



Buffalo Sabres

Daily Press Clips

December 28, 2015

Capitals-Sabres Preview

By Kevin Massoth

AP

December 28, 2015

Goaltender Braden Holtby might downplay what he and his Washington Capitals have been up to lately, but there is no stepping around the history books.

The Capitals can extend their best start in franchise history Monday night and Holtby can add to his league-high win total when they visit the Buffalo Sabres for the first game of a home-and-home set.

Washington leads the Eastern Conference with a 26-6-2 record thanks to a dominating stretch in the last month-plus.

Holtby made 29 saves in Saturday's 3-1 win over Montreal for his 10th consecutive win at the Verizon Center - matching the longest home streak by a Capitals goaltender since 1989-90. It improved the Caps' record to 14-1-1 since Nov. 21 and gave them their seventh straight regulation win.

"I don't think any of us really even know we're winning seven in a row," Holtby said. "We expect a win every night, and we try and prepare in a way that gives us the best chance to do that."

The Capitals play six of their next seven on the road, but things don't drop off much away from the nation's capital. Washington not only holds the best home record in the NHL but the best road mark in the East. Holtby has a 1.65 goals-against average and .949 save percentage in his last nine road games.

Holtby ranks toward the top of the NHL in GAA (1.92) and save percentage (.932). What helps is a team that has supplied him early leads. The Capitals are 19-1 when scoring first and 12-0 when leading after the first period.

Even without points from Alex Ovechkin and Nicklas Backstrom, the Capitals jumped ahead of the Canadiens with an Evgeny Kuznetsov first-period tally and cruised in their first game back from the NHL's Christmas break.

The only negatives were a few bumps and bruises. Ovechkin was examined for a shot he took to his left arm and top defenseman John Carlson needed a maintenance day at Sunday's practice, which Holtby left early due to dehydration and cramps. All three are expected to play on Monday.

Buffalo (15-16-4) continued its mini roll of late with Saturday's 6-3 win at Boston. The Sabres improved to 4-1-1 in their last six games thanks to a monster five-goal third period. The five goals in the final 20 minutes were the most for Buffalo in a third period since it posted six in a 7-4 win over Tampa Bay on March 19, 2008.

Rookie Jack Eichel logged two goals and an assist in the final period to cap his first four-point game. The 19-year-old has been inconsistent since the Sabres made him the No. 2 pick in the June draft, but he has tallied points in three straight games.

"I think he's gone through some ups and downs," coach Dan Bylsma said. "We've seen him play some great games and we've seen some tough stretches of playing a lot of hockey. We've had this break - the six-day break - and seen him come back energized with a little more jump in his step."

Buffalo's season-high six goals were one more than the Sabres scored in their previous three games.

Goaltender Chad Johnson will look to add to his 3-0-1 hot streak since Dec. 14. He holds a 1.47 GAA and .957 save percentage during that span.

Sabres have never-quit mentality

By John Vogl

Buffalo News

December 28, 2015

Dan Bylsma looked up at the scoreboard, saw the Sabres in a two-goal deficit with 11 minutes to go Saturday and thought maybe – just maybe – the game was over. Then the coach looked along the bench at his players. He noticed the resolve that has been in place since the preseason.

"There's no sag in our team," Bylsma said Sunday. "There's no droop in our shoulders. We keep on playing. We keep on playing the right way and think we can win hockey games and come back playing that way."

Buffalo's belief in itself is well-founded. Including Saturday's 6-3 comeback victory against Boston, the Sabres have four wins when trailing after two periods. Only the Los Angeles Kings (five) have more.

"We kind of have that mindset where we don't look back," forward Marcus Foligno said after practice in First Niagara Center. "We keep going after teams. It's a never-quit mentality. We play that desperate hockey, and that's where we're at our best."

Indeed, the Sabres head into Monday's home game against Washington as one of the NHL's best third-period teams. They've scored 40 of their 84 goals during the final 20 minutes, tied with the Capitals for second most behind Dallas (50). The Sabres have trailed after two periods in 20 of their 35 games, and they've come back to get points in six of them.

Saturday's game in Boston will likely remain the most memorable. Buffalo scored five times in the final 9:39 to turn a 3-1 deficit into the 6-3 victory.

"Our group never gives up, and we proved it against a good hockey team," forward Nicolas Deslauriers said. "For sure, we don't want to be trailing in the third, but we have confidence in our group."

