



Buffalo Sabres

Daily Press Clips

October 2, 2015

Sabres piece together lineup, beaten badly by Minnesota

Buffalo News

October 2, 2015

The Buffalo Sabres used a patchwork lineup Thursday night and it was no match for the Minnesota Wild in a 6-1 preseason loss at the Xcel Energy Center in St. Paul.

The Wild outshot Buffalo, 42-11, in dropping the Sabres to 4-2 in exhibition play. Only a 36-save night from Buffalo goaltender Chad Johnson kept the margin from being worse.

Jason Zucker, Tyler Graovac and Zach Parise scored in the first period as the Wild took a 3-0 lead and never looked back. Nino Niederreiter made it 4-0 in the second period before Tim Schaller scored Buffalo's only goal, an unassisted tally at 17:15 of the second period.

Former Sabres Zac Dalpe and Thomas Vanek closed the scoring in the third period.

The Sabres played the game without big names like Jack Eichel, Ryan O'Reilly, Evander Kane and Tyler Ennis. They're all expected to play in Friday night's exhibition finale against Columbus at 7 p.m. in First Niagara Center (MSG, Radio 550 AM).

It was a difficult game for Buffalo defenseman Rasmus Ristolainen, who was on the ice for four of the goals.

Veteran winger Patrick Kaleta, on a tryout contract, played his first preseason game after suffering a groin injury during scrimmages on the first weekend of camp but didn't last very long. The Angola native played just three shifts in the first period totaling 2:06 before suffering a lower-body injury and did not return.

After the game ended, the teams played a 3-on-3 overtime session to test the new rule that will be used in the regular season. No one scored in the five-minute period.

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O'Reilly was charged with driving under the influence and leaving the scene of an accident after striking the side of a Tim Hortons cafe in Lucan, Ont., with his vintage 1951 Chevrolet pickup at approximately 4 a.m. on July 9. That was just six days after he signed a \$52.5 million contract extension with the Sabres that's the largest in franchise history.

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The Sabres recalled William Carrier from Rochester on Thursday and loaned defenseman Brady Austin to the Amerks. They still have 38 players in camp (21 forwards, 13 defensemen and four goalies) and have to have their 23-man roster set by 5 p.m. on Tuesday in advance of Thursday's opener against Ottawa.

Hat trick of delays: O'Reilly case pushed back to Oct. 22

By Mike Harrington

Buffalo News

October 2, 2015

Sabres center Ryan O'Reilly told reporters on Wednesday he had no idea if there was a resolution coming today to his legal issues. As it turns out, there was none.

In hockey parlance, O'Reilly is now at a hat trick of delays.

According to radio station CFPL-AM in London, Ont., O'Reilly's case was pushed back today to Oct. 22, meaning it will still be lingering well into the Sabres' season. It's the third delay in the case. The London Free Press reported O'Reilly was simply represented by counsel and was not at the courthouse. The new date is between home games against Toronto and Montreal on Oct. 21 and Oct. 23.

O'Reilly, remember, was charged with driving under the influence and leaving the scene of an accident after striking the side of a Tim Hortons cafe in Lucan, Ont., with his vintage 1951 Chevrolet pickup at approximately 4 a.m. on July 9. That was just six days after he signed a \$52.5 million contract extension with the Sabres that's the largest in franchise history.

O'Reilly did not travel with the Sabres today to St. Paul, Minn., for their game tonight against the Wild. He's likely to be in the lineup Friday night against Columbus in First Niagara Center in the team's home exhibition finale.

Wild rout Sabres to conclude preseason

NHL.com

October 2, 2015

The Minnesota Wild had 42 shots in a 6-1 preseason win against the Buffalo Sabres at Xcel Energy Center on Thursday.

Minnesota outshot Buffalo 42-11.

Jason Zucker, Tyler Graovac, Zach Parise, Nino Niederreiter, Zac Dalpe and Thomas Vanek scored for the Wild, who led 4-0 at 5:38 of the second period. Mikko Koivu had three assists.

Devan Dubnyk made 10 saves for Minnesota, which finished its preseason 4-2-0.

Tim Schaller scored an unassisted goal and Chad Johnson made 36 saves for Buffalo (4-2-0), which plays its final preseason game Friday against the Columbus Blue Jackets at First Niagara Center.

Sabres forward Patrick Kaleta made his preseason debut but left the game with a lower-body injury after playing 2:06.

Sabres' Bylsma primed to win Jack Adams Award

By Jon Lane

NHL.com

October 2, 2015

It's become a habit to dismiss the Buffalo Sabres and any iota of a chance they have of reaching the Stanley Cup Playoffs. They've averaged a shade over 21 wins the past three seasons, and in each of the previous two finished at or near the bottom of the NHL in most offensive and special-team categories.

