



Buffalo Sabres

Daily Press Clips

November 7, 2014

Nolan seeing new effort from Sabres

By Amy Moritz

Buffalo News

November 6, 2014

The effort had to come first. It needed to be consistent and productive and with a can-do attitude rather than a fickle one that would shrink back into "woe is me" at the first sign of adversity.

Ted Nolan is starting to see consistency of effort from the Buffalo Sabres, who have three points in their last two games. They came back from deficits twice, earning a shootout win against Detroit on Sunday while falling in a shootout to Montreal on Wednesday.

With the effort level established, the Sabres can start to work on other things. Like execution. Especially on the power play.

"I think the thing we really wanted to establish was the effort," said Nolan, whose team hosts the Edmonton Oilers tonight (7 p.m., MSG, Radio 550 AM).

"Once we get the effort, that's our foundation. Then we can start the execution. It took us awhile to get that effort but we're getting it right now. The guys are working extremely hard and now we've just got to execute on certain things. Our defensive zone is getting better. Our attack is going to the net. We want to shoot some more. We start with the effort and we branch out from there."

Better execution on the power play would help the Sabres' struggling offense.

Buffalo has the worst power play in the league, clicking at just 4.3 percent. The Sabres have two goals on the man advantage, both by Drew Stafford, in 46 opportunities.

In their last game, the Sabres had three power plays in the first 40 minutes. They struggled to set up in the offensive zone and recorded just two shots on goal.

So the power play became the point of emphasis in Thursday's practice.

"Our power play needs to improve," said Tyler Ennis, who has logged the most power play time on the team. "It was a good day to work on everything – entries, end zone, five-on-four, five-on-three. We put a lot of time into it and we've got to be better."

"Just play with confidence and work hard. We kind of get a little stationary. We did a lot better job today of getting more motion, getting everyone involved and using the whole ice."

Motion. Breakouts. Short passes. It's all about keeping the hockey simple and the effort consistently high.

"I thought as though the effort was there and that's all that really matters with this group," Stafford said after Wednesday's game. "We're not going to beat teams with our skill. We're not going to beat teams with the one-on-one stuff. It's going to come down to execution and will to compete. I felt as though it was there."

And for Nolan, if the players are showing a will to compete, the systems will stay simple to generate more opportunities.

"I think the simplest form of doing anything is keeping it as simple as we possibly can," Nolan said. "Sometimes when you're pressing you try to do too much. You try to make the long passes. One thing we tried to do today is really simplify it and make those short passes, those short 5-foot, 6-foot passes and get some traffic in front of the net, get some screens in front of the net."

Sabres notebook: Purple gear is part of fight against cancer

By Amy Moritz

Buffalo News

November 6, 2014

There will be a good amount of lavender in First Niagara Center tonight.

Tonight's game with the Edmonton Oilers is part of the NHL's "Hockey Fights Cancer." The league-wide initiative raises money for various cancer-related charities.

Over the past two seasons the Sabres' fund has donated \$15,000 to Flashes of Hope, an organization that funds research for pediatric cancer. Members of the Sabres have also worked with Roswell Park Cancer Institute. Also taking part in the event is ECMC Lifeline Foundation, Carly's Club and WNY Hospice Essential Care.

Combine tonight's effort with the month-long Movember campaign to raise money and awareness for men's health, and November has become an important month for NHL players to give back.

"I don't have anyone in my family who has had cancer," Sabres goaltender Michal Neuvirth said. "But whatever it takes to help people like that, I'm in 100 percent. The Movember and Hockey Fights Cancer, it's good of the league and it's good for the fans."

...

The Sabres announced that Saturday's game against the Pittsburgh Penguins will be its annual "Military Appreciation Night" featuring tributes to current and former members of the armed services throughout the night.

The team will wear camouflage jerseys during warmups that will be auctioned on NHL.com.

Proceeds will benefit the Buffalo Sabres Foundation.

The United Way will sell "Operation United" short-sleeved (\$15) and long-sleeved (\$20) T-shirts to benefit veterans' services in Western New York.

Military members will receive a 25 percent discount at the Sabres Store on Nov. 8 and fans are encouraged to submit their Sabres military photos at sabres.com/fanscrapbook to be featured on the HD video board during the game.

