



Buffalo Sabres

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Canadiens beat Sabres 7-2 to improve to 8-0

By Nick Mendola

AP

October 24, 2015

BUFFALO, N.Y. (AP) — Andrei Markov had a career night for the streaking Montreal Canadiens.

The defenseman crossed the 500-point mark with a career-best five points and the Canadiens beat the Buffalo Sabres 7-2 on Friday night to run their season-opening winning streak to eight games.

"Maybe, I just got lucky today," Markov said after finishing with a goal and four assists. "It's great to have eight wins, but tomorrow is another challenge."

The Canadiens are two victories away from matching the NHL record set by the Toronto Maple Leafs in 1993-94 and matched by the Sabres in 2006-07.

Brendan Gallagher joked that he was surprised Markov had so many points.

"It's a pretty undercover 500 points," Gallagher said. "He's pretty special, year after year. It's not every day that you get to see a guy put up 500 points."

Gallagher and Dale Weise each scored twice, and Max Pacioretty and Torrey Mitchell also scored. Mike Condon made 34 saves, and P.K. Subban and Tomas Plekanec each had three assists.

"When they put up seven, it makes any goalie's job easier," Condon said. "It was really nice to see the offense explode tonight."

Matt Moulson and Ryan O'Reilly scored for Buffalo, and Cody Franson had two assists. Cody Franson had two assists, and Chad Johnson allowed all seven goals.

"You're playing a team that hasn't lost a game all year," Sabres defenseman Josh Gorges said. "You've got to play the right way the whole way through and too many times tonight, collectively as a group, we just made mistakes."

Montreal won for first time in four tries against Buffalo dating to Nov. 28, 2014.

The Canadiens opened the scoring with 5:25 left in the first period. Subban and Weise worked a 2-on-1 against Jake McCabe that ended with Weise's one-timer past Johnson.

Jack Eichel nearly tied it with a minute left in the first, when he wheeled along the blue line and traced the left circle before being stifled by Condon.

"The score didn't really dictate the game that well," Condon said. "They had a lot of chances, but we did a good job on defense negating that."

Johnson gave up a soft goal 45 seconds into the second, leaving the post open on a rebound after spilling Gallagher's backhand back to the shooter.

The Montreal right wing added a power-play goal on a similar play 27 seconds into the third.

"Both those goals were just around the net, finding pucks," Gallagher said. "Any time you score seven there's a lot of guys doing a lot of good things."

The Sabres got on the board off a no-look backhand pass from Sam Reinhart. He was gliding past the goal line when he dropped the puck to Moulson for a hard snap shot past Condon.

Buffalo tied it 6 minutes later, with Franson navigating a diving shot-blocker and sliding the puck to O'Reilly for a one-timer that beat Condon low.

"They didn't surprise us," Gallagher said. "You can just see the improvements they've made from last year. As soon as we turned it over, they made us pay. Condon made a lot of big saves for us."

Montreal reclaimed the lead when Mitchell, a former Buffalo player, redirected Subban's slap shot past Johnson with 6:29 left in the second. Markov needed 3 seconds of Montreal's first power play to send a slap shot from the point past Johnson to make it 4-2 with 1:38 left in the period.

Pacioretty picked up his goal on a low shot from the slot midway through the third period, and Weise deflected Markov's point shot home to complete the scoring with 4:37 left.

NOTES: Jimmy Roberts, a five-time Stanley Cup winner as player for Montreal and a former Sabres head coach and assistant, died Friday. He was 75. Buffalo recalled goalie Linus Ullmark from Rochester of the American Hockey League before the game, and sent down goalie Nathan Lieuwen.

Sabres veer off course in 7-2 loss to Canadiens

By John Vogl
Buffalo News
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Sam Reinhart seemed a little bewildered. From his vantage point Friday, the Sabres played pretty well. They outshot Montreal by 10. The score was tied, 2-2, midway through the game, giving Buffalo a legitimate chance to beat the NHL's last undefeated team.

But when Reinhart looked up at the scoreboard at the end of the night, the Canadiens had waltzed out of First Niagara Center with a lopsided 7-2 victory. The rookie wasn't quite sure how it all got away from the Sabres so quickly.

Simply put, a laundry list of imperfections by the Sabres kept Montreal perfect. Buffalo faltered on the penalty kill, in the faceoff dot, in the crease and in coverage. There's little chance of beating anyone after making those mistakes, let alone the 8-0 Canadiens.

"You're playing a team that hasn't lost a game all year," Sabres defenseman Josh Gorges said. "You've got to play the right way the whole way through. Too many times, collectively as a group, we just made mistakes.

"We veered off of what we need to do to be successful."

If the Sabres want to improve their 2-5 record Saturday night when they host New Jersey, they'll have to clean up a few problem areas:

- Penalty killing. There are 30 teams in the NHL, and the Sabres rank 30th at a paltry 63.1 percent. Montreal went 2 for 3, making opponents an impressive 7 for 19. The Canadiens joined Columbus and Florida as teams with multiple power-play goals in a game against Buffalo.

The goals put the Sabres in a 4-2 hole late in the second period and a 5-2 pit in the opening seconds of the third.

"Penalty kill is an issue," coach Dan Bylsma said. "We need to keep the score 3-2, and we're not able to. It snowballs in the third period."

- Key faceoffs. The Sabres won just 41 percent of the draws, and two losses really hurt. No. 1 center Ryan O'Reilly was beaten on the third and fourth goals in the Buffalo zone. Both resulted in shots from the point that found the net. Both came just four seconds after the puck dropped.

"Their third and fourth goals were just lost draws by me," O'Reilly said. "I've got to do a better job of getting something on it, at least give us a chance to buy our forwards time."

The third goal, which snapped the 2-2 tie with 6:29 left in the second, was tipped by Torrey Mitchell.

"It's a tough bounce," O'Reilly said, "but I've got to be better if we want to give ourselves a chance to beat a team like that."

- Goaltending. Chad Johnson had been solid in relief of Robin Lehner during the opening six games, putting up a .906 save percentage. It was just .731 on Friday as the Habs scored on seven of 26 shots.

Johnson had little chance on four of them, but three could have been stopped. He was cleanly beaten on two shots and failed to hug the post on another. Rookie Linus Ullmark is expected to make his NHL debut against the Devils.

