



# **Buffalo Sabres**

## **Daily Press Clips**

*February 7, 2015*

## **Stars-Sabres preview**

**By Staff Report**

**Associated Press**

**February 6, 2015**

The Dallas Stars' push for a second straight playoff berth hit a serious road block during a brief homestand in which coach Lindy Ruff pointed a finger at Kari Lehtonen.

With no other realistic options in net, Lehtonen will likely get a chance to regroup in an opportune matchup as the Stars try to win for the fourth time in five road games Saturday night against the reeling Buffalo Sabres.

After winning for the fourth time in six games behind Lehtonen's 38 saves in a 5-2 victory at Winnipeg last Saturday, Dallas stumbled at home in Tuesday's 3-2 shootout loss to Colorado and Thursday's 5-3 loss to Tampa Bay.

The Central Division-worst Stars (23-20-8), who snapped a five-year postseason drought last season, have now slid five points behind in a packed race for the final Western Conference playoff spot.

"It's going to be difficult to gain ground if we're not collecting points," forward Erik Cole told the team's official website.

Lehtonen gave up four goals -- three in the third period -- while facing 28 shots against the Lightning. Since going 8-2-0 with a 2.12 goal-against average over an 11-game stretch, he's 4-4-3 with a 3.40 mark in his last 12.

"Kari wasn't good enough for us," Ruff said after his team climbed back from a 2-0 deficit to make it 3-all in the third. "To beat a team like (Tampa Bay), playing that well and you battle back, he's got to be better for us."

With inexperienced Jussi Rynnäs serving as backup while Anders Lindback undergoes a conditioning stint with the AHL, Dallas is likely to give Lehtonen a ninth straight start.

The veteran should have a great opportunity to bounce back as the Stars go for their third straight win over league-worst Buffalo (15-34-3). He's 4-0-1 with a 2.29 GAA in his last five meetings dating to his time with the Atlanta/Winnipeg franchise.

The Sabres also have totaled five goals over a season-worst, six-game home losing streak after they were blanked for the ninth time this season -- one short of matching a team record -- in Thursday's 3-0 loss to St. Louis.

The club had ended a franchise-record, 14-game skid in Monday's 3-2 win at Montreal.

"We have to play for a full 60 (minutes) if we want to have success," defenseman Tyler Myers said.

Zemgus Girgensons leads the team with 13 goals, but he's only tallied two in his last 15. Fellow center Tyler Ennis has scored twice in his past 11 at First Niagara Center.

Ennis, though, had two goals and two assists in a pair of one-goal defeats versus Dallas last season. Matt Moulson has totaled six goals in his last five against the Stars dating to his time with the New York Islanders.

Probable starter Jonas Enroth finished with 36 saves in a 3-2 road loss last March in his only career start in this series. He's 1-9-0 with a 4.13 GAA in his past 10 overall, while Dallas ranks among NHL leaders at 3.14 goals per game.

Stars defenseman John Klingberg has totaled four goals with three assists over his last four after scoring Thursday.

Jamie Benn has three goals and four assists over a five-game point streak and has racked up two scores and four assists while recording a point in each of his five career meetings with the Sabres.

## **Sabres' trade scenarios start to gain momentum**

By Mike Harrington

Buffalo News

February 6, 2015

Welcome to The Silly Season.

Things got pretty real in places like Buffalo and Winnipeg on Friday, with trade chatter heating up even though the NHL trade deadline is not until March 2.

The Sabres insist they're not shopping defenseman Tyler Myers, and all indications are that's true. But the former Calder Trophy winner continues to be a hot item on other teams' wish lists. TVA Sports' Renaud Lavoie, one of the top French-language hockey reporters in Quebec, said Friday that talks between the Sabres and Anaheim Ducks were heating up and that former U.S. Olympic blue-liner Cam Fowler could be one of Buffalo's targets in any deal.

While that rumor crackled through hockey circles, the Sabres took the ice for practice at HarborCenter without Myers and defense partner Josh Gorges. Without Myers on the ice, the imaginations of people on social media ran wild.

It wasn't until after practice when coach Ted Nolan defused things, noting Myers and Gorges were simply on maintenance days and expected to be in the lineup Saturday night when the Lindy Ruff-led Dallas Stars come to First Niagara Center.

