



# **Buffalo Sabres**

## **Daily Press Clips**

*October 18, 2014*

## **Panthers' Luongo gets 67th shutout, 1-0 vs. Sabres**

By Nick Mendola

Associated Press

October 17, 2014

BUFFALO, N.Y. (AP) — The Buffalo Sabres just can't seem to score against Roberto Luongo

Luongo stopped 26 shots for his 67th career shutout — fourth against Buffalo — to lead the Florida Panthers to a 1-0 win over the Sabres on Friday night for their first victory of the season.

Luongo, who moved past Patrick Roy into sole possession of 13th place on the career shutouts list, extended his scoreless streak against the Sabres to 183 minutes, 19 seconds.

"It's crazy," Luongo said. "I don't know if it's a comfort level thing or whatnot, but it's nice especially to get our first win like that."

Sean Bergenheim scored in the second period for the game's only goal, sending an odd-angled wrist shot between Mike Weber's legs and past Sabres goalie Jhonas Enroth.

Enroth finished with 34 saves for Buffalo.

Florida coach Gerard Gallant got his first win with the Panthers.

"It's good," Gallant said. "It's not fun when you lose but it's a fresh year. Still a bit of a slower start but this is a big road trip to get things going the right way."

The Panthers had the first six shots of the game before Buffalo went on a power play and forced Luongo into his first two saves of the night.

A giveaway in his own slot by Marcus Foligno gave Tomas Fleischmann a 1-on-1 with Enroth midway through the first, but the Sabres' goalie made a right pad save to keep the game scoreless.

Luongo was called upon to make a pair of close-range shots on Matt Moulson early in the second.

Foligno had a wraparound attempt in the third period's first minute, but Luongo slid over to stop the puck with his left pad.

"You got that guy back there and your team is so much more confident," said Panthers defenseman Erik Gudbranson. "He made really good saves all night. It's amazing how he tracks the puck within those scrambles and is able to come up with pretty key saves."

The Sabres wasted a prime opportunity when they had a 5-on-3 power play for 49 seconds in the third period. Luongo made a pair of saves before Erik Gudbranson's penalty expired, then three more by the time Chris Stewart ended the power play by taking down Upshall in the slot.

"(Luongo) made four, five saves in the third period, like real key saves for us," Gallant said. "Especially that 3-on-5 when the guys did a great job killing that so those were definitely key points in the hockey game and I thought our group stood up real good."

Buffalo again had a slow start, with just three first-period shots on goal, and failed to build on Tuesday's win in Carolina.

"We're definitely not happy," Sabres coach Ted Nolan said. "No one's going to help us get out of this thing except for ourselves. We got a good group of guys. We just got to learn we have to compete and we have to work. We're not a fancy team."

With Florida's Aaron Ekblad and Buffalo's Sam Reinhart, the game also marked the earliest season match-up between the NHL's No. 1 and No. 2 draft picks since 1997, when Boston's Joe Thornton and San Jose's Patrick Marleau faced off.

Luongo, drafted No. 4 overall that year, began the day with a 1.93 goals against average, .938 save percentage in 19 career games against the Sabres.

He shut out the Sabres in his first game with Florida on March 7 after blanking Buffalo with Vancouver exactly a year ago.

The Sabres haven't scored against the Panthers in 132:24, dating back three games to Jan. 21.

Florida has now won four straight games against the Sabres, and four straight in Buffalo.

The Sabres have lost all three home games to start the season after losing their first nine last season, a franchise worst.

"When things ain't going good, our confidence kind of lacks a little bit," Nolan said. "I don't think we put two passes together all night long. Our confidence is a little bit rattled."

## **Lethargic Sabres fall prey to Panthers**

By Mike Harrington

Buffalo News

October 17, 2014

It was a Friday night, the end of the work week. Who among us couldn't use a little snooze?

The Buffalo Sabres sure seemed to feel that way for at least the first 40 minutes Friday. The problem, of course, was they were supposed to be wide awake.

Pity the folks at First Niagara Center who have endured three home games and have seen the Sabres score just two goals so far while losing all of them. The latest was a 1-0 loss to the Florida Panthers before an announced crowd of 17,864.

Sean Bergenheim, an annual Sabres-killer from his days with the New York Islanders, got the only goal at 3:01 of the second period by taking a pass from former Sabre Brad Boyes and using a Mike Weber screen to whip the puck under Jhonas Enroth. It gave the Panthers (1-2-1) their first win under new coach Gerard Gallant.

The Sabres (1-4) were coming off Tuesday night's extended shootout triumph in Carolina, but carried over none of that momentum. They were outshot, 16-3, in a scoreless first period, had no shot attempts for nearly seven minutes and no shots at even strength for more than 16 minutes.

Coach Ted Nolan said his team played like a bunch of peewees in Monday's stinker here against Anaheim and got a much better effort from his players Tuesday. Things reverted Friday.

"I learned last time I can't say how I feel," said a grim-faced Nolan, a reference to the way his peewee comment quickly spread across North America via social media. "But we're not happy. We're definitely not happy."

"It's just in the mind-set," said center Zemgus Girgensons. "It's nothing to do with skill or anything. We have to come to the rink to be prepared for the first period right away."

The Sabres seemed allergic to winning most one-on-one battles for the puck. Passes were routinely behind teammates or at their feet instead of on their stick. Giveaways were too numerous to count, especially in the first period.

"If we don't compete and we don't work, we're not a fancy team and can't rely on our skill to get us out of trouble," Nolan said. "When things aren't going good, your confidence kind of lacks a little bit and I don't think we put two good passes together all night long."

"We should be the team that comes out hard, especially when we play here in Buffalo," Enroth said. "That's not good enough."

The Sabres continue to have goals from just four players: Girgensons, Marcus Foligno, Tyler Ennis and Torrey Mitchell. They have none from their defensemen.

The fans got into the game in the last 10 minutes, imploring the team to get the tying goal. And the Sabres did press in the third period better than any of the previous four games with a 14-8 edge in shots on goal that cut Florida's final margin to 35-26.

The power play had some good moments, producing eight shots on goal, but the Sabres suffered through an 0-for-5 night that dropped them to 0 for 15 thus far on the season.

"The third period was the best effort," Girgensons said. "The first period was unacceptable to see 16-3."

