



Buffalo Sabres

Daily Press Clips

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Sabres-Blues Preview

Associated Press

April 2, 2014

Ryan Miller's first shutout with the St. Louis Blues wowed his coach and teammates.

It's a feeling the Buffalo Sabres used to know well.

Miller, however, is not expected to start Thursday night with Brian Elliott set to get the nod when the Blues host the Sabres.

The star goalie stopped 31 shots and kept the net empty in a shootout Tuesday in a 1-0 victory over Philadelphia. Miller recorded his first shutout since March, 21, 2012, with Buffalo.

"It's been awhile since I had a shutout so it felt good to finish the job and keep building the right way towards the playoffs," Miller said.

Miller is 10-3-1 with a 2.01 goals-against average and .920 save percentage since the Sabres (21-45-9) traded him March 1 along with Steve Ott for goalie Jaroslav Halak, forward Chris Stewart, prospect William Carrier and two draft picks.

St. Louis (51-17-7) won't be welcoming any of its former players back since Halak was traded by Buffalo to Washington and Stewart is out with a high ankle sprain.

Miller also won't face his former team since Hitchcock has decided to turn to Elliott, who is 8-1-0 with a 2.08 GAA in nine home starts this season. Elliott is 8-0-2 with a 1.67 GAA versus the Sabres.

"We've talked to both goalies. They know that there's going to be a schedule," Hitchcock said. "We still have some flexibility based on the opponent and where we are standings-wise, but we want to make sure that both guys get what they need."

Miller didn't seem to mind since his voice cracked at times when the trade was announced. He is Buffalo's franchise leader with 284 victories and 540 games.

"This year, I am pretty fresh leaving that situation so maybe it's a nice little break and get Ells in there and he's going to kick some pucks out," Miller said, "and hopefully I'll maybe see some of the boys for dinner or see them around the rink or something, catch up and see how they're doing."

St. Louis leads Colorado by seven points for the Central Division title and is chasing Boston in the Presidents' Trophy race.

Buffalo, in contrast, continues to rebuild with young players. One of them is rookie Nathan Lieuwen, who made his third start and earned his first victory with 33 saves Tuesday in a 3-2 shootout win over New Jersey.

"The one word that Teddy (coach Ted Nolan) keeps using is compete," Lieuwen said. "I just went out there and competed. Good things happened."

Tyler Ennis scored twice, with Drew Stafford assisting both times as the Sabres ended an 0-3-1 slide.

Brenden Morrow scored twice past Miller and Stewart had two assists for the Blues in a 4-1 victory at Buffalo on Nov. 19. St. Louis has won 13 of the last 15 meetings.

Ott has two points in 16 games with the Blues after he had 20 in 59 for the Sabres. He has gone eight straight games without one.

"We'll see what he comes up with," St. Louis center Derek Roy said of Ott facing his former team. "But every game he's got something and every game he's running his mouth so that gets the bench fired up and it's good for us."

Sabres sign Wisconsin D McCabe to 3-year deal

Associated Press

April 2, 2014

BUFFALO, N.Y. (AP) -- Defenseman Jake McCabe has given up playing his senior year at Wisconsin by signing a three-year contract with the Buffalo Sabres.

The Sabres announced the move on Wednesday, a day after general manager Tim Murray raised the likelihood of signing McCabe. Buffalo selected the 20-year-old in the second round of the 2012 NHL draft.

McCabe is coming off a season in which he earned first-team Big Ten honors with a career-best 25 points (eight goals, 17 assists) in 33 games.

Last year, he was captain of the U.S. team that won the gold medal at the World Junior championships in Russia.

Miller will have to wait to fend off Sabres' shots

By Mike Harrington

Buffalo News

April 2, 2014

HAZELWOOD, Mo. — There will be a first time for Ryan Miller to face the Buffalo Sabres someday. He said here Wednesday he's particularly looking forward to the day he returns to First Niagara Center next season.

But as for trying to thwart his old Blue & Gold tonight in Scottrade Center, the St. Louis Blues goaltender — and yes, that does sound and look weird — will be taking the night off.

