



Buffalo Sabres

Daily Press Clips

October 30, 2015

Malkin, Zatkoff lift Penguins over Sabres 4-3

By Dan Scifo

AP

October 30, 2015

PITTSBURGH (AP) — The Pittsburgh Penguins may be starting to find their stride.

Evgeni Malkin scored his fourth of the season on the power play, Jeff Zatkoff made 50 saves in his season debut and the Pittsburgh Penguins beat the Buffalo Sabres 4-3 on Thursday night.

"We know we have the guys that can score, but you're not going to win just on talent," Penguins forward Pascal Dupuis said. "You have to grind games and win them the hard way. It's what we're learning to do early in the year."

Dupuis, Patric Hornqvist and Ben Lovejoy all scored their first of the season and Malkin added an assist. Pittsburgh beat Washington on Wednesday night and has won three straight, six of its past seven and seven straight over Buffalo. Malkin has four goals and nine points in his last seven games.

Sidney Crosby had two assists, his first points in three games. Crosby is off to the worst start of his career and went without a point in eight of the team's first nine games.

Dupuis' goal was his first since last November after he missed most of 2014 with career-threatening blood clots.

"When you come back, you want to be an impact player and want to get back to your old ways," Dupuis said. "It's taking a while, but it's slowly getting there."

The same can be said for the Penguins' power play. The unit is statistically the worst in the league despite a number of world-class players, including Crosby and Malkin. It scored its third of the season in 32 chances, breaking an 0-for-11 slump.

That helped support Zatkoff, who got the call after Marc-Andre Fleury started the first nine games for Pittsburgh. He turned aside 41 shots in the final two periods, including 23 in the third.

"We knew they were going to throw everything at us," Zatkoff said. "They put a good push on, but thankfully we had a two-goal cushion."

The Penguins were able to hold the cushion thanks in part to Phil Kessel. The winger saved a goal early in the third period when he fished a puck off the goal line and out of harm's way during a net-mouth scramble to keep the Penguins ahead by two.

Jamie McGinn, Nicolas Deslauriers and Matt Moulson scored for Buffalo.

The Sabres have yet to win back-to-back games this season but had a chance to Thursday after beating Philadelphia on Tuesday. Buffalo has dropped five of its last seven.

Chad Johnson made 25 saves for the Sabres.

Sabres coach Dan Bylsma returned to Pittsburgh after winning a Stanley Cup with the Penguins in 2009.

Bylsma won 252 games and earned 43 playoff wins, both franchise records, in addition to a Jack Adams award for most outstanding coach in the league before he was fired after the 2014 season.

Buffalo finished with the worst record last season and hired Bylsma to turn around the franchise and aid rookie Jack Eichel's development the way he helped Crosby. The Penguins welcomed him back with a video tribute in the first period and the fans responded with a standing ovation.

Crosby got his assists as Pittsburgh scored twice in the first 7:16 to open the scoring.

NOTES: Pittsburgh won for the ninth time in 11 games against Buffalo. ... Crosby has at least a point in 26 of 29 games against Buffalo. ... Zatkoff got his first NHL start since April 13, 2014. ... Buffalo returns home Friday against Philadelphia. Pittsburgh begins a four-game road trip Saturday at Toronto. The Penguins won't play at home again until Nov. 11 against Montreal. ... Sabres F Tyler Ennis missed this game with a lower-body injury. D Carlo Colaiacovo also sat for Buffalo. ... Pittsburgh scratched D Adam Clendening and F Sergei Plotnikov.

Flyers-Sabres Preview

By Nicolino Dibenedetto

AP

October 30, 2015

The Philadelphia Flyers already lost to the Buffalo Sabres earlier this week. A change of venue could prove beneficial Friday night.

The Flyers attempt to avoid a three-game slide by continuing their road success against the Sabres.

Philadelphia (4-3-2) won four of five games before falling 4-3 in overtime against Buffalo (3-7-0) on Tuesday. The Flyers followed that with another lackluster effort against another team that failed to reach the playoffs last season, losing 4-1 to New Jersey on Thursday.

"We didn't deserve to win the game," Jakub Voracek said. "They were better than us.

"We always leave 100 percent on the ice, (but) we just didn't play good."

That's rarely been the case over the Flyers' last 14 visits to Buffalo, going 10-2-2 and winning three in a row - all decided by one goal.

Michael Raffl has scored the decisive tally in each of the last two matchups at First Niagara Center, including a third-period tally in a 2-1 victory Feb. 15.

Brayden Schenn leads Philadelphia with four goals, scoring two against the Sabres on Tuesday before setting up his brother Luke Schenn's first tally of the season Thursday.

Brayden Schenn, however, has scored just once in five games in Buffalo, while Voracek has one in nine visits.

That doesn't bode well for the right wing, who has yet to find the net through nine games. Voracek has scored at least 22 goals in three straight seasons while his career-high 81 points last season led the team.

The slowest start of his career came in 2010-11 when he went 11 games without a goal.

The Sabres followed their win at Philadelphia with a 4-3 loss at Pittsburgh on Thursday, despite unloading 24 shots in the third period and outshooting the Penguins 53-29 overall. It was coach Dan Bylsma's first meeting with the Penguins since he was fired in 2014.