"There was a little bit unfortunate in some of the goals," Bylsma said in regards to deflections. "It was unfortunate for Johnny there with the puck finding its way through. It's disappointing. It turns into a drubbing."

- Lapses in coverage. Montreal opened the scoring on a two-on-one. The fifth goal, which turned the game into a rout just 27 seconds into the third period, featured Brendan Gallagher alone at the side of the net with all day to roof the puck.

"We played a solid game but gave them too many free ones," Reinhart said.

- Failure to capitalize. Though the Sabres rallied to tie it, they could have easily been in front. They continue to hit posts, sticks, pads and goaltender's chest protectors rather than the net. Buffalo outshot the Habs, 36-26, but gave Mike Condon his second win in his second career start.

"The great thing about hockey is we've got an opportunity to come back and redeem ourselves," Gorges said. "We don't have time to sit and feel sorry for ourselves."

Stuck on two goals, frustration is growing for Eichel

By Amy Moritz

Buffalo News

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Twice in the first period he put on some vintage Jack Eichel moves – if an 18-year-old rookie can have the word “vintage” used to describe his play.

Eichel blew by veteran Montreal defender Jeff Petry to charge the net with the puck and create scoring opportunities.

They were fantastic moves and one included a sick toe-drag, but neither resulted in a goal.

And that’s starting to wear a bit on Eichel.

“I think I’m getting frustrated at this point,” said Eichel who had four shots in the Sabres 7-2 loss to the Canadiens at First Niagara Center Friday night. “You feel like you’re getting a lot of chances and you’re playing well and you’re doing the right things and then it’s not going your way but it’s a long season. You’re going to start getting the bounces sooner or later if you keep doing the right things.”

Eichel took care of his first NHL goal in his first game. He now has two goals in seven games and he’s looking for more production from himself. That’s when he starts to feel the frustration creeping into his game.

“Just trying to do too much,” Eichel said when asked how he knew he was getting frustrated on the ice. “You don’t want to stray away from what you’ve been doing that’s helped you get the chances. The way I’ve always looked at it – if you’re getting chances then you’re doing something right. I think you just need to bear down a little bit and once you get one I think it will open it up.”

Speed has helped Eichel create two fantastic goals and a host of near-chances that have Top 10 Plays written all over them.

But the oohs and ahhs of his offensive game aren’t what impress Dan Bylsma the most. The Sabres coach repeatedly talks about Eichel’s play away from the puck when asked to assess his game.

“I’ve been more amazed at his play away from the puck and his defensive play than I have his offensive play,” Bylsma said about Eichel earlier this week. “He’s been elite away from the puck and working hard away from the puck and you see that just as much as the offensive flair.”

It’s something that Eichel has heard emphasized by Bylsma and something he understands as key to breaking out for more goals.

“Coach has been on me when I don’t have the puck to make sure I’m moving my feet. Attack defenders. Make them play me and obviously utilize my teammates at the right moments,” Eichel said. “I think that’s the most important thing because ... everyone skates well at this level. The time where you can stun D is when you don’t have the puck and they’re not expecting you and then you get at that full speed and they’re not able to stay up with you because you’re at full speed and they were standing still.

“That’s what’s going to translate. Obviously I think I can get better playing away from the puck and I think that’s going to help me maybe finish some of those chances.”

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Former Sabres Torrey Mitchell and Brian Flynn returned to play in Buffalo for the first time since they were dealt to the Canadiens in a trade deadline deal last season.

Mitchell finished with a goal while Flynn was plus-1 as the two played on a line with Devante Smith-Pelly.

Flynn said there was an adjustment period for him playing with Montreal.

He had no points in nine regular season games with the Habs last year then contributed a goal and two assists in six playoff games.

He entered training camp more comfortable, ready for a fresh start and finding the Canadiens' style suits his game.

"It's just fast," Flynn said. "We play really fast. We skate. We don't play a big, physical style of hockey. Kinda just in your face with our speed and our sticks and cause a lot of turnovers and I think that plays to my strengths of skating and checking and so far this year with Mitchy and Smith-Pelly we've been able to find some chemistry and we play against the other team's top lines and do a good job holding them off the score sheet."

Flynn was an undrafted free agent when his collegiate career at Maine ended. The Sabres signed him and he played five games in Rochester to close out the 2011-12 season.

He split the next year between Buffalo and Rochester before becoming a regular in the Sabres lineup.

"I think it was good for me to start my career and development here and maybe I got a chance to play a little more right off the bat than maybe would have if I was with the Canadiens or another team that was winning," Flynn said. "I'm very grateful for the time I had here and going back to Rochester. I learned a lot along the way and I think it's helping me now."

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Former Sabres coach Jim Roberts died Friday at 75 from complications of cancer, the St. Louis Blues confirmed.

Roberts replaced Roger Neilson in December 1981 and coached through March 1982, going 21-16-8 in his 45 games with the Sabres.

He won five Stanley Cups with Montreal (1965, 1966, 1973, 1976, 1977) and was the first member of the St. Louis Blues, who picked him in the 1967 expansion draft. He played in 1,159 career games including 447 with the Blues.

Quick hits: Canadiens 7, Sabres 2

By John Vogl

Buffalo News

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The Sabres hoped to keep sole possession of a long-standing NHL record. Montreal made sure to put its name in the book.

The Canadiens dropped Buffalo, 7-2, Friday night to improve to 8-0 this season. They matched the 1975-76 Sabres as the only teams to start the year with eight straight regulation victories. The overall record is 10-0, which the 2006-07 Sabres and 1993-94 Toronto Maple Leafs achieved with the help of overtime and shootouts.

Buffalo fell hard to 2-5 overall and 2-3 in First Niagara Center. The Sabres trailed, 2-0, tied the game midway through the second, then watched Montreal pull away. Goaltender Chad Johnson stopped just 19 of 26 shots.

Put it away: The Canadiens dashed any comeback hopes harbored by the Sabres just 27 seconds into the final period. Brendan Gallagher scored the Habs' second power-play goal, giving his team a three-goal cushion. The Habs poured it on with goals from Max Pacioretty and Dale Weise. Andrei Markov had a five-point night.

Five-goal second: Fans begging for goals got their fill during the second period. Montreal scored three times and Buffalo found the net twice as the Canadiens skated into intermission with a 4-2 lead. Montreal scored two goals in the final 6:29 to pull away after Buffalo tied the game.

