



Buffalo Sabres

Daily Press Clips

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Sabres-Lightning preview

By Jordan Garretson

Associated Press

November 9, 2015

The previously high-scoring Tampa Bay Lightning are slumping offensively, though a difficult early schedule hasn't done them any favors.

Playing the Buffalo Sabres for already the fourth and final time Tuesday night at home, though, could continue to provide a temporary elixir for their struggles.

Tampa Bay (7-7-2) has played a league-high 11 road games. Six of its next seven are at home - where it's just 2-3-0 - while Buffalo's five road contests are tied for the fewest in the NHL.

The Lightning averaged 3.4 goals through their first eight contests but have managed 11 during a 2-5-1 stretch, scoring one or none in six of those games. Plus, Tampa Bay has wasted strong defensive efforts during that span, surrendering 15 goals in the eight games.

The Lightning lost 1-0 at Minnesota on Saturday, getting shut out for the third time despite 31 shots on goal.

"We created a lot of chances," defenseman Anton Stralman said. "(Wild goaltender Devan Dubnyk) made some unbelievable saves. You can't take those away from him. However he saves them, he did it. Some of them, we definitely want back. It's just the way it goes for us right now."

The loss of Ondrej Palat won't help, as the left wing will miss three to five weeks with a lower-body injury after leaving in the second period. Palat's seven points are tied for fourth on the club.

"When you see somebody like him go off the way he did, it's never encouraging," coach Jon Cooper said. "... You don't want to lose anybody, but he's a big part of our team."

Nearly half of Tampa Bay's victories have come against the Sabres (6-8-0), whom it's outscored 10-3 in sweeping three meetings despite being outshot 88-75. The Lightning own a 25-5 edge in goals during a seven-game series winning streak.

Center Tyler Johnson has four goals and nine assists in his last 12 meetings.

Buffalo has won three of four, the only loss coming by a 4-1 score at home to Tampa Bay on Thursday. Rasmus Ristolainen scored his second goal with 16.8 seconds left in Saturday's 3-2 win over Vancouver, while Jack Eichel had two assists for his first multipoint game.

Linus Ullmark stopped 35 shots after getting pulled from Thursday's defeat after surrendering three goals on 11 shots in the first period.

"It was pretty exciting," Ristolainen said. "But two points are a big thing for us."

Eichel has four points in his last four games after recording three in his first 10, but has managed one point in the three meetings with the Lightning.

Ryan O'Reilly leads the Sabres with 13 points, though he's gone without one in a season-high three straight games.

Ben Bishop has won eight straight starts against Buffalo while posting a 1.48 goals-against average. He's lost his last five overall starts despite a 1.63 GAA.

Nikita Kucherov is pointless in five career home games against Buffalo, though he has four goals and two assists in his last six matchups overall.

Sabres get one last shot at Lightning

By John Vogl

Buffalo News

November 9, 2015

Ryan Miller's analytical mind is probably more impressive than his talent. The goaltender has an insightful way of seeing hockey, and it's made him an expert at what is happening on the ice.

When he watched the Sabres on Saturday, he saw a team loaded with talent but struggling to gain confidence. A few things seem to be holding Buffalo back.

One of them is Tampa Bay.

It seems whenever the Sabres start feeling good about themselves, the Lightning come along and knock them back down.

Buffalo is 6-8 overall but 0-3 against the Bolts, with the final meeting in the four-game season series coming Tuesday in Tampa.

"We don't want to let them sweep us through the season," center Jack Eichel said Monday. "This will be an important game for us. We definitely have a lot to prove to ourselves in overcoming them."

The losses to the defending Eastern Conference champions have come in a variety of ways.

Tampa easily won the opener, 4-1. The Sabres played one of their best periods of the season to start Game Two, but they couldn't hold off the Lightning in a 2-1 loss. Tampa took advantage of early mistakes Thursday to open a 3-0 lead in another 4-1 win.

Repeatedly failing to measure up to a team regarded as elite has taken a toll.

"It's a good challenge for us," center Ryan O'Reilly said in First Niagara Center. "Obviously, it's frustrating. I think seeing these guys so much right now, it's a little more intense than other games. We're frustrated. We haven't beat them yet. We know we have to have a good game, for sure."

It's said that learning to win in the NHL is a process, and O'Reilly believes it is true. He agrees Miller might be on to something when he says the Sabres have yet to break out of their shell.

