



Buffalo Sabres

Daily Press Clips

December 31, 2014

Lightning-Sabres Preview

By Jordan Garretson

Associated Press

December 30, 2014

The Tampa Bay Lightning are looking for better road play after capping a perfect homestand.

Getting Ryan Callahan going could be the key to accomplishing that.

Callahan looks to help visiting Tampa Bay to a fourth straight victory Wednesday night against the Buffalo Sabres.

The Lightning (23-11-4) concluded an undefeated three-game homestand Monday with a 3-2 win over Toronto despite falling behind 2-0 within the first eight minutes. Callahan scored in the second period to snap the team's five-game power-play drought, which had seen the Lightning go 0 for 21. Steven Stamkos broke a tie in the third period with his 20th goal and Tampa Bay improved to 19-1-0 when it scores at least three.

Stamkos avoided going what would have been a season-worst four straight games without a goal.

"(Stamkos) had some really good looks that he missed, and, sure enough, the one he gets is off a great deflection," coach Jon Cooper told the team's official website. "It's just a matter of time with him. You can't keep goal scorers down. They eventually get out of whatever's happening to them. Hopefully, this will be a breakthrough for him because I thought he had a really strong game."

Callahan, who also assisted on Valtteri Filppula's goal later in the second, had gone 13 games without a goal himself. The Lightning are 15-0-0 when Callahan scores since acquiring him from the Rangers on March 5.

"I said something to him in practice (Monday) too," goaltender Ben Bishop said. "I told him, 'Why don't you score every game?' He said he's trying. It's a good stat to have."

Callahan, fourth on the team with 12 goals, hasn't found the back of the net in his last nine road games, a span in which Tampa Bay is 2-5-2. The Lightning, who are playing their first of four straight road games, have scored two goals or fewer seven times in that span while going 2 for 31 on the power play.

Tampa Bay's current 1-3-2 road stretch began with a 2-1 shootout loss in Buffalo on Dec. 2. Stamkos and Callahan each had one shot. The Lightning claimed a 5-0 win in Tampa two days later, however, as Stamkos had a goal and two assists and the Sabres were outshot 35-13.

Despite being last in the Atlantic Division, Buffalo (14-20-3) has defended its home ice well over the last 6 1/2 weeks, going 9-2-0 since Nov. 15. However, the Sabres have surrendered 28 goals while losing five of six overall. Tyler Ennis, who leads Buffalo with 23 points, has one point in that stretch and he also has one point in his last nine meetings with Tampa Bay.

Buffalo, which led 2-1 in the second period of Monday's 5-2 loss at Ottawa, was outshot 9-2 in the final period.

"We played well until the third period when they took it to us," Ennis said. "I don't know if we were tired, but they deserved to win. We have to get more than two shots, especially when the game is on the line."

It continued a trend of late collapses that has seen the Sabres give up two or more third-period goals in four of their last five defeats. They allowed four goals in the third period of a 6-3 loss at Detroit on Dec. 23 and have been outscored by 22 goals over the final 20 minutes of regulation this season.

Bishop, whose lone shutout of 2014-15 came against Buffalo, has won five straight starts versus the Sabres behind a 1.76 goals-against average.

Sabres Girgensons, 5 'Hawks lead NHL All-Star vote

By Staff Report

Associated Press

December 30, 2014

NEW YORK (AP) — Five Chicago Blackhawks players and Buffalo Sabres forward Zemgus Girgensons are poised to be selected by fans to play in the NHL All-Star Game at Columbus, Ohio, next month.

With two days left before voting closes, Girgensons maintains his overall lead with more than 1.46 million, the NHL announced Tuesday. A majority of the second-year player's votes are coming from his native Latvia.

Fans are allowed to vote using the same device up to 10 times a day.

In line for the final two forward spots are Chicago's Patrick Kane (1.07 million votes) and Jonathan Toews (1.06 million). Pittsburgh's Sidney Crosby (704,792) is fourth.

Chicago's Duncan Keith (1.04 million) and Brent Seabrook (875,868) lead defensemen. Blackhawks' Corey Crawford leads goalies with 955,385 votes, nearly 400,000 more than Montreal's Carey Price.

Sabres' Kaleta proves he's a 'tough man'

By Jay Skurski

Buffalo News

December 30, 2014

No, Patrick Kaleta says, he did not punch himself in the head during a fight with Ottawa's Jared Cowen on Monday.

The video evidence, though – which has gone viral by appearing on national websites like Yahoo! and Sports Illustrated – would suggest otherwise.