Can't see me: Sam Reinhart collected the puck near the goal line and sent a no-look, backhand pass directly to the stick of Matt Moulson. The winger's low shot made it 2-1 and gave Moulson 10 goals in his last 14 games against Montreal.

Quick strike: The teams needed a combined nine seconds of power-play time to score two goals. Buffalo tied the game at 2-2 when Cody Franson danced around Montreal defenders and fed Ryan O'Reilly in the right circle. His low shot slipped through goaltender Mike Condon just five seconds after the power play started.

The Canadiens shaved one second off the Sabres' time to make it 4-2. Montreal won the draw with 1:42 remaining in the second, and Alexei Emelin's slap shot beat Johnson with 1:38 left.

First strike: The Canadiens opened the scoring for the seventh time in their eight games. Johnson had no chance. Puck-carrying Weise entered the Sabres' zone with P.K. Subban for a two-on-one. Weise passed to his right for Subban, then immediately accepted a return feed. He wasted no time ripping it into the net with 5:25 left in the first period.

Quick strike: Montreal opened a 2-0 lead just 45 seconds into the second period. Johnson stuffed Gallagher's initial drive at the side of the net, but the goalie left room between his glove and the post for the rebound.

Missing the mark: The Sabres haven't had trouble creating chances. It's finishing them that's been tough. The first period was further proof. Tyler Ennis hit the post instead of an empty net. Reinhart shot high and wide after a fine passing play by Evander Kane and Ryan O'Reilly got the rookie the puck. Jack Eichel set up Kane with a cross-ice pass in the closing seconds, but the winger struck the post to send Buffalo into the opening intermission in a 1-0 hole.

First look: Sabres goaltending prospect Linus Ullmark wore an NHL uniform for the first time, dressing as Johnson's backup after a recall from Rochester. The 22-year-old is expected to make his debut Saturday night when the Sabres host New Jersey.

"It's like a dream come true," said Ullmark, who was 1-2 with a .932 save percentage in Rochester. "You're always thinking about this growing up, and now I'm here and I'm really excited for it."

The Sabres selected Ullmark in the sixth round of the 2012 NHL Draft.

Sitting again: Center David Legwand and defenseman Carlo Colaiacovo were the Sabres' healthy scratches. Colaiacovo has sat for five straight games, while Legwand has watched two in a row and three of four.

Counting the house: The Sabres' sellout total remains at one. The upper corners of the 300 Level were again empty for one of the team's biggest rivals. At least half of the fans were wearing red Montreal jerseys.

Up next: After starting 0-3-1, the Devils come to town on a three-game winning streak. All three victories have come in overtime or a shootout. The Devils have fielding an intriguing power play that has scored in five of seven games but has also allowed three short-handed goals. Cory Schneider (3-1-1, .927 save percentage) will start in goal for the Devils.

West Seneca native Lee Stempniak, who made the team after a training-camp tryout, is second on New Jersey with six points, including four assists.

Canadiens stay perfect by routing Sabres

By Joe Yerdon

NHL.com

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BUFFALO -- The Montreal Canadiens remained perfect and made some history in the process.

The Canadiens became the second team in NHL history and the first in 40 years to start the season with eight consecutive regulation victories by routing the Buffalo Sabres 7-2 at First Niagara Center on Friday.

Defenseman Andrei Markov had a goal and four assists, and forwards Brendan Gallagher and Dale Weise each scored twice for the Canadiens, the first team to start its season with eight regulation wins since the Sabres did it to begin the 1975-76 season.

"It's always good to win," Gallagher said. "We just have a one-game-at-a-time mentality. It won't change. Take this for what it is, we have another game [Saturday] night and we move on to that one."

The Canadiens are two victories shy of the NHL record of 10 consecutive wins to start a season. The 2006-07 Sabres and 1993-94 Toronto Maple Leafs each started 10-0-0, but the Sabres had three shootout wins during their streak and Toronto's eighth victory came in overtime.

The Maple Leafs come to Bell Centre on Saturday.

"We're just focusing on Toronto now," said P.K. Subban, Markov's defense partner. "For us, we can't focus on those things."

Markov's first assist came on Torrey Mitchell's go-ahead goal at 13:31 of the second period. He scored his first goal of the season at 18:22, when his power-play slap shot beat Chad Johnson after Tomas Plekanec won a faceoff. Markov had the secondary assist on Gallagher's power-play goal 27 seconds into the third period and the primary assist on goals by Max Pacioretty at 11:11 and Weise at 16:23.

"He played a great hockey game," Canadiens coach Michel Therrien said. "Him and P.K., they control the game. They were solid defensively, really effective offensively. That was a hell of a performance by those two."

Markov's assist on Pacioretty's sixth goal of the season was his 500th career point. His five-point game gave him 501 points for his career.

"It's a pretty undercover 500 points," Gallagher said. "He's pretty special, year after year. He's so poised with the puck. He understands the game so well. It's no every day that you get to see a guy put up 500 points."

Plekanec and Subban each had three assists and backup goaltender Mike Condon made 34 saves for Montreal, which can become the first team in NHL history to start its season with nine consecutive regulation wins by beating Toronto in 60 minutes.

"It's another challenge tomorrow and we realize that," Subban said. "With every game, it's only going to get tougher for us regardless of what our record is and what the schedule is. Every team is looking at us as hopefully one of the teams to beat in the league. We have to come out with the right mentality and I think we're learning that. It's fun. It's fun to play right now when guys are coming out and executing the game plan as well as we are right now."

Matt Moulson and Ryan O'Reilly had second-period goals for Buffalo, and Johnson made 19 saves. The Sabres (2-5-0) host the New Jersey Devils on Saturday.

"That's the great thing about hockey, that we've got an opportunity to come back and redeem ourselves tomorrow night," Sabres defenseman Josh Gorges said. "This loss [stinks], but we don't have time to sit and feel sorry for ourselves. We've got to park this tonight and we've got another tough match tomorrow night."

The Canadiens led 1-0 after one period on a goal by Weise at 14:35, and made it 2-0 when Gallagher whacked his own rebound past Johnson 45 seconds into the second.

"Both those goals were just around the net, finding pucks," Gallagher said. "Any time you score seven there's a lot of guys doing a lot of good things."

But the Sabres tied it on goals by Moulson at 4:49 and O'Reilly, whose power-play one-timer beat Condon at 11:04.