The comeback mentality began as soon as the puck dropped in preseason. Buffalo trailed, 2-1, entering the third period of its opening exhibition but rallied for a 3-2 victory in Minnesota. During the final preseason game, the Sabres were in a 5-0 deficit against Columbus but scored four times in the third period to pull within one before losing, 6-4.

The rallies continued when the regular season started. Buffalo has earned 2-1 victories over Detroit, Toronto and the New York Islanders despite entering the third period in a 1-0 hole. They also trailed 1-0 in a 2-1 overtime loss to San Jose, and they were in a 3-2 third-period deficit during a 5-4 shootout loss to the Red Wings.

"We don't think we're out of a game, and we have shown we can fight back and get goals," Bylsma said. "We got down by two goals in games and we don't seem to panic or sink our shoulders down or think, 'Oh, it's 20 minutes left to go in a game. It's over. We'll get the next one.' We have maybe even more resolve to keep on playing, keep on fighting, keep on going."

The comeback ability is a team-wide trend. During the six games in which Buffalo erased third-period deficits to get at least a point, eight players have scored and 13 recorded assists.

Ryan O'Reilly leads the way. He has scored eight of his 14 goals during third periods, including four in the six comeback games. Overall, he has four tying goals, three go-ahead goals and two game-winners.

"He's just one of those guys that lays it all out there every day," defenseman Jake McCabe said. "In practice, he's out there first, he's leaving last, and that's just kind of his mentality. There's no quit in his game."

"I know that we've had good third periods this year. Even if we're down we continue to be resilient and show that will to score and make plays. We've got big-time playmakers that just keep showing up like Ryan."

The Sabres says there's no magic third-period formula. Their second intermissions when trailing are the same as any other break.

Despite their ability to erase deficits, it would not be wise to trail the Capitals. Washington, which leads the Eastern Conference with a 26-6-2 record, is 18-0-0 when leading after two. The Sabres are on a 4-1-1 run that has bumped their record to 15-16-4.

"We've got good leaders on this team, and they're saying the right things in the room," McCabe said. "We just go out there, stick to our systems and don't go away from that. You can't go off on your own page and try to do it all yourself. The goals we scored showed that. We had forecheck goals. We had dirty goals, and that's what it's going to take to continue this good little stretch we've been on."

Sabres notebook: Goalie Lehner close to practicing

By John Vogl
Buffalo News
December 28, 2015

Robin Lehner is facing shots and moving in the crease. Dan Bylsma hopes the goaltender will soon be doing it during the Sabres' practices.

Lehner, who has been out since suffering a high-ankle sprain during Buffalo's season opener, took the ice before his teammates worked out Sunday.

"Robin was on the ice this morning again taking shots," Bylsma said in First Niagara Center. "He was working on some post play and some of that pushing off and loading up on the post. We are looking at starting a schedule for him to return to practice and possibly down the road return to play."

Bylsma said the organization will create Lehner's rehab schedule over the next few days.

"Hopefully, we'll see him in practice soon," the coach said. "The next two weeks as we map it out is going to see an increased level of progression of where he's at right now to practice to game simulation, scrimmage and possibly getting in the net in a rehab situation."

The coach said Mark Pysyk also is progressing, though the defenseman is not yet on the ice. He's been out since Nov. 17 with what was originally categorized as a bone bruise. Pysyk will miss his 18th straight game Monday when the Sabres host Washington.

"He's progressing with workouts off the ice and hope to see him soon get on the ice and progress with his lower-body injury," Bylsma said.

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Evander Kane missed Sunday's practice for personal reasons, with The Buffalo News reporting he is the subject of a sex-offense investigation. His status for Monday was unclear.

Left wing Matt Moulson missed the workout with an illness.

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The line of center Johan Larsson, left wing Zemgus Girgensons and captain Brian Gionta has totaled just one shot during the past two games. The trio didn't even attempt one during Saturday's 6-3 victory in Boston.

They've been too busy keeping the opponent's best players quiet.

"I think they were our best line even though they didn't put the numbers on the board," Bylsma said.

The Larsson line played extensively against Boston's top unit that features Patrice Bergeron and David Krejci. During the previous game against Chicago, they matched up against Jonathan Toews. The trio's effectiveness has allowed Bylsma to put Ryan O'Reilly against lesser lines.