The Sabres' best chance to get even came when they controlled the zone with a two-man advantage for 49 seconds early in the third period. Tyler Myers had two shots, both corralled by Florida goalie Roberto Luongo, two others were blocked and a fifth went wide.

Luongo posted his third straight shutout against Buffalo, including one here with Vancouver exactly a year ago Friday and one in Florida in March in his first game with the Panthers.

"There were definitely some chances on the five-on-three and our third period was our best, so you have to build on that," said Cody Hodgson, who took over at a point slot on the power play.

The Sabres won't have much time to figure it out because the Boston Bruins were already in town for tonight's game here. And they'll be ornery, with a 2-4 record after Thursday's 6-4 loss in Montreal. Old Sabres nemesis Milan Lucic got fined \$5,000 by the NHL Friday for gestures toward the Montreal crowd late in the game as he entered the penalty box.

## **Sabres notebook: Position shuffle doesn't faze Hodgson**

By Amy Mortiz

Buffalo News

October 17, 2014

He doesn't really care where he plays. Just put him in the lineup. He'll adjust.

Cody Hodgson started this season with the Buffalo Sabres playing left wing – a position at which he excelled playing for Team Canada in the World Championships this summer.

The momentum did not carry over to the start of the NHL season, so coach Ted Nolan moved Hodgson back to center.

"Honestly I just like playing, no matter where," Hodgson said Friday morning. "Center or wing. Left wing or right wing. It doesn't matter. I'm playing with good players no matter where I play. It didn't work out at wing right away but you never know. It could go back to that."

In his first three games, Hodgson had no points, one shot and was a minus-4 while playing left wing.

Tuesday at Carolina, Hodgson found some chemistry with Chris Stewart and Marcus Foligno, picking up an assist while taking three shots.

Hodgson stayed at center of that line in Friday at First Niagara Center. He had one shot and was a minus-1 as the Sabres lost, 1-0, to the Florida Panthers.

Hodgson finds the differences between wing and center subtle, more a case of understanding your duties and, always, communicating with teammates.

"I think it's just your positioning first of all," Hodgson said. "When you're coming into the zone if you're not the first guy back, making sure you look behind you instead of in front of you."

"As a centerman, you want to pick out the guys who are usually in front of you down low so you work with the D-man whereas as a winger you're working with people behind you, the offensive team behind you and then also working with your center on interchange. You gotta get in the shooting lanes right away, first in on the forecheck. You want to eliminate the guy right away instead of reading."

"It's different situations but either way, it doesn't take too much of an adjustment once you've done it a few times."

If the wing-center shuffle isn't much of an adjustment, there's the move to the point on the power play for Hodgson.

Shooting is more of a priority now, especially for the right-handed shot on a Sabres power play unit that normally sets up on the right side. Hodgson moves from being a passer, working down low or mid-wall to set up plays, to being the guy who needs to pull the trigger – quickly and accurately.

"Obviously I need to shoot more," Hodgson said. "It's just a mind-set, being able to shoot when nobody's ready. That type of thing. Because the goalies in this league are so good when they're ready for it they're going to stop it. If you can shoot, the quick-release guys, they score goals."

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Not surprisingly, Ville Leino doesn't look back at his time in Buffalo with kind thoughts and words.

Leino, who went down in Sabres infamy last season after failing to score a goal in 58 games and was bought out, has signed with Zagreb of Russia's Kontinental Hockey League. During his introductory news conference, he ripped the Sabres, according to GroceryTwigs, a hockey blog.

"My Buffalo time was pretty bad overall," Leino reportedly said. "I was disappointed for the players and the organization, and I think they are going to be like that."

During a one-on-one with Mislav Jantoljak, Leino went further.

"There's a huge difference between teams," Leino said. "NHL is hard. You have to have chemistry, a good line. You have to have a good team to win, a good coach and GM and everything in place. Like we were just talking about those great organizations, Philly, Detroit, they were that. Buffalo is not that."

"They, well, during my time they fired two coaches, GM had to go, they just have 2-3 players that used to be there when I got there. They are going to struggle for the next couple of years."

"It seems like everything went wrong. I mean, I was injured all the time and then, obviously, I had a lot of pressure with the money and I think the last year they were just trying to get through it and buy me out after the season anyway. I could sense that, I knew it was coming."

"It's hard to play when everything goes against you every day and you don't kind of know what the situation is, so I'm just glad that's over with."

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Friday was the earliest date that the top two draft picks in the most recent NHL draft have faced off against each other since 1997.

It was Oct. 11, 1997 when Joe Thornton, the overall No. 1 pick of Boston, faced Patrick Marleau, the No. 2 pick of San Jose. They are now teammates.

Friday it was No. 1 Aaron Ekblad of Florida facing Buffalo's No. 2 overall pick, Sam Reinhart.

Ekblad played 21 shifts on the blue line for the Panthers, with 20:28 of ice time and one shot.

Reinhart again played on the Sabres' fourth line, taking nine shifts for 7:09 of ice time. He won three of his five faceoffs.

Dealing with the low ice time has been an adjustment for Reinhart.

"It's different," Reinhart said before the game. "There's no question I'm used to playing a lot more and getting a lot more opportunities. I was aware that if I was to still be here at this point that it would have to be an adjustment. I'm trying to go through that now."

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Buffalo has introduced a loyalty program called "Sabres Fan Advantage." Fans participate by downloading the mobile app in the Apple Store or Google Play. Fans then earn points by scanning codes on tickets or receipts from merchandise and concessions purchased in First Niagara Center, as well as by entering keywords announced during Sabres games on MSG.

The points can be redeemed within the app for team merchandise, game tickets and fan experiences like player meet-and-greets.

## **Panthers' Ekblad, Sabres' Reinhart focused on future**

By Joe Yerdon

NHL.com

October 17, 2014

BUFFALO -- When the Florida Panthers visit the Buffalo Sabres on Friday, the highlight of the matchup involves the top two players selected in the 2014 NHL Draft.

Panthers defenseman Aaron Ekblad, selected first, and Sabres forward Sam Reinhart, selected second, will face off against each other for the first time in their pro careers. While they are good friends and were roommates while trying out for Canada at the Ivan Hlinka Memorial Cup, they're focused on what lies ahead in their careers.

