



Buffalo Sabres

Daily Press Clips

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Sabres-Red Wings Preview

By Kevin Massoth

AP

December 1, 2015

At first glance, the Detroit Red Wings' point streak looks pretty good. A closer look, though, reveals a negative trend.

The Red Wings hope a meeting against a team they have cleaned up against will keep them from leaving any more points on the table when the Buffalo Sabres visit Tuesday night.

Detroit's seven-game point streak is its best in four years, and another against the Sabres would give the franchise its longest since going 12 in a row from March 11-April 3, 2010.

The Red Wings (12-8-4) are 4-0-3 since Nov. 16 after losing three of their previous four games. But a sour taste resonates considering they've played six overtimes in seven games and four extra periods in a row. The last four - two wins and a pair of losses - came after Detroit blew leads in the third period.

"It's been frustrating," center Luke Glendening told the team's official website. "I think it's been my line the last four games or five games here, so we have to figure... a way to hold on."

The Red Wings have surrendered five goals in the closing three minutes this season to force overtime, and they've coughed up 29 goals overall in the final five minutes of periods - tied for the second most in the league.

Detroit has played nine overtime games already, its most in the first two months of a season since the league reintroduced the extra period in 1983-84. A single-season high for Detroit is 27 in 1996-97.

"We're getting leads and playing pretty well for most of the game, but we're not closing it out," left winger Drew Miller said. "Obviously you don't want to give up leads late in the third period, but I don't think it's something we're going to worry about."

What might help is a game against the Sabres.

The Red Wings are 26-2-2 with one tie against Buffalo since March 27, 1996, including an 11-0-1 mark since March 13, 2010. They have won 15 of the last 16 in Detroit, losing once in overtime to earn 31 of a possible 32 points.

Buffalo (10-12-2) has finally found its offense, though, to log consecutive wins after an 0-4-2 stretch.

The Sabres scored seven goals during their losing streak but linked together consecutive 4-1 victories over Carolina on Friday and Nashville on Saturday.

They went 2 for 4 on the power play against the Predators, snapping a five-game drought on the man advantage.

"Critical," coach Dan Bylsma said. "We've had the power-play situation before recently and it's been at critical times."

Both power-play tallies, a Jamie McGinn rebound and a Sam Reinhart wrist shot, followed a Viktor Arvidsson major penalty for cross-checking when his stick hit Sabres defenseman Carlo Colaiacova in the throat.

Arvidsson was assessed a game misconduct and Colaiacova did not return and was taken to the hospital as a precaution, though he practiced on Monday.

"Obviously it was a scary incident and at the time it was pretty painful, but it is what it is," Colaiacovo told the Sabres' official website. "Right now, it's not really stopping me from doing much."

Buffalo will face Petr Mrazek, who holds a 2.19 goals-against average and .932 save percentage in 14 appearances. Mrazek was pulled midway through the first period against the Sabres on Jan. 18 after allowing three goals on seven shots.

It's unclear if Chad Johnson or Linus Ullmark will start for Buffalo.

Sabres rookies proving up to the task of winning games

By John Vogl
Buffalo News
December 1, 2015

DETROIT - Dan Bylsma said during training camp that keeping Jack Eichel and Sam Reinhart on the Sabres' roster would give Buffalo its best chance to win. With two months of the season gone, the rookies have proved the coach right.

Buffalo carries a two-game winning streak into Tuesday's match in Detroit, and the game-winning goals belonged to Eichel and Reinhart. They have combined for half of the Sabres' 10 game-winners this season, with Reinhart's total of three ranking sixth in the NHL.

"It's nice to see that we're able to get in here and contribute early," Eichel said Monday in Joe Louis Arena.

No other NHL team boasts two rookies among its top-three goal scorers. While the placement of Eichel (tied for first) and Reinhart (third) is partly an indictment of Buffalo's slow-starting veterans, there's also no doubt the rookies have earned their rankings atop the Sabres' stat sheet.