"We're able to put out 90 to get him in more offensive-zone starts with the confidence that you're going to play 22 behind it," said Bylsma, referring to the uniform numbers of O'Reilly and Larsson, respectively. "I thought Girgensons and Larsson really drove our team energy-wise and played the way we need to play."

Sources: Evander Kane is subject of sex offense investigation

By Lou Michel and Tim Graham
Buffalo News
December 28, 2015

Evander Kane, a Buffalo Sabres left winger, is the subject of a sex offense investigation by Buffalo police over an incident that allegedly occurred Sunday morning in a downtown hotel room near First Niagara Center, three police sources have told The Buffalo News.

Kane has not been charged with any crime, and law enforcement officials would confirm only that there is an ongoing investigation by officers from the department's Sex Offense Squad.

"We have an investigation ongoing," a Buffalo police source said. "We are not naming the suspect, and we do not expect it to be resolved in the very near future."

Another law enforcement source said the woman was having "memory issues."

The team reported that Kane, 24, was absent from practice Sunday morning for personal reasons. Kane's practice jersey was hanging in his stall Sunday morning, with all unused equipment in place, after the team's practice. The locker room door was closed for longer than usual after practice ended, and player interviews were rushed.

A law enforcement source said Kane is represented by Buffalo attorney Paul J. Cambria. Cambria, when contacted Sunday, declined to comment.

The Sabres released the following statement:

"We take the allegation made today against Evander Kane very seriously. We are gathering facts and have been in touch with the NHL and Evander's representatives. Until we have more information we will not have any additional comment."

Evander Kane's agent, Craig Oster of Newport Sports Management, did not return calls for comment.

One of the law enforcement sources recalled the rape allegation against South Buffalo native and NHL superstar Patrick Kane earlier this year that was ultimately dropped because investigators were not convinced he had committed a crime.

The source stressed that police were not naming the alleged suspect in Sunday's incident publicly because of the intense publicity generated by the Patrick Kane investigation and the need for investigators to do their jobs.

The other two sources pointed out that the investigation into Sunday's alleged incident is in its very early stages.

For months, Patrick Kane, the Chicago Blackhawks star, was the subject of intense scrutiny by detectives in the Town of Hamburg and investigators in the Erie County District Attorney's Office after a young woman accused him of attacking and sexually assaulting her in his lakeside home in early August.

Patrick Kane, 26, denied the allegations and also hired Cambria to represent him. The young woman in that case hired attorney Thomas Eoannou.

In a bizarre turn of events, the accuser's attorney held a news conference to accuse law enforcement officials of mishandling evidence, but the next day he announced that his earlier accusation had been wrong and that he had been deceived by the woman's mother. He then withdrew from the case.

Ultimately, with the help of DNA evidence, Patrick Kane and his legal team prevailed in early November, when Erie County District Attorney Frank J. Sedita announced there would be no charges.

Evander Kane, a Vancouver native, has eight goals and five assists in 25 games in his first season on the Sabres since joining the team from the Winnipeg Jets.

Evander Kane, who arrived in Buffalo via trade in February, has been doing well to fit in with the Sabres after a tumultuous stay with his previous team. He repeatedly asked for trades from Winnipeg and was finally dealt after a reported locker-room incident with teammates that included his clothes being thrown into a shower.

In October, Evander Kane rented a helicopter and took two Sabres teammates to Toronto for a baseball playoff game. He has also tried to reshape his image by donating time and money to the Boys & Girls Club of Buffalo. Evander Kane took 60 children to dinner and to an arcade in November, and this month he treated 50 kids from the club to dinner and a \$10,000 Christmas shopping spree at Target.

Evander Kane scored a goal Saturday night during a game against the Boston Bruins, in Boston. The team's next game is at home Monday against the Washington Capitals.

Capitals expect Ovechkin, Carlson to play vs. Sabres

By Adam Kimelman

NHL.com

December 28, 2015

CAPITALS (26-6-2) at SABRES (15-16-4)

TV: SNO, SNW, SNP, CSN-DC+, MSG-B

Season series: The Washington Capitals defeated the Buffalo Sabres twice in three games last season with each win coming in a 10-day span in March. Capitals forwards Alex Ovechkin and Jay Beagle each had a goal and an assist in a 6-1 win March 7 at Verizon Center. On March 16, Capitals forward Evgeny Kuznetsov scored the game-deciding shootout goal in a 4-3 victory at First Niagara Center. Sabres forward Johan Larsson had two goals in two games against the Capitals.

