



# **Buffalo Sabres**

## **Daily Press Clips**

*February 15, 2015*

## **Flyers-Sabres preview**

By Alan Ferguson

Associated Press

February 14, 2015

The Philadelphia Flyers are riding their longest point streak in three seasons, but their recent habit of blowing leads has kept them from making more progress in the playoff race.

The Flyers will try to aid that pursuit by avoiding a third straight loss Sunday night in Buffalo, the first of two matchups with the last-place Sabres in five days.

Philadelphia (23-22-10) has earned at least one point in eight consecutive games (5-0-3) for its longest streak since 2011-12 but has also taken losses in three of its last four contests. The Flyers squandered a two-goal lead in the third period Friday in a 4-3 overtime defeat in Columbus.

They also failed to capitalize on an early lead in Montreal in a 2-1 overtime loss Tuesday and blew a two-goal advantage in a 3-2 shootout loss to the New York Islanders on Feb. 5.

Those results have the Flyers sitting seven points behind Boston for the Eastern Conference's final postseason spot.

"On one hand, it's good getting points out of all the games but we lost a few points the last couple of games," defenseman Mark Streit said. "We played really well over stretches but at some points, we lost focus and had some bad periods. Overall, we're confident and (Sunday's game) is crucial."

The Flyers will try to aid their cause with a fifth consecutive win over the Sabres (16-36-3) and second this season after a 4-3 victory in Buffalo on Jan. 17.

In their next trip to Buffalo, the Flyers will try to secure their first nine-game point streak since March 8-26, 2011, and earn their third win in 12 road games.

The Sabres have just three victories in their last 24 overall contests and endured a franchise-worst 14-game losing streak that ended Feb. 3. They've dropped their past two games by one goal apiece.

Buffalo couldn't recover from a three-goal deficit in a 3-2 loss to the Islanders last Sunday and gave up the tiebreaking goal with 7:45 remaining in a 2-1 defeat to Ottawa on Tuesday.

On pace for their fewest goals in a full season, the Sabres have started to make deals before the March 2 trade deadline. They acquired beleaguered forward Evander Kane and defenseman Zach Bogosian from Winnipeg on Wednesday in a seven-player deal that most notably sent Tyler Myers and Drew Stafford to the Jets.

While Kane is out after undergoing season-ending shoulder surgery, Bogosian could make his debut for the Sabres on Sunday.

"He's got a great personality. He's excited about being here," coach Ted Nolan said. "People in Buffalo want to see some energy and some body collisions. He likes to play that style."

Buffalo also got goaltender Anders Lindback from Dallas on Wednesday for netminder Jhonas Enroth, but Michal Neuvirth is expected to serve as the team's main starter for the rest of the season.

If he starts Sunday, Neuvirth will have to be wary of Wayne Simmonds. He has five goals and four assists in his last seven games, and had two goals and an assist Friday.

Simmonds has no goals and four assists in his last eight matchups with Buffalo. Matt Read has three goals and three assists in the four-game win streak over Buffalo, and Vincent Lecavalier has three goals and two assists.

The Sabres will visit Philadelphia on Thursday night.

## **Sabres' goal statistics flirting with historic lows**

By Mike Harrington

The Buffalo News

February 13, 2015

The Buffalo Sabres set an NHL record last season for the fewest goals in the expansion era of hockey dating to 1967. So it was almost unimaginable they would be worse at putting the puck in the net this year.

Incredibly, they are.

Subtracting their six team-awarded shootout winners that are listed in the standings, the Sabres have scored just 97 goals in 55 games this season for an average of 1.76 goals per game. That's a historic, preposterously low figure.

If it holds for the rest of the season, the Sabres' current average would be the lowest in the NHL in nearly 80 years. Not since the 1935-36 Montreal Canadiens scored 82 goals in a 48-game season – an average of 1.71 – has a team scored so little for a full year.

In fact, if it lasts for the final 27 games of this season, Buffalo's current average would rank as the fourth-lowest of all time since the NHL legalized the forward pass in all three zones of the ice for the 1929-30 season.

Only the 1935-36 Habs and two defunct teams from 1930-31, the Philadelphia Quakers and New York Americans at 1.73, are worse.

"I wouldn't say it's shocking. I would say it's more frustrating personally to me," Sabres forward Chris Stewart said after a recent practice. "The fact we know we can put the puck in the net makes this all worse. It's not about the personnel here as much as it's about getting hungry in those areas and putting those pucks in the net.

"There are good goalies in this league. No one is going to hand you free goals. You have to go to those tough areas and when you have them beat, you've got to bear down and put them through the net. Especially when you're struggling."

The Sabres are on pace for 145 goals for the season over 82 games, which would be five fewer than last year. The only other expansion-era teams to even finish below 164 are the 1997-98 Tampa Bay Lightning (151) and the first-year Oakland Seals of 1967-68 (153).

The Sabres were off Friday and return to the ice Saturday in HarborCenter, where new defenseman Zach Bogosian will take part in his first practice with the team. The next game is here Sunday night against Philadelphia.

They'll dutifully work on their defensive zone breakouts, their forechecking, their moribund power play that's the worst in the league. To this point of the season, pretty much nothing has worked to generate any kind of offense.

### **Bad from start to finish**

The Sabres have been shut out nine times this year, one shy of the franchise mark of 10 that they equaled last season. They've scored one goal 17 times. They've scored two goals 13 times. Add it up and you've got two or fewer goals in an astonishing 39 of 55 games.

When Buffalo opened the season by scoring just 10 goals in the first 10 games, it was the worst start to a season by an NHL team since 1936.

The Sabres are consistently bad no matter what period of the game you're talking about, too. Buffalo has been outscored by 21 goals in the first period (47-26), by 30 in the second period (66-36) and by 41 in the third period (75-34). That's the biggest differential in each period in the league.

There are plenty of simple reasons to account for all the trouble scoring. The Sabres have a lineup bereft of elite talent, albeit several players have decent goal-scoring resumes in their past. Quite simply, the Sabres don't have the puck very much and don't shoot it enough when they do.

No NHL team had only 10 shots on goal in a game since 2008. The Sabres have done it twice this year, most recently in Sunday's 3-2 loss to the New York Islanders.

When you say scoring, you think of rushes up ice and capitalizing on neat passing plays or rebounds to score goals. In reality, goals start in the defensive zone when a team first possesses the puck.

The Sabres routinely struggle with their first passes from their defense and possessions quickly lose momentum. Their forwards often fumble their way out of the defensive zone and are overpowered in the neutral zone or turn the puck over. The coaching philosophy of "get it in deep" is hard for the Sabres to accomplish, as they rarely get the puck into the offensive end of the ice for any sustained pressure.

"This is absolutely about starting in your defensive zone," said captain Brian Gionta, a seven-time 20-goal scorer in the NHL who has just five this season. "When you're not coming out clean in your own end, you're not going to create chances through the neutral zone on the rush and you're not going to be in good position to forecheck. It's all related.

"It's not about the offensive zone. It's about long before that. We have to do a better job as a team coming up before that supporting each other. Once we get in the offensive zone, we're all right. Once we get some sustained pressure, we're all right. It's just getting there."

Sustained pressure in the offensive zone is hard to establish under normal circumstances on shifts that usually last in the neighborhood of 45 seconds for most players. But when you're chasing the puck most of the time, that leaves even less time for offense.

"We spend too much time in the 'D' zone and we all know that," said center Zemgus Girgensons. "You're tired out quickly and by the time you have to go to the attack, you're thinking more about a change and getting off the ice rather than trying to get the puck in there and do something with it."

### **Analytics just as bad**

When you take the analytics view of things, it's no surprise the Sabres rank as the NHL's worst team since the fancy-stats era began in 2007.

The Sabres are last in the NHL in shots on goal with 1,255 (only New Jersey is even under 1,400), and last in shots against with a whopping 1,914 (only Toronto and Colorado are even over 1,800). That's a 659-shot difference, or nearly 12 per game, that is far and away the worst in the league.

When it comes to shot attempts, things are even uglier. The Corsi rating, which adds all shots on goal as well as those blocked and missed, is not a perfect stat because of vagaries in arena statistical crews. But in extreme cases like the Sabres, it can provide some illumination at how bad they really are.

Buffalo has given up 1,517 more shot attempts than it has taken and has a Corsi-for rating of 37.22 percent, meaning its opponents have taken nearly 63 percent of all shots during games. That 37.22 figure really stands out when you consider no other team is below 44 percent and 19 teams are over 50, with Chicago leading at 54.85.

"The faster we move the puck out of our end, the faster we can attack and generate more shots," Girgensons said. "The breakouts have to be better."

The shooting does too. The Sabres don't get many shots and don't score on many. Their shooting percentage of 7.73 is 28th in the league, ahead of only Carolina and Arizona.

## **Slumps all over**

It's almost certain this year's edition of the Sabres will finish with the most offensive offense in the franchise's history. Until last year, the record was 190 goals by the 2002-03 team. Buffalo has smashed that two seasons running. Remember, this is a franchise with a lineage that includes the French Connection, Pat LaFontaine and Alexander Mogilny.

Nine times in their history, the Sabres have scored more than 300 goals in a season – or double what they are likely to finish with this year.

Girgensons, a 20-year-old, leads Buffalo with 14 goals to date. Tyler Ennis has 13. No one else is in double figures. The Sabres might go without a 20-goal scorer for the first time in their history.

"You have to move forward," Ennis said. "We've scored goals in games. It just comes down to being simple, getting that power play going, too."

Slumps are everywhere in the lineup and so are failures. Matt Moulson, making \$5 million in the first year of a five-year contract, has eight goals in 51 games and has scored just one in his last 21 outings. Cody Hodgson, in the second year of a six-year deal, has been stuck at two goals for 23 games after scoring 20 last year.

Brian Flynn hasn't scored in 24 games, Torrey Mitchell hasn't scored in 21 and Nic Deslauriers has 19 straight doughnuts. Patrick Kaleta is 0-for-the-season in 33 games. Gionta has one goal in 12 games.

