



Buffalo Sabres

Daily Press Clips

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Sabres-Canadiens Preview

By Scott Garbarini

AP

March 10, 2016

The Montreal Canadiens have at least regained their edge on home ice, though it's hardly been an advantage in recent meetings with the Buffalo Sabres.

Fresh off a promising start to their homestand, the Canadiens attempt to break that trend when the Atlantic Division rivals face off Thursday night.

After having its fading playoff hopes all but dashed by an 0-3-1 road trip, Montreal (31-30-6) opened a four-game stay at Bell Centre with Tuesday's 4-3 overtime win over Western Conference contender Dallas to move to 6-0-1 in its last seven at home.

Success has been surprisingly harder to achieve against the Sabres, who've left Montreal victorious in 10 of their last 13 visits. Buffalo has taken five of the last six overall matchups as well, including a 6-4 home win Feb. 12 that came nine days after a 4-2 victory at Bell Centre.

Buffalo (27-32-9) did have a four-game point streak halted with Tuesday's 4-2 loss to the New York Rangers, though coach Dan Bylsma was pleased with his young team's effort. After falling behind 3-0 early in the second period, the Sabres recorded a 19-4 shot advantage in the third.

"I thought we lost our energy a little bit with the second and the third goal and there was a lull in the game for us," Bylsma said. "Then we probably played our hardest and most energized 32 minutes of hockey there for the remainder of the game and had every opportunity to come back and tie that one up."

The Sabres were able to overcome a two-goal deficit in Toronto the previous night, getting third-period goals from Jack Eichel and Evander Kane before winning 4-3 in a shootout.

Eichel has three goals and two assists over a four-game point streak and Johan Larsson scored his third goal in four games Tuesday. Neither's recent production comes close to that of Montreal's Alex Galchenyuk, however.

Galchenyuk recorded his third two-goal game in his last four after scoring in overtime against Dallas, giving him nine in his past seven contests. The 2012 No. 3 overall pick also scored twice on the power play in last month's loss in Buffalo.

"What we saw earlier in the season, he's not the same player," coach Michel Therrien said. "He's playing with a lot more confidence. In the past, he had nice two- or three-game stretches. This last month, he's been able to maintain a high standard of play."

Galchenyuk's rise also has been sorely needed. Of Montreal's top eight goal scorers, three (Brendan Gallagher, Lars Eller, David Desharnais) are injured and two (Dale Weise, Tomas Fleischmann) were traded to Chicago on Feb. 26.

Montreal still has a healthy Andrei Markov, who's compiled seven points in the season series and had a goal and four assists in a 7-2 rout at Buffalo on Oct. 23.

The Sabres scored three times on eight shots in 21:28 against Ben Scrivens in the most recent matchup, but the journeyman is coming off a solid 30-save effort against Dallas.

Buffalo's Robin Lehner struggled against the Rangers, allowing three goals on 14 shots before being pulled 6:05 into the second. He had posted a 1.75 goals-against average over his nine prior starts and had 33 saves in the Feb. 3 victory at Montreal.

Sabres head for Montreal with Habs just an arm's length away

By Amy Moritz
Buffalo News
March 10, 2016

The standings don't sugarcoat anything. The Buffalo Sabres sit in 25th place in the National Hockey League and have been hovering near that spot consistently all season.

So with a month of games remaining and no playoffs in sight, the Sabres set different kinds of team goals.

Like catching Montreal.

The Canadiens still have playoff hopes. After beating the Dallas Stars in overtime Tuesday night to snap a four-game losing streak, the Habs moved seven points behind the Detroit Red Wings for the final wild-card spot. But the Sabres are looking to play spoiler. The Habs sit with 68 points (sixth place) in the Atlantic Division. The Sabres, in seventh with 63, have a chance to catch the Habs, especially with two head-to-head games remaining.

The teams meet in Bell Centre at 7:30 Thursday night, then meet for the final time this season March 16 in Buffalo.

"I know we're looking at it as an opportunity to maybe catch them in the standings with two games," Sabres coach Dan Bylsma said after an hourlong practice at First Niagara Center on Wednesday. "We've had some success against them earlier in the year. We know where we're at in the standings. We know where they're at and we want to use these two games as a possible way to catch them."

The Habs, who started the season as the hottest team in the NHL, won the first meeting, a severe 7-2 drubbing on Oct. 23.

But the Sabres have won the last two, including a 4-2 win in Montreal on Feb. 3 and a 6-4 win in Buffalo Feb. 12.

Does past success inspire confidence?

