



Buffalo Sabres

Daily Press Clips

November 2, 2014

Sabres-Penguins Preview

By Jeff Bartl

Associated Press

October 31, 2014

Evgeni Malkin missed the entire preseason, but that hasn't stopped him from getting off to the best start of his career and being the top contributor on the Pittsburgh Penguins' league-best power-play unit.

He'll look to help Pittsburgh earn a fourth straight victory as it hosts the struggling Buffalo Sabres on Saturday night.

Malkin began practicing just two days before the Penguins' season opener as he recovered from an undisclosed injury, and said it took time to get back into game shape.

The results have shown otherwise, though, as the former MVP and two-time Art Ross Trophy winner has four goals - all on the power play - and eight assists while earning a point in all nine games for Pittsburgh (6-2-1).

Malkin's eight power-play points are among the most in the league for a Penguins team that leads the NHL by a wide margin. Pittsburgh has converted 39.5 percent of its opportunities with the man advantage, and it's gone 7 for 16 during the winning streak.

"I just do my job," Malkin said. "We have a great line with (Pascal Dupuis) and (Blake) Comeau. We try to use each other. A good power play, too. Most (of my) points are on the power play, but still a couple chances 5 on 5."

Rookie coach Mike Johnston has been impressed with Malkin's level of play after working his way back from the injury.

"I think Geno's overall game, you can just see it getting better and better," Johnston said. "He's picking up the puck with more speed, he's carrying it, he's making better plays. So I think his play over the course of the next couple weeks will be where he wanted it to be if he had a preseason."

Malkin assisted on Chris Kunitz's power-play goal in the first period of Thursday's 3-0 win over Los Angeles. Kunitz had an assist on Kris Letang's goal then scored again in the third for Pittsburgh, which has outscored opponents 14-3 during the three straight wins.

The Penguins held a 12-2 goal advantage over the Sabres while winning all three meetings last season, and Buffalo may not be any more competitive in this matchup.

The Sabres (2-8-1) have scored 12 non-shootout goals while allowing 36, which rank among the most in the league. They failed to convert on their first 33 power-play chances before Drew Stafford converted in Thursday's 3-2 overtime loss to Boston.

"It's just embarrassing, unacceptable to go 0-for this long," forward Chris Stewart said. "We've been trying different combinations and for it to finally click, it feels pretty good. Hopefully we can keep it going."

Tyler Ennis had a goal and an assist for Buffalo, which was outshot 37-15. It has totaled 40 shots on net the last three games and ranks last in the league with 21.2 per contest, while facing a league high 36.7.

"We still need to address the shots," Ennis said. "We've got to find a way to put those through. But we've got to stay positive. We've got to go into Pittsburgh and play a full 60 (minutes), not just 40."

Jhonas Enroth made 34 saves Thursday and will be in net for this contest. He's 1-3-0 with a 2.58 goals-against average in his career against Pittsburgh, which likely will go with Marc-Andre Fleury as he comes off his 30th career shutout and second in three games.

Fleury had a 0.67 GAA in last season's series sweep of the Sabres.

Sabres assign No. 2 pick Reinhart to junior team

By Nick Mendola

Associated Press

October 31, 2014

BUFFALO, N.Y. (AP) — The Buffalo Sabres have sent No. 2 overall draft pick Sam Reinhart to the Kootenay Ice of the Western Hockey League.

Reinhart, 19, has played in nine games for the struggling Sabres, recording one assist and just three shots on goal.

NHL rules stipulate that a drafted rookie can play in up to nine games on a trial basis. Once Reinhart played his 10th, he would've been committed to the NHL for the full season and started the clock on his rookie contract.

Sabres coach Ted Nolan has played him mostly on the fourth line and not used him on the power play.

Reinhart has proven himself at the junior level, scoring 105 points for Kootenay last season and a career total of 101 goals in 203 games for the Ice.

Flury, Kunitz lead penguins to 5-0 rout of Sabres

By Dan Scifo

Associated Press

November 1, 2014

PITTSBURGH (AP) — Marc-Andre Fleury capped a career week with another shutout for the Pittsburgh Penguins.

Fleury made 18 saves for his second consecutive shutout, Chris Kunitz scored twice, and the Penguins earned their fourth win in a row with a 5-0 victory over the Buffalo Sabres on Saturday night.

"I don't think I've had two straight shutouts in the NHL," Fleury said. "It feels good though."

Fleury was right. He recorded back-to-back regular-season shutouts for the first time in his career.

Coming off a 3-0 win over the defending Stanley Cup champion Los Angeles Kings, Fleury posted his third shutout in four games and the 31st of his NHL career.

He has stopped 98 of the last 101 shots he faced and has held opponents without a goal in 10 of his past 12 periods.

"You have a feeling your goaltender is in a zone, so we went back to him tonight," Penguins' coach Mike Johnston said. "He was good in Nashville and continued right through this week.

"You can't say enough about having a goaltender that will play like that."

Evgeni Malkin, Patric Hornqvist and Blake Comeau also scored for Pittsburgh, and captain Sidney Crosby had three assists. Kunitz, with four goals in his last two games, has seven this season.

Malkin also had two assists, extending his point streak to 10 games. Crosby has a point in 18 straight games against Buffalo, his longest active run against any team.

The Penguins finished 3 for 5 on the power play. It was the fourth straight game and seventh time in 10 games that Pittsburgh's power play scored multiple goals. Pittsburgh is 10 for 21 on the power play during its four-game winning streak.

"We've done some good things, guys have capitalized, but you need some luck, too," Crosby said. "We'll try to keep riding that. It's tough to do, but hopefully we'll continue to carry that momentum and build confidence."

The Penguins have outscored opponents 19-3 during the last four games. They defeated the Sabres for the 13th time in 17 games, earning their eighth win in the past 11 played in Pittsburgh.

Jhonas Enroth made 29 saves for the Sabres, who were shut out for the fifth time in 12 games this season.

"It's very tough, especially today," Enroth said. "I didn't play my best game and just felt that we weren't really close in this one."

Buffalo entered with 12 non-shootout goals in 11 games. The Sabres, who lost for the seventh time in eight games, are 2-9-1 and have the second-fewest points in the Eastern Conference.

"With our confidence right now, if we get down two goals, it doesn't seem like we have the will to battle back," Sabres coach Ted Nolan said. "When you don't work and you don't fight and you don't compete and you don't battle, that's what's going to happen."

Kunitz opened the scoring at 4:26 of the first, crashing the net to backhand a rebound from the slot past a sprawled Enroth.

The Penguins controlled long stretches of the first period, owning a 12-3 shots advantage. The Sabres went more than 13 minutes without a shot.

Buffalo had the better of the play through early parts of the second period as the Penguins appeared listless at times.

"I didn't think we carried our speed very well," Johnston said. "There were a lot of lulls in the game."

Comeau provided a boost with his goal at 11:54 of the second. He took a pass from Malkin at the blue line and snapped a shot that beat Enroth high to the glove side.

The Penguins nearly scored again 1:30 later during a goalmouth scramble, but a video review of the puck tucked inside the post proved inconclusive.

The Penguins' power play made it 3-0 at 16:09 of the second. Hornqvist, from the slot, completed the slick one-touch passing sequence from Malkin at the point and Kunitz at the goal line.

Kunitz added a second power-play goal 2:33 into the third, tipping Kris Letang's blast from the point past Enroth. Malkin scored another at 13:11.

"It's all about results and execution when it comes to the power play," Crosby said. "For it to be going in, it builds confidence and gets you to believe in what you're doing. That's the biggest part."

NOTES: The Penguins have killed 26 straight penalties during their past seven games. ... Penguins D Olli Maatta played his final game before undergoing surgery next week to remove a tumor from his neck. He is expected to return in four weeks. ... Crosby played in his 560th game, tied for 10th most in team history. ... Buffalo will host Detroit on Sunday. Pittsburgh will play its next five on the road starting Tuesday at Minnesota.

Red Wings-Sabres preview

By Alan Ferguson

Associated Press

November 1, 2014

After knocking off one of the league's premier franchises, the Detroit Red Wings will try to secure a season-high win streak by beating one of its lowliest.

The Red Wings will also try to add to their dominance over the Buffalo Sabres when they get Johan Franzen back on the ice for the opener to a three-game road trip Sunday.

Detroit (6-2-2) scored four times in the opening period en route to a 5-2 victory over reigning champion Los Angeles on Friday. Gustav Nyquist and Pavel Datsyuk each had two goals and an assist with Nyquist scoring his two on power plays in the first 11:44.

"We got off to a really good start. The power play was magic," said coach Mike Babcock, whose team was 3 for 34 with a man advantage in the first nine games. "We're going in the right direction. We've got to keep getting better."

The Red Wings are expected to get some help as they try for a third consecutive win with Franzen set to end a six-game absence due to a groin injury. He had two goals and three assists in his first four games, and will play for the first time this season with Datsyuk, who has four goals in the last three contests.

Datsyuk also has four assists during a career-best five-game point streak to start a season and has played a large role in Detroit's eight consecutive wins over Buffalo (2-9-1). He has five goals and four assists while appearing in seven matchups.

He scored two goals in last season's four meetings, which the Red Wings swept by a 12-6 margin, and Darren Helm extended his goal scoring streak against the Sabres to four games in the final matchup, a 4-2 road win April 8.

After finishing with a league-low 52 points in 2013-14, Buffalo is well on its way to another dreadful showing this season. The Sabres have been outscored 24-5 during a 1-6-1 stretch and 12-2 in three consecutive losses.

They've also registered 18 shots or fewer in four straight games but earned a 2-1 win in San Jose on Oct. 25 at the beginning of that streak. They were far less competitive Saturday in Pittsburgh.

Buffalo was outshot 34-18, 12-3 in the opening period, and gave up three power-play goals in a 5-0 drubbing. The Sabres failed on four power-play chances, dropping them to 1 for 38 on the season.

Jhonas Enroth allowed all five goals, matching his total from his previous two starts.

"With our confidence right now, if we get down two goals, it doesn't seem like we have the will to battle back," coach Ted Nolan said. "When you don't work and you don't fight and you don't compete and you don't battle, that's what's going to happen."

Buffalo will next try to end an 0-4-1 mark at home. The Sabres had one of the worst home starts in NHL history last season, going 0-8-1 before avoiding a tie for an unwanted league record with a 3-2 shootout win over Los Angeles on Nov. 12.

Detroit has won four straight in Buffalo and seven of eight. The Red Wings are also 23-2-1 with one tie in their last 27 overall meetings.

The Sabres' Zemgus Girgensons had three goals in last season's series, the most against any team in his career, but has one assist in his last 10 games.

Reinhart send down for seasoning in juniors

By John Vogl

Buffalo News

October 31, 2014

The question to Tim Murray was simple: How are you?

"Terrible," came his quick reply.

With that, it became clear the Sabres' general manager had agonized over Friday's decision to send Sam Reinhart back to juniors. Murray was rooting for the No. 2 overall draft pick to stay in Buffalo. Once the games started, the GM never leaned toward keeping Reinhart past his nine-game tryout.

"It's an emotional day," Murray said in First Niagara Center. "I told him you're my first first-round draft pick as a GM, and obviously I was cheering for him, but I can't let emotion come into play on the decision.

"I can't keep him here and say, 'Hey, hey, look what we did here. Our first-round pick played 82 games in his first year eligible.' That's craziness to me. It's about doing what's right for him and what's right for the organization."