Capitals team scope: Defenseman John Carlson did not practice Sunday because of a maintenance day and goaltender Braden Holtby left practice early, but coach Barry Trotz said neither is considered a serious issue. "[Carlson] got twisted up [but] he's fine," Trotz told Monumental Network. "Don't see any issues. We'll know better [Monday] but he got twisted up a little bit. We kept him off today and that's fine. He's played a lot of hockey for us." Carlson has 27 points in 34 games and leads the Capitals in average ice time with 24:28 per game. Trotz said Holtby had some cramping after working with goaltending coach Mitch Korn but that he also is expected to be fine and available Monday. Ovechkin practiced after injuring his right arm during a 3-1 win Saturday against the Montreal Canadiens. "He seems fine," Trotz said. "He was shooting some pucks so he seems good."

Sabres team scope: Forwards Evander Kane and Matt Moulson missed practice Sunday, according to the Sabres website. Moulson had an illness and Kane sat out for personal reasons, according to coach Dan Bylsma, and their status for Monday is unknown. Goaltender Robin Lehner skated before practice Sunday and Bylsma said he's getting closer to returning to the lineup. Lehner hasn't played since sustaining a high-ankle sprain on opening night against the Ottawa Senators. "Robin was on the ice this morning again taking shots," Bylsma said. "He was working on some post play and some of that pushing off and loading up on the post. We are looking at starting a schedule for him to return to practice and possibly down the road return to play. Next few days we'll be making that schedule and hopefully we'll see him in practice soon." Bylsma said. Defenseman Mark Pysyk, who has missed 17 games because of a lower-body injury, could return to skating soon, Bylsma said.

Report: Sabres' Evander Kane subject of sex offense investigation

By Kristin J Shilton
USA Today
December 28, 2015

Buffalo Sabres left winger Evander Kane is the subject of a sex offense investigation by Buffalo police, according to the *Buffalo News*. Police sources told the *News* the allegations stem from an encounter early Sunday morning with a woman at a downtown Buffalo hotel.

At this time, Kane has not been charged with any crime, and the *News* reports the investigation is in the very early stages. The *News* cites police sources as saying the woman accusing Kane, whom they declined to name, is having "memory issues" and said the investigation will not be resolved any time soon.

Kane has hired Paul J. Cambria, according to the *News*, to represent him in the case, the same lawyer hired by Chicago Blackhawks star and Buffalo native Patrick Kane when he faced sexual assault allegations over the summer. Patrick Kane's investigation was dismissed after prosecutors failed to find enough evidence to charge him with a crime.

When reached by USA TODAY Sports, the Buffalo Sabres provided the following statement:

"We take the allegation made today against Evander Kane very seriously. We are gathering facts and have been in touch with the NHL and Evander's representatives. Until we have more information we will not have any additional comment."

The NHL also added a statement, telling USA TODAY Sports, "We are aware of and are monitoring the investigation involving Buffalo Sabres forward Evander Kane. We have no further comment at this time."

Evander Kane, 24, was absent from the Sabres' practice at First Niagara Center for "personal reasons" on Sunday. He was traded to the team from the Winnipeg Jets in February after a tumultuous tenure that ended with him requesting a trade following a reported incident with teammates in the locker room.

The Sabres' next game is Monday against the Washington Capitals.

Sabres rookie Jack Eichel learning NHL game

By Bill Hoppe
Olean Times Herald
December 28, 2015

BUFFALO – Coach Dan Bylsma isn't sure what sparked it. Perhaps it was Jack Eichel's secondary assist on the first goal Saturday in Boston. Or maybe it was the slick center's tying score late in the Sabres' thrilling 6-3 comeback win against the Bruins, the rookie's first NHL game in his hometown.

Whatever happened, for the first time in a while, Bylsma said, Eichel simply enjoyed playing and "not carrying the weight of having to score."

By the end of the Sabres' five-goal third-period, Eichel had a career-high two goals, four points and numerous memories that will last a lifetime.

"You saw him start to play with a lot more energy and a lot more excitement, and maybe he'll leave some of that burden behind about needing and having to score," Bylsma said Sunday after the Sabres prepared for tonight's home game against the Washington Capitals inside the First Niagara Center.

Eichel, of course, derived some of that energy and excitement from playing before about 100 family and friends at the TD Garden.