Brian Elliott, and not Miller, will be in goal for the Blues tonight against Buffalo. St. Louis is trying to catch Boston for the Presidents' Trophy and stay ahead of Anaheim and San Jose in the Western Conference. Tonight is a rare breather in the schedule, as the Blues have matinee showdowns here Saturday against Colorado and Sunday at Chicago.

Miller has to be ready for those.

"It's fine. There will be a lot of time to worry about that later," Miller said about a Buffalo reunion following practice Wednesday in the suburban St. Louis Mills Ice Zone. "This year, I'm pretty fresh leaving that situation so maybe it's just a nice little break. Get 'Ells' in there. He's going to kick some pucks out. Hopefully I'll see some of the boys for dinner or around the rink or something. Catch up and see how they're doing."

The Blues were prepared to defer to Miller on this one, but he opted for the much bigger picture.

"We talked to him and said, 'Listen, do you have to play against Buffalo? Does it matter?'" said coach Ken Hitchcock. "He didn't care one way or the other. So it set up our schedule nicely for what we wanted to do right to the end of the season."

Miller got a little emotional when asked what it will be like to see his old teammates on the other bench.

"It's going to be a little strange," he said with a small crack in his voice. "Definitely with a group of guys you'd played with for a number of years, it's going to be a little bit different. All great guys, all guys I count as friends. I'm looking forward to seeing them. That's the human side of it."

While Miller will sit, former Buffalo captain Steve Ott is itching to get going for his first game against his old team. Ott sat out Wednesday's optional skate and

had already left the building when reporters entered the Blues locker room, but he told The News by phone he's extra hyped.

"I'm looking forward to it a lot, but I'm trying to take it like any game where you have friends out there," Ott said. "I'm just going to be myself and I expect them to be the same. There's no friends on the ice, but what's said and done on the ice stays there and gets forgotten pretty quick.

"I'm going to play hard against them and expect them to play hard at me. You owe that to the league."

Ott wouldn't specify who on the Buffalo roster he thinks might try to match him chirp for chirp. He said he and former Sabre Cody McCormick shared a couple smirks when they bumped during a recent St. Louis-Minnesota game.

"Nothing major there. It was all good," Ott said.

"I hope none of the boys start trying to wake him up too much," a smiling Miller said of the Sabres. "You know how he gets when he gets really awake. I don't think anybody is going to try to give him too hard a time. He likes to stir things up. I'm sure he's going to be running his mouth a little bit and getting into guys."

Miller is coming off perhaps his best performance as a Blue, Tuesday's 1-0 shootout win over Philadelphia that saw him make 31 saves in the game and two more in the shootout. He's 10-3-2 since the Feb. 28 trade to St. Louis, with a glossy 2.01 goals-against average and .920 save percentage.

But until Tuesday, Miller had allowed three or more goals in four of his previous five starts. The shutout was his first since March 21, 2012 against Montreal, the longest active drought for an NHL starter.

"I've seen it a few times and not many goalies can win a game almost on his own like 'Millsy' can," Ott said. "And he was there right from the first five minutes making some great saves."

Miller lost several shutouts the last couple of years in Buffalo on goals late in third periods. He knew he couldn't afford that this time.

"That probably helped a little bit," he said. "It was not just for that little bonus at the end. It was really for the victory. This team keeps showing me they're willing to grind and play hard in the corners, and I've got to show I can grind out a game too as part of our ongoing relationship."

Miller said he offered Elliott some tips on how to play Pittsburgh shooters during a recent game and would be available for advice on Buffalo skaters, particularly during a shootout. Will Elliott pick Miller's brain a lot otherwise on his old team?

“No, his brain is too complicated,” Elliott joked. “I just like to keep it simple, play my own game and wait for the puck to come to me.”

A win tonight would be St. Louis' 52nd of the season, breaking the franchise mark of 51 set in 1999-2000. Those Blues won the Presidents' Trophy with 114 points but were upset in the first round of the playoffs in seven games by San Jose.