Reinhart's path back to Kootenay of the Western Hockey League is a simple one to trace. Ted Nolan thought Reinhart got outmatched physically while on a scoring line, so the coach dropped him to the fourth line. Murray watched Reinhart play only a few minutes per night, so he dropped the 18-year-old from the roster.

The remaining Sabres will visit the Pittsburgh Penguins tonight.

"If he had been playing second-line minutes, we might not be here having this conversation," Murray said.

"Watching him play, watching how important he was here, the minutes he got here, the situations he played here suggested to me or told me it was time to get back.

"He's just not heavy enough. He's not strong enough yet."

Murray delivered the news Friday morning, and the 6-foot-1, 185-pound rookie put up a strong facade during the meeting. It didn't last.

"I guess when he left me he was emotional, disappointed," Murray said. "He should be disappointed. I told him that, 'Be disappointed. You're allowed to be disappointed.'

"I guess he was emotional walking out of the rink. He's been here since rookie camp" in July. "He's been coming in and out of the door every day. He's been part of the team, and then all of a sudden I tell him he's not part of the team."

Only two of this year's draft picks will remain in the NHL: Aaron Ekblad of Florida, the first overall pick; and Edmonton's Leon Draisaitl, who went third.

Murray concedes Reinhart won't learn much in juniors – the center has already excelled during three full seasons in Kootenay – but the GM wants Reinhart to take lessons when he can. That could be while representing Canada in the World Junior Championship or when facing a WHL powerhouse. Murray wants Reinhart to head to the gym at night even if Kootenay spent the morning working out.

"I think this will be good," Nolan said. "You look at the overall picture where he got knocked off the puck a little bit or he slipped underneath. Those things just come through maturity and growth. You just let human nature take its course, and with that Sam's going to develop into a stronger individual and he's going to be an even better player.

"Right now it's about putting people in the right place. These kids have to develop, and when they develop we're going to be a great team."

Reinhart had no goals, one assist and three shots while averaging 10:21 of ice time. He also experienced how hard it is to win in the NHL. The Sabres are just 2-8-1.

"The start we're off to as a team has an effect on a young guy," Murray said. "The 18-year-old is not the guy that can get you out of the rough patch. He's part of the tide. When the tide's high, he's high. When tide's low, he's low. I think that's what we saw."

With Reinhart gone, Murray can focus on Nikita Zadorov. The 19-year-old defenseman is sitting in Buffalo because a rights fight between the Kontinental and Canadian hockey leagues looms if the Sabres send him back to juniors.

"He stays with us or we assign him to London. After that we won't be involved," said Murray, who wishes the American Hockey League was an option for Zadorov. "We've tried every avenue, and we've been shut down at every avenue."

Sabres notebook: Strachan finally receives his chance to play

By John Vogl

Buffalo News

October 31, 2014

Tyson Strachan was behind the pace at the start of the Sabres' last game. That's to be expected from a guy who'd played just once in 10 games.

The defenseman should be up to speed tonight in Pittsburgh. He'll be playing in his second straight. Strachan is expected to again replace struggling Andrej Meszaros on the Buffalo blue line.

"Obviously, you want to be in there," Strachan said Friday in First Niagara Center. "It's nice to play anytime you get in. I'm just going to keep working and hopefully get in the lineup as much as possible and do what I can."

Strachan was paired with Mike Weber during Thursday's 3-2 overtime loss to Boston. He played 13:47 and was on the ice for one goal against, an Adam McQuaid shot that ricocheted off Weber.

Strachan's only other game came Oct. 14 in Carolina.

"I know it was tough for him to sit out all those games, but we wait," coach Ted Nolan said. "You wait for someone's misfortune to make it your fortune. Tyson did that."

The 30-year-old is accustomed to waiting his turn. He was a role player for St. Louis, Florida and Washington before joining the Sabres this season.

"I've made a career out of being ready when given the opportunity," Strachan said. "It's obviously difficult. We're competitive people. You wouldn't be at this level if you weren't. You want to play every night, but I'm also comfortable in that role. I know I can do it. I've been there before."

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The Cody Hodgson carousel continues. He's spun from left wing to center to left wing, and it appears he'll be in the middle again tonight.

Hodgson centered for Marcus Foligno and Chris Stewart during Friday's short practice. It was a promotion from Thursday's fourth-line duty. Hodgson played 8:46 and had one shot against Boston.

"Cody Hodgson is one of the players that we rely on, and he's got to be better like all of us do," Nolan said. "He was cut down on his minutes. I thought he responded well, and we'll probably put him back in the middle."

Brian Flynn, who has appeared in just two games, will center the fourth line in place of Sam Reinhart, who was sent back to juniors.

Goaltender Jhonas Enroth is expected to make his second straight start.

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The Penguins possess a plethora of positive streaks:

- Sidney Crosby has recorded at least one point during his last 17 games against Buffalo. The captain has 10 goals and 18 assists during the stretch.

- Pittsburgh has killed 22 straight penalties during the last six games. The Sabres scored their first power-play goal of the season Thursday to improve to 1 for 34.
- Evgeni Malkin has a nine-game points streak, tied with Columbus' Ryan Johansen for longest in the NHL heading into Friday's schedule. Malkin has four goals and eight assists during the run.

"Geno's overall game, you can just see it getting better and better," first-year coach Mike Johnston told reporters in Pittsburgh. "He's picking up the puck with more speed, he's carrying it, he's making better plays. So I think his play over the course of the next couple weeks will be where he wanted it to be if he had a preseason."

Malkin missed most of training camp with an undisclosed injury. It prevented him from learning the intricacies of Johnston's game plan.

"Nothing's sore, in great shape now," Malkin said. "It's a little bit tough because it's a new coach, lots of new players. Now we understand how to play all three lines and all three zones."

Sabres fire blanks again in loss

By Mike Harrington

Buffalo News

November 2, 2014

PITTSBURGH – It's pretty obvious a good bunch of the Buffalo Sabres have gotten the message, whether it's from their owner or their fans or anyone in between, that losing is acceptable and not something to be accountable for.

The Sabres played Washington Capitals to the Harlem Globetrotting of the Pittsburgh Penguins over the second half of a 5-0 loss Saturday in Consol Energy Center. A virtually empty Buffalo dressing room greeted the media when the doors were open a few minutes after the team fell to 2-9-1.

Captain Brian Gionta, Cody McCormick and goaltender Jhonas Enroth were present. The rest of the group took the exit – stage right. Not much presence by this team during games, not much after them either.

"On the bench when it's 1-0, everybody puts their head down and looks for something else to do. To be accountable, you have to stand up," coach Ted Nolan said grimly. "If we win a game, they're all in there and they want to talk. But when you lose, they want to hide. It's the one thing where no one is going to come in and help us. The only way to get through tough times is you've got to be tough."

Perhaps a no-show afterwards was to be expected. Save for the first 10 minutes of the second period, the game itself was another mailed-in effort as well.

Chris Kunitz, Evgeni Malkin and Sidney Crosby all had three points as the Penguins improved to 7-2-1. Kunitz had two goals, Malkin added one and Crosby registered three assists to extend his point streak against Buffalo to 18 games, his longest against any opponent.

The Penguins' last three goals were all on the power play, two coming when the Sabres killed their own man-advantage with a penalty. One was a too many men on the ice call, a grievous mistake when you're a man up.

Malkin, Crosby, Kunitz and Kris Letang played puck-on-a-string in the third period as Pittsburgh went 3 for 5 on the power play and improved its NHL-best percentage to 41.8.

Buffalo was blanked for the fifth time this year in just 12 games. Pens goalie Marc Andre-Fleury meanwhile, posted his second straight shutout and third in the last four games. Pittsburgh had a 34-18 advantage in shots on goal as the Sabres failed to get to 20 for the fourth straight game.

"You have to look at the way we're playing the game," Gionta said. "Right now, we're having a hard time coming out of our own end. We spend too much time in the D-zone and you're not going to score goals from there."

Fully dressed in a suit for the flight home in advance of today's 5 p.m. game against Detroit in First Niagara Center, defenseman and Pittsburgh native Mike Weber agreed to speak before exiting.

"It's a consistency problem. We show up one game, we don't show up the next," Weber said. "We show up in spurts, we show up in shifts. We show up for a period here, a period there. It's continued frustration from years previous."

Weber was far from done:

"Whether it's been on the road or at home, we've got to somehow find an identity to get mean, get nasty, get angry. There's not enough anger. There's not enough intensity throughout the game. We're not a team that should be dumping the puck in and swinging by guys.

"We need to be a team where if we're going to go down, we're going to go down swinging. We haven't been that team yet. That's the most frustrating part."

Good words. And Weber has given them at other times. But he's a limited player, pointless and minus-6 this season, and coming off a year where he was minus-29. It's the money guys who continue to do nothing. Matt Moulson's five-year, \$25-million contract has produced exactly no goals so far. Same for Gionta's three-year, \$12.75-million deal.

They both had one shot on goal Saturday. Gionta had a prime chance to score a tying goal early in the second period but he fired high and wide alone in the slot after a terrible Kunitz giveaway. Gionta slunk to the bench after looking to the rafters and shaking his head in disgust.

"It's a 1-0 game and I have to take onus on that and be better there," Gionta said.

There was one shot apiece for Drew Stafford and Cody Hodgson, both stuck on one goal. Two for Chris Stewart, who is 0 for his 12 games. That's a trio raking in more than \$12 million of Terry Pegula's timbits this season.

"People usually – usually – battle like a son of a gun in order to keep that position in this league," Nolan said. "There's only 700-something jobs in it. You want to make sure that you're not going to be the one that they're thinking of moving or sending out or trading or whatever. You want to make sure you do the right things."

Ehrhoff finds new life with Penguins

By Mike Harrington

Buffalo News

November 2, 2014

PITTSBURGH – The Sabres look like they're years away from competing for a playoff spot, let alone a Stanley Cup. That's pretty much why Christian Ehrhoff wanted out after last season.

Ehrhoff thought the Sabres were dealing him at the trade deadline and again over the summer. Neither of those scenarios played out but the Sabres surprised him by making him one of their compliance buyouts. That worked for him, as he quickly signed a one-year, \$4 million deal with the Pittsburgh Penguins.

"I came to Buffalo when they were on the rise and I had a lot of different expectations," Ehrhoff said prior to Saturday's game, his first meeting with his old team. "I hoped to be on a team that had a chance to compete and obviously it didn't turn out that way so I'm happy with a fresh start here."

Ehrhoff, who signed a 10-year, \$40-million deal with Buffalo in 2011, said he's only watched limited Sabres highlights thus far this season. He acknowledged what he's seen has been ugly.

"I feel for the guys. It's tough to see," he said. "You don't want to see a team struggle like that but that's just part of the game. There's teams that are going to be at the bottom. It's tough to watch from the outside."

Sabres coach Ted Nolan said he wasn't disappointed that Ehrhoff made it clear he'd rather be elsewhere.

"I'm not disappointed in anybody," Nolan said. "That's why we have a free country and sometimes contracts hold you to certain places, but if you don't want to be somewhere, then the best thing is to ask to be moved."

Ehrhoff entered Saturday with a team-best plus-6 rating but there were plenty of whispers around the Penguins that the team was looking for more offense from him. He had no goals and three assists, and has not cracked the team's first power-play unit, although he's still averaging 21 minutes, 12 seconds per game.

"I think Christian has come along well," said first-year Pens coach Mike Johnston. "He's a mobile defenseman, a good one-on-one player. ... In the summer we were looking for a top-4 guy to add depth with our team and he's proven to be that."