Eichel enters his 25th game with eight goals, while Reinhart has six.

"There's a lot of expectation and there's a lot of eyes on them," Bylsma said. "Just getting their first goal was big for them. They both think and believe they can do more and be better for the team, but for where they've come from this year has been pretty impressive with what they've been able to do and how they're doing it.

"It's promising for our team."

For the second time in a week, Bylsma tabbed Reinhart as the team's most improved player. The 20-year-old scored twice during Saturday's 4-1 victory over Nashville, and he's on pace for a 20-goal season. Regarded as a playmaker in junior, Reinhart is showing he can be a finisher, too.

"He's just a smart player all the way around," left wing Matt Moulson said. "He's going to be able to make plays and get goals just because of how smart he is and how well he thinks the game."

Reinhart will face the Red Wings as the first-line right winger alongside center Ryan O'Reilly and left wing Evander Kane. The trio combined for three goals and six points against the Predators.

"To get everyone chipping in and supporting leads to more success," Reinhart said. "It's nice to have that."

Eichel, meanwhile, is on pace for 27 goals. He's scored in two of the last three games. His eight goals rank second among NHL rookies, two behind Detroit pace-setter Dylan Larkin, and Eichel leads first-year players with 80 shots.

"We've got young guys in big roles, so we've got to step up," defenseman Rasmus Ristolainen said. "So far it's been good, but I think everyone can still be better and we can win more games than we've won so far. We've just got to keep building."

Though Ristolainen is not a rookie, he's another young player who has been vital to Buffalo's victories. The 21-year-old ranks second on the team in points with 14, recording four goals and 10 assists. He is tied for 12th in scoring among NHL defensemen.

While the three first-round picks are expected to be big parts of the Sabres' long-term future, they're making sure to be a huge part of the present.

"I don't think it's a surprise by any means," Moulson said. "Rasmus is a great defenseman at both ends of the rink. Jack and Rhino obviously have been getting some points.

"We have a lot of good young players, and they're a big part of why we're having success."

In order to continue having success, the Sabres will need more than a trio of youngsters on the score sheet. The long-awaited balanced attack finally arrived during the weekend. The Sabres had 13 skaters record at least a point during the 4-1 wins over Carolina and Nashville.

The outburst allowed Buffalo to win by three goals or more on consecutive nights for the first time since March 2008.

"Hopefully, the flood gates open up for us," Moulson said. "I don't think we played our two best games by any means, but we got some big goals by guys, some timely goals and guys getting to the net and getting some dirty goals. We're going to have to keep doing that."

Sabres notebook: Colaiacovo back from dented trachea

By John Vogl
Buffalo News
December 1, 2015

DETROIT – While a dented trachea is no laughing matter, Carlo Colaiacovo was able to turn it into one.

The Sabres defenseman, who suffered the injury Saturday night after a cross-check to the throat, was delivering puns and fun Monday after practicing with his teammates.

“Whatever I got to do to help the team win, right?” Colaiacovo said to Evander Kane when the forward mentioned how Buffalo scored twice on the power play earned by the cross-check.

Despite spending much of Saturday night in a Nashville hospital, Colaiacovo is cleared to play in Tuesday’s game against Detroit.

“I feel pretty good,” he said in Joe Louis Arena. “Obviously, it was a pretty scary incident. At the time it was pretty painful. Right now it’s not really stopping me from doing much. I’m just dealing with it and luckily I’m still able to play.

“It kind of feels like when you’re sick and you get a really sore throat. Everything hurts to swallow. Other than that, it’s just a normal soreness. The good thing is I’ll be OK.”

Colaiacovo was hospitalized after the Predators’ Viktor Arvidsson caught him in the throat with his stick. Arvidsson was given a five-minute major and a game misconduct but no supplemental discipline.

“When it first happened I was just trying to catch my breath,” Colaiacovo said. “It was a scary moment when you get hit in the throat that hard. Obviously, I don’t think it was intentional. It’s an accidental thing.