The other former Sabres on the Blues' roster, Derek Roy and Jordan Leopold, will both play tonight. Roy has nine goals and 28 assists on the season, but no goals in the last 15 games. Leopold (one goal, five assists) will return after an 18-game absence due to an ankle injury and illness.

Sabres face old teammates

By John Vogl

Buffalo News

April 2, 2014

Tyler Ennis never left any wiggle room when it came to Ryan Miller while the two were teammates. That hasn't changed now that they're opponents.

"I still think he's the best goalie in the world," Ennis said. "The five years I was here I don't think I scored on him many times in practice."

The Buffalo center won't score on Miller in a game, either, but it has nothing to do with his talent. Miller won't be in net tonight when he welcomes his old team to St. Louis.

The bad news for Buffalo is Miller's 19 teammates will play. The Blues boast the second-best record in the NHL, while the Sabres ... well, you know where the Sabres are.

But this game has nothing to do with matchups for the Sabres. It's about catching up with old friends, specifically Miller and former captain Steve Ott.

"It's exciting to play against old teammates," defenseman Mike Weber said. "Millsie being such a big part of our organization for years and Otter being our captain, it's going to be fun to see those guys."

Since the duo was traded in late February, Weber has texted with Miller and talked with Ott, who's essentially a brother because they lived together in juniors. Weber can sense the excitement brought about by the move.

"They both love it. It's a different atmosphere, different culture," said Weber, who is equally excited for Ott. "You play in this league to win a Stanley Cup. As hard as he's battled for his whole career, for him to get that opportunity to have a chance to compete for the Stanley Cup, that's huge for him."

"He's been close a couple of times, so it's awesome for him. If he plays the way he can, I don't know who else can take them."

Other Sabres agree St. Louis will be the team to beat once the playoffs start.

"They've got a powerhouse team over there," forward Cody Hodgson said. "It's going to be different seeing them on the other side of the ice and trying to beat them."

One Buffalo player will skate without connections to the departed Sabres. Defenseman Jake McCabe, selected in the second round of the 2012 NHL Draft, is expected to make his professional debut.

The Sabres signed McCabe to a three-year deal potentially worth \$2.775 million Thursday. He'll make the rookie maximum of \$925,000 per season. The clock ticks immediately on the deal because he's 20 years old, so the first year will consist of the remaining seven games.

McCabe elected to join the Sabres rather than return for his senior year at the University of Wisconsin.

The alternate captain led Badgers defensemen with eight goals and 25 points in 36 games this season.

"Thank you everyone for the overwhelming support," McCabe wrote on Twitter. "Want to also thank UW for the best three years of my life, very excited for this opportunity!"

Goaltender Miller sits as Sabres visit Blues

By David Kalan

NHL.com

April 2, 2014

SABRES (21-45-9) at BLUES (51-17-7)

TV: MSG-B, BELL TV, FS-MW

Last 10: Buffalo 2-7-1; St. Louis 7-3-0

Season series: The St. Louis Blues won their only previous game this season against the Buffalo Sabres 4-1 at Scottrade Center on Nov. 19, 2013. This will be the last time they meet.

Big story: Facing his former team for the first time since being traded on Feb. 28, Ryan Miller isn't expecting to see much action. Goaltender Brian Elliott will start for St. Louis, which is looking to keep pace in the Presidents' Trophy race while closing in on its second division title in three seasons.

Team Scope:

Sabres: Six of Buffalo's seven remaining games are against teams in the thick of the playoff hunt. So the Sabres will look to play spoiler, a role they enjoyed Tuesday night when they edged the New Jersey Devils 3-2 in a nine-round shootout.

The win came in coach Ted Nolan's first game after signing a contract extension that formally dropped the "interim" tag from his title. It was also the first NHL win for goalie Nathan Lieuwen.

"I felt like I belong here," said Lieuwen, who stopped 33 of 35 shots. "That's a great feeling, when you're in the NHL and you can tell yourself that you belong here and you can play at this level and you can do really well at this level."