During a heavyweight bout in the first period against the Senators, Kaleta landed a straight left to his own face before coming over the top with a haymaker that caught the right side of Cowen's head.

It's enough to make you say ... what the heck was that?

"From the looks of it, when he switched up, I was looking to block myself so I didn't get hit in the face," Kaleta said Tuesday after the Sabres wrapped up practice on the second rink at HarborCenter. "Even though it looks like I did" punch myself in the face, "I don't really think I did."

So it wasn't some twisted motivational ploy, even though Kaleta said he'd be OK with that, too.

"Hey, if that's what it takes to win a fight, then that's what happens," he said with a laugh.

Kaleta's fighting major was the Sabres' 23rd of the season according to the website hockeyfights.com, most in the NHL. But it was the first time Kaleta has dropped the gloves this season after getting hit in the face with a slap shot in the preseason. That necessitated facial surgery, during which plates and screws were inserted to repair the damage, so fighting has been something Kaleta had avoided.

"Good to get my first one in," Kaleta said. "I felt like maybe at that time we could use a little bit of a spark. It is what it is. I don't know if technically I should be fighting or whatever, but I did it. It's over and done with.

"It was a little bit different right off the bat, especially. You get a couple in, you're back to normal. It's just like riding your bike."

That's some bike.

"He's a tough man," Sabres coach Ted Nolan said of Kaleta.

That was on display in the third period against the Senators, when Kaleta got tangled up with Cowen in the Ottawa zone and crashed hard into the end boards. He was down for several minutes before being helped off the ice.

"The way he went into the boards and the way he went down, we thought for sure he'd be out for a while," Nolan said. "Then all of a sudden, we come into the room a couple hours later, he's got a smirk on his face. He said, 'I'll be ready to go.' And certainly he was on the ice today, so that's a good sign for us."

Kaleta sported a nasty gash over his right eye – which impacted his vision and prevented him from returning against Ottawa – but otherwise was OK after the play.

The 28-year-old was initially scared that he had hurt his surgically repaired right knee after tearing the anterior cruciate ligament in it last season.

"I was scared a little bit," he said, "but got back and started feeling better. I practiced today, so it was good."

Kaleta should be in the lineup Wednesday (6 p.m., MSG, 550 AM) against the Tampa Bay Lightning in what has the potential to be another physical game. In the teams' last meeting Dec. 4 in Florida, there was a combined 106 penalty minutes in the third period alone.

Six players took misconducts – Kaleta, Nikita Zadorov and Cody McCormick for the Sabres and Victor Hedman, Brian Boyle and Brenden Morrow for the Lightning.

"You're battling to win," Kaleta said. "You battle every single shift, and whatever it takes to be a positive influence on your team to get the 'W,' that's what we have to do. I wouldn't expect anything less than a hard-fought, battling game."

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Defenseman Tyler Myers practiced in a red non-contact jersey, but won't be ready to play Wednesday against the Lightning, Nolan said. Myers has been out the last four games with a lower-body injury.

"We'll see how he responds tomorrow after skating today," the coach said.

Defensemen Josh Gorges and Mike Weber were given "maintenance days" Tuesday and will be in the lineup against Tampa Bay. However, defensemen Rasmus Ristolainen, who missed Monday's game in Ottawa with the flu, did not practice Tuesday and is expected to miss the game

"That bug gets you, it gets you pretty good," Nolan said.

Without Ristolainen, who averages more than 20 minutes of ice time per game, the Senators were able to cash in some easy chances directly in front of Sabres goalie Jhonas Enroth during a 5-2 victory.

"You miss that youthful enthusiasm," Nolan said of Ristolainen. "His hockey sense, his hockey ability ... for a young man, he plays some big minutes for us, so we certainly miss his presence out there."

Center Torrey Mitchell, who has been out since blocking a shot off his foot Dec. 16, is "still limping around pretty good, so he looks like he's going to be out another little while," Nolan said.

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Goaltender Matt Hackett cleared waivers Tuesday and was sent to Rochester. Hackett has been rehabbing with the Sabres after suffering a knee injury in April against Boston.

The 24-year-old played in eight games with the Sabres in 2013-14, going 1-6-1 with a 3.10 goals-against average and .908 save percentage.

Rochester biz launching parking app for Sabres

By Bennett J. Loudon

Rochester Democrat & Chronicle

December 30, 2014

A Rochester business will launch a new iPhone app Jan. 13 in Buffalo to make it easier to pay for parking at Buffalo Sabres hockey games.