"I thought we had the start we wanted there," O'Reilly said. "We came out fast. I think they were a little slow off the start that we got momentum. But we've got to find consistency. We didn't keep it throughout the game. We left Johnson out to dry tonight. He stood on his head on his head all year for us. We have to be sharp."

Mitchell, a former Sabres forward, broke the tie 2:17 later with his third goal of the season when he tipped a slap shot by Subban past Johnson. Markov's goal made it 4-2 after two periods.

"I always compare [Markov], the way he sees the game and sees the ice, to a guy like Nicklas Lidstrom," Subban said. "They're very similar. They can go a whole night and maybe you don't see him out there and you look at the stat sheet, a plus player and a couple points and between 25-29 minutes. He's just happy to do his job quietly and that's something that I've tried to do. ... He had five points tonight but the way he played is the way he's going to continue to play every night."

Gallagher gave Montreal a three-goal lead when he put the rebound of Pacioretty's shot over Johnson's shoulder for his third of the season.

"It snowballs in the third period," Sabres coach Dan Bylsma said. "It's disappointing, because I think we fought our way back in that game. Certainly, at that time we had some opportunities to go ahead and don't take them."

Pacioretty's goal made it 6-2 and Weise tipped Markov's point shot past Johnson for his third goal of the season. The Canadiens scored three goals each in the second and third period.

"Our group of forwards has been awesome all season long," Markov said. "They work hard, and it's nice to see that. We just have to support them back, and try to feed them."

Mitchell and linemate Brian Flynn played in their first game against the Sabres since they were traded to Montreal from Buffalo on March 2.

"We have a good team," Gallagher said. "We have a lot of confidence when we step on the ice. No matter what situation we're faced with we're going to find a way to come through with two points and we did that again tonight."

Sabres implode late, fall to undefeated Canadiens

By Bill Hoppe
Olean Times Herald
October 24, 2015

BUFFALO – Just like the old days. For stretches Friday, it felt like five or 10 years ago as the Sabres' talent overwhelmed the NHL's best club, the undefeated Montreal Canadiens.

After falling behind 2-0 early, the Sabres roared back, tying the entertaining tilt just over halfway through. The crowd inside the First Niagara Center sensed something special could happen.

Then, just as quickly as it started, the Sabres imploded for the first time this season, allowing five unanswered to close an ugly 7-2 shellacking from the Canadiens before a bipartisan crowd of 18,214 fans.

How good are the Canadiens? They became the second team in NHL history to begin a season with eight straight regulation wins, joining the 1975-76 Sabres.

Against the NHL's best team, the Sabres had no margin for error.

"You've got to play the right way the whole way through, and too many times tonight, collectively as a group, we just made mistakes," Sabres defenseman Josh Gorges said.

Those mistakes – breakdowns, penalties, lost faceoffs and poor goaltending – burned the Sabres, who allowed three third-period goals, including a power-play score 27 seconds in that essentially sealed the game.

"It snowballs in the third period," Sabres coach Dan Bylsma said. "It's disappointing, because I think we fought our way back in that game. Certainly, at that time we had some opportunities to go ahead and don't take them."

The Sabres generated plenty of opportunities, pumping 36 shots on backup goalie Mike Condon, who subbed for reigning Vezina Trophy winner Carey Price. Sabres rookie Jack Eichel dazzled early on, creating and narrowly missing some dynamic chances he created.

After Dale Wiese and Brendan Gallagher put the Habs up 2-0 by 45-second mark of the second period, the Sabres tied it up by the 11:04 mark, getting a Matt Moulson score and a Ryan O'Reilly power-play goal.

But despite some great chances, the Sabres couldn't get ahead.

"That's going to happen," Gorges said. "We can't let it affect us. If we're getting chances and we're not scoring, the game is still 2-2."

Former Sabre Torrey Mitchell broke the tie at 13:31. Goals from Andre Markov, Gallagher, Max Pacioretty and Wiese cemented the win. Markov had five points.

To make matters worse, shaky goaltending hurt the Sabres for the first time this season.

Chad Johnson had subbed superbly for injured starter Robin Lehner, giving the Sabres a chance to win every contest. But the backup looked terrible at times Friday, making only 19 saves.

Johnson couldn't stop Gallagher's seemingly harmless stuff-in attempt in close. Markov's goal went right through his legs.

"We left Johnson out to dry tonight," O'Reilly said. "He stood on his head all year for us. We have to be sharp."

What will Bylsma do tonight when the Sabres host the New Jersey Devils? The Sabres recalled rookie Linus Ullmark, arguably their top goalie prospect, prior to the game to back Johnson up. Nathan Lieuwen went down and allowed seven goals Friday in Rochester before getting yanked.

Bylsma said he hadn't made a goaltending decision yet. Ullmark, 22, had surgery on both hips in April and has only played three games in North America.

Whoever's in goal, the Sabres are happy they have a quick opportunity to shake off their ugly loss.

"This loss (stinks)," Gorges said, "but we don't have time to sit and feel sorry for ourselves. We've got to park this ... and we've got another tough match."

Canadiens' Brian Flynn grateful for Sabres career

By Bill Hoppe
Olean Times Herald
October 24, 2015

BUFFALO – Having played in Montreal as a member of the Sabres, forward Brian Flynn knew about the city's passionate support for the Canadiens.

Then Flynn, 27, *really* experienced the electric atmosphere inside the Bell Centre after the Sabres traded him to the Habs for a fifth-round pick prior to the March 2 deadline.

"The playoffs last year, I just remember sitting in the locker room and you could hear the whole entire building shaking before you even went out on the ice," Flynn said Friday prior to the 8-0 Canadiens' 7-2 win against the Sabres. "It's a special place. It is the best place to play, and you could feel that vibe when I was with Buffalo."

The Sabres mostly lost during Flynn's 175-game run in Buffalo. Still, throughout all the turmoil, he established himself as a versatile asset capable of playing anywhere.

The speedy Flynn has fit in nicely in Montreal, carving out a role as a fourth-liner. The Canadiens' up-tempo style suits him well.

"We play really fast," Flynn said inside the First Niagara Center. "We skate, we don't play a big, physical style of hockey, but kind of just in your face with our speed and sticks and cause a lot of turnovers, and I think that plays to my strengths ... skating and checking and so forth."