But there are precedents of teams making quantum leaps in the NHL standings. The Montreal Canadiens ascended from the Eastern Conference basement to a first-place finish in the Northeast Division in 2013. A season later, the Colorado Avalanche rose from 29th in the League (39 points in 48 games) to 112 points and the Central Division title. An extreme example is the 1992-93 San Jose Sharks, whose 58-point jump from the season before remains the biggest turnaround in League history.

A 58-point jump is asking too much, but there's no denying the excitement in Buffalo, where there are expectations for the Sabres to make noise in the East. The additions of Evander Kane, Jack Eichel and Ryan O'Reilly fortified a group of forwards that already included Tyler Ennis, Matt Moulson, Zemgus Girgensons and Sam Reinhart, putting them in position to significantly increase their NHL-worst 153 goals from last season. Defenseman Cody Franson, who signed a two-year contract Sept. 10, should spark a power play that finished 30th at 13.4 percent.

"It's not the Buffalo Sabres from last year," coach Dan Bylsma said in video posted by the Sabres website. "So in building our team and going forward and building that, all of us are new and I think that's a pretty exciting thing."

Patrick Roy's work with the Avalanche in 2013-14 earned him the Jack Adams Award as coach of the year. Bylsma brings clout to a Sabres team that lost 51 games in each of the past two seasons. He's the right man to lead them into a new generation and the preseason pick to win the award this season.

Hired on May 28, Bylsma has experience with immediate turnarounds. He took over a Pittsburgh Penguins team 10th in the East with 25 games left in 2008-09 and led it to an 18-3-4 finish and its first Stanley Cup championship in 16 years. He also won the Jack Adams Award in 2011 after guiding the Penguins to 49 wins despite Sidney Crosby, Evgeni Malkin and Jordan Staal missing a combined 119 games because of injuries. His .668 winning percentage (252-117-32) is the best of anyone in history with at least three full seasons coached.

Eichel and Reinhart are potential franchise centers. Kane and O'Reilly add scoring that's been lacking. Leading the charge will be Bylsma, who will have the Sabres ready to work and ready to surprise.

"In order to have success, we're going to have to be real detailed," O'Reilly told the Buffalo News. "It's not going to be easy to come from where we were last year. We've got to work together. We've got to find out quickly how to have success together."

FINALISTS

Todd McLellan, Edmonton Oilers -- McLellan became the Oilers' seventh coach in eight seasons after winning three Pacific Division titles and reaching the playoffs six times in seven seasons with the Sharks. He's coaching a potential generational talent (Connor McDavid) and will impose the mental fortitude that's been missing in Edmonton for so long.

"Mentally strong teams have poor patches during the season," McLellan told the Canadian Press. "It's an automatic thing. But they come out of it quick, they come out of it confident. They go back to their foundation and basics. The weaker teams tend to stay in it a little bit longer. The pushback thing is a big thing for me, the mental strength to keep going. Get through the crap, if you will, when it's not going well."

"There's going to be some tough times. There will be some days where it's not going real well. And I'll be really interested to see the group during those moments."

Lindy Ruff, Dallas Stars -- Facing high expectations last season, the Stars disappointed with a sixth-place finish in the Central Division. However, they won seven of 10 to finish 31-18-5 in their final 54 games, a 102-point pace over 82 games.

Forward Patrick Sharp, defenseman Johnny Oduya and goaltender Antti Niemi provide Dallas a championship pedigree. Oduya's presence also provides optimism of improving a defense that allowed 3.13 goals per game.

After fortifying the roster, general manager Jim Nill called the Stars a complete team. The pick here is Ruff will get Dallas over the hump and compete for his second Jack Adams Trophy.

"I'm excited," Ruff said. "[It] was disappointing last year because I felt we were a better team than where we ended up. We faced some adversity. We got better in some areas. I think we need to get better again, but I think we're really going in the right direction."

ALSO IN THE MIX: Jeff Blashill, Detroit Red Wings; Todd Richards, Columbus Blue Jackets; Barry Trotz, Washington Capitals

Report: Sabres' Ryan O'Reilly court date pushed back to Oct. 22

By Bill Hoppe
Olean Times Herald
October 2, 2015

Buffalo Sabres center Ryan O'Reilly's impaired driving case in Ontario has been delayed for the third time, according to CFPL-AM.

The case was pushed back – “put over” is the Canadian legal term – this morning until Oct. 22, according to the radio station. The case was also moved on Aug. 20 and Sept. 10.

O'Reilly, 24, was arrested July 9 and charged with impaired driving and leaving the scene of an accident after his pickup truck allegedly hit a Tim Hortons in Lucan, Ont. He signed the biggest contract in Sabres history – a seven-year, \$52.5 million extension – July 3.