Ehrhoff has had limited power-play time because the Penguins' No. 1 unit normally features four forwards and defenseman Kris Letang. Still, Pens star Sidney Crosby said he likes the way Ehrhoff can move the puck up the ice from the back end.

"That's the way he likes to play," Crosby said. "He likes to join the rush and really move it. He's a great skater and that creates more time for himself. We're really happy to have him."

"It's been great. We got a really good group of guys in here and so far we've enjoyed some success," Ehrhoff said. "We're trying to build on it and get better. Obviously the goal here is to play all the way in the playoffs."

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Cody Hodgson's position flopping continued Saturday as he moved back to center between Marcus Foligno and Chris Stewart. Hodgson, in the second year of a six-year contract, entered the game with one goal, one assist and a minus-7 rating.

"It's part of the job to learn about little details of the game and to be versatile and that's what I'm trying to do," Hodgson said. "I played right wing growing up, played a lot of center, left wing I'm still learning. All of it can only make me better."

Hodgson said he understands how his lack of contribution to the Sabres' struggling offense is a big reason the team is last in the NHL in scoring.

"You guys have watched a lot of hockey too," he said. "We're due definitely."

We're just not the kind of team that will light things on fire right away in a game, so you have to start off playing sound defensively. Don't give up too much, but make sure you compete and then you'll get chances."

With Sam Reinhart sent back to junior, Brian Flynn moved back into the Sabres' lineup for the third time this season. Flynn had been a healthy scratch the last five games. Tyson Strachan was again in the lineup, his first back-to-back games with Buffalo. Andrej Meszaros, with a team-worst minus-10, was a healthy scratch for the second straight game. So was Nikita Zadorov, whose status continues to remain in limbo between a potential return to junior hockey or a move to the KHL.

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The Detroit Red Wings hit town for today's 5 p.m. game against the Sabres in First Niagara Center having won three of their last four games. That includes Thursday's 5-2 win over Los Angeles in Joe Louis Arena that saw the Wings score four goals in the first period.

Los Angeles forward Jordan Nolan, son of Sabres coach Ted Nolan, will have a hearing today with the NHL's Department of Player Safety, after being whistled for a boarding penalty in that game on Detroit's Darren Helm, who remained in the game.

The Wings finished October 6-2-2 and will get forward Johan Franzen back today. He has been out for six games, since suffering a groin injury Oct. 17 against Toronto in a game in which he scored two goals.

Henrik Zetterberg leads the Red Wings in scoring with 14 points and entered Saturday one off the NHL lead in both assists (11) and points. Gustav Nyquist leads the team in goals with seven. Jimmy Howard (5-1-2, 1.97 GAA, .929 save percentage) is slated to start in goal.

High-scoring Penguins host struggling Sabres

By Wes Crosby

NHL.com

November 1, 2014

SABRES (2-8-1) at PENGUINS (6-2-1)

TV: SN1, MSG-B, ROOT

PITTSBURGH – The Buffalo Sabres are aware their special teams have to improve if they are to compete Saturday with the Pittsburgh Penguins at Consol Energy Center.

Buffalo scored its first power-play goal of the season Thursday in a 3-2 overtime loss to the Boston Bruins. The Penguins, who have also killed 22 consecutive penalties, scored one more power-play goal in a 3-0 win Thursday against the Los Angeles Kings than the Sabres have through their first 11 games this season.

Pittsburgh's NHL-best power play dipped in percentage to a 39.5 percent success rate following Thursday. Buffalo's rose to 2.9 percent.

Sabres forward Drew Stafford said Buffalo must stay out of the penalty box and force the Penguins to play 5-on-5, where Pittsburgh's bottom-six has struggled to produce, in order to earn its third win of the season.

"Discipline is key," Stafford said. "You don't want to give a team like that with the skilled players they have and the dangerous guys they have, you don't want to give them any extra time or space or opportunity to get momentum. I think their power play is extremely dangerous, obviously.

"One key strategy on our part is to stay as disciplined as possible."

The Sabres moved forward Cody Hodgson to third-line center and forward Cody McCormick to the fourth line between forwards Nicolas Deslauriers and Brian Flynn. Sabres coach Ted Nolan said he expects Hodgson to play a complete game, with a defensive mindset.

"If you want to play center ... you have to go both ends and play defense and play offense," Nolan said. "It's not just a one-way track where you wait at the blue line and wait to see what happens. There's defensive responsibilities and Cody has to get better."

Penguins defenseman Christian Ehrhoff, who scored 33 points and six goals with the Sabres last season, said he hasn't been able to watch his former team play, but that it has been hard to hear of its struggles.

"I feel for the guys," Ehrhoff said. "It's tough to see and you don't want to see a team struggle like that, but that's just part of the game. There's teams that are going to be at the bottom and it's just tough to watch from the outside."

Pittsburgh will use the same lineup it has since moving forward Evgeni Malkin back to center in a 4-3 overtime loss Oct. 23 against the Detroit Red Wings. Since that move, the Penguins are 3-0-1 and have outscored their opponents by a combined score of 17-7, including two shutouts in the past three games.

Here are the projected lineups:

SABRES

Matt Moulson – Tyler Ennis – Drew Stafford

Torrey Mitchell – Zemgus Girgensons – Brian Gionta

Marcus Foligno – Cody Hodgson – Chris Stewart

Nicolas Deslauriers – Cody McCormick – Brian Flynn

Josh Gorges – Tyler Myers

Mike Weber – Tyson Strachan

Andre Benoit – Rasmus Ristolainen

Jhonas Enroth

Michal Neuvirth

Scratched: Nikita Zadorov, Andrej Meszaros

Injured: Matt Hackett (lower body), Patrick Kaleta (upper body)

PENGUINS

Chris Kunitz – Sidney Crosby – Patric Hornqvist

Pascal Dupuis – Evgeni Malkin – Blake Comeau

Nick Spaling – Brandon Sutter – Steve Downie

Zach Sill – Marcel Goc – Craig Adams

Olli Maatta – Kris Letang

Christian Ehrhoff – Paul Martin

Rob Scuderi – Simon Despres

Marc-Andre Fleury

Thomas Greiss

Scratched: Jayson Megna

Injured: Beau Bennett (lower body), Robert Bortuzzo (lower body)

Status report: Maatta will play in his last game Saturday before undergoing surgery to remove a potentially cancerous tumor from the back of his neck next week. Bortuzzo, who has not played this season because of a lower-body injury, is expected to be ready to replace Maatta in the lineup ... Buffalo sent forward Sam Reinhart, the No. 2 pick in the 2014 NHL Draft, to Kootenay Ice of the Western Hockey League Friday. Reinhart had one assist in nine NHL games played.

Who's Hot: Malkin has scored at least one point in each of Pittsburgh's nine games this season. He is tied with Hornqvist for second on the Penguins with 12 points, three behind Crosby. Kunitz, who had three points and two goals Thursday against the Los Angeles Kings, is tied with Hornqvist for second on Pittsburgh with five goals ... Stafford leads the Sabres with six points. He scored his first goal of the season Thursday against the Boston Bruins.

Penguins' Fleury continues to roll, blanks Sabres

By Wes Crosby

NHL.com

November 2, 2014

PITTSBURGH -- Marc-Andre Fleury made 18 saves Saturday for his third shutout in four games in the Pittsburgh Penguins' 5-0 win against the Buffalo Sabres at Consol Energy Center.

Fleury has stopped 95 of 98 shots over this stretch. Pittsburgh controlled the game throughout, allowing few scoring chances to get through to Fleury, who faced six shots in the third period.

"It think it was the easiest shot-wise [of the three shutouts], physically," Fleury said. "Mentally, it's a little tougher because you're not doing anything. You're just standing there, so it's a little tougher to always stay alert, but I thought our guys played so well. They didn't give much."

The Penguins have won their past four games by a combined margin of 19-3. Buffalo has been shut out in five of its first 12 games.

"I just know that I've got to find a way to get this one out of my mind here in the next 15-20 minutes," Sabres defenseman Mike Weber said. "Whether it's been on the road or at home, we somehow have to find an identity to get nasty, get angry. There's not enough anger, there's not enough intensity throughout the game."

"We're not a team that should be pumping the puck in and swinging by guys. We're not a team that gets the puck dumped in on us and it should be easy on their forwards to pick it up and wheel and make plays. Every man has to pick it up."

Chris Kunitz scored his second goal of the game to extend Pittsburgh's lead to four 2:33 into the third while on the power play. It was Kunitz's seventh goal of the season, tying him with Sidney Crosby (three assists) for the Penguins lead.

Crosby leads the NHL with 18 points, three more than Dallas Stars forward Tyler Seguin, Philadelphia Flyers forward Jakub Voracek and teammate Evgeni Malkin.

"I thought we did a pretty good job of holding onto the puck when we had it," Crosby said. "But we just had some trouble early on getting pucks through, they got sticks on them and blocked some shots. So, I think eventually we were able to get more through and get some power plays and capitalize on those."

Malkin scored a power-play goal with 6:49 remaining. He has at least one point in each of Pittsburgh's 10 games after missing training camp because of an undisclosed injury.

The Penguins' NHL-leading power play scored on three of five opportunities. Sabres goalie Jhonas Enroth said he doesn't think he has every faced a power play comparable to Pittsburgh's.

"They have a lot of great tools," Enroth said. "The power-play goals they scored were pretty good goals and hopefully we can take a page from their book and see how a great team plays on the power play."

The puck barely exited the Buffalo zone throughout the first period, with the Penguins entering the intermission holding a 1-0 lead and 12-3 shot advantage.

Kunitz opened the scoring with his sixth goal of the season 4:26 into the first. Crosby drove through defensemen Tyler Myers and Josh Gorges before sliding a shot on goal. Patric Hornqvist whacked at the rebound off of Enroth's pads and the puck jumped to Kunitz, who wristed it into the net.

Buffalo recorded the game's first shot 57 seconds into the game, but went 13:06 without another.

Pittsburgh added two second-period goals to take a 3-0 lead into the third period, despite the Sabres playing a more fluid style that led to nine shots. Blake Comeau extended the Penguins' lead to 2-0 with his third goal of the season 11:54 into the second.

Malkin stopped by the right boards inside the blue line and slid a pass to Comeau, who was darting through the middle. Comeau sent a shot past defenseman Andre Benoit, who went to his knees and turned sideways, and Enroth's outstretched glove.

Malkin earned another assist when he helped set up Hornqvist's power-play goal with 3:51 remaining in the second. Malkin found Kunitz to start a tic-tac-toe series of passes before the puck came to Hornqvist, who one-timed a shot past Enroth.

The goal came after the Sabres were called for too many men on the ice, which nullified a hooking call on Crosby. Buffalo, which has scored one power-play goal this season, failed to score on four opportunities.

"It's the same recipe and the same results," Sabres coach Ted Nolan said. "It's 1-0, we had a little bit of pressure in the second period, then we have a turnover and it's [2-0], then we take a penalty and then the game's over. The confidence factor right now, if we get down by two goals, it doesn't seem like we have the will to battle back."

The Penguins have killed 26 consecutive penalties. Penguins coach Mike Johnston credited Fleury with part of that success.

"You have a feeling that your goaltender is in the zone, so we went back to him tonight," Johnston said. "We weren't really sure what we were going to do this week for the rotation of the goaltenders. ... But he was good in Nashville [last Saturday] and he continued right through this week off the road trip, so you can't say enough about having a goaltender that will play like that.

"Especially on the power-play pressure. They had a few good shots on the point that he had to find on the power play and I thought he did a really good job around the crease."