The defense pretty much adds nothing offensively either. All Buffalo defenders this season have combined for 14 goals, with the departed Tyler Myers getting the last of his team-high four in Tuesday's 2-1 loss to Ottawa. Entering Friday, NHL defense scoring leader Oliver Ekman-Larsson of Arizona had 16 goals on his own and two other full-time blue liners (San Jose's Brent Burns and Dallas' Trevor Daley) had 14 apiece.

The Sabres have to figure their offense will improve next year with the addition of Evander Kane, the return of Sam Reinhart and the likely drafting of either Connor McDavid or Jack Eichel. It won't be hard to be better. Still, it was said last year and can be said again now: It's hard to imagine the Sabres could be any worse.

"There's just not many games where we score a lot of goals and you put a lot of pressure on yourself because of it," Girgensons said. "We've all been struggling with the offense and that's the way this season has gone so far. Hopefully we can change something in these next few games. We have to help each other to get over it."

## **'Stick tap' salute greets Bogosian at first practice**

By Amy Moritz

The Buffalo News

February 14, 2015

Zach Bogosian met a number of his new teammates Thursday night as the Buffalo Sabres hosted their musical "Sabres Unpucked" event.

Saturday was the first time he met them at the office.

Greeted by stick taps, the defenseman quickly got to work, taking a spot on the point during power play practice at HarborCenter and being paired with Andre Benoit, at least for now.

Bogosian, who was part of the Sabres' blockbuster trade day, will make his team debut Sunday when Buffalo hosts the Philadelphia Flyers in First Niagara Center (7:30 p.m., NBCSN, WGR 550 AM).

"It was good just to get on the ice," Bogosian said. "I hadn't skated or had a practice in three or four days because of travel. It felt good to get out there. I'm looking forward to getting things going tomorrow. It's been a whirlwind, but I'm happy things are going the way they are."

Sunday will be the Sabres' first game in five days and their first since Wednesday's trades, which sent away Jhonas Enroth, Tyler Myers and Drew Stafford and brought in Bogosian and goaltender Anders Lindback, along with Evander Kane, who is out for the season after having shoulder surgery.

With time to process the deal, both individually and collectively, the Sabres had a spirited hourlong practice at HarborCenter on Saturday.

"I think any time change is made – whether it be coaches, players, call-ups – there's always fresh energy, new energy," Sabres forward Tyler Ennis said. "We've got to take advantage of that."

"When there's a big trade like that, it's nice that we had a few days to rest and kinda just think about what happened and get geared up. ... For practice this week we did a good job of working on systems, tweaking a few things and that new energy should help."

Working on systems. Tweaking things here and there. Focusing on the hockey. It's the only sane thing the Sabres can do at this point.

"There's so many things to think about in this game and distractions and things happening," coach Ted Nolan said. "The players, and we as coaches, want to get on the ice and practice and play. It's good to get all the distractions out of the way and just get back to playing."

"I think this group, for the vast majority, we've got a good group of guys. They give us what they have every day. We try to keep their spirits up as best we can. When there's problems ... you get on the ice it all seems to go away. It's good therapy for the guys to get out there."

Sometimes, though, it's difficult to ride the emotional roller coaster.

Sure, Mike Weber sees some excitement with new faces and the forecast potential of the franchise. But the 27-year-old defenseman knows a thing or two about this time of year when big trades happen. That March 2 date – trade deadline day – looms large for players on last-place teams.

That's when the game within a game becomes partly a job of managing your anxiety.

"You have a little bit of anxiety. I'm not going to lie to you," Weber said. "We've got a couple weeks to the trade deadline and there's more moves to come as we've heard. As a professional there's that anxiety like, 'Oh, I could be gone tomorrow. Or I could be here.' The exciting part is what we could build here going forward. But again, you're a professional so you've got to come to work every day trying to get yourself better, trying to help other guys, and pull as many people in the right direction to right this ship as humanly possible.

"We work hard, and that's all you can ask for right now. Hopefully the young guys are learning enough to go forward and hopefully as a team we kinda go through this and learn from it and we start hating to lose. Because when you hate to lose and start learning how to win, that's how championship teams are built."

## **Trade for Kane a big one, but not the biggest**

By John Vogl

The Buffalo News

February 14, 2015

Aside from the actual hockey, this is one of the most fascinating eras in Sabres history.

In less than two years, Buffalo has traded three captains (Jason Pominville, Thomas Vanek, Steve Ott), four players who've been alternates (Robyn Regehr, Matt Moulson, Tyler Myers, Drew Stafford) and the goalie with the most wins in franchise history (Ryan Miller). Kids who've watched their Miller, Vanek and Pominville jerseys become obsolete probably think this rapid succession of huge moves is commonplace.

It's not.

The only comparable trade run came in 2000 and 2001. Buffalo built up its roster by acquiring Chris Gratton, Doug Gilmour, J.P. Dumont and Donald Audette, then tore the team apart by dealing Michael Peca and Dominik Hasek.

The recent moves can either numb you or make your head spin. Each seems more significant than the one before it. Last week's deal actually was bigger. The trade with Winnipeg involving Evander Kane and Myers will go down as one of the largest blockbusters in franchise history.

The trade featured top-end talent, multiple players, shock value, league-wide attention and a seismic shift for the organization. Based on those factors, here's my list of the six biggest trades in Sabres history.

6. Alexander Mogilny and a fifth-round pick to Vancouver for Michael Peca, Mike Wilson and a first-round pick. July 8, 1995.

The growing disconnect between Mogilny, the organization and fans made the deal seem inevitable, diminishing the shock value. But the Russian was a bonafide star, an electrifying performer who holds a Buffalo record that will never be broken: 76 goals in a single season.

"He's gone now," The News' Jim Kelley wrote. "The most talented right winger in the history of hockey in Buffalo slipped out of town in a dead-of-night deal constructed at a prairie hotel in the northernmost outpost in all of professional sports.

"Did you expect anything else?"

"The moves are considered good ones for a team looking to get bigger, faster and younger and reduce one of the highest payrolls in the National Hockey League last season, but they also signal the end of a an attempt to be an immediate Stanley Cup contender."

5. Dave Andreychuk, Daren Puppa and a first-round pick to Toronto for Grant Fuhr and a fifth-round pick. Feb. 2, 1993.

The Sabres could compete offensively with anyone, and Andreychuk was a prime reason for that. But Buffalo didn't want to leave a magical season in the untested hands of Puppa, Tom Draper or a young Dominik Hasek. Everyone felt better with the acquisition of Fuhr, who'd backstopped Edmonton to five Stanley Cups.

"At long last, the Sabres did not just stand there and ponder their navels in anticipation of the Stanley Cup playoffs," The News' Larry Felser wrote. "This time they acted. Not only acted, but did so aggressively.

"If they fail again to win a playoff series, as they have since 1983, this time at least they'll go down in flames."

4. Tyler Myers, Drew Stafford, Joel Armia, Brendan Lemieux and a first-round pick to Winnipeg for Evander Kane, Zach Bogosian and Jason Kasdorf. Feb. 11, 2015.

Rumors about Myers have been plentiful, but shipping out the former Rookie of the Year for the league's bad boy du jour had tongues wagging throughout the NHL.

3. Dominik Hasek to Detroit for Vyacheslav Kozlov, a first-round pick and a third-round pick. June 30, 2001.

Like the Mogilny deal, folks saw a Hasek trade coming. The shock returned when Darcy Regier revealed the circumstances surrounding the deal. The world's greatest goaltender held the Sabres at virtual gunpoint, threatening retirement to dictate where he went and for whom.

"There's no way that Darcy can say seriously that he's happy for what he got," said Hasek's agent, Ritch Winter. "He traded away one of the greatest players ever to play the game."

2. Pierre Turgeon, Uwe Krupp, Benoit Hogue and Dave McLlwain to the New York Islanders for Pat LaFontaine, Randy Wood, Randy Hillier and a fourth-round pick. Oct. 25, 1991.

LaFontaine was already well on his way to the Hockey Hall of Fame. Turgeon had been anointed as the next Mario Lemieux when he was drafted first overall just four years before the trade. From a talent standpoint, few trades in NHL history can compare.

"Buffalo gave up a lot, maybe more than it really should have, but besides getting LaFontaine's skills as a hockey player, the club gets his leadership and desire," Kelley wrote. "Turgeon is not the first player to be swallowed up in Buffalo's leadership abyss. It's something that consumed Phil Housley, Tom Barrasso and others, and it is the primary reason this trade was made.

"It is also the primary reason that, in this deal at least, the Sabres should come out on top."

1. Danny Gare, Jim Schoenfeld and Derek Smith to Detroit for Mike Foligno, Brent Peterson and Dale McCourt. Dec. 2, 1981.

The blockbuster didn't have the national impact or star power of the LaFontaine deal, but holy cow was Buffalo traumatized. Women wept at the loss of Schoenfeld, the redheaded heartthrob who was tougher than quantum physics. Men bemoaned the loss of Gare, who found equal joy in scoring goals and punching faces.

Shipping out two Buffalo captains essentially closed the door on the 1975 Stanley Cup finals team, with only Gilbert Perreault, Craig Ramsay and Bill Hajt left from the beloved squad.

"That trade, in my opinion, took the heart of our team right out," Larry Playfair said in the book, "100 Things Sabres Fans Should Know and Do Before They Die." "I remember the hole I felt, the emptiness, the 'Oh my God, what have they done? We'll never make the playoffs now.' "

## **On the fly**

- Kevin Cheveldayoff has been the general manager in Winnipeg since 2011, but Wednesday's deal with Buffalo was his inaugural player-for-player trade. If you wait that long, it had better be a blockbuster.
- Bogosian's contract, which runs through 2019, has a no-trade clause that kicks in this summer.
- Defenseman Kimmo Timonen, who has missed the whole season with blood clots, is expected to start skating with the Flyers on Tuesday. If he can play in enough games before the March 2 trade deadline, he'll be on the move. That would put one more name ahead of Andrej Meszaros on the blue-line list.
- Former Sabres forward Chris Thorburn became the Jets' franchise leader in penalty minutes, passing ex-Buffalo forward Eric Boulton. "We had a good text conversation," Thorburn said. "It's cool. I'm not going to lie, especially with the guy that I pass. Eric Boulton was a great teammate and good friend and still is."