"We had a number of good looks," Bylsma said. "I think we gave them some easy opportunities with our puck management in the first."

Bylsma sees some promise in Buffalo generating 93 shots over the last two games.

"It's where we've played," he said. "There are certainly a handful of stretches in tonight's game and the Philly game where we were playing in our own end, but for large portions you're playing in the offensive end. You're having offensive zone time. We have the mentality of getting pucks and bodies there. That's what we've done well."

Ryan O'Reilly has at least one point in four straight games, totaling two goals and five assists. The left wing had two assists Thursday after setting up Tyler Ennis' tally against the Flyers.

He has six points in eight career meetings with Philadelphia.

Ennis has three goals and two assists in the past six games, but he sat out Thursday due to a lower-body injury. He's considered day to day.

Jack Eichel may be looking forward to a return home, where the rookie has scored all three of his goals in six games. The second overall pick failed to get his first on the road Thursday, despite tying five others for the franchise rookie record with eight shots on goal.

Sabres' Bylsma receives warm welcome in Pittsburgh

By Mike Harrington
Buffalo News
October 30, 2015

PITTSBURGH – The positive reaction Dan Bylsma got from fans here Thursday night was genuine and he appreciated it. But with the way the Buffalo Sabres finished the game, Pittsburgh Penguins supporters were probably happy to see their old coach get out of town and take his new team with him.

Bylsma's return to Consol Energy Center resulted in a 4-3 loss but not before the Sabres put on some unbelievable pressure in the third period and barely missed out on a tying goal. The Sabres outshot Pittsburgh in the game, 53-29, including a stunning 24-4 in the final 20 minutes.

The Sabres had a wide edge in shot attempts (83-44) and the lopsided count was 37-8 in the third period as the ice was heavily tilted in Buffalo's favor.

"It's where we've played," said Bylsma, whose team piled up 93 shots on goal in splitting its two-game road trip. "For large portions of the game, you're playing in the offensive end and having offensive zone time. And we're having the mentality of getting pucks and bodies there."

The Sabres trailed 4-2 and nearly got within a goal before a shot by Jamie McGinn stopped dead on the goal line with about eight minutes left. Matt Moulson finally scored with 2:26 to go to get the Sabres within one and Buffalo mostly played 6-on-4 in the final two minutes after Pittsburgh's Kris Letang was sent off for delay of game.

Pens backup goalie Jeff Zatkoff made four of his 50 saves in the final minute, including a big one on Ryan O'Reilly with 15 seconds left to preserve the win.

"We had to have that relentless attitude and not care," O'Reilly said. "Whether you lose 7-2 or end up tying the game. We just played."

The Sabres' 53 shots were their most since they had 53 against Washington in 2007 and five off the franchise record of 58 set against the old Kansas City Scouts in 1975. The 24 shots in the third period were two shy of the team mark of 26 set in 1978 at Cleveland.

"Our team stuck with it," said McGinn, who scored Buffalo's first goal. "We kept the pressure on, made it an interesting one. There's no give-up in our group."

Bylsma had jump in his step all day in the city where he won a Stanley Cup in 2009. Right from when he burst down the tunnel during the morning skate, sprinted on the ice to shoot a puck into the net and slammed his stick on the glass in one corner to say hello to some arena workers.

"After I won the first game in Mellon Arena against Montreal, we were going to play Philly and someone yelled as we were going off the ice, 'You haven't done anything until you've won in Philly,'" Bylsma said in the morning, using a gravelly voice to mimic the leatherlung. "I'm sure I'll hear both sides of the ledger today."

He only heard one side. There was applause from fans when a segment of Bylsma's interview was shown on the Jumbotron before the teams took the ice. Then came the big moment during a TV timeout with 13:52 left in the first period.

There were several clips, including one of Bylsma holding the Cup aloft.

The applause grew, the crowd rose together in salute as players on both benches stood and tapped their sticks on the boards to join in as Bylsma waved to the crowd. The Jumbotron said simply "Welcome Back, Dan Bylsma."

"I just saw a little bit of it. They got me jumping around a little bit," a smiling Bylsma said, referring to scenes of him celebrating the Pens' Cup victory. "It was a nice welcome, nice applause. I was thankful."

"That's great for him," said O'Reilly. "Obviously, he's a great coach who was here for many years and helped them win. We've got a ton of respect for him and that was very nice of the fans."

Bylsma even got inadvertently involved in a situation behind the Buffalo bench that went viral as the night went on. During the second period, he caught a puck that went into the bench and turned to flip it over the glass to a young boy in the aisle wearing a Pittsburgh Pirates hat. But a middle-aged man grabbed his toss and stole the puck from the kid, drawing howls of boos throughout the arena.

The theft quickly spread across social media, with the Pens mascot presenting the unidentified child a puck and a Sidney Crosby jersey for his trouble, drawing huge cheers. The Pens later tweeted a picture of him holding a puck from both teams too.

"I was aware because of the response of the crowd," Bylsma said with a laugh. "I thought they were cheering for him to get it and the response made me know he didn't get it. It got him a puck and he got a jersey after that. Maybe it's a good thing the guy stole it from him."