"It makes sense," O'Reilly said. "I myself wasn't on a winning team last year. All the guys here weren't on a winning team as well. We're trying to find out how to get these wins together and feel that and feed off it. It's a learning process, I think, for all of us. It's something that we will discover. It's going to take time.

"Obviously, we want the results right away, but we have to do it game-by-game. This Tampa team, they're skilled. You can tell they made a good run last year. You can tell by the way they play. They don't panic. They're controlled. They play smart. We have to outdo that. We have to come in more intense than them and want it right away."

The Sabres are catching a break because Tampa Bay received bad news Monday.

Forward Ondrej Palat, who is tied for fifth on the team in scoring with seven points, will miss three to five weeks with an ankle injury.

"He's an extremely valuable player to our team," Lightning coach Jon Cooper said in Tampa. "Our depth will be tested."

Aside from their domination of the Sabres, Tampa Bay has been average. It is 7-7-2, including 2-3 at home, and even in goal differential.

That hasn't stopped the Lightning from displaying some swagger. They have won in the past and are confident they can do it again.

The Sabres are still seeking that winning attitude.

They're getting close with victories in three of the last four. Finally beating the Lightning might help their confidence catch up to their talent.

"We're finding ways to win," captain Brian Gionta said. "We're a team that's maturing in that sense. We've been playing good hockey for most of the year, with spurts that are really good. At times, we still make mistakes that kind of hurt us, but that's part of the learning process.

"I like the way our team has played pretty much all year, how we've competed, how we've stayed in games, how we've dominated some parts of games. It's a much better feeling coming in day-to-day knowing we're growing as a team."

Sabres notebook: Another week and still no Bogosian

By John Vogl

Buffalo News

November 9, 2015

One of these days, the Sabres will have Zach Bogosian back on their blue line. It's still not clear when that day will come.

Another work week started for the Sabres on Monday, and once again Bogosian was not on the ice. Buffalo's No. 1 defenseman has yet to play after suffering a lower-body injury during the opening days of training camp, but coach Dan Bylsma insists he's not frustrated with Bogosian's unexpectedly long recovery.

"Not that much," Bylsma said in First Niagara Center. "I would actually be more if we had played him five games and then he'd sat out 14. I'd probably be a little more. It'll be a good trade" when he comes back.

There is still no timetable for that to happen, however. The Sabres' next two games are on the road, Tuesday in Tampa Bay and Thursday in Florida, and that will bring Bogosian's total to 16 games missed this season.

"He's not going on the trip with us," Bylsma said. "He will be skating back here and has ramped up where he's at. He's in some higher-level stages than three days ago.

"He's doing well, on progression, building a foundation. There is a date when you will see him. Eventually, you will see it come to fruition."

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Bylsma played against Phil Housley. He didn't like it.

"You feared playing against this guy because you could not catch him," Bylsma said of the defenseman, who was inducted into the Hockey Hall of Fame on Monday night. "You couldn't catch this guy if you tried. A young, American-born player we love and feared playing against his speed."

Housley, who spent his first eight seasons in Buffalo, became the 13th person with Sabres ties formally inducted into the hall. The other players are Gilbert Perreault, Pat LaFontaine, Dale Hawerchuk, Doug Gilmour, Dick Duff, Grant Fuhr, Clark Gillies and Tim Horton. Also previously inducted were co-founder Seymour H. Knox III and coaches Scotty Bowman, Punch Imlach and Marcel Pronovost.

Announcers Ted Darling, Rick Jeanneret and Harry Neale have plaques in the hall after winning the Foster Hewitt Award for excellence in broadcasting. Charlie Barton, Dick Johnston, Jack Gatedcliff and Jim Kelley were honored by the hall with the Elmer Ferguson Award for distinguished journalism.

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The latest line combinations for the Sabres will feature Jack Eichel skating in the middle of left wing Jamie McGinn and right wing Tyler Ennis.

"I'd like to see that creativity together," Bylsma said. "I know Jack likes to have the puck. I know Tyler likes to have the puck. So there's been a concern that there's only one puck for the two of them, but two skilled players having the chance to play together and create off each other is what we're hoping for."

Ennis set up the winning goal in Saturday's 3-2 victory over Vancouver, but he's hardly happy with his season. He has three goals and seven points in 12 games. He's biggest troubles have come in the defensive zone. He's minus-6, and 70 percent of the five-on-five goals scored when he's on the ice have come from the opponent.