## **Sabres notebook: Bogosian makes solid first impression**

By Amy Moritz  
The Buffalo News  
February 14, 2015

Tyler Ennis knows a few things about his new teammate, Zach Bogosian.

"We were in the same draft class," Ennis said. "I'm pretty sure he was like third overall or something. Not sure, but he was a high pick."

Yes, Tyler, Bogosian was the third overall pick in 2008, the year the Sabres picked Ennis 26th overall.

Bogosian was selected by the then-Atlanta Thrashers and the 24-year-old defenseman has spent his entire pro hockey career in the Thrashers/Winnipeg Jets organization. So this whole trade deal is a new experience for him.

"Emotionally you play with those guys for seven years," Bogosian said. "There's a big chunk of us that kinda grew up together. But you also realize that hockey is a business. It's a new opportunity for me, a new chapter in my career. I'm just going to roll with it."

Bogosian made a solid first impression on Sabres coach Ted Nolan.

"You kinda know what kind of player he is, but to find out what kind of person he is was a treat," Nolan said. "He seems like a fine gentleman. He's got a great personality to him. He's excited about being here. ... In Buffalo they want to see some energy, they want to see some collisions out there. He likes to play that style. He'll fit right in here."

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The Philadelphia Flyers come to Buffalo with some extra baggage for their frustration.

The Flyers have lost their last two games in overtime, blowing third-period leads in both. On Friday, they were up, 3-1, in Columbus only to lose to the Blue Jackets, 4-3 in OT. That came after they let slip a 1-0 third-period lead in Montreal for a 2-1 OT loss to the Canadiens.

"The last two games have been embarrassing the way we lose these games," Flyers center Sean Couturier told the Philadelphia media Friday night.

The top line of Claude Giroux, Brayden Schenn and Jake Voracek has just one even-strength goal since Jan. 19.

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Chris Stewart was not at Sabres practice Saturday and while he's certainly a name on the trading block, Nolan said the forward has the flu.

"He wasn't feeling too good so we kept him away from the team," Nolan said. "Hopefully he'll feel better in the morning."

There is a possibility that the Sabres will recall a forward from Rochester in case Stewart isn't well enough to play.

Also missing was Josh Gorges. It was a "maintenance day," but Nolan said the defenseman would be examined by doctors to see if there is something more serious. His potential injury has not been disclosed.

As for the goaltending duties, expect Michal Neuvirth to get the opportunity to make his case to be the organization's No. 1 netminder.

"I think we owe it to him," Nolan said. "He's paid his dues. ... We'll ride him for a while."

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Brian Gionta needs one point to become the 62nd active NHL player and 49th American player in NHL history to record 500 career points. The last player to reach that milestone with the Sabres was Miroslav Satan on Feb. 16, 2004. ... The Sabres have lost the last four meetings with the Flyers. The last time the Sabres lost five straight to Philadelphia was from Nov. 21, 2008 to Nov. 6, 2009. ... The teams meet again on Thursday in Philadelphia.

## **Sabres, with Bogosian, return to action against Flyers**

By Evan Sporer

NHL.com

February 14, 2015

**FLYERS (23-22-10) at SABRES (16-36-3)**

**TV: NBCSN**

**Season series:** Michael Del Zotto had two assists, including on Michael Raffl's game-winning goal, when the Philadelphia Flyers defeated the Buffalo Sabres 4-3 on Jan. 17. Philadelphia forward R.J. Umberger had a goal and a game-high five shots. The loss was Buffalo's 10th consecutive in regulation.

**Flyers team scope:** Defenseman Andrew McDonald, who was a late scratch Friday because of the death of his grandmother, is expected back in the lineup, general manager Ron Hextall told CSNPhiladelphia.com. Hextall said Raffl (upper body) and defenseman Braydon Coburn (foot) are possibilities to play. After taking a 3-1 lead early in the third period Friday at Nationwide Arena, the Flyers lost 4-3 in overtime to the Blue Jackets. The point extended Philadelphia's streak to eight games (5-0-3), its longest of the season.

**Sabres team scope:** This is Buffalo's first game since trading defenseman Tyler Myers and forward Drew Stafford to the Winnipeg Jets on Feb. 11. Defenseman Zach Bogosian, acquired in the trade along with injured forward Evander Kane, participated in his first Sabres practice Saturday. "It was good to be on the ice. I hadn't skated or had a practice in three or four days with the travel," Bogosian said. "It felt good to get out there. I'm looking forward to getting things going [Sunday]. It's been a whirlwind but I'm happy things are going the way they are." Forward Chris Stewart (flu) and defenseman Josh Gorges (undisclosed) were absent from practice; Gorges was being examined by doctors, coach Ted Nolan told the Buffalo News. Each is questionable. With Gorges out, Andre Benoit was paired with Bogosian.

## **New-look Sabres set to start latest stage of rebuild**

By Joe Yerdon

NHL.com

February 14, 2015

**BUFFALO** -- The Buffalo Sabres are about to start another chapter of their rebuild Sunday when they host the Philadelphia Flyers (7:30 p.m. ET; NBCSN).

On Wednesday, the Sabres traded defenseman Tyler Myers and forward Drew Stafford, along with two prospects and a first-round pick in the 2015 NHL Draft, to the Winnipeg Jets for defenseman Zach Bogosian and forward Evander Kane. The Sabres also traded goalie Jhonas Enroth to the Dallas Stars for goalie Anders Lindback and a conditional third-round pick in the 2015 draft.

"It's where we've been probably the past two or three years having a lot of new faces in there," Sabres defenseman Mike Weber said. "It's good to meet Zach. He's a nice addition, very welcomed here. He plays the game hard, plays the right way. Obviously the trade part of it, it's tough to see talented, skilled, good people go, but you bring in a guy like Zach and he fits in well with the direction we want this team to go in being harder to play against."

The Sabres (16-36-3) are last in the NHL with 35 points. They're last with 97 goals and last with 190 allowed. Now, with Bogosian and Lindback ready to begin their Sabres careers, Buffalo is ready to move on from an emotional day that changed the team in a big way.

"You kind of get used to it," Sabres forward Tyler Ennis said. "We know that it's a process. We're excited about Evander and Zach. We haven't met Evander yet, but Zach seems like a great guy. [He] looked good out there [Saturday], so we're excited. ... I think any time change is made, whether it be coaches, players, call-ups, there's always fresh energy, new energy. We're going to have to take advantage of that."

Bogosian was paired with Andre Benoit at practice. Josh Gorges sat out for what Sabres coach Ted Nolan called a maintenance day. It's likely Gorges and Bogosian will ultimately be paired.

"I'm excited," Bogosian said. "It's definitely a different feeling when you kind of go from a playoff push to a team that's out of it a bit, but we keep building for the future and that takes time. That doesn't happen overnight. I'm just happy to be here and be a part of it and hopefully turn this thing around."

Bogosian (6-foot-3, 215 pounds) isn't quite as big as 6-foot-8 Myers, but he's eager to move on from what's been an emotional time.

"It was good to be on the ice. I hadn't skated or had a practice in three or four days with the travel," Bogosian said. "It felt good to get out there. I'm looking forward to getting things going [Sunday]. It's been a whirlwind but I'm happy things are going the way they are."

Cody Hodgson took Stafford's place on a line with Brian Flynn and Marcus Foligno. With the NHL Trade Deadline on March 2, the current setup may be temporary.

"As a professional, you have a little bit of anxiety, I'm not going to lie to you," Weber said. "We've got, what, a couple of weeks until the trade deadline? There are more moves to come, as we've heard. As a professional there's that anxiety that I could be gone tomorrow or I could be here."

"The exciting part is what we could build here going forward. You're a professional and you've got to come to work every day trying to get yourself better and try to help the other guys and pull as many people in the right direction to right this ship as humanly possible."

In each of the past three seasons, the Sabres have traded players who to that point had spent their entire career in Buffalo.

Two seasons ago, the Sabres traded forward Jason Pominville to the Minnesota Wild. Last season, the Sabres sent forward Thomas Vanek to the New York Islanders and goalie Ryan Miller to the St. Louis Blues.

Weber (seven seasons) and forward Patrick Kaleta (nine) are now the longest-tenured Sabres.

"It's not easy," Weber said. "I guess I'm getting older (27) so I've matured to a point where you understand this and accept it as part of the game and part of the business every March, you know that this is coming. Especially when we've been in the position that we've been in the last two, three years, that's a huge part of it, that there's going to be changes made and there needs to be changes made.

"You just try to look forward to the future and try to see what happens. Obviously we are where we are. It [stinks], but you look at some the pieces we've brought in and a lot of the pieces that we've gotten rid of and moved on, you just hope and you work for it that things will get better."

## **Evander Kane must prove able**

By Steve Conroy

The Boston Herald

February 14, 2015

In many ways, Evander Kane would have been a perfect Bruin.

He's big enough at 6-foot-2, 200 pounds, he finishes his checks, he can shoot the puck at close to an elite level and he is competitive. Kane even knocked out Matt Cooke with one punch.

But his very un-Bruin-like approach to the team concept — at least that's the strong perception of the young man — would have made him a bad fit. And if he doesn't change his lone wolf ways, Kane may not be a good fit anywhere.

If he, however, buys into the group mentality — something that comes naturally to most hockey players — Kane could be something special.

Before the disgruntled Winnipeg Jets forward was shipped in a blockbuster deal to the Buffalo Sabres, the Bruins kicked the tires on Kane, 23. Just how seriously they considered bringing him is not quite clear, but when Kane opted for season-ending surgery, the B's surely fell by the wayside as a contender for an in-season trade partner with the Jets. But it's doubtful Bruins general manager Peter Chiarelli could or would match such a package for a player with that many red flags. It's one thing for management and coaches to lose patience with a player, it's quite another for teammates to turn on him, which is what reportedly happened in Winnipeg.

That is not Chiarelli's concern now, it's Buffalo GM Tim Murray's.

With a bushel of draft picks at his disposal, Murray is attempting to accelerate the rebuilding process in Buffalo, bringing in Kane and defenseman Zach Bogosian — a second-pair blue-liner at best — for former franchise cornerstone Tyler Myers, rental forward Drew Stafford, two prospects and the lowest of the three first-round picks Buffalo holds in the 2015 draft, considered to be a deep one.