Sabres notebook: Bogosian tests injury with pre-game skate

By Mike Harrington
Buffalo News
October 30, 2015

PITTSBURGH – Near the end of the Sabres' morning skate Thursday in Consol Energy Center, defenseman Zach Bogosian was seated on the bench waiting to start a session after the team finished its gameday paces. Coach Dan Bylsma saw Bogosian and invited him on to the ice, complete with the coach's escort as he held the player up in mock fashion.

There was laughter all around but it was an important moment, too.

Bogosian, expected to be the top minutes-eater on the Buffalo defense, has not played in a game this season after suffering a lower-body injury on the first weekend of training camp. He returned for one practice earlier this month but suffered a setback and had not been seen on the ice since.

He skated for about 15 minutes in the neutral zone Thursday, doing several large circles and cuts under the watchful eye of trainer Tim Macre while clearly testing some sort of leg issue.

"It feels nice to just get back out there and test it out a little bit," Bogosian said. "It's moving in the right direction so I just go day by day. I guess we'll see how things react after a few days of skating."

Bogosian has been on a week-to-week timetable and that hasn't changed but it could soon.

"It's good to see him out there," said Bylsma. "He's progressing and hopefully it means we'll see him in the next few days continue to progress. Hopefully we're looking at him skating more full-time in a few days."

Bogosian played 21 games for Buffalo last year after being acquired from Winnipeg along with Evander Kane, collecting seven assists. He averaged 23:40 a game of ice time combining his totals with the Jets and Sabres – but cracked 28 minutes nine times with the Sabres.

Injuries have been a problem throughout Bogosian's career, as he has not played 70 games in a season since suiting up in 71 for Atlanta in 2011.

"You want to be out there. No one wants to watch," Bogosian said. "I can't wait to get back but you have to be smart about it as well. I'm trying to do everything in my power to get back and be as healthy as possible. You don't want it to act up.

"It's frustrating. No one wants to watch. I love being around the boys. Being on the road trip feels nice to hang out with the guys. It's better to be in the mix again."

Bogosian did say he's staying engaged with the team and new coaching staff through meetings and off-ice workouts.

"I do everything except practice pretty much," he said. "I'm a rinkrat at heart and I'm trying to find my way throughout the rink and get things done."

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Defenseman Mike Weber's stay in the press box lasted for only two games and he was more than pleased to get back on the ice Thursday against his hometown team.

Weber is from the Pittsburgh suburb of Cranberry and always enjoys playing against the Penguins. He entered play Thursday with no points and minus-3 rating in seven games.

"I want to bring the same thing I always try to bring," Weber said. "All through my career I've been in and out, kept the same kind of focus and determination and do what I do and hopefully introduce myself to a couple of their players in a physical way down low."

That was exactly Bylsma's theory in putting Weber back in the lineup.

"In this game, we're going to need his physical style, his abrasive brand," Bylsma said. "We're going to see guys like Patric Hornqvist at the net, especially on their power play, and that's when 'Webby' is at his best."

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The Penguins scratched defenseman Adam Clendening, the Wheatfield native acquired in the offseason from Vancouver. Clendening, a former second-round draft pick of Chicago who played at Boston University, has appeared in just one game after being recalled from the minors on Oct. 14.

Tuesday's overtime win in Philadelphia was the Sabres' 200th regular-season OT decision since it was instituted in 1983. Buffalo is virtually even in those games, with a 99-101 record.

Quick hits: Penguins 4, Sabres 3

By Mike Harrington

Buffalo News

October 30, 2015

PITTSBURGH -- The bad matchup continues for the Buffalo Sabres when they meet the Pittsburgh Penguins but at least this was a far better performance than recent years.

It's seven straight losses and counting for Buffalo against the Pens after Thursday's 4-3 loss before 18,415 in Consol Energy Center.

The Sabres have dropped seven in a row against the Penguins for the first time in franchise history. In those seven games, the Penguins have outscored Buffalo, 29-6.

The Sabres fell behind, 2-0, in the first 7 1/2 minutes but rallied to tie the game on goals by Jamie McGinn and Nicolas Deslauriers in a span of 2 minutes, 15 seconds late in the first.

Pittsburgh took the lead for keeps on Ben Lovejoy's goal at 8:18 of the second period as he beat Chad Johnson on the tail end of a 2-on-1 with Evgeni Malkin after stepping out of the penalty box. Malkin made it 4-2 on a power-play goal at 14:57 of the second.

The Sabres poured it on in the third and Matt Moulson scored with 2:26 left. Buffalo had a power play for the final 1:51 after Kris Letang's delay of game penalty and spent most of it playing 6-on-4. There were several good chances but no tying goal.

In the standings: The Sabres fell to 3-7, again failing to put together a two-game win streak. The Sabres' first nine games all followed the same pattern of loss-loss-win every three games. The Penguins improved to 6-4 and are 6-1 after an 0-3 start that sent shivers through their fan base and raised big questions throughout the NHL.

No. 87 finds his mojo: Sidney Crosby entered the game with just three points this season and all off them came in an Oct. 20 win over Florida. But he assisted on Pascal Dupuis' goal 56 seconds into the first period and Patric Hornqvist's tally at 7:16. Crosby did not have a point in eight of nine games this season, the first time that has ever happened at any point in his career -- forget about it happening at the start of a season.