"I've still got another step," Ennis said. "I can capitalize more and make better plays out there. I think the last play was a good play, but I can still play a better 60 minutes. Just creating more, play better defensively. Getting on the plus side of the game one of these days would be nice."

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Sabres defenseman Carlo Colaiacovo, who has missed two games with an upper-body injury, practiced and has been cleared to return. Evander Kane walked around the arena with a brace on his left knee, but he is at least two weeks away. ... Defenseman Jake McCabe, who skated a career-high 23:47 during Saturday's win, has drawn praise from Bylsma.

"His skating ability has been a huge improvement for our lineup," the coach said. "His responsibility and minutes have gone up virtually with every game. ... It's not spotless, but his ability and what he's done have been a huge, huge improvement for our back end since he's got in there."

Lightning, without Palat, aim for sweep of Sabres

By Colin Stephenson

NHL.com

November 9, 2015

SABRES (6-8-0) at LIGHTNING (7-7-2)

TV: NBCSN

Season series: Three first period goals and a 30-save performance by backup goaltender Andrei Vasilevskiy propelled the Tampa Bay Lightning to victory over the Buffalo Sabres on Nov. 5. Nikita Kucherov had a goal and an assist for Tampa Bay, which won its seventh straight game against Buffalo, dating to Dec. 4, 2014. Chad Johnson played the final two periods in goal for the Sabres after Linus Ullmark allowed three goals on 11 shots in the first period.

Sabres team scope: Defenseman Carlo Colaiacovo, who has missed two games with an upper-body injury, told reporters at practice Monday he is ready to return to action. Coach Dan Bylsma mixed up his lines, putting rookie center Jack Eichel between Jamie McGinn and Tyler Ennis. Bylsma said it's something of an experiment putting Eichel and Ennis together, since they each like to handle the puck. However, it's an experiment he thinks is worthwhile. "I'd like to see that creativity together," Bylsma told buffalohockeybeat.com. "I think two skilled players having the chance to play together and create off each other is what we're hoping for."

Lightning team scope: Forward Ondrej Palat will miss 3-5 weeks with a lower-body injury, Tampa Bay announced Monday. Palat was injured in a 1-0 loss to Minnesota on Saturday. "Our depth will be tested now, because he is a big part of our team," coach Jon Cooper said. With 12 healthy forwards on the roster, the Lightning recalled forward Mike Blunden from Syracuse of the American Hockey League on Monday. This is the first of three straight home games, six of seven in Tampa, and seven straight in Florida for the Lightning, who have been shut out three times in their past eight games, and scored more than one goal twice in that span. One of those times was their 4-1 win the previous time they faced Buffalo.

Sabres' Tyler Ennis knows he can improve

By Bill Hoppe
Olean Times Herald
November 9, 2015

BUFFALO – When Dan Bylsma and Tyler Ennis discuss the speedy Sabres winger's play, the coach rarely has to give the young veteran his opinion.

That's because Ennis, who can often be critical of his own game, usually beats Bylsma to the punch.

"He tells me the same thing he's told you," Bylsma said Monday following practice inside the First Niagara Center. "I know (he's) probably been a little hard on himself a handful of times."

On the surface, Ennis, 26, has enjoyed a decent start this season. With three goals and seven points in his first 12 outings, he's on a 20-goal, 47-point pace entering tonight's road game against the Tampa Bay Lightning – almost his exact numbers from 2014-15.

Ennis' dynamic game-winning assist in which he said he "shimmy-shaked a couple of guys" late in Saturday's 3-2 win – he intercepted a pass in his own zone and beat four defenders into Vancouver territory – showcased slick skills "very few" NHL players possess, Bylsma said.

"I don't know the group of players that I would put into the very few," Bylsma said, "but very few."

Still, Ennis, who's averaging a tick under 20 minutes on the ice each game, knows he can better. He's a minus-6 this season. And one shift, he believes, shouldn't cancel out the rest of the game.

"I think the last play was a good play, but I can still play a better 60 minutes," he said.

With so much new talent surrounding him, this was supposed to be a breakout campaign for the 2008 first-round pick.

"I know he needs to, wants to play better than he is right now," Bylsma said. "I do know he came up big for us in the dying seconds of that game on a big play to help us get a win."

Ennis spent most of this season playing with center Ryan O'Reilly before moving beside Zemgus Girgensons, his pivot most of last year, on Saturday. Bylsma switched Ennis again Monday, this time beside rookie center Jack Eichel and Jamie McGinn.