Winnipeg GM Kevin Cheveldayoff is rightly getting some praise for the deal, not only helping his team for the playoff push, but also bolstering his position for the future with the prospects acquired — Joel Armia (a 2011 first-round pick), forward Brendan Lemieux (the 31st overall pick in last June's draft who is said to favor the irritating style of his father, Claude) and, perhaps the jewel of the trade, the first-round pick. That haul was received even after Kane's situation had all but painted Cheveldayoff into a corner. Not a bad day at the office for him.

But like Dallas GM Jim Nill with Tyler Seguin, Murray has coveted Kane for a long time and he believes in his talents, even though he admitted there were some "warts" with every player. He better hope his instincts are correct, because he's staked his reputation on being able to turn Kane's career around.

And Murray's got some more work to do to make that happen. You have to wonder if Ted Nolan will be the guy to coach the enigmatic Kane. Just last week, the Sabres coach extolled the virtues of the 25-year-old Myers, whose development has stagnated since he won the Calder Trophy in 2010.

"He's one of the bright spots on this team," Nolan told reporters before a game in Montreal. "When you go through a rebuilding and restocking of the organization, some of the pieces you keep and you surround them. Tyler Myers is one of those guys you build your team around. Very rarely do you see a 6-foot-8 guy who can skate like a 5-foot-8 guy. He's been tremendous for us all season long."

If Nolan doesn't stick around, which is the prevailing wisdom, Murray better find the right guy. The Buffalo News has reported that Murray is likely to go after former NHLer Luke Richardson, now the coach of the AHL's Binghamton Senators.

There's also the question of whether the Sabres' veteran leadership could help. While Brian Gionta and Josh Gorges are strong character guys, there's no winning culture in Buffalo for Kane to embrace.

On top of all the character issues and the heavy price, there's this little bit about the season-ending shoulder surgery to repair a torn labrum. Nothing to be concerned about there, right? Just ask the Columbus Blue Jackets.

But while there are serious questions about the deal from Buffalo's end — giving up all those future considerations for a team in a rebuilding mode is amazing — there is an optimistic note to ponder. Kane will most likely be riding the left wing for either Connor McDavid or Jack Eichel, both of whom are considered to be generational talents at the center position. If Kane can become Hull to Eichel's or McDavid's Oates, the deal will be worth it

If Kane fails in Buffalo, it will set the Sabres' already long rebuilding process back years. But if the strapping winger succeeds and reaches his potential, he'll be a headache for the Bruins in the Atlantic Division for years to come.

## **Jets addressed present, future in Evander Kane trade**

By Fluto Shinzawa

The Boston Globe

February 14, 2015

Three years in Boston gave the Bruins a good window to identify and acknowledge Phil Kessel's deficiencies. Kessel's warts, however, were not significant enough for the Bruins to boot him out the door. They traded Kessel to Toronto because he wanted out — for bigger bucks, an offensive system, and a coach who would grant him more freedom.

The Bruins did not receive immediate help in exchange for Kessel. They received futures, which turned out to be a haul (Tyler Seguin, Dougie Hamilton, and Jared Knight) because of Toronto's sputtering play in 2009-10 and 2010-11.

This was not the case for Winnipeg.

Like Kessel, Evander Kane wanted out. Unlike the Bruins, the Jets wanted him gone, too.

Buffalo received the best player in Tuesday's blockbuster. Kane is 23 years old. The left wing is a 6-foot-2-inch, 198-pound dynamo who plays with speed, skill, and sandpaper. He scores. He checks. He fights.

Assuming he recovers from shoulder surgery and is put with a good playmaker, Kane could become Buffalo's version of Milan Lucic: a game-changing, hard-to-play-against power forward.

"He plays hard," Sabres general manager Tim Murray said in a news conference following the trade. "He plays in traffic. He doesn't play a perimeter game. He plays a heavy game. He scores goals from around the net. He plays the game right. He finishes checks. He's a good fighter. I don't know how much I want him fighting. But that's his character on the ice."

Kane should become Buffalo's No. 1 left wing. Teams usually don't like trading such types away. But the Jets did awfully well for themselves by getting rid of Kane, who could not play in Winnipeg any longer because of a mismatch between player, teammates, and organization.

Like Peter Chiarelli did with Kessel, Jets GM Kevin Cheveldayoff got his futures: a 2015 first-round pick (the lowest of Buffalo's three selections) and prospects Joel Armia and Brendan Lemieux. Armia is a big, right-shot wing. Lemieux is a point-per-game player for Barrie, the OHL club that's fed Bryan Little, Mark Scheifele, Alexander Burmistrov, and Michael Hutchinson to the Jets.

But Cheveldayoff also acquired players who will help his team in the playoff chase. By expanding the deal to include Zach Bogosian, Cheveldayoff landed Tyler Myers and Drew Stafford.

Myers, a former Calder Trophy winner, was paired with Tobias Enstrom in Winnipeg's 3-1 loss to Nashville on Thursday. Stafford played with Scheifele and Mathieu Perreault on Winnipeg's second line.

The most significant trickledown effect of the trade was moving Dustin Byfuglien back to defense full time. Byfuglien had been Scheifele's right wing in the previous game against Minnesota. Byfuglien played a team-high 24:45, logging one assist and eight shot attempts.

Myers was the Sabres' No. 1 defenseman. That's the equivalent of being a new car in the creaky Red Line fleet. Myers was overtaxed, overmatched, and overwhelmed on the bottom-feeding Buffalo roster.

It's different in Winnipeg. Myers becomes one-third of a dynamite right-side lineup. Byfuglien is a physical freak who can change the game with his hammer of a shot, physical play, and slick skating. Jacob Trouba, 20, is a smart, mobile, and competitive defenseman.

Under coach Paul Maurice and assistant Charlie Huddy, Myers could become anything he wants. The 6-8, 219-pound behemoth could play a shutdown role. He has the skill and pedigree (48 points as a rookie in 2009-10) to be an offensive-minded pace pusher.

"When you talk about young players and draft picks, internally we talk about the foundation of the player and the ceiling of the player," Cheveldayoff said. "Tyler's got a tremendous foundation. He's big, he can skate, he can shoot. He'll have an opportunity to play with a deeper defense corps. He can log a lot of minutes. He's scored on the power play. Sometimes in this game, fresh starts are really welcome for players that have lots of expectations heaped on them and lots of hype as young players. It is a hard game to play in this league as a young player. It's even harder as a young defenseman."

This is a risky deal for the Sabres. Kane had a torn labrum in his left shoulder. Given his roughneck style of play, more significant injuries could be in his future.

The greater concern, however, is with Kane's character. He chose season-ending surgery with his team in a playoff race. He's butted heads with coaches and teammates. Buffalo is at least two years away from contention. Kane, who has never appeared in a playoff game, may not enjoy grinding during the Sabres' rebuild.

Brian Gionta and Josh Gorges are veterans. They'll be good influences on Kane. But he'll need a good coach to steer him straight, too. Ted Nolan may not be that man.

Kane isn't the first good player to push for a departure. Ryan Kesler didn't want to stay in Vancouver. Martin St. Louis burned his bridges in Tampa Bay. Jason Spezza was not interested in returning to Ottawa.

They put their GMs in tough spots. Steve Yzerman came through by landing Ryan Callahan plus picks for St. Louis. Cheveldayoff may have outdone Yzerman.

## **NHL Insider: Jets-Sabres blockbuster works out for both teams**

By Michael Russo  
Minneapolis Star Tribune  
February 14, 2015

You have to hand it to Winnipeg Jets General Manager Kevin Cheveldayoff and Buffalo Sabres counterpart Tim Murray.

In last week's blockbuster that sent Evander Kane and Zach Bogosian to western New York and Tyler Myers, Drew Stafford, two prospects and a low first-round pick to the great white north, both GMs accomplished what they wanted.

The Sabres don't want to win now. In 30th place, they're more than willing to keep taking their lickings and have it pay dividends in June when they'll draft a potential franchise-turner in Connor McDavid or Jack Eichel.

Kane, 23, won't play until next season because of shoulder surgery, so Murray gets a potential star who can't help his team win this year but should accelerate Buffalo's rebuilding process.

The Jets do want to win now but also continue to stockpile young talent. Winnipeg has a boatload of top prospects and smartly is going the draft-and-develop route, in large part because the Jets know how hard it will be to attract upper-echelon free agents.

So not only was Cheveldayoff able to pick up a couple of talents in Joel Armia and Brendan Lemieux, he was able to snag two pieces that at least theoretically could help them make the playoffs for the first time since relocating from Atlanta.

This was not an easy trade for the GM known as "Chevy" to make.

The Jets had to trade Kane. His dirty, soaking wet laundry was aired publicly recently when he showed up late to a pregame meeting in a track suit and had it reportedly thrown into the shower by teammate Dustin Byfuglien.

Kane's pride was hurt, he was scratched that game and had the proverbial bus driven over him by teammates. He opted to stop playing hurt for those teammates by going under the knife. So despite the fact Chevy had to trade a perceived problem child who had no chance of playing this season, he got quite the return.

The Wild is climbing fast and has the Jets nervous. The Myers and Stafford pickups seemed to throw shivers down the spine of many Wild fans, although I'm not the biggest fan of either. Maybe Myers needs good coaching, but every time I watch the giant defenseman, he's erratic. And Stafford, maybe because of years of losing causing declining production, doesn't do much for me.

If Wild GM Chuck Fletcher is spurred to do something, it won't be Winnipeg's moves triggering him as much as the Wild's depth at forward being hampered by long-term injuries to Jason Zucker, Matt Cooke and Ryan Carter.

The Wild's lines are in flux. Bottom-six guys and even minor leaguers such as Jordan Schroeder have assumed bigger roles, and all eyes are inspecting whether they'll be able to step up. Schroeder and Justin Fontaine certainly did Saturday night against Carolina.

There's little doubt Fletcher will have to do something (or somethings) by the March 2 deadline.

It's believed he has inquired with Arizona about Antoine Vermette and with Toronto about Mike Santorelli. However, both teams may want to wait until closer to the deadline to up the leaguwide price, and Fletcher may not be in a position to wait that long.