But in 29 career games against Buffalo, Crosby has 47 points (14 goals, 33 assists). He had 11 points in three games against the Sabres last year -- including eight assists in the first two meetings.

Juice to the power play: The Penguins entered the game an astonishing 2 for 31 with the man advantage, which was the worst showing in the NHL. It took them just 49 seconds to convert on Mike Weber's tripping penalty with Malkin's goal. Both of the Pens' previous power-play goals were in the Florida game, meaning the Pens were 0 for 28 in their other eight games this season.

Another injury: The Sabres were without second-leading scorer Tyler Ennis due to a lower-body injury he apparently suffered Tuesday in Philadelphia. Ennis, who has five points, sat out Wednesday's practice here on what was termed a maintenance day and took the morning skate Thursday. But he did not appear for the warmup and Tim Schaller took his place.

So that means that Buffalo was playing without perhaps its two top wingers (Ennis and Evander Kane), its expected starting goalie (Robin Lehner) and top minutes man on defense (Zach Bogosian).

In the Penguins' net: Backup Jeff Zatkoff made his first start of the season and stopped 50 of Buffalo's season-high 53 shots on goal. He played in place of Marc-Andre Fleury, who has been strong (1.90 GAA, .937 save

percentage) in the face of his club's offensive struggles. Zatkoff's start leaves former Sabre Ryan Miller in Vancouver as the only starting goalie in the NHL to play every game thus far this season.

Next up: The grind continues for the Sabres with a rematch against Philadelphia Friday night at 7. Then they make their first trip to Brooklyn to face the New York Islanders in Barclays Center Sunday night at 7:30.

Penguins hang on to defeat Sabres in Bylsma's return

By Wes Crosby

NHL.com

October 30, 2015

PITTSBURGH -- Jeff Zatkoff made 50 saves to help the Pittsburgh Penguins to a 4-3 victory against the Buffalo Sabres on Thursday, spoiling coach Dan Bylsma's return to Consol Energy Center.

Pittsburgh (6-4-0) has won six of its past seven games since beginning the season with three consecutive losses.

Zatkoff's start was his first in the NHL since April 13, 2014, when the Penguins lost 3-2 in a shootout to the Ottawa Senators. It was his first win in the League since March 22, 2014, when Pittsburgh defeated the Tampa Bay Lightning 4-3.

"It took me a period, about, to get familiar with the screens," said Zatkoff, who played 37 games for the Penguins' American Hockey League affiliate and appeared in one game with Pittsburgh in 2014-15. "In practice, you don't have that many guys -- your D corps, your forwards, their forwards -- in and out trying to track the puck. So, after the first, I felt a lot more comfortable. It felt like I settled in."

The four goals are the most the Penguins have scored this season.

The Sabres (3-7-0) failed in their bid to win consecutive games for the first time this season.

Penguins defenseman Ben Lovejoy scored his first goal of the season to give Pittsburgh a 3-2 lead 8:18 into the second period. Shortly after being released from the penalty box, Lovejoy gained possession and dropped the puck to Evgeni Malkin entering the offensive zone. Malkin returned the puck to Lovejoy, who tucked it between the left post and goalie Chad Johnson's right skate.

Malkin extended the Pittsburgh lead to two goals on a power play with 5:03 remaining in the second. Malkin's fourth goal was the Penguins' third with the man-advantage on 32 opportunities.

Matt Moulson scored with 2:26 remaining in the third period to pull the Sabres to within one goal, but Buffalo could not capitalize on a power play in the game's final two minutes. The goal initially was credited to Ryan O'Reilly, who had the primary assist.

Pittsburgh allowed 24 shots in the third period. The Penguins played Wednesday, earning a 3-1 win at the Washington Capitals, and coach Mike Johnston said he thought it affected their late-game performance against the Sabres.

"I don't want to make excuses, but that's a tough back-to-back. That's a real tough back-to-back," Johnston said. "Sometimes when you have a lead, psychologically at that time, if you're a little bit tired, you tend to sit back. I thought when we did that through the third. That Buffalo, they have a good-skating young team, and we didn't get our forecheck going, so they drilled the net and they came at us with a lot of speed."

"It seemed like we were backing up a lot. ... The best way to settle down a period like that is to attack yourself like we did in the first two periods."

Zatkoff made four saves in the final 51 seconds to preserve the one-goal lead.

The Penguins scored two goals in the game's first 7:16, but a late push from the Sabres erased their two-goal deficit.

Forwards Pascal Dupuis and Patric Hornqvist each scored his first goal of the season to build the Penguins' 2-0 lead. Dupuis scored 56 seconds in when he dove to poke a rebound off of a shot from Sidney Crosby past Johnson. Crosby also assisted Hornqvist's goal with a backhand pass that set up Hornqvist for a one-timer between the faceoff circles.

Dupuis' goal was his first since Nov. 14, 2014, when he scored twice against the Toronto Maple Leafs.

The Sabres responded with two goals 2:15 apart to tie the game with 3:20 remaining in the first. Jamie McGinn deflected Tim Schaller's shot past Zatkoff at 14:25, then O'Reilly fed Nicolas Deslauriers from behind the net to set up the tying goal.