The company, StadiumPark, will launch the app at the Allpro Parking lot, at 95 Washington St., across the street from the First Niagara Center where the Sabres will take on the Detroit Red Wings. The app also can be used for parking at future Sabres home games and other events at the facility.

StadiumPark was started in November 2013 by Jeremy Crane, a Brighton resident and the company's only full-time employee.

"We wanted to take a market, which we see to be a large market, and grab up as much as we possibly can," he said.

"Ultimately we're looking into large concert venues. Another thing we want to get into is state fairs or any situation where there's a large event where many cars are coming in and they're only collecting cash," he said.

The StadiumPark app is not yet available for Android devices, but Crane is working on adding that option.

The iPhone app can be downloaded from the Apple Store. Users sign up by providing their name, email and payment information. StadiumPark accepts Visa, MasterCard, and American Express credit cards or PayPal.

In the app, users can choose First Niagara Center from a menu listing venues, and then show a QR code to a parking attendant, who will scan their device with an iPad Mini to complete the transaction.

With the app, spectators won't have to carry cash to pay for parking and parking operators can process vehicles faster.

StadiumPark will charge users a fee from 99 cents to \$2.49 depending on the location. At the Allpro lot in Buffalo, the fee will be \$1.49.

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For details, visit StadiumParkapp.com online.

On Twitter, follow @stadiumparkapp.

Vasilevskiy could start for Lightning against Sabres

By Joe Yerdon

NHL.com

December 30, 2014

LIGHTNING (23-11-4) at SABRES (14-20-3)

TV: MSG-B, BELL TV, SUN

Season series: The Buffalo Sabres and Tampa Bay Lightning have split two games. Buffalo won 2-1 in a shootout at First Niagara Center on Dec. 2, and the Lightning shut out the Sabres 5-0 two nights later at Amalie Arena.

Sabres team scope: Buffalo coach Ted Nolan said Tuesday that goalie Jhonas Enroth will start; he made 31 saves in a 5-2 loss to the Ottawa Senators on Monday. The Sabres may get defenseman Tyson Strachan back after he has missed the past five games with a lower-body injury. Buffalo has won seven of its past eight games at home and came back from trailing 3-0 in the third period to defeat the New York Islanders 4-3 in a shootout on Dec. 27. Forward Chris Stewart has a point in five straight games (two goals, three assists).

Lightning team scope: Tampa Bay recalled rookie goalie Andrei Vasilevskiy from Syracuse of the American Hockey League on Tuesday and he could start in place of Ben Bishop. The Lightning have won three straight games, the latest 3-2 against the Toronto Maple Leafs on Monday. But Tampa Bay has lost four of its past five road games.

Sabres becoming dominant home team: 'I don't think a lot of teams like coming to Buffalo'

By Bill Hoppe
Olean Times Herald
December 30, 2014

BUFFALO – It felt like the glory days of the First Niagara Center again, 2006 and 2007 or even the late 1990s. Sabres fans sensed something special was happening, an improbable comeback was in the works.

The crowd grew louder and louder Saturday as the Sabres roared back from a 3-0 third-period deficit against the New York Islanders in just 5:12. When Chris Stewart's nifty goal tied it, the 19,070 fans erupted.

The building hadn't been so loud or raucous in years.

"It felt like a playoff game," winger Tyler Ennis said about the Sabres' exciting 4-3 shootout win. "We were saying a lot of us had chills. We're all pumped up. It really makes you want to get back to the playoffs and get that feeling and get that emotion back."

Believe it or not, the FNC has quickly become one of the NHL's toughest arenas for visitors. The rebuilding Sabres have won eight of their last 10 home games entering tonight's tilt against the Tampa Bay Lightning.

"I don't think a lot of teams like coming to Buffalo," Ennis said Tuesday following practice inside HarborCenter. "I think ... it's not fun to play against us at home, and the crowd is a big part of that."

The Sabres have been wildly entertaining racking up their victories. They have scored 29 goals in their eight wins, 3.6 a game. They have trailed or been tied in the third period in six of those triumphs.

"You get some people who aren't liking that we're winning, but I don't give a crap," Sabres winger Patrick Kaleta said. "We're in this to win. Everyone in the locker room is here to put up Ws on the board and make a push for the playoffs, and that's our goal."

The Sabres are never out of games, and the crowd knows it. Players are starting to feed off of the energy inside the arena.

Kaleta was so "pumped up" when Stewart scored Saturday, he raced down the ice from the bench.

