



# **Buffalo Sabres**

## **Daily Press Clips**

*November 7, 2015*

## Canucks-Sabres Preview

By Jeff Bartl

AP

November 7, 2015

Ryan Miller said he knew it was time to leave Buffalo, no matter how much he wanted to stay.

The Sabres were in a state of decline and transitioning toward a rebuilding mode that included changes in the front office and behind the bench, and Miller was beginning to have contentious sessions with the media.

He's focused more on the good memories he has of Buffalo, though, as he returns for the first time with the Vancouver Canucks, who begin a seven-game road trip Saturday night.

Miller guided the Sabres to the Eastern Conference finals in 2006 and '07 in his first two full seasons and won the Vezina Trophy in 2009-10. They made the playoffs the next season before missing the following two years, leading to the firings of long-time fixtures in coach Lindy Ruff and general manager Darcy Regier.

The club then decided to move on without Miller, who was dealt to St. Louis at the trade deadline of the 2013-14 season before signing a three-year, \$18 million deal with Vancouver.

Miller had a sprained knee that cost him most of the second half of last season when the Canucks lost 6-3 at Buffalo on Feb. 26.

"Once you show people who you are and they accept you, I think they feel you're always a part of that," Miller said. "I spent a long time here and really tried to connect to the community. It's a great place."

Surely he'll be emotional when he takes the ice and should get a warm ovation from the crowd, but he'll quickly turn his attention to trying to deal the Sabres (5-8-0) a fourth home loss in five tries.

Miller, who beat Buffalo 5-2 in Vancouver on Jan. 30 in his only other game against his former team, has a 2.14 goals-against average in 12 starts after losing 3-2 to Pittsburgh on Wednesday. The Canucks (6-3-4) had won their previous two.

"He built this place," winger Alexandre Burrows said. "We know how important it'll be to get a win for Ryan, so we're pretty fired up."

They're hoping to keep that excitement throughout a stretch that will have them on the road until playing their next home game Nov. 21. The Canucks first face a Sabres team that had won three of four prior to allowing three first-period goals in Thursday's 4-1 home loss to Tampa Bay.

Rookie Jack Eichel added to his highlight reel with his fifth goal, but Buffalo has lost six of the 10 games in which it has outshot its opponent.

"We're a lot to blame for that one," defenseman Cody Franson said. "Our missed execution in the first period put us behind the eight ball early."

Tyler Ennis assisted on Eichel's goal, and he knows the importance of getting off to a better start against Miller. They were teammates from Ennis' rookie season in 2009-10 until Miller was dealt.

"My best memory of Ryan is that I don't think I scored on him ever in four years of practice," Ennis said. "He's definitely one of the best goalies to ever play here and I think he's one of the best goalies in the league."

"We want to treat it like any other game. It'll be more emotional for Ryan because he hasn't played here, but we've gotta get a win and get back in the race."

Chad Johnson likely will be in net after stopping all 10 shots he faced over the final two periods Thursday, when he relieved Linus Ullmark. Johnson hasn't faced the Canucks since a relief effort in 2013 while with Boston.

## **Ryan Miller's return full of pleasant surprises**

By Amy Moritz

Buffalo News

November 7, 2015

It's been about 20 months since Ryan Miller stood at the lectern in First Niagara Center taking questions from the media.

When Miller was last in Buffalo, he was saying goodbye as he and Steve Ott were traded to St. Louis in March 2014.

He always thought he'd be back to visit the place he called home for the better part of his first 12 professional hockey seasons. But life got in the way during the summer and a knee injury kept him away last season.

So when Miller returned to Buffalo with the Vancouver Canucks in advance of Saturday afternoon's game at First Niagara Center, he seemed slightly blown away by the changes to the downtown landscape.

"It's fun to see how things changed," Miller said Friday after the Canucks practiced at First Niagara Center. "Maybe staying away a little bit longer is kind of a shock to the system to come down here and see so much has changed. I'm real excited for the city in that regard. There's some real nice things happening and people seem to be responding really well to that. I'm hearing lots of good things."

And he's saying a lot of good things about Buffalo as well.

"A lot of the guys have been asking me what Buffalo's all about," Miller said. "The simplest answer is you get to know the city, you get to know the people and that's really where it's at. That's what's always made it a great place. Once you show people who you are, they accept you. I think they feel you're always a part of that."