"It was a pretty special moment for me, my family," Eichel said. "It's what I dreamed as a little kid, going back home where you're from and playing against the team you grew up watching."

Eichel assisted on Evander Kane's second-period goal, tied the contest 11 minutes into the third period, sealed it with a long empty-netter and assisted on Ryan O'Reilly's empty-netter.

The best part of the victory, Eichel said, was "just being able to celebrate that win with all the people that have supported me and been with me since I was young."

In less than 45 minutes, Eichel compiled as many points as he had in the previous nine games. He hadn't scored a goal in seven games, a season-long stretch.

"I had that little stretch of, I guess, frostbite," Eichel said. "It's nice to kind of break through and have a game you can build off of."

Saturday's effort could be a turning point in Eichel's season. While the 19-year-old has generated excitement from the get-go, his first three months in the NHL have been up and down. The second overall pick has 11 goals and 20 points in 35 games.

But for the first time in his life, Eichel hasn't consistently dominated the competition. The youngster has regularly tried to overcompensate by doing too much.

"I think that's probably been part of the struggle for him in probably games 15 through 30, where believing he could do more and thinking he could do more and would help us if he scored one more or got a goal," Bylsma said.

Right now, Eichel's said he's trying to learn how to relax a bit.

"It's obviously a lot easier said than done," he said. "It's my first NHL season and ... it's important for me to realize this is an 82-game season. It's long. You're not going to be good every game. (I can't be too) hard on myself because I think I'm my biggest critic and I put a lot of pressure and stress on myself."

Slowly, Eichel is learning. He enjoyed two strong games before the Christmas break, registering an assist in both.

"The type of game I want to play is one with the puck on my stick and making plays and setting my linemates up and creating offense and playing that 200-foot game, starting in my own zone, playing north, using my speed," Eichel said. "For a lot of the year ... I wasn't doing the things that had gotten me to this point, and I think I'm trying to get that confidence going again and know that I can make plays and do the things that have gotten me to this point."

"I think I've gotten back to that in the last few games, and that's why I think I've been successful."

To Bylsma, Eichel has started "using his speed and being hard to play against."

"I think when he realizes how effective he can be with his speed, that's when he's been at his best," Bylsma said. "He was at it (Saturday), especially in the third period."

Before Saturday, Eichel used the five-day break to recharge at home.

"I think the biggest thing for me was taking a little mental break, getting back," he said. "That was a game I had marked on my calendar. I had a lot of jump for it. It's exciting to be able to feel good about yourself after that."

Report: Sabres' Evander Kane subject of sex offense investigation

By Bill Hoppe
Olean Times Herald
December 28, 2015

Buffalo Sabres winger Evander Kane is the subject of a sex offense investigation following an alleged incident Sunday morning in a downtown hotel room near the First Niagara Center, according to The Buffalo News.

Kane, 24, hasn't been charged with a crime. The paper cites three police sources. [Read more here.](#)

The Sabres released the following statement: "We take the allegation made today against Evander Kane very seriously. We are gathering facts and have been in touch with the NHL and Evander's representatives. Until we have more information we will not have any additional comment."

Kane was absent from practice Sunday for what Sabres coach Dan Bylsma called "personal reasons."

Multiple Sources: Evander Kane Accused in Alleged Sexual Assault

WGR 550

December 28, 2015

Buffalo, N.Y. (WBEN) - Multiple law enforcement sources tell WBEN Buffalo Sabre Evander Kane is the subject of sexual assault allegations by a woman at a downtown hotel. The sources, both inside and outside the Buffalo Police rank, say a 20 year old female is making the claim and that the alleged incident took place in the early hours of Sunday at Harborcenter.

The sources tell WBEN a room at the downtown location is being examined as well as a vehicle and that no charges have been filed.

Kane did not practice with the team today and Head Coach Bylsma informed the media he missed due to "personal reasons".

In a statement the Buffalo Sabres said, "We take the allegation made against Evander Kane very seriously. We are gathering facts and have been in touch with the NHL and Evander's representatives. Until we have more information we will not have any additional comment."

WBEN has reached out to the Buffalo Police for comment.

Chicago Blackhawks superstar and Buffalo native Patrick Kane was the subject of a sexual assault claim stemming from an incident in August and no charges were filed in the case.

Sabres forward Evander Kane subject of sex assault investigation

By Hannah Buehler and Shawn Stepner

WKBW

December 28, 2015

BUFFALO, N.Y. (WKBW) - Evander Kane, the 24-year-old forward for the Buffalo Sabres, is the subject of a sexual assault investigation, according to police sources.