...

Marcus Foligno remains out of the lineup with an upper body injury. Coach Ted Nolan said Foligno skated on his own Thursday and could potentially return on Saturday against the Penguins. ... Patrick Kaleta also remains sidelined waiting for the doctors to clear him for games after breaking several bones in his face during a preseason game. "He's getting closer and closer," Nolan said. "He broke a couple of sticks in practice so the frustration is getting more. But we've still got to wait for the doctor to give him the 100 percent OK." ... Nolan said that Jhonas Enroth will start tonight.

Pegulas officially open HarborCenter

By T.J. Pignataro

Buffalo News

November 6, 2014

Terry and Kim Pegula formally opened the HarborCenter on Thursday night and left with a key to – and the hearts of– the City of Buffalo.

“Is everybody having fun?” Terry Pegula asked in his usual everyman fashion standing at center ice. “It’s cold down here.”

Pegula’s new \$172 million complex, which downtown workers and Sabres fans have watched go up over the last year and a half, will be a destination for “regional kids, national kids and international kids” in years to come, Pegula said.

A signature “barn-style” indoor rink replete with a natural wood-beamed ceiling is the gems of the facility, which also includes an indoor parking ramp, a pro shop, training centers, a Tim Hortons bake shop and the (716) Food and Sport restaurant, which is expected to open today.

The project is collective brainchild of Pegula, his wife, Kim, and Cliff Benson, Sabres chief development officer.

“Standing here on center ice today is just a testament to the thousands of workers, their passion and the hard work that so many people put together so that our vision and the vision we shared with everyone else would come to fruition today,” Kim Pegula said.

The event, dubbed VIP grand opening night, included those who helped build HarborCenter, top Sabres brass, officials from Hodgson Russ, First Niagara, the city of Buffalo and other dignitaries.

There were some stars spotted, including former Buffalo Sabres captain Danny Gare.

The Pegulas garnered several separate and sustained standing ovations from the crowd.

“To think three years ago this was a city-owned surface parking lot?” said Mayor Byron W. Brown, who presented the Pegulas with a key to the city.

“Terry and Kim Pegula put in a great proposal of what this could be and it all came to fruition tonight with the opening of the HarborCenter. It’s phenomenally exciting.”

John R. Koelmel, president of HarborCenter Development and former head of First Niagara Bank, introduced the facility as “a one-of-a-kind, hockey and entertainment complex ... with first-class amenities.”

Since the complex unofficially opened a week ago for Canisius College and Erie Community College hockey games, Koelmel said there was an overwhelming “I can’t believe I’m in Buffalo” feeling from visitors.

Edmonton at Buffalo preview

By Staff Report

CBS Sports

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The Buffalo Sabres and Edmonton Oilers were among the worst teams in the NHL last season.

That much hasn't changed so far in 2014-15.

Drew Stafford looks to continue his torrid production against the Oilers and lead the Sabres to an eighth win in nine meetings Friday night in Buffalo.

The Sabres (3-9-2) had a league-low 52 points last season, and Edmonton (4-8-1) wasn't much better, finishing with a Western Conference-worst 67.

So far, both teams are holding steady among the bottom dwellers, as the Sabres' eight points are tied with Carolina and Columbus for last in the East while the Oilers' nine are the fewest in the West.

Buffalo's struggles aren't helped by a 1-4-2 home record. However, the team is showing signs of improvement, claiming four of six points in the past three home games.

The Sabres rallied to earn a point in the standings Wednesday, but eventually fell 2-1 in a shootout to Montreal. Stafford's power-play goal may have provided a ray of light since Buffalo is a league-worst 2 for 46 on the man advantage.

The club ranked 29th last season, converting 14.1 percent of power plays.

"Sometimes when you're pressing, you try to do too much," coach Ted Nolan told the Sabres' official website. "You try to make those long passes so one thing we tried to do today is really simplify it and make those short passes."

Having Stafford face the Oilers could also help. He's collected seven goals and two assists in six career meetings, including five points in three as the host.

Both of Stafford's goals this season have come in Buffalo, and Tyler Ennis set up both.