"I come into every single game with just an attitude that I want to come out, be positive, work hard and be enthusiastic about the game every shift," Ekblad said. "And that's kind of the mentality I have going into every game. I don't really think about who I'm playing against. You can't cheat against everyone; you have to play in this League because everyone is so good."

The top two picks in the draft haven't played against each other this early in a season since Oct. 11, 1997, when top pick Joe Thornton, then of the Boston Bruins, faced second pick and future teammate Patrick Marleau of the San Jose Sharks.

"That's one day out of your lifetime," Reinhart said of his first game against Ekblad. "As excited as it was getting drafted here, that's the biggest priority, going to a team that wants you and an organization that is going to give you an opportunity. I wasn't preparing for the draft, I was preparing for the work that comes now, what's surrounding me now."

Ekblad's start with the Panthers has been a positive one despite Florida starting the season without a win (0-2-1). Through three games he has an assist, and his ice time has increased in every game, topping out at 23:34 on Monday against the Ottawa Senators; he's averaging 21:49 of ice time per game, tops among all rookies.

"It means a lot," Ekblad said. "I mean, that's obvious that the coaches have the confidence to put me out there that much throughout a game. I'm really happy to have those kind of opportunities. I've been lucky. I've been blessed my whole life to have those kind of opportunities to play a lot of minutes and all that good stuff. I have to try and take advantage of it and use those opportunities to my favor and hopefully contribute to my team win."

Reinhart's start has been a bit slower. Through the first three games he was playing on the third line, but was moved to the fourth line Tuesday against the Carolina Hurricanes. He'll again be on the fourth line against Florida, but the Sabres (1-3-0) aren't down on him at all.

"His skill set is off the charts as far as his hockey intelligence; you can see that," Sabres coach Ted Nolan said. "Everything he does is calculated. He knows his position on the ice. It takes a lot to go from junior hockey [to the NHL]. You're dealing with young men and some boys at times. In this League there's no boys; it's all men. He just has to learn to do things quicker than he has and he'll be fine."

The person who might know best about Reinhart is someone who has been around him a lot and will play against him Friday.

"Just knowing that he's a really smart guy, on and off the ice he's a smart kid, and he uses that on the ice to his advantage," Ekblad said. "He's a good player and someone to watch out for out there."

## **Panthers shut out Sabres for first win under Gallant**

By Joe Yerdon

NHL.com

October 17, 2014

BUFFALO -- Florida Panthers goalie Roberto Luongo is making a habit of shutting out the Buffalo Sabres.

Luongo made 26 saves, and Sean Bergenheim scored his first goal of the season to help the Panthers to a 1-0 victory, their first of the season, against the Sabres at First Niagara Center on Friday.

"You got that guy back there and your team is so much more confident," Panthers defenseman Erik Gudbranson said of Luongo. "He made saves all night, really good saves all night. It's amazing how he tracks the puck within those scrambles and is able to come up with pretty key saves. He did really well for us tonight."

The shutout was the 67th of Luongo's NHL career, passing Patrick Roy to tie Roy Worters for 13th place on the all-time list.

"I'm really focused on trying to get some wins here, and those kind of records are things you look back on when you're said and done," Luongo said. "It's a nice little something to have, but at the same time there are other things that are more important."

The win was Luongo's third consecutive shutout against the Sabres. He made 25 saves in a 3-0 win with the Vancouver Canucks on Oct. 17, 2013 and 25 saves in a 2-0 win with the Panthers on March 7. He has four shutouts against Buffalo in 20 games.

"It's crazy," Luongo said. "I know I shut them out in Florida, too, for my first game, so it's nice. I don't know if it's a comfort-level thing or whatnot, but it's nice especially to get our first win like that."

The win was the first for coach Gerard Gallant with the Panthers, and his first in the NHL since Nov. 9, 2006, when his Columbus Blue Jackets defeated the St. Louis Blues.

After a scoreless first period, when the Panthers outshot the Sabres 16-3, Bergenheim scored 3:01 into the second. He picked up a loose puck from Brad Boyes and snapped a wrist shot between the legs of Sabres goalie Jhonas Enroth, who was screened by Sabres defenseman Mike Weber.

"I like that my goals come from in front of the net, shooting quick or shooting a lot," Bergenheim said. "It's nice to see it go in, and maybe I was a little bit surprised but you've got to shoot."

The Panthers withstood a power-play threat from the Sabres when Gudbranson was called for hooking at 6:46 of the third period and forward Dave Bolland was called for high-sticking at 7:48. With 48 seconds of a 5-on-3, the Panthers killed the penalties.

"It was huge," Gallant said. "Special teams a lot of times win you the hockey game, and I think that kill won us the hockey game for sure. It would've been tough, late in the game, 1-0 all game and then all of a sudden you give up a goal real late like that, it would have been tough on us."

The Panthers attempted 64 shots and 35 were on goal. It's the first time this season the Sabres have not had 70 or more shots attempted against them.

"I could've saved one more puck, I guess," said Enroth, who saved 34. "It's hard to win games in this league, and we've got to put in a full 60-minute effort to win games this year."

The Sabres have lost four of their first five games and face the Boston Bruins on Saturday.

"We're trying to find ourselves, find out what type of team we are," Sabres coach Ted Nolan said. "The last game [at the Carolina Hurricanes, a 4-3 shootout win Tuesday] we played much better the first couple periods, we came out with some jump. Four games in a row we didn't have good third periods. The one good thing about tonight, we had a good, strong third period. I think the message here tonight, we have ... to be a hardworking team. If we don't work hard all the time, from start to finish, it's going to be tough."

It was the first game between the top two picks of the 2014 NHL Draft: Panthers defenseman Aaron Ekblad (No. 1) and Sabres forward Sam Reinhart. It's the earliest in the season the top two picks have played since Oct. 11, 1997, when Joe Thornton of the Boston Bruins faced Patrick Marleau of the San Jose Sharks.

Bolland left with less than five minutes remaining in the third period with a lower-body injury. Gallant did not have an update following the game.

Florida plays at the Washington Capitals on Saturday.

## **What should the Sabres do with Zadorov?**

By Dhiren Mahiban

NBC Sports

October 17, 2014

Buffalo Sabres 2013 first rounder Nikita Zadorov has only practiced with the big club as the team's brass tries to figure out where the hulking defenseman plays this season.

