



Buffalo Sabres

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Gionta, Gorges set to face their old team

By Amy Moritz

Buffalo News

November 4, 2014

The Montreal media was already at First Niagara Center Tuesday, huddling around Brian Gionta and Josh Gorges in the Buffalo Sabres locker room.

Last year, the duo were the captain and alternate for the storied Canadiens franchise.

In the offseason they moved to Buffalo – Gionta as a free agent signing and Gorges via trade.

Montreal arrived for tonight's game tied for first in the Eastern Conference while the Buffalo Sabres have limped to a 3-9-1 start.

But don't suggest to Gorges that it's difficult for him to be with the struggling Sabres after spending seven seasons in Montreal.

"My team is here in Buffalo. That's where my focus is. That's where my head is," Gorges said Tuesday. "Things that happened in the past you have no control on. So there's no sense in thinking about what ifs and what could of been. The focus is on today, here and now and this team in Buffalo."

"Obviously it's a little bit of a different game," the defenseman said. "You're playing your former team for the first time but at the end of the day, tomorrow is two points on the line. It's an opportunity for us to put two wins together, which we haven't done this year. That's got to be where our heads are at."

Gionta hadn't thought much about facing his former team until Tuesday, but it's a right of passage he's gone through previously, when he went from New Jersey to Montreal in 2009.

"It's good friends. It's memories," Gionta said of what makes facing your former team difficult. "You've been there five years. You still have a lot of friendships and stuff."

Playing against former teammates and friends isn't new. In fact, it happens all the time, just without the attention.

"It's no different when we play against other teams around the league that have guys I've played with before. Guys I grew up with, I played junior with, all sorts of things," Gorges said.

"You know these guys personally, but when the puck drops they're wearing a different color jersey than you are. So you think about it leading up to the game, but once that puck drops, your focus is on helping your team win. And whoever's not wearing the same color jersey as you, friends or not off the ice, it doesn't matter, they're standing in the way of what we're trying to accomplish."

One of the items on that list of things the Sabres are trying to accomplish is scoring. Particularly for Gionta.

The right winger has yet to score in his 13-game Buffalo career. He has one assist and 20 shots.

And the team could use some scoring. The Sabres rank last in the league, scoring just 14 goals in their first 13 games.

"He's struggling like our whole team struggled at the beginning, but we're all kind of coming out of it together," Sabres coach Ted Nolan said of Gionta. "I thought the last little while he's had a little more jump. It's a lot of weight to put on people's shoulders, especially when you come from a different team and expectations and

pressures involved with being a captain, it takes a little while. Different people, different system, different coaching staff. ... I didn't mean struggle, it's just that he needed to find his footing and he's finding it right now I think."

Gionta said he needs to continue to do the little things, to get up and down the ice, to break through for that first goal.

"Last few games I had some good chances, just missed the net or kind of tried to get too precise with things," Gionta said. "For the most part I feel good about my game except getting on the score sheet. ... It always is frustrating. You want to help the team and you want to be part of that. Especially when the team is losing you want to do what you can to help and part of that is scoring in my position. I have to do better in that aspect."

Sabres notebook: Patience pays off for Flynn upon return

By Amy Moritz

Buffalo News

November 4, 2014

It's a little easier to come to practice after a win.

It's even easier to come to practice after you scored your first goal of the season.

Brian Flynn got the Sabres on the board Sunday, scoring in the second period as Buffalo went on to defeat Detroit in a shootout.

It was his first goal since last Feb. 28.

"We've been struggling to score, and we really talked about going out into the second period to try and get that first goal to get a lead," Flynn said. "When I went in that's all I was thinking about, nice to get the first one, nice to get up and hoped we could build off that."

"It's always nice to get the first one of the year out of the way. That one always seems to be the hardest one, but I try not to put any pressure on myself to score. I just focus on some other things, defensively I try to be responsible out there and the goals will start to follow."

The playing time will start to follow, too. Flynn has appeared in just four of the first 13 games for the Sabres, but will likely be back in the lineup for the third straight game.

After sitting for five straight games, Flynn returned to the lineup Saturday in Pittsburgh, playing on the fourth line with Cody McCormick and Nicolas Deslauriers.

"Obviously you don't like sitting. It's frustrating watching for, you know, five consecutive games or so," Flynn said. "Then when you get in there you realize it's a lot more fun playing, so you want to do a good job and play hard when you're in there and make it hard on them to pull you back out of the lineup."

The way in which Flynn handled those games as a healthy scratch is one of the reasons head coach Ted Nolan loves to have Flynn on his team.