The next court date falls on an off day between home games with the Toronto Maple Leafs and Montreal Canadiens. O'Reilly isn't scheduled to play in tonight's preseason game in Minnesota against the Wild.

Update: The Sabres have recalled winger William Carrier from Rochester and sent defenseman Brady Austin to the Americans.

Impaired driving case involving Sabres star O'Reilly adjourned until Oct. 22

The Canadian Press

October 2, 2015

LONDON, Ont. - The impaired driving case involving Buffalo Sabres star Ryan O'Reilly has been adjourned until Oct. 22.

The star forward wasn't at Thursday's court date. A lawyer for the 24-year-old appeared on his behalf.

This marks the third time the case has been adjourned.

O'Reilly was arrested and charged with impaired driving and failing to remain at the scene on July 9. Police say a green pick-up truck was driven into the side of a Tim Hortons in Lucan, Ont., a community north of London, around 4 a.m., before driving away.

O'Reilly was traded from the Colorado Avalanche to Buffalo in June along with forward Jamie McGinn for Mikhail Grigorenko, J.T. Compher, defenceman Nikita Zadorov and the 31st pick of June's NHL draft.

The Sabres signed O'Reilly to a seven-year contract extension on July 3 for US\$52.5 million. He's due to make \$6.2 million this season.

Last year with the Avalanche, O'Reilly scored 17 goals and added 38 assists in 82 games.

O'Reilly and the Buffalo Sabres are set to make their regular-season debut Oct. 8 in Ottawa.

Wild Slam Sabres 6-1

By Dan Cave

WGR 550

October 2, 2015

Playing without names like Eichel, Kane and O'Reilly, the Sabres were thoroughly dominated by the Wild on Thursday 6-1. Chad Johnson stopped 36 of 42 shots and Tim Schaller scored the lone goal. Buffalo returns home to close out the preseason against the Columbus Blue Jackets on Friday. The puck drops at 7 p.m. on WGR 550 and the Buffalo Sabres Radio Network.

Goals

Jason Zucker opened the scoring 5:10 into the game, slamming home a Jared Spurgeon rebound.

Minnesota upped its lead just 5:19 later on a 2-on-0 rush. Charlie Coyle beat both Rasmus Ristolainen and Chad Ruhwedel to create the odd-man chance and Tyler Graovac converted for the 2-0 lead.

Zach Parise made it 3-0 on the power play, firing a Ryan Suter rebound past Chad Johnson.

Nino Niederreiter's blast at 5:38 of the 2nd period put the Wild ahead 4-0.

Tim Schaller finally got Buffalo on the board, taking advantage of a turnover, with 2:45 left in the 2nd.

A pair of former Sabres scored 36 seconds apart in the final period. Zac Dalpe (21 games with BUF in 2014-15) made it 5-1 and Thomas Vanek found the net moments later for the five-goal lead.

Game Notes

--It took the Sabres 7:17 to record their first shot of the game (Johan Larsson) and 8:28 into the final period for their 10th.

--Kaleta started the game on Buffalo's top line, but left early and did not return with a lower body injury.

--Minnesota dominated right from the start, outshooting Buffalo 17-3 after the first 20 minutes.

--Marcus Foligno and Marcus Dumba dropped the gloves halfway through the second period.

--Rasmus Ristolainen led the team with 21:54 of playing time, but was on the ice for 3 Minnesota goals. The 20-year-old defenseman began the evening playing on the left side with Chad Ruhwedel and flipped back to the right after Niederreiter's goal.

--Neither side found the net during an experimental 3-on-3 overtime session following regulation.

Injuries

--BUF - Patrick Kaleta - lower body injury, 1st period (did not return)

1st Period

Goals

5:10 - MIN - Jason Zucker (Jared Spurgeon, Mikko Koivu)

10:19 - MIN - Tyler Graovac (Charlie Coyle, Christian Folin)

18:22 - MIN - Zach Parise (PPG) (Ryan Suter, Mikael Granlund)

Penalties

17:58 - BUF - Matt Donovan (2 min., tripping)

18:45 - MIN - Zach Parise (2 min., holding)

2nd Period

Goals

5:38 - MIN - Nino Niederreiter (Jason Zucker, Mikko Koivu)

17:15 - BUF - Tim Schaller (Unassisted)

Penalties

10:28 - MIN - Matt Dumba (5 min., fighting)

10:28 - BUF - Marcus Foligno (5 min., fighting)

3rd Period

Goals

17:00 - MIN - Zac Dalpe (Unassisted)

17:36 - MIN - Thomas Vanek (PPG) (Unassisted)

Penalties

3:00 - MIN - Ryan Carter (2 min., tripping)

17:13 - BUF - Evan Rodrigues (2 min., instigator)

17:13 - BUF - Marcus Foligno (5 min., fighting)

17:13 - BUF - Marcus Foligno (10 min. misconduct)

Goaltending

BUF - Chad Johnson (36 saves, 42 shots)

MIN - Devan Dubnyk (10 saves, 11 shots)

Power Plays

BUF - 0 of 2

MIN - 2 of 3

Three Stars

1.) MIN - Jason Zucker (1 G, 1 A)

2.) MIN - Tyler Graovac (1 G, 1 A)

3.) MIN - Mikko Koivu (2 A)

Sabres fall behind early in loss to Minnesota

By Jourdon LaBarber

Sabres.com

October 2, 2015

Minnesota treated Thursday night's game as a dress rehearsal for the regular season and a young Sabres lineup couldn't keep up.