Ideally, Zadorov would play in the American Hockey League, with the Rochester Americans, but because of his junior eligibility, it's not an option.

The Sabres could loan him to a team in Russia, but as The Buffalo News' John Vogl points out, they would have little control over the 19-year-old's development.

Buffalo feels at 6-foot-5, 238 pounds Zadorov is too big for the junior game and are reluctant to send him back to the London Knights.

"The player just wants to play," Zadorov's agent, Rolland Hedges, said. "It's up to Buffalo how they're going to deal with that."

One option could be to have the Russian stick with the big club. Zadorov appeared in seven games for the Sabres last season scoring a goal to go along with a minus-4 rating.

"I can't answer that question straight up, but we're trying to do our best with the situation," coach Ted Nolan said. "We're going to keep working at him, get his conditioning a little better. He's another promising young prospect that we have to make sure we do the best for him."

Zadorov is expected to be a healthy scratch once again tonight when the Sabres host the Florida Panthers.

## **Sabres prospect Sam Reinhart ready to face friend Aaron Ekblad**

By Bill Hoppe  
Olean Times Herald  
October 17, 2014

BUFFALO – Naturally, Sabres center Sam Reinhart, the No. 2 pick in June, wants to play against Florida Panthers defenseman Aaron Ekblad, the No. 1 pick, tonight.

The prospects don't have much of a rivalry, though.

"Not the fact the fact that we're one and two, it's the fact that I know him very well," Reinhart said this morning inside the First Niagara Center. "We're pretty good friends."

The two once roomed together at a Team Canada event. They also got to know each other well leading up to the draft. There's a mutual respect between the two.

The youngsters might not see much of each other tonight, however.

Ekblad has averaged 21 minutes, 49 seconds of ice time in three appearances. Reinhart, meanwhile, has averaged 11 minutes, 15 seconds in four games.

The 18-year-old skated just six minutes, 39 seconds on the fourth line Tuesday.

"It's different," Reinhart said about playing less. "There's no question I'm used to playing a lot more and getting a lot more opportunities, and I was aware if I was still to be here tonight, it would have to be an adjustment. I'm trying to go through that now.

"Last game, obviously it was important to get the win. But I think I handled it well. I was able to observe a little bit more. Even when it was my time to get out there, I was ready to battle and compete."

What else did Reinhart learn from the limited ice time?

"I think just the compete level and the intensity of the game," he said. "I think it's a different thing you can learn as opposed to watching it from up top."

Sabres goalie Jhonas Enroth will make his second straight start tonight. Defenseman Andrej Meszaros will return from a one-game benching. Tyson Strachan will likely be scratched.

In other news, Sabres coach Ted Nolan said Mark Pysyk was assigned to Rochester on Thursday mostly for conditioning purposes. The defenseman injured his shoulder during his first preseason shift.

"We're never concerned with Mark's ability to play in this league," Nolan said. "Now, we just got to get him some games and hopefully get him back here quick."

## **Sabres start sluggishly again, get blanked by Panthers**

By Bill Hoppe  
Olean Times Herald  
October 18, 2014

BUFFALO – Fresh off their first win this season, against the winless Florida Panthers, the hapless Sabres imploded again early Friday, allowing a team with three goals all season to dominate them.

The Panthers outshot the Sabres 16-3 during a wretched first period. The Sabres finally put their first even-strength shot on goalie Roberto Luongo at about the 16-minute mark.

The Sabres, thanks to Jhonas Enroth's strong goaltending, escaped the opening 20 minutes tied. But Sean Bergenheim scored 3:01 into the second period, the only score in the 1-0 snoozefest the Sabres dropped before 17,864 fans inside the First Niagara Center.

The Sabres are 1-4 this season and heading nowhere fast.

Following Monday's embarrassing 5-1 home loss to Anaheim, coach Ted Nolan compared the Sabres to a peewee team.

Nolan bit his tongue after Friday's defeat.

"I learned last time I can't say how I feel," Nolan said. "We're not happy. We're definitely not happy. No one's going to help us get out of this thing except for ourselves. We got a good group of guys. We just got to learn we have to compete and we have to work. ..."

"We're not a fancy team. We can't rely on our skill to get us out of trouble in certain occasions. We got to put that in our mindset before the game starts."

Opponents have outshot the Sabres 69-36 during the first period and 191-109 overall. So much for building on Tuesday's 4-3 shootout win in Carolina.

Still, Nolan believes the Sabres showcased some small improvements. The Sabres outshot the Panthers 14-8 in the third period.

Baby steps, right?

"We're trying to find ourselves, find out what type of team we are," Nolan said. "The last game in Carolina we played much better the first couple periods, we came out with some jump. Four games in a row we didn't have good third periods. The one good thing about tonight, we had a good, strong third period."

"I think the message here tonight, we have ... to be a hardworking team. If we don't work hard all the time, from start to finish, it's going to be tough."

Sabres winger Drew Stafford added: "We battled a little bit more in the third period, but that's the kind of energy we need to bring in the first period."

The Sabres' veteran "stars" have brought little energy most games. Stafford, Brian Gionta, Cody Hodgson, Matt Moulson and Chris Stewart all have zero goals.

Stewart's tripping call in front of Luongo, who has blanked the Sabres three straight games, killed a third-period power play.

"You have to learn to play the game right first," Nolan said. "You're not going to score from the perimeter. You have to go to those dirty areas, and that's why scoring in this league is tough."

The Sabres have seven goals all season. Their power play is zero of 15 so far.

"We haven't really generated offense at all," Stafford said. "Our defensive play, we've been running around a lot. Bringing in talent is one thing, but we're still working on getting that chemistry together."

The good news? The Sabres can rebound quickly. The bad news? They host the reeling Boston Bruins, one of the NHL's heavyweights, tonight. The Bruins have lost four of their last five games and had a day off Friday.

## **Sabres speedster Torrey Mitchell showcasing simply style**

By Bill Hoppe  
Olean Times Herald  
October 18, 2014

BUFFALO – Despite having some of the best wheels on the Sabres, speedy winger Torrey Mitchell showcases a simple, straightforward style as a third- or fourth-liner.

The 29-year-old is a no-frills checker.