"Last year we talked about he's very versatile," Nolan said. "He can go one game and go in your top two lines and next day he can go on your fourth line. He's very versatile. He doesn't complain. He's a pro. And for him to sit and watch for the first nine games pretty much, to sit back and not complain but keep working all of a sudden, like I said, I think good things happen to good people."

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Patrick Kaleta was woefully disappointed.

The forward just wants to play. But Tuesday was another groundhog day for Kaleta as the doctors have still not cleared him to play.

"I just try to stay positive. I need to be positive to be a good teammate," Kaleta said. "I'm upset that I can't play, but I have to help out however I can."

Kaleta, as he puts it, "broke his face" when he went down to block a shot in a preseason game. He has been practicing full contact but has not been cleared for games.

"He went to see the doctor one more time, and he still didn't give him the clearance," Nolan said. "I think he's like (Nikita) Zadorov asking coach every day if he's in the lineup. I think he's asking the doctor every day if he's cleared. So he's champing at the bit to get back in."

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Federal investigators are looking into whether former Buffalo Sabre Thomas Vanek was the target of an extortion attempt according to a story in the Democrat & Chronicle.

It is part of the ongoing investigation into a Rochester-area gambling ring. Vanek, who now plays for the Minnesota Wild and has not been charged with any crime, has testified before a grand jury in relation to the case.

The story in the Rochester paper states that a \$230,000 payment by Vanek to cover gamble debts was used in a money-laundering operation by the gambling ring.

Canadiens head to Buffalo seeking answers to slump

By Arpon Basu

NHL.com

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MONTREAL -- Ten days.

That is all it has taken for the Montreal Canadiens to go from being the toast of the NHL, a team sitting pretty with a 7-1-0 record, to one getting booed in its own building.

The Canadiens have won once since defeating the New York Rangers 3-1 on Oct. 25, a five-game span that has seen Montreal get outscored 18-6, with the exclamation point being laid down by the Chicago Blackhawks in a 5-0 win at Bell Centre on Tuesday.

The Canadiens are 1-3-1 in the 10 days since that win against the Rangers, and what appeared to be a promising start to the season has gone seriously sideways in a hurry.

"Nothing's working for us," center Tomas Plekanec said Tuesday. "I mean, I thought we played hard in the first period, we put pucks to the net. We need to take a step back. We have to stay positive as much as possible and we've got to fight through it.

"We've got to help ourselves, somehow."

The Canadiens can do that as soon as Wednesday, when they will visit the Buffalo Sabres and former captain Brian Gionta and alternate captain Josh Gorges for the first time since they left Montreal during the summer -- Gionta via free agency, Gorges in a trade.

But a lot of things will need to change in order for the Canadiens to come out of their current rut, and a win against the Sabres would not be as important as how they play in Buffalo.

The Canadiens are a team built on speed, one that thrives on mistakes and is able to transition from defense to offense as quickly as any team in the NHL.

But they have not been doing that of late. Far from it.

Pucks that used to crisply go from stick to stick up the ice are now bouncing away to the opposition. There is little cohesion in anything the Canadiens are doing offensively, and they appear unable to enter the opposing zone more than one player at a time.

"We know what we want to do, and when we do it, we're so hard to play against," Plekanec said. "That's our game. The transition game is our game. I think what we need is our second guy on the forecheck, our second guy when we're getting pucks through the neutral zone and in the offensive zone, our second guy is a little bit too late. They get two guys there and outnumber us in the corners and they get it out too easy."

When the Canadiens are not transitioning well, they become very easy to play against, and that's what's happened during the past few games.

"We're having trouble creating rhythm in our game," coach Michel Therrien said. "Our transition game isn't there. In a relay race, when you don't get that baton, you can't race. That's what's happening to us right now."

Therrien attempted to fix that Tuesday by putting his two best puck-moving defensemen on the same pairing, the first time this season P.K. Subban and Andrei Markov played together on a regular basis.

It didn't work.

Subban and Markov were on the ice for three Chicago goals and were on the points of a Canadiens power play that went 0-for-4, dropping them to 8.1 percent for the season, better than only the Minnesota Wild and the Sabres.

If the Canadiens transition game is going to work, Subban and Markov will be a big part of it. Subban, for one, does not like what he's seeing from his own play this season.

"Am I guilty of not being my best? Yeah, I am. I don't think this season I've been my best," Subban said. "The good thing is there's a lot of hockey to be played, I know I can be better, and it starts [Wednesday]. Another opportunity.

"You can say whatever you want, nobody cares. People just want to see you play better. People want to point the finger at me? That's fine. I've got to be better. And I will be."