"I thought, even though it was a slow start, we stuck with it," said O'Reilly, who has 10 points in 10 games. "I think we've been in that situation before and we haven't handled ourselves the right way and the appropriate way and didn't respond the right way, and this time we did. We came back, we started to get possession of the puck and got it deep, and the game started to swing our way a bit.

"Unfortunately, in the second, we didn't continue to do what we wanted to do."

Buffalo forward Tyler Ennis did not play because of a lower-body injury and is day-to-day, Bylsma said.

The Penguins played a video tribute during the first period for Bylsma, who coached Pittsburgh from 2009-2014 and won the Stanley Cup in 2009. Though he joked he doesn't "know what choked up means," Bylsma admitted the crowd's response made for a special moment.

"I just saw a little bit of the [tribute video]. They got me jumping around a little bit," Bylsma said. "It was obviously a nice welcome and nice applause. I was thankful."

Flyers visit Sabres, look to get Giroux, Voracek going

By Dan Rosen

NHL.com

October 30, 2015

Season series: The Buffalo Sabres defeated the Philadelphia Flyers 4-3 in overtime Tuesday at Wells Fargo Center. Sabres forward Zemgus Girgensons scored the winner on a breakaway at 2:29 of overtime. Tyler Ennis, Jamie McGinn and Jake McCabe also scored for Buffalo. Brayden Schenn scored twice for the Flyers, and Chris VandeVelde had a goal.

Flyers team scope: Philadelphia is starting a five-game, nine-day road trip and hopes to get some production out of top-line forwards Claude Giroux and Jakub Voracek. Giroux has five points (three goals). Voracek has no goals and three assists. He leads the Flyers with 40 shots on goal, including six in each of the past two games. "Sometimes you are second-guessing yourself when you don't produce, and I think that is the case," Voracek said. "Sometimes I make plays that I make on a consistent basis and now if you are second-guessing yourself, that is when you don't make those plays. It's tough. We can't feel sorry for ourselves. We have to go and get points on the road. That's the bottom line." Goalie Michal Neuvirth is expected to start. Neuvirth appeared in 27 games with the Sabres last season.

Sabres team scope: Buffalo is playing the middle game of a three-in-four set. The Sabres also play the New York Islanders at Barclays Center on Sunday. They have has 93 shots on goal in their past two games, including a season-high 53 in a 4-3 loss at the Pittsburgh Penguins on Thursday. McGinn has scored in back-to-back games, and Ryan O'Reilly had two assists against the Penguins, giving him 10 points in 10 games. The Sabres are 7-for-25 on the power play at home, where they're 8-for-12 on the penalty kill. Chad Johnson has allowed 14 goals in his past three starts, so it's possible backup goalie Linus Ullmark will start against the Flyers. Ullmark gave up four goals against the New Jersey Devils this past Saturday in his only start of the season.

Sabres can't complete comeback against Penguins

By Bill Hoppe
Olean Times Herald
October 30, 2015

PITTSBURGH – A year or two ago, as the Buffalo Sabres rebuilt their lineup from the ground up, a game like their exciting 4-3 loss to the Penguins on Thursday would've turned into an utter annihilation.

But against a team that usually destroys them, the Sabres roared back from an early 2-0 deficit inside the Consol Energy Center, their personal house of horrors, tying it before the first period ended.

When the Penguins went up two goals again late, the Sabres pumped 24 of their 53 shots on net in a wild third period, putting constant pressure backup goalie Jeff Zatkoff.

"We just played," Sabres center Ryan O'Reilly said. "We didn't think as much."

These days, even the Sabres' losses can be fun to watch.

After he scored at 17:34, Matt Moulson narrowly missed the tying goal near the crease in the waning seconds with the Sabres up two skaters. Earlier in the period, Jamie McGinn's shot stopped on the goal line.

"Even though it was a slow start, we stuck with it, and I think we've been in that situation before and we haven't handled ourselves the appropriate way, responded the right way," O'Reilly said. "That's what we did. We came back, we started getting possession of the puck and getting it deep and shots on net."

The Sabres, who have lost seven straight games to the Penguins, last had 53 shots on Oct. 13, 2007. They had 40 shots in their 4-3 overtime win Tuesday in Philadelphia.

The offense is primed to bust out.

Considering the Penguins had outscored the Sabres 25-3 in their previous six victories, Thursday showed some major progress. Last year, they throttled the Sabres 5-0, 6-1 and 2-0. The Sabres haven't beaten the Penguins since a 4-2 triumph here April 23, 2013.

Back then, Sabres coach Dan Bylsma led the Penguins.

The Penguins honored their former coach in his first game back here with a stirring video during the first period. As the tribute played, the crowd of 18,415 fans roared and gave Bylsma, who won the 2009 Stanley Cup, a standing ovation. Players on both benches tap their sticks. A smiling Bylsma responded by waving to the crowd.

Bylsma still seemed moved following the game.

"It was obviously a nice welcome and a nice applause," Bylsma said. "I was thankful."

Was he choked up on the bench?

"I don't know what choked up means," he said.

Coincidence or not, the Sabres finally woke up shortly after the tribute, getting goals from McGinn and Nick Deslauriers before the period ended.

Pascal Dupuis scored 56 seconds into the game and Patric Hornqvist followed at 7:16.

What got the Sabres going?