"I try not to do too much," Mitchell said Friday prior to the Sabres' 1-0 loss to the Florida Panthers inside the First Niagara Center.

Mitchell, of course, was talking about knowing his limitations. While the Quebec native moves quickly, he's not a goal scorer.

He scored in Tuesday's 4-3 shootout win in Carolina, his second goal in five games going back to last season's finale. But Mitchell only had two goals in his previous 71 contests. He has 38 in 397 NHL appearances.

Mitchell, part of the March 5 trade that sent Matt Moulson to Minnesota, has carved out an eight-year career by embracing his role.

"Sometimes when you simplify things, you're more effective," Mitchell said. "Obviously, I play a pretty simple game. Trying not to do anything fancy out there is a big part of my game. It works for me. I've been doing it for years."

Three weeks ago, Mitchell was on the bubble, fighting with about five other forwards for a roster spot. On Friday, he played his second game at left wing beside center Zemgus Girgensons and captain Brian Gionta.

"A good part of my game is speed, and those two guys are quick players," Mitchell said. "I can keep up with them and create turnovers on the forecheck and just create energy."

Mitchell's legs and versatility – he can also play center – helped him impress Sabres coach Ted Nolan.

"I have confidence in my game right now," Mitchell said. "I felt good. I felt like I had a good training camp and a good preseason."

Right away, Nolan said, he noticed Mitchell's speed last season.

"So he's bringing that, and his confidence seems to be growing by the minute, too," Nolan said. "So now if he gets himself in a position and throws some pucks at the net, you never know what's going to happen."

Mitchell scored a go-ahead goal Tuesday, one-timing Gionta's pass in the left circle.

"I think I can fill a lot of roles," Mitchell said. "I'm not a big goal scorer by any means, but my speed can help on any line, I think."

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Naturally, Sabres center Sam Reinhart, the No. 2 pick in June, wanted to play against Panthers defenseman Aaron Ekblad, the No. 1 pick.

The top two selections don't have much of a rivalry, though.

"Not the fact the fact that we're one and two, it's the fact that I know him very well," Reinhart said Friday morning. "We're pretty good friends."

The two once roomed together at a Team Canada event. They also got to know each other well leading up to the draft. The friends share a respect for each other.

The first two picks from the most recent draft hadn't faced each other this early in a season since Joe Thornton and Patrick Marleau met Oct. 11, 1997.

Notes: Sabres defenseman Andrej Meszaros returned from a one-game benching, so Tyson Strachan was scratched for the fourth time this season. ... Sabres center Cody Hodgson on going back to the middle after a stint at left wing: "I'll play anywhere, anytime. It's just different looks, different dynamic." Hodgson also manned a point on a power-play unit Friday. ... Panthers goalie Robert Luongo also blanked the Sabres a year ago to the day with Vancouver.

## **Sabres' Nolan feels Meszaros is a top four D-man**

By Paul Hamilton

WGR 550

October 17, 2014

Buffalo, NY (WGR 550) -- After just one game of sitting out, Andrej Meszaros is back in the Sabres lineup. Meszaros has struggled mightily this season, but Ted Nolan thinks he's one of their best defensemen, "He's going to be one of our top four defensemen and you don't judge a whole season on one game, so we want to see him play the way he's capable of playing, so that was the choice."

Meszaros had to sit some games last year in Boston, so he knows the drill, "It is what it is, I just have to play better, it's as simple as that. There's no excuses, I know I can be better and I have to be better."

In hockey sometimes it's the simple things that count. Meszaros said, "I need to do my job, get involved and all the little things and just if you work hard, everything else will come."

The three scratches are Tyson Strachan, Nikita Zadorov and Brian Flynn. Jhonas Enroth comes off a strong outing in Raleigh and he gets the call tonight.

Much to the chagrin of the amateur coaches out there, Sam Reinhart has played at least one game and likely another on the fourth line. Nolan said he needs to see more overall, "Every game and Sammy's not the only one. You've got to want and I was upset with the way we played against Anaheim. It wasn't because of the loss, it was the way we lost and if you're going to try to change things you've got to hate losing more than you like winning." Nolan added, "As players go you want them to have that hunger and desire to get out here, so certainly we want to see that from Sammy."

Cody Hodgson is not only back at center, but he's also moving to the point on the power play. One thing Ted Nolan has been harping on is getting Hodgson to shoot more. I had wondered if that's why Nolan put him back there and he said, "We haven't got the team where we're able to ad lib as we go. We gotta have a structure to it and we've got to make sure that we put our people in a good position to do their thing and Cody's one of those guys that has a tremendous shot and if we spring him where he's able to do that, I mean all the top shooters in this league, they've got to get the ice and they've got to get the puck and shoot."

Hodgson is used to being along the wall on a power play, so how does this change things? "I think the perspective of the mindset of being a shooter instead of a passer. Most of the power play will be setup on the other side so when it comes to me, I'll be mostly shooting."

With a 1-3 record, the Sabres are tied for 26th in the NHL. Florida is 0-2-1 and dead last.

The top two picks from June are playing in this game. Aaron Ekblad was the number one overall pick and has one assist in three games and is minus one. Sam Reinhart is pointless in four games and is also minus one. Reinhart averages 11:15 per game and has won just 22.7 percent of his faceoffs. Ekblad averages 21:49 per game.

Join Schopp and the Bulldog at 6:00 for the pregame when they'll be joined by Ted Nolan, Cody Hodgson and Andrej Meszaros.

## **Luongo, Panthers blank Sabres, 1-0**

By Dan Cave

WGR 550

October 17, 2014

Sean Bergenheim was the only player to find the net on Friday and Roberto Luongo stopped all 26 shots he faced in a 1-0 Panthers win over the Sabres (1-4-2) at First Niagara Center.

The opening period ended in a scoreless tie, but Buffalo was badly outshot 16-3. Jhonas Enroth came up with several big stops, including one on Tomas Fleischmann, who swiped the puck from Marcus Foligno and walked in alone. A little over three minutes into the second period, Sean Bergenheim put Florida on the board with his first goal of the season. The Panthers forward slipped a shot through Enroth's pads to put his team ahead. The sloppy play continued for Buffalo as Florida continued to pepper Enroth with shots, but the Sabres netminder was able to keep the Panthers out of the net.