The Sabres' visit to St. Louis opens a three-game road trip. Five of their final seven games will be away from Buffalo.

Blues: The decision to start Elliott instead of Miller is likely a result of the Blues' grueling final schedule. While The Sabres are looking to 2014-15, St. Louis is a Stanley Cup contender that is nipping at the Boston Bruins' heels in the chase for the League's best record. Overtaking Boston could be tricky, however, as all of St. Louis' remaining games after Thursday are against teams in playoff position or still within striking distance. So the last-place Sabres may be the last opportunity for Blues coach Ken Hitchcock to give Miller a night off before the regular season ends.

Miller is 10-3-1 with a 2.01 goals-against average since joining the Blues and was stellar in St. Louis' last game on Tuesday night, stopping 31 shots in a 1-0 shootout win against the Philadelphia Flyers.

"He was terrific," Ken Hitchcock said of Miller. "He was focused and competitive and whatever else we needed of him. We needed him badly."

Who's hot: Sabres forward Tyler Ennis scored two goals against the Devils on Tuesday. ... Blues forward Alexander Steen has three goals and four assists in the past five games.

Injury report: Sabres forward Nicolas Deslauriers is likely to be back after missing the team's win against the Devils for the birth of his child. Forwards Torrey Mitchell (undisclosed) and Zenon Konopka (back) and defenseman Alexander Sulzer (upper body) are all questionable. Goalie Jhonas Enroth (leg) is not expected to be back while defenseman Tyler Myers (upper body), goalie Michal Neuvirth (lower body) and forward Chris Stewart (ankle) are all out. ... Blues defenseman Jordan Leopold (ankle) is questionable and forward Vladimir Tarasenko (hand) is out.

Blues' Miller happy to see Sabres, not play them

By Louie Korac

NHL.com

April 2, 2014

HAZELWOOD, Mo. -- When the Buffalo Sabres traded goalie Ryan Miller to the St. Louis Blues on Feb. 28, it ended nearly 15 years of Miller playing for the only NHL organization he knew.

So when Miller's new team and old team play for the first time since the trade Thursday at Scottrade Center, he'll be on the bench; Brian Elliott will make the start instead.

"It's fine," Miller said after practice Wednesday. "There will be a lot of time to worry about that later. This year it's pretty fresh leaving that situation, so maybe it's just a full break, get [Elliott] in there.

"Hopefully I get to see some of the boys for dinner or see them around the rink, catch up and see how they're doing."

Watching the Sabres without being part of the group will be something different for Miller. He was drafted by Buffalo in the fifth round (No. 138) of the 1999 NHL Draft and made his NHL debut with the Sabres during the 2002-03 season. He ranks as the franchise's all-time leader in games played (540) and wins (284).

"It's going to be a little strange," Miller said. "There were a group of guys I played with for a number of years. It's going to be a little bit different but all great guys, all guys I count as friends. I'm looking forward to seeing them.

"On the human side of it I'm glad the guys are going to be in town. A chance to see some friends."

Asked if he picked Miller's brain about shooters from his former team, Elliott said, "No, his brain's too complicated. I just like to keep it simple, play my own game, and wait for the puck to come to me and worry about the rest later."

Though leaving Miller on the bench removes some of the drama from the game, the Blues and Miller are looking at the big picture. With upcoming games against Central Division rivals Colorado Avalanche and Chicago Blackhawks in back-to-back games Saturday and Sunday, the Blues have larger goals in mind, such as a division title, the top spot in the Western Conference and perhaps the Presidents' Trophy.

To accomplish all that they'll need Miller down the stretch and into the Stanley Cup Playoffs.

"We're not trying to get too far ahead, but definitely trying to be playing the right way leading into the playoffs," Miller said. "For me [a 1-0 shootout victory against the Philadelphia Flyers on Tuesday] was a good step forward. I just want to keep making the steps necessary. Hopefully we're where we all need to be. It doesn't have to be perfect hockey but it needs to be the right kind of hockey. We have to have a good attitude and the belief in this locker room."