“When I looked at it after, I don’t blame the guy. It’s a tough spot for him to be in. He turns around and catches me right underneath the throat. I don’t think there was any intent. For me it was hard to swallow, pardon my pun, but it was a scary moment and a long night in the hospital. Thankfully, I’m OK.”

The defenseman won’t even need a neck guard when he returns to action.

“When you’re dealing with vital organs, as they say, they take every precaution possible,” Colaiacovo said. “That’s basically what it was, going there and doing a bunch of tests just to make sure everything was still functioning properly. They found what they found. I don’t know what that’s supposed to feel like, but for me it just feels like a sore throat.

“It was a long night at the hospital. I’m here today with my teammates with a smile on my face and ready to get back at it.”

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Sabres coach Dan Bylsma said Mark Pysyk (bone bruise) is skating on his own back in Buffalo. Tyler Ennis (upper body) has not yet returned to the ice, and Bylsma said there is still no timetable for the forward to return. Pysyk will miss his seventh straight game, while Ennis will sit out his fourth.

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The Sabres' two-game road trip to Nashville and Detroit is a double homecoming for David Legwand. The center spent his first 15 seasons playing for the Predators. He's is a Detroit native who was traded to the Red Wings late in 2013-14 season.

Bylsma put Legwand out for the opening faceoff in Nashville as recognition for his time there.

"The question is do I have to start him against Detroit?" the coach said with a smile. "He only played 20 games here."

The game against the Red Wings is a figurative homecoming for Bylsma. He grew up three hours away in Grand Haven, Mich., and was a fan of the Wings as a kid. The coach welcomed a few friends and relatives to town.

"It's not the same as when I played," he said. "More people don't make the drive anymore. I'm just wearing a suit behind the bench, so it's not as exciting to come as it was to see me play here."

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Detroit is on a 4-0-3 run, with six of the games decided in overtime. The Red Wings have played longer than 60 minutes in nine of their 24 games.

Peter Mrazek will start in goal for Detroit. He is 6-4-3 with a .932 save percentage and 2.19 goals-against average.

Eichel, Larkin set for first pro head-to-head matchup

By Mike G. Morreale

NHL.com

December 1, 2015

Dylan Larkin may have been overshadowed by Jack Eichel at their respective colleges last season, but that no longer seems to be the case as rookies in the NHL.

Larkin, selected in the first round (No. 15) of the 2014 NHL Draft by the Detroit Red Wings, is the first teenager to play for the Red Wings since Jiri Hudler in 2003-04. Larkin has spent the majority of the season on the top line with Henrik Zetterberg and Justin Abdelkader.

Eichel, the No. 2 pick in the 2015 draft by the Buffalo Sabres, has teamed with Larkin in the past with USA Hockey's National Team Development Program and with several United States teams at international tournaments.

On Tuesday, Larkin and Eichel will go head-to-head for the first time as professionals when the Red Wings face the Sabres at Joe Louis Arena (7:30 p.m. ET; TVA Sports, SNO, SNP, MSG-B, BELL TV, FS-D).

They last met on Oct. 25, 2014, when Eichel scored once to help lead Boston University to a 3-2 victory over the University of Michigan. Larkin had two assists in the loss at Agganis Arena in Boston.

In 24 games, Larkin leads NHL rookies with 10 goals and a plus-14 rating, and is third with 18 points.

It hasn't surprised Eichel that Larkin has been able to impress in his first NHL season.

"I knew he was going to play in the League this year and knew he would do terrific," Eichel said. "He's a good friend of mine. Ever since that second year when we were [at the NTDP] that was his coming-out party. He was one of our best players every night. And if you've seen him play, he stands out right away just because of how great a skater he is. He always seems like he's moving. He's like the energizer bunny."

Last season Larkin ranked second at the University of Michigan in goals (15) and points (47), and was tied for first with 32 assists. His 47 points were second among NCAA freshmen behind Hobey Baker Award-winner Eichel at Boston University.