Buffalo had a chance to tie the game in the third period, but Luongo shut the door on a Sabres 5-on-3 power play. The Florida goaltender was able to keep Buffalo out of the net the rest of the way, en route to a 1-0 Panthers victory. Enroth was very sharp in defeat, coming up with 34 saves.

The Sabres return to action on Saturday, hosting the Boston Bruins at 7 p.m. Hear the call on WGR 550 and the Buffalo Sabres Radio Network with Dan Dunleavy and Rob Ray.

### **1st Period**

Goals

None

### **Penalties**

5:18 - FLA - Derek MacKenzie (2 min., slashing)

13:37 - BUF - Marcus Foligno (2 min., high sticking)

19:51 - BUF - Josh Gorges (2 min., hooking)

### **2nd Period**

Goals

3:01 - FLA - Sean Bergenheim (1) (Brad Boyes)

### **Penalties**

0:14 - FLA - Aleksander Barkov (2 min., high sticking)

9:02 - BUF - Zemgus Girgensons (2 min., roughing)

9:02 - FLA - Scottie Upshall (2 min., goaltender interference)

15:30 - BUF - Drew Stafford (2 min., interference)

17:20 - FLA - Jimmy Hayes (2 min., tripping)

### **3rd Period**

Goals

None

### **Penalties**

3:52 - BUF - Nicholas Deslauriers (2 min., interference)

6:46 - FLA - Erik Gudbranson (2 min., hooking)

7:58 - FLA - Dave Bolland (2 min., high sticking)

9:22 - BUF - Chris Stewart (2 min., tripping)

### **Goaltending**

FLA - Roberto Luongo (25 saves, 25 shots)

BUF - Jhonas Enroth (34 saves, 35 shots)

**Power Plays**

FLA - 0 of 5

BUF - 0 of 5

**Three Stars**

1.) FLA - Sean Bergenheim (1 G, 0 A)

2.) BUF - Jhonas Enroth (34 saves)

3.) FLA - Roberto Luongo (26 saves)

## **Hamilton: Sabres still don't put in a full effort**

By Paul Hamilton

WGR 550

October 17, 2014

**Buffalo, NY (WGR 550)** -- After getting their first win of the season in Carolina on Tuesday, the Sabres looked pretty bad in period one here at home.

Despite giving up 16 shots, Jhonas Enroth steered them all away.

There was very little passion and the only time Buffalo had any zone time was during its one power play.

The poor ice conditions here cost them their best scoring chance. Drew Stafford had Matt Moulson for a tap-in, but the puck bounced, even though it was a five-foot pass.

Marcus Foligno scored two goals against the Canes and had a terrific game. He followed that up with a horrendous 20 minutes where he gave the puck up to Tomas Fleischmann who walked in alone and also took a high sticking penalty.

Sam Reinhart only played 2:46 in the first period and got stripped of the puck in the neutral zone by Tomas Kopecky who also got the puck back in.

Roberto Luongo has now shut the Sabres out four times in his career.

The second period wasn't much better and apathy cost them a goal. Cody Hodgson cleanly lost the draw and Florida put the puck around the wall. Andrej Meszaros gave it away to Brad Boyes who quickly relayed the puck to Sean Bergenheim in the left wing circle. He turned and shot right away for his seventh goal in 23 games against the Sabres.

Buffalo's passing in this game was atrocious through 40 minutes and, as a result, the offense struggled. Luongo had 12 saves through two periods with very little zone time in his end. Enroth had another strong effort and was the only reason Buffalo stayed in the game.

"If you go with cross-ice passes in your defensive zone, that's not too good," Nolan said. "We jus gotta learn to do the simple things. Simple things are getting the puck up the boards, getting the puck in and going to work for it, and getting out of our end as quick as we can."

The Hodgson line started the third period and actually got some sustained pressure, but then the Ennis line came out and Florida was all over Buffalo again.

A little bit later, Buffalo had a 49 second 5-on-3. Ennis did win the draw and Buffalo kept control. Luongo made two saves, one shot got blocked and one went over the net. Chris Stewart took a tripping penalty and that ended the power play.

"Any time you have a 5-on-3 in the NHL, you have to capitalize," said Moulson. "Especially in a game like that. We didn't. We'll look at it and see what we can improve."

It looked like Florida was going to take a 2-0 lead when Enroth was down and out, but Torrey Mitchell flew across the crease and made the save in front an empty net.

"Great play by [Mitchell]," said Enroth. "We have a couple of guys blocking a lot of shots and it's a pleasure to play behind them and have those guys on your team. That's what we do. We try to bail each other out as much as we can."

Win or lose this was another pathetic effort by this club. Ted Nolan has a real problem on his hands.

"We're not happy," Nolan said. "Definitely not happy. No one's going to help us get out of this except ourselves. We've got a good group of guys, but we just gotta learn that we have to compete and we have to work. We're not a fancy team. We can't rely on our skill to get us out of trouble on certain occasions. We just have to put that in our mindset before the game starts."

## **Luongo, Florida shut out Sabres**

By Mark Ludwiczak

The Sports Xchange

October 17, 2014

BUFFALO, N.Y. -- Roberto Luongo's success against the Buffalo Sabres continues.

The Florida Panthers goaltender recorded his third consecutive shutout against the Sabres on Friday night, making 26 saves to lead his team to a 1-0 win.

In his first game upon returning to the Panthers on March 7, Luongo made 25 saves in a 2-0 victory over Buffalo. He also made 25 saves to lead Vancouver to a 3-0 victory over Buffalo exactly one year ago.

"It's crazy," Luongo said. "I know I shut them out in Florida too for my first game, so it's nice. I don't know if it's a comfort level thing or what not, but it's nice especially to get out first win like that.

"I don't want to jinx it, so we'll keep it on the quiet side."

It was a gritty effort by the Panthers, who picked up their first victory of the season under new head coach Gerard Gallant. The Panthers (1-2-1) largely controlled the flow of play for 60 minutes.

"That's how we're going to be successful. We need four lines, we need six defensemen and we need a great goaltender and we got a lot of that tonight," Gallant said. "I thought we really took control of the game in the first half. Not quite as well in the third period but I thought we really played well."