"It's a really nice place when you get to know the people. That's always been its best asset. That's what I keep telling people."

Miller is putting up some of his best numbers since he won the Vezina Trophy while with the Sabres in 2010. That season he had a 2.22 goals-against average and a .929 save percentage.

This year he has a 2.14 goals-against and a .923 save percentage and has again been in top form at age 35.

"I've always been a late bloomer so maybe I'll get it figured out in my late 30s," Miller said. "Just try to see where things take me. Just my mental approach. I've seen a lot of ups and downs. I've seen a lot of different things. Just try not to put too much stock into anything other than I just want to be out there and compete. I want to make saves. Just try to really simplify things, get back to the attitude that got me into the league."

"I was probably trying to think too much, as you guys know, so taking it back to some real basic stuff. Trying to have some fun, compete as hard as possible and see what happens."

Miller began his pro hockey career with the Sabres in 2002 and Buffalo easily became his default home. His parents, Dean and Teresa, would often make the drive from Michigan – a trek they plan on making again on Saturday.

His rise to elite goaltender made an impression on a number of young players. The season Miller won the Vezina, forward Tyler Ennis was in his first pro year, playing 10 games with the Sabres before becoming a full-time NHL forward in 2010-11.

"My best memory of Ryan is that I don't think I scored on him ever in four years of practice," Ennis said. "He's an incredible goalie and hopefully I'll have my best memory," Saturday, "if I can get one on him."

"I remember him coming to the rink every day, working hard especially in practice. He spent a lot of time on the ice. He was usually one of the last guys off the ice. He competed on every puck and he'd get upset even if you put a puck in on a rebound. He didn't want any pucks in the net, he worked hard and that's why he's so good."

He helped defenseman Mike Weber, who broke into the NHL full time in 2010-11, find his way on the blue line.

"Early in my career he would take me under his wing," Weber said. "The way he sees the game is probably unlike a lot of players ... just the way he sees things break down."

"He can talk to you to help you out back there and that was pretty huge as a defenseman to have him helping you out throughout the course of the game."

Miller's leadership extended beyond game situations.

"He was extremely vocal in the locker room and committed in the community and just a guy that as a young player you looked up to and you wanted to kinda fill his shoes as you get older," Weber said.

## **Sabres notebook: Shots are there but the goals are lagging**

By Amy Moritz

Buffalo News

November 7, 2015

The Buffalo Sabres are getting scoring opportunities. They're just, well, not scoring.

The Sabres lead the National Hockey League in shots on goal per game – 32.7. But they rank third-worst in the league in goals scored per game – 2.15.

The second period of Thursday's 4-1 loss to the Tampa Bay Lightning provides a microcosm of that stat after the Sabres had 21 shots, including many prime scoring chances, but just one goal.

"I'd like to see us execute better with our opportunities," Sabres coach Dan Bylsma said after the team practiced Friday morning at First Niagara Center. "You can look at a few of them that we had that I think we just need to be better at the execution of it. You can look at the shot totals and talk about our shooting percentage. I've heard the word 'puck luck.' We've gotten good opportunities and good looks, we just need to be better at the execution of it and look to five or six examples in last night's game."

While Bylsma is looking for forwards to finish off their scoring chances, he also wants to see the defensemen be more active in supporting the rush and more of a factor on the offensive end.

"I think the shot totals for our defensemen, and our giving the pucks to the forwards in the offensive end from point shots and putting the puck back down low, is significantly improved from where we were at last year in that regard," Bylsma said. "We need to do a much better job of even getting shots through – delivering the puck by the defensemen and in the offensive zone in particular. I think our D can be more active in supporting the rush."

"There's numerous instances last game where they passed the puck up and fall off and I think they can take the opportunity to support the rush better than they have been. We're still learning in that regard."

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While the Sabres are looking for better execution in the offensive zone, they're also looking for execution and consistency in the defensive zone. Minor lapses can cause big problems. It was just a few missed defensive zone assignments that allowed Tampa Bay to take a 3-0 first-period lead on Thursday.

"We played well in the first in spurts but their goals, I think they had five scoring chances and scored on three of them," Sabres defenseman Mike Weber said. "It's the kind of things where we're standing beside guys or missing assignments, not getting pucks deep, things like that have been biting us."