"Sticking with it," McGinn said. "You can't get down. That's why it's a 60-minute game. They came out, the crowd was into it. But it's one of those things we stuck with it."

Ben Lovejoy put the Penguins up 3-2 in the second period before Evgeni Malkin scored the eventual winner on the power play at 14:57.

Sabres goalie Chad Johnson looked a bit shaky for the second time in three outings, making 25 saves. Backup Linus Ullmark could make his second NHL start tonight at home against the Flyers.

Meanwhile, a lower-body injury forced the Sabres to scratch winger Tyler Ennis, whose three goals are tied for the team lead. Ennis skated Thursday morning after missing practice Wednesday. Bylsma said he's day-to-day.

So the Sabres are now missing four of their top players: Ennis, winger Evander Kane (MCL), defenseman Zach Bogosian (lower body) and goalie Robin Lehner (ankle).

Forward Tim Schaller made his season debut, centering McGinn and David Legwand.

Penguins superstar Sidney Crosby, the greatest scorer of his generation, started the tilt with only three points in nine games, all of which came in one outing. The slick center assisted on both first-period goals. He now has a point in 20 of his last 21 appearances against the Sabres and 26 of his 29 career games.

Sabres' Mike Weber understands role well

By Bill Hoppe
Olean Times Herald
October 30, 2015

PITTSBURGH – By now, after years and years of getting scratched, gritty veteran Mike Weber knows sitting out occasionally accompanies his role as the Buffalo Sabres' sixth or seventh defenseman.

"You never want to come out," Weber said Thursday, "so I understand it's kind of unfortunately built into my role for reasons unknown. ... I just continue to come to the rink determined to work hard and be a good teammate, and when I get my opportunities, take full advantage of them."

Weber, who was "really itching" to play after getting scratched two straight games, received another opportunity Thursday in Pittsburgh, a city about 20 minutes from his hometown, Cranberry.

Coach Dan Bylsma wanted Weber's physical, "abrasive brand" around the net, so he inserted the 27-year-old, for the Sabres' 4-3 loss to the Penguins inside the Consol Energy Center.

Perhaps Bylsma, who coached the Penguins for five and a half seasons, remembered one of Weber's more infamous games, the night almost five years ago he punched and hounded Penguins superstar Sidney Crosby.

Playing an NHL game in Pittsburgh, something Weber did for the 10th time Thursday, is a memorable experience.

"It's always special for me to be able to come back in this arena and have the honor and privilege of playing in the NHL," he said. "It's something I remember as a kid watching the Penguins play. I have a lot of respect for this league and the opportunities that you get in this league. To come home and play in front of your home fans ... it's pretty special."

To make room for Weber, Bylsma sat defenseman Carlo Colaiacovo for the sixth time in eight games.

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A few years back, when Sabres center Jack Eichel played in summer hockey tournaments, spectators would flock to whichever rink had the talented youngster destined for the NHL.

They weren't looking for Eichel, the second overall pick in June.

Instead, they wanted to see Daniel Sprong, a slick winger the Penguins drafted 46th overall.

"When we were young, he was, like, unbelievable, best player in all those summer tournaments," Eichel said Thursday. "To play against him, he was just faster than everyone, more skilled."

Five 2015 picks – Eichel, Sprong, Connor McDavid, Noah Hanifin and Mikko Rantanen – have cracked the NHL already. Only one, Sprong, 18, was selected in the second round.

"It's good to see they gave him the opportunity," Eichel said.

An impressive preseason helped Sprong, a prospect many projected as a first-rounder, force his way onto a loaded roster.

General manager Jim Rutherford told the Pittsburgh Tribune-Review earlier this week the Penguins plan to keep Sprong the rest of the season.

While most teams give their young second-rounders a long look during training camp, they usually have low expectations for them. Occasionally, one will wow.

Sabres center Ryan O'Reilly joined the Colorado lineup as a regular months after getting drafted 33rd overall in 2009.

"I think you're not really expecting to come in and have an impact right away," O'Reilly said. "I think that's something that I've experienced. For (Sprong), that's obviously a great thing, especially when you look at their lineup. The players that they have, to earn a spot there, that's impressive, for sure."

O'Reilly said he felt no pressure in camp as a rookie with the Avalanche.

"I was fortunate because I came into the league when they were rebuilding, trying to do something new," he said. "So they had a bunch of spots available. I just kind of came and worked hard. Being in camp, (I was like), 'Oh, I want to be able to play a preseason game.' I never thought I'd get cut or anything like that, but I was just kind of enjoying every single moment I was there."

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Sabres defenseman Zach Bogosian, out since suffering a lower-body injury early in training camp, joined his teammates toward the end of Thursday's morning skate.

Bylsma said Bogosian, who practiced once two weeks ago, "is progressing." He hopes Bogosian can start skating more in the coming days.

Bogosian still appears to be week-to-week. Naturally, watching is difficult for Bogosian, a self-proclaimed "rink rat."

"It is frustrating," Bogosian said. "No one wants to watch. I'm a guy that loves being around the boys."

Notes: Eichel and winger Sam Reinhart both played their 10th games Thursday, meaning the first year of their entry-level contracts were activated. ... Penguins defenseman Adam Clendening, a Wheatfield native, was scratched for the ninth time in 10 games this season. ... Penguins forward Kevin Porter played 43 games with the Sabres over a two-year stretch. ... Penguins backup goalie Jeff Zatkoff made his season debut Thursday, his first NHL start since April 14, 2014.