7 Eyewitness News has learned a report was filed Sunday and Buffalo Police are investigating. The allegation centers around the Buffalo Marriott Hotel at HARBORCENTER. A police source says the incident allegedly occurred early Sunday morning.

Buffalo Police sources also confirm with 7 that Evander Kane's car was towed from the Buffalo HARBORCENTER Marriott on Sunday for "further investigation." Mike Weidman shared these pictures with 7 Eyewitness News.

The Buffalo News reports that Paul Cambria is representing Evander Kane. 7 Eyewitness News reached out to Cambria, who had no comment.

7 Eyewitness News Sports Anchor Shawn Stepner obtained the following statement from the Buffalo Sabres:

"We take the allegation made today against Evander Kane very seriously. We are gathering facts and have been in touch with the NHL and Evander's representatives. Until we have more information we will not have any additional comment."

Stepner also received the following statement from the National Hockey League:

"We are aware of and are monitoring the investigation involving Buffalo Sabres forward Evander Kane. We have no further comment at this time."

It is important to note that Evander Kane, who was traded to the Sabres in February, has not been charged with any crime.

Multiple police sources say this is only an investigation into an allegation.

Sources: Evander Kane subject of sex offense investigation

WGRZ

December 28, 2015

BUFFALO, NY – Buffalo Sabres forward Evander Kane is the subject of a sex offense investigation by the Buffalo Police Department, multiple sources have confirmed to 2 On Your Side. Our sources say the alleged incident took place at the HarborCenter Marriott Hotel early Sunday morning but no criminal charges have been filed at this time.

Buffalo Police Department spokesman Mike DeGeorge and Erie County District Attorney Frank Sedita both declined comment on the investigation.

The Buffalo News first reported the allegations Sunday afternoon.

We'll have more information here on WGRZ.com and in our upcoming newscasts as it becomes available.

Multiple Sources: Evander Kane Accused in Alleged Sexual Assault

WBEN

December 28, 2015

Buffalo, N.Y. (WBEN) - Multiple law enforcement sources tell WBEN Buffalo Sabre Evander Kane is the subject of sexual assault allegations by a woman at a downtown hotel. The sources, both inside and outside the Buffalo Police rank, say a 20 year old female is making the claim and that the alleged incident took place in the early hours of Sunday at Harborcenter.

The sources tell WBEN a room at the downtown location is being examined as well as a vehicle and that no charges have been filed.

Kane did not practice with the team Sunday and Head Coach Dan Bylsma informed the media he missed due to "personal reasons".

WBEN has reached out to the Buffalo Police who tell us they have no official comment.

The Buffalo Sabres have issued the following statement:

"We take the allegation made today against Evander Kane very seriously. We are gathering facts and have been in touch with the NHL and Evander's representatives. Until we have more we will not have any additional comment."

Sources tell WBEN Kane's legal counsel for the matter is Paul Cambria, the same lawyer who represented Patrick Kane in a similar matter . Patrick Kane, the Chicago Blackhawks superstar and Buffalo native was the subject of a sexual assault claim stemming from an incident in August and no charges were filed in the case.

Sabres displaying "Never Quit" attitude in comeback wins

By Jourdon LaBarber

Sabres.com

December 28, 2015

Matt Moulson and Evander Kane both were absent as the Buffalo Sabres returned to practice at First Niagara Center on Sunday morning. Moulson felt under the weather and Kane took the day for personal reasons, according to Coach Dan Bylsma.

For the players that were on the ice, the positivity from their 6-3 come-from-behind win in Boston on Saturday still hadn't worn off. That game – in which Buffalo trailed 3-1 with 13:01 remaining in the third period – was just the latest example of the "no quit" attitude that the Sabres have displayed all season.

"I even go back mentally and in my notes to preseason, when we've gotten down by two goals in games and we don't seem to panic or sink our shoulders down," Bylsma said. "We even have maybe more resolve to keep on playing, keep on fighting, keep on going.

"I'd have to go back and look at the facts of even our preseason games, but that's the way our mentality was in preseason and that's the way our mentality's been in a number of games we've gotten down in."

Bylsma has a good memory. The Sabres trailed in three of their four preseason wins, coming back from a 1-0 deficit against Minnesota, from 3-1 against Toronto and 2-0 against Ottawa. They beat the Wild by a score of 3-2 and beat the Maple Leafs and Senators each 6-4.

