

Last 10: Tampa Bay 6-0-4; Buffalo 1-9-0

Season Series:

The Lightning has won two of three contests versus the Buffalo Sabres this season heading into Saturday night. In their most recent game however, Sabres netminder Jhonas Enroth spoiled Ryan Callahan's Lightning debut and Steven Stamkos' return to the lineup with a 3-1 victory at the Tampa Bay Times Forum on March 6.

Big Story:

After losing five out of their last six games that have been decided in a shootout, including being scoreless in the past 15 rounds, the Lightning defeated the New York Islanders in the 13th round of a shootout Thursday.

Team Scope:

LIGHTNING – Points are paramount down the stretch for the Bolts, who put an emphasis on winning the game without going to a shootout after a shootout loss to the Ottawa Senators Monday. A slow start kept the Lightning struggling to keep pace with the New York Islanders Thursday, who were reinvigorated by a number of fresh faces on their roster.

The Lightning eventually won, again in a shootout, but they were not particularly happy with the outcome.

"They're not all Picassos," head coach Jon Cooper said. "We have to be better."

Tampa Bay will surely keep Thursday's performance in mind, as they currently sit two points behind the Montreal Canadiens in third place in the Atlantic Division standings with two games in hand. Whoever finishes in second place will have home ice advantage in the first round of the postseason, while the third-place team will start the playoffs on the road.

SABRES – The last time Buffalo faced the Bolts, Enroth was defending his spot as the starting netminder after the Sabres dealt fellow goaltender Ryan Miller and acquired Michal Neuvirth at the trade deadline. Now the Sabres top two goalies remain sidelined with ailments. With Enroth and Neuvirth out, Matt Hackett and Nathan Lieuwen have been recalled.

The injuries in net are just two of a total of six injuries that have occurred on the Sabres roster since the trade deadline.

It has led Buffalo to a 1-9-0 skid over their last 10, including a 6-1 rout by the Nashville Predators Thursday. Interim head coach Ted Nolan expressed his disappointment with the Sabres' performance, especially since many of them will be fighting for NHL contracts come the 2014-15 campaign.

Who's Hot:

Forward Ryan Callahan netted two goals Thursday and now has four goals, four assists and is a plus-3 in 11 games with the Bolts. Valtteri Filppula extended his career-high 10-game point streak with a secondary assist Thursday. His streak is tied (Tyler Seguin) for the longest active streak in the NHL (as of Friday afternoon).

Transactions:

3/20 – Signed free agent forward Cody Kuniyuki to a one year, two-way contract

Injury Report:

Lightning – D Brian Lee (knee, out); Sabres – Zemgus Girgensons (undisclosed), Chris Stewart (lower body), Alexander Sulzer (upper body), Michal Neuvirth (lower body), Jhonas Enroth (lower body), Zenon Konopka (back)