



Buffalo Sabres

Daily Press Clips

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Hurricanes-Sabres Preview

By Jeff Mezydlo

AP

November 27, 2015

The lack of offensive production that's contributed to a string of close defeats is starting to wear on the Buffalo Sabres.

They'll try to avoid extending their season-high slide to seven games Friday night against the visiting Carolina Hurricanes.

Ranked 28th in the NHL with 2.05 goals per game, Buffalo (8-12-2) has scored seven times during its 0-4-2 stretch. One of those defeats came in overtime, another in a shootout and the last two by one goal in regulation.

"This is getting pretty frustrating now, I think it's like a broken record," forward Marcus Foligno told the Sabres' official website. "We're losing games by a goal and ... I think we're outplaying teams in some of these games."

The Sabres felt that was the case in Wednesday's 3-2 loss to Nashville. Buffalo outshot the Predators 25-11 in the first two periods but trailed 3-0 before Evander Kane scored late in the second.

Buffalo hasn't notched a power-play goal in four games and is 1 for 18 in the last six. However, coach Dan Bylsma is trying to find positives amid this dark stretch.

The Sabres recorded 32 shots after failing to reach 30 in six of the previous eight games. They also killed all three penalties Wednesday.

"There's a lot in the game that's good," Bylsma said. "There's nothing good about getting down 3-0 and not winning the hockey game, but some pretty good stuff from our lines."

Rookie Jack Eichel snapped a six-game goal drought with his seventh to match Ryan O'Reilly for the team lead. Eichel, though, has recorded two of his 11 points in the last seven contests.

"Hopefully I can build some momentum," the 19-year-old said.

While Buffalo forward Zemgus Girgensons returned from missing four games with an upper-body injury, teammate Tyler Ennis could sit a second straight contest also with an upper-body issue.

Ennis doesn't have a point in his last three games, but has four goals and two assists in his last seven against Carolina.

The Hurricanes (8-10-4) have won two of three while earning at least one point in four straight games and six of the last seven. Jordan Staal recorded a goal after the puck bounced off two skates and Jeff Skinner had one on a skate deflection as Carolina rode that good fortune to a 4-1 victory over Edmonton on Wednesday.

"Put your head down, go to work and earn those luck chances," Cam Ward, who made 30 saves for his second straight victory, told the NHL's official website. "They're starting to bounce our way, and hopefully we can continue that."

Though the Hurricanes have been competitive during their 2-1-4 stretch, the only time they've posted back-to-back wins came on a three-game run Oct 27-30. Coach Bill Peters hopes his team's latest triumph can light a spark to ignite a needed winning streak.

"You have to hate to lose," Peters said. "Every game is a dogfight. Losing is a disease, and winning is an unquenchable thirst you have to have."

Carolina's Justin Faulk has three goals and six assists during a seven-game point streak.

Ward's dropped three straight at Buffalo and has a 3.27 goals-against average in his last four there.

Sabres' Reinhart being rewarded for improved play

By John Vogl

Buffalo News

November 27, 2015

Everyone wants to be rewarded for a job well done, to know that their efforts are recognized. Lately, Sam Reinhart has felt the love.

In the six games since scoring a game-winning goal in Florida, Reinhart has seen a boost in playing time and responsibilities. Sabres coach Dan Bylsma has bumped up the rookie's minutes and moved him to Jack Eichel's wing.

It's done wonders for the 20-year-old's confidence heading into Friday's home game against Carolina.

"I've felt when I've been playing my best I've been getting rewarded, so it's nice to know that the little things are getting recognized," Reinhart said in First Niagara Center. "A lot of my confidence comes from knowing that they're believing in me and are able to put me out there."

Reinhart, who is averaging 14:07 of ice time this season, has skated 16:09 during the last six games. He's scored once, had another erased by offsides and has taken nine of his 34 shots during the run.

There's more that has caught Bylsma's eye.

