



Buffalo Sabres

Daily Press Clips

December 13, 2014

Panthers-Sabres preview

By Jon Palmieri

Associated Press

December 12, 2014

Talk of a playoff spot would've seemed ridiculous coming from the Buffalo Sabres less than a month ago.

Not so much anymore.

The surging Sabres seek a fifth consecutive home victory Saturday night when they face a Florida Panthers team that has had their number of late.

Buffalo (11-16-2) has spent most of this season at the bottom of the NHL standings, a spot it occupied as recently as Nov. 22. However, since losing five straight and eight of nine, the Sabres have headed in the opposite direction with a surprising 8-3-0 run.

That surge has left them only seven points out of the final playoff spot in the Eastern Conference.

"We're kind of making our way up there. We're kind of getting to the middle of the pack, hopefully soon. A playoff spot is close," forward Marcus Foligno told the team's official website. "It's something you're always checking. We want to get back in a playoff spot and that eighth spot is pretty close."

An outstanding performance from Jhonas Enroth gave the Sabres their second win in as many tries on a five-game homestand Thursday. Enroth made 42 saves and Matt Moulson scored twice in Buffalo's fourth straight home win, 4-3 over Calgary.

"It wasn't one of our better games," coach Ted Nolan said. "It's pretty special because we weren't in the game but we still believed that we could come back."

Zemgus Girgensons and Foligno also scored and Tyler Ennis had three assists for Buffalo, which reached four non-shootout goals for the first time in nine games.

"Our team confidence is in a good place," defenseman Tyler Myers said. "I think we're doing the right things, we're trying to do the right things ... I think that confidence will grow even more."

Just about every aspect of Buffalo's game has improved and Enroth is no exception. He's 7-2-0 with a 1.93 goals-against average in his last nine appearances after going 1-8-1 with a 3.77 mark in his first 10.

One of the Sabres' few recent losses came at Florida last Saturday. Roberto Luongo continued his dominance of Buffalo with 26 saves in a 3-2 victory, Florida's fifth straight in the series. Luongo, who had recorded shutouts in his three previous meetings, is 8-1-0 with a 1.77 GAA in his last 10 against the Sabres.

Luongo, though, could be rested in the second half of this back-to-back after making 29 saves in a 3-2 shootout win at Detroit on Friday. Tomas Fleischmann and Jonathan Huberdeau scored first-period goals to help the Panthers (12-8-7) improve to 5-2-1 in their last eight games.

"We played the game we wanted to play and we took it to the shootout," Luongo said. "And in the shootout anything can happen."

Rookie defenseman Aaron Ekblad was held without a point for the first time in six games. He had a career-best three assists in last week's win over the Sabres.

Leading scorer Nick Bjugstad had an assist, giving him four goals and seven points during a four-game run.

This contests features two of the league's worst power plays. Florida ranks 25th and is 2 for 26 over its last 10 games, while Buffalo ranks last and is 2 for 25 during that same span.

Sabres starting to believe in themselves

By Mike Harrington

Buffalo News

December 12, 2014

Tank this.

That seems to be the message emanating from the Buffalo Sabres' dressing room in recent weeks, as the numbers in the standings continue to blossom even though the numbers on the stat sheet remain hideous.

Saturday's visitor to First Niagara Center is the Florida Panthers and they will find a Buffalo team playing with belief not seen the last two seasons. The Sabres are 8-3 in their last 11 games overall and 6-1 in their last seven at home, with wins in four straight.

Thursday's 4-3 victory over Calgary marked the third time in their last four wins the Sabres have come from behind to snare two points.

"You get scored on and you don't feel like everything is collapsing down on you," captain Brian Gionta said after practice Friday. "For sure, you can see we're not anywhere near as fragile a team as we were. Early in the year, a game like last night would have been far gone."

The Sabres are still only five points out of 30th overall, the last-place slot in the NHL standings. But it's stunning to note they're suddenly just seven points out of the final playoff spot in the Eastern Conference.