Ennis is tied with Stafford for the team lead with seven points, collecting four in the last four games. The center's only point in three games against the Oilers is an assist on a goal by Stafford in a 3-1 win at Edmonton on March 20.

Buffalo lost 3-2 to the Oilers at home Feb. 3 - its only defeat in the series since 2005-06.

Edmonton is off to an 0-4-1 start on the road for a second straight season. The team hasn't endured a longer winless streak to start a season as the visitor since going 0-3-3 with two ties in 1999-2000.

The Oilers' overall slide reached four games Thursday, when they surrendered the last four goals in the third period of a 5-2 defeat at Boston.

"We've got to continue on with the positives and try to correct the negatives. The game's behind us now," goaltender Ben Scrivens told the team's official website. "We've got another one (Friday) we need to try and win."

Facing the Sabres' anemic power play may be just what the Oilers need since they've allowed six power-play tallies on 18 chances on the road.

Scrivens has yet to start in consecutive days, so he could be rested in favor of backup Viktor Fasth, who is 0-2-1 with a 4.70 goals-against average. Fasth has never faced the Sabres, while Scrivens had 39 saves in a 6-5 overtime loss with Toronto in his last start at Buffalo on April 3, 2012.

He's also 0-2-0 with a 4.86 GAA in three road starts on the season.

Buffalo's Jhonas Enroth, who is 1-6-1 with a 3.34 GAA on the season, stopped 25 shots in his lone start against Edmonton on Feb. 3.

Sabres' Ted Nolan on shootouts: 'You should have one winner'

By Bill Hoppe
Olean Times Herald
November 6, 2014

BUFFALO – Ted Nolan refers to the shootout as a “skills competition.” So, the Sabres coach doesn't like it then?

“Ehhh, I'm not a big fan of it,” Nolan said this afternoon inside the First Niagara Center. “But it's entertaining for the fans. The game, I like to declare a winner. It's kind of like horseshoes or grenades, everything's close, everybody's fair. But I think in a game you should have one winner.”

The Sabres lost a 2-1 shootout to Montreal on Wednesday, their sixth point in the last six games. The Sabres won a 3-2 shootout against Detroit on Sunday.

Slowly, the Sabres are building some momentum.

“I think the thing we really wanted to establish was the effort,” Nolan said. “Once we get the effort, that's our foundation, and then we can execution to get that. It took long so long to get that effort. We're getting it right now. The guys are working extremely hard. Now, we just got to execute on certain things.”

In lineup news, Nolan said goalie Jhonas Enroth start Friday against Edmonton. Meanwhile, banged-up winger Marcus Foligno will miss his third game Friday. He skated on his own today and could play Saturday.

Winger Patrick Kaleta, out since a shot hit him in the face Sept. 28, is “getting closer and closer,” Nolan said.

“Today he got so close he broke a couple of sticks in practice,” Nolan said. “The frustration is getting more. But we still got to wait for the doctor to get 100 percent OK.”

Nolan said the Sabres will make one change on defense Friday.

In other news, Nolan awarded winger Nick Deslauriers, a fourth-liner all season, a spot on the left wing beside center Cody Hodgson and Drew Stafford today.

“It creates more energy on our team,” Nolan said. “The one thing he does bring is some energy.”

Sabres goalies Jhonas Enroth and Michal Neuvirth still battling for No. 1 job

By Bill Hoppe
Olean Times Herald
November 7, 2014

BUFFALO – They are both 26 years old, young NHL veterans competing to become the Sabres' starting goalie.

Right now, Michal Neuvirth, having started five of the last eight games, including the past two, has the upper hand. The Czech struggled badly during the preseason, then watched as Jhonas Enroth earned five of the first six nods.

But Neuvirth has rebounded recently, posting a .957 save percentage in his last two appearances.

Meanwhile, Enroth, tonight's starter against the Edmonton Oilers, has stumbled recently, allowing nine goals in his last two starts. Still, the Swede looked sharp throughout the exhibition slate and his early-season work.

"I think it's a healthy competition," Enroth said Thursday inside the First Niagara Center.

The battle for the No. 1 job could go on for months. Neuvirth has a better save percentage (.925-.908) and goals-against average (2.60-3.34) than Enroth.