Red Wings visit Sabres to open three-game trip

By Staff Report

NHL.com

November 2, 2014

RED WINGS (6-2-2) at SABRES (2-9-1)

TV: TVA SPORTS, FS-D, MSG-B, BELL TV

Season series: The Detroit Red Wings will try to defeat the Buffalo Sabres for the ninth straight time when they come to First Niagara Center. Buffalo hasn't defeated Detroit since a 6-2 victory on Oct. 13, 2009, and scored six goals in four losses to the Red Wings last season.

Red Wings team scope: Detroit opens a stretch of three road games in four nights minus one of its regular defensemen. Kyle Quincey left the Red Wings' 5-2 victory against the Los Angeles Kings on Friday with an ankle injury and has been ruled out against the Sabres. That means another opportunity for Brian Lashoff, who played 75 games for Detroit last season but will be making his 2014-15 debut. "[Lashoff] is a good pro. he's worked real hard, he's going to be an important penalty-killer for us, was last year," coach Mike Babcock said Saturday, according to the Red Wings website. "He gets his opportunity, and when you get your opportunity, you gotta make good and you gotta carve out a little niche for yourself, so make it a competition for the other guys." The Red Wings should get a lift from the return of forward Johan Franzen, who missed the past six games with a groin injury.

Sabres team scope: Offense continues to be a problem for Buffalo, which lost 5-0 at the Pittsburgh Penguins on Saturday and has scored 12 non-shootout goals in its first 12 games. The Sabres are being outshot by an average of more than 15 per game. They had 18 shots against the Penguins, went 0-for-4 on the power play and allowed Pittsburgh to score three times in five chances with the extra man. "It's the same recipe and the same results," coach Ted Nolan said. "It's 1-0, we had a little bit of pressure in the second period, then we have a turnover and it's [2-0], then we take a penalty and then the game's over. The confidence factor right now, if we get down by two goals, it doesn't seem like we have the will to battle back."

Sabres did the right thing with Sam Reinhart

By Mike Zeisberger

Toronto Sun

October 31, 2014

Buffalo Sabres fans dream of one day seeing Connor McDavid and Sam Reinhart skating together as teammates, perhaps even linemates.

They might very well get a sneak preview of that at the upcoming World Junior Championship, which face off in less than two months.

Because the Sabres shipped Reinhart back to junior on Friday, he now stands to become one of the veteran leaders on and off the ice for Team Canada when the tournament kicks off on Dec. 26.

Somewhere, Team Canada coach Benoit Groulx is smiling. And Sabres general manager Tim Murray can very much understand why.

"The World Junior becomes important because he's going to play a big role. He's going to be a leader on the team," Murray said of Reinhart, who was picked second overall in the 2014 entry draft by Buffalo.

"Hockey Canada's going to lean on him, as they are with a couple other guys. It's a great chance for him to feel good about his game again."

It's hard to "feel good" about, well, anything when you are a Sabre these days, given the unacceptable results going on in both execution and effort on the ice. Their lack of defensive zone coverage on the winning goal in a 3-2 overtime loss to the Bruins on Thursday, for example, was pointed out by Buffalo goalie Jhonas Enroth as a symbol of why the Sabres are a "bad team."

That's why the Sabres organization didn't just do the right thing by assigning Reinhart to Kootenay of the Western Hockey League -- they did the only thing.

In the end, the decision benefits three different parties down the road -- the kid himself, the Sabres franchise and, of course, Team Canada.

Even though the optics suggest the Sabres are tanking in order to be in position to pick McDavid first overall next summer, the atmosphere around the team is toxic right now. Reinhart certainly doesn't need to be around that, especially since the Sabres are not going to win anything this year -- except for, perhaps, the McDavid sweepstakes.

And if they go on to do exactly that, it would mean McDavid and Reinhart would be reunited as teammates after competing for Canada at the World Juniors.

Ten months ago at the 2014 World Juniors in Sweden, McDavid and Reinhart registered four points each during a tournament in which Canada finished a disappointing fourth. This time around, there stands to be much more responsibility on their young shoulders.

An impressive start to his infant NHL career has resulted in forward Leon Draisaitl sticking with the Edmonton Oilers, meaning he'll be unavailable to Team Canada. The same appears to be true regarding defenceman Aaron Ekblad (Florida) and forward Curtis Lazar (Ottawa), who figure to stay with the Panthers and Sens respectively.

At least Groulx has a core of McDavid and Reinhart to lean on. Eight months from now, Tim Murray might find himself doing the same.

Christian Ehrhoff feels Sabres pain from afar

By Dave Molinari
Pittsburgh Post-Gazette
November 2, 2014

Since the Penguins season began, defenseman Christian Ehrhoff has only caught highlights on the NHL Network of his former team, the Buffalo Sabres.

He has seen enough, however, to empathize with his former teammates. The Sabres brought a 2-8-1 record into Consol Energy Center Saturday night.

"I feel for the guys. It's tough to see," said Ehrhoff, who left the Sabres after they bought out his contract in the summer.

"You don't want to see a team struggle like that, but that's just part of the game. There's teams that are going to be at the bottom. It's just, it's tough to watch from the outside."

Ehrhoff said he's been pleased with his start with the Penguins. He has been thrilled to join a team that can contend for a championship and get a clean slate.

"I'm happy with a fresh start here. I came to Buffalo when they were on the rise and I had different expectations," Ehrhoff said.

He shrugged off the idea that his one-year deal with the Penguins will allow this season to serve as a tryout for free agency.

"I'm not too concerned with what's beyond this year," Ehrhoff said. "I just want to come here and have a good season as a team and be successful as a team. That's my main goal."

Coach Mike Johnston said he likes the progress he has seen so far. Ehrhoff had three assists heading into the game.

"I think Christian's come along well. I thought last game may have been his best game," Johnston said. "His versatility is really good. He's a good penalty-killer, good five-on-five guy. I've been really pleased. Obviously, in the summer, we were looking for a guy who could add depth to our team, be a top-four guy, and he's done that."

Officially speaking

When officials reversed a penalty call Thursday night in the Penguins game against the Los Angeles Kings, it was perplexing, Johnston said.

The Kings were facing a penalty after a neutral-zone collision. Then, officials nullified the call and opted for a neutral zone faceoff.

"I thought it was unusual for sure. I've never seen it in hockey. Usually, a call is a call," Johnston said. "If the referee thought he made a bad call, usually he'll say 'That's what I saw.' The referees discussed it, and they were very adamant in the end that they may have erred on the call and they wanted to get it right. That was their explanation to me."

Johnston hopes it will be a rare event.

"I don't think you can go with that because probably most calls could be debated between two officials," Johnston said. "I'd rather see them always trust their instincts. When they make a call, they've made a call."

Greiss must wait

Johnston said there was no set goaltending plan this week, but after Marc-Andre Fleury's shutout Thursday it was agreed that the Penguins should go with the hot hand and wait to give backup Thomas Greiss another start.

"Thomas wasn't scheduled to play [Saturday's] game, but, to be honest, we were waiting to see this week," Johnston said. "Going into this week, we sort of went game-to-game. Because of the shutout, I thought Fleury looked really good, looked like he was in a zone."

The Sabres are terrible – and terribly fascinating

By Sean Gentile

Sporting News

November 2, 2014

PITTSBURGH — So far, the 2014-15 season as played at Consol Energy Center has been pretty boring.

The home team is good, but a string of playoff meltdowns has turned October through March into an 82-game preseason. There's an undercurrent of "none of this matters" that flows throughout the building, and it's not an invalid sentiment to hold.

MORE: Hurricanes finally win | Fan support Howe | Malkin takes action | Scores

On Saturday, though, what could well turn out to be one of the worst teams in recent history came to town. The Buffalo Sabres might've disappointed themselves and their fans, but through a sheer scale of terribility — they are so, so bad — their 5-0 loss to the Penguins shouldn't have disappointed anyone else.

All you can ask as a hockey fan — or as part of the media — is that something interesting happens, and the Sabres, by dint of an almost preternatural inability to touch the puck, let alone score goals, qualify as such. They have two wins in 12 games, somehow, but this feels like the early stages of a six-month long car crash.

They've been shut out five times and, before Saturday, had controlled just 36.1 percent of all shots at even strength. That's not just more than 20 points below the league-leading Minnesota Wild; by at least one measure, their October was the worst puck-possession month since the NHL started tracking shot totals in 1987-88. Sidney Crosby, in his time on Earth, has never seen a team as bad in that department.

And, of course, you need the puck to score goals. Players like Brian Gionta, who signed a three-year contract worth \$4.25 million annually in the offseason, and Matt Moulson (five years, \$25 million) haven't done that at all. Three — Tyler Ennis, Zemgus Girgensens and Marcus Foligno — have managed it more than once. As a team, they have 13. Ducks winger Corey Perry has 10 himself. Their opponents have 30.

"We show up in one game, we don't show up in the next," defenseman Mike Weber said, "We show up in spurts, we show up in shifts, we show up in a period here, a period there. It's a continued frustration from years previous that for whatever reason, we can't get out of our game."

With due respect to Weber, they haven't shown up all that much. Against Pittsburgh, they tested Marc-Andre Fleury 12 times at even-strength and 18 times overall, and were shut out for the fifth time.

It seemed like less, largely because they opened with a three-shot period that, somehow, included two minutes on the power play. At 5-on-5, they managed two unblocked attempts in the first 20 minutes. Two.

Halfway through the game, they were on pace for a second 10-shot disaster in less than a week. They managed to avoid that, though.

And, hey, they took 30 of the game's 79 even-strength attempts at even-strength. That's a little better than 37 percent. Improvement!

Their biggest problem against Pittsburgh was a penalty kill that allowed three goals on five opportunities. The Penguins are the best team in the league with the man advantage, so it's understandable enough, but that doesn't change Buffalo's reality: They're drowning, and it's probably not going to get any better. If anything, based on the underlying numbers and the distinct feel that the players are only now realizing how dire their situation is, it'll get worse.

Losing every game they play is in the franchise's best interest, because that, if nothing else, guarantees them Jack Eichel, a pretty solid door prize in the Connor McDavid Derby. Watching this bear itself out in real time is almost surreal. On Saturday — and in the 11 games that came before it — they were having serious trouble exiting their zone, let alone sustaining pressure in their opponent's.

"We're not a team that should be dumping the puck in and swinging by guys and we're not a team that should get the puck dumped in on us and it should be easy for their forwards to pick it up and wheel and make plays," Weber said.

"Every man has to pick it up, intensity-wise. Be nasty. We have to be a team that if we're going to go down, we're going to go down swinging."

Words like intensity and compete and confidence pop up when there aren't any real answers. They might apply here, though, because the Sabres are even uglier than they should be. Lack of talent is the ultimate problem, but they're not doing themselves any favors.

"With our confidence factor right now, if we get down two goals, it doesn't seem like we have the will to battle back," coach Ted Nolan said. "When you don't work and you don't fight and you don't compete and you don't battle, that's what's going to happen."

It sucks for guys like Weber and Gionta and goalie Jonas Enroth, who, understandably enough, were the only signs of life — other than a tumbleweed, maybe — in a cleared-out locker room. It certainly sucks for Nolan, who's tasked with motivating and preparing a group of players that was assembled to fail and somehow has metastasized into something worse.

The coach, for what it's worth, was asked if players need to be more accountable. He said yes.

"It's like on the bench when it's 1-0 — everybody puts their head down and looks for something else to do," Nolan said. "To be accountable, you have to stand up; if we win a game, they all want to talk, but when you lose, you want to hide."