When they started 2-9-1, the Sabres were dead and buried where most experts figured they would be. That was waiting simply to call the name of either Connor McDavid or Jack Eichel come June.

Mention the draft – or many of their own fans' hope the Sabres might lose their way to a top pick – and you'll get plenty of cross words and evil stares in the dressing room.

"There's a room full of guys that have a lot of pride," coach Ted Nolan said. "When you start telling someone they're not very good, or 'we expect you to be at that position,' well, I've been in that position my whole life growing up where I grew up and it's not a good feeling.

"The only one thing that people fight for is respect and I think that's one thing this team has really been battling to gain is respect. We don't claim to be the best team in the world but at least we deserve respect that the rest of this league gets. We're going out to compete and battle and try to win."

Gionta insists the players never gave into the outside notion that losing is winning, and they certainly won't now that they're actually winning.

"That attitude never crept into this locker room," Gionta said. "Never. Even in training camp, even when we were struggling. That mind-set never set in. Guys in this room right now believe we can be a winning team and that's where it starts."

"You put together wins and you find some confidence and you create a new culture," said winger Marcus Foligno. "It feels better coming in here, it feels better on the ice where you get down and you feel like you can come back. Sometimes new guys come in and it can take a toll but then it takes its course. And then it starts clicking."

After the Panthers, it's a Monday game against struggling Ottawa. The Senators just fired coach Paul MacLean and are just 4-9-2 in their past 15 games. A quick trip to Winnipeg for a game on Tuesday is followed by some badly needed rest.

Then comes another back-to-back, here next Saturday against a reeling Colorado club and Dec. 21 at Boston, which currently holds the last playoff spot in the East.

"We didn't help ourselves with the way we started but by no means are we out of it," Gionta said. "We continue to progress, you can like your chances."

The Sabres, of course, need to keep working on ways to cut down their monstrous shot disadvantages that crop up just about every night.

They were outshot, 45-19, by Calgary and gave up 40 more shot attempts in the game than they took, but once again rode the hot goaltending of Jhonas Enroth to a victory.

Buffalo's Corsi percentage, tracking shots on goal, missed and blocked, is just 36.8 for the season. That's according to stats.hockeyanalysis.com, a key website for hockey analytics. No other team in the NHL is below 45.2 and 20 teams are at or above 50 percent. The Sabres have to find ways to generate more shots and ways to cut down how many they're giving up because those numbers usually mean serious regression is looming.

"We had such a slow start because we seemed to have a huge learning curve and there's still that learning curve there in some ways," said winger Tyler Ennis, who is coming off his first three-point game of the season. "We know we need to get more shots on net. It's tough to win games when you're not getting 20 shots.

"We need to do a better job of that but we're doing a lot of good things too. We know we're winning with a struggling power play and not putting enough shots on that. Imagine if we improve at that."

Sabres notebook: Revenge sought on improved Panthers

By Mike Harrington

Buffalo News

December 12, 2014

It's easy to forget that the Florida Panthers are an Atlantic Division rival of the Buffalo Sabres. It's something the Sabres had better remember quickly because they've lost five straight to their Sunshine State foes.

The Panthers hit town for Saturday's game against Buffalo having won both meetings against the Sabres this year after taking the final three last season. They posted a 1-0 victory Oct. 16 in First Niagara Center and a 3-2 win last Saturday at BB&T Center in Sunrise.

"That's a team that we definitely owe," said Sabres forward Marcus Foligno. "We played a pretty good game in their rink but they play really good defensively, force errors and force you to cough up pucks. So we have to be smarter against them.

"They've impressed a lot of people how they've played," added Tyler Ennis. "They've been good defensively and have not given up much."

The Panthers entered Friday's game in Detroit with just eight regulation losses, and only Detroit and Pittsburgh (six each) had fewer in the Eastern Conference. Florida is second-last in the NHL in goals with 57, ahead of only the Sabres' 48. But it's fifth in the league in goals-against with 64.