Pairing Eichel and Ennis, arguably the team's two best puck-movers, might seem like a no-brainer. The two dazzled in one of their lone appearances together, a Sept. 26 preseason win in Ottawa. Ennis had three goals and four points and Eichel had two assists.

But both might want the puck, and there's only one on the ice.

"I'd like to see that creativity together," Bylsma said. "I know Jack likes to have the puck, Tyler likes to have the puck. If Jack has the puck in the last minute of the last game, maybe we don't see Tyler dance up the ice with it. So there's been a concern there's only one puck for the two of them. I think two skilled players having the chance to play together and create off each other is what we're hoping for."

This isn't Ennis' first "slow" start. Why does he occasionally stumble out of the gate? He thinks it takes him "a while to get used to the pace or something."

"I think that's why I'm maybe rushing things," Ennis said. "I'm rushing them too much and rushing them when I have some chances, rather than just taking that extra second and making a good play."

Two years ago at this time, Ennis looked lost in former coach Ron Rolston's system. When Ted Nolan took over, he started using his natural instincts and playing less robotically.

Bylsma utilizes systems and structure *much more* than Nolan. Could that be a problem?

"No, I think it's great," Ennis said. "Any coach will allow guys to do what makes them themselves, just it has to be within a structure. I think we got a great structure. There's been no limitations in my end. I just have to perform better."

The Sabres need to perform better against the Lightning. They've lost seven straight to their Atlantic Division rival, including all three this season. Tonight is already the final meeting of 2015-16 between the teams.

"We owe 'em one, for sure," Ennis said. "We've been saying that for a long time. Last time we were there (Oct. 17) we played well. We just didn't get the win. It seems like we play them every game now, so we know their systems, they know ours. It's just going to come down to who wants it more."

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Fourteen games into the season, Sabres defenseman Zach Bogosian, who suffered a lower-body injury early in training camp, is still sidelined. There is, however, some good news.

"There is a date where you will see him," Bylsma said. "Eventually you will see it come to fruition."

Bylsma said Bogosian is progressing and "building a foundation." He has recently ramped up his workouts to a higher level.

Bogosian will skate in Buffalo while the Sabres play two road games in Florida this week.

In other injury news, defenseman Carlo Colaiacovo (upper body) said he's available to play.

Meanwhile, forward Cody McCormick, out since he developed blood clots in January, still hasn't been cleared to play, Bylsma said.

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Bylsma said he remembers the "skating legs and the young face" of Sabres defense great Phil Housley, who was inducted to the Hockey Hall of Fame on Monday.

"He's for me like Paul Coffey," he said. "(I) feared playing against this guy because you could not catch him, and he was that virtually every night he played. You couldn't catch this guy even if you tried."

Sabres' Zach Bogosian progressing

By Bill Hoppe
Olean Times Herald
November 9, 2015

BUFFALO – When general manager Tim Murray pulls the trigger on the Zach Bogosian trade, coach Dan Bylsma joked, it'll help the Sabres.

After all, the Sabres will be receiving a minute-munching first-pair defenseman.

"It'll be a good trade made when Tim makes it," Bylsma cracked this afternoon inside the First Niagara Center.

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Bogosian will skate in Buffalo while the Sabres play two road games in Florida this week.

In other injury news, defenseman Carlo Colaiacovo (upper body) said he's available to play. Meanwhile, forward Cody McCormick, out since he developed blood clots in January, still hasn't been cleared to play, Bylsma said.

In practice news, Bylsma mixed up his lines today, putting rookie center Jack Eichel beside right winger Tyler Ennis and Jamie McGinn.

Eichel and Ennis, perhaps the Sabres' two best puck-movers, enjoyed a monster preseason game together.

"They played a little bit together here and there," Bylsma said. "I'd like to see that creativity together. I know Jack likes to have the puck, Tyler likes to have the puck. If Jack has the puck in the last minute of the last game, maybe we don't see Tyler dance up the ice with it (to create the winner).

"So there's been a concern there's only one puck for the two of them. I think two skilled players having the chance to play together and create off each other is what we're hoping for."

Sabres' Ennis not happy with his play

By Paul Hamilton

WGR 550

November 9, 2015

Buffalo, NY (WGR 550) -- To me Tyler Ennis hadn't looked like himself lately until he galloped up ice to help set up the game winning goal Saturday against Vancouver.