Blues coach Ken Hitchcock has a plan for Miller and Elliott for the rest of the regular season, but he did talk to Miller before opting to go with Elliott against the Sabres.

"We talked to [Miller] and said, 'Listen, do you have to play against Buffalo? Does it matter?'" Hitchcock said. "He didn't care one way or the other, so it set up our schedule nicely for what we wanted to do right to the end of the season. This set our schedule up and that's what we're going to follow through on."

Steve Ott, who came to St. Louis from the Sabres along with Miller, will play against the Sabres. He spent parts of two seasons in Buffalo, and was captain this season.

"I hope none of the [Sabres] try to wake him up too much," Miller joked of Ott. "You know how he gets when he gets really awake."

"I don't think anybody's going to try and give him too hard of a time. He likes to stir things up. I'm sure he's going to be running his mouth a little bit. That's how we have fun."

There will be much more meaning for Miller when he has to return to Buffalo and the First Niagara Center as a visiting player.

"It's always weird when you play your former team," said Blues forward Derek Roy, another former Sabre who faced Buffalo earlier this season at First Niagara Center for the first time. "It's even more weird when you play in the opposite building and sit in the opposite bench. Going back to Buffalo was kind of weird for me and I'm sure it's going to be weird for him."

"When that comes around, we'll look forward to that," Miller said.

Blues goalie Ryan Miller won't play against old Sabres teammates

By Bill Hoppe

Olean Times Herald

April 3, 2014

Sorry, Buffalo fans. Thirty-four days after the blockbuster trade between the Sabres and Blues, star goalie Ryan Miller has earned a well-deserved break tonight against his old club in St. Louis.

Backup Brian Elliott will replace Miller.

Of course, the Blues also have former captain Steve Ott, another key piece of the deal. Expect the agitating winger, who didn't practice Wednesday, to have some fun and try to get under the Sabres' skin.

"I hope none of the boys start trying to wake him up too much," Miller told reporters Wednesday in St. Louis. "You know how he gets when he gets really awake. So I don't think anybody's going to try to give him too hard a time.

"But he likes to stir things up. I'm sure he's going to be running his mouth a little bit and trying to get into guys. That's how he has fun."

Miller said he's fine sitting against the he team left Feb. 28 after 12 years.

"I'm pretty fresh leaving that situation so maybe it's just a nice little break, get Els in there," he said. "He's going to kick some pucks out. Hopefully, maybe see some of the boys for dinner or see them around the rink or something, catch up, see how they're doing."

Still, seeing his old friends is "going to be a little strange," Miller said.

"Definitely, with the group of guys I played with a number of years, it's going to be a little different," he said. "But all great guys, all guys I count as friends. So I'm looking forward to seeing the human side of it. I'm actually excited some guys are going to be in town, a chance to see some friends."

Miller played arguably his best game with the Blues on Tuesday, stopping 31 shots in a 1-0 shootout win against Philadelphia, his first shutout since March 21, 2012, a 101-game stretch.

"It was kind of a grind," Miller said about the game. "It's something where this team, they keep showing me they're willing to grind and play hard in the corners. I got to show them I could grind out a game, too. It's part of our ongoing relationship. We kind of build a relationship with the boys in here. I got to show I can play the type of game they need some nights."

Overall, Miller is 10-3-1 with a 2.01 goals-against average and .920 save percentage in 14 games since the trade. The Blues have 51 wins and 109 points, Western Conference highs.

Notes: The Sabres had Wednesday off. ... Former Sabres defenseman Jordan Leopold (ankle) is expected to play his first game since Feb. 8 for the Blues. ... Sabres coach Ted Nolan on seeing Miller and Ott: "They're on a very good team right now and a type of team that we want to build into. So it'll be good to see those two guys and play against them."

Badgers men's hockey: UW defenseman Jake McCabe passes up senior season, signs with Buffalo

By Andy Baggot

Wisconsin State Journal

April 3, 2014

Since Mike Eaves became the University of Wisconsin men's hockey coach in 2002, he's had 18 underclassmen depart school early to turn pro.