Panthers goalie Roberto Luongo had posted three straight shutouts against the Sabres until getting beat twice in last Saturday's game. He started Friday in Detroit, so the Sabres could see backup Al Montoya in this one. That, however, would be no easier path to a win.

That's because Montoya is 3-0-1 in his career against Buffalo, with a 1.61 goals-against average and .945 save percentage. He shut them out last year while playing for Winnipeg.

...

Foligno joked he got a large elephant off his back with his second-period goal Thursday against Calgary, his first since scoring twice 20 games ago in the Oct. 14 shootout win at Carolina.

"It's always nice to contribute and the way our top line has been going, you need some secondary scoring to help them out," Foligno said. "That can come from a lot of guys and I'm glad I was able to do it."

After having just two goals all season, Foligno nearly had two in a span of 96 seconds Thursday. His deflection of a Nikita Zadorov shot less than two minutes after his goal was wiped off because it was ruled on replay that his stick was too high. The call appeared correct.

Foligno played center in the game and was in that slot at practice again Friday, between Nicolas Deslauriers and Drew Stafford.

"The wing is obviously the thing I've been getting into lately but whenever you can fill in the middle you've got to do it," Foligno said. "I was happy with my faceoffs last night and that's your biggest concern as a winger coming in. I won some key ones, little things you have to do right."

Foligno won seven of his 10 faceoffs in the game and the Sabres had a 38-32 advantage overall – after Calgary won 13 of 15 draws in the first period.

...

Coach Ted Nolan said Cody McCormick will miss Saturday's game with a lower-body injury suffered Thursday, so Cody Hodgson will return to the lineup after one game as a scratch. Hodgson centered Chris Stewart and Patrick Kaleta in practice Friday.

Tyson Strachan (lower body) continues to be out and fellow defenseman Mike Weber missed practice Friday while he gets checked for an undisclosed ailment.

Nolan said Andrej Meszaros (concussion) is ready to return to the lineup against the Panthers if Weber can't go.

...

Jhonas Enroth tied Los Angeles' Jonathan Quick for the NHL lead in 40-save outings by making 42 stops in Thursday's game. It was Enroth's fourth of the season and he's 3-1 in those games. According to the Elias Sports Bureau, Enroth's shutout of the Los Angeles Kings on Tuesday made him the first goalie in NHL history to win his first four shutouts by 1-0 scores.

With the win over Calgary, Enroth improved to 7-2 in his last nine games with a 1.93 goals-against average and .944 save percentage. It came in his 100th career game. Enroth's career record is 33-45-13, 2.79 and .914.

...

The team will host its annual autographed light-up ornament surprise Saturday to benefit the Sabres Foundation.

With a \$20 donation, fans will receive an ornament autographed by a Sabres player. The ornaments will be on sale in the 100 Level pavilion starting at 5 p.m. through the second intermission. They will be sold by the Sabres' wives and girlfriends and will be gift-wrapped, keeping the player who autographed each one a surprise.

Wins put new spin on tank, trade talk

By Mike Harrington

Buffalo News

December 12, 2014

There's never been a Sabres season like this. It's a cart-before-the-horse special.

Forget about playing 82 games. Let's get right to the draft, the tankers howl. No matter it's not until the end of June.

But with the tank-or-no-tank byplay long ago tiresome, we seem to be on to a different topic. It's Tim Murray as Monty Hall. Let's Make a Deal. Or Three. No matter the trade deadline is in March.

One rumor starts from one of the big "Insiders" and fans go crazy. A couple of days ago, one major outlet north of the border breathlessly announced Murray is ready to deal one of his goaltenders.

It's a given that's going to happen, since both Jhonas Enroth and Michal Neuvirth are pending free agents. So the fervor started immediately. Who is staying and who is going? Can you reasonably trade Enroth the way he's been playing?

No chance. He made 42 more saves in Thursday's 4-3 win over Calgary. His save percentage is .944 over his last nine games and he's at .936 for the season – yes, the season – at even strength.