"We have the capability. Everyone's seen it. ... It's one of those things we've been really good for 50-55 minutes of a game and those five minute lapses have been biting us. Teams have been taking advantage of it and we've been in every game. It's a growing process. It's a maturing process with this team and the new faces we have in here."

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Johan Larsson has been paired with Jack Eichel on Bylsma's ever-shifting line combinations. Larsson, who has three assists on the season, has played better when paired with Eichel.

"Four games ago when" Larson "got the opportunity to play there I think it's been his best hockey to this point," Bylsma said. "He's played a little more tenacious. He's played a little more with an edge. You've seen his skating ability and that's been pretty consistent alongside of Jack there."

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The Sabres will host the "Bowl-A-Rama" celebrity bowling tournament to benefit the Buffalo Sabres Foundation on Jan. 3 at Transit Lanes. Each team will have the opportunity to bowl with a celebrity Sabres guest, including players, alumni and broadcast personalities. The 21-and-over event includes auctions, prizes, food and open bar. Teams of five can register for \$1,000 with sponsorship packages available. To register visit [sabres.com/bowling](http://sabres.com/bowling) or contact Teresa Belbas at 855-4588 or at [teresa.belbas@sabres.com](mailto:teresa.belbas@sabres.com).

## Canucks' Miller to face Sabres in Buffalo for first time

By Joe Yerdon

NHL.com

November 7, 2015

**BUFFALO** -- Vancouver Canucks goalie Ryan Miller will make his return to the city where his NHL career started in 2002.

The Canucks play the Buffalo Sabres on Saturday (1 p.m. ET; SN, MSG-B) the first time Miller will play here since he was traded by the Sabres to the St. Louis Blues in 2014.

"I've been away a lot longer than I thought I'd be, just last year getting interrupted by injury," Miller said Friday. "I thought I'd be back sooner, so it's a little delayed, but it's still a little bit emotional. But it is fun. It's fun to see how things have changed. Maybe staying away is little bit of a shock to the system, to come down here and see so much has changed. I'm really excited for the city in that regard. There's some really nice things happening. People seem to be responding really well to that. I'm hearing lots of good things. It's nice to come back here and know everything's going well."

Miller faced the Sabres once last season; he made 20 saves in a 5-2 win in Vancouver on Jan. 30, but an injury sustained Feb. 22 in a game against the New York Islanders prevented him from playing in Buffalo on Feb. 26. The added time has helped give him perspective on his career and what it means to come back to Buffalo.

"The only thing I kind of thought about was that it was odd it's been so long," Miller said. "I think (last time) standing here a year and a half ago (after the trade), so it's been a long time. Getting injured last year the game before coming back here was a little bit ironic. It's just been a while. Pulling up and seeing how things have changed, that was interesting to see. It was a great chapter of my life, and things have definitely kept moving forward for everybody."

"I'm just going to try and enjoy it and try to be in this moment right here. I'm not going to try and go back too far and drift off. This is a nice moment. I have a good life. I'm happily married and have a beautiful son. I play with a good organization and we're competitive. I feel good, so that's exactly where I want to be in my life. I'm not going to try and go too far drifting back, but I'm going to try and have fun with it."

Miller was traded by the Sabres to the Blues, along with Sabres captain Steve Ott, on Feb. 28, 2014. The trade ended Miller's time in the Sabres organization after he'd been a part of it for almost 15 years; he was picked by Buffalo in the fifth round (No. 138) of the 1999 NHL Draft.

"He's a pro and I remember him coming to the rink every day working hard, especially in practice," Sabres forward Tyler Ennis said. "He spent a lot of time on the ice. He was usually one of the last guys off the ice and he competed on every puck. He got upset if you put a puck in on a rebound if another guy was coming down on a shooting drill, so he didn't want any pucks in the net and he worked hard and that's why he's so good."

Miller made his NHL debut with the Sabres in a 4-3 overtime loss against the New Jersey Devils on Nov. 19, 2002. Over the course of the following nine and a half seasons in Buffalo, Miller helped the Sabres reach the Eastern Conference Final in 2006 and 2007 and helped them win the Presidents' Trophy in 2006-07.