Flynn, who went undrafted out of the University of Maine, is grateful for his Sabres career. He quickly developed as an unheralded prospect, playing 26 NHL games in 2012-13, his first professional season.

"I think it was good for me to start my career and development," Flynn said. "Maybe I got a chance to play a little bit more maybe right off the bat than I maybe would've if I was with the Canadiens or another team that was winning."

The Sabres have changed dramatically since Flynn left, adding about 10 new players. Flynn, however, still checks in on his old friends.

"I have a lot of buddies and check the score every night, see how they did, see how the team did," he said. "I think I will for a little while."

Quick recovery helped Sabres goalie Linus Ullmark reach NHL

By Bill Hoppe
Olean Times Herald
October 24, 2015

BUFFALO – If Sabres goalie Linus Ullmark had suffered any setbacks in his rehab following double-hip surgery in April, the worst-case scenario would've been a return to the ice in January.

But the Swede, 22, recovered quickly enough to join full practices a month ago and earn three starts with the Rochester Americans this month.

Ullmark dazzled in the AHL, making 38 saves in his debut and 43 on Wednesday. Now, just three games into his North American career, he's already in the NHL.

The Sabres recalled the 2012 sixth-round pick Friday prior to the Sabres' 7-2 loss to the Montreal Canadiens inside the First Niagara Center and sent backup Nathan Lieuwen, who hadn't played in two weeks, back to the Amerks.

Goalie Chad Johnson looked awful in his sixth straight start Friday. The Sabres also host the New Jersey Devils tonight. Could Ullmark start then?

Sabres coach Dan Bylsma wouldn't say following the game. However, sooner or later, Johnson, who has played every game this season, will have to rest. The Sabres might want to use Ullmark, arguably their top goalie prospect.

Of course, this could also be a short recall to get Lieuwen, who allowed seven goals Friday in Rochester before getting yanked, some game action and Ullmark a taste of the NHL.

Either way, the loquacious Ullmark is "super excited."

"It's like a dream come true," he said. "You're always thinking about this when you're growing up, and now I'm here, and I'm really excited."

He said he received the news Thursday when he was out eating. He couldn't tell his family members because they were at home in Sweden sleeping.

Ullmark went 1-2 with a 2.72 goals-against average and a .932 save percentage in Rochester. His hips, which he said started bothering him early in 2015, feel strong. He believes he plays more agility now.

The smaller North American ice surface hasn't been a problem yet.

"There's a lot of difference just because the ice is smaller, just tighter and all the bodies are close to you all the time," he said. "It's always a threat when they have the puck in the zone, compared to Europe. ... If you shoot it from the boards it always an easy shot in Europe, but when you're here you can always be sure that someone's going to tip it."

Ullmark, as Sabres fans might learn, has an upbeat personality and always seems to be smiling. He likes to wear colorful masks with characters painted on. He recently ditched his Bowser Nintendo mask for a blue and gold Sabres one with the Minions from the movie "Despicable Me."

"A lot of my friends and family, they just love the Minions," Ullmark said. "Whenever you talk to them, everybody loves (them). We thought it would be great to have on the mask."

Notes: Jim Roberts, who coached the Sabres for 45 games in 1981-82 and also spent four seasons as an assistant, died Friday. He was 75. Roberts won five Stanley Cups as a player with Montreal. ... The Sabres made defenseman Carlo Colaiacovo and center David Legwand healthy scratches.

Canadiens upend Buffalo 7-2

By Pat Malacaro
WGR 550
October 24, 2015

Buffalo, NY (WGR 550) -- Welcome once again inside of the Ted Darling Memorial Press Box, high atop ice level at First Niagara Center. The Buffalo Sabres look to play spoilers for the Montreal Canadiens tonight. The visitors come to town having won all 7 of their games to start the season, setting a new franchise record and are looking to make it 8.

Chad Johnson will get the start in goal tonight for the blue and gold, but for tomorrow night it could be Linus Ullmark. The youngster was called up from Rochester earlier in the day. For more on that, and also a recap of Paul Hamilton's chat with former Sabre Brian Flynn, [click here](#). Be sure to comment in the thread below, while I add my two cents in between the scoring plays. As always you can also give Brian Koziol and myself each a follow on Twitter: @BrianWGR and @PatWGR.

First Period

14:54 - The Sabres head to the man advantage first tonight. Both teams have been flying early on with few whistles, but Alexander Semin takes the first infraction of the night and gives Buffalo a 5-on-4 chance for the next two minutes.

12:56 - The two teams are back to full strength, and to be perfectly honest Montreal got the better of the scoring chances during the last two minutes. Tomas Plekanec had a breakaway chance but it was stopped by Chad Johnson to keep the game scoreless.

9:47 - It has been an even period so far. The shots on goal indicate as much as well. Tyler Ennis hit the goal post once that does not count as a shot, but officially they are 5-5.

5:25 - CANADIENS GOAL. P.K. Subban made a perfect pass to **Dale Weise** and **Chad Johnson** had no chance to stop the puck that went underneath his goalpad. It was tic-tac-toe to a T. **1-0 MTL**.

2:45 - The arena has been pretty quiet for the last several minutes as there are so many Habs fans in attendance tonight. I have been told that many of the population of Welland, ONT are french speaking and that they travel down to see Montreal play every time.

End of Period

Goal Summary

BUF:

MTL: 14:35 - Dale Weise (2) (PK Subban, Tomas Fleischmann)

Penalty Summary

BUF: none

MTL: 5:03 - Alexander Semin (2 min., slashing)

Shots on Goal

BUF - 11, MTL - 11

Second Period

19:15 - CANADIENS GOAL. Brendan Gallagher was by the side of the Buffalo net and was able to hold off

the Sabre defender long enough to sweep the puck into the net. Not a good start to the middle stanza by the blue and gold. **2-0 MTL.**

15:39 - Montreal has really lulled Buffalo into their defensive style of game early in this period. Buffalo has yet to have a good breakout of their zone, let alone a scoring chance.

15:05 - SABRES GOAL. Well, right on cue I guess. **Sam Reinhart** makes a beautiful spinning pass to the front of the net and **Matt Moulson** does not miss. That was as pretty of a play as I have seen this season out of Buffalo, and it cuts their deficit in half. **2-1 MTL.**

11:39 - All of a sudden it is the Sabres who have had the better of the play, and they now hold a 4-1 edge in shots this frame. Montreal has not had any sustained zone time since their goal by Gallagher.