Subban was made a part of the Canadiens leadership group this season when he and Max Pacioretty joined Plekanec and Markov as alternate captains to fill the void left by the departures of Gionta and Gorges. It's a role he takes seriously, and he openly admitted taking blame for the way he's played fits with the sort of accountability the Canadiens want to establish in their dressing room.

That role also appears to allow Subban to take a positive view of the situation the Canadiens finds themselves in, a sudden market correction from powerhouse to mouse in a span of 10 days.

"Obviously we know that the past couple of games haven't been our best games, and we're paying for it the past two, but that's OK," Subban said. "That's all a part of learning. There's a lot of hockey to be played this season. What we have to do is figure out, this is the way we're going to get out of these situations.

"As a guy who's part of the leadership group, you watch to see if guys are getting down on each other. We're not doing that. Guys are supporting each other, building each other up. That's what's important. That's what's going to get us out of this thing."

Preview: Montreal at Buffalo

By Staff Report

CBS Sports

November 4, 2014

The Buffalo Sabres produced just three win streaks last season en route to finishing with the fewest points in the league.

They have a chance to register their first this season if they can take advantage of slumping Montreal but will have to snap a five-game skid to the Canadiens on Wednesday night.

Buffalo registered its first set of back-to-back victories in 2013-14 from Nov. 12-15 and had a season-high three consecutive wins Feb. 25-28 before losing 19 of its final 22.

The Sabres (3-9-1) once again have the fewest points in the NHL but rebounded from a 5-0 drubbing in Pittsburgh on Saturday with a 3-2 shootout win against Detroit the next day, snapping an 0-4-1 drought at the First Niagara Center.

Chris Stewart scored the tying goal with 6:52 left in regulation and Zemgus Girgensons had the shootout winner along with an assist on Brian Flynn's second-period tally.

"You hate losing more than you love winning," Girgensons said. "Winning is awesome. It's a different feeling. It feels good. I just hope we can keep it going and improve."

Buffalo will next face a Montreal team that's been outscored 18-5 during a 1-3-1 stretch. The Canadiens had allowed 22 goals in a 7-1-0 start with seven coming in the lone defeat at Tampa Bay on Oct. 13.

They let Chicago pull away for a 5-0 victory Tuesday by giving up three goals in the final period and were shut out for the second time in five games.

The Canadiens also extended their power-play drought by going 0 for 4. They're 0 for 17 in the last seven games and 3 for 37 this season.

Montreal also allowed a power-play goal for the third straight game.

"We've got to stay positive as much as possible," forward Tomas Plekanec said. "We've got to take a step back and start from the basics. It's not our first time going through it."

The Canadiens (8-4-1) have been on the other side of shutouts in their last two matchups against Buffalo with Carey Price and Dustin Tokarski each earning one. Price has given up five goals in each of the first two games this month and with Montreal playing on back-to-back nights, Tokarski could make the start.

The shutout in Buffalo on March 16 is Tokarski's lone one in 13 career appearances. The Canadiens have won three in a row at the First Niagara and outscored Buffalo 15-4 in the last five overall matchups.

Price allowed three goals on 74 shots in three wins against the Sabres last season.

Buffalo is expected to send out Michal Neuvirth for the second straight game after he made 36 saves in his second victory in three starts Sunday.

Neuvirth is 1-2-0 with a 3.03 goals-against average in his last three matchups with Montreal after going 4-1-0 with a 1.82 GAA in his first six.

He'll try to get some more help from a Buffalo penalty kill that went 4 for 4 against the Red Wings. The Sabres had allowed six goals in the 17 times they were short-handed in the prior five games.

Buffalo's power play is just 1 for 42 this season.

The Canadiens' Brendan Gallagher has five goals and one assist in nine career matchups, including two goals in last season's series, but is mired in a career-worst eight-game point drought.

Former Montreal captain Brian Gionta will face the Canadiens for the first time since signing a three-year deal with the Sabres in July. He has one assist so far for Buffalo, where he's also captain.

Rangers' Bailey inks deal with hometown Sabres

By Josh Brown

Guelph Mercury

November 4, 2014

KITCHENER — Justin Bailey picked up his telephone as soon as it was official.

"I called my mom right away," said the Kitchener Rangers forward, who inked a three-year entry level contract with the Buffalo Sabres on Sunday.

His mother, Karen Buscaglia, was having a family dinner with her mom Donna and stepdad Bob at the time.

"She actually had me on speaker phone," said Bailey. "Everyone was cheering in the background. It was awesome."

And fitting, too.

After all, Buscaglia — a single mom — has been Bailey's backbone since he first laced up skates.