"Honestly, when you ask me, I think Buffalo has the best fan base in the entire world," said Kaleta, a native of nearby Angola. "I wouldn't expect anything less."

The Sabres are 10-8-2 overall at home this season. They went 13-21-7 at home last year. The building has been packed most nights.

Clearly, the Sabres appreciate their fans' support. They usually just boo when they're upset.

Other teams have endured some ugly moments inside their buildings in recent years. Angry Edmonton fans have a penchant for throwing Oilers jerseys on the ice at Rexall Place. Frustrated Toronto fans have tossed Maple Leafs jerseys and waffles – yes, waffles – on the ice at the Air Canada Centre.

"It's such a great place to play," Ennis said about Buffalo. "We were talking how when things aren't going well in other cities, you see jerseys thrown on the ice, and it's never been like that here. It was such a loud game against the Islanders, and it really gave us a boost, and we're thankful for the loud cheers."

Nolan understands what a special place Buffalo can be. His last full season here, 1996-97, the Sabres won the Northeast Division before beating Ottawa in the opening round of the playoffs.

"I've always believed if you could give this town something to cheer about, they're going to cheer loud and proud," Nolan said. "The way we played (Saturday), especially in that comeback, that's all we're looking for here is just a solid effort and entertainment. They certainly got the effort and the entertainment."

How have the Sabres, who lost their first five home contests in October, improved so quickly?

"I think we've been playing a lot simpler," Ennis said. "I think we've been cleaning up our D-zone, and I think the crowd's helped us a lot. I think the crowd helped big time last game."

Nolan believes the crowd and the speedy maturation of some of the Sabres' prospects has ignited the team.

"I think maybe the fans have a big influence on that, the comfort of home," Nolan said. "We're getting a little bit more comfortable with one another. The young guys are really emerging. ... We got some good, young prospects really starting to come into their own. The team's feeling better about themselves, so I think that adds to the entertainment value."

Sabres' Patrick Kaleta on punching himself in head: 'I don't really think I did'

By Bill Hoppe

Olean Times Herald

December 30, 2014

BUFFALO – Sabres winger Patrick Kaleta said he had no clue he punched himself in the head Monday during his ferocious fight with Ottawa's Jared Cowen until someone informed him.

Kaleta's cool with his unusual move, though.

"Hey, if that's what it takes to win a fight, then that's what happens," he said Tuesday after the Sabres practiced in HarborCenter.

Naturally, friends have been sending Kaleta the video. What happened? How does a veteran who has fought regularly throughout his career send his own left fist into the side of his head?

"From the looks of it, when he switched up, I was looking to block myself so I didn't get hit in the face," Kaleta said. "So even though it looks like I did, I don't really think I did."

Kaleta left the Sabres' 5-2 loss to the Senators later when he tumbled hard into the boards. He had trouble getting up and couldn't put any pressure on his right leg as he was helped off the ice.

It appeared the 28-year-old, who tore his right ACL last season and essentially broke his face three months ago, had suffered another major injury.

But Kaleta skated Tuesday with a swollen right eye and a large cut. His leg is fine. He's ready to face the Tampa Bay Lightning tonight.

"He's a tough man," Sabres coach Ted Nolan said about Kaleta. "I mean, the way he went into the boards and the way he went down, we thought for sure he was going to be out for a while. Then all of sudden, we come into the room a couple hours later he's got a little smirk back on his face. He says, 'I'll be ready to go.'"

Kaleta hit his eye on the boards, and it "blew up" on him.

"That was the main reason the doctor wouldn't let me come back," he said.

Kaleta also had the wind knocked out of him and was scared about his knee because he suffered a "bit of a hip pointer" and his leg went numb.

His first fight this season went much better than his tumble.

"Good to get my first one in," Kaleta said. "I felt like maybe at that time we could use a little bit of a spark. It is what it is. I don't know if technically I should be fighting or whatever."

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Nolan said defenseman Tyler Myers, who had his first "real skate" Tuesday, will miss his fourth straight game tonight. Myers (lower body) practiced in a non-contact role.

Defenseman Rasmus Ristolainen (sick) is still sidelined. Center Torrey Mitchell, out the last six games after blocking a shot with his foot, is still limping and out "another little while," Nolan said.

Meanwhile, defenseman Josh Gorges and Mike Weber both had maintenance days Tuesday and will play tonight. Nolan said the Sabres could make a lineup change. Goalie Jhonas Enroth is expected to start again.

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The Sabres also assigned goalie Matt Hackett to Rochester after he cleared waivers Tuesday.