When Murray did his regular appearance on WGR Radio prior to Thursday's game, what was the biggest revelation? No one has called him about his goaltenders. (A quick lesson there to all of you on rumors).

Murray, of course, has been getting some calls on others and he's wide open for business, as he should be. Drew Stafford and Chris Stewart will certainly go. Murray has got an eye on the future but has to be careful about his present, too.

Murray knows what Terry Pegula wants and shares the owner's lust for Connor McDavid (or Jack Eichel). But he can't make it overly obvious what his intentions might be. Trading Enroth now would be horrendous optics, about the tankiest thing ever.

"Right now I don't see a huge need to shake up this roster or make trades," Murray insisted. "And I can certainly tell you that I don't want to lose players for nothing."

The Sabres have won eight of 11. They're 9-7-1 in their last 17 games and that's no small sample size. It's more than 20 percent of the season. If you're in the tank mob, you'd be interested to note the Sabres are tied for 17th in the league in points since Nov. 1, when they were 2-9-1.

I assume the tank mob can figure out that's nowhere close to 30th.

"The only way to work out of it was when we started to see success," said Tyler Myers. "We slowly started playing the right way."

Chatter about Myers is everywhere these days. The Detroit Red Wings, among several teams, love him. Myers wasn't great Thursday, as he was on the ice for all three of Calgary's goals. But he was also on for two of his own team's goals and played 27:37. That's seven straight games of 24-plus minutes with a plus-1 rating in them.

Easy bottom line to me: If Murray trades Myers, he's nuts.

At some point, you have to start building your team with NHL players. Myers is 24. If you're looking at, say, three years before you're in serious contention, he'll be 27. In his prime.

The reason so many teams want Myers is because there's a dearth of right-shot defensemen in the league. And Myers has a reasonable contract, with a cap hit of \$5.5 million for four more years and \$23 million already paid through this season.

Instead of unloading guys, keep building your team. You know Zemgus Girgenson, Matt Moulson and Tyler Ennis are likely here going forward. Why not have Myers, Rasmus Ristolainen and Nikita Zadorov as your top three defensemen?

And that opinion holds even though Myers and partner Josh Gorges had one of their toughest games in quite a while during Thursday's bizarre affair. The Sabres were outshot, 45-19, and again refused to wilt. And they scored four goals. Remember when they scored 12 goals for all of October?

"We're going to the net more, getting hungrier," Girgenson said. "It's how you get those goals."

Murray doesn't tell Ted Nolan who to play but clearly tells him which players will be on his team. No one from Rochester is coming and that's probably deserved with the Amerks having won just three of their last 17 games.

When Murray said in the middle of last month Nolan and his hand-picked assistants weren't getting enough out of their players, it was a warning shot. Pretty good job by Nolan with the roster Murray built, whether it was designed to tank or improve. Even if Murray can't be happy that Stewart is flaming out – or that Nolan scratched him for a game and depressed his trade value.

The Sabres should press forward. Forget the tank or the trades, at least for a while. Play the season. With all these wins lately, it's getting downright goofy.

Panthers seek winning streak facing Sabres

By David Satriano

NHL.com

December 12, 2014

PANTHERS (12-8-7) at SABRES (11-16-2)

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

Season series: Florida Panthers defenseman Aaron Ekblad had three assists in a 3-2 win against the Buffalo Sabres on Dec 6. Florida has defeated Buffalo in each of the past five games dating to last season.

Panthers team scope: Florida is looking to win consecutive games for the third time this season after defeating the Detroit Red Wings in a shootout 3-2 on Friday. Goalie Roberto Luongo, who made 29 saves, is 12-6-2 against Buffalo and has a 1.84 goals-against average, .940 save percentage and four shutouts. Forward Tomas Fleischmann has two goals and three assists in his past four games. The Panthers were 0-for-5 on the power play Friday and are 2-for-26 in their past 10 games, with no goals in their past 12 opportunities.