"The one thing we can control is our attitude," Nolan said. "Rumors are out there. There's rumors every day about everybody. You can't let it get into your mind-set. As much as we work on nutrition for our bodies and simple things for our mind, we also work on our soul."

"You have to be a professional," added captain Brian Gionta. "First things first, you go out there and take care of your own business. You can't control what's going to happen. ... Guys need to focus in on their game, come to the rink professionally. And I think we've got a good group for that."

In Winnipeg, meanwhile, it was announced that enigmatic winger Evander Kane will undergo shoulder surgery and be sidelined 4-6 months. And to many close observers of the Jets, there's a feeling that could mark his farewell to Winnipeg and put him squarely on the market.

Kane was a healthy scratch for a game earlier in the week in his hometown of Vancouver and a Sportsnet report said he arrived for a team meeting in a track suit, a violation of the team's dress code. The same report said teammate Dustin Byfuglien threw the suit in a cold tub, infuriating Kane. He wasn't seen again until it was time for the team's charter to return to Manitoba.

With rumors running wild the Jets would like to excise themselves of the 23-year-old Kane and his \$5.25 million cap hit that runs through 2017-18, the surgery means Kane would not be available to help a playoff team this year. But a team out of the postseason chase, looking to add assets for the future and with plenty of salary cap space could still make a play for him – and provide Winnipeg some players for this year's stretch drive.

The Sabres certainly fit all of those categories. Kane, the No. 4 overall choice in 2009, has 109 career NHL goals, including a high of 30 in the Jets' 2011-12 return season to the NHL. He has 10 goals and 12 assists in 37 games this year.

Sabres winger Chris Stewart, one of Buffalo's top trade chips, played with Kane during the 2011 World Championships. Stewart's brother, Anthony, also played with Kane on the 2010-11 Atlanta Thrashers.

"He could be a little misunderstood," Chris Stewart said Friday of Kane. "People call him cocky and arrogant, but I think he's confident in his trade. I can't really comment because I don't know the full story but with those situations, the best way is to handle it internally. ... He definitely rubbed some guys the wrong way, but my brother got along with him well. Once you get to know the real Ev, you get to know both sides of the story."

Gionta, a former captain in Montreal, said he didn't know enough about Kane's situation to comment directly on it either. But generally, the captain can't bring one outlier back to the group on his own.

"Teams that win, teams that play together have a good group where everybody is buying in," Gionta said. "It's a group effort. A lot is made of a guy wearing a letter and they've got to do certain things. You do have to do it, but it's about the collective group that brings guys in."

Stewart is certainly one player buying in despite his uncertain status. He has four goals and four assists over the last 11 games, big numbers for a Buffalo team that continues to sit last in the NHL in offense.

"Early in the season, I was probably stressing about it a little more, not really knowing your future in this organization," Stewart said. "To this day, I still don't really know. You can't predict that. The only thing I worry about and what I control is how I play and what I do on the ice.

"But it's a deadline. Definitely the clock's on it and it's ticking."

Stewart, Drew Stafford, Torrey Mitchell, Jhonas Enroth and Michal Neuvirth are the Sabres' unrestricted free agents expected to be available. Neuvirth took a shot to his ankle during the All-Star break and has not played since Jan. 17 against Philadelphia, his eighth straight loss.

With the New York Rangers announcing Friday that starter Henrik Lundqvist is gone for up to a month with a throat injury, Enroth or Neuvirth could become options to join Cam Talbot in goal in New York.

Neuvirth is expected to start one of the three home games slated for the next four days, either the Dallas contest, Sunday's visit by the New York Islanders or Tuesday's matchup with Ottawa.

"I can focus on myself and my game," Neuvirth said. "Right now I'm playing for the Buffalo Sabres. I will do my best to help my team win a hockey game. I got traded before in juniors. It's just part of the business. Right now I'm not thinking about trade at all. ... I'm just focusing on the next game."

## **Heated meeting between Ted Nolan and Chris Stewart ignite winger**

By Bill Hoppe  
Olean Times Herald  
February 6, 2015

BUFFALO – Ted Nolan wanted to rattle Chris Stewart's chain a bit, get the enigmatic veteran thinking. The Sabres coach saw a big, powerful winger playing a soft game.