After injury scare, Kaleta back at practice

By Chris Ryndak

Sabres.com

December 30, 2014

Patrick Kaleta has had some bad breaks this season and it looked like he could've faced further setbacks after the game against the Ottawa Senators on Monday.

However, the 28-year-old right wing was back at practice for the Buffalo Sabres on Tuesday as a full participant.

Kaleta decided to drop the gloves with Senators defenseman Jared Cowen late in the first period and while he threw some big shots with his left hand, he took a couple of punches as well.

He was struck in the face by a slap shot in the preseason and hadn't dropped the gloves yet this season as he is still recovering from facial surgery. He needed to have plates and screws inserted to repair the damage and he has dealt with issues with his eye all season.

"It was good to get my first one in. I felt maybe at that time, we could've used a little bit of a spark," he said after practice at HARBORCENTER. "It is what it is. I don't know if technically I should be fighting or whatever, right or wrong, but I did it. It's over and done with and we'll go from there."

Then early in the third, he lost an edge while skating down the ice in the Ottawa zone and crashed violently with Cowen into the end boards. Kaleta was down for several minutes and needed assistance skating to the dressing room.

He missed the rest of the game but should be available for Wednesday night's home tilt against the Tampa Bay Lightning at 6 p.m..

"He's a tough man," Sabres coach Ted Nolan said. "The way he went into the boards and the way he went down, we thought for sure he'd be out for awhile. Then all of a sudden, we come into the room a couple hours later, he's got a smirk on his face. He said, 'I'll be ready to go.' And certainly he was on the ice today, so that's a good sign for us."

When he hit the boards, Kaleta said he hit his right eye and the impaired vision was a main reason why he wasn't allowed back in by the medical staff. He had some stitches above his right eye on Wednesday.

He said he also had the wind knocked out of him and when his hip collided with the boards, his right leg went a little numb and made him concerned about the knee he had surgery on last year. However, there was no concern there once the doctors checked it out and he feels ready to play against the Lightning.

TUESDAY'S PRACTICE

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44 Nicolas Deslauriers – 65 Brian Flynn – 21 Drew Stafford
19 Cody Hodgson – 25 Mikhail Grigorenko – 80 Chris Stewart
22 Johan Larsson – 8 Cody McCormick – 36 Patrick Kaleta

Defensemen: 3 Mark Pysyk, 24 Tyson Strachan, 41 Andrej Meszaros, 51 Nikita Zadorov, 57 Tyler Myers (injured reserve, non-contact participant), 61 Andre Benoit

1 Jhonas Enroth
34 Michal Neuvirth

Did Not Skate: 4 Josh Gorges (maintenance day), 6 Mike Weber (maintenance day), 12 Brian Gionta (injured, upper body), 17 Torrey Mitchell (injured reserve, lower body), 55 Rasmus Ristolainen (flu), 82 Marcus Foligno (injured reserve, hand)

Tyler Myers skated for a bit in a red non-contact jersey. He's missed the past four games with a lower-body injury. He won't be ready for Wednesday night's game, but Nolan said that depending on how he feels, it's possible he could be ready by the weekend. Rasmus Ristolainen did not skate as he recovers from the flu.

Tyson Strachan will be available to play. He traveled with the team to Ottawa, but wasn't quite ready to go Monday night. He hasn't played in five games.

With Mark Pysyk up from the American Hockey League, Buffalo currently has seven healthy defensemen on the roster. Josh Gorges and Mike Weber were given maintenance days but should be ready for Wednesday.

Center Torrey Mitchell has been out since Dec. 16 after blocking a shot off his foot. Nolan provided an update on his status Tuesday.

"I saw him today. He's still limping around pretty good so he looks like he's going to be out another little while," Nolan said.

Nolan said that they will likely make a few lineup changes for Wednesday. The goaltender will remain the same as Jhonas will start once again in net.

Goaltender Matt Hackett cleared waivers and has been assigned to the Rochester Americans of the American Hockey League. Hackett injured his knee back on April 12 and has been rehabbing ever since. He's been a participant in a number of practices, but remained on the injured reserve list.

One point of emphasis during practice was the team's play in the neutral zone.

"Our defensive zone's getting a lot better. Our attack's getting a lot better. Sometimes we play the elite teams like Detroit, they pick you apart and they show you your tendencies," Nolan said. "The one thing we learned playing against Boston and a couple of the good teams we've played lately, is they've started picking our neutral ice apart a little bit. We have to tighten that up a little bit."