Also, after Fletcher traded last year's second-round pick and next year's second for Matt Moulson last March, he's hesitant to trade this year's second. So Fletcher may have to look at moving midrange or long-off prospects or lower draft picks for scoring help.

The Wild also still needs a left-shot defenseman. Could Philadelphia's Nick Schultz, the all-time leader in games played for the Wild in the midst of a bounce-back season, fit that bill (although the Flyers are trying to re-sign him)? Maybe Carolina's Andrej Sekera.

When Zucker was sidelined, Fletcher gave his oft-repeated stock answer that if something makes sense, he'll pounce.

But Wild players, by virtue of this impressive turnaround to put the team right in the playoff hunt, also deserve some help. And as Fletcher has proved the past few deadlines by acquiring Jason Pominville and Moulson, he's usually willing to do it even if the price is hefty.

## **Sabres goalie Anders Lindback excited for fresh opportunity in Buffalo**

By Bill Hoppe

Olean Times Herald

February 13, 2015

BUFFALO – For the time being, goalie Anders Lindback will likely take a backseat to Michal Neuvirth. With Jhonas Enroth gone, the Sabres plan to evaluate Neuvirth to see if he's worth re-signing.

But an opportunity could materialize for the 26-year-old Lindback, part of Wednesday's Enroth trade with the Dallas Stars, if Neuvirth plays well and gets dished or he falters. The Sabres need goalies badly.

Sabres general manager Tim Murray loves big goalies, and the 6-foot-6, 215-pound Lindback is one of the NHL's tallest. That hasn't translated to much success, however. The Sabres are the Swede's third team since last season and the fourth in his five-year career.

"I know I can play on this level," Lindback said Thursday inside HarborCenter following his first practice. "For me, I need games. I need to play and get in there. It's tough ... in the situation I was in in Dallas. I'm excited to be here."

Lindback, a free agent following the season, could be running out of chances.

He struggled mightily all season in Dallas, posting some terrible numbers – 2-8-1 with a 3.71 goals-against average and a .875 save percentage – in front of one of the NHL's worst defenses.

The Stars waived him earlier this season, allowing them to send him to their affiliate in Austin. He played seven AHL games, shuttling back and forth.

Lindback often went weeks between NHL starts. He last played Saturday, coincidentally, in Buffalo, making 21 saves in the Stars' 3-2 loss.

"Honestly, last couple of games I played in Dallas I feel like I played pretty good," Lindback said. "I just haven't gotten the numbers with me, and also I have only (seven) starts in the NHL this year. It's really not in any way where you can compare that and say that it's all over 40 games it's going to be those numbers.

"You're going to have bad games. In the long run, it evens out if you play well. For me, I feel like I've been playing all right. Just get out there and relax. I know I can do it, and I think I proved myself before."

Overall, Lindback is 36-43-5 with a 2.85 goals-against average, a .901 save percentage and three shutouts in 95 NHL appearances.

"It's been up and down," Lindback said about his career. "Obviously, that's how some career go. I feel real confident. I think every year I've got better. I feel like I'm a way better goalie now than I used to be. In my mind, that's the most important thing, just focus on what I can do and how I can get better, can help this team to win more games."

Lindback, like a lot of European goalies, was a low draft pick, a seventh-round selection, 207<sup>th</sup> overall, by the Nashville Predators in 2008.

Under the tutelage of noted goalie coach Mitch Korn, who worked with the Sabres in the 1990s, Lindback developed into a strong prospect in Nashville.

He debuted in 2010-11, playing 22 games behind 6-foot-5 Predators star Pekka Rinne, one of the NHL's best. Naturally, because of his size and organization, Lindback drew a lot of comparisons to Rinne.

"I think he was most successful when he was with Nashville because not only was he able to mimic and shadow Pekka Rinne a little bit, but he had Mitch Korn there," said Justin Goldman, a goalie analyst and consultant who runs [thegoalieguild.com](http://thegoalieguild.com).

Goldman said Lindback's a reaction-based goalie who relies on his instincts and reflexes to make aggressive saves in which he extends his lanky frame. Korn, Goldman said, recognizes natural talents and works around them.

When Nashville dealt Lindback to the Tampa Bay Lightning in 2012, he began working with goalie coach Frantz Jean, who teaches an economical, blocking mindset, Goldman said. Instead of simply reacting, Lindback was taught to fill and manage space.

"It went against the grain of his natural instincts, which is to be more of a reactionary-based goalie," Goldman said. "So I think his wires got crossed a little bit in Tampa Bay."

Lindback lasted two seasons and 47 games in Tampa Bay before signing with Dallas on July 1. Given the Stars' awful defense, Dallas wasn't a good place for him to fix his game. Of course, the Sabres' defense is even worse.

But tall goalies often take longer to develop.

"If you grow up playing one way your whole life, and then all of a sudden, in order to be successful you have to change that, it takes a time," Goldman said.

Goldman has spent time on the ice with Lindback at a goalie camp and believes he could still become a strong NHL netminder.

"But it may just take a few more years," he said. "I don't if there's teams out there that are patient enough. I don't know if he'll get the right coaching to make that happen, but you never know."

## **Zach Bogosian happy to join Sabres: 'I heard Buffalo, it was a good feeling'**

By Bill Hoppe

Olean Times Herald

February 14, 2015

BUFFALO – The mood on the ice inside HarborCenter belied the Sabres' sorry state. Players laughed and had fun throughout Saturday's up-tempo practice, the end of another trying week for the rebuilding club.

For some, the session, the first with new Sabres defenseman Zach Bogosian, was therapeutic.

"We got a good group of guys," Sabres coach Ted Nolan said. "They give us what they have every day. They're trying to keep their spirits up as best we can. There's problems outside the area, but when you get on that ice, it seems to all go away. It's good therapy for the guys to get out there."

This is an unsettling time for the Sabres, who host the Philadelphia Flyers tonight at the First Niagara Center. Wednesday's trades – Jhonas Enroth, Tyler Myers and Drew Stafford suddenly left town – rocked the team.

With the deadline just 15 days away, more deals will be coming soon. Mike Weber believes the uncertainty creates anxiety, something the Sabres defenseman has learned to deal with over the years.

"I'm getting older," the 27-year-old said. "I've matured to the point where I understand this and accept this as part of the game, part of the business. Every March ... you know this is coming, and especially when we've been in the position we've been in in the last two, three years. That's a huge part of it."

Bogosian was a huge part of the deal that sent Myers and Stafford to Winnipeg. The 24-year-old left a solid Jets team on the brink of the franchise's first playoff berth in eight years to join the NHL's worst club.

"It's definitely a different feeling when you go from a playoff push to kind of be out of it a little bit," he said. "But we just got to keep building for the future. That takes time."

Still, Bogosian, a native of Massena, a town of almost 13,000 about 300 miles from Buffalo, said he's "excited" for the new opportunity. His godfather is from Buffalo and he attended his first NHL game here 10 or 15 years ago.

"A lot of emotions went through you," he said about hearing of the trade. "Once I heard Buffalo, it was a good feeling that I was going to kind of come close to home and play in front of my family and friends."

Evander Kane, the high-scoring winger the Sabres acquired with Bogosian, garnered most of the attention last week. But the 6-foot-3, 225-pound Bogosian is a versatile defenseman, showcasing a physical edge to go with his strong skating.

"I like to play both sides of the puck," said Bogosian, who plays about 22 minutes a night.

Nolan knows Bogosian's style will identify with Buffalo fans.

"Here in Buffalo, people want to see some energy," said Nolan, who paired Bogosian with Andre Benoit. "They want to see some body collisions out there. He likes to play that style, so he should fit in perfectly."

Nolan often watched Bogosian, the third pick in 2008, play in junior and knew all about his talents.

"To find out what kind of person he is is a treat," he said. "He seems like a real fine gentleman. He's got a great personality to him. He's excited about being here."

Kane, meanwhile, is out for the season after undergoing shoulder surgery earlier this month.

"Fans got to wait a little bit to see him, but they'll be satisfied," Bogosian said.

Character issues have dogged Kane over the years. The 23-year-old reportedly didn't show up for a game Feb. 5 after teammates threw his track suit in the shower. He allegedly violated the Jets' dress code.

Bogosian wouldn't comment on Kane's situation.

"Out of respect to the guys in that (Jets) room, I'm just going to say I'm going to keep it in the room," he said.

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The flu sidelined Sabres winger Chris Stewart, who will almost certainly be dealt prior to the deadline, Saturday. Naturally, Stewart's absence raised some eyebrows.

Stewart's status is unclear for tonight's game. Nolan said a flu bug is going around.

In other lineup news, Sabres defenseman Josh Gorges, who's dealing with an undisclosed injury that won't go away, missed the session and will be evaluated to "see if it's more than maintenance," Nolan said.

The Sabres practiced a forward short and could recall another player, Nolan said.

Struggling Sabres winger Cody Hodgson, a healthy scratch the last two games, skated on the third line and will likely return tonight.

Hodgson said he hasn't spoken to Nolan in more than a week.

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An odd schedule – the Sabres practiced only twice last week – kept Bogosian from skating with his new team until Saturday.

"I guess when there's a big trade like that it was nice we got a few days to kind of rest and kind of just think of what happened," Sabres winger Tyler Ennis said.

## Evander Kane's 'advanced' stats in 6 charts

By Matthew Collier

WGR 550

February 13, 2015

The Buffalo Sabres made a big splash by acquiring Evander Kane on Tuesday. They became the talk of the hockey world for several days as analysts broke down each element of the deal: Did the Sabres give up too much? How will Kane fit in with their locker room? Does this assure the Sabres of 30th place? Who will he play with next season? And so on...

One thing that has been brought up numerous times is that Kane *\*only\** has one 30-goal season. As a side note, how many players per year score 30? (Instant Trivia Music). Last four (full) seasons:

2009-10: 24

2010-11: 29

2011-12: 30

2013-14: 21

So, of the 894 players who stepped onto the ice in 2011-12, Evander Kane scored in the top 3%. And, somehow, this is used AGAINST him.  $\sim \setminus (\smile) \_ / \sim$

That isn't how you analyze scoring, anyway. There are tons of factors that play into whether an NHLer ends up with 30 goals. Who he plays with, how much offensive time he's given, how often he's on the power play and with whom.

Let's start there with a more reasonable look at his numbers.