I asked Ennis if he wasn't quite 100 percent yet after missing two games with an injury. He said he was and that isn't it, "Yes I was fine. I don't think I was great last game either. I still think I have another step and I can capitalize more and make better plays out there, so I think the last play was a good play, but I can still play a better 60 minutes."

Dan Bylsma thinks Ennis can be a little hard on himself but didn't disagree with him, "We've talked about his game numerous times and he tells me the same thing that he's told you, but I know that's how he felt last game that he didn't play well and I think he's right, but he's not alone in that. I know he needs to and wants to play better right now."

It seems like at times Ennis tries to do too much with the puck and winds up losing it. He says there are things to improve on, "Just creating more, play better defensively, get on the plus side of the game."

Ennis and all the forwards get shuffled around a lot and would he be better if he just stayed on one line for a while? "I don't know, I'm just trying to find chemistry with whoever, so it's a great thing to have so many good forwards because really I'm happy playing with anyone."

In most seasons Ennis is a slow starter. He said that means there's better to come than three goals and four assists for seven points in 12 games, "I don't know, it takes me awhile to get used to the pace or something, but I think for me I've just got to even slow it down mentally a little bit. I think that's why I'm rushing things too much and I'm rushing myself out of some chances rather than just taking an extra second and make a good play."

The Sabres skated for about 45 minutes on Monday before taking off for Tampa.

The long term injured guys were they only ones not practicing. They are Zach Bogosian, Evander Kane, Robin Lehner and Cody McCormick. After practice Bylsma said Bogosian is still on the prescribed pace.

The lines were also tweaked as they usually are:

Moulson O'Reilly Gionta

McGinn Eichel Ennis

Larsson Girgensons Reinhart

Deslauriers Legwand (Schaller) Foligno

McCabe earning increased ice time, more responsibility

By Chris Ryndak

Sabres.com

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The 22-year-old defenseman has seen his ice time increase, topping the 20-minute mark in each of the past three games, and Sabres coach Dan Bylsma has found reasons to add to McCabe's workload and give him more responsibility.

"He got a bit of a double shift and got close to the 25-minute mark. That's us relying on him and depending on him in tough situations," Bylsma said after practice Monday at First Niagara Center.

McCabe was sent down to the American Hockey League before the start of the season and did not play in Buffalo's first two games. He was called up after dressing in one game for the Rochester Americans and McCabe has found himself in the lineup for the Sabres ever since.

"His ability and what he's done has been a huge improvement for our backend since he's gotten in there," Bylsma said. "His defending ability – probably the biggest aspect of that is his skating ability."

McCabe has two goals on 10 shots this season. Going back to Development Camp in the summer and through this fall's Training Camp, he's been working on developing a consistency to his game.

"I think I'm growing every game and getting more confident as the season's gone on here," he said. "I'm just going to try to continue to play well and play better each game and just improve and keep that consistency going."

In the 12 games he's played this season, McCabe has seen a lot of time with both Cody Franson and Mark Pysyk. McCabe and Pysyk had been paired frequently in the minor leagues up until this season so they've been able to develop a good rapport.

He's only played the past two weeks or so with Franson but they've been able to develop good chemistry already. A lot of that has to do with communication on the ice.

"He talks a lot. He's come from a place obviously that's preached that," Franson said. "We've been able to click quite quickly because of it. Talk out there with how fast this game is goes a long way and that's something we've been able to be pretty smooth at."

Without hearing Franson's comments, McCabe also remarked that talking on the ice is a big part of his game and a reason why things have been going well so far.

"It's just communicating out there when you go out to get pucks. That's the biggest thing, he said. "The more you talk, whether it be forwards or us defensemen, it makes the game easier out there and it slows it down."

McCabe, a second round pick in the 2012 NHL Draft, has only 21 career games under his belt – with 57 percent of them having been played this year alone. However, Franson has seen the University of Wisconsin alumnus excel so far this season and is looking forward to continue manning the blue line next to him.

"To see him come in with that little bit of experience and be able to do what he's doing is very impressive. He's playing against good players already," Franson said. "He's playing an accountable role and he's doing a good job with it. He's making smart plays. He's not getting beat."

"He's very easy to play with and I really enjoy playing with him. It's one of those things were the more we time we get together, the better we'll get."

There is still a lot of room for McCabe to develop and continue to improve, but Bylsma has liked what he's seen thus far in the defenseman's young career.