The hard-working sales manager woke up early to drive her son to hockey practices in Western New York. She made sure he had the right equipment and found ice time. She watched his eyes light up as he sorted through books of hockey cards and laughed when he imitated the excited delivery of legendary Sabres' announcer Rick Jeanneret.

Mostly, she supported his dream of becoming a professional hockey player.

"I don't think I can remember a time when she's ever missed a game," said Bailey. "I give her all the credit for everything that I've accomplished."

To this day, Buscaglia finishes work early on Friday just so she can drive from the Buffalo suburb of Williamsville to catch the Rangers at the Aud.

"I grew up just with my mom," said Bailey. "She has been there every step of the way."

The Sabres ties run deep with Bailey's family.

Former Buffalo stars Matthew Barnaby, Rob Ray and Mike Peca lived in his mom's condo complex when Bailey was a kid. Barnaby even held him as a baby and continues to be a mentor.

Before heading north to Kitchener, he lived with and played for Sabres' great Pat LaFontaine, then the coach of Bailey's Long Island Royals.

So imagine his excitement when he was drafted by his hometown club in the second round of the 2013 NHL draft.

Imagine the thrill of not only attending two Sabres training camps but impressing staff so much that he was one of the final junior aged players cut last month.

And imagine the satisfaction of signing a formal contract with the team he spent his entire life watching and cheering for.

"I don't think many kids have been able to live out that dream and that's something I'm very fortunate for," he said. "It think it's all small steps of eventually actually putting on the real jersey and participating in an NHL game."

When that day comes, his mom and grandparents will be proudly watching from the stands.

Former Canadiens Brian Gionta and Josh Gorges want to focus on present with Sabres

By Bill Hoppe

Olean Times Herald

November 5, 2014

BUFFALO – Tonight's not about feeling nostalgic. Sure, respected Sabres veterans Brian Gionta and Josh Gorges enjoyed some special years with the Montreal Canadiens. Gionta captained the storied franchise. Gorges was their heart and soul.

But these days, despite two wins in their last five games, the rebuilding Sabres are struggling badly. Tonight's game, the first tilt against the Canadiens this season, can't be overshadowed by Gionta and Gorges facing their old team.

"At the end of the day, (tonight) is two points on the line for us to put two wins together, which we haven't done this year," Gorges said Tuesday inside the First Niagara Center. "It's something we got to focus on, and that's where our heads are at."

The game certainly has some meaning in Montreal. Even though the Canadiens hosted Chicago on Tuesday, some French-Canadian media outlets arrived in Buffalo a day early.

On what would normally be a quiet early-season practice day, Gionta and Gorges spoke to a throng of reporters.

"It's no different than when we play against other teams in the league, guys I've played with before, guys I grew up with, played junior with – all different types of things," Gorges said. "You know these guys personally, but when the puck drops, they're wearing a different color jersey than you are."

Gionta, the Sabres' new captain, said he hadn't thought much about playing the Canadiens.

"The first time's always the toughest," he said. " ... It will be nice to get it behind me."

Deep down, the game probably holds a lot of meaning for the players. Gionta, 35, spent five seasons in Montreal, the last four as captain. Gorges, 30, played eight seasons.

The Canadiens let them go following a 100-point season in which they reached the Eastern Conference final. They traded a devastated Gorges on July 1, hours before the Sabres signed Gionta.

"It's good friends, it's memories," Gionta said. "You've been there five years. You build a lot of friendships and stuff. At the same time, it's a new chapter and you're excited to kind of go out there and play against them."

Still, Sabres coach Ted Nolan doesn't want to have a "Win-one-for-the-Gipper" mentality, an "overused motivational tool," he said.

"As a team right now, we can't be thinking about winning it for anybody but ourselves," Nolan said.

Gorges shot down a question about him still having a hard time over leaving Montreal.

"No, I mean, my team is here in Buffalo," the defenseman said. "That's where my focus is. That's where my head is at. Things have happened in the past you have no control on, so there's no sense in thinking about what-ifs or what could've been. The focus is on today, here and now."

The veterans have endured a rough on-ice acclimation to the Sabres. The team, which won a 3-2 shootout Sunday against Detroit, is just 3-9-1 and has scored 14 goals. Gionta has zero goals and one point in 13 games, his worst offensive start ever.

"He's struggling like our whole team struggled in the beginning, but we're all kind of coming out of it together," Nolan said about Gionta. "I thought the last little while he has a little bit more jump. It's a lot of weight put on peoples' shoulders, especially when you come from a different team and expectations and pressures involved with being a captain – all those type of things. It takes a little while."