Since then, the comebacks have continued. They can even be broken down into a few different categories:

- *The Late Gamers:* These are the comebacks in which the Sabres swung the entire momentum of the game in their favor in the third period. The win over Boston on Saturday can be filed here, as can 2-1 wins over the Islanders and Red Wings on Nov. 1 and Dec. 14, respectively.

Buffalo erased 1-0 leads in the third and won before the end of regulation in both of those two contests. The game against Detroit especially came down to the wire, with both of the Sabres' goals coming in the final five minutes.

- *The Down Early Comebacks:* Three of the Sabres' wins have come when the team trailed 1-0 after the first period: against Toronto on Oct. 21, at Nashville on Nov. 28 and against Arizona on Dec. 4. Buffalo won those games 2-1 (OT), 4-1 and 5-2, respectively.

All in all, the Sabres have six wins this season when their opponent has scored first, a mark that is tied for eighth in the League.

- *The Near Comebacks:* Sometimes, the Sabres have been able to come back in a game but weren't able to hold on for a win. Goals that would have caused third-period ties against Ottawa on Oct. 8 and Dallas on Nov. 17 were erased due to coach's challenges, for example.

Other instances that fall under this category include shootout losses to St. Louis and Detroit, both in which the Sabres rallied back from deficits but came away with only one point in the standings.

"I do think we have developed a [feeling] that we know we can come back," Bylsma said. "We've won four times coming back. There's a couple more we probably could have won that we lost in a shootout or overtime. But we have shown that ability that we are going to be able to come back in games."

When David Krejci scored to make the game 3-1 in favor of Boston on Saturday, it was especially disconcerting considering that Buffalo hadn't practiced in five days. But on the bench, there was a consistent message: Just get the next one.

The Sabres did, and it was a familiar suspect who came through. Mike Weber took a shot from the blue line that bounced off the end boards to who else, but Ryan O'Reilly – the team's leading scorer – who put the puck in on the far side to close the gap. It was all Sabres from there.

"We've had a never-quit, never-stop kind of attitude all season long," Weber said. "Once we kind of got the next one the boys started rolling and it was pretty impressive."

O'Reilly has been a common factor late in games for Buffalo. Of his team-leading 32 points this season, 19 (8+11) have come in the third period.

"We've had players step up in those particular spots and a lot of times it's been Ryan O'Reilly," Bylsma said. "Last night, we go 3-1 in that game with 11 minutes to go; you're kind of looking at the clock going 'this is the game on the 26th after we've had three days off, maybe this one's over."

"They go out and get us the goal to bring it back to 3-2 and all of a sudden, you're back within one and kind of sparked us with that shift."

The Sabres will need to carry the confidence from their win in Boston into their next two games, a home-and-home set against the Washington Capitals. Washington is 14-1-1 in its last 16 games and winners of seven in a row. Coverage begins Monday at 6:30 p.m. with Tops Sabres Gamernight on MSG-B.

INJURY UPDATES

Goaltender Robin Lehner skated ahead of practice on Sunday morning and is inching closer to a potential return, Bylsma said. Lehner hasn't played since sustaining a high-ankle sprain against Ottawa in the season opener.

Bylsma left the option open for Lehner to potentially play rehab games in Rochester before returning to the Sabres.

"I think in the next two weeks, as we map it out, he's going to see an increased level of progression from where he's at right now to practice, to game simulation, scrimmage, to possibly getting in a rehab situation," the coach said.

Defenseman Mark Pysyk, meanwhile, is continuing to rehab from a lower-body injury that has forced him to miss 17 games.

"He's progressing with workouts off the ice and we hope to see him soon on the ice."

SUNDAY'S PRACTICE

88 Jamie McGinn – 90 Ryan O'Reilly – 23 Sam Reinhart
63 Tyler Ennis – 15 Jack Eichel – 82 Marcus Foligno
28 Zemgus Girgensons – 22 Johan Larsson – 12 Brian Gionta
44 Nicolas Deslauriers – 17 David Legwand

4 Josh Gorges – 55 Rasmus Ristolainen
29 Jake McCabe – 47 Zach Bogosian
6 Mike Weber – 46 Cody Franson

25 Carlo Colaiacovo

31 Chad Johnson

35 Linus Ullmark