"He's just gotten better and better and better with his play," the coach said. "The pace of his game has picked up. The puck battles have picked up. His initiating plays has picked up."

"He's one of the smarter, better positional players. That's his forte, so you've added the pace and you've added the puck battle. You've added that to his game, and you've seen it virtually every game."

Reinhart had one of his least-successful outings Wednesday during a 3-2 loss to Nashville. He was on the ice for two Predators goals and saw his ice time dip to 13:44, just one game after he set a career high of 18:54.

He's already shown a tendency to quickly rebound from rough games. It's a quality trait in anyone, let alone someone with 31 career games.

"I still had those chances, so I'm just going to stick with it," Reinhart said. "In a situation like this, you've got to stay positive. Hopefully, I can start burying some opportunities now."

An improved shot has helped Reinhart record four goals, which ranks in a tie for third on the offensively challenged Sabres and 11th among NHL rookies. He stays on the ice after practice with Ryan O'Reilly, learning how to improve his accuracy and velocity.

"There's a lot of after-practice hours that have been spent already this year. That adds up," Reinhart said. "Obviously, the shot's an easier thing to work on. When I left last year, I knew right away that was a big part of it. I've been able to spend a lot of time this year, this past summer and even last year working on it. I feel a lot more comfortable with it, a lot more confident with it."

Bylsma would like to see more of it.

"He's been the most improved guy with his shot since the start of his season," the coach said. "He had a muffin to start the season. He's worked hard on it. You've seen him ring a couple off some heads and some ears in some games. He scored the goal that got called back here in the building."

"It was an excellent shot, so I'd like to see him use it more."

While Reinhart wasn't ready to compete with bigger players during his nine-game tryout last season, the 6-foot-1, 189-pounder can stand up more this year. He's not going to initiate the physicality, as his seven hits in 22 games show, but he can better withstand the pounding. He's become a fixture at the top of the crease.

"In terms of being engaged, I think that comes with the confidence, just knowing that I can compete with kind of anyone out there," Reinhart said. "That's really important for me to go through and learn. It's not that I haven't been able to do it before. It's just kind of convincing myself and learning how to compete and battle at that level.

"I feel a lot better."

...

The Sabres' 0-4-2 slide has dropped them into last place in the Atlantic Division and into a tie for 27th in the 30-team NHL. Buffalo is 8-12-2 with 18 points, just three more than 30th-ranked Edmonton and 18 behind the league- and division-leading Montreal Canadiens.

The Hurricanes' 8-10-4 record has been bolstered by a 2-0-1 run heading into Friday. They've beaten Los Angeles and Edmonton while losing in overtime to Philadelphia.

"You have to hate to lose," coach Bill Peters told reporters in Carolina after Wednesday's 4-1 victory over Edmonton. "You've got to be competitive in this sport. Every game is a dog fight. Losing is a disease, and winning is an unquenchable thirst that you have if you have it."

...

The Sabres keep saying it, over and over.

"We're getting the chances. We just need to bury them."

After outshooting Nashville, 32-20, but losing, the Sabres again went to their refrain. It turns out they're right.

A shot chart compiled by HockeyStats.ca showed the Sabres attempted 22 shots from inside the faceoff circles. They connected on just one. Buffalo's season shooting percentage is 6.8 percent, tied with Carolina for 28th in the NHL.

"You look at all the games, we had chances," left wing Evander Kane said. "You can look at the positives. We've definitely competed with those teams and outplayed them at times, but that only takes you so far. You've got to win. This is a results league, so winning's the main thing no matter how you play."

Sabres continue run of slow starts, lose to Predators

By John Vogl

Buffalo News

November 26, 2015

Believe it or not, the Sabres are actually pretty good when they have the lead. The problem is they rarely have it.

That will have to change if they want to end their six-game winless skid.

The Sabres' slide continued Wednesday night with a 3-2 loss to Nashville. Once again, Buffalo never led. During the 0-4-2 run, the Sabres have been in front for a grand total of 8 minutes, 22 seconds.