So Nolan challenged Stewart during a meeting shortly after the [27-year-old's Dec. 9 benching](#).

Their chat got heated.

"He got mad, he got angry," Nolan told the Times Herald on Friday inside HarborCenter. "I got a little bit angry myself. Sometimes people think I'm a mild-mannered guy, but I grew up on the other side of the tracks. I know how to talk both sides."

Stewart, the team's top offensive threat in recent weeks, said Nolan's strong words caught him off guard. Nolan told him to "start to remember why you're playing this game." Nolan reminded Stewart, who will almost certainly be traded before the March 2 deadline, teams don't want a player based on his past exploits.

"Two bulls going at it in a china shop," Nolan said about the talk. "He just needed someone to step up and let him know, and I did. It got him mad. The last thing I told him, 'In this situation, I'm the coach and I get the final say.'

"So we walked out mad at each other a little bit, and I didn't do it to get him mad. My job is to try to get the best out of every player, and I thought he was one of those guys that he was a lot better than he was playing, and now he sees the way he could play."

Stewart has turned his season around after an awful, career-worst start, quickly becoming the Sabres' best forward. He has four goals and six points in the last eight games entering tonight's tilt against former Sabres coach Lindy Ruff and the Dallas Stars inside the First Niagara Center. He has six goals and 13 points in 23 contests since getting scratched.

He didn't score in Thursday's 3-0 loss to St. Louis, but he was arguably the best player on the ice, generating three strong scoring chances, including a second-period breakthrough.

"I had to pick my game up," Stewart said about his resurgence, "and I did."

Stewart said he reached a moment when he remembered hockey's just a game that's supposed to be fun.

"Over the last 15, 20 games, I don't want to swear, but I just said, '(Bleep) it,' and just kept playing, I got nothing to lose here."

The genesis of Stewart's revival was Nolan's challenge, which he could've taken two ways.

"I could've made excuses and said, 'You know what, he's wrong, he's pointing the finger at me,'" he said. "Or, I said, 'I could take it on the chin like a man and take a look in the mirror and realize that I wasn't playing to my potential,' which is true."

He added: "It definitely got the player that I can be out of me."

Stewart's grateful Nolan held him accountable. Very few people would poke a seething 6-foot-2, 231-pound hockey player who has [fought some of the NHL's top heavyweights](#).

"There's not too many people in my life right now that really hold me accountable," Stewart said. " ... People think of me as a scary guy. One-on-one meeting with me, who knows what he was thinking? Things could've got ugly."

Things were *really* ugly earlier this season for Stewart, who will be an unrestricted free agent this summer. After a strong training camp, Stewart, a deadline acquisition from the Blues last season, didn't score his first goal until Nov. 2, the 13<sup>th</sup> game. He finally scored again in his 21<sup>st</sup> appearance.

It's no secret the Sabres plan to trade Stewart, one of the top rental players on the market. Stewart acknowledged Friday he "bought into the whole not really knowing the future" earlier in the season. He was stressing out.

"I think I got caught up in that a little bit, wanted to play well, not producing and the team (was) losing," he said. "It's definitely something that I took personally. I really do take this game personal. I want to put so much pressure on myself to produce and play the right way and win hockey games. When that wasn't happening, I definitely took it to heart."

Stewart understands his short Buffalo tenure could be over soon.

"I can only worry about or really control what I do on the ice," he said. "That's the only task. ... It's a deadline. The clock's on. It's ticking. We'll see what happens."

## **Sabres try to block out trade rumors**

By Steve Vesey

WIVB

February 6, 2015

**BUFFALO, N.Y. (WIVB)** - The rumblings are starting to get louder, the closer we get to the NHL trade deadline – but Sabres head coach Ted Nolan is trying to keep his players focused on the ice.

Earlier today, TVA Sports reported the Sabres are in trade talks with Anaheim involving Tyler Myers. That is one of several names that will likely pop up over the next few weeks.

“Rumors are out there. There’s rumors out there every day about everybody. You can’t let it get into your mindset. As much as we work hard on nutrition for our bodies... We also work on our soul. Making sure we have those things in balance and don’t let anything affect you,” said Nolan.