"I don't know how that guy does it but he buzzes around as fast as he can, and as fast as he can is really fast. So he's super-skilled and understands the game," Eichel said. "He has an unbelievable release too. So I'm not surprised at all that he's doing so well."

Larkin has put himself in the Calder Trophy discussion. Edmonton Oilers center Connor McDavid was among the rookie scoring leaders before he sustained a fractured left clavicle Nov. 3 after crashing into the boards in a game against the Philadelphia Flyers. He was expected to miss fourth months but told reporters Monday that he's recovering ahead of schedule.

McDavid, who had five goals and 12 points in 13 games prior to the injury, has been working out in Toronto. He hasn't started skating but is spending time in the pool and the weight room while he waits for the bone to heal. He said there is no timetable for him to return.

"It's healing well and I feel like it's a little bit ahead of schedule," McDavid told the Oilers website Monday. "It's coming along where it feels good and you want to start doing everything. But at the end of the day you have to let it heal."

"The Oilers medical staff has been great. I've been working with them and we've done a bunch of different stuff. They've done a good job of keeping it moving and making me feel good."

While the hockey world awaits the return of McDavid, other first-year players have earned the spotlight, including Larkin.

St. Louis Blues coach Ken Hitchcock said what impresses him about Larkin is his ability to see and avoid the rough areas of the ice.

"That's the surprising part for me," Hitchcock said. "He has the ability to sniff out danger when he's going to get rocked. He's able to avoid that type of contact, which to me is a sign of a guy whose game is well beyond his age."

Larkin is very cognizant of where he is in every situation. In a 3-2 win against the Los Angeles Kings on Nov. 20, Larkin transitioned out of his end with Zetterberg on his left and Abdelkader on his right. After stretching his left leg along the blue line to keep the play onside as Zetterberg entered the zone, Larkin went to the front of the net and was in position to bang in the rebound of an Abdelkader shot for the decisive goal 6:08 into the second period.

Larkin isn't only about highlight-reel goals. Such was the case Nov. 27 when he feathered a pass to Niklas Kronwall on a 2-on-1 for an overtime goal in a 4-3 victory against the Oilers. Kronwall's expression after the goal spoke volumes as to how impressed he was with Larkin's patience and craftiness on the play.

Larkin was the best player for the United States at the 2015 IIHF World Junior Championship, tying for the tournament lead with five goals. He also had one assist in 10 games to help the U.S. win the bronze medal at the 2015 IIHF World Championship; Eichel was a teammate on both teams.

"I don't think he had as many points as he probably wanted [at the World Championship] and he was probably frustrated; I know because I was his roommate at the time," Eichel said. "He had a lot of chances, was always around the net and made a lot of great plays though. He's a terrific skater and it shows."

Eichel, who is tied for second among rookies with eight goals, has two goals in the past three games. He's looking to become the first Sabres rookie to score at least 25 in a season since Thomas Vanek in 2005-06.

He had 26 goals in 40 games at BU last season, but earlier this season Eichel went six games without a goal. He understands he'll need to be patient.

"It's long [season]; quite a schedule," Eichel said. "You're playing a few games a week. You're on the ice every day and it can be tough to manage your body and be up to play every game. But that's part of a being a pro and I'm still adjusting to it. It's something I need to get better at and get more comfortable with."

Eichel continues to put fans on the edge of their seat whenever he has the puck on his stick. In a 4-1 win against the Carolina Hurricanes on Nov. 27, he gave Buffalo a 2-1 lead 12:24 into the second when he picked up a loose puck in the neutral zone, carried it across the blue line and took a wrist shot that beat goaltender Cam Ward over his right shoulder.

"I was trying to make something out of nothing," Eichel said. "I tried to keep it simple, use my speed and get a shot on net. Good things happen when you do that."

"In a one-one contest, Eichel manufactures offense from a broken play in the neutral zone, using his power and speed to get in a situation where he could fire a laser of a wrist shot," Sabres television analyst Brad May told the Sabres website. "It's fun to watch when Jack sees daylight."