Obviously, that just won't cut it.

"Goals have been hard to come by for our team so far," left wing Evander Kane said in First Niagara Center. "We need to focus on coming out in the first period and trying to get that lead. If we have that mind-set, that'll create that urgency to really come out and try to win the game in the first period.

"I think that's kind of what we have to do, stop being in that position of having to try to win the game late."

While numbers sometimes fail to tell the story - for example, Buffalo outshot the Predators, 25-11, through 40 minutes but still found itself in a 3-1 deficit - the trends are pretty clear when it comes to fast and slow starts:

- The Sabres fell to 2-9-2 when giving up the first goal. They are 6-3 when scoring first.
- They dropped to 1-7-2 when trailing after one period. They are 4-1 when leading after one.
- They fell to 2-10-1 when trailing after two periods. They are 6-1 when leading after two. The only loss came Monday when St. Louis rallied for a 2-1 victory, erasing the only lead Buffalo has held since Nov. 12.

"It's six in a row," captain Brian Gionta said. "It's never fun. We've got to find ways to win games."

Jack Eichel hopes the Sabres look to the final two minutes for answers. While Buffalo played in Nashville's end for much of the game, putting up a 32-20 shot advantage, the team didn't really buzz the zone or goaltender Carter Hutton until it pushed for a comeback.

"Hopefully, our team can build some momentum off the way we played in the last minute and a half, two minutes: fast, straight ahead and behind their D," Eichel said. "We started to play a little more desperate and out-competed them. At that point, I think it was a little too late."

Buffalo scored the final two goals as Kane ended Hutton's shutout bid with 1:38 left in the second period and Eichel pulled the Sabres within a goal with 1:19 to play. It could have been a different game if the Sabres had scored while taking an 11-4 shot lead in the opening period.

Instead, they went into intermission in a 1-0 hole.

"It's kind of been the way the season's going so far," Kane said. "We outplay teams, but we're not capitalizing, we're not scoring. Then the other teams are coming and scoring on our net. It makes it tough, but we've got to find ways to come out and get leads, and that has to start next game."

The Sabres host Carolina on Friday, and the Hurricanes are 0-7 when trailing after one period.

"We've got to get more guys to the front of the net and score more goals on those second and third chances," Eichel said. "That would really help us if we were able to do that."

The good news is the Sabres continue to get chances from most of the players in the lineup. The only skaters who didn't have shots Wednesday were Johan Larsson (who was benched most of the third period), Sam Reinhart, Nicolas Deslauriers and Josh Gorges.

While the Sabres are frustrated, they still believe they'll eventually start getting some breaks.

"There's a lot in the game that's good," coach Dan Bylsma said. "There's nothing good about getting down, 3-0, and not winning the hockey game."

Sabres host Hurricanes, look to end losing streak

By Sean McCullen

NHL.com

November 27, 2015

HURRICANES (8-10-4) at SABRES (8-12-2)

TV: FS-CR, MSG-B, BELL TV

Season series: The Buffalo Sabres won two of three games against the Carolina Hurricanes last season. Marcus Foligno's two goals led Buffalo, and Eric Staal and Riley Nash each scored twice for Carolina.

Hurricanes team scope: Goalie Cam Ward will start his second straight game, The News & Observer reported. He made 30 saves in a 4-1 victory against the Edmonton Oilers on Wednesday, Carolina's second win in its past three games. Ward is 2-0-3 in his past five starts. Defenseman Ryan Murphy, who has not played since sustaining a concussion Nov. 14 against the Philadelphia Flyers, practiced Thursday before being assigned to Charlotte of the American Hockey League. He has four assists in 17 games for Carolina this season. Defenseman Tim Gleason informed the Hurricanes on Thursday that he was ending his professional tryout. Gleason, 32, played 546 games with Carolina between 2006 and 2015. "He looked and felt good physically but didn't feel up to the grind of the NHL mentally," general manager Ron Francis said.