8:56 - SABRES GOAL. The Sabres win a face-off draw in the offensive zone on the power play and seconds later **Ryan O'Reilly** brings the game even. That was some nice stickwork by Cody Franson to get the puck to O'Reilly. Gamenight: **2-2 tie.**

6:29 - CANADIENS GOAL. The former Sabre **Torrey Mitchell** gets in on the scoring parade this period. Just when it looked like the blue and gold were seizing the momentum the visitors steal it right back. **3-2 MTL.**

1:38 - CANADIENS GOAL. Anything Buffalo has done Montreal has done better. **Tyler Ennis** was in the box for roughing and **Andrei Markov** is able to bury a shot from the point right away and it is back to a two-goal deficit for Buffalo. **4-2 MTL.**

End of Period

Goal Summary

BUF: 4:49 - Matt Moulson (2) (Sam Reinhart, Cody Franson). 11:04 - Ryan O'Reilly (2) PPG (Cody Franson)
MTL: 0:35 - Brendan Gallagher (2) (Tomas Plekanec, PK Subban). 13:31 - Torrey Mitchell (3) (PK Subban, Andrei Markov). 18:22 - Andrei Markov (1) PPG (Tomas Plekanec)

Penalty Summary

BUF: 18:18 - Tyler Ennis (2 min., roughing). 19:11 - Josh Gorges (2 min., Interference)
MTL: 10:59 - Tomas Fleischmann (2 min., Interference)

Shots on Goal

BUF - 11 (22), MTL - 7 (18)

Third Period

19:33 - CANADIENS GOAL. Another one for **Brendan Gallagher**, this time on the power play, has all but assured Montreal of two points tonight. The forward was left all by his lonesome at the side of the net and it is a three goal lead. **5-2 MTL.**

15:01 - Subban was in the penalty box for tripping, but the Sabres really did not generate any chances. Disappointing given the fact that the team could have really gotten back into the game with more than half of the period left to go.

10:32 - Johan Larsson made a beautiful play to pick up the puck in his own zone and get by a defender. However, the forward missed the net with his shot. Even if it is not a good shot from a good angle, I would like my player to make the goalie earn it.

8:49 - CANADIENS GOAL. This game is all but over now as the **Max Pacioretty** is able to sneak a shot home

along the ice to up the lead to four. The Montreal captain gives the visiting fans something to cheer about again.
6-2 MTL.

4:38 - CANADIENS GOAL. The mass exodus had already started, but with **Dale Weise's** second goal of the game all that are left now are red Canadiens' jerseys in the stands. **7-2 MTL.**

End of Game

Montreal 7, Buffalo 2

Goal Summary

BUF: none

MTL: 0:27 - Brendan Gallagher (3) PPG (Max Pacioretty, Andrei Markov). 11:11 - Max Pacioretty (6) (Andrei Markov, Tomas Plekanec). 15:23 - Dale Weise (3) (Andrei Markov, David Desharnais)

Penalty Summary

BUF: 7:40 - Cody Franson (2 min., roughing)

MTL: 2:54 - PK Subban (2 min., tripping). 11:33 - Nathan Bealieu (2 min., holding the stick)

Shots on Goal

BUF - 8 (26), MTL - 14 (36)

Former Sabre Flynn in settling in with his new team

By Paul Hamilton

WGR 550

October 24, 2015

Buffalo, NY (WGR 550) -- Brian Flynn was just one of the trade deadline deals made by Tim Murray last season. Buffalo got Montreal's 5th round pick this June in exchange for the winger.

This season Flynn has one goal and one assist in seven games with Montreal, but he's not on the team to score goals. He said the transition was tough at first because Michel Therrien employs a system, where the coaches in Buffalo did not, "It was a little bit more of an adjustment than I initially thought it would be. It's a much different style of play here than it was in Buffalo with all the systems and stuff."

"It's just fast, we play really fast, we skate, we don't play a big physical style of hockey, but we're in your face with our speed and sticks which cause a lot of turnovers and that plays with my strengths."

Flynn plays with another former Sabre in Torrey Mitchell. Devante Smith-Pelly rounds out the line and their job is to keep top lines off the scoreboard.

There has been a lot of changeover since Flynn left, but he still has played with 13 of the current Sabres. He said he still looks to see how this team is doing, "I have a lot of buddies and I check the score every night to see how they did and I think I will for a little while."

Flynn is not mad at Tim Murray for trading him. He said they were told what was happening, "I knew there was a chance. Tim Murray had made it clear leading up to the deadline that anyone was on the table to get traded and they were going to change things up bigtime, so I didn't necessarily think it was going to happen, but I wasn't caught off guard at all."

Flynn knows how hockey crazy the fans of Buffalo are, but in Montreal it gets jacked up even more. He said, "It's fun, that's the sport, that's the team there. I just remember sitting in the lockerroom and you could hear the whole entire building shaking before you even went out on the ice, so it's a special place."

When you think of the Montreal Canadiens you think of a team that was built from the goaltender out.

Carey Price was the best player in the NHL last season and at 6-0-0 with a 1.00 goals against and .966 save percentage, he's still the best.

What you don't think of is one of the top scoring teams in the league. They are tied with Tampa Bay for sixth in scoring averaging 3.29 goals per game.

Buffalo is tied with Los Angeles at 27th with just 1.67 goals per game. Only Pittsburgh and Anaheim are worse.

Buffalo won't have to face Price as Princeton's own Mike Condon gets the call. Condon's only game was a 3-1 victory at Ottawa where he made 20 saves.

Even though the Sabres called up Linus Ullmark, Chad Johnson gets the call in net. He's 2-4-0 with a 2.35 goals against and .906 save percentage.

Buffalo has one player with two goals and that's Jack Eichel. Montreal has two with five goals in Max Pacioretty and Tomas Plekanec.

The lines were similar to how they were at the end against Toronto:

Kane O'Reilly Reinhart

Ennis Eichel Gionta

Moulson Girgensons Foligno
Deslauriers Larsson (Legwand) McGinn

Join Schopp and the Bulldog at 6:00 for the pregame from 716 when they'll be joined by Dan Bylsma, Josh Gorges and Brian Flynn.

Sabres opponent report - Week 2

By Brayton Wilson

WGR 550

October 24, 2015

Another week down for the Buffalo Sabres, and the team has gone 2-5-0 through the first seven games of the season.

