



# **Buffalo Sabres**

## **Daily Press Clips**

*January 16, 2016*

## Capitals-Sabres Preview

By Scott Garbarini

AP

January 16, 2016

Wins and goals have been frustratingly scarce for the Buffalo Sabres on home ice over the past month, two qualities that the