They might want that, but they're not going to get it.

Sabres confident top prospect Sam Reinhart will keep developing in junior

By Bill Hoppe
Olean Times Herald
November 1, 2014

PITTSBURGH – When general manager Tim Murray told Sam Reinhart, his top prospect, the Buffalo Sabres would be sending him back to junior, the 18-year-old handled the difficult news well.

But a few minutes later, the disappointment of leaving the First Niagara Center to begin his long trip back to the Kootenay Ice overwhelmed Reinhart.

"He was emotional," Murray said Friday. "I guess he was emotional walking out of the rink."

Murray understands Reinhart's reaction. The No. 2 pick in June spent more than two months in Buffalo. He played nine games this season.

"Now, all of a sudden, I tell him he's not part of the team," Murray said.

Murray said Reinhart "should be disappointed."

"I told him that," Murray said, "'Be disappointed. You're allowed to be disappointed.'"

Murray shares Reinhart's emotion. The two will forever be tied to each other.

"I told him, 'You're my first first-round draft pick as a GM,'" Murray said. "Obviously, I was cheering for him. But I can't let emotion come into play on the decision."

The 6-foot-1, 185-pound Reinhart just isn't strong enough to play in the NHL yet.

"It's not hockey sense, it's not skill," Murray said. "It's none of that. For me, it's strength."

Sabres coach Ted Nolan said Reinhart will "be fine."

"We all know his hockey intelligence," he said. "We all know he's going to be a big, big player down the road. But sometimes that human development just happens naturally. He's going to get stronger naturally. He's going to develop. He'll go back and pump weights."

Reinhart struggled during his short stint, compiling zero goals, one assist, three shots, two penalty minutes and a minus-1 rating. The youngster's contract would've activated if he played his 10th game.

Clearly, that wasn't going to happen. Nolan scratched Reinhart twice and mostly skated him limited minutes on the fourth line. He played a game-low seven minutes, 45 seconds in Thursday's 3-2 overtime loss to Boston. He averaged 10 minutes, 22 seconds of ice time each appearance.

The Sabres couldn't force Reinhart into the lineup every game.

"I can't keep him here, say, 'Look what we did here, our first-round pick played 82 games in his first year eligible,'" Murray said. "It's craziness to me. It's about doing what's right for him and right for the organization."

For Murray, returning prospects to junior, even elite ones, is just a normal part of development.

"For an 18-year-old player, I don't see the value of the argument he can sit on the bench here and work out versus going back to junior, no matter what he's accomplished in junior," Murray said. "Great players have gone

back to junior, 99 percent of the players that have played here have gone back to junior. He's still going to get something out of it."

Of course, having dominated the Western Hockey League for two seasons, Reinhart has also outgrown junior. Reinhart had 36 goals and 105 points in 60 games last season and 35 goals and 85 points in 72 contests two years ago.

"He's not going to learn a whole lot there on the ice, I don't think," Murray said. "I know he can go back there and be a 120-point guy in a full season, playing three-quarters speed. But that's not what we want him to do. We want him to go back there and get stronger."

Murray said Reinhart must start working toward his goal immediately.

"He's going to have to find a way two or three times a week to slip out on his own and get to the gym and get stronger," Murray said.

That vision for Reinhart might not mesh with Kootenay coach Ryan McGill's.

"He's going to have to manage his time different," Murray said about Reinhart. "It might be a different message than his junior coach would like him to send, and I understand that."

Reinhart will almost certainly spend some away from Kootenay. He could captain Team Canada's entry at the world junior championship in December.

"It's a great chance to feel good about his game again, to feel that he's a world-class player in his age group," Murray said. "Just because you get cut here at the NHL level at 18, it doesn't mean you're not a world-class player in your age group."

The Sabres play the Penguins tonight.

Sabres notes: GM Tim Murray undecided on Nikita Zadorov's future

By Bill Hoppe
Olean Times Herald
November 1, 2014

PITTSBURGH – With Sam Reinhart sent back to junior Friday, Buffalo Sabres general manager Tim Murray can concentrate on another teenage prospect, defenseman Nikita Zadorov.

"I don't want to start juggling five balls," Murray said inside the First Niagara Center.

The Sabres have essentially been stashing Zadorov on their roster until they find a place for him to play. The 19-year-old has played only one of the first 11 games.

Since Zadorov doesn't have a release from his Russian team, the Sabres lose control of him for the rest of the season if they send him back to the Ontario Hockey League's London Knights.

"I just haven't come to a decision on that," Murray said about Zadorov's future. "It could be tomorrow, it could be three weeks. I guess I'll start thinking more about that now."

Zadorov's situation is very unique.

"I just know he stays here for us or we assign him to London, and after that, we won't be involved, we can't be involved," Murray said. "We've tried every avenue, and we've been shut down at every avenue."

Murray said verbal agreements and other things – "Stuff that's way out of our hands," he said – haven't helped.

London GM Mark Hunter calls every day about Zadorov, Murray said. The Knights want the No. 16 pick in 2013 back.

Of course, the AHL would be the ideal place for Zadorov to develop. But Canadian Hockey League players can't play in the AHL until their junior eligibility runs out.

Murray, like a lot of GMs, wants to see that rule changed.

"Nothing against junior hockey, I grew up watching it, know a lot of people in the game," he said. "There are certain players that are beyond that."

Murray wants prospects to receive an AHL trial similar to the nine-game trial the NHL gives youngsters before their contract kicks in.

"The schedule Zadorov's on here, the 20 games in the American Hockey League would've been a lot quicker, right?" Murray said. "They're not going to agree to anything like that. They have to protect their franchise. They feel that they sell tickets based on stars coming back. I understand that. It's a dilemma for development, and it's not just me talking about it."

xxx

Sabres coach Ted Nolan said Brian Flynn will play tonight against the Penguins, just the forward's third game this season. The Sabres don't plan to recall a player to replace Reinhart, Nolan said.

"We can't just all of a sudden jump into another young guy and throw him into the same situation," Nolan said.

Goalie Jhonas Enroth will make his second straight start tonight. Defenseman Tyson Strachan will likely play again, Nolan said. Strachan has been a healthy scratch nine times like Flynn.

Center Tyler Ennis and forward Cody McCormick rested Friday but will play tonight.

Meanwhile, winger Patrick Kaleta, out since taking a puck in the face Sept. 28, has been practicing fully.

"He's pretty close," Nolan said. "He's anxious to get back."

xxx

Former Sabres defenseman Jamie McBain has signed a tryout with the Manchester Monarchs, Los Angeles' AHL affiliate.

Sabres showing lack of accountability on and off the ice

By Bill Hoppe
Olean Times Herald
November 2, 2014

PITTSBURGH – When the dressing room door opened following Buffalo Sabres' dispirited 5-0 loss to the Penguins on Saturday, three players – captain Brian Gionta, forward Cody McCormick and goalie Jhonas Enroth – were still at their stalls.

Three.

Nineteen players participated in the Sabres' 10th loss in 12 games.

Given the Sabres' actions on the bench, coach Ted Nolan's not surprised players bolted from the room. He said they must be accountable.

"It's like on the bench when it's 1-0, everybody puts their head down and looks for something else to do," Nolan said inside the Consol Energy Center. "To be accountable, you have to stand up. If we win a game, we all want to talk. But if we lose, we all want to hide. No one's going to come in here and help us. The only way to get through in tough times is going to be tough."

The hapless Sabres lost their third straight contest. Incredibly, an opponent shut them out for the fifth time in eight games! They have 12 goals in 12 games. Opponents have 41. The Penguins' league-leading power play scored three times.

The Sabres might be worse than last season, when they finished dead last.

"Whether it's been on the road or at home, we got to somehow find an identity to get mean, get nasty, get angry," Sabres defenseman Mike Weber said passionately. "There's not enough anger. There's not enough intensity throughout the game. We're not a team that should be dumping the puck in and swinging by guys. ...

"Every man's got to pick it up intensity-wise and be nasty. We need to be a team, if we go down, we're going to go down swinging. We haven't been that team yet. That's the most frustrating part."

Weber said the Sabres showcase little consistency.

"We show up one game, we don't show up the next," he said. "We show up in shifts, we show up for a period here and there. It's a continued frustration from years previous for whatever reason we can't get out of our game."

He added: "Mentally, I don't know where we are."

What about the shutouts? How can a team score so little? The Sabres are on an 82-goal pace. Remember, it's November.

"When you don't work and you don't compete and you don't battle, that's what's going to happen," Nolan said. "This is the National Hockey League. It's the best players in the world. Usually (players) battle like a son-of-a-gun in order to keep that position this league."

Gionta added: "You got to look at the way we're playing the game, and right now we're having a hard time coming out of our own end. We spend too much time in our D-zone. You're not going to score goals in this league from there."

The Sabres actually stayed in Saturday's contest a bit. But two second-period goals put the Penguins up 3-0.

"That confidence factor right now, if we get down 2-0, it doesn't seem like we have the will to battle back," Nolan said.

Penguins' Christian Ehrhoff happy with fresh start, sorry Sabres struggling

By Bill Hoppe

Olean Times Herald

November 2, 2014

PITTSBURGH – Penguins defenseman Christian Ehrhoff figured since the Buffalo Sabres asked him to submit a no-trade list last season, the rebuilding team would deal him during the summer.

"That was kind of my expectation," Ehrhoff said Saturday prior to the Penguins' 5-0 win inside the Consol Energy Center, "but it didn't end up that way."

On June 29, the Sabres used their second compliance buyout to eat the final seven seasons of Ehrhoff's 10-year contract. The German was shocked.

The 32-year-old joined the Sabres in 2011 expected to be a final piece in the Stanley Cup puzzle. He departed months after they finished dead last.

Ehrhoff signed a one-year, \$4 million contract with the powerhouse Penguins on July 1.

The slick Ehrhoff appeared disenchanted with the Sabres' sorry state late in his three-year run. Clearly, he wanted to leave.

"For me, I'm happy with a fresh start here, because I came to Buffalo when they were on the rise," he said. "I had a lot different expectations. I had hoped for to be on a team that had a chance to compete, and obviously it didn't turn out that way."

Ehrhoff has blended in nicely on the Penguins' star-studded roster, skating more than 21 minutes a game. He started Saturday's tilt with three assists and a plus-6 rating in nine games.

"His versatility is really good," Penguins coach Mike Johnston said. "He's a good penalty killer, good five-on-five guy. We've had him matched up against top players. So I've been really pleased.

"Obviously, in the summer we were looking for a player to add depth to our team, a top-four guy, and he's proven to be that."

Ehrhoff added: "It's pretty easy to adapt."

It's easier to adapt with less pressure. Ehrhoff's the Penguins' third or fourth defenseman. Despite his heavy shot, Johnston uses him on the second power-play unit.

"I think we've probably been spoiled with a lot of D back there that can do that," Penguins superstar Sidney Crosby. "He's fit right in. That's the way he likes to play, he likes to join the rush and move it."

The Sabres have to pay Ehrhoff two-thirds of the \$18 million left of his \$40 million deal. They couldn't trade him because they faced a huge cap recapture penalty if he retired early.

Ehrhoff essentially bet on himself by signing a short contract. If he plays well, showcases his old Vancouver form, he could earn another lucrative long-term deal.

Before Buffalo, he thrived playing for some talented Canucks teams, averaging 14 goals and 47 points over a two-year stretch.

"I'm not too concerned with what's beyond this year," Ehrhoff said.