### 1) Usage

For starters, Kane has not been on many good teams. Up until this season, the linemate in which he played the most minutes with over his career was Olli Jokinen. The ever-solid Blake Wheeler is tops on the list, so it isn't as if he's been playing with slugs.

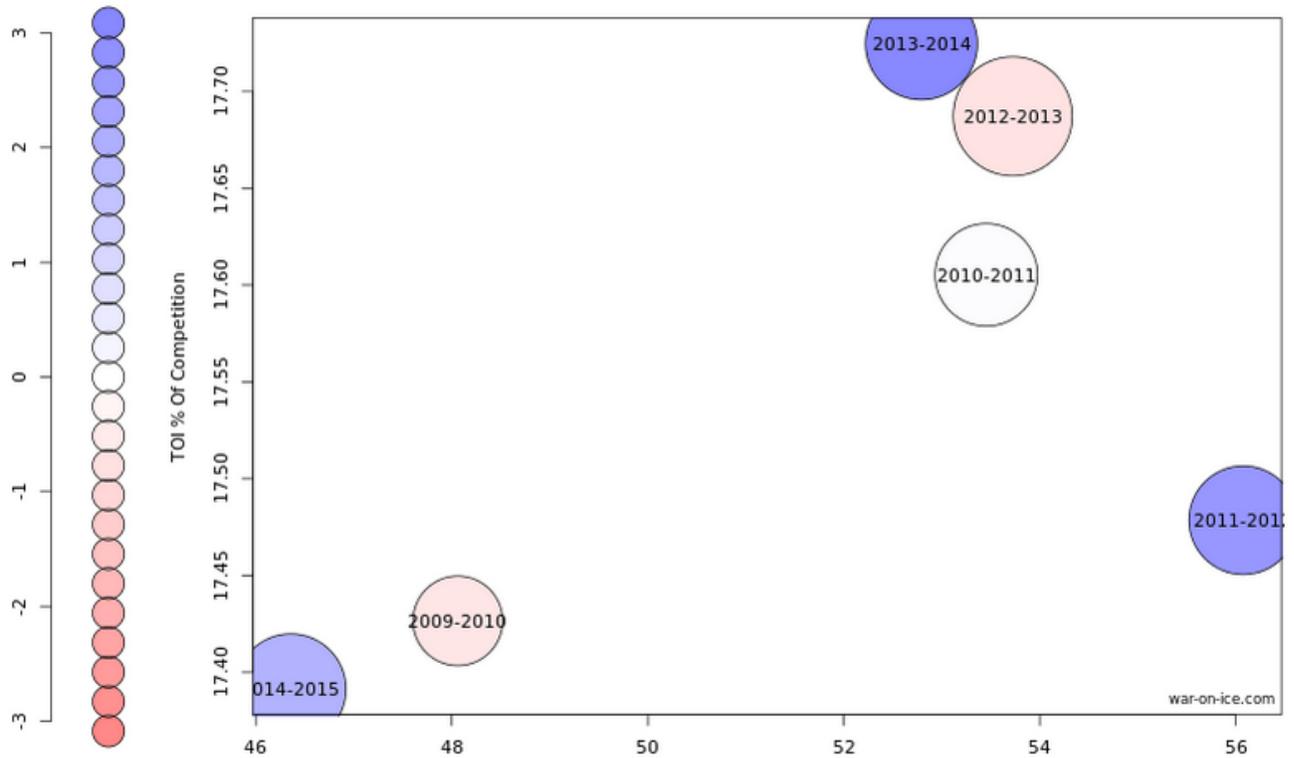
Our chart below represents his Offensive Zone Start %, Quality of Competition and Relative Fenwick (puck possession).

One thing to note is that the QOC isn't that big of a difference in actual number, but appears bigger on the chart in order to spread things out. Kane has been facing the opponents' top six forwards since Day One.

What stands out the most is that his role completely changed this season, yet the 23-year-old continued to be on the positive side of puck possession (darker blue is positive, red negative).

itive Corsi For Percent

Evander Kane TOI % Of Competition vs. Fraction of Offensive vs Defensive Zone Starts

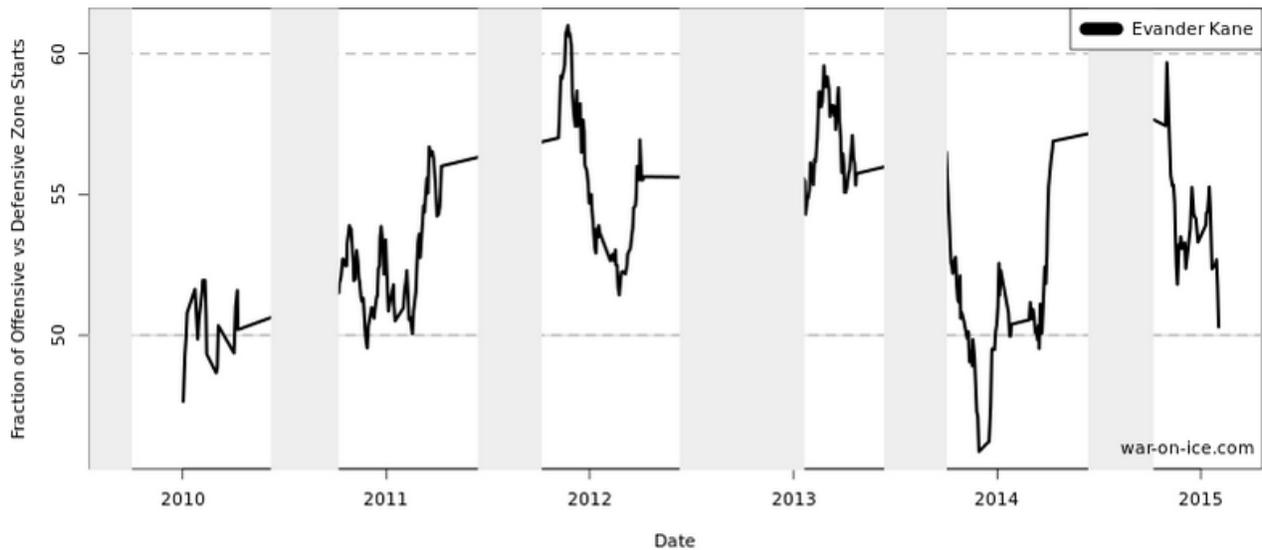
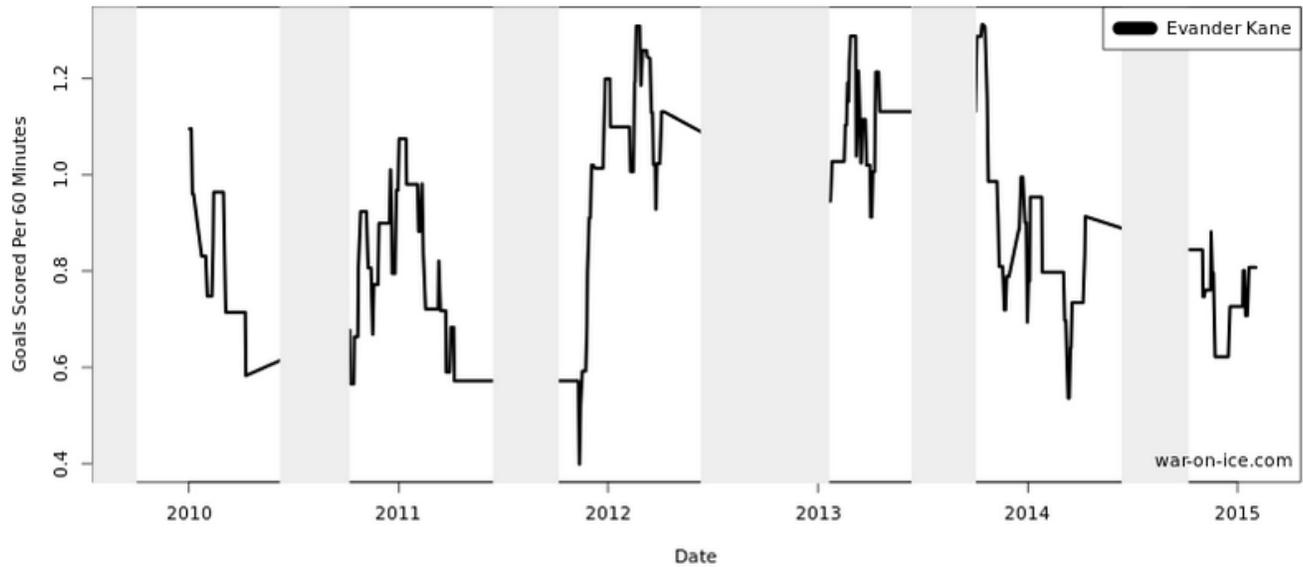


### 2,3) Scoring vs. Usage

Above, we could see that Kane has the capability to face top lines and come out on top of puck possession, but what about his scoring. After all, that's what got him here.

It is easy to see that when Kane is given more chances in the offensive zone, he scores more. There are a handful of players like Sidney Crosby and Patrice Bergeron who can score no matter how they are used, but they are the rare bears.

How this relates to Buffalo is simple: As a Sabre, you can bet your dollar bill that Kane will not see a giant dip in offensive zone starts like he did in 2014 and into 2015. He will be playing a top offensive role.



#### 4) Individual scoring chances per game, NHL since 2011

War-on-ice.com recently came up with "scoring chance" data. It's a little more complex, but to simplify, the definition is just shots close to the net. Scoring chances can be pretty darn arbitrary, but in this case you could just call them "close shots" and you'd be right enough.