Sabres team scope: Buffalo has lost six straight games (0-4-2) after winning three in a row and five of six. All of the losses have come against teams that are in a Stanley Cup Playoff position (Dallas Stars, twice; St. Louis Blues, twice; San Jose Sharks; and Nashville Predators). "You look at all the games, we had chances," left wing Evander Kane told the Buffalo News. "You can look at the positives. We've definitely competed with those teams and outplayed them at times, but that only takes you so far. You've got to win. This is a results league, so winning's the main thing, no matter how you play." The Sabres have scored seven goals during the losing streak. They outshot the Predators 32-20 on Wednesday but lost 3-2.

Sabres playing well in losses, need to score more goals

By Bill Hoppe
Olean Times Herald
November 27, 2015

BUFFALO – They're different this year. Unlike the last two seasons, the Sabres rarely get pummeled in their losses. They stay in contests and often outplay their opponents. That's why the six-game losing streak they carry into tonight's home tilt against the Carolina Hurricanes feels a bit odd.

Sure, the Sabres have only led for eight minutes, 22 seconds during the skid. That happens when you've scored just seven times.

But they've been in every game during their 0-4-2 run. They have four one-goal losses. If the power play, which is just one of the last 18, could've converted a couple of critical five-on-threes, they might have a win or two.

"You can look at the positives," winger Evander Kane said Wednesday following the Sabres' 3-2 loss to Nashville inside the First Niagara Center. "We've definitely competed with those teams, outplayed them at times. That only takes you so far. You got to win. This is a results league."

On Wednesday, they had an 11-4 shot advantage after one period and a 25-11 advantage after two. But a breakdown almost 14 minutes into the game, the Predators' first flurry of shots, cost them.

"It's frustrating because I think for the most part we've given ourselves a chance," Sabres defenseman Josh Gorges said. "But at the end of the day, it doesn't matter. We're in the business of winning and losing, and all that matters is winning. And whatever position we're in, we got to find ways. We got to find ways to get that extra goal, to keep that extra goal out of the net – whatever it may be."

The Sabres can't score those extra goals. They have only 45 all season. Their shooting percentage during this losing streak is 4.19 and 6.8 overall.

Almost across the board, every forward is enduring an awful offensive season. Captain Brian Gionta, Marcus Foligno and David Legwand all have one goal. Johan Larsson has zero.

Larsson, who ended last season as the No. 1 center, got benched Wednesday, skating just one shift in the third period and a game-low six minutes, 37 seconds overall.

"I thought his last game (Monday) was probably his best," Sabres coach Dan Bylsma said Wednesday. "Tonight we had some plays with the puck and positional decisions with the puck that weren't good. (His line was) essentially on for all three goals. We had plays with the puck, decisions with the puck we need to do a better job with."

Gionta has kept playing big minutes through his slump. Bylsma skated him a season-high 22 minutes, 16 seconds on Wednesday, five minutes more than rookie Jack Eichel, whose team-best seventh goal ended a six-game drought.

Meanwhile, Matt Moulson, Eichel's housemate, skated a season-low 11 minutes, 38 seconds as Bylsma shuffled lines. Moulson hasn't scored a goal in 10 games and has four goals in 22 contests this season.

Notes: Bylsma said winger Tyler Ennis missed Wednesday's game with an upper-body injury and needs further evaluation. He has no timetable for a return. ... Eichel has scored six of his seven goals at home. ... Hurricanes winger Nathan Gerbe, a former Sabres regular, is out four to six weeks with a lower body injury. ... The Sabres had Thursday off.

Comeback falls short, Sabres defeated by Nashville 3-2

By Pat Malacaro

WGR 550

November 26, 2015

Buffalo, NY (WGR 550) -- The Buffalo Sabres look to snap their five-game losing streak and feast on the Nashville Predators. The two teams are scoreless in the first period.