"No, I don't think so," said Sabres defenseman Zach Bogosian. "The beauty of the NHL is any given team can beat any given team on any given night. The 30th-place team can beat the first-place team. That's the way it goes sometimes. I think if you're too worried about the competition you kind of forget about what you have to do as a team. We have to go in there with our game plan, our mindset. Go in there, play a good road game and go from there."

Marcus Foligno has a slightly different outlook. The forward has four points in his last two games against Montreal, including a three-point night (two goals, one assist) in the last meeting.

So does Foligno feel a bit of confidence when playing the Habs?

"Big time," Foligno said. "I think the way I've been playing, I want to get on the board and I don't want to let these couple games go with slides any more."

"I think I need to have some results where it's repetitive numbers from me. Against Montreal, it's a team I like to play against. Some guys, it's like that. You feel comfortable against certain teams. You know what you can bring. Going to Montreal, it's always fun to play them in Montreal. You get a little jacked up for those games and I'm sure I've got to bring a better effort."

Foligno has 18 points (eight goals, 10 assists) with offensive streaks. He has bunches of games with no points, then a few breakout games, then back to a scoreless stretch. He is currently on a three-game pointless skid. Bylsma likes Foligno's game but wishes he would use his strengths better.

"I think Marcus has played real big and real strong for us," Bylsma said. "I'd like to see him cash in a little more by going in harder at the net. The one play," in Tuesday's loss to the New York Rangers "Rasmus," Ristolainen "at the end of the first period got the puck to the net. It dropped off the goalie right there and Marcus had gone to the net but continued to the corner. I'd like to see Marcus establish himself as a big-frame body guy at the net and tap it in, being a factor, scoring at the net more."

Sabres notebook: Lehner to get the start against Canadiens

By Amy Moritz
Buffalo News
March 10, 2016

Robin Lehner will be back in goal for the Buffalo Sabres.

Though he was pulled in the second period Tuesday after letting in three goals on 14 shots in the 4-2 loss to the New York Rangers, coach Dan Bylsma liked what he saw on the ice at practice on Wednesday morning.

"I thought he was attentive and sharp and eager to get back in net and he will for us tomorrow night," Bylsma said, thereby naming Lehner the Sabres starter for Thursday's game against the Montreal Canadiens in Bell Centre.

The rest of the lineup remained the same in Wednesday's practice with injured players Cody Franson (neck) and Ryan O'Reilly (lower body) taking the scene in from the bench.

"Hopefully Cody is progressing," Bylsma said. "We'd like to see him get out on the ice, not with the team, hopefully soon. He's not going on the trip with us.

"Ryan, his three-week period from his injury will be Friday. That will be another point in his progression to see when he gets to that point. He's starting to show up in meetings and we see him on the bench in practice, he's even chirping the coaches' skills a little bit in practice today. He's trying to get as close as he can to the ice right now.

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The Sabres thought they should have earned an offensive-zone faceoff late in Tuesday's game after the Rangers iced the puck. Only they weren't called for icing. The linesmen said the puck had been tipped, costing the Sabres time and an opportunity to set up a play trailing, at the time, 3-2.

"I didn't see it. ... From what we know it didn't hit but you know linesmen make the calls all night long," Bylsma said. "Whether it did or did not, it's disappointing. I didn't know why it wasn't an icing when he didn't blow the whistle. He said it got tipped. That's the call he made. That's not the reason why we lost the game."

Eller day-to-day, likely out for Canadiens

By Sean Farrell

NHL.com

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SABRES (27-32-9) at CANADIENS (31-30-6)

TV: 7:30 p.m. ET; RDS, SN, SN360, MSG-B, NHL.TV

Season series: The Buffalo Sabres have won two of three games against the Montreal Canadiens, including a 4-2 win at Bell Centre on Feb. 3. Buffalo forward Marcus Foligno has three goals and one assist and forward Ryan O'Reilly has one goal and three assists. They are among 18 Sabres players who have a point against Montreal, which has outscored Buffalo 13-12. Canadiens defenseman Andrei Markov has one goal and six assists, defenseman P.K. Subban has five assists and center Alex Galchenyuk has three goals.

Sabres team scope: Goalie Robin Lehner will start for Buffalo. Lehner was not happy about being pulled by coach Dan Bylsma during the second period of a 4-2 loss against the New York Rangers on Tuesday after allowing three goals on 14 shots. "I thought he was attentive, sharp, and eager to get back in net, and he will for us [Thursday] night," Bylsma said after practice Wednesday. O'Reilly and defenseman Cody Franson each watched practice from the bench. Franson will not make the trip. Bylsma said O'Reilly's recovery from his lower-body injury will reach the three-week point in his progression Friday. "He's started to show up in meetings and you see him on the bench in practice, and he's even chirping the coaches' skills a little bit in practice. ...so he's trying to get as close as he can to the ice right now," Bylsma said.