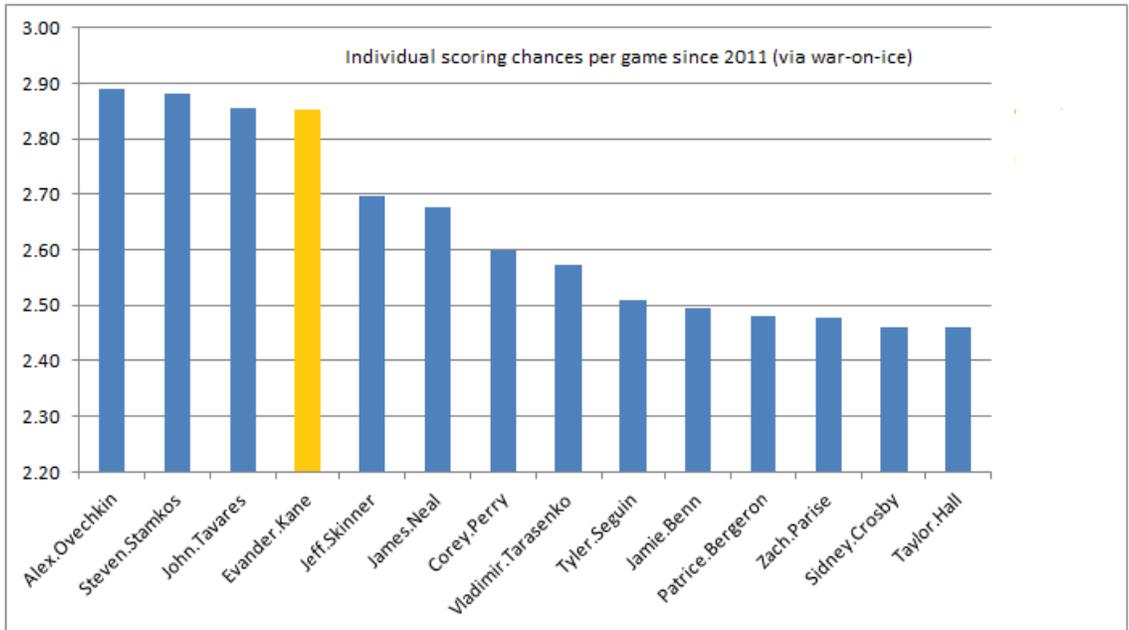
It has been noted that Kane shoots with frequency, putting as many as 287 shots on goal in a season. Compare that to the Sabres' current club, Tyler Ennis has 124 this season and may not crack 200.

But is he a garbage shooter? Drew Stafford took a lot of shots, but many of them came from the top of the circles. Nathan Gerbe was the same way.

Not Kane. Here is the top players in the entire NHL since 2011 in "close shots"

The only question is: Why isn't his shooting percentage higher than 9.0%? That is difficult to determine without tons of video study, but we can say this: He scores by being a "volume shooter." Alex Ovechkin only has a 12.3%

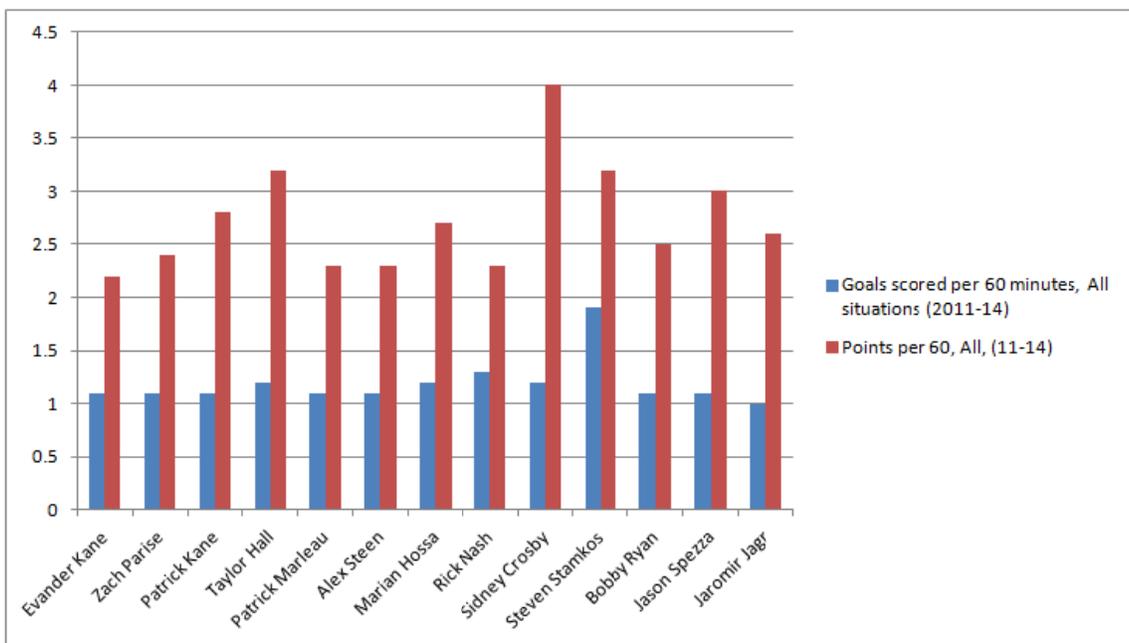
shooting percentage, yet he leads the league in shots every year. Kane might be a slightly less good-at-finishing version.



**5) Goals and assists per 60, all situations between 2011-14**

When we look at numbers, we try to get a profile of a player. Who does he compare with? How has he fit into his team?

Chart No. 5 shows the difference between Kane and some of the NHL's elite in terms of playmaking. While the newest Sabre is racking up a similar amount of goals per 60 minutes as the other All-Stars, they are adding to point totals with large sums of assists. He isn't far behind players like Rick Nash, Alex Steen and Patrick Marleau, but it is clear he is far from being in the same conversation of offensive value as Crosby, Ovechkin, Stamkos, Hall and Kane.

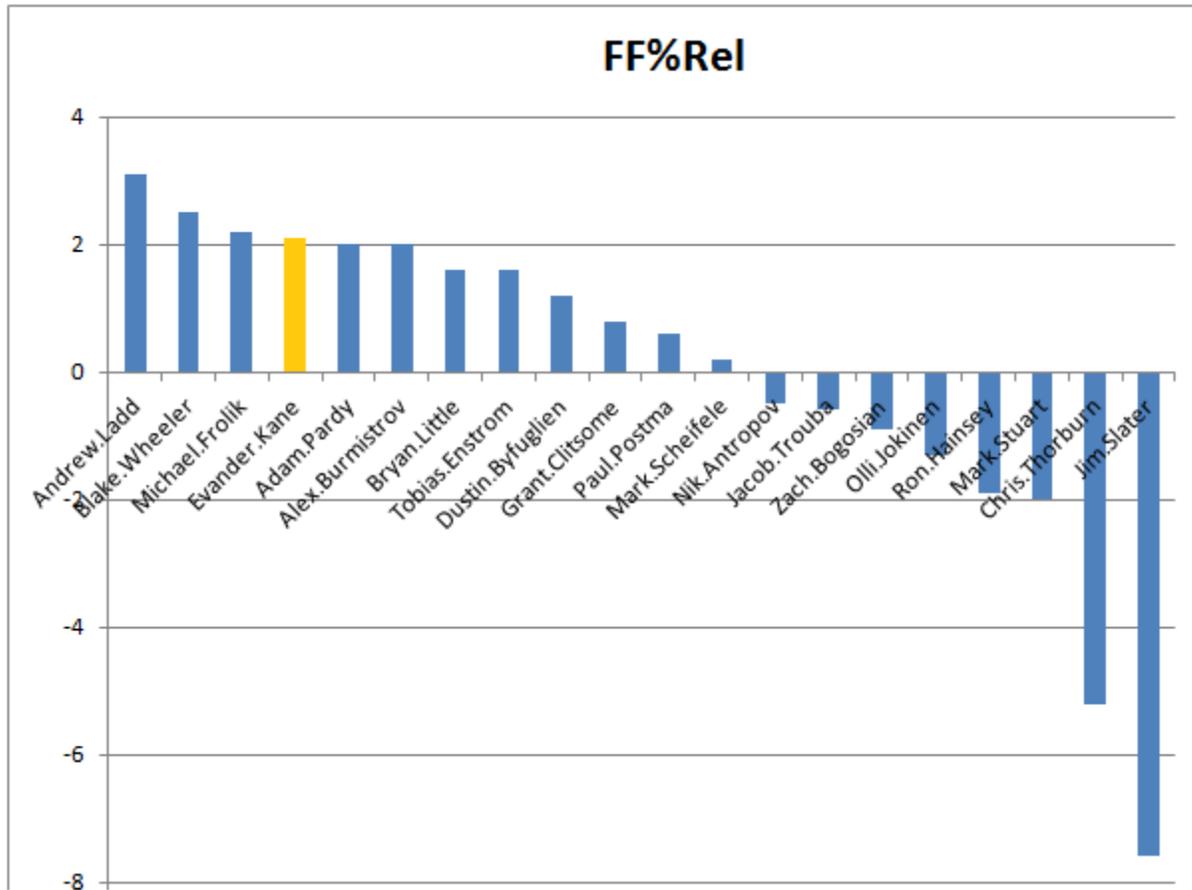


## 6) Fenwick Percentage (shot attempt differential or puck possession) since 2011 vs. Teammates

Relative to teammates simply means how much better was the team when he was on the ice vs. off the ice. Since 2011, the Jets have been better with him out there. Again, it is clear that Kane has not been one of the elite players in the NHL but has been very good.

The thing that sticks out: Look at those names. Jack Eichel or Connor McDavid, if they turn out, will be quite a bit better than the (albiet underrated) Andrew Ladd.

That is the X factor in the Kane deal. All the numbers say he's good. How good can he be? That may depend on the guy picked first by the Sabres and/or how Murray builds the rest of the team.



## **Bogosian finally gets on the ice with the Sabres**

By Paul Hamilton

WGR 550

February 14, 2015

Buffalo, NY (WGR 550) -- Zach Bogosian participated in the "Unpucked" event on Thursday, but Saturday was the first time he got to work with his new teammates on the ice. Bogosian said, "I guess that was a good way to break the ice. That was a good event and I'm still trying to make my way around to get to know everyone, but that will take some time."

Bogosian's godfather lives in Buffalo, so he wasn't torn up that his destination was Western New York, "I got pulled into the office and they told me, so it's the first time for me and there were a lot of emotions that run through you, but once I heard Buffalo, it was a good feeling because I can come close to home and play in front of my family and friends."

On the other side of that coin, Bogosian has to leave the only organization he knows. He said, "Emotionally you play with those guys for seven years. There's a big chunk of us that grew up together, but you also realize that hockey is a business, it's a new opportunity for me, a new chapter in my career and I'm just going to roll with it."