Sabres team scope: Buffalo has won eight of its past 11 games, including 4-3 in overtime against the Calgary Flames on Thursday. Forward Cody McCormick left that game and won't play; he will be replaced by Cody Hodgson. "It's nothing too serious. ... But serious enough that he misses at least [Saturday]," coach Ted Nolan told the Sabres website. Defenseman Mike Weber (lower body) missed practice. The Sabres have scored nine goals in their past five games and usually have trouble scoring against Luongo. "Last game (against the Sabres), we had a couple of good chances and Luongo made some pretty good saves on some of the chances we had," Nolan said. "He's one of the premier goaltenders in the League and we just have to find a way to get one by him."

Sabres' Matt Moulson finally scoring again

By Bill Hoppe
Olean Times Herald
December 12, 2014

BUFFALO – Matt Moulson can't figure out what exactly caused his awful, career-worst start. Maybe the five-year, \$25 million contract the Sabres awarded the high-scoring winger in free agency played in his head. Perhaps the expectations that accompany scoring 30 goals three straight years weighed on him.

Whatever the case, Moulson was downright terrible earlier this season. At one point during his 14-game goal drought, his wife, Alicia, gave him a little pep talk.

"I remember my wife saying at the start of the year, 'You're going to score again. It's not like you're going to have zero goals,'" Moulson said Friday inside the First Niagara Center.

It might have felt like that, however. Moulson finally scored his first goal Nov. 7.

These days, having compiled six goals and 12 points in the last 15 games, he's back on track entering tonight's game against the Florida Panthers.

The 31-year-old enjoyed arguably his best game with the Sabres in Thursday's 4-3 win against Calgary, scoring twice and giving the Flames fits on the left wing beside center Zemgus Girgensons and Tyler Ennis.

Moulson, who's at his best around the net, scored the opening goal and the winner in close. He was also positioned in front ready to score on Girgensons' goal and slickly undressed Calgary's T.J. Brodie earlier in the game.

Playing with Girgensons and Ennis on the No. 1 line the past month has ignited Moulson's confidence. Moulson has been "getting back to things I was doing before," he said.

"I kind of expected the game to come to me, maybe at the start of the season wasn't working as much as I should've on the ice," Moulson said. "During the game sometimes you get in slumps and you find yourself standing around a little more often.

"So when you have that confidence, it gives you that little extra jump out there."

Ennis added: "Multiple 30-goal scorer. He's such a smart player. I'm fortunate to be able to play with him. It's a fun line. I know he's going to be open. I just got to find him."

Moulson acknowledged earlier this year he was putting too much pressure on himself.

"It's something that compounds itself," he said. "You want to do well and you want the team to succeed. ... Sometimes it's a tough thing to get out of because the more pressure you put on yourself, the more you want to do well, the worse you play. So I think that was definitely the case with me."

Sabres coach Ted Nolan understands how pressure to perform can consume players.

"A lot of these guys, they are expected to do certain things, and when they don't, pressure starts adding and they start squeezing their sticks a little more," he said. "They want to do so much, and sometimes when you want to do so much, you don't do too much at all. ...

"He really wanted to come have a good start. He wanted to come back, he wanted to be a big part of it. And all of a sudden, with the line, it's all history now."

Nolan traces Moulson's resurgence to his linemates. The trio combined for seven points Thursday. Ennis had three assists.

"You got some speed, you got some playmaking," Nolan said. "Speed and playmaking with a goal scorer usually adds up to good success. Matty has a good nose for the net. He knows how to go to it."

Of course, it's no coincidence the Sabres heated up around the same time as Moulson. They have won two straight games and eight of the last 11.

Moulson believes he's beginning to see the vision he had when he re-signed July 1. He played 44 games here last season during some of the franchise's darkest days. But he liked Nolan, the team and the Sabres' plan for the future, so he returned following a 30-game stint in Minnesota.