World Junior Championship recap: Dec. 29

By Kris Baker

Sabres.com

December 30, 2014

Sam Reinhart (2014, first round) scored a pair of goals Tuesday including the game-winner as Canada remained perfect (3-0-0-0, 9 pts.) at the 2015 IIHF World Junior Championship with a 4-1 triumph over Finland (0-0-1-2, 1 pt.).

Reinhart's second consecutive two-point effort earned him Canada's Player of the Game honor.

Just as they have since being formed at Canada's first training camp practice, the high-skill line of Reinhart, Max Domi (ARI) and Anthony Duclair (NYR) stood out from the pack all game long with crisp passing and consistent offensive pressure. And just as he has since being returned to the junior ranks following a nine-game NHL stint, Reinhart's impact went beyond the offensive zone with keen defensive awareness and a smart stick on the penalty kill.

Reinhart connected for Canada's first goal of the night at 5:32 of the opening period while on a power play when he dished the puck back to the point and went straight to the net to cash the rebound of a Shea Theodore (ANA) shot.

Reinhart's second tally at 13:34 of the second period was the culmination of an excellent shift from start to finish that served as a snapshot of Reinhart's three-zone effectiveness.

The first key play saw the crafty centerman provide own-zone support and emerge from a corner scrum to send a long, accurate lead pass to Max Domi that wasn't converted. The second key play had a much different result, as Reinhart got on his horse in transition and shot down the center lane to deflect a Duclair pass up over the right shoulder of Juuse Saros (NSH) to give Canada the 2-0 lead.

One of six returnees from last year's World Junior squad, Reinhart has been everything the Canadian coaching staff has hoped for through three games. In addition to notching two goals and five points, the 19-year-old standout has logged a plus-six rating and seven shots on goal with a 58 percent success rate on face-offs.

The Finns proved a worthy opponent with their pressing style, but Canada capitalized twice in the third period with goals from Duclair and Curtis Lazar (OTT) to close out the victory.

Canada now sets their focus on a New Year's Eve match with the United States. First place in Group A is on the line, along with preferential seeding in Friday's cross-over quarter-final games.

Game time on Wednesday is 4 p.m. (NHL Network/TSN).

Sabres prospects **Hudson Fasching** and **J.T. Compher** (2013, second round) each produced two shots on goal as the United States (2-1-0-0, 8 pts.) continued preliminary round action with a 3-0 shutout of Slovakia (1-0-0-2, 3 pts).

Fasching's powerful north-south game continued to blend well with University of Michigan centerman Dylan Larkin (DET), as their line with Sonny Milano (CBJ) again served as USA's primary engine. While Larkin and Milano each scored for the second straight contest, Fasching did his part crashing the net and dominating board play with his bulky frame and puck protection skills.

With the U.S. swarming early in the third period, Fasching controlled a puck behind the net and made a nice centering feed for Milano before Larkin scooped up a rebound and scored from a sharp angle. Fasching was not

credited with an assist on the play, but his hard work beneath the goal line certainly contributed to the outcome as the Americans took a 2-0 lead.

Minutes later, Fasching filled a lane on a two-on-one rush and accepted a pass in stride from Will Butcher (COL), only to see Slovakian goaltender Denis Godla thwart him with the glove.

Fasching, a sophomore at the University of Minnesota, has recorded two points (1+1) thus far in the tournament while sharing the team lead with a plus-five rating.

With Fasching grinding away, Compher proved just as valuable in his role as USA's fourth centerman on a line with Anthony Louis (CHI) and John Hayden (CHI). Throughout the game, the trio provided a tenacious forechecking presence along with speed and self-sacrifice on the penalty kill. The versatile Compher has collected eight shots on goal while winning 16 of 32 faceoffs through three preliminary round tilts.

Hayden capped the scoring the game's final minute while Thatcher Demko (VAN) made 17 saves in the shutout.

The undefeated Americans will face what should be their toughest test to date Wednesday as they look to claim first place in Group A against rival Canada.

Victor Olofsson (2014, seventh round) saw limited minutes as Sweden (3-0-0-0, 9 pts.) stayed atop the Group B standings with 3-2 win over Russia (1-1-0-1, 5 pts.).

While his offensive moments were few, Olofsson made a notable defensive play with his stick with the game tied 1-1 late in the middle frame. After three games, the MOD0 product has two shots on goal and a plus-one rating.

Sweden closes the preliminary round Wednesday when they take on Switzerland (1-0-0-1, 3 pts).