"They are just at that age when goalies flourish and start to show what their true value is in this league," Sabres goalie coach Arturs Irbe said. "It's not difficult to work, because I have two goaltenders that are very hungry. They want to prove themselves, and ... they are looking for that opportunity to get the No. 1 job."

Both goalies have mostly stood tall under a barrage of shots, becoming the Sabres' early-season MVPs. Their porous defense has allowed 508 shots, a stunning 36.3 a game, the NHL's highest total.

The Sabres have scored only 15 goals all season, so Enroth and Neuvirth have had no margin for error. They have three wins, all by one goal. The Sabres have been blanked in Enroth's last two starts.

"Both guys have that bailing-out mentality at a very extreme level, which is great," Irbe said.

Sabres coach Ted Nolan worked closely beside the loquacious Irbe, who played 568 NHL games over 13 seasons, with the Latvian national team and hired him in August. Nolan credits the 47-year-old for helping his goalies thrive.

"He's ... figured out a formula on how to maximize both of them at the same time, and so far it's working," Nolan said. "Almost every game we've played so far we couldn't complain about our goaltending."

At some point each practice, Irbe whispers encouraging words or offers advice to his goalies.

"Everything he says makes sense to me," Neuvirth said. "When I found out he was going to be our goalie coach, I was excited."

Irbe worked with the quiet Neuvirth for two seasons in Washington, where he started briefly for the Capitals at the end of 2010-11.

"I've been in this situation before in Washington," Neuvirth said.

Irbe said he learned years ago Neuvirth's a "quiet competitor."

"I learned that he is very talented, very gifted guy that is very competitive," he said. "He wants to win. He's a winner. He has won in the minor leagues, (a Calder Cup). ...

"He comes across as quiet and a really hard-to-read person sometimes, which is fine. But I know that he's ultra-competitive. He enjoys goaltending."

He added: "It's about time to come out and bloom and become what he can be."

Irbe has had to build a relationship with Enroth.

"With Jhonas, it's a little different," he said. "I'm learning, adjusting, and he's adjusting to me. But he's a very, very smart goaltender."

Before Irbe, Enroth had one goalie coach, the popular Jim Corsi. The two grew close before the Sabres fired him following last season. Just thinking about Corsi on Thursday made Enroth laugh.

"Jimmy was a really good character," Enroth said. "He meant a lot to me. ... It's different times now, and I like what we've been doing so far with Arturs."

Irbe said he and Enroth "share some interesting similarities."

"He's a very big-time student of the game, very much so," he said. "He analyzes things. He wants to understand everything. It's pretty clear what he likes and what he wants to do. He's strongly set on ways, and we have good conversations."

Enroth and Neuvirth still enjoy good conversations. Despite the competition, the two are friends.

"I respect Jhony as a goalie," Neuvirth said. "We're making each other better every day in practice. We talked about stuff. Some things he does I like, and I try to copy from him."

Irbe wants them to keep pushing each other.

"They can look back as the season goes on and say, 'Goalies are doing their job,'" he said.

Of course, it's very likely only one goalie will survive the battle. Both will be unrestricted free agents following the season.

"I'm still striving to be the guy here," Enroth said. "I want to be here. I love Buffalo so far. I would like to play so good so I get an extension here. I'm just going to try to take it day-by-day."

Man advantage a focus at practice

By Chris Ryndak

Sabres.com

November 6, 2014

The Buffalo Sabres want to boost their power-play numbers and focused on the man advantage for a good portion of practice Thursday afternoon at First Niagara Center.

At one end of the ice, the Sabres focused on their special-teams play, particularly 5-on-3 situations.

Assistant coach Bryan Trottier is in charge of the power play and emphasized that the skaters on the man advantage need to play with confidence and work hard every shift.

"We get a little stationary. We did a lot better job today of getting more motion, get everyone involved and use the whole ice," Ennis said. "We put a lot of time into it so we've got to be better. "

Buffalo is 2-for-46 on the power play (4.4 percent) and to improve, Sabres coach Ted Nolan has been getting the players to do concentrate on the basics like putting pucks and bodies to the net.

"Sometimes when you're pressing, you try to do too much," he said. "You try to make those long passes so one thing we tried to do today is really simplify it and make those short passes."