In a 3-2 loss against the Nashville Predators on Nov. 25, Eichel took a cross-ice feed from Ryan O'Reilly in the bottom of the left circle and drove a shot past goaltender Carter Hutton inside the left post. That kind of goal scored by Eichel has become a routine occurrence. If opposing goalies give Eichel an opening on the short-side post, there's a good chance he'll find the space to bury it.

"He's going to make [Buffalo] a stronger team if he hasn't already and as he continues to develop and become more of a leader, I think that will become even more evident," Larkin said of Eichel. "I think I was most impressed with [Eichel's] leadership abilities and how he took over a game. If the team wasn't playing well or down and needed a goal, you're looking at Jack and he handled that really well."

Red Wings hoping to get, preserve lead vs. Sabres

By Joe Lane

NHL.com

December 1, 2015

SABRES (10-12-2) at RED WINGS (12-8-4)

TV: TVA Sports, SNO, SNP, MSG-B, BELL TV, FS-D

Season series: The Detroit Red Wings won three of four against the Buffalo Sabres last season and are 11-0-1 in their past 12 games against them, with the lone defeat a 3-2 shootout loss Nov. 2, 2014 at First Niagara Center. Two power-play goals from forward Tomas Tatar gave the Red Wings a 6-3 win Dec. 23, 2014. Goalie Petr Mrazek made 25 saves in Detroit's 3-1 victory Jan. 13 and forward Henrik Zetterberg's sixth NHL hat trick sparked a comeback from a 3-0 first-period deficit in a 6-4 win Jan. 18. Zetterberg, Tatar and Gustav Nyquist led all skaters with six points each.

Sabres team scope: Defenseman Carlo Colaiacovo practiced Monday after leaving Buffalo's 4-1 win Saturday against the Nashville Predators because of a dented trachea. Colaiacovo sustained the injury following a cross-check by Predators forward Viktor Arvidsson and was hospitalized after the game. "At the time it was pretty painful," Colaiacovo told the Buffalo News. "Right now it's not really stopping me from doing much. I'm just dealing with it and luckily I'm still able to play." Coach Dan Bylsma's lineup adjustments Monday saw Colaiacovo on the second defense pairing with Zach Bogosian, and Jake McCabe and Cody Franson on the third pair. Forward Marcus Foligno was moved to the third line with Nicolas Deslauriers and Zengus Girgensons. Defenseman Mark Pysyk (lower body) is in Buffalo skating on his own. Forward Tyler Ennis (upper body) is out and there remains no timetable for his return. Goalie Chad Johnson allowed eight goals on 174 shots (.954 save percentage) in seven November games.

Red Wings team scope: Although Detroit has points in seven straight games (4-0-3), it's blown third-period leads in four straight, five of the past seven and seven times this season, the latest a 2-1 overtime loss Sunday to the Florida Panthers. "It's been frustrating," forward Luke Glendening told the Red Wings website. "I think it's been my line the last four games or five games here, so we have to figure that one ... find a way to hold on." Coach Jeff Blashill focused on the power play, 0-for-9 in the past three games, at practice Monday. "Obviously hasn't been good enough here for a while," Blashill said. "We want to get back to the basics a little bit on our power play and hopefully it has a positive impact come [Tuesday]." Forward Teemu Pulkkinen practiced on the fourth line and likely will replace Tomas Jurco in the lineup. Mrazek will start in goal Tuesday with goalie Jimmy Howard playing Thursday against the Arizona Coyotes.

Sabres' Colaiacovo has recovered quickly

By Paul Hamilton

WGR 550

December 1, 2015

Detroit, MI (WGR 550) -- When Carlo Colaiacovo was crosschecked in the throat on Saturday, he was taken straight to the hospital.

The team had Sunday off and surprisingly enough he was able to practice on Monday. The defenseman said, "I'm feeling pretty good. Obviously it was a scary incident and at the time very painful, but it is what it is now and it hasn't stopped me from doing much."