Miller won the Vezina Trophy in 2009-10, the same season when he helped the United States to the silver medal at the 2010 Vancouver Olympics. He was a member of the 2014 Sochi Olympic team led by Sabres coach Dan Bylsma.

"I watched the one as a fan in the 2010 Olympics and he was probably the most valuable player for the United States team in that Olympics," Bylsma said. "Joe Pavelski's shot goes in off the crossbar, it's a different story for

Ryan and Team USA. In 2014, Jonathan Quick played the majority of the games and I remember Ryan's professionalism and supporting his team."

There aren't many Sabres left on the roster who played with Miller during his formative years in Buffalo, but those who spent the most time with him recalled what made him so successful.

"Early on in my career he kind of took me under his wing," Sabres defenseman Mike Weber, Miller's teammate from 2007-14, said. "The way he sees the game is probably unlike a lot of players that play in this League. He has a real thinking mind; just the way he sees certain things break down, how things break down, and the way he could talk to you and help you out back there was pretty huge as a defenseman, to have him helping you out throughout the course of a game and in the locker room."

Miller's career has taken him from Buffalo to St. Louis and now to Vancouver, but if there's anything that's changed about him it's how he's mellowed out as a 35-year-old veteran. One thing that hasn't changed is that he's the same competitor he was as a rookie in Buffalo years ago.

"I enjoy just how good he is," Canucks coach Willie Desjardins said. "I enjoy that he does a great job not giving up rebounds. I enjoy that he wants to win every night. Like he's super competitive, he plays to win every night. So those are all great factors. I like the fact that how smart he is and how well he studies the game. He sees things that I don't see. It's like he's at a different level when he's on the ice. Knowing what shooter is coming in, what hand he is, everything away from the puck. He has great vision on the ice. But all those things I enjoy. I think he comes with a real professional attitude and I think he wants to give his club a chance to win, not just every night, but long-term."

## **Former Sabres goalie Ryan Miller's heart remains in Buffalo**

By Bill Hoppe  
Olean Times Herald  
November 7, 2015

BUFFALO – Part of what makes this city a great place, former Sabres goalie Ryan Miller believes, is once you show people who you are and they accept you, Buffalo will always be a part of your life.

Miller, whose Vancouver Canucks face the Sabres this afternoon, spent nine seasons in Buffalo not only as the starting goalie, but as a face of the franchise in the community.

"A lot of guys have been asking me about what Buffalo's all about," Miller said Friday. "The simplest answer is you get to know the city, you get to know the people. ... You want that connection. It's a really nice place when you get to know the people, and that's what always has been its best asset."

That's why returning to Buffalo – today will be Miller's first game at the First Niagara Center as a visitor – is so special for the former Vezina Trophy winner, one of the Sabres' all-time greats.

Miller, 35, hasn't been back since the Sabres traded him to the St. Louis Blues on Feb. 28, 2014. Naturally, the experience is "a little surreal" and "a little bit emotional," he said. The transformation around downtown and throughout the area wowed him. He stopped by Roswell Park Cancer Institute to visit children before practice Friday.

"It's fun to see how things have changed," said Miller, who was injured when Vancouver visited last season. "Maybe staying away is a little bit of a shock to the system to come down here and see so much has changed. I'm really excited for the city in that regard. There's some really nice things happening."

The Sabres will almost certainly honor their all-time wins leader this afternoon, and the fans, who never got their chance to give Miller his proper sendoff, will likely roar. Several former Sabres stars have received nice ovations in recent seasons. Miller's could be the most rousing.

Miller hasn't thought much about what today could feel like.

"I'm still trying to wrap around that," he said. "I just kind of wanted to get through practice today and see how that went. But it was fun being in the building again. ... It was fun to be back on that ice, for sure. ... As far as how the game is going to go and emotions or whatever, just take it as it comes."

Miller's life has changed since the Sabres dealt their biggest asset in the midst of a major rebuilding process. He struggled with the Blues, failing to help them past the first round of the playoffs.

Still, Miller, at an age when most goalies are graying, is thriving in the second season of his three-year contract. His 2.14 goals-against average and .923 save percentage are among the league's best.