Canadiens team scope: Montreal forward Lars Eller is day-to-day with what he termed a mid-body injury after practice Wednesday. "It's not a serious or long-term thing," said Eller, who wore a no-contact jersey after missing a 4-3 overtime win against the Dallas Stars on Tuesday. "We're talking days, not weeks." Center Alex Galchenyuk had his second straight two-goal game Tuesday. It was his fourth in seven games, a span in which he has scored nine goals. "The fact that we've been in every game this year pretty much for the most part and we've battled hard no matter who's in the lineup and we've showed up to play pretty much every night, I think it says a lot about the character of the coaches and the management that we firmly believe that we have the right recipe here," Canadiens captain Max Pacioretty said. "It's just a matter of putting it all together and making it work."

Sabres' Ryan O'Reilly itching to return; Robin Lehner to start Thursday

By Bill Hoppe
Olean Times Herald
March 10, 2016

BUFFALO – As Ryan O'Reilly nears the three-week mark of his injury, the Sabres are starting to see more of their No. 1 center around the rink.

O'Reilly, who hurt his right foot Feb. 19 in Columbus, has started attending meetings and watching practice from the bench, Sabres coach Dan Bylsma said.

"He's even chirping the coaches a little bit in practice," Bylsma said this afternoon. "He's trying to get as close as he can to the ice right now."

O'Reilly, who's out three to four weeks, could be back on the ice soon. Bylsma has said he could start skating later this week.

In other injury news, Bylsma said defenseman Cody Franson (neck) could skate by himself soon.

Meanwhile, goalie Robin Lehner, who was yanked after allowing three goals in 26 minutes Tuesday, will start Thursday in Montreal. Lehner wasn't happy about leaving the game following the 4-2 loss to the New York Rangers.

"I thought he was attentive and sharp and eager to get back in net," Bylsma said about Lehner's practice performance today inside the First Niagara Center.

Sabres' Deslauriers didn't think the puck hit him on the key icing play

By Paul Hamilton

WGR 550

March 10, 2016

Buffalo, NY (WGR 550) -- Right before the Rangers J.T. Miller scored into the empty net on Tuesday, icing was waived off as Zack Bogosian went back for the puck. The Sabres bench went wild and Marcus Foligno received a 10 minute misconduct.

Brian Gionta told me the refs told him that the puck hit a Sabre on the way down. The Rangers cleared the puck high into the air from their own goal line so the only player it could've hit was Nick Deslauriers. If it did hit him it would have gotten him on the left shoulder. Deslauriers said, "I don't think so, I'll have to look at it." Did he feel anything? "No, not at all, I can't tell the percentage, but I don't think it hit me."

"If it didn't, it turns around the end of the game."

Dan Bylsma has looked at the play and he doesn't think it hit him either, "I don't see that, I didn't see it last night even when it happened, from what we know it didn't hit Nick."

"It's disappointing, I didn't know why it wasn't an icing, he said it got tipped, but it's not the reason we lost the game, but we're looking at a minute left on the clock, we've got the timeout, it gets sent back down to the other end, Cal's going to take a draw where he's 70 percent on the night (he was 58 percent overall) and we're going to win it, but it was waived off and we played on."

Foligno earned a 10 minute misconduct after the call. He said, "I saw it as a guy trying to shoot for the empty net and that's icing. I don't understand and they said they thought it hit off someone, but there was no one around their guy and he shot it almost from their goal line and it goes all the way down to our goal line, Bogosian's skating as hard as he can to make sure it was icing so we don't take too much time on the clock and they waive it off. I was just frustrated by that. If it didn't result in them scoring I probably wouldn't have lost my cool, but it's a crucial part of the game and it's one simple call where we get a faceoff and a timeout and then make a play, who knows, so with all the hard work we had on that forecheck then to ice it and not get a call was just frustrating."

As far as the injured three of Ryan O'Reilly, Cody Franson and Tyler Ennis, Bylsma said, "Not any updates yet. I hope the way Cody is progressing we can hopefully see him not with the team, but get on the ice soon."

"Ryan's three week period for his injury will be Friday, so that will be a point in his progression and we'll see."

O'Reilly sat on the bench and watched practice. Bylsma said, "He's started to show up in meetings and see him on the bench in practice and even chirping the coaches skills a little bit, so he's trying to get as close as he can to the ice right now."

Right after practice the team left for Montreal.