Colaiacovo stayed down on the ice and then went straight to the hospital. He said, "I was trying to catch my breath, when you get hit in the throat that hard, I'm just real fortunate I was able to be back here today."

Viktor Arvidsson was given a five minute major penalty and was thrown out of the game, but not suspended by the NHL. Colaiacovo isn't holding a grudge, "I don't think it was intentional, it was an accidental thing. I don't blame the guy, it's a tough sport for him to be in, he turns around and catches me under the throat and I don't think there was any intent and for me it was hard to swallow, pardon my pun and it was a long night in the hospital."

Of course the player didn't want to go through that, but his teammates picked him up and scored two goals on the five minutes power play. Colaiacovo said that's what teams do, they pick each other up, "That made me feel real good and know for as bad as the situation was, it ended up turning into a positive for us and those are the things you have to capitalize on as a team and in unfortunate situations, you pick the guy up and win it for the guy."

Dan Bylsma had the team on the ice in Detroit for about 45 minutes on Monday. He even admitted he was surprised Colaiacovo was back, "I was surprised, what happened on the ice and he was gasping for air, had difficulty breathing and when he came to the bench it was still the case."

Sam Reinhart netted two goals in Nashville and is on a pace for 21 goals this season. Bylsma has been impressed with how far his rookie has come in a short period of time, "Sam has to be our most improved player from the start of the season until now. He went from having not really a very effective shot to, he's worked extremely hard on it and it's a pretty potent weapon for him now."

As the game Saturday was winding down, teammates starting trying to set Reinhart up for his hat trick. Bylsma said he enjoyed that, "Our team wanted Sam out on the ice and got Sam out on the ice and that's what you want from your team."

If you're reading into this that the team is starting to come together, Dan Bylsma would tell you that you are right, "I've heard it more than once from this group and they've showed it in how they've played that they being together and they're battling and working together, it's a short period of time for that to have developed."

Ristolainen showing why the Sabres wanted him badly

By Paul Hamilton

WGR 550

December 1, 2015

Detroit, MI (WGR 550) -- The development of Rasmus Ristolainen is showing why the Sabres draft table was so happy when Nashville took Seth Jones at number four in the draft leaving Ristolainen on the board.

The next defenseman off the board was Darnell Nurse by the Oilers at seven and then Buffalo got its man at eight.

The 21 year old leads Buffalo in ice time averaging 24:05 per game.

He is also second in scoring with 14 points in 24 games. Nine of those points have come in his last 11 games and the kid said there is a reason for it, "It's pretty much mental, you've got to be ready every game, you've got to be ready to work and so far it's be good and I need to continue that."

"It's all about confidence, this year we're playing better and getting more chances, so I just try to get pucks to the net and try to get pucks to the forwards and they make plays happen."

When I spoke with Josh Gorges for the pregame show in Dallas he talked about how much Ristolainen has helped him play well. The younger defenseman feels the same way, "He talks a lot, he's in the defensive zone. If I do some mistake, he always backs me up, so our chemistry has been really good and I really like to play with him."

Gorges has been through the wars. Ristolainen said he has a lot of good information to share, "We talk a lot off the ice and on the ice, we talk about everything."

Gorges thinks his defensive partner is just scratching the surface, "You see his composure when he goes back for pucks, I think his biggest asset to playing defense is he can get the puck and make the breakout and he doesn't have to play defense and I think he's really good at that."

"He's 21?" Gorges asked with a chuckle, "That's super young, most guys don't break into the league until they're 22, so he's just going to keep getting better and find ways to use his stick defensively and even the biggest key the mental aspect of it, you see his composure when he goes back for pucks. I think his biggest asset to playing defense is the fact that he can go get the puck and make the breakout and he doesn't have to play defense and he's really good at that, finding the next play, finding our forwards and getting the puck to them in positions where they can go down and make plays."

"I'm excited to see what he can do over the next few years."