Buffalo will get back Zemgus Girgensons for tonight's tilt with the Predators. He missed each of the last four games due to injury. For more from today's morning skate, including the starting goaltender for the blue and gold tonight, click here for Paul Hamilton's pregame primer.

Feel free to comment in the thread below, while I add my observations in between the scoring plays. Also, be sure to give Brian Koziol and myself each a follow on Twitter: @BrianWGR and @PatWGR.

First Period

18:32 - INJURY UPDATE: Tyler Ennis is out of tonight's lineup due to an upper body injury. We hope to hear more about it following the game when head coach Dan Bylsma meets the media.

16:12 - Shots on goal are 4-0 and the Sabres have had all of the scoring chances so far. Carter Hutton has been up to the task so far.

12:46 - Buffalo had the first power play of the night thanks to a Barret Jackman tripping minor, but the Sabres only picked up one shot on goal. It is 5-0 Buffalo in that category.

8:24 - The breaks just are not going the Sabres way right now. Hutton had a shot from the blue line by Jack Eichel go right through his legs and hit the goal post. That should have been a goal, but instead just a chance gone by.

6:08 - PREDATORS GOAL. Linus Ullmark is able to stop the initial Nashville shot, their first of the game, but **Mike Fisher** is able to get to the rebound and slam it home for the lead. **1-0 NSH.**

End of Period

Goal Summary

BUF: none

NSH: 13:52 - Mike Fisher (3) (Colin Wilson, Ryan Ellis)

Penalty Summary

BUF: none

NSH: 4:10 - Barret Jackman (2 min., tripping)

Shots on Goal

BUF - 11, NSH - 3

Second Period

19:05 - PREDATORS GOAL. Nashville comes out firing in the middle stanza and just like that, it becomes a two-goal deficit for the blue and gold. **Craig Smith** lets go of a wrist shot from just inside of the blue line and it finds the top corner of the net for a goal. One that Ullmark would like to have back. **2-0 NSH.**

14:48 - Former "fan favorite," until late in his tenure at least, Paul Gaustad is back in town tonight with Nashville.

He received a contract extension after finishing the 2012 season with the Pred after being acquired at the trade deadline from Buffalo. At last check Gaustad is 2-7 on face-offs tonight. That is his main role, face-off specialist. He has just two points (0G, 2A) in fifteen games this season.

13:31 - PREDATORS GOAL. Welcome back to town, **Cody Hodgson**. Another player who had his Sabres' tenure come to an abrupt and unceremonious end. He gets his second goal of the season and puts his former team down by three. **3-0 NSH.**

5:29 - Buffalo is once again dominating the shots on goal, but this time it is a more even period of hockey. Chad Johnson has not been overly tested since taking over for Ullmark following the third Nasvilel goal, but the quality chances have not been there at the other end of the ice yet either.

1:29 - SABRES GOAL. It is one that **Carter Hutton** will want back, but **Evander Kane** beats him with a shot from just inside the blue line in the slot and gets Buffalo on the board. That was the goal that the team needed, from one of the players that is going to be counted on to produce. **3-1 NSH.**

End of Period

Goal Summary

BUF: 18:22 - Evander Kane (2) (Rasmus Ristolainen, Josh Gorges)

NSH: 0:55 - Craig Smith (5) (Matthias Ekholm). 6:29 - Cody Hodgson (2) (Gabriel Bourque, Calle Jarnkrok)

Penalty Summary

BUF: none

NSH: none

Shots on Goal

BUF - 14 (25), NSH - 7 (11)

Third Period

18:31 - Jackman is back in the box for Nashville. This would be a good time for Buffalo to get a goal and within one.

16:18 - Marcus Foligno takes the first Buffalo penalty of the night as he rides Colin Wilson into the Sabres' net and knocks it off its pegs. A lazy penalty by a player that has been disappointing to say the least this season.

10:09 - Foligno is playing like a man possessed. He has crashed into Hutton twice since taking the lazy interference penalty. The first time he buzzed the goalie in his crease while trying to score, and the second time he upended the net minder skating for the puck. It was not a Lucic on Miller play, but was a good collision.