Ehrhoff mostly struggled with the Sabres, only looking like No. 1 defenseman for short stretches. The team has been just as bad this season, perhaps even worse, without Ehrhoff eating up minutes.

"I feel for the guys," Ehrhoff said. "It's tough to see. You don't want to see a team struggle like that. That's just part of the game."

Sabres coach Ted Nolan said he's never disappointed if a player wants to leave.

"That's why we have a free country," he said. "Sometimes contracts hold you to certain places. If you don't want to be somewhere, I think the best thing is asked to be moved."

The Sabres host the Detroit Red Wings tonight, the first of four home games this week.

Notes: Struggling Sabres forward Cody Hodgson, a touchy subject for Nolan, was moved from the fourth line to center Chris Stewart and Marcus Foligno. Hodgson has mostly played wing this season. "We want him to play the way he's capable of playing," Nolan said. "So far, he hasn't done it. We just got to get better." ... The Sabres made one lineup change Saturday, inserting forward Brian Flynn for Sam Reinhart, who was returned to junior Friday. Meanwhile, defenseman Tyson Strachan replaced Andrej Meszaros for the second straight game. The Sabres also scratched defenseman Nikita Zadorov. ... Crosby's first-period assist extended his point streak against the Sabres to 18 games, his longest current streak.

Sabres' Murray knew Reinhart had to be sent down

By Paul Hamilton

WGR 550

October 31, 2014

Buffalo, NY (WGR 550) -- After the Sabres went out for practice, Tim Murray met with Sam Reinhart to tell him he's going back to junior.

It seemed like it was a pretty obvious decision. One of the most obvious things in watching Reinhart play was how overmatched he was physically. Murray said, "He's not going to learn a whole lot there on the ice, I told him I know he can go back there and be a 120 point guy in a full season playing three quarters speed, but that's not what we want him to go back there and do."

I know at face value, that statement might seem like Murray has lost his mind, but he told Reinhart what he needs to accomplish, "We want him to go back there and get stronger and he's going to have to find a way that when he's tired and he's had his workouts with his team on ice and off ice and he goes home for a nap or has dinner and he's going to have his rest, he's going to have to find a way two or three times per week to slip out on his own to get to the gym and get stronger."

Murray said, "The biggest factor was watching him play, the minutes he got here, the situations he played in here, told me that it was time to go back." Of course Reinhart was down, "With me he was good, but when he left me he was emotional and disappointed. He should be disappointed and I told him that, 'Be disappointed, you're allowed to be disappointed'."

Many fans have no idea how to develop young players. They want all the 18-21 year olds in Buffalo and playing despite not being ready for the NHL. Murray disagrees with that philosophy, "For an 18 year old player, I don't see the value of you can sit on the bench and workout versus going back to junior. Great players have gone back to junior."

Murray also felt losing didn't help, "The start we're off to as a team has an effect on a young guy. A young guy plays to what the team is doing. If the team's really successful, I think some individual success comes to young players. If the team is going through a rough patch, that kid will go through the rough patch with the team and the 18 year old is not the guy that can get you out of the rough patch."

Murray of course wants the kid to succeed, but keeping him here isn't what's best, "It's an emotional day, I told him you're my first first round draft pick as a GM and I was cheering for him, but I can't let emotion come into play, it has to be the decision that's right for the organization and him. It can't be the right decision for me."

Rushing young players is such a mistake and has been proven time and time again not to work. Murray said, "The group of guys, Johansen, Getzlaf, Perry, I mean they're superstars in our league and they didn't play from day one, so it's about patience, it's about doing the right thing and I believe this is the right thing."

Nolan could see Reinhart was overwhelmed after three games and he reduced his ice time. Nolan said, "We all know his hockey intelligence, we all know he's going to be a big, big player here. I think the biggest thing is the strength factor, being banged off the puck wouldn't be good for his confidence so this will be good." Nolan added, "He's a fine young man and there wasn't one negative thing that I saw, but we had to make sure we made the right decision for him. Are we 100 percent right all the time? Probably not, but, it was a collective choice. Look at Grigorenko down in Rochester, throwing him into the fire too premature, sometimes hinders development, so right now it's about putting people in the right place and these kids have to develop and when they do, we'll be a great team."

Former Sabre Ehrhoff expected more in Buffalo

By Paul Hamilton

WGR 550

November 1, 2014

Pittsburgh, PA (WGR 550) -- Christian Ehrhoff will play his first game against the Sabres since he told Tim Murray he didn't want to be here anymore and was bought out.

It was very apparent in Ehrhoff's play in many games last year that he had packed it in and didn't want to be here. In an interview sent out by Penguins.com Ehrhoff said, "I feel for the guys, it's tough to see."

Ehrhoff was asked if he wanted to leave and he said, "I never really thought about it, but when the deadline came they asked me for my list, so I assumed something was up." Ehrhoff added, "In the summer they decided to go that route and obviously for me I'm happy with a fresh start here. I came to Buffalo when they won my rights and I had a lot different expectation, I had hoped to be on a team that has a chance to compete and it didn't turn out that way."

Ehrhoff said even though he didn't get traded at the deadline, he expected to be traded in the summer. Tim Murray wanted the compliance buyout so he wouldn't be hurt by the contract should Ehrhoff retire early.

This season Ehrhoff has no goals and three assists and is plus six.

Ted Nolan has really never spoken about Ehrhoff's departure. He said, "No I'm not disappointed in anybody. That's why we have a free country and sometimes contracts hold you to certain places, but if you don't want to be somewhere, then the best thing is to ask to be moved. I'm not 100 percent sure how it all transpired, but we moved him and hopefully he's happy here and we moved on also."

The Pens have used Marc-Andre Fleury in every game but one and tonight will be no different. He's 6-2-0 with a 2.13 goals against and .926 save percentage. In his last 12 starts against Buffalo, he's 10-2-0 with a 1.93 goals against.

At the other end its Jhonas Enroth who's 1-5-1 with a 3.11 goals against and .915 save percentage.

Pittsburgh leads the Metropolitan Division with 13 points. The Pens have won three straight scoring 14 goals.

In their last six games Pittsburgh has killed off 22 straight penalties.

Sidney Crosby has scored a point in 17 straight games versus Buffalo scoring 10 goals and 18 assists for 28 points.

Evgeni Malkin has a nine game NHL streak going where he's scored 12 points.

Brian Flynn takes Sam Reinhart's place since the 18 year old has been sent back to junior. Flynn will be with Cody McCormick and Nic Deslauriers. Cody Hodgson will center Marcus Foligno and Chris Stewart.

Tyson Strachan will remain in on defense which means Andrej Meszaros is scratched.

Join Brian Koziol at 6:00 for the pregame when he'll be joined by Tim Murray, Ted Nolan, Tyson Strachan and Brian Gionta.

Hamilton: Sabres look the same in Pittsburgh

By Paul Hamilton

WGR 550

November 1, 2014

Pittsburgh, PA (WGR 550) -- It was very predictable what we'd see in the first period in Pittsburgh.

The Pens had the puck in the Buffalo end pretty much for the whole period except for the one Sabres power play. Even then, Andre Benoit made a horrible decision from the left point allowing Pascal Dupuis to lead a 2-on-1. Tyler Myers did get a stick on the shot which allowed Jhonas Enroth to stop it easily.

The line of Sidney Crosby, Chris Kunitz and Patric Hornqvist never left the Buffalo zone and did score when Crosby took the puck to the net and both Myers and Josh Gorges took him. Both wingers followed him to the net and Enroth stopped Hornqvist, but not Kunitz.

Matt Moulson had the two Buffalo scoring chances. He took a puck to the net very early with Marc-Andre Fleury making the stop. Later, Chris Stewart set him up in the slot, but his shot hit Chris Letang in the skate.

Enroth was good once again making 11 first period saves, while Fleury stopped three pucks.

Buffalo at least put some pressure on Fleury in the second, but a goal that was way offside pretty much put Buffalo out of it.

Evgeni Malkin brought the puck into the zone and laid a beautiful pass to Blake Comeau who made no mistake for his third over Enroth's shoulder. The problem was Malkin had put himself offside as he carried the puck into the zone and the linesmen missed it.

I think that should be a reviewable play, but of course it's not.

Buffalo got a sloppy penalty as six guys were on the ice for a power play which not only canceled the PP, but gave the Pens a chance and they made no mistake. Nobody covered Hornqvist in front and he took a great pass from Kunitz and scored his sixth since coming over from Nashville.

Early in the period Brian Gionta was wide open to the right of Fleury and ripped the puck over the net.

A couple of times Zemgus Girgensons got the puck to the net, but Fleury held strong.

Moulson had another power play chance when he tipped a shot from the point, but again, Fleury was in position.

Pittsburgh got an early third period power play when Mike Weber roughed up Crosby and Kunitz tipped in his second of the game with Crosby getting another point. It was great vision by Letang from the blue line not only to see Kunitz off to Enroth's left, but to get the shot through to him.

Buffalo tried to break the shutout in the third on the power play when Stewart went strong to the net, but Fleury gave him nothing.

Tyler Ennis took Buffalo off the power play again with a lazy penalty and Malkin scored Pittsburgh's third power play goal of the game.

This was just another of many horrendous offensive efforts for this team and there just doesn't seem to be any improvement or an end in sight. "It's the same recipe and it's the same results," said Ted Nolan. "With our confidence factor right now, if we get down two goals it doesn't seem like we have the will to battle back."

After the game, only three players were in the dressing room, ready to speak to the media. I asked Nolan if his players have to be more accountable.

"They have to [be more accountable]," Nolan said. "On the bench, when it's 1-0, everybody puts their head down and looks for something else to do. To be accountable, you have to stand up. If we win a game, they're all in there and they want to talk. When you lose, they want to hide."

"No one's going to come in here and help us," Nolan continued. "The only way to get through tough times is, you've gotta be tough. We'll test our mental will in the next little while."

Pens ride power play to 5-0 win over Sabres

By Dan Cave

WGR 550

November 1, 2014

The Penguins racked up three power play goals and Sidney Crosby, Evgeni Malkin and Chris Kunitz each contributed three points in a 5-0 win over the Sabres. Marc-Andre Fleury stopped all 18 shots he faced for his second straight shutout.

It didn't take long for the Penguins to grab the lead and for Crosby to extend his point streak against Buffalo. The Pittsburgh captain drove hard to the net and Kunitz shoveled home the loose puck, putting the Pens up 1-0. Crosby's assist on the goal gave him at least one point in 18 straight games when playing the Sabres.

Blake Comeau made it 2-0 at 11:54 of the second period on a missed offsides call. Malkin reached the Buffalo zone and dragged the puck along with him, only after crossing the blue line. Malkin fed Comeau in the slot and the Pens' forward capitalized, snapping a shot past Jhonas Enroth. Patric Hornqvist's power play tally later in the period put Pittsburgh ahead by three. Hornqvist finished off a pair of perfect passes by Kunitz and Malkin with his sixth goal of the season.

Pittsburgh's second power play goal of the evening came early in the final period, a Kunitz deflection off of Kris Letang's shot from the point. At 13:11 of the third, the Pens struck again with the man advantage. Malkin found the net after having already racked up a pair of assists, making it 5-0.

Coming off a 3-0 win over the Kings, Fleury extended his shutout streak against Buffalo, turning aside 18 shots. Enroth faced 34 shots by the Penguins, stopping 29 of them.

The Sabres return home to face the Detroit Red Wings Sunday at 5 p.m. Dan Dunleavy and Rob Ray will have the

play by play on WGR 550 and the Buffalo Sabres Radio Network.