The Sabres will practice at 2:00 on Monday at Joe Louis Arena.

Colaiacovo returns to practice following cross-check to throat

By Jourdon LaBarber

Sabres.com

December 1, 2015

DETROIT - Carlo Colaiacovo struggled to catch his breath as he fell to the ice in the second period against Nashville on Saturday. The Buffalo Sabres defenseman had just turned around and taken a strong cross-check from Predators forward Viktor Arvidsson directly to his throat.

After collecting himself on the ice, Colaiacovo skated off on his own power and immediately went to the dressing room where, according to Sabres coach Dan Bylsma, he continued to gasp for air. He went to the hospital, underwent tests and was diagnosed with a dented trachea shortly after the game ended.

Luckily, he was released later that night and was a welcome presence on the ice during the team's at practice at Joe Louis Arena on Monday afternoon.

"I feel good," Colaiacovo said. "Obviously it was a scary incident and at the time it was pretty painful but it is what it is. Right now, it's not really stopping me from doing much.

"For me it was hard to swallow – pardon my pun – but it was a scary moment and a long night in the hospital. Thankfully I'm OK."

Colaiacovo said that he's still feeling pain two days later, but he has already been cleared to return to game action. He returned to his spot on the left side of a pair with Cody Franson in line rushes on Monday.

Like Bylsma said following the game on Saturday, Colaiacovo did not believe there was any malicious intent from Arvidsson and held no ill will against the Predators forward.

He was able to take solace, in fact, from what happened as a result of the cross-check. Arvidsson received a five-minute major and a game misconduct and the Sabres scored twice to take the lead on the ensuing power play.

"That made me feel real good obviously," Colaiacovo said. "It was a big win for us. Knowing that for as bad as the situation was it turned out to be a positive for us and got us going, those are the things we've got to capitalize on as a team.

"In unfortunate situations you pick the guy up and go win it for the guy so [it was] a great win for us, something to build on going into tomorrow and for me I'm just grateful to be able to be back out there."

A PERFECT TRIP FOR LEGWAND

David Legwand took the ice for the opening faceoff on Saturday, acting as the starting centerman between Nicolas Deslauriers and Marcus Foligno.

It was a calculated move by Bylsma to start the veteran, a bottom-six forward this season, against the team for which he spent the majority of his career. Franson, another former Predator, also got the nod to start.

"We talked about it before the game," Bylsma said. "David's already been back to Nashville a couple times but it's still a pretty significant moment to be a part of the starting lineup and be there in a city where he played so long."

Buffalo's current road trip actually features two homecomings for Legwand. After two nights in Nashville, where he played parts of 15 seasons and was the Predators' first-ever draft pick in 1998, the forward was able to spend an off day with his family in his hometown Detroit.

For as well as the schedule worked out off the ice for the veteran, its coincided with his most productive stretch on it this season. Legwand has tallied a point in three of his last four games (2G+1A), including an assist on Buffalo's second goal on the five-minute power play in Nashville.

Playing near the corner in the offensive zone, Legwand worked to keep possession in the Sabres' favor and was able to move the puck to Matt Moulson in the right circle. Moulson quickly found Sam Reinhart in the high slot and fed him for the game-winning goal.

Just as he hasn't been a regular in the starting lineup, Legwand hadn't seen much time with the man advantage. After filling in for Evander Kane on power-play drills in practices last week, even he wasn't sure when he'd see time with the extra man.

"[Assistant coach Dave Barr] just kind of grabbed me and pushed me out there," he said. "I said to him after, 'Maybe I should be in the meetings.' But I've been in the League long enough where I should know what I'm doing also."

Tuesday, playing in his hometown arena, Legwand will look to keep the point production going against the Red Wings, for whom he played the latter half of the 2013-14 season.

"The question is do I have to start him against Detroit?" Bylsma quipped. "I think he only played 20 games."

Coverage of the game on Tuesday begins at 7 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 slated for 7:30 p.m.

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