Left winger Sean Bergenheim scored the lone goal for Florida in the second period after Florida outshot Buffalo 16-3 through the first 20 minutes.

The goal came 3:01 into the second period on Bergenheim's first goal of the season. After a faceoff loss by the Sabres in their own end, Bergenheim fired a low shot past Sabres goalie Jhonas Enroth to the far side of the net. "I like that my goals come from in front of the net, shooting quick or shooting a lot," Bergenheim said. "It's nice to see it go in, and maybe I was a little bit surprised but you gotta shoot."

The offensively challenged Panthers hope that shoot-first philosophy will pay dividends moving forward.

"I think we've just got to do more of that," right winger Scottie Upshall said. "To score pretty goals in this league is tough to do, so the more you just put pucks on net I think you're going to be successful. We practiced it all week and I thought we had a bunch of chances where guys were going to the net and playing hard hockey." It was another rough outing for the Sabres (1-4-0), who were thoroughly dominated at home for the second consecutive time. Buffalo was outshot 44-12 in a demoralizing 5-1 loss to Anaheim on Monday, after which head coach Ted Nolan had some strong words regarding his team.

"I learned last time I can't say how I feel," Nolan said. "We're not happy. We're definitely not happy. No one's going to help us get out of this thing except for ourselves. We got a good group of guys. We just got to learn we have to compete and we have to work. ... We're not a fancy team. We can't rely on our skill to get us out of trouble in certain occasions. We got to put that in our mindset before the game starts."

Enroth made 34 saves in the loss.

Buffalo's best opportunity to tie the score came midway through the third period during a five-on-three advantage for 49 seconds. Panthers defenseman Willie Mitchell got in the way of a Tyler Ennis shot from short range, and Luongo ended the Sabres' zone time with a glove save on a shot from the point by Buffalo defenseman Tyler Myers.

After killing off the five-on-three, Sabres right winger Chris Stewart had a golden opportunity in the slot, but his shot went wide of the net. Seconds later, Stewart took a tripping penalty to end the power play opportunity. "We haven't really generated offense at all," Sabres right winger Drew Stafford said. "Our defensive play, we've

been running around a lot. Bringing in talent is one thing, but we're still working on getting that chemistry together."

Gallant said that the late penalty kill won his team the game.

"(Luongo) made 4-5 saves in the third period, real key saves for us, especially that 3-on-5 when the guys did a great job killing that," Gallant said. "It was huge. Special teams a lot of times win you the hockey game and I think that kill won us the hockey game for sure."

NOTES: D Tyson Strachan, D Nikita Zadorov and C Brian Flynn were scratched for the Sabres. LW Shawn Thornton, D Erik Gudbranson and C Brandon Pirri were scratched for the Panthers. ... This game featured the top two picks from this summer's draft in Florida's Aaron Ekblad (first overall) and Buffalo's Sam Reinhart (second overall). According to Elias Sports Bureau, this was the earliest date in the season that the top two picks in the previous draft went up against each other since Oct. 11, 1997, when Joe Thornton (Bruins) and Patrick Marleau (Sharks) faced each other. ... The teams will next meet on Dec. 6 in Florida. ... This was the 80th game all time between Buffalo and Florida.

## **Reinhart vs. Ekblad highlights tonight's matchup at First Niagara Center**

By Chris Ryndak

Sabres.com

October 17, 2014

It'll be No. 1 versus No. 2 at First Niagara Center on Friday.

The top two picks of the 2014 NHL Draft will go head-to-head when Aaron Ekblad, the draft's top pick, and the Florida Panthers take on Sam Reinhart and the Buffalo Sabres. Faceoff is scheduled for 7 p.m. (MSG, Bell TV with the Tops Gamenight pregame show beginning at 6:30 p.m.).

The game marks the earlier date in the season for the first game featuring the top two picks in the most recent draft since Oct. 11, 1997. Back then, Joe Thornton (first overall) of the Boston Bruins squared off against Patrick Marleau (second overall) and the Sharks in San Jose.

However, as interesting as the matchup may be, it's not really on the minds of the two rookies who will play Friday night.

"Not the fact that it's 1 and 2, it's the fact I know him very well. We're pretty good friends so I think that says more than 1 and 2," Reinhart said.

Reinhart and Ekblad roomed together during a U-18 camp last year and have played together on several teams, including Team Canada for the 2014 IIHF World Junior Championship. They grew closer as they were often together for pre-draft commitments.

Reinhart is the seventh 18-year-old to ever dress for the Sabres and became the fourth to do so on opening night.

He has been up and down the lineup through four games. He started on a scoring line, but the coaching staff has decided to dial is minutes back in order for him to get a better feel for the speed and intensity of the game. He played 6:39 on Tuesday while on a line with Nicolas Deslauriers and is expected to play with them again on Friday.

"There's no question I'm used to playing a lot more and getting a lot more opportunities. I was aware that if I were to still be here at this point that it would have to be an adjustment. I'm trying to go through that now," Reinhart said. "I think last game, obviously it was important to get the win, but I think I handled it well and was able to observe a little bit more.

"When it was my time to get out there, I was ready to battle and compete. I think that was the biggest thing for me to watch and learn. If I get out anymore tonight, I'll be ready for that."

Sabres coach Ted Nolan thinks that Reinhart has handled the adjustment well. Reinhart is itching for more ice time and Nolan hopes that that desire to play spreads throughout the lineup.

"If you're going to try to change things, you've got to hate losing more than you like winning sometimes," Nolan said. "As players go, you want them to have that hunger and desire to get out there. Certainly we want to see that from Sam but we want to see it from everyone."

On the other side of the ice, Ekblad has averaged 21:49 of ice time a night through three games for Florida.

"It means a lot. It's obviously the confidence the coaches have in me to put me out there that much throughout a game. I'm really happy to have those kinds of opportunities," he said. "I'm trying to take advantage of it and use those opportunities to my favor and hopefully contribute to a team win."