1st Period

Goals

4:26 - PIT - Chris Kunitz (6) (Patric Hornqvist, Sidney Crosby)

Penalties

12:46 - PIT - Olli Maatta (2 min., holding the stick)

2nd Period

Goals

11:54 - PIT - Blake Comeau (3) (Evgeni Malkin, Pascal Dupuis)

16:09 - PIT - Patric Hornqvist (PPG) (6) (Chris Kunitz, Evgeni Malkin)

Penalties

13:34 - PIT - Sidney Crosby (2 min., hooking)

14:50 - BUF - Bench penalty (2 min., too many men on the ice)

20:00 - PIT - Blake Comeau (2 min., roughing)

3rd Period

Goals

2:33 - PIT - Chris Kunitz (7) (PPG) (Kris Letang, Sidney Crosby)

13:11 - PIT - Evgeni Malkin (5) (PPG) (Sidney Crosby, Christian Ehrhoff)

Penalties

2:00 - BUF - Mike Weber (2 min., roughing)

3:35 - BUF - Nicolas Deslauriers (2 min., hooking)

10:32 - PIT - Craig Adams (2 min., holding)

12:22 - BUF - Tyler Ennis (2 min., interference)

16:18 - BUF - Zemgus Girgensons (2 min., interference)

Goaltending

BUF - Jhonas Enroth (29 saves, 34 shots)

PIT - Marc-Andre Fleury (18 saves, 18 shots)

Power Plays

BUF - 0 of 4

PIT - 3 of 5

Three Stars

1.) PIT - Evgeni Malkin (1 G, 2 A)

2.) PIT - Chris Kunitz (2 G, 1 A)

3.) PIT - Marc-Andre Fleury (18 saves)

Murray: Assigning Reinhart to junior 'the right thing' for his development

By Chris Ryndak

Sabres.com

October 31, 2014

The development of rookie center Sam Reinhart will continue with the Kootenay Ice of the Western Hockey League.

The Buffalo Sabres announced Friday that Reinhart, the second overall pick in the 2014 NHL Draft, has been assigned to his junior club, meaning he won't be eligible to return to the Sabres until next season.

Reinhart, who will turn 19 on Nov. 6, had one point – an assist – in nine NHL games this season. He currently checks in at 6-foot-1, 185 pounds and Sabres general manager Tim Murray would like him to take extra time to focus on getting stronger this season.

"[He's] not strong or heavy enough yet. Just by getting stronger, he's going to get quicker and faster but strength was an issue for me," Murray said. "Watching him play, watching how important he was here, the minutes he got here, the situations he played in here told me it was time to get back."

"...It's about patience. It's about doing the right thing and I believe this is the right thing."

Murray met with Reinhart before the team took the ice for practice at First Niagara Center and said that Reinhart seemed to take the news well then. However, Reinhart was obviously disappointed and Murray said Reinhart was emotional after their meeting.

"It's an emotional day. I told him, 'You're my first first-round draft pick as a GM.' Obviously I was cheering for him, but I can't let emotion come into play in the decision," he said. "It has to be the decision that's right, No. 1 for the organization and No. 2 him. It can't be the right decision for me."

"I can't keep him here and say, 'Hey, hey, look what we did here. Our first-round pick played 82 games in his first year eligible.' That's craziness to me. It's about doing what's right for him and what's right for the organization."

Reinhart is a lock to make Team Canada's World Junior Championship team and having the experience as one of the leaders on that team will help him in the long run. Murray hopes that Reinhart looks and achieves many shorter-term goals like playing well at the WJC and helping lead Kootenay into a playoff position.

Murray said that after seeing Reinhart play at the NHL-level, he never considered keeping him in Buffalo for the entire year just so he could observe and play a reduced role on the ice.

"I don't see the value of the argument of you can sit on the bench here and work out versus going back to junior, no matter what he's accomplished in junior," Murray said. "Great players have gone back to junior. Ninety-nine percent of the players that play here have gone back to junior. He's still going to get something out of it. He's going to get the World Junior."

"Hopefully his team's a playoff team. Every playoff game you play at every level is experience that you can't take away from him. There are a lot of short-term things that he can take."

Sabres coach Ted Nolan has often praised Reinhart's hockey intelligence, his emotional maturity and his willingness to learn new things in all areas of the pro game. However, physically, the hockey department saw limitations in his game that will change with work and time.

"You look at the overall picture where he got knocked off the puck a little bit or he slipped underneath. Those things just come through with maturity and growth," Nolan said. "You just let human nature take its course and with that, Sam's going to develop into a stronger individual and he's going to be an even better player."

Reinhart was dominant in junior last season, scoring 105 points (36+69) in Kootenay. He also put up six goals and 17 assists in 13 playoff games. He was named the WHL's Player of the Year and Most Sportsmanlike Player of the Year.

Buffalo, though, has struggled to produce offense through 11 games this season and Murray thinks that is part of the reason Reinhart looked like he needs more seasoning at the junior level.

"If the team is really successful, some individual success comes to young players. If the team is going through a rough patch, that kid will go through the rough patch with the team," he said. "The 18 year old is not the guy who can get you out of the rough patch. He's part of the tide, so when the tide's high, he's high; when the tide's low, he's low. I think that's what we saw."

Both Murray and Nolan still think the future is very bright for Reinhart. They're well aware of his skill set and character.

"He's a fine young man. There wasn't one negative thing I saw. The one thing we want to do as mature adults is make sure we try to [make] the right decision for him and the right choice," Nolan said.

"Throwing him in the fire a little too prematurely can hinder development. Right now, it's about putting people in the right place and these kids have to develop and when they develop, we're going to be a great team."

Friday practice report

By Chris Ryndak

Sabres.com

November 1, 2014

After a long practice on Wednesday and a hard-fought game on Thursday, the Buffalo Sabres were back on the ice Friday morning at First Niagara Center.

Tyler Ennis and Cody McCormick were given rest days. Both should be ready to go Saturday night when the Buffalo Sabres take on the Pittsburgh Penguins at Consol Energy Center.

Defenseman Tyson Strachan, who played in his second game of the season Thursday night, looks like he'll be staying in the lineup for the foreseeable future. He skated with Mike Weber while Andrej Meszaros – a healthy scratch against the Bruins on Thursday – worked alongside Nikita Zadorov.

Strachan played 13:47 against Boston and has one assist on the year. He said he's used to coming in after long stretches of sitting out and hasn't felt out of place on the ice.

"Composure's a big part of my game and I don't think I lost that part of it," Strachan said. "Just a play here and there, the quickness of the game is something you need to take a little bit of time to get back into the swing of, but you practice at a high pace every day with guys and I've been through it before so I know how to handle that situation. I feel like I can jump in whenever."

Coach Ted Nolan has been impressed with Strachan's play so far.

"I know it was tough for him sitting out all those games, but you wait," he said. "We wait for someone's misfortune to make it your fortune. And Tyson did that."

Sam Reinhart did not skate as **he was assigned to his junior club**, the Kootenay Ice of the Western Hockey League, before practice.

Jhonas Enroth will once again start in goal in Pittsburgh.

IN THE MIDDLE AGAIN

Cody Hodgson was back at center on a line with Marcus Foligno and Chris Stewart. He played on the fourth line against the Bruins. He has one goal and one assist through 11 games.

"Cody Hodgson is one of the players that we rely on. He's got to be better like all of us do," Nolan said. "Last night, he was cut down on his minutes. I thought he responded well."

A HEALTHY COMPETITION

After some line work, the squad split into two teams for a shootout relay that had the players loosen up a bit as well as have them focus on putting the puck in the net.

"It's just nice to have a little competition or something," forward Brian Flynn, who will play against the Penguins, said. "It usually brings the best out of you, gets a little more life out there. You need to do fun things like that every once in awhile."

After the relay, the defensemen focused on some shooting drills from the point.

Even goaltender Matt Hackett, who is recovering from a knee injury sustained in April, partook.

HERE OR LONDON

Reinhart was sent back because the team was pressed to make a decision. He had played nine games and if he dressed for a 10th, his entry-level contract would kick in and he would not be able to return to junior.

The Sabres face a similar situation with Zadorov, who has played in only one game so far this season. He cannot play for the Rochester Americans of the American Hockey League due to his age and contract status, so Buffalo's only option would be to send him to the London Knights, the junior club that owns his rights.

There are other circumstances, including a Kontinental Hockey League team that owns Zadorov's rights that might prevent him from reporting to London. That however, is out of the Sabres hands as their only options are to keep him in the NHL or assign him to London.

"I just know he stays here for us or we assign him to London. And after that, we won't be involved. We can't be involved," Sabres general manager Tim Murray said. "We've tried every avenue and we've been shut down at every avenue. We can't send him to the American [Hockey] League."

Murray said that the Knights ownership group is eager to get Zadorov back in their lineup.

FRIDAY'S PRACTICE

26 Matt Moulson – 21 Drew Stafford
17 Torrey Mitchell – 28 Zemgus Girgensons – 12 Brian Gionta
82 Marcus Foligno – 19 Cody Hodgson – 80 Chris Stewart
44 Nicolas Deslauriers – 65 Brian Flynn – 36 Patrick Kaleta

4 Josh Gorges – 57 Tyler Myers
6 Mike Weber – 24 Tyson Strachan
61 Andre Benoit – 55 Rasmus Ristolainen
51 Nikita Zadorov – 41 Andrej Meszaros

1 Jhonas Enroth
34 Michal Neuvirth
31 Matt Hackett

Patrick Kaleta practiced with the team and is getting closer to returning, but Nolan said they're waiting to get clearance from the medical staff before he'll be able to play in a game. He had facial surgery after taking a slap shot to the face in a preseason game back on Sept. 28.

Home sweet home

By Joe Ray

Sabres.com

November 1, 2014

Only 22 seconds into the game, Nolan Sheeran zipped a pass between two defenders to Shane Conacher, who sped down the left wing and buried a shot five-hole. The 2,000 fans in attendance at the first official event in the brand-new HARBORCENTER had not even quieted down from the opening faceoff, and the building continued to shake with excitement after the goal.

"I said, 'If I'm getting the first goal, I'm jumping right into the 'C-Block' [fan section]," explained Conacher. "I had to dangle a few of my teammates to jump into the boards there."

Goals by Doug Beck and Jack Stander helped power Canisius' effort in front of the sold-out crowd, but Ohio State generated just enough offense to force a 3-3 tie on Friday.

Conacher's early goal was followed up 1:27 later to double the Canisius lead. Beck caught Ohio State goaltender Christian Frey out of position and converted on a wraparound attempt.

Matt Johnson and Luke Stork scored for Ohio State to even the score at 2-2 in the second period. Freshman defenseman Stander scored his first goal as a Griffin during an extended four-on-four in the third period to make it 3-2, with a spin-o-rama move from Conacher creating the space to set up the assist.

After having one goal overturned on replay, Derek Gust found the equalizer for Ohio State with four minutes to play.

Goaltender Keegan Asmundson stood his ground in overtime as Ohio State peppered the Griffs with numerous chances late, but neither team could break through in the extra period.

From the pre-game warmups all the way to the final whistle, the atmosphere was electric inside Rink 1 at HARBORCENTER. Canisius students packed the rink to capacity on Halloween night and made sure the Griffs established home-ice advantage early and often.

"The crowd was great," Canisius head coach Dave Smith said. "The energy in the building was noticeable to the point that before the first puck drop, the referee came over and said, 'There's so much energy in here, we don't want to take it away.'"