Last Saturday, the Sabres jumped out to a quick start in the first period against the reigning Eastern Conference Champion, Tampa Bay Lightning. Sam Reinhart scored his first career National Hockey League goal, but the Lightning would get a late third period powerplay goal to sink the Sabres 2-1.

Buffalo would then come home to host the Toronto Maple Leafs on Wednesday night looking to shake off the two game road-trip to Florida. P.A. Parenteau got the Leafs on the board early in the game, but Evander Kane would get his first goal as a Sabre (not taken away this time) and tie the game 1-1. After the 3-on-3 overtime did not solve anything, both teams would go to a shootout. In the fifth round of the shootout, Matt Moulson scored the game-winning goal to give Buffalo its second win of the season.

On Friday, the Sabres hosted the unbeaten Montréal Canadiens, looking to give Montréal its first loss of the season. Montréal would get out to a 2-0 lead, but Buffalo would tie the game thanks to goals from Moulson and Ryan O'Reilly. Later, the Canadiens would tack on five unanswered goals to take it to the Sabres, 7-2.

What did we learn from one of the opponents from this past week?

Montréal cannot be stopped

There is no argument around the NHL when people say the Canadiens is the best team in the league.

Even without Carey Price in net, the Canadiens have been solid in both ends of the ice. Mike Condon is 2-0-0 this season in net with a 1.50 goals-against average and a .947 save-percentage. As for Price, when he is in the net, he is 6-0-0 with a 1.00 goals-against average and a .966 save-percentage. Price, who won last year's Vezina Trophy as Goaltender of the Year and Hart Trophy at the league's Most Valuable Player, continues to carry his team to success.

On offense, the Canadiens are getting goals from everywhere on the ice. Team captain, Max Pacioretty leads the team with six goals and is in a three-way tie for the most points on the team with nine. Tomas Plekanec and Andrei Markov are the other two Canadiens' players at nine points.

Overall, the Canadiens are the highest scoring team in the NHL with 30 goals in eight games.

On the defensive side of the puck, the team has only allowed nine goals against in the eight games to open the year. That is a league low, and the next lowest total is 14 goals against. Those teams are the Nashville Predators and the Vancouver Canucks.

Montréal has tied the 1975-76 Sabres for the most regulation wins to begin a season with eight.

The Canadiens will look to continue its winning ways against the Maple Leafs on Saturday at home. Tuesday begins a three-game road trip to the Pacific Division with the Vancouver Canucks on Tuesday, the Edmonton Oilers on Thursday, and the Calgary Flames on Friday.

The Canadiens can tie the 1993-94 Maple Leafs and the 2006-07 Sabres for the most wins to begin a season with 10 on Tuesday in Vancouver, and can break the record on Thursday in Edmonton.

This upcoming week for the Sabres will be no cakewalk.

The team will host the New Jersey Devils on Saturday, before going on a Pennsylvania road-trip beginning on Tuesday against the Philadelphia Flyers, then closing out the trip in Pittsburgh against the Penguins on Thursday. Then the Sabres come home on Friday for another meeting with the Flyers.

What is there to know about the upcoming opponents this week?

Stempniak making an impact

West Seneca native, Lee Stempniak was a training camp invite that managed to play himself into a roster spot. The 32-year old forward is entering his eleventh season in the NHL, looking to continue his career where he's compiled 167 goals and 208 assists in 715 career games.

Through the first eight games of the 2015-16 season with the Devils, Stempniak has scored two goals and four assists while playing on the top line with Mike Cammalleri on the left wing and Adam Henrique at center.

Stempniak's first goal of the season was an overtime winner on Sunday against the New York Rangers. On Thursday, Stempniak also scored the game-tying goal for the Devils against the Ottawa Senators with 32-seconds left in the third period. The Devils would eventually force a shootout where Stempniak scored the game-winning goal in the fourth round of the shootout.

Stempniak comes home to play in front of his hometown crowd on Saturday, and he will be playing with a chip on his shoulder.

Sidney who?

It is a mess in Pittsburgh with the Penguins right now. After an offseason that saw Phil Kessel come in to play with Sidney Crosby, the Penguins have started the year 3-4-0, and have struggled to find the score sheet.

As for Crosby, he was held off the score sheet completely through the first five games of the season. On Tuesday against the Florida Panthers, Crosby finally got a goal and two assists in a 3-2 overtime win. On Thursday against the Dallas Stars, Crosby was held pointless again in a 4-1 loss. In seven games, Crosby has been held to the three points on 20 shots on goal.

As for Kessel, he too has been held to only three points (two goals and one assist), and has registered 24 shots on goal in seven games.

Evgeni Malkin has been the Penguins' leading scorer with three goals and two assists in seven games played, but even five points has not been good enough.

If the Penguins continue to struggle this badly to start the season, could second year head coach, Mike Johnston be out of a job? With talents like Crosby, Malkin, and Kessel struggling it could be a real possibility.

Pittsburgh are on the road to play the Nashville Predators on Saturday, then in the nation's capitol to play the Washington Capitals on Wednesday, before returning home to host the Sabres on Thursday.

Hakstol establishing culture in Philly

After an illustrious eleven-year coaching career with the University of North Dakota, David Hakstol left the Peace Garden State to coach the Flyers in Philadelphia.

Hakstol led North Dakota to six Frozen Four appearances in his eleven seasons, but not once did he win a Division I NCAA Championship.

In six games so far with the Flyers, Hakstol has led his team to a 3-2-1 record, but more importantly has gotten the players committed and buying in to his system.

"He brings another aspect to our system," Flyers captain Claude Giroux said in an interview with NBCSN's Kathryn Tappen. "Just to be able to learn from him, and we have a young team that wants to work hard and learn. If everybody's there to learn, and we're on the same page, I think we'll be off to a good start."

The Flyers have been getting some production all around the ice, but the team is still at least a year away from getting back to the playoffs. With the past success of Hakstol, the Flyers should be bound for success down the road.

This week for the Flyers will be a three-game home-stand against the Rangers on Saturday, the Sabres on Tuesday, then the Devils on Thursday. Then on Friday, Philadelphia will travel to Buffalo to play the Sabres for the second time in three games.

Who else around the NHL has made headlines this past week?