He added: "I didn't mean struggle. It's just that he had to find his footing. He's finding it right now, I think."

In Saturday's disastrous 5-0 loss in Pittsburgh, Gionta got the puck all alone in front with no Penguins around him, then shot it over the net.

The winger then looked up in disgust.

"Last few games I've had some good chances, just either missed the net or kind of trying to get too precise with things," Gionta said. "For the most part, I feel good about my game except getting on the score sheet."

Meanwhile, Gorges, an alternate captain, has had a bigger on-ice impact, blocking an NHL-high 56 shots.

Both players, Nolan said, have given the Sabres the leadership he expected they would.

"No question," he said. "The way we started wasn't the way we wanted to start. But their character and leadership hasn't faltered, hasn't changed. We all got to step up in the same mold. They're doing a great job for us."

Sabres' Brian Flynn finally playing again: 'I had to try to be patient'

By Bill Hoppe
Olean Times Herald
November 5, 2014

BUFFALO – In his first two seasons, the Sabres only scratched Brian Flynn three times. But the 26-year-old forward became a spare part in October, sitting out nine games, including five straight to close the month.

Now, Flynn's making it difficult for Sabres coach Ted Nolan to take him out of the lineup. He opened the scoring in Sunday's 3-2 shootout win against Detroit, his first goal in 25 games.

Nolan likes Flynn's calm demeanor and versatility.

"I knew I had to try to be patient," Flynn said Tuesday. "Teddy made that clear, just be patient. That's what I tried to do. But, yeah, it is frustrating at the same time. It's what you're here to do, whether you're the 13th forward or playing on the top line, you have to bring the same effort."

Being the odd man out was difficult, especially with the Sabres losing constantly.

"It's not fun watching every night and watching the guys struggle like that," Flynn said. "But at the same time, you've got to come to the rink and be prepared to play any game and practice the same way. ... That's what I try to do. Watching the games up top you learn a little bit and try to get out there."

Nolan inserted Flynn on the fourth line for Saturday's 5-0 loss in Pittsburgh, his first appearance since Oct 18.

"I think what we saw from him is exactly what we know we can get out of him," Nolan said. "Last year we talked about he's very versatile. He can go one game and go on your top two lines, the next day he can go on your fourth line. He's very versatile. He doesn't complain."

Naturally, Flynn's first goal since Feb. 28 felt good.

"The first one of the year always seems to be the toughest one, kind of break the ice," Flynn said.

Nolan added: "I think good things happen to good people."

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Nolan might use the same lineup tonight against the Montreal Canadiens he fielded Sunday.

Goalie Michal Neuvirth will make his sixth start this season, Nolan said. Winger Marcus Foligno, out last game after getting "banged up," will test his injury this morning and could play, Nolan said.

Winger Johan Larsson would replace Foligno again.

Meanwhile, winger Patrick Kaleta, out since a slap shot hit him in the face Sept. 28, still isn't ready.

"I think he's like (Nikita) Zadorov, asking the coach every day if he's in," Nolan said. "I think he's asked our doctor every day if he's in. So he's chomping at the bit to get back in."

xxx

A few weeks ago, Jim Montgomery, Zemgus Girgensons' junior coach, said, "I know that he's not the best in shootouts."

Why isn't Girgensons, whose two shootout goals have him in a five-way tie for the NHL lead, good in the one-on-one competition?

"He just comes straight down," Montgomery said. "He's always looking to deke his threat of a shot, and I told him that when I coached him, 'You got to be a threat to shoot.'"

Montgomery said that Oct. 15, the day after the Sabres center scored the shootout winner by deking in Carolina. He scored the winner again Sunday against Detroit by – you guessed it – deking.

Despite the "criticism," Montgomery's a big Girgensons supporter.

Sabres Nolan switched lines up again

By Paul Hamilton

WGR 550

November 4, 2014

Buffalo, NY (WGR 550) -- The Sabres got back to work on Tuesday after a day off and Ted Nolan tweaked the lines. Nolan did say he'll use the same lineup on Wednesday unless Marcus Foligno is good enough to go. Nolan said, "We'll see how he feels in the morning and if he feels OK, we'll see what happens."

Today's lines were:

Mitchell-Ennis-Stewart

Moulson-Girgensons-Gionta

Larsson-Hodgson-Stafford

Deslauriers-McCormick-Flynn (Kaleta)

Michal Neuvirth will again be in goal.

Pat Kaleta saw the doctor and he still doesn't have full clearance.