Pens Hold Off Late Sabres Rush

By Dan Cave

WGR 550

October 30, 2015

Matt Moulson notched his 3rd goal of the season on Thursday, part of a final period that saw Buffalo rack up 24 shots, but the Penguins hung for the 4-3 victory. Pittsburgh backup netminder Jeff Zatkoff, making his season debut, came up with 50 saves in the win. Chad Johnson stopped 25 of 29 in the loss.

Scoring

- Sidney Crosby assisted on both of Pittsburgh's opening period goals. Crosby's rebound was shoveled in by Pascal Dupuis just 56 seconds into the game. Later, Crosby found Patric Hornqvist alone in the slot and Hornqvist's snapshot beat Johnson cleanly for the 2-0 lead.
- The Sabres responded with two goals in the span of 2:15, courtesy of Jamie McGinn and Nicolas Deslauriers. McGinn struck first, redirecting a Rasmus Ristolainen point shot (that also deflected off Tim Schaller). Minutes later, Ryan O'Reilly set up Deslauriers from behind the net, winging a pass in front for the successful one-timer.
- Pittsburgh regained its two-goal lead in the 2nd period. Ben Lovejoy gathered his own rebound moments after stepping out of the penalty box for the 3-2 lead. Evgeni Malkin made it 4-2 with a tap-in power play goal later in the period.
- Matt Moulson's late goal (originally credited to O'Reilly) at 17:34 pulled Buffalo to within a goal, but Zatkoff stood tall over the final 2:30, which included a Buffalo power play.

Game Notes

- 53 shots marked Buffalo's most since 10/13/07 vs. Washington (53).
- The Sabres hit the 40-shot mark for the second consecutive game after recording 40 in Tuesday's win at Philadelphia.
- Last season, the Sabres' highest shot total in a single game was 38 against Colorado on 3/28/15.
- Jack Eichel led Buffalo with eight of the team's 53 shots. Jamie McGinn finished with six while Rasmus Ristolainen and Brian Gionta had five each.
- For the third time this season, the Sabres surrendered a goal in the opening 2:00 of the game (10/8 vs. Ottawa, 10/21 vs. Toronto).
- With his two assists on Thursday, O'Reilly now has seven points in his last four 4 games (2 G, 5 A)
- The Pens entered the game 2 for 31 on the power play -- they went 1 for 1 on Thursday.
- Dan Bylsma, returning to Pittsburgh for the first time, earned an ovation from the fans at Consol Energy Center following a tribute video
- Bylsma called Ennis "day-to-day" with a lower body injury.

What's Next

The Sabres immediately return home for their second meeting with the Flyers in four days. Buffalo and Philadelphia will faceoff at First Niagara Center at 7 p.m. on Friday. Hear the call on WGR 550 and the Buffalo Sabres Radio Network.

Sabres-Penguins: From the Locker Room

WGR 550

October 30, 2015

Read Ryan O'Reilly's postgame reaction to his team's play in the final period of Thursday's 4-3 loss to Pittsburgh, plus Nicolas Deslauriers on Pens goalie Jeff Zatkoff, and Dan Bylsma's thoughts on returning to Consol Energy Center.

Ryan O'Reilly

"Being down two [goals], we just kind of had to have that relentless attitude and not care whether you lose 7-2 or end up tying the game. We just played. We didn't think as much."

"It was a slow start, but we stuck with it. We've been in this situation before and we haven't handled ourselves in the appropriate way, didn't respond the right way. Tonight we did. We came back, started getting possession of the puck, getting it deep, getting shots on net and the game started to swing our way."

Nicolas Deslauriers

"I played with Jeff [Zatkoff] in the minors, in Manchester. He's a good goalie. He works hard in practice so maybe that's why he was ready for his first matchup. The bounces weren't on our side, but we put a lot of shots there. He did a great job."

Dan Bylsma

"We had a number of good looks...their defenseman gets a stick on one late there, keeps it out of the net. I think our shot attempts were 30-plus in the 3rd. Just coming from too far behind."

"I just saw a little bit of [the video tribute]. It got me jumping around a little bit. It was obviously a nice welcome and nice applause, and I was thankful."

Bad bounces prevent Sabres from comeback in Pittsburgh

By Jourdon LaBarber

Sabres.com

October 30, 2015

PITTSBURGH – The Buffalo Sabres had already come back from a two-goal deficit once by the time Pittsburgh jumped out to a 4-2 lead with 5:03 to play in the second period Thursday night.

To come back a second time, it turned out, they would need a few more bounces.

Matt Moulson tipped in a goal on a shot by Ryan O'Reilly to cut the deficit to one with 2:26 to play but the Sabres couldn't find the back of the net again in a 4-3 loss to the Pittsburgh Penguins at Consol Energy Center. Buffalo recorded a season-high 53 shots in the loss, marking the team's highest shot total since they put up 53 on Washington back on Oct. 13, 2007.

"We had a number of good looks and I think their defenseman gets a stick on one late, keeps it out of the net, and I think are shot attempts are 30-plus in the third," Sabres coach Dan Bylsma said. "[We were] just coming from too far behind."