Some have been more prepared than others. Eaves said the latest to leave, junior defenseman Jake McCabe, is among the most ready to play at the next level.

McCabe signed a three-year contract Wednesday with Buffalo, the NHL club that drafted him in the second round in 2012. He immediately left Madison to join the Sabres in St. Louis, where he's expected to make his debut tonight.

"There's going to be a transition time, but of all our guys, physically and mentally, he's as ready as anyone who's ever left," Eaves said.

McCabe, a 6-foot-1, 210-pounder from Eau Claire, is coming off a season in which he finished fifth on the Badgers in scoring with 25 points (8 goals, 17 assists) and was a first-team all-Big Ten Conference selection.

Eaves said the deal McCabe received from Buffalo was so enticing — a max contract worth \$925,000 annually — "it would be ludicrous for us to say, no, he should stay."

Still, Eaves described the loss of McCabe as a "double-whammy" because not only was he going to be a workhorse on the blue line, he was the heir apparent to be captain.

McCabe didn't immediately return a text message seeking comment.

Now that the Badgers have lost at least one underclassman for nine straight offseasons, Eaves is waiting to see if another shoe drops.

On the heels of losing nine seniors as well as McCabe, Eaves said he's still waiting to see what happens to sophomore winger Nic Kerdiles, a second-round NHL draft pick of Anaheim.

Kerdiles was the No. 2 scorer for UW last season, finishing with 38 points (15 goals, 23 assists) even though he missed 10 games.

"He's going through the same process (as McCabe)," Eaves said of weighing the pros and cons with his family. "He said he'd let us know as soon as possible."

There is no obvious candidate to wear the “C” for the Badgers next season. Nor is there an easy way to get around the fact that they’ve lost talent that scored 72 of 120 goals in 2013-14.

If Kerdiles turns pro, it would leave junior center Joseph LaBate (11-10-21) as the lone double-figure goal-scorer for 2014-15.

“We’ve lived through it before,” Eaves said. “We know what we’re getting into.”

Here are the underclassmen that have left the University of Wisconsin men’s hockey program to turn pro since Mike Eaves became coach in 2002.

2003-04: Defenseman Ryan Suter. 2005-06: Winger Robbie Earl; center Joe Pavelski. 2006-07: Defenseman Joe Piskula; winger Jack Skille. 2007-08: Center Kyle Turris. 2008-09: Defenseman Jamie McBain. 2009-10: Defenseman Cody Goloubef; defenseman Ryan McDonagh; defenseman Brendan Smith; center Derek Stepan. 2010-11: Defenseman Jake Gardiner; winger Jordy Murray; center Craig Smith. 2011-12: Winger Jason Clark; defenseman Justin Schultz. 2012-13: Center Brendan Woods. 2013-14: Defenseman Jake McCabe.

Sabres player speaks German with students

By Emily Lenihan

WIVB

April 2, 2014

BUFFALO, N.Y. (WIVB) - Buffalo Sabres player Christian Ehrhoff paid a special visit this week to some local students, learning his native language. It's natural for Ehrhoff to talk about his hometown in Germany, in the language he grew up speaking.

Ehrhoff said, "You know it's fun, it's a great program they have here and for me, it's easy to come out and support them and talk a little bit in German."

For these students in the Lake Shore German Language Program, listening to Ehrhoff is a real treat.

Sophia Koenig said, "Oh I was so excited, I was freakin' out."

Koenig is one of the lucky few who got to stand next to Ehrhoff and ask him a question, in German, about his life. She plays hockey too, so naturally she asked him who his favorite player was growing up.

Koenig said, "He said Wayne Gretzky at first, and I mean everybody's favorite hockey player is Wayne Gretzky at one point or another."

Collin Woods said, "What he likes most about Germany, and what he misses. He misses the Audobon a lot, cause he gets to go really fast."

Not only did Woods ask Ehrhoff a question, he was also one of just four students who played in a mock shoot out, with Ehrhoff passing the puck.

Woods ended up winning the "shootout," but every student in this gym went home with something exciting to talk about.