"He's got to cut down on some of those puck plays but he's been very good for us and he's going to continue to be very good for us," he said.

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One notable change in the lines comes in the pairing of Eichel and Ennis. For more on that new combo, check out Monday's edition of **Sabres in :90 presented by Tops Friendly Markets**.

TAMPA... AGAIN

The Sabres will face the Lightning for the fourth and final time this season Tuesday night. Tampa Bay has gotten the best of Buffalo on all three occasions, outscoring the Sabres 10-3.

"We don't want to let them sweep us for the season so this is going to be an important game for us," Eichel said. "We definitely have a lot to prove to ourselves and overcoming them. They're a good team and they were in the Cup Finals for a reason. But we've played them well and we know we can beat them."

Buffalo will get their last crack at the defending Eastern Conference Champions on national TV. The game is set to air on NBCSN at 7:30 p.m. It can also be heard live on WGR 550.

The Sabres have won four of their past six games and are coming off a win against Vancouver in which Rasmus Ristolainen potted the game-winning goal with 16.8 seconds remaining in regulation.

"We've been playing good hockey for most of the year – spurts that are really good," captain Brian Gionta said. "At times, we still make mistakes that they kind of hurt us, but that's part of the learning process."

INJURY UPDATES

Defenseman Carlo Colaiacovo returned to practice after missing the past two games with an upper-body injury.

Zach Bogosian, who has been out since the early stages of Training Camp due to a lower-body injury, however, is not yet back on the ice with the team. Before the team flew out to Tampa, Bylsma provided an update on his condition and when he may return to practice:

"He's doing well – on progression and building a foundation. There is a date when you see him. Eventually you will see it come to fruition," Bylsma said. "He's now going on the trip with us. He will be skating back here and has ramped up where he's at. He's at higher level stages than three days ago."

Bylsma was also asked about the status of center Cody McCormick, who did not pass his physical at the start of Training Camp. McCormick has not played since Jan. 9 after being diagnosed with blood clots. He has yet to be cleared by the team's medical staff and Bylsma said that until that happens, McCormick will remain out.

Housley took first steps toward hockey hall while with the Sabres

By Jourdon LaBarber

Sabres.com

November 9, 2015

A storied 21-year career for Phil Housley culminated with his induction into the Hockey Hall of Fame on Monday night, an honor bestowed upon only nine other players to have worn a Buffalo Sabres sweater.

Housley played for eight different teams, but the foundation for his candidacy was laid down in Western New York. Before becoming the second leading United States-born scorer in League history, he arrived as a baby-faced defenseman at the ripe age of 18 after Buffalo selected him with the sixth pick in the 1982 draft.

"They took a chance on a high-school kid that probably weighed 165 pounds soaking wet and gave me an opportunity," Housley said when thanking the Sabres during his induction speech.

"The game has given so much to me and my family. I accept this great, great honor on behalf of my family and friends and I know I'll cherish this day for the rest of my life."

Housley became a staple in the Sabres' record books in the eight years that followed his being drafted, and it didn't take long. He made the rare transition from high school player to NHL defenseman look seamless. His 47 assists as an 18-year-old set a Sabres rookie record that still stands today.

"He was all about hockey," Sabres equipment manager Rip Simonick, who has been with the team since its inception in 1970, said. "We had a really, really young team and he just fit in."

Simonick recalls how Hall of Fame coach Scotty Bowman, who drafted and coached Housley early in his career, may have had a hand in the defenseman's record-setting season.

"He was a guy that could get a lot of points," Simonick said. "He played defense most of the time, but there was a couple records – you know Scotty knows all about the records. He let Phil play center for maybe 20 games and he ended up getting more goals than any other rookie defenseman and more points."

Well, the records didn't stop there. In his sophomore campaign of 1983-84, Housley scored a career-high 31 goals that still stands as the most in a single-season by a Sabres defenseman. Not impressive enough? He holds the next five spots in that category too.

In fact, Housley holds every single-season and career scoring record for Sabres defensemen. His 61 assists and 81 points in the 1989-90 season are both records for a defenseman, as are his career marks in Buffalo of 178 goals and 380 helpers for 558 points.

Housley asserted himself as quickly off of the ice as he did on it.

"Best story is our first exhibition game at St. Catharines, we're getting on the bus and here comes Phil Housley and his present-day wife," Simonick recalled. "Scotty Bowman and Jimmy Roberts were the coaches at the time and said, 'Where is she going?'"