In addition to Moulson's marker, Jamie McGinn and Nicolas Deslauriers both scored their second goals of the season. Ryan O'Reilly and Rasmus Ristolainen each tallied two assists while Chad Johnson stopped 25 of 29 shots in net for Buffalo.

Penguins' goaltender Jeff Zatkoff made 50 saves in his first start of the season.

The game came down to the wire as Moulson's stick got tied up by Penguins' defenders Ben Lovejoy and Rob Scuderi as he attempted to connect on a loose puck in front of an open net with only seven seconds to play.

It wasn't the only tough break for Buffalo. Earlier in the third period, when the Sabres still trailed by two, McGinn nearly scored his second goal of the game but the puck stopped on the very edge of the goal line.

"It's unfortunate, a tough bounce that would have changed a lot," McGinn said. "We would have swung the momentum way in our favor and we still would have had enough time."

Even so, the Sabres were able to put themselves in a position to tie the game in a third period in which they outshot the Penguins 24-4. When Moulson tipped O'Reilly's shot, with over two minutes still left to play, it gave Buffalo new life.

"We played together," McGinn said. "There's a lot of supporting around the rink, you know those little chip plays behind with a guy coming through, and we held onto the puck down in the offensive end and made smart plays. When you do that well you get a lot of chances and next time the puck's going to hit the back of the net."

ENNIS SCRATCHED

Sabres' forward Tyler Ennis did not dress for Thursday's game due to a lower-body injury. Ennis was held out of practice on Wednesday for a maintenance day but participated in the team's morning skate on Thursday.

Bylsma said afterward that he is day-to-day. The Sabres travel home to take on the Flyers on Friday.

Tim Schaller was added to the lineup in Ennis' place and recorded his first point of the season with his assist on McGinn's goal. Marcus Foligno replaced Ennis on Buffalo's top line alongside Deslauriers and O'Reilly.

FIRST-PERIOD REBOUND

The game looked like it might have potential to get out of hand early when the Sabres trailed 2-0 just 7:16 into the first period. But just as quickly as they dug themselves into the hole, they were able to climb right back out before the first intermission.

With 5:35 to play in the period, Ristolainen took a shot from the blue line that touched two Sabres' sticks on its way to the net – first Schaller's on the edge of the circle and then McGinn's in front of the net. It was McGinn's second-straight game with a goal.

A few minutes later, Deslauriers was fed from behind the net by O'Reilly and banked a shot off the right post to tie the game.

"It was a slow start, [but] we stuck with it," O'Reilly said. "I think we've been in the situation before and we haven't handled ourselves the appropriate way ... we came back, we started getting possession of the puck and getting it deep and [putting] shots on net and the game started swinging our way.

"Unfortunately in the second, we didn't continue what we wanted to do."

FALLING BEHIND

For as good as they were at the end of the first and then for the entirety of the third, the Sabres struggled to limit the Penguins' chances in the second period.

Evgeni Malkin took the puck into the offensive zone and delivered a pass to Lovejoy just as he came out of the penalty box eight minutes into the second. Lovejoy's initial shot deflected off of Johnson's pad, but he scored on his own rebound to put Pittsburgh on the board.

Later, with 5:03 left to play in the period, Pittsburgh was on their only power play of the game when Malkin scored his own goal on another rebound attempt. Malkin's goal was only the Penguins' third power-play goal of the season and it gave them the 4-2 lead that they held until the final three minutes of the game.

CROSBY HEATS UP

Sidney Crosby had only scored three points this season, all of which came in one game against the Florida Panthers on Oct. 20. On Thursday, he wasted little time in adding to that total.

Crosby came off the bench for his first shift of the game with the Penguins in the offensive zone, received the puck from Lovejoy at the blue line, then sent a shot off of Johnson's right pad that Pascal Dupuis was able to clean up to put Pittsburgh on the board 56 seconds into the contest.

Later in the period, Crosby delivered a backhand pass through traffic to set up Patric Hornqvist, who beat Johnson to his glove side from between the circles. Hornqvist also tallied two points (1+1) for Pittsburgh in the victory.

PITTSBURGH SAYS 'THANK YOU'

Following Thursday's morning skate, Bylsma said that he expected to receive a mixed reaction from the Pittsburgh crowd as he returned to coach against his former team for the first time.

He was wrong.

It seemed as if everyone in attendance joined in for a standing ovation when Bylsma was recognized in a video tribute on the Jumbotron during the first period. He received more applause when he was shown on the board in the third.

It was a special moment for Bylsma, who spent six seasons with the Penguins and lifted the Stanley Cup as their coach in 2009.

"I just saw a little bit of it, they got me jumping around a little bit," he said. "It was a nice welcome and a nice applause. I was thankful."

MAYDAY'S MOMENT

"Dan Bylsma used his whole bench to generate 53 shots, with every player registering at least one shot. Only Tim Schaller, at 8:43, was under ten minutes and was effective and noticeable throughout. Moving forward, I see this balanced ice time as a strength for the Sabres"— Brad May, Sabres studio analyst.

LET'S HAVE ANOTHER

The Sabres will fly home to host the Philadelphia Flyers on Friday night 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 live on WGR 550 with puck drop set for 7 p.m.