Drew Stafford tallied on the power play on Wednesday against Montreal after Tyler Myers crashed the net from the point to battle for a loose puck that ended up on Stafford's stick. Ennis compared Myers' presence to that of Boston Bruins' defenseman Zdeno Chara. While Myers stands 6-foot-8, 219 pounds, Chara is the only player in the League that's taller – checking in at 6-foot-9, 255 pounds.

"We've got a lot of guys that can make plays but we want a lot to go through Mysie. We want him shooting that puck and making those plays," Ennis said.

"You see Chara sometimes plays the net-front in Boston. Mysie, I think is more mobile than Chara so if he can make his way to the net quicker and take a few guys with him and find someone for a goal then that helps our power play."

The Sabres will host the Edmonton Oilers at 7 p.m. on Friday.

Jhonas Enroth will start in goal.

THURSDAY'S PRACTICE

17 Torrey Mitchell – 63 Tyler Ennis – 80 Chris Stewart

26 Matt Moulson – 28 Zemgus Girgensons – 12 Brian Gionta

44 Nicolas Deslauriers – 19 Cody Hodgson – 21 Drew Stafford

22 Johan Larsson – 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

1 Jhonas Enroth
34 Michal Neuvirth
31 Matt Hackett

Power-Play Units

Moulson-Ennis-Stafford
Meszaros-Myers

Hodgson/Stewart-Girgensons-Gionta
Zadorov/Gorges-Ristolainen

Nolan has been pleased with Deslauriers' play of late and bumped him up from the fourth line.

"You like to reward people and he's doing a good job," Nolan said. "Plus, it creates some more energy on our team and one thing he does bring is some energy."

The team will likely make one lineup change on defense.

INJURY UPDATES

Marcus Foligno did not skate. He's missed the past two games due to injury. He skated on his own before practice Thursday and Nolan said Foligno will take the morning skate on Friday. His status for the game against Edmonton is doubtful and Nolan hopes he'll be ready to go against the Penguins on Saturday.

Nolan also said that Patrick Kaleta is getting closer to returning. Kaleta caught a slap shot in the face in the preseason and needed surgery to repair the damage. He's been practicing with the team, but hasn't been cleared to return to game action.

"He's getting closer and closer," Nolan said. "Today he got so close he broke a couple sticks in practice. So the frustration's getting more but we've still got to wait for the doctor to give him the 100-percent OK."

#HOCKEYFIGHTSCANCER NIGHT ON FRIDAY

The Sabres will again take part in the NHL Hockey Fights Cancer program during the team's game, presented by ECMC, on Friday.

As part of an NHL-wide initiative to raise money and awareness for cancer research, the Sabres will be hosting events throughout the night with the help of local cancer patients and their charitable organizations.

Fans attending the game will have the opportunity to purchase "RJ" hats for \$20 in honor of Rick Jeanneret and his fight against cancer. The hats have been donated by New Era Cap Company and will be sold before the game and until they are sold out. A portion of the proceeds from the sale will be donated to the cancer care and research.

To commemorate the night, all Sabres players will wear purple jerseys and use sticks with purple tape during warm-ups, and the jerseys and sticks will be auctioned off on NHL.com immediately following the game to benefit cancer care and research.

There will also be a ceremonial puck drop before the game, so fans are strongly encouraged to be in their seats early.

Hockey Fights Cancer is a charitable initiative founded in December 1998 by the National Hockey League and National Hockey League Players' Association. It is supported by players, NHL member clubs, NHL alumni, the NHL Officials' Association, professional hockey athletic trainers and equipment managers, corporate marketing partners, broadcast partners and fans throughout North America.

#TBT Profile: Dave Snuggerud

By Kevin Snow

Sabres.com

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DAVE SNUGGERUD

How Acquired: 1987 Supplemental Draft

Buffalo stats (1989-1992): 215 games; 26-46-72, 109 PIMs

Career NHL stats (1989-1993): 265 games; 30-54-84, 127 PIMs

Mention the name Dave Snuggerud to a Sabres fan, and they are likely to recall a reliable special teams player who played a key role on the teams of the late 80's. These days, Snuggerud is teaching that same work ethic to kids in Minnesota, and the Sabres could benefit from it very soon.