"We're starting to go," Moulson said. "We have a long way to go. But we're starting to build something. I think we're believing in ourselves ... that's the biggest thing. That was probably lacking early on. You start off a little rocky and that belief you probably had coming into the season kind of fades a bit."

Sabres' Cody Hodgson set to return from benching

By Bill Hoppe

Olean Times Herald

December 12, 2014

BUFFALO – As the Sabres warmed up before practice this afternoon, coach Ted Nolan and Cody Hodgson skated around the ice together and talked about the season-long slump that forced the struggling center into the press box Thursday.

What was Nolan's message to Hodgson, who will play again Saturday? The 24-year-old's trying to work too hard, and that's forcing him to do things out of his character.

"You don't need Cody to be banging bodies," Nolan said inside the First Niagara Center. "We don't need him to be blocking shots. We need him to have that offensive threat every time he's on the ice. So we just kind of talked about those type of things, try to play the way he's capable of playing, and that's grab the puck and go to the net. ... I think he's trying to do too much in all areas of the ice."

Hodgson, who has one goal and three points in 28 games, will likely replace center Cody McCormick. Nolan said the lower-body injury McCormick suffered in Thursday's 4-3 win against Calgary is "nothing too serious."

In other injury news, defenseman Tyson Strachan (lower body) needs time to help him heal, Nolan said. Meanwhile, defenseman Mike Weber missed today's session because of an "issue" he has been battling for three of four games, Nolan said. Weber was examined earlier today.

Nolan said Andrej Meszaros could play Saturday against Florida. The defenseman was cleared to return from a possible concussion earlier this week.

With wins piling up, Sabres seek respect

By Steve Vesey

WIVB

December 12, 2014

BUFFALO, N.Y. (WIVB) - Going into the season, and even a month into the season, much of the Sabres-related talk focused on next year's draft. That is not the case, all of a sudden.

Eight wins in the last eleven games have some of the pro-tanking crowd scratching their heads. For the players and coaches, though, it's a matter of pride and respect.

"There's a room full of guys that have a lot of pride. When you start telling someone they're not very good, or we expect you to be in that position. I've been in that position my whole life. Growing up where I grew up, it's not a good feeling. The only one thing that people fight for is respect," said head coach Ted Nolan.

Respect seems to be the key term during this run, keyed by goaltender Jhonas Enroth's hot play. With some offensive players chipping in last night, the Sabres are no longer playing like doormats.

"I think that's the one thing this team really has been battling to gain, is respect. We don't claim to be the best team in the world, but at least we deserve the respect that the rest of this league gets. We're going out to compete, to battle, and to try to win," said Nolan.

Despite the recent surge, the Sabres are still closer to dead-last in the NHL (five points ahead), than they are to a playoff spot (seven points back) – but the conversation is starting to change.

Top line paces Sabres, Girgensons sets new mark

By George Blas

TWC Sports

December 12, 2014

BUFFALO, N.Y. - The Sabres four-game homestand is off to a good start after back-to-back wins. The team has four straight victories on home ice and has won 8 of its last 11 games.

Thursday's 4-3 win over the Flames was fueled by the Sabres top line - Matt Moulson, Tyler Ennis and Zemgus Girgensons. The trio combined for three goals and seven points on the night in the victory.

"Our line has good chemistry right now," Ennis said. "We're getting really used to each other. We know that you create a lot of offense in this league by getting it behind the net, working it, taking pucks to the net and that's how we were successful."

"We're just moving the puck around," Girgensons said. "Chemistry a little bit, knowing where we can be sometimes without looking, so that's a big thing in the game."

Girgensons, the leader in All-Star voting, scored his team-leading ninth goal of the season against Calgary. After scoring eight in 70 games as a rookie last year, the 20-year-old has already set a new career-high through 29 games in his sophomore campaign.

"You want to improve and moving on from last season that was one of the goals," Girgensons said.

"He's really developed his game at both ends of the ice, offensively and defensively," Moulson said. "He's a kid, he's so young, he keeps working hard and always wants to learn and get better. He's always improving every part of his game. He's a great kid with a really really good attitude."