"It was amazing, you couldn't ask for a better start," said Sheeran. "It was pretty insane when Conacher got that goal."

The Buffalo Jr. Sabres, one of Canisius' co-tenants at HARBORCENTER, are well-represented on the Griffs roster. Sheeran's two assists on Friday give him seven points in six games. He's off to a red-hot start to this season after moving to center between Conacher and Ralph Cuddemi.

Former Jr. Sabres Ryan Schmelzer and Josh Kielich set up Beck's wraparound goal that gave Canisius a 2-0 lead just 1:49 into the game. For Schmelzer, it was his first point with Canisius.

With Sheeran and Schmelzer fresh off stellar campaigns with the Buffalo Jr. Sabres, the early contributions from them and the rest of Canisius' freshman class have added a significant dimension to this lineup.

"All of those guys really did a wonderful job," Smith said of freshman like Sheeran, Schmelzer, and Stander. "You see the contributions of a guy like (Ryan) Schmelzer who's asked to do so much. You really need those contributions from your freshman. You need freshman to contribute. When you have that, you have depth."

With Canisius and the Jr. Sabres now sharing a home, a relationship is set up where players can have the chance to develop as hockey players from youth levels all the way through college.

"Because we have such nice facilities, that will help the Jr. Sabres bring in players, help them have a better team, and it will be better for people to come and watch the Jr. Sabres," Sheeran said. "It's beneficial for both teams."

The Griffs and Buckeyes will return to HARBORCENTER on Saturday for a 7:35 p.m. showdown. Based on Friday's atmosphere, it should be easy for Canisius to carry the momentum from an action-packed opening night.

"Nothing was really decided tonight, so the race just gets extended a little bit," Smith said. "We need to play with the same passion and intensity to continue to have the demeanor to win through the ups-and-downs of a game. Now we've got to be the hungrier dogs."

Sabres' top-10 PK unit goes against Penguins' No. 1 power play

By Chris Ryndak

Sabres.com

November 1, 2014

PITTSBURGH – The Buffalo Sabres have been strong on the penalty kill so far this season, but they'll face their biggest challenge yet Saturday night in the Pittsburgh Penguins.

Buffalo currently has the eighth-ranked penalty kill in the League at 85.3 percent (35 of 41). The Penguins are tops in the NHL on the power play with 15 goals in 38 attempts (39.5 percent). Pittsburgh's power play is the second-most efficient unit at home, licking at a 37.0 percent pace.

The puck drops from Consol Energy Center at 7 p.m. The Tops Gamenight pregame show begins at 6:30 p.m. on MSG-B. The game will air on Sportsnet One in Canada and can also be heard live on WGR 550.

The Sabres shorthanded units have killed off right of their 24 of their past 27 penalties against high-quality teams that have included Boston, Anaheim, San Jose and Los Angeles.

"We're taking a lot of pride in it. Guys are going over the boards and they know they have a job to do," Sabres forward Cody McCormick said. "They take a lot of weight for it and they want to make sure they're doing it and that it's a privilege to be out there."

Buffalo will look to keep the Penguins on the outside and not allow shots from the slot. Evgeni Malkin (4+4) and Sidney Crosby (3+5) are tied for the League-lead in power-play points with eight each (Arizona's Keith Yandle has one goal and seven assists with the man advantage).

What will help the units out the most, however, is playing the game as close to penalty free as possible.

"The best way to kill it is stay out of the box," Sabres coach Ted Nolan said. "They're very potent. They've got really good, high-end players and when you give high-end players an opportunity, they'll sting you and they'll sting you good. We've got to be very patient tonight. We've got to be very disciplined."

Marcus Foligno has become one player the Sabres have relied upon in shorthanded situations. He even had a prime scoring chance on the PK against the Bruins on Thursday.

"One of my goals this year was to be an important part of that penalty kill," he said. "So far, I think it's working. If you can get offensive chances on the penalty kill, that's great but there are some lethal power plays in the League and you can really get bit there so, just do your job, block shots and kill important penalties."

KNOCKING ON OPPORTUNITY'S DOOR

With Sam Reinhart now **back with his junior club in Kootenay**, a spot in the lineup opens up for Brian Flynn.

"We knew that possibly this day would come that if Reinhart goes back, we'd need someone to jump in," Nolan said. "Flynn was unfortunately the odd guy out at the moment but we pushed him hard in practice and kept him alert and kept him informed just in case. He's been a true pro about it and now he gets his opportunity."

Tyson Strachan will also stay in the lineup. The 6-foot-3, 215 pound defenseman has been steady for Buffalo in the two games he's played so far this season. Nolan also thinks he adds some cohesion and chemistry to the backend.

"Strachan plays the way Strachan plays. We didn't ask him to come and do coast-to-coast rushes for us. We asked to be a reliable defensive defenseman for us and he did that well," Nolan said.

Cody Hodgson will return to center on a line between Foligno and Chris Stewart. Jhonas Enroth will start for Buffalo. He made 34 saves Thursday night against the Bruins.

PROJECTED LINEUP

26 Matt Moulson – 63 Tyler Ennis – 21 Drew Stafford
17 Torrey Mitchell – 28 Zemgus Girgensons – 12 Brian Gionta
82 Marcus Foligno – 19 Cody Hodgson – 80 Chris Stewart
44 Nicolas Deslauriers – 8 Cody McCormick – 65 Brian Flynn

4 Josh Gorges – 57 Tyler Myers
6 Mike Weber – 24 Tyson Strachan
61 Andre Benoit – 55 Rasmus Ristolainen

1 Jhonas Enroth
34 Michal Neuvirth

Healthy Scratches: 41 Andrej Meszaros, 51 Nikita Zadorov
Injured Reserve: 31 Matt Hackett, 36 Patrick Kaleta

Success on power play leads penguins over Sabres

By Chris Ryndak

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PITTSBURGH – In an otherwise empty Buffalo Sabres dressing room Saturday night, defenseman Mike Weber stood before a handful of reporters and was asked about the team's 5-0 loss to the Pittsburgh Penguins at Consol Energy Center.

Visibly upset and frustrated by the result, Weber chose his words carefully, but the message was clear. He wants his team to get mad and not take the losing sitting down anymore.

"We've got to somehow find an identity to get mean, get nasty, get angry," an intense Weber said after the game. "There's not enough anger. There's not enough intensity throughout the game.

"Every man's got to pick it up insanity-wise and be nasty. We need to be a team that if we're going to go down, we're going to go down swinging. We haven't been that team yet and that's the most frustrating part."

The Sabres have had their share of struggles in the early goings of this season and ran into a red-hot Penguins team that has now won four in a row, improving their overall record to 7-2-1.

The Penguins' power play is the best in the League and is humming along at an incredible 41.9 percent success rate (18-for-43). They scored three power-play goals against a Sabres penalty kill that entered the game ranked eighth in the League.

"With our confidence factor right now, if we get down two goals, it doesn't seem like we have the will to battle back, so we've got to stay close, 1-1 or 0-0 as long as we can and battle that way," Sabres coach Ted Nolan said.

Sidney Crosby (0+3), Evgeni Malkin (1+2) and Chris Kunitz (2+1) each had three points for the Penguins. Marc Andre-Fleury made 18 saves and in his past four games, is 4-0 with a 0.75 goals against average, a .969 save percentage and three shutouts.

Jhonas Enroth made 29 saves in net for the Sabres. The goaltending performances Buffalo has gotten from him and Michal Neuvirth have been bright spots thus far but the goal support just hasn't been there.

"It's very tough, especially today. I didn't play my best game," he said. "I just felt we weren't really close in this one."

Inconsistency has been a thorn in the Sabres' side and they've had trouble putting together full 60-minute efforts.

"It's a consistency problem. We show up one game, we don't show up the next, we show up in spurts, we show up in shifts, we show up for a period here, period there," Weber said. "It's a continued frustration from years previous that, for whatever reason, we can't get out of."

TRYING TO FIGURE IT OUT

The Sabres' scoring troubles continue to mount as well. Buffalo has been shut out in five of their 12 games this season and has only 12 non-shootout goals.

"When you don't work and you don't fight and you don't compete and you don't battle, that's what's going to happen," Nolan said. "This is the National Hockey League. It's the best players in the world and people usually – usually – battle like a son of a gun in order to keep that position in this League because there's only 700-and-something jobs in it.

"You want to make sure that I'm not going to be the one they're thinking about moving or sending [down] or trading or whatever. You want to make sure you do the right things in order to do it and right now, we're not doing it."

The Sabres have spent a majority of their games in the defensive zone and that has severely hampered their ability to create scoring chances. Buffalo had only 18 shots on goal and 20 more didn't hit the net.

Even with limited chances, the Sabres could have capitalized a few times off opportunistic turnovers by the Penguins. However, they couldn't put the puck on Marc-Andre Fleury.

Sabres captain Brian Gionta missed wide on a giveaway early in the second in front of the Penguins net and later on, Stafford intercepted the puck at his own blue line, but had the shot blocked by Penguins defenseman Olli Maatta. That play quickly turned up ice to set up Blake Comeau's goal to make it 2-0.

"It's a 1-0 game at that point and I have to take onus on that and be better there," Gionta said of his missed shot.

"...You have to look at the way we're playing the game and right now, we're having a hard time coming out of our own end. We spend too much time in the D-zone and you're not going to score goals in this League from there."

CROSBY STILL GNASHES

The Sabres have had their hands full with Crosby over the years. That continued Saturday night. With three assists in the game, the Penguins captain increased his point streak against the Sabres to 18 games (10+20). It's a streak that dates back to Dec. 29, 2007. During his career, Crosby has now collected at least one point in 24 of 26 games against the Sabres.

THEY'VE GOT THE POWER

The Penguins got off to a fast start, scoring 4:26 in. On the rush, Crosby drew two defenders to him but lost the puck as he reached the top of the crease. Following up on the play, Patric Hornqvist's shot attempt found its way over to Kunitz, who backhanded it in past Enroth.

Pittsburgh added to their lead in the second period, scoring twice. Comeau scored on a feed from Malkin with 8:06 to play and then Hornqvist tallied on the power play with 3:51 remaining in the period.

Malkin assisted on both second-period goals, extending his point streak to 10 games (5+10).

The Sabres had stayed out of the box and kept the League's top power play off the ice up until the sequence that led to Hornqvist's goal.

Buffalo committed a bench minor for having too many men on the ice. The Penguins went tic-tac-toe to set up the goal as Malkin fed it to Kunitz below the goal line, who then immediately tapped the puck to Hornqvist, who as able to score on a one-timer.

Kunitz scored his second of the night on the power play 2:33 into the third to make it 4-0 when he deflected in a slap pass from the point by Kris Letang. Malkin added another with the man advantage with 6:49 remaining in regulation.

"They have a lot of great tools, this team," Enroth said. "The power play goals they scored were pretty good goals and hopefully we can try to take a page from their book and see how a great team plays the power play."

SHAKE IT OFF

"It's extremely frustrating right now but we've got to find a way to get this one out of our mind because it doesn't get any easier tomorrow with Detroit," Weber said.

Buffalo will wrap up their fourth of 19 sets of back-to-back games when they face the aforementioned Detroit Red Wings on Sunday at 5 p.m. at First Niagara Center. The Tops Gamenight pregame show begins at 4:30 p.m. on MSG-B and Bell TV. The game can also be heard live on WGR 550.

The game opens up a four-game homestand which concludes on Nov. 8 when the Penguins come to town.