With a roster consisting of only a handful of veterans, the Sabres dropped a 6-1 contest to the Wild on Thursday night at Xcel Energy Center. Minnesota played its regular season starters in its final tune-up of the preseason.

Buffalo falls to 4-2 in preseason play with the loss. Like the Wild did on Thursday, the Sabres will use Friday night's preseason finale against Columbus as an opportunity to field a lineup close to the one that will play when the regular season opens on Oct. 8.

But despite the difference in the Thursday's lineups, Sabres coach Dan Bylsma was unhappy with his team's performance after the game.

"There [were] two teams at two different levels," he said. "We didn't move our feet and got out-competed at pretty much every turn."

Tim Schaller scored Buffalo's only goal in the loss, an unassisted score in the second period off a turnover in front of the Minnesota net. Chad Johnson made 36 saves in net for the Sabres in his final preseason start.

Minnesota controlled the puck for the majority of the game, and it showed in the shot differential. The Sabres only generated three shots on goal in the first period, a period in which the Wild scored three times. On the night, Buffalo was outshot 42-11.

Jason Zucker, Tyler Graovac, Zach Parise, Nino Niederreiter, Zac Dalpe and Thomas Vanek each scored a goal for Minnesota and Mikko Koivu and Charlie Coyle each tallied two assists. Zucker opened the scoring 5:10 into the game when he tapped in a rebound off of Johnson's pad.

Graovac and Parise both scored later in the first period, the latter with a power play goal, and Niederreiter beat Johnson to his glove side in the second. Dalpe and Vanek, both former Sabres, each scored in the final three minutes of the game.

The Buffalo players weren't willing to accept the lineup differential as an excuse for the lopsided loss.

"You've just got to play a full 60 minutes," Schaller said. "Against a good team like this no matter what the lineup is, you can't take a shift off; you can't take a period off. We could've beat them tonight, even with the lineup we had, we were all working hard but we just got to play the whole 60 minutes."

JOHNSON HEATS UP

He wasn't happy with the amount of goals that were scored, but Johnson was strong in net for the Sabres in the second and third periods. Had it not been for some stellar saves in the third, the final score easily could have been more lopsided in favor of Minnesota.

"We forced our goaltender to be great tonight," Bylsma said. "He stopped [almost] 40 shots and a number of them big ones; it could've been a lot worse."

Johnson stopped two one-timer attempts from the Wild, one with his glove at point-blank range and another with his pad, in the third period. Then, he made a strong stop on a breakaway to cap off his solid stretch.

"Right from the start too I felt pretty into it," he said. "I mean I'm not happy with letting six goals in, that's obviously disappointing but I think again like I said in preseason, with rosters and everything you kind of have to take it with a grain of salt and look at the positives."

KALETA EXITS EARLY

Patrick Kaleta's preseason debut came to an unfortunate end when he left the game with a lower-body injury early in the first period. Kaleta came into camp hoping to earn an NHL contract after signing an AHL deal to play in Rochester on Sept. 12.

Bylsma said afterward that he was unsure whether or not Kaleta had aggravated the same lower-body injury that had forced him to miss the majority of camp up to this point.

RISTO LOOKING TO REBOUND

Defenseman Rasmus Ristolainen struggled at the beginning of the game when he opened playing on the left side opposite Chad Ruhwedel. It was the first time Ristolainen had ever played on the left, he said, but he too made no excuses following the loss.

"Everything's a little different on the left side there but still I've got to be better," he said.

For the second game in a row, Ristolainen played a team-leading 23:34 of ice time and then played the majority of the practice 3-on-3 overtime period afterward.

While Bylsma's original plan was to play the defenseman on both Thursday and Friday, he said he would reevaluate the situation before determining whether Ristolainen will take the ice against Columbus.

If Ristolainen has any say in the decision, he'll be out there at First Niagara Center.

"If it's my choice, oh yeah," he said. "This one can't happen anymore and I want to fix it."

UP NEXT

The Sabres will end their preseason at home against the Columbus Blue Jackets on Friday night. Puck drop is scheduled for 7 p.m. The game can be seen live on MSG with Dan Dunleavy and Rob Ray on the call or heard on WGR 550.