The Sabres host the Florida Panthers on Saturday night.

Sabres continue to battle for respect

By Chris Ryndak

Sabres.com

December 12, 2014

For the past month now, the Buffalo Sabres have been feeling better about their overall game.

The Sabres are 8-3-0 in their past 11 games and 6-1-0 in their past seven at home dating back to Nov 15.

After a tough month of October, the Sabres bounced back in November and find themselves climbing up in the standings. While they're still five points from last place, they now find themselves seven points out of the final wild card berth in the Eastern Conference.

"We're kind of making our way up there. We're kind of getting to the middle of the pack, hopefully soon. A playoff spot is close," Sabres forward Marcus Foligno said after practice Friday at First Niagara Center. "It's something you're always checking. We want to get back in a playoff spot and that eighth spot is pretty close."

While the players and coaches entered the season with playoff aspirations, most media outlets picked Buffalo to finish in last or next-to-last place in the League. Sabres coach Ted Nolan said they took it to heart.

"There's a room full of guys that have a lot of pride. When you start telling someone they're not very good or expect them to be at that position – I've been in that position my whole life and growing up where I grew up – and it's not a good feeling," he said.

"The only one thing people fight for is respect. I think that's the one thing this team has really been battling to gain – is respect. We don't claim to be the best team in the world but at least we deserve the respect that the rest of this League gets.

"We're going out to compete and battle and try to win. Even if you do those things right all the time, it doesn't guarantee you wins, but at least there's the respect factor.

"So it did have a lot to do with it and guys took it personally. It's filtered into the game now where we're starting to play the game the way we're capable of playing it."

BACK IN

Cody Hodgson watched Buffalo's 4-3 win over the Calgary Flames on Thursday from the press box as a healthy scratch. He and Nolan had a long chat during the warmup skate before practice. Nolan would like to see Hodgson simplify his game and focus on creating offensive opportunities for both him and his teammates.

Nolan hopes that having him watch one will have the desired effect. Hodgson will play Saturday night against the Florida Panthers as Buffalo continues its four-game homestand.

"Sometimes when you look at it, you say, 'I do have a little more time.' So we discussed all that stuff," Nolan said. "We had a nice talk and he'll be back in and hopefully get his game back."

Watching the game helped Hodgson see the game from a different perspective he thinks can help him when he suits back up.

"I think the biggest realization you get up there is there is more space than you think," he said. "You may not need more room to operate than you think on the ice. There's time out there, even if it's just a half-second, it makes a big difference."

INJURY REPORT

Nolan said Mike Weber was not at practice because he was being evaluated by doctors for an injury that's afflicted him the past few games. He hoped to receive an update later Friday afternoon.

Tyson Strachan missed practice once again with a lower-body injury. He's missed three games and Nolan said it's just going to take time for him to get back to 100 percent.

After leaving midway through the second period of Thursday's game with a lower-body injury, Cody McCormick missed practice on Friday. Nolan said he had an appointment with team doctors on Friday and that he could miss Saturday night's game against Florida.

Andrej Meszaros could return to the lineup. A concussion has sidelined him for the past five games but he's been cleared to return to action.

FRIDAY'S PRACTICE

26 Matt Moulson – 28 Zemgus Girgensons – 63 Tyler Ennis

65 Brian Flynn – 17 Torrey Mitchell – 12 Brian Gionta

44 Nicolas Deslauriers – 82 Marcus Foligno – 21 Drew Stafford

80 Chris Stewart – 19 Cody Hodgson – 36 Patrick Kaleta

4 Josh Gorges – 57 Tyler Myers

51 Nikita Zadorov – 55 Rasmus Ristolainen

61 Andre Benoit

41 Andrej Meszaros

1 Jhonas Enroth

34 Michal Neuvirth

Did Not Skate: 6 Mike Weber, 8 Cody McCormick, 24 Tyson Strachan