Nolan usually runs a different practice after his team had a day off. He said, "The first thing that goes is your hand-eye coordination, so the first thing you want to do is a lot of passing to get those hands back and then you build it from there. Towards the end you want to address the system, but if you have a consistent practice routine, hands-eye is the first thing I do."

Andrej Meszaros sat for two straight games, but played against Detroit. In that game he led the team with 25:46 of ice time blocking three shots. Nolan liked what he saw, "I don't like scratching people, but sometimes it's good to sit back and realize what you could miss if you're not doing your job properly, so he came in with the right attitude, he worked extremely hard which we thought he would and sometimes you just need a little wakeup call and he performed very well for us."

Three other defensemen logged big minutes in that game with Tyler Myers getting 25:41, Rasmus Ristolainen 25:30 and Josh Gorges 25:15. Tyson Strachan only played 15:29 and Nikita Zadorov 12:42.

In the last five games the Sabres have picked up five of 10 points. Despite that, they're still dead last in the NHL with a .269 winning percentage. Carolina is next at .300 and Columbus is .364. Nolan says the team is moving forward slowly because it takes new players a while to work in, "If you don't make too many changes in the off season, you just filter back to where you were, but we're changing here, we're changing the culture, we're changing the system that we want to play and by changing culture, you bring in different people and it takes a little while for that chemistry to match what we want."

Sabres' Hackett progressing

By Paul Hamilton

WGR 550

November 4, 2014

Buffalo, NY (WGR 550) -- Matt Hackett has spent the past week or so practicing with his teammates.

Hackett had knee surgery over the summer after being crashed into last March. He's not ready to play, but thankful to be progressing, "I'm feeling a lot better, it's nice to get back and on the ice with the boys and finally get some shots. It's been a tough summer and it's pretty boring just being in the trainer's room all the time, so it's nice to get out there and take some real shots."

The reason Hackett is so far away is he can't do everything yet. He must take the rehab one step at a time, "I have to take it easy and make sure it doesn't get too sore or too swollen right now, so there's a few movements I still can't do around the post and stuff I've got to work on. It's mostly getting the flexibility back in the knee, so I'm working on that and it's going to take a while."

The pain of course isn't gone and won't be totally gone for a good, long time, "It'll be painful for the next few years probably so I've just got to get use to that and manage it, but now it gets a little weak after a few days of hard work, so I've just got to make sure it doesn't get too swollen."

Hackett got eight games in last year going 1-6-1 with a 3.10 goals against and .908 save percentage. Before that, he had played 33 in Rochester and struggled. His best hockey seemed to be in Buffalo so it had to be devastating he got hurt when he was finally getting a chance, "It's tough, but it's part of the game and it happens, so if I don't comeback stronger from this, I waste an opportunity, so I must comeback stronger and more mentally prepared."

Hackett had a freak collision in the crease which caused the injury, but he knows he gets hit more now than he used to, "They're going to crash the net more and net drives are a big part of the game now, but you've just got to be aware of what's happening around you and just get it out of my head and play my game."

When Hackett is ready he'll wind up in Rochester or assigned to another minor league team.

Tuesday practice report

By Chris Ryndak

Sabres.com

November 4, 2014

The Sabres continue their four-game homestand Wednesday night against the Montreal Canadiens at 7:30 p.m. They could go with the same lineup that beat the Detroit Red Wings on Sunday, depending on the health of left wing Marcus Foligno.

Foligno did not practice Tuesday morning at First Niagara Center. He missed the game on Sunday with an injury, marking the second game he's sat out this season.

Johan Larsson was recalled to take his place in the lineup and skated with the team again on Tuesday.

Sabres coach Ted Nolan said that they'll evaluate Foligno before Wednesday's game and if he's ready to go, he'll be in. Other than that, the personnel will remain the same.

That means Michal Neuvirth will start in goal and Nikita Zadorov and Andrej Meszaros will remain in on defense.

CHAMPING AT THE BIT

Zadorov, 19, played 12:42 against the Red Wings on Sunday on a pairing with Tyson Strachan. It was only Zadorov's second game of the season and he more than doubled his ice time from the previous game back on Oct. 23.

The 2013 first-round pick is happy to be in the lineup and contributing. He also played 1:04 on the power play and hopes to see more time on special teams in the coming games. He hasn't been shy to let Nolan know he would like to be on the ice more.

"That was pretty funny [Sunday]," Zadorov said. "He looked at me and started laughing when I wanted to go on the 5-on-3 because I played 5-on-3 a lot last year. I just tried to maybe look at him – maybe he'd see that I'd be ready – and just put me in and try to for like 20 seconds. He said, 'Someday' so we'll see next time."