"He goes, 'She goes to every one of my games.' Literally, they put it on Mike Ramsey and said, 'Hey, get your Minnesota boy and get his girlfriend off.' Guess what – she went to the game in St. Catharines and he played great. Good guy, good coach, good person; I was glad to have him on the team."

Thirty-three years and four children later, Housley thanked his wife Karin – who he called his "high-school sweetheart" – on stage during his induction.

"She's been the back bone of our family, she's had to put up with me for over 30 years and I know that's hard and I don't know why she does it," he said. "She's always been there for me in good times and bad and she has as much to do with the day more than anyone."

Housley was traded after the 1989-90 season in a deal with the Winnipeg Jets that saw the Sabres acquire Dale Hawerchuk and a 1990 first-round pick that would be used to select forward Brad May. After three years in Winnipeg, Housley went on to play for St. Louis, Calgary, New Jersey, Washington, Chicago and Toronto.

Sabres coach Dan Bylsma, who made his playing debut for the Los Angeles Kings in the 1995-96 season, said Housley's above-average skating garnered extra attention from opponents.

"I remember skating legs and the young face, really," Bylsma said. "You feared playing against this guy because you could not catch him and he was that virtually every night he played; you couldn't catch this guy even if you tried."

Now, the former defenseman is climbing his way up the coaching ranks. Housley is in his third season as an assistant coach for the Nashville Predators and has been mentioned as a candidate for head coaching jobs in recent years.

Current Sabres defenseman Cody Franson spent part of last season playing under Housley in Nashville and said that the attributes that made him great on the ice have translated to the bench.

"Having him as a coach, you can tell that he's a guy who's played a long time," Franson said. "He's a guy that's played a certain way ... he expects you to make plays, he expects you to see what's coming and be able to make that play whether it be a tight play or an easy play.

"He expects high-level execution and I think that's the way he played. I really enjoyed having him as a coach."

While the game might not come as easy for most defensemen as it did for Housley, Franson said that the defenseman-turned-coach will do whatever it takes to help his players improve.

"I know that all those guys in Nashville enjoy working with him," he said. "He's a guy that's easy to be around, he's there to listen to you if you ask for help ... even at this level you can never improve enough and he's one of those guys that's there to listen to you and be able to try and help you out and coach you through things."

Before the end of his speech, Housley – a man who achieved so much at a young age – was sure to offer his own advice for kids with athletic aspirations.

"I guess if there's one message I want to deliver, it's why are kids focusing on one sport?" he asked. "I remember playing football, baseball and hockey when I was in high school and looking forward to the change of sports and seasons. I got the chance to meet and create new friends. Just enjoy being a kid, have fun and enjoy playing different sports and build your athleticism."

From just having fun as a kid to playing pro hockey as a teenager and now to the Hall of Fame, just look at how far that outlook took him.

Karabacek heats up with 6-point weekend

By Kris Baker

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In the Quebec Major Junior Hockey League, Vaclav Karabacek (2014, second round) came to life with a goal and three assists Saturday to earn the game's second star as Baie-Comeau dropped a 5-4 overtime decision to Halifax.

The productive outing arrived on the heels of a two-assist effort the night before in the Drakkar's 6-4 loss to Acadie-Bathurst.

For Karabacek, a right-wing prospect hoping to represent his native Czech Republic at the 2016 IIHF World Junior Championship, the production is coming at the right time and will need to continue if he is able to achieve his goal of playing in the prestigious tournament.

Through 16 games, Karabacek has connected for six goals, 12 points and a team-leading 69 shots on goal. Seven of his 12 points have come in his last four games for a last-place Drakkar squad that has won just three times all season and is currently mired in an eight-game losing streak.

WHL

In Saturday action, Brendan Guhle (2015, second round) scored his second goal of the year and added an assist as Prince Albert came up short in a 6-4 loss to Moose Jaw. Guhle, who on Friday contributed two shots on goal in a 4-0 loss to Red Deer, has rung up two goals, eight points and a plus-5 rating in his first dozen games since returning to the Raiders from Buffalo.

Defenseman Brycen Martin (2014, third round) notched a pair of helpers Friday and a team-high seven shots on goal as Saskatoon was upended by Moose Jaw 7-4. Martin continued to contribute on Saturday, collecting two more helpers as Saskatoon doubled Red Deer 4-2.

Martin, who has now gotten on the scoresheet in three straight games, has racked up 17 points (3+14) in 18 contests this season to enter the week tied for fifth in scoring among WHL defenders.