Blue Jackets off to historically bad start

It is sad that the Columbus Blue Jackets have gone through more coaches this season than they have win in eight games.

On Wednesday, the Blue Jackets fired head coach Todd Richards after the team started the season 0-7-0. In to try and rescue the Jackets from disaster is former Lightning, Rangers, and Canucks coach, John Tortarella.

In Tortarella's first game back behind the bench on Thursday, Columbus give up a 2-1 lead in the second period to fall 3-2 to the Minnesota Wild. In that game, Tortarella benched center Ryan Johansen for, reportedly, being out of shape. Even though Johansen leads the Blue Jackets, in terms of points with six. It set the record for the most regulation losses to start a season, and put the Jackets to 0-8-0.

Through eight games, the team has given up a league-leading 37 goals against, which is eight more than the next closest team at 29 goals against (Boston Bruins).

Goaltender, Sergei Bobrovsky, who won the 2013 Vezina Trophy, has gone 0-6-0 this season with a 4.72 goals-against average, and a .840 save-percentage.

Up next for Columbus, the Blue Jackets continue its road-trip with a matchup with the Colorado Avalanche on Saturday. Then the Blue Jackets come back East with divisional matchups with the Devils on Tuesday and the Capitals on Friday. Will the Jackets get a win this week? We will have to wait and see.

Keep it locked to WGR and WGR550.com for all the latest on the Sabres.

Sabres unable to derail unbeaten Canadiens

By Jourdon LaBarber

Sabres.com

October 24, 2015

In the midst of a historic start to their season, the Montreal Canadiens showed Buffalo why they were unbeaten in seven games coming into their contest on Friday night at First Niagara Center.

Montreal responded to a second-period Buffalo comeback with five unanswered goals as the Canadiens beat the Sabres 7-2 to move to 8-0-0 on the year, an unprecedented mark for the franchise to begin a season. The Canadiens have never started a season with eight-consecutive regulation wins in their the 107-season history.

Matt Moulson and Ryan O'Reilly both scored for Buffalo and Chad Johnson stopped 19 of 26 shots. With the loss, the Sabres fall to 2-5-0 on the season.

"We just missed assignments, a couple faceoff goals ... obviously special teams didn't help us at all," Sabres captain Brian Gionta said. "We've got to be better."

Dale Weise and Brendan Gallagher led the way for Montreal with two goals each. Andrei Markov tallied five goals (1G + 4A) and P.K. Subban and Tomas Plekanec each contributed three assists. Gallagher and Weise each scored on the power play.

Canadiens goaltender Mike Condon, playing in his second NHL game, stopped 34 of 36 shots.

"There's going to be bumps in the road," Sabres defenseman Josh Gorges said. "I think the biggest thing from tonight is when you're playing good teams – or playing any teams – you get a bad bounce here, you don't get a goal there, it doesn't affect the way you focus and it doesn't affect the way you play, you just keep rolling.

"That's what happens tonight, you take a step off the track, you get behind, and then we kind of get in a bit of a lag there and we've got to keep pushing forward."

TIED, FOR A SECOND

After going down 2-0 on Gallagher's goal 45 seconds into the second period, the Sabres were able to fight back and tie the game.

About four minutes later, after a play was extended in their offensive zone, Cody Franson sent a puck towards the boards that was retrieved by Sam Reinhart. As he glided past the goal line, Reinhart delivered a no-look, backhand pass directly to Moulson to set up his second goal of the season.

"I knew he was on the ice so I knew he was going to be in the right spot," Reinhart said.

Franson later fed O'Reilly on the opening faceoff of a Sabres power play with 11:04 to play in the second and the forward fired a shot from the right circle to tie the game. O'Reilly's goal was only the third power-play goal allowed by Montreal this season.

But the tie didn't last. Former Sabre Torrey Mitchell deflected a shot into the net to regain the lead for Montreal 2:27 later and Markov beat Johnson three seconds into a Canadiens power play to cap a five-goal period.

After Gallagher opened the third period with his second goal of the game, it began to snowball for Buffalo.

"As the game went on, late in the game, I think we gave them a little bit too much," Reinhart said. "For the most part, I think we played a solid game but gave them too many free ones there."

MORE MISSED CHANCES

It's become a reoccurring theme early in the season for the Sabres. In the first period, Buffalo created several opportunities to score but went into intermission with no goals to show for it.

Tyler Ennis hit the post on a wide-open shot. Jack Eichel couldn't convert on a jaw-dropping toe-drag. Evander Kane was stopped by Condon on two separate occasions, first in the opening minute of the period and then on a one-time opportunity as it came to a close.

"I thought we got the start we wanted there," O'Reilly said. "We came out fast and I think they were a little slow at the start. We got momentum but we've got to find consistency. We didn't keep it throughout the game and we left Johnson out to dry tonight."

PK PROBLEMS

Buffalo came into the season having struggled to kill penalties, allowing power-play goals on five of 16 chances. The penalty kill hampered the Sabres again on Friday, when the Canadiens were 2-3 on the power play.

Gorges was called for interference with 49 seconds to play in the second period, less than a minute after Buffalo allowed Markov to score a power-play goal. The Sabres began the third shorthanded, and Gallagher scored to all but end their hopes of coming back.

"The penalty kill is an issue," Sabres coach Dan Bylsma said. "Coming out of the break, we had 1:19 to kill; we knew it was a big situation for us."

MAYDAY'S MOMENT

"It's awfully hard to play against the hottest team in the NHL and not show up with your "A" game. Buffalo started strong but a few minor mistakes were costly. It's a marathon not a sprint. They simply have to stay focused and confident. Over the long haul, their work ethic and attention detail will show up more often than not." - Brad May, Sabres Studio Analyst

QUICK TURNAROUND

Buffalo won't have any time to dwell on a difficult loss. The Sabres return to action on Saturday when they host the New Jersey Devils at 7p.m. at First Niagara Center. Coverage begins at 6:30 p.m. with Tops Sabres Gamenight on MSG-B and Bell TV. The game can also be heard on WGR 550.

"The best way to rebound from a game is focus on the next one," Reinhart said. "That's one good thing with so many games throughout the year, it kind of makes it easy to forget and regroup ... We're going to learn from our mistakes, think it over tonight, and get ready for New Jersey tomorrow."

Saturday is also Hockey Fights Cancer Night and fans attending the game are encouraged to be in their seats early for pregame ceremonies.