Bogosian hasn't totally kept up on the Sabres but he knows that he and Evander Kane are being added to a very young mix of talent. He said, "I'm excited, it's definitely a different feeling when you go from a playoff push to kind of being out of it, but we've got to keep building for the future and that takes time, it doesn't happen overnight, so I'm just happy to be here and be a part of it."

With the trade it had been awhile since the defenseman had been on the ice. He said, "It was good just to get on the ice, I hadn't had a practice in three or four days, so it felt good to get out there and looking forward to getting things going."

Bogosian has firsthand knowledge of what went down in Winnipeg with Kane. He said he doesn't want to get into it, "Out of respect to the guys in that room I'm going to keep it in the room. All I know is that me and Evander are very excited to be here and be Buffalo Sabres."

The Flyers are in town for a game Sunday night. Join Pat Malacaro for the pregame beginning at 6:30.

## **Sabres Stewart misses practice**

By Paul Hamilton

WGR 550

February 14, 2015

Buffalo, NY (WGR 550) -- Chris Stewart and Josh Gorges were not at practice Saturday at HarborCenter. Stewart will likely be dealt before the trade deadline so I asked Ted Nolan if he was asked to keep Stewart off the ice, "No there's a little bit of a flu bug going around, so he wasn't feeling too good so we kept him away from the team. Hopefully he'll feel better tomorrow morning.

Gorges missed practice Thursday for a "maintenance day." Nolan said he must go for an evaluation, "We kept him off for a maintenance day, he wasn't feeling too good, so we'll probably have him see the doctor for another looksee and we'll keep our fingers crossed." This could wind up being a lot more serious than Nolan let on two days ago.

Zach Bogosian had his first practice with his new team. Bogosian is big and strong and enjoys the hitting part of the game. That sounds like a Ted Nolan type of player, "In order to play that way we have to get players that play that way and getting a player of his style certainly adds to the mix. It's entertaining, it's fun especially here in Buffalo, people want to see some energy, see some body collisions and he likes to play that style so he should fit right in.

The Sabres play the Flyers Sunday night.

## **Bogosian takes part in 1st practice as a Sabre**

By Chris Ryndak

Sabres.com

February 14, 2015

Zach Bogosian attended the "Sabres UnPucked" music event Thursday night and got acclimated with his fellow players in a more relaxed setting. On Saturday, it was back to work as he took part in his first on-ice practice with the club at HARBORCENTER.

"I guess it's a good way to break the ice. That was a good event," the newest Buffalo Sabres defenseman said. "I'm still trying to make my way around to get to know everyone, but that'll just take some time."

He was part of the Sabres bigger of two trades on Wednesday which brought him, Evander Kane and goaltending prospect Jason Kasdorf to Buffalo from Winnipeg.

A native of Massena, N.Y., which is about two-and-a-half hours north of Syracuse, he knew with him playing in Buffalo, there would now be more opportunities for there to be an audience full of familiar faces.

"Once I heard [it was] Buffalo, it was a good feeling, knowing I was going to come close to home and play in front of my family and friends," he said after practice on Saturday at HARBORCENTER.

Bogosian likes to play a physical style and prides himself on being making things as difficult as possible for the opposition. Sabres coach Ted Nolan is looking forward to working with a player who has that mentality.

"Getting a player of his style certainly adds to the mix. It's kind of entertaining and it's fun," Nolan said. "Especially here in Buffalo, people want to see some energy. They want to see some body collisions out there and he likes to play that style. He should fit right in perfectly."

His fellow defensemen are also well aware of what he can bring to the table and they're also eager to take the ice with him.

"As a defenseman, watching Zach play, he's a big, strong guy to play against," Mike Weber said. "He's always been hard to play against. He eats shots, can contribute offensively also. He's going to come in here and big part of this team for a lot of years to come."

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### **INJURIES AND ILLNESSES**

Chris Stewart did not practice because of a flu-like illness and Josh Gorges was also not a participant.

As of now, if Gorges is unable to play, Bogosian will be paired with Andre Benoit.

The Sabres last practiced on Thursday and Gorges was given a maintenance day then also. There is a chance he might not play Sunday night when the Sabres host the Philadelphia Flyers at 7:30 p.m.

"We kept him off for a maintenance day," Nolan said. "He wasn't feeling too good so we'll probably send him to the doctor here to get another look and see if it's more than just a maintenance day. We'll keep our fingers crossed."

The Sabres may have to call up a forward from the Rochester Americans if Stewart is ruled out.

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## **IN THE DRIVER'S SEAT**

With Jhonas Enroth now in Dallas, the Sabres will turn to Michal Neuvirth to carry the load in net.

"I think we owe it to him," Nolan said. "He's paid his dues and unfortunately, maybe he would've had a bulk of the games if he didn't get injured from the get-go so we're looking forward to what he has to offer and he's excited about it. So yeah, we'll ride him for a while."

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## **SATURDAY'S PRACTICE**

28 Zemgus Girgensons – 63 Tyler Ennis

26 Matt Moulson – 17 Torrey Mitchell – 12 Brian Gionta

82 Marcus Foligno – 65 Brian Flynn – 19 Cody Hodgson

44 Nicolas Deslauriers – 37 Matt Ellis – 36 Patrick Kaleta

Defensemen: 6 Mike Weber, 24 Tyson Strachan, 41 Andrej Meszaros, 47 Zach Bogosian, 51 Nikita Zadorov, 55 Rasmus Ristolainen, 61 Andre Benoit

34 Michal Neuvirth

35 Anders Lindback

## **POWER PLAY**

First Unit

Mitchell-Girgensons-Ennis

Moulson-Bogosian

Second Unit

Foligno-Flynn-Gionta

Ristolainen/Meszaros-Zadorov

## **Jr. Sabres fighting for playoff spot**

By Joe Ray

Sabres.com

February 14, 2015

The Buffalo Jr. Sabres have spent this season adjusting to a new coach, a new home rink and new faces joining the team at different points of the season. They've weathered it all and have grown together as a team now with only three games remaining in the season and a playoff spot on the line.

Buffalo split two games at HARBORCENTER this week to hold on to eighth place in the OJHL's South-West Conference. Monday night, the Jr. Sabres asserted their dominance in a 6-1 victory over Burlington, outshooting the Cougars 49-16 in the process.

Five different skaters picked up two points in the win and goaltender Alex Connal had his shutout bid spoiled on a power-play tally with 3:18 to play.

Wednesday night, the Jr. Sabres hosted the Aurora Tigers, the OJHL's top team with 85 points. Both teams played strong games defensively, but Aurora made the most of their 21 shots, taking home a 5-1 victory.

After enduring losing streaks of seven and eight games in the first two months of the season, the Jr. Sabres eventually rallied back, winning 11 of 17 games throughout December and January while losing no more than two games in a row at any point during that stretch.

A change in the team's mentality was a big factor in the turnaround.

"I think we've just got to keep a positive attitude," forward David Baskerville said. "I think midseason when we were down, we had a lot of negatives on the bench – just take your stick and slap the boards, things like that.

"I think we've just got to keep talking to each other and picking each other up. We have to remember that we're a team and we're only going to go far if we stay together."

The roster of the Jr. Sabres team has been bolstered by veteran additions over the course of the season with players like Josh Gabriel, Zach Evancho, and Brenden Dunning coming back home from other programs. The presence of players with years of junior hockey experience helps foster the development of a number of first-year players.

"You can definitely tell the difference between the start of the year and now with these younger guys," defenseman Ben Casale said. "Their games have just been elevated so much. For us older guys, we just wanted to go out and work hard in games and practice to show them what you have to do to win."

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### **DOWN THE HOME STRETCH**

Buffalo has a tremendous opportunity to move up in the standings in the upcoming final week of the regular season. The Jr. Sabres are currently 21-27-1-2 with 45 points. Two of their final three games are against the St. Michael's Buzzers (47 points) and the Orangeville Flyers (46 points).

They're looking to make the playoffs for the fourth season in a row.

"We're feeling confident," Casale said. "We control our own fate, and as long as we take care of business it shouldn't be a problem."

Should the Jr. Sabres falter next week, they may be at risk to lose their postseason berth to the Hamilton Red Wings, who are currently four points out of the playoff picture. Given how far the Jr. Sabres have come throughout the season, such an ending would be a major disappointment.

"This is a group that started out with a new coach, with kids away at other teams, and they've all kind of come home," head coach John Tucker said. "The team has really bonded together. I think we're going to be a very dangerous team to play.

"Our kids are on the ice every day at this level while others teams might be on the ice two days a week. It's really going to show as the season wears down here. Our conditioning and our closeness is going to pay off for us."

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### **A PROMISING TREND**

Two more members of the Jr. Sabres committed to local college hockey programs in the past weeks, bringing the total of local hockey commitments from this team to five.

Baskerville committed to join Canisius College starting in 2016, becoming the fifth Jr. Sabres player in the last two seasons to commit to the Griffs' program. Former Jr. Sabres forwards Ryan Schmelzer and Nolan Sheeran have excelled in their freshman seasons under head coach Dave Smith. Forwards Josh Gabriel and Daniel Lafontaine will also join them next season.

Baskerville, 17, is a native of Eden and remembers former Griffs such as Chris Forsman, Kyle Bushee and Scott Moser – who is currently an assistant coach under Smith – from when he was a younger player in the Cazenovia program.

"I'm used to playing at the HARBORCENTER now and I've had connections to Canisius for a while now," Baskerville said. "Over the summer, Coach Smith contacted me and we've just kept a good relationship. When he offered me last week, I couldn't pass it up.

"I know my role and I have high expectations for myself. I've just got to keep working there."

Casale, 20 announced his college decision on Tuesday. He's committed to play for the Fredonia Blue Devils next season. He's currently second on the Jr. Sabres with 135 games of OJHL experience and leads the team's defensemen in scoring with four goals and 15 assists in 49 games this year.

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### **UPCOMING GAMES**

Feb. 18 vs. St. Michael's (1:30 p.m., HARBORCENTER)

Feb. 20 @ Burlington (7:30 p.m.)

Feb. 21 @ Orangeville (7:30 p.m.)