Drafted first overall by Buffalo in the 1987 Supplemental Draft from the University of Minnesota, Snuggerud joined the Sabres at the start of the 1989-90 season after competing for Team USA at the 1988 Winter Olympics in Calgary. Snuggerud played all 80 games in his rookie season, finishing with 14 goals and 16 assists. The Minnesota-native showed his true value as a checking winger, scoring six shorthanded goals in 215 games with Buffalo, including a team-high four during the 1990-91 season.

Following a trade to San Jose for Wayne Presley on March 9, 1992, Snuggerud would end his NHL career as a member of the Philadelphia Flyers where he played 14 games in 1992-93. Snuggerud took the 1993-94 season off, and officially called it quits after playing 72 games with IHL's Manitoba Moose in 1994-95.

Snuggerud has spent the last 20 years as a teacher in Minnesota, and two years ago started the Breakaway Academy, a private school which combines academics and athletics. He's also trained several Minnesota-area hockey players, including Sabres prospect Hudson Fasching, who is currently in his sophomore season at the University of Minnesota.

Sabres.com recently had the chance to talk with Snuggerud about his playing career, and what he's accomplished since then.

What are your memories of playing in Buffalo?

I enjoyed the people in Buffalo and their enthusiasm for sport. Buffalo sports fans were very supportive and wanted to win. It was a lot of fun talking hockey to families in Buffalo.

Guys like Dave Andreychuk, Alex Mogilny, Rob Ray, Mike Ramsey, Pierre Turgeon, Rick Vaive, Doug Bodger, Scott Arniel and Rick Dudley all took the time to make my first year in the league special. There was a lot to learn and they all took the time to help.

You grew up in Minnesota and played hockey at the University of Minnesota. You also represented the United States at the 1988 Winter Olympics. What do you consider your career highlight?

Every season and team was a different experience. College hockey was so much fun, trying to learn how to manage your time between classes, practices, and travel. We had a lot of success when I played at the University of Minnesota. The success was driven by the tradition of Gopher hockey, great coaching, and the local talent around the Twin Cities that decided to attend the University of Minnesota.

I really enjoyed my Olympic experience because I had a chance to play with unbelievable talent. Kevin Stevens, Craig Janney, Mike Richter, Tony Granato, Scott Young and Brian Leetch were players that excelled and were fun to practice with every day.

You retired from professional hockey in 1995 at age 29. What went into your decision to retire at such a 'young' age when many thought you could still play?

Looking back on it now, I wish I would have decided to play a few more years. At the time I retired, I was very

interested in starting my teaching career. Every summer when I went back to Minneapolis I worked on my teaching degree. I earned my degree and was ready to start a new career.

What was your thought process in creating the Breakaway Academy?

I taught for 20 years in the public school. My concern is that too many students are being assessed on their character by how they do on a test score. Two years ago, I started a school that I had been working on for about five years called Breakaway Academy.

We are a private school for students in grades 5-8, and we use licensed teachers that instruct in a traditional school setting. We use the Minnesota Standards to guide our student learning in math, science, language arts, and social studies. In the afternoon, the athletes train on- and off-the-ice to become better hockey players. After school, our student athletes go and play for their local hockey association teams.

How has the Breakaway Academy grown?

We are in our second year. The first year we had 25 students, and we have doubled in size for the second year with 50 students. We will continue to grow because of the small class sizes, the individualized learning and great hockey training. The kids are learning about character and how to be a good person.

Have you had the chance to work with any famous names over the years?

I had the opportunity to train future great Hudson Fasching who will wear the Sabres uniform in the near future. We have also trained eight D-I college hockey players.

Are you still coaching high school hockey?

I have been coaching for the past 20 years. We have three kids in hockey and I have been fortunate enough to coach all my kids, from mites through high school. Our fourth child is a swimmer, and she decided to play in warm water rather than on frozen water.

Your nephew Luc was drafted by Chicago (fifth round, 141st overall) this year – did you give him any advice throughout the draft process?

I trained Luc and Hudson together, and they both trained very hard. The message was always to be a son-of-a-gun on the ice and compete at the highest level. But when you leave the playing field, work on being the nicest person you can.