Giorgio Estephan (2015, sixth round) scored his seventh goal of the year Friday as Lethbridge bested Seattle 5-2. On Saturday, Estephan recorded one assist as part of a first-star effort in a 3-2 win over Kootenay. Estephan has collected points in seven straight contests to boost his season total to 23 (7+16). He has recorded at least one point in 13 of his 17 appearances this season.

In Saturday action, Devante Stephens (2015, fifth round) put his first goal of the year into an empty net as Kelowna outgunned Portland 8-5. Stephens, who began the week without a point in Tuesday and Friday wins at Tri-City and Portland, has four points (1+3) in 18 outings for the second-place Rockets.

OHL

Eric Cornel (2014, second round) scored a power play goal Saturday to end a seven-game goal drought as Peterborough was defeated by Niagara 5-1. Earlier in the week, Cornel was blanked in Thursday's 5-3 loss to North Bay before picking up a helper on Friday in a 7-3 defeat to Erie. The Petes' captain has collected 14 points (4+10) through 18 contests.

NCAA

Hudson Fasching scored on the power play Friday and added one assist as Minnesota was defeated by Notre Dame 4-3. On Saturday, Fasching saw his three-game goal streak snapped as the Gophers earned the weekend split with a 4-1 victory over the Fighting Irish. The power forward prospect has four goals, six points and a plus-three rating through his first seven games. Next up for Minnesota is a home-and-home set with WCHA opponent Minnesota State beginning Friday.

Sophomore goaltender Cal Petersen (2013, fifth round) made 31 saves in Notre Dame's 4-3 win over Minnesota on Friday. The reigning Hockey East Defensive Player of the Week returned to the Fighting Irish net for his eighth consecutive start on Saturday, stopping 22 of 25 shots in a 4-1 loss to the Gophers. Petersen has posted a 4-2-2 record this season with a 2.83 goals-against average and .909 save percentage.

Notre Dame centerman Connor Hurley (2013, second round) logged three shots on goal and a minus-1 rating in the weekend split with Minnesota. Through seven appearances, Hurley has collected four assists and a plus-2 rating while seeing time at the point on the top power play unit. Notre Dame heads to Boston on Thursday to begin on two-game Hockey East set with Northeastern.

RPI goaltender Jason Kasdorf made 28 saves Friday before a third-period collision forced him to leave with an injury as the Engineers played to a 2-2 tie with Clarkson. As a result of the hit, Clarkson senior forward Jeff DiNallo was assessed a one-game suspension by ECAC Hockey.

Kasdorf did not dress the following night as Engineers defeated St. Lawrence 4-3 in overtime, and his status remains uncertain heading into Friday's tilt with Yale. Prior to the injury, the Winnipeg native posted a 3-4 record with a 2.46 GAA and a solid .927 save percentage.

In a rare Tuesday night tilt, freshman forward Christopher Brown (2014, sixth round) notched a pair of assists as Boston College smoked Massachusetts 7-0. Brown was unable to keep it going as the Eagles continued their shutout streak with 3-0 and 2-0 victories over Maine on Friday and Sunday. Boston College has posted shutouts in six of their nine games this season, with Brown recording four points (1+3) along the way.

Sean Malone (2013, sixth round) notched two shots on goal Friday as Harvard and Yale ended in a 2-2 tie. Malone recorded another two shots on goal Saturday as the Crimson got past Brown 5-2. Malone has captured four assists in five games for Harvard, who continues the schedule next weekend with games at Quinnipiac and Princeton.

Maxwell Willman (2014, fifth round) was held off the scoresheet Friday as Brown was dominated by Dartmouth 7-3, and then logged one shot on goal and a checking from behind penalty in the Bears' loss to Harvard on Saturday. Willman will continue the hunt for his first points of the season this weekend as winless Brown visits Union and RPI.

Ivan Chukarov (2015, seventh round) logged one shot on goal and a plus-2 rating over the weekend as Massachusetts swept Connecticut by scores of 4-2 and 5-3. Through nine collegiate contests, Chukarov has netted one assist and a minus-1 rating. UMass goes for their third-straight win Friday at Merrimack.

For more on all the youngsters in the Sabres pipeline, check out Kris Baker's website, SabresProspects.com. You can also follow him on Twitter (@SabresProspects) for in-game updates throughout the week on any Buffalo prospects that are in action.