Foligno: Tuesday's comeback effort was "The hardest we've worked"

By Jourdon LaBarber

Sabres.com

March 10, 2016

From top to bottom, Dan Bylsma said he was impressed with his team's effort in their 4-2 loss to the New York Rangers on Tuesday night. He reiterated those comments on Wednesday, going so far as to say that their comeback effort in the second and third periods was as fierce as he's seen his team play.

"I really think that was the hardest we've pushed and the hardest we've played, aggressively going after a win," he said. "I think they had two scoring chances the rest of the game. We had them on the ropes. They flipped a lot of pucks out of the glass and played a responsible road game but we were pushing hard at them."

The real highlight of the Sabres' tenacity, however, was the consistency with which they brought it. It started at the top with the line of Evander Kane, Jack Eichel and Sam Reinhart, who produced the Sabres' first goal and combined for 19 shot attempts in total, and trickled down throughout the lineup.

Take the line of line of Marcus Foligno, Johan Larsson and Brian Gionta, for example. Gionta fed Larsson for Buffalo's second goal of the second period, but they also served in their usual role of menacing other teams' top lines to the point of frustration.

Such an instance could be found with five minutes remaining in the third period on Tuesday. Foligno, who used his size as a weapon on the forecheck throughout the game, engaged in a battle for the puck in the corner and was soon joined by Gionta. New York kicked it out to Brady Skjei at the end wall, but Larsson was there to engage him and get the puck back to Gionta in the corner.

Gionta flipped it out of the corner back to Larsson, who sent the puck back to the blue line to extend the possession. Larsson repositioned to the slot and, on the way, drew an interference penalty against second-line center Derek Stepan that gave Buffalo a chance to tie the game on the power play.

"I think every line was doing their job," Foligno said. "It seemed like those last 30 minutes were the hardest we've worked against a really good team ... for us to be on their D, cause turnovers, get pucks to the net, it was something that was kind of continuous throughout all four lines and it was definitely good to see."

Even those with limited opportunities found ways to make an impact. Daniel Catenacci played only two shifts in the third period, but his speed on the forecheck still ended up creating a scoring chance. He stole the puck at off the left-wing wall, won a battle on the right-wing wall and danced around with the puck behind the net to get it back to the D all in a span of 20 seconds on his final shift.

Seconds later, Mark Pysyk was flinging the puck to the front of the net for a scoring opportunity thanks to the work of Catenacci and linemates Cal O'Reilly and Nicolas Deslauriers to extend the play.

"I've always been an all-around forward but right now I'm on the fourth line and that's to create energy and try and play in their zone," Catenacci said. "Make it hard on their D and obviously try to chip in with any offense you can have, but the main thing is to play hard and use my speed."

They took zero points in the standing from the regulation loss, but their effort at the very least serves as a blue print for future games, including their next meeting with the Rangers – which, by the way, is on April 2 at Madison Square Garden.

"We work hard every game and we know we can compete with any team in the League," Catenacci said. "We knew we had a great chance to win and that's why we never stopped coming. Being tenacious and playing in their zone is how you create offense, and that's what we did."

UPON FURTHER REVIEW

Foligno received a 10-minute misconduct with one-minute remaining on Tuesday when he argued after J.T. Miller scored an empty-net goal to all but end Buffalo's comeback hopes. Foligno was arguing with a referee about a play that appeared to be uncalled icing against the Rangers 40 seconds earlier.

The referee believed the puck had hit Deslauriers, who was near it when it was cleared from the Sabres' end.

"I saw as a guy trying to shoot for an empty-net and that's icing," he said Wednesday. "If it didn't result in scoring I probably wouldn't have lost my cool but it's a crucial part of the game and it's one simple call that we get a faceoff, we get a timeout, we might make up a play and who knows, right?"

Bylsma agreed with Foligno that the puck hadn't in fact touched any of his players, but wasn't willing to attribute the loss to one missed call.

"From what we know it didn't hit him," Bylsma said. "Linemen make the calls all night long. Whether it did or did not, it's disappointing. I didn't know why it wasn't an icing but they didn't blow the whistle, they said it got tipped, that's the call he made. That's not the reason why we lost the game."

INJURY UPDATES

Ryan O'Reilly and Cody Franson, each out with injuries since Feb. 12, both were spectators at practice on Wednesday. Franson is currently nursing an injury to his neck while O'Reilly is approaching week three of a lower-body injury with a 3-to-4 week timetable for recovery.

"Cody is progressing; we'd like to see him possibly going out with the team, getting on the ice soon," Bylsma said. "Ryan, again, his three-week period from his injury is Friday so that will be another point in his progression."