2:38 - Nashville is outshooting Buffalo 9-5 this period, but the Sabres are pressing the play. They may not be getting the quality shots on goal but if they keep pressing they may be able to get at least one goal to make it interesting.

1:19 - SABRES GOAL. That is the one that gets everyone on their feet. **Jack Eichel** is able to score from a bad angle and he snaps his scoreless streak. **3-2 NSH.**

End of Game

Nashville 3, Buffalo 2

Goal Summary

BUF: 18:41 - Jack Eichel (7) (Ryan O'Reilly, Zach Bogosian)
NSH: none

Penalty Summary

BUF: 3:42 - Marcus Folingo (2 min., interference). 6:16 - Marcus Folingo (2 min., goaltender interference). 7:29 - Cody Franson (2 min., tripping)
NSH: 0:42 - Barret Jackman (2 min., kneeing)

Shots on Goal

BUF - 7 (32), NSH - 9 (20)

Housley returns to Buffalo, looks back on playing days

By Jourdon LaBarber

Sabres.com

November 27, 2015

On Wednesday, Phil Housley visited Buffalo for the first time since his induction into the Hockey Hall of Fame on Nov. 9. The former Sabres defenseman, now an assistant coach for the Nashville Predators, took the time to reflect on his election and on his time as a Sabre.

On former Sabres coach and general manager Scotty Bowman, who drafted Housley in 1982 and is also in the Hockey Hall of Fame:

"You hear the rumors about Scotty and him just being a great coach. First time I met him was at the draft, I thought he was just a great man and he really allowed me to play the game that he wanted me to play. I think that was important.

"He didn't put too much pressure on me, he sort of just let me play and again, the leaders of that team in my first year were excellent, made me feel really comfortable, but Scotty was great at developing me as a young man."

On what he remembers about most about playing in Buffalo:

"In the '80s there it was a great sports town. The fans were great, they really supported, you know Jim Kelly came and played for the football team so things were looking really good in the '80s there and I really enjoyed it. The fans are really exceptional. They're great supporters of the Sabres.

On Sabres equipment manager Rip Simonick's story about Housley bringing his future wife, Karin, on the team bus during his first camp:

"My wife Karin was my high school sweetheart so we started dating my senior year ... There was a little bit of miscommunication there. It just happened that the team bus showed up and I had Karin because it was supposed to go to the hotel.

"We walked on the bus and everybody was on the buss. As I looked down, Scotty was right there in the first row and I thought, 'Is this bus going to the next hotel?'

"That's when Lindy Ruff leaned over and said 'Houer, you're not supposed to have your girlfriend on the bus.'

"So I had to ask her to back out.

"Believe me, it was one of the most embarrassing moments. And then going up to Montreal, 'cause that was the first exhibition game, that's where we were heading and I got to be named second star of that game. I saw Scotty at the end of the bench there as I was coming off doing the salute and I thought, 'Here, I'm getting sent down to the minors.'

"He just said 'Good game, kid,' so I knew it was good at that time. But, you know, it's funny all the stories you can go back and reminisce about but that one was one of the funniest."

He recalled, for example, playing in his first game at the Montreal Forum, standing opposite his childhood idol in the Canadiens' Guy Lafleur. Housley entered that season as a baby-faced, 18-year-old defenseman.

He met Lafleur again later in his rookie season, this time in the playoffs. The Sabres swept the Canadiens 3-0 in the first round. Now, both players are Hall of Famers.

"There are a lot of stories. Playing against Montreal, beating them in the first round my first year 3-0 and shutting them out and losing the double-overtime against Boston the second round.

"There are a lot of great memories there. Especially being able to play with Gilbert Perreault, another Hall of Famer, who really was ahead of his time as far as making plays. You think back about all the guys when you started your life as a hockey player and you can't thank them enough."