The 6-foot-5, 220-pound defenseman is eligible to play in nine NHL games before the team must decide if they'll keep him in Buffalo and activate the first year of his entry-level contract or send him back to the London Knights of the Ontario Hockey League, his junior team.

Nolan has liked Zadorov's attitude and said that the nine-game limit will not factor into how often he gets into the lineup.

FAMILIAR FACES

Sabres captain Brian Gionta and alternate captain Josh Gorges are former Canadiens and served in those same leadership roles for Montreal. Buffalo acquired Gorges in a trade on July 1 and a few hours later, Gionta signed a three-year deal with the Sabres as an unrestricted free agent.

Gionta said he hasn't put much thought into playing his former club. Gorges said that it might be a little strange at first, but his focus is on getting the win, no matter whom the opponent is.

"It's a little bit of a different game, you're playing your former team for the first time, but at the end of the day, tomorrow is two points on the line," Gorges said. "It's an opportunity for us to put two wins together, which we

haven't done this year – something we've got to focus on and that's got to be where our heads are at coming in tomorrow night."

Gionta is still looking for his first goal of the season.

"It always is frustrating. You want to help the team win and you want to be a part of that," he said. "Especially when the team is losing, you want to do what you can to help – and part of that is scoring in my position. I have to do better in that aspect."

Montreal has gotten off to a hot start – tied for first place in the Eastern Conference with 17 points – but dropped their last game to the Calgary Flames on Sunday by a 6-2 score. Tuesday night, the Canadiens are set to face Chicago at Bell Centre.

Buffalo is 2-2-1 in its past five games.

SHAKE IT UP

The Sabres tried out some new lines. Notably, Chris Stewart lined up next to center Tyler Ennis. The game-tying goal late in the third period of Sunday's game came when Ennis found Stewart in front of the net.

"I thought [Matt] Moulson played a lot better last game. He had a little jump in his game. Maybe flipping Stewart and [Drew] Stafford, you'll get a better result," Nolan said. "You shake it up every day and try to get that formula."

17 Torrey Mitchell – 63 Tyler Ennis – 80 Chris Stewart
22 Johan Larsson – 19 Cody Hodgson – 21 Drew Stafford
26 Matt Moulson – 28 Zemgus Girgensons – 12 Brian Gionta
44 Nicolas Deslauriers – 8 Cody McCormick – 65 Brian Flynn – 36 Patrick Kaleta

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

34 Michal Neuvirth
1 Jhonas Enroth
31 Matt Hackett

College hockey report

By Joe Ray

Sabres.com

November 4, 2014

CANISIUS GOLDEN GRIFFINS

The opening weekend at HARBORCENTER provided an intense home-ice advantage for Canisius, which played host to the Ohio State Buckeyes. Although the Griffs matched up well with their strong national opponent, they could not muster a victory this weekend.

Friday night, the two teams skated to a 3-3 tie. Shane Conacher and Doug Beck got the building charged up with two goals in the first two minutes. Ohio State rallied to erase the deficit in the second period, but freshman Jack Stander scored his first goal with Canisius to give the Griffs a late lead.

After one Ohio State goal was disallowed just seconds after Stander's goal, Ohio State's Derek Gust beat Keegan Asmundson to tie the game once again. Neither team could break the ice in overtime despite numerous strong chances each way.

Canisius was unable to duplicate their strong start on Saturday night, as the Griffs were outshot 41-21 in a 4-1 loss. After entering the third period up 2-0, Nick Oddo and Kevin Miller scored 29 seconds apart to double the Buckeyes' lead.

Braeden Rigney registered a shorthanded tally with 4:26 to play to help Canisius avoid the shutout. In addition to that goal, Canisius' penalty killers stymied Ohio State's power play all weekend, holding the nation's second-ranked man-advantage group scoreless on nine chances.

Reilly Turner made 33 saves on 37 shots in the loss, and Adam Harris stopped four shots in 8:23 after relieving Turner in the third period.

Canisius will travel to Sacred Heart this weekend before returning to HARBORCENTER on November 14 and 15 to face the RIT Tigers.

Upcoming Games

- Friday, November 7 @ Sacred Heart (7:05 p.m.)
- Saturday, November 8 @ Sacred Heart (7:05 p.m.)
- Friday, November 14 vs. RIT (7:35 p.m., HARBORCENTER)
- Saturday, November 15 vs. RIT (7:35 p.m., HARBORCENTER)

NIAGARA PURPLE EAGLES

Niagara remains winless to start the season (0-8) after being swept by the AIC Yellow Jackets in a pair of games at Dwyer Arena last weekend.