"I feel good," Miller said. "I've always been a late-bloomer, so maybe I'll get it figured out in my mid-30s. ... I think just my mental approach is just that I've seen a lot of ups and downs and I've seen a lot of different things. I just try not to put too much stock into anything other than I want to just be out there and compete and I want to make saves."

Being a father to an 8-month-old boy, Bodhi, has helped change him.

"I think just mainly just coming back from the rink ... you have even more perspective," he said. "I tried to give myself perspective and proportion here in Buffalo trying to be involved in things outside the rink, but I think this is definitely something that adds to that or is bigger than that for me, so it's been fun."

Less than two years after Miller left town, only eight former teammates are still with the Sabres.

Their memories of Miller, whose influence is still felt, are special.

"He's such a pro," Sabres winger Tyler Ennis said. "I remember him coming to the rink every day working hard, especially in practice. He spent a lot of time on the ice. He was usually one of the last guys off the ice. He competed on every puck. He got upset even when you put a puck in on the rebound when another guy was coming down and shooting it. So he didn't want any pucks in the net."

Sabres defenseman Mike Weber said while Miller never wore the 'C,' he was essentially their captain.

"We had a lot of captains through the years here, but I think he was probably the most consistent captain," he said. "He was extremely vocal in the locker room and committed in the community. Just a guy that as a young player you looked up to and wanted to fill his shoes as you get older."

## **Miller talks return to Buffalo**

By Matthew Coller

WGR 550

November 7, 2015

James the security guy at First Niagara Center is always good for a friendly hello (even if you leave your media pass in the car, not that this reporter has ever done that) , but his smile was extra big around 3 PM on Friday afternoon. Former Sabres goaltender Ryan Miller name-dropped James as one of the people he was happiest to see in returning to Buffalo for the first time in over two years.

"Ryan and I are tight," James said proudly, noting that Miller gave him a hello hug.

Miller talked to a small media contingent from behind the same podium as he did after being traded by the Sabres to the St. Louis Blues at the trade deadline in 2014. That night, the emotions were raw and Miller showed how deeply engrained in Buffalo he had become since being drafted by the team in 1999 and developed into Team USA's goalie and a Vezina Trophy winner.

His return is ironically timed. The Sabres' decision to trade their star goalie coincided with a decision to go into full-on rebuild mode. The centerpiece of that rebuild being Jack Eichel, who Miller will see for the first time.

"I'm excited for the city for them to have a guy (Eichel) with such tremendous upside," he said.

Miller would have returned to Buffalo last year if not for a knee injury only days before his scheduled home coming.

"I thought I'd be back sooner," Miller said. "It's a little bit delayed but it's still emotional. When you wait longer it's kind of a shock to the system to see how much has changed."

Miller's return also acts as a reminder of how far downtown has come since his exit. For most of his career, there was a parking garage where Harbor Center now stands.

"There's been nice changes here," the 35-year-old netminder said. "It's a beautiful facility and great for the city with the extra ice rinks and the attraction to be down here and really make downtown a destination again."

The long-time Sabre goalie, who won 284 games in Buffalo during his career, leads a quality team, which has been led by his strong play in net. Miller is 5-3-4 with a .923 save percentage.

"I've been trying to simplify things and get me back into the attitude that got me into the league," Miller said. "Just have some fun and compete as hard as possible."

The Sabres enter the matchup coming off a 4-1 loss to the Tampa Bay Lightning. Puck drop against Vancouver is set for 1PM on Saturday.

## **Ryan Miller returns to Buffalo**

By Shawn Stepner

WKBW

November 7, 2015

BUFFALO, N.Y. (WKBW) - Few players can measure up to how popular Ryan Miller was during his time with the Buffalo Sabres, both for his play in uniform, and his contributions off of the ice.

Miller was in Buffalo on Friday for the first time since being traded away from the Sabres in February of 2014. He took the ice with his Vancouver Canucks team for practice. He's expected to get the start in goal against the Sabres when the two teams battle it out on Saturday at 1:00 p.m.

Miller is the Sabres' franchise leader in games played (540) and wins (284) after spending parts of 11 seasons suiting up for Buffalo.

He missed the Canucks' visit to Buffalo last year because of a knee injury.

"I thought I'd be back sooner. So it's a little delayed but still a little bit emotional," said Miller. "It's fun to see how things have changed. Maybe staying away a little bit longer is kind of a shock to the system... come down here see how much is changed. I'm really excited for the city."