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## **FRIDAY'S PROJECTED LINEUP**

26 Matt Moulson – 63 Tyler Ennis – 21 Drew Stafford  
82 Marcus Foligno – 19 Cody Hodgson – 80 Chris Stewart  
17 Torrey Mitchell – 28 Zemgus Girgensons – 12 Brian Gionta  
44 Nicolas Deslauriers – 23 Sam Reinhart – 8 Cody McCormick

4 Josh Gorges – 57 Tyler Myers  
6 Mike Weber – 41 Andrej Meszaros  
61 Andre Benoit – 55 Rasmus Ristolainen

1 Jhonas Enroth  
34 Michal Neuvirth

Scratched: 24 Tyson Strachan, 51 Nikita Zadorov, 65 Brian Flynn  
Injured Reserve: 31 Matt Hackett, 36 Patrick Kaleta

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## **ON POINT**

The Sabres first power-play unit will feature a slightly new wrinkle Friday night. Cody Hodgson will move from forward on the second unit to the left point on the first. Hodgson said the biggest difference for him will be changing his mindset from “pass first” to “shoot often.”

“Most of the power play will be set up on the other side so when it comes to me, I’m mostly shooting as opposed to before being a down-low guy or a halfwall guy setting things up,” he said. “This time, it’s more just shooting.”

He said when it comes to switching positions both on the power play and 5-on-5, maintaining constant communication with his teammates is of the utmost importance. Nolan hopes putting Hodgson on the point will give the power play will provide some stability and develop into a consistent scoring threat.

Buffalo’s power play is currently 0-for-10 on the season.

“We haven’t got the team where we’re able to ad lib as we go. We’ve got to have a structure to it and make sure we put our people in a good position where they can do their thing,” Nolan said.

“Cody’s one of those guys that has a tremendous shot and if we spring him and he’s able to do that, similar to all the top shooters in this League, they’ve got to get that ice and they’ve got to get the puck and shoot.”

## **Projected Power Play Units**

Moulson-Ennis-Stafford  
Hodgson-Myers

Stewart-Girgensons-Gionta  
Benoit-Meszaros

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## **BREAKING OUT**

Marcus Foligno recorded a pair of goals on Tuesday in Carolina. Nolan hopes the team’s other scoring threats will be able to get at least one in the goal column soon.

"Those goal scorers, when they don't score for awhile, they get hungry and they want to score," he said. "As we get going here, Cody Hodgson's going to get much better; Matty Moulson's going to get much better; Drew Stafford's going to get much better because the longer it goes, the hungrier they get."

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### **GOING BACK-TO-BACK**

Friday's game is the first of a back-to-back set at home. The Sabres will host the Boston Bruins on Saturday at 7 p.m. It marks the second of 18 sets of back-to-back games this season. Buffalo then won't be home again until Boston returns to town on Oct. 30.

## **Sabres can't backup Enroth in loss to Panthers**

By Joe Ray

Sabres.com

October 17, 2014

Despite a third-period rally featuring a flurry of shots, the Buffalo Sabres could not crack the code to score against Roberto Luongo. The 35-year-old goaltender made 26 saves to record the shutout as the Florida Panthers defeated the Sabres Friday at First Niagara Center by a score of 1-0.

Luongo posted the 67th shutout of his career and third consecutive against the Sabres with this victory. Sean Bergenheim scored a goal in the second period which proved to be the eventual winner.

Jhonas Enroth turned in his strongest statistical performance of the year in net for the Sabres, denying 34 of 35 shots. Matt Moulson led the Sabres with five shots in this game after recording just five in his first four games of the season.

Enroth made 16 saves in the opening period to keep Florida scoreless, but the Panthers' first shot of the second period found the back of the net. Bergenheim fired from the left faceoff circle, and zipped a low shot past Enroth. Brad Boyes and Dmitry Kulikov were credited with assists on the goal. For Kulikov, it was the 100th point of his NHL career.

Near the midway point of the third period, Buffalo had a number of strong chances to tie the score with an extended power play, including 49 seconds of five-on-three play. Chris Stewart had the best chance of all after the first penalty expired. Gaining a bouncing puck at point-blank range, Stewart had his sights set on beating the glove of Luongo, but the puck flew over the net.

At the end of the night, the Sabres were scoreless on four power-play chances despite generating eight shots with the man advantage. The new first unit, which made a major change placing Cody Hodgson on defense opposite Tyler Myers, created many of those power-play chances. Moulson said the team just needs to keep things simple to break the slump.

"I think just keep shooting, get shots and get everyone going to the net," he said. "When it's not going in, the simplest way to fix that is to get pucks to the net. Get guys to the net and get a greasy one to kind of get that confidence going and go from there."

Sabres head coach Ted Nolan echoed this sentiment, saying that his team is going to have to step their game up another notch to earn the tough goals that win games.

"You have to learn to play the game right first," Nolan said. "You're not going to score from the perimeter; you have to go to the dirty areas. That's why scoring in this league is tough, and why scoring is at a premium. You score in front of the net, and when you go there, you've got to pay a price to go there."

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### **STELLAR SWEDE**

Three nights after stopping 22 of 25 shots in Carolina for his first victory of the season, Enroth was on top of his game against the Panthers, earning the second star of the game for his efforts. The one goal that snuck through was one he would certainly like to have back.

"He caught me a little bit off guard and got it through my legs there," Enroth said. "I definitely should have been maybe a little more alert or ready for that ... that's one I felt like I could have saved."

The Sabres blocked 17 shots to aid Enroth against Florida. Andrej Meszaros led the way with four blocks, while Josh Gorges and Zemgus Girgensons each picked up three. Torrey Mitchell helped out with two blocked shots, and his second one prevented the Panthers from putting the game away midway through the third period.

After a Stewart tripping penalty, Kulikov had a wide-open net while Enroth was out of position. Gorges and Mitchell stepped up to block the shot, and Mitchell's back side rejected the puck.

"A great play by [Mitchell]," Enroth said. "We have a couple of guys that are blocking a lot of shots, and it's a pleasure to play behind them and have those guys on your team. That's what we do; we try to bail each other out as much as we can."

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### **PICKING UP THE PACE**

The Sabres closed out the game in much better fashion than they started. After being outshot 16-3 in the first period, the Sabres generated nine shots in the second, and 14 in the third.

Given that the team faltered late before holding on to defeat Carolina on Tuesday, the Sabres were encouraged by the end of this loss, hoping that it leads to positive momentum moving forward.

"We just have to be prepared from the get-go," Moulson said. "We came into that game in Carolina with a little bit of fire, and you have to bring that every single game. It's a tough league and you have to be at your best every time."