Goaltender Jackson Teichroeb returned from injury on Friday, but he surrendered three goals on 21 shots in a 3-1 loss. The Purple Eagles were confounded by AIC goaltender Alex Murray, who stopped 42 of 43 Niagara shots on the night. Freshman Albin Karlsson's scored his first collegiate goal for Niagara in the loss.

Niagara got off to a strong start in the Saturday afternoon rematch with AIC, but fell by a final score of 4-2. Isaac Kohls tallied his first goal of the season with help from Nick Cecere and Lochner, and the Purple Eagles closed the first 20 minutes of play up 1-0 and outshooting AIC 18-9.

The lead would be short-lived, as Austin Orszolak and Alexander MacMillan scored two goals for AIC in a 2:56 span early in the second period. Stephen Pietrobon tied the game for Niagara at the 16:31 mark of the second, but MacMillan returned the lead to AIC just 58 seconds later. Orszolak added a third-period goal to seal the victory for the Yellow Jackets, and Murray made 40 more saves to complete the weekend sweep.

Still searching for the cure to end their eight-game losing streak, Niagara hits the road to face Bentley this weekend before having a week off from play.

Upcoming Games

- Friday, November 7 @ Bentley (7:05 p.m.)
- Saturday, November 8 @ Bentley (7:05 p.m.)

RIT TIGERS

The RIT Tigers, tasked with two difficult road matches against undefeated Robert Morris, could not match up with the Colonials and dropped both contests.

Robert Morris rode a four-goal second period effort en route to a 6-3 win over RIT on Friday. Matt Garbowsky (1+1), Josh Mitchell (0+2) and Brady Noorish (1+1) each had two points in the loss. Noorish's shorthanded goal at the 12:39 mark of the second period was his first collegiate goal.

Mike Rotolo started in net for the Tigers, surrendering five goals on 22 shots. Rotolo was relieved for the third period by Ken Maclean, who stopped four of five shots.

RIT turned to goaltender Jordan Ruby on Saturday, but his 38 saves weren't enough as they dropped a 4-2 decision.

Garrett McMullan scored halfway through the first period to erase an early deficit, and Mitchell and Garbowsky were credited with assists on the goal. Mitchell (2+7) and Garbowsky (3+5) currently sit one-two in Tigers' team scoring.

In the second period, Ruby faced 24 shots from Robert Morris, and he turned away all but one of them. The senior goaltender struggled to hold up in the third period, as the Colonials picked up two goals on five third-period shots to secure the win. Danny Smith scored his first goal of the season for RIT to cut the lead to two with less than two minutes to play.

RIT returns home to the Gene Polisseni Center this weekend for a pair of games with Holy Cross.

Upcoming Games

- Friday, November 7 vs. Holy Cross (7:05 p.m., Gene Polisseni Center)
- Saturday, November 8 vs. Holy Cross (7:05 p.m., Gene Polisseni Center)
- Friday, November 14 @ Canisius (7:35 p.m.)
- Saturday, November 15 @ Canisius (7:35 p.m.)

BUFFALO STATE BENGALS

The Buffalo State Bengals opened their season with a split against two conference opponents. The Bengals lost to Oswego on Friday, and then picked up an overtime win Saturday against Cortland.

Buffalo State welcomed all in attendance for their season opener with a Halloween treat, as junior forward Nick Melligan opened the contest with a natural hat trick. After scoring 14 minutes into the game, Melligan took advantage of three Oswego penalties early in the second period and added two five-on-three goals just 45 seconds apart.

Oswego stormed back with three goals of their own to close out the second period, and in the third period Kenny Neil scored his second of the game for the Lakers with 44 seconds left to pull out the 4-3 win over Buffalo State. Mike DeLaVergne made 34 saves in the loss for the Bengals.

Buffalo State rallied from their defeat the night before with a 3-2 overtime victory against Cortland on Saturday. Anthony Beaumont and Jason Zaleski tallied power-play goals in regulation for the Bengals. After Tommy Nolan tied the game midway through the third for Cortland, it was Beaumont who picked up his second goal of the night to give Buffalo State the win.

DeLaVergne picked up another 34 saves in the victory, including 17 saves in the third period to keep his team in the game.

Buffalo State's home set this weekend against Morrisville State will be their last home appearance for five weeks.

Upcoming Games

- Friday, November 7 vs. Morrisville State (7 p.m., Buffalo State Ice Arena)
- Saturday, November 8 vs. Morrisville State (7 p.m., Buffalo State Ice Arena)
- Friday, November 14 @ Plattsburgh (7 p.m.)
- Saturday, November 15 @ Potsdam (7 p.m.)