Sabres forward Chris Stewart is one of the players on the roster who could be a target for a contender. While he is aware of the fact that he could be on the move within the next month, Stewart has played very well lately. If the rumor mill is bothering him, it doesn’t show.

“It’s out of your control,” said Stewart. “Early in the season, I was probably stressing about it a little more. Not really knowing your future in this organization, and to this day I still really don’t know. I can’t really predict that. Can only control how I play and what I do on the ice.”

The NHL trade deadline is Monday, March 2nd this year. The Sabres host Dallas tomorrow night.

## **Moulson moves to the point**

By Chris Ryndak

Sabres.com

February 6, 2015

The Buffalo Sabres power play had a little bit of a different look at practice Friday at HARBORCENTER. Defensemen Tyler Myers and Josh Gorges were given maintenance days so different personnel were used on the man advantage.

On the first unit with Chris Stewart, Zemgus Girgensons and Tyler Ennis, Matt Moulson joined Nikita Zadorov on the point. It's a different position for Moulson and an option the team will likely use Saturday night against the Dallas Stars.

"We're going to definitely look at it," Sabres coach Ted Nolan said. "We need an intelligent player back there making good plays. Breaking out is probably one of the most important parts of our power play and we haven't been making great first passes lately. We'll give it a try."

Nolan said that both Myers and Gorges will be ready to play when Dallas comes to town for a 7 p.m. faceoff from First Niagara Center. The Tops Gamenight pregame show will begin at 6:30 p.m. on MSG-B and the game can also be heard live on WGR 550.

Zadorov was a healthy scratch for Buffalo's game against St. Louis on Thursday and Nolan said the team will wait before deciding whether he'll be back in the lineup or not.

Before being scratched, Zadorov had seen time on both power-play units. The second unit on Friday featured Drew Stafford, Brian Flynn and captain Brian Gionta up front with Andre Benoit and Andrej Meszaros at the points.

Gionta has eased back into the power play since he returned from injury on Jan. 27 and expects to be more involved in special teams play as the season progresses.

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### **GETTING THERE**

Buffalo has had trouble scoring goals this season and was shutout for the ninth time this season on Thursday. The Sabres are 1-4-0 in their four games since All-Star Weekend and are averaging just 1.6 goals per game.

While burying their chances has been an issue, Gionta feels that they'll generate more offense if they're able to quickly and more effectively get out of their own end.

"It's not about the offensive zone. It's about before that and we've got to do a better job as a team coming up together, supporting each other," he said. "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."

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### **STARTING SOON?**

Michal Neuvirth may start one of Buffalo's two games over the weekend. He hasn't played since Jan. 17 and sustained a lower-body injury while working out on the ice during the All-Star Break. Friday marked his second practice with the team since the injury.

"I feel pretty good. It was a tough injury," Neuvirth said. "I took a shot right to the ankle, a heavy shot from the slot, and couldn't put my skate on for a few days. But, I've been working really hard on and off the ice and I've been feeling good the last couple days."

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## **GAIN AN ADVANTAGE**

Fans who show their Sabres Fan Advantage app during checkout at the Sabres Store or other merchandise locations at First Niagara Center will receive 30 percent off their entire purchase on Saturday and Sunday from 10 a.m. through the end of each home game and on Monday from 10 a.m. until 5 p.m.

This discount is not valid with any other offers.

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## **FRIDAY'S PRACTICE**

80 Chris Stewart – 28 Zemgus Girgensons – 63 Tyler Ennis  
26 Matt Moulson – 17 Torrey Mitchell – 12 Brian Gionta  
19 Cody Hodgson – 65 Brian Flynn – 21 Drew Stafford  
44 Nicolas Deslauriers – 37 Matt Ellis – 36 Patrick Kaleta  
82 Marcus Foligno (non-contact)

61 Andre Benoit – 55 Rasmus Ristolainen  
6 Mike Weber – 24 Tyson Strachan  
51 Nikita Zadorov – 41 Andrej Meszaros

1 Jhonas Enroth  
34 Michal Neuvirth

Maintenance Day: 4 Josh Gorges, 57 Tyler Myers

## **POWER PLAY**

First Unit  
Stewart-Girgensons-Ennis  
Zadorov-Moulson

Second Unit  
Stafford-Flynn-Gionta  
Benoit-Meszaros

## **Amerks weekly report**

By Kevin Snow

Sabres.com

February 6, 2015

### **THE WEEK THAT WAS**

#### ***Friday, January 30: CRUNCH 6 – AMERKS 4***

The Rochester Americans returned from the AHL All-Star break last Friday in Syracuse, dropping a 6-4 decision to the Crunch at the Onondaga County War Memorial Arena. Despite two goals from Brayden Irwin and a goal from Evan Rankin in his first game in an Amerks uniform since 2013, Rochester was unable to complete a third-period rally and fell to 18-25-1-0 on the season with the loss.