As for a message to the fans, Miller says he misses everybody and hopes things are good, because things are good with him.

## **Miller reflects on Buffalo as Sabres prepare to host Canucks**

By Jourdon LaBarber

Sabres.com

November 7, 2015

Tyler Ennis spoke with a familiar face outside the Buffalo Sabres' dressing room after practice at First Niagara Center.

Ryan Miller returned to the Sabres' rink on Friday for the first time since he was traded in the 2013-14 season. He practiced in the building for the first time in an opposing uniform and, on Saturday, he'll start against the Sabres as the goaltender for the Vancouver Canucks.

He thought he'd be back sooner, but an injury in the days leading up to his return last season and a busy summer as a husband and father delayed his return to this point.

"Maybe staying away a little bit longer is kind of a shock to the system to see so much has changed," Miller said. "I'm really excited for the city in that regard, there's some nice things happening and people seem to be responding really well to that."

As he stood at the same podium where he gave a tearful goodbye when he was traded almost two years ago, it was clear how much the city still means to Miller as he spoke about his excitement for its development on and off the ice.

"I spent a lot of time here and tried to connect the best I could to the community and felt like I was a part of it," he said. "A lot of the guys have actually been asking me what Buffalo is all about. The simplest answer is you get to know the city, you get to know the people and that's really where it's at."

"That's what always has made it a great place is once you kind of show people who you are and they accept you, I think they feel like you're always a part of that."

It's no surprise that, upon his return, Miller took the time to visit the Roswell Park Cancer Institute, a cause he championed while he played in Buffalo. He was glad to hear that rookie forward Jack Eichel has been dedicating time to Carly's Club, a Roswell initiative dedicated to supporting families of children with pediatric cancer.

"I think that's awesome," he said. "I think that anytime you can establish something like that at a young age with these guys – give them a sense of proportion in the world, what's really going on out there and let them know that there's more going on than coming to the rink and trying to put on a show."

"I think when they understand that the community is going to come out and support you, but that there's a bigger part to the community, it helps the club, it helps everyone become something bigger."

With 284 wins as a Sabre, Miller is the all-time winningest goaltender in the franchise's history. He played 11 seasons in Buffalo, reaching the postseason four times and winning the Vezina Trophy in 2010.

Nobody knows the challenge that Miller will present for the Sabres better than Ennis, his teammate for parts of five seasons.

"My best memory of Ryan is probably the fact that I don't think I scored on him ever in four years when he was in practice," Ennis said. "He's an incredible goalie; hopefully I'll have my best memory tomorrow if I can get one on him."

Miller would get upset in practice, Ennis said, even if a player scored on a rebound in a drill after the next guy had already started. The stories that Ennis and defenseman Mike Weber – the two longest-tenured Sabres – told of Miller weren't unlike the tales you'd hear from teammates of Dominik Hasek.

But Miller's leadership went beyond competition. He was one of the first guys on the ice and last ones off for practice. He was involved in the community and vocal in the locker room. For young players, Weber said, he was the kind of guy whose shoes you wanted to fill.

"Early on in my career he kind of took me under his wing," the defenseman said. "The way he sees the game is probably unlike a lot of players that play in this league. He has a real thinking mind, just the way he sees certain things break down ... and how he could talk to you and help you out back there was pretty huge as a defenseman."

"We had a lot of captains through the years when he was here but I think he was probably our most consistent captain."

Coverage of Buffalo's game against Vancouver on Saturday will begin at 12:30 p.m. on MSG-B with puck drop set for 1 p.m. The game can also be heard live on WGR 550.

While the game might be an emotional one for the Canucks' goalie, the Sabres are trying to treat it like any other contest. Buffalo is 5-8-0 and looking to avoid a second-straight loss after falling to Tampa Bay 4-1 on Thursday.

"He's a special player, special goaltender and like I said it's always nice to see him," Weber said. "It'll be even nicer to get the win over him tomorrow."

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### **COLAIACOVO OUT**

Sabres defenseman Carlo Colaiacovo was absent from Friday's practice after missing the game on Thursday with an upper-body injury. Sabres coach Dan Bylsma said that he is still day-to-day and will not play on Saturday but that he "is doing just fine."

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