In addition to the pair of goals by Irwin and a tally by Rankin, AHL All-Star Phil Varone recorded a goal and an assist in the game. Dan Catenacci, Brady Austin, Tim Schaller, Jerry D'Amigo and Jake McCabe each registered an assist while goaltender Andrey Makarov finished with 27 saves on 32 shots.

#### ***Saturday, January 31: FLAMES 3 – AMERKS 2***

Rochester goaltender Travis Fullerton made 31 saves in his AHL debut, but it was not enough as the Amerks came up short on the losing end of a 3-2 decision to the Adirondack Flames at the Glens Falls Civic Center. With the loss, Rochester falls to 18-26-1-0 on the season and remains winless against the Flames in Glens Falls.

Brayden Irwin finished with a goal and an assist and closed out the weekend with four points after scoring twice in Rochester's loss to Syracuse on Friday. Jake McCabe also found the back of the net while top point-getter and AHL All-Star forward Phil Varone tacked on his team-leading 33rd point of the season with an assist. Fullerton, who rejoined the Amerks from the Elmira Jackals, stopped 31 of the 34 shots he faced while becoming the fifth different Amerk goaltender this season to see game action for Rochester.

#### ***Tuesday, February 3: AMERKS 3 – WOLVES 2***

The Rochester Americans scored once in each period and held off a late comeback by the Chicago Wolves as the Amerks snapped a three-game skid with a 3-2 victory over the Wolves in a Tuesday morning matchup at Allstate Arena. The win is Rochester's first on its season-long eight-game road swing and improves the Amerks to 19-26-1-0 on the season.

Tuesday's win also marked Rochester's first regular season victory in Chicago since Feb. 11, 2009 and guarantees a season split with the Wolves for the second straight year.

William Carrier and Phil Varone each recorded a goal and an assist to lead the Amerks while second-year forward Dan Catenacci scored the eventual game-winner early on in the third period to keep his hot streak intact. Johan Larsson, Jake McCabe, Joel Armia and Jerome Leduc all picked up assists and Andrey Makarov finished the day with 23 saves to improve to 14-13-1.

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### **UPCOMING GAMES**

- Friday, February 6: Rochester @ Grand Rapids, 7 p.m.
  - Saturday, February 7: Rochester @ Grand Rapids, 7 p.m.
  - Sunday, February 8: Rochester @ Milwaukee, 4 p.m.
  - Tuesday, February 11: Rochester @ Utica, 7 p.m.
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## PLAYER NOTES

**Phil Varone's** torrid play has the reigning team MVP back in sole possession of the team scoring lead, and with goals in two of his last three games, the fourth-year pro has now reached double digits in goals in each of his first four pro seasons since joining Rochester for the 2011-12 campaign.

Second-year forward **Tim Schaller** leads the Amerks with 13 goals and is on pace to become the first Amerk this season to reach the 20-goal mark. Schaller, who also made his NHL debut with Buffalo this season, headlines a list of six different Amerks to have reached the 10-goal mark, making Rochester and Texas the only two teams to have six skaters with 10 or more goals on the season.

**Chad Ruhwedel** remains Rochester's top scoring blueliner with 21 points (7+14) while being one of just two skaters to appear in all 46 games thus far. All seven of Ruhwedel's goals this season have come on the power-play, placing him sixth in the league and second among rearguards.

**Dan Catenacci** enters the weekend having produced 11 points (4+7) in the last 15 games, including four points over his last five outings.

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## AMERKS LEADERS

Points: Varone (35), Grigorenko (30), Schaller (28)

Goals: Schaller (13), Varone (11), Grigorenko/Larsson/Armia/Dalpe (10)

Assists: Varone (24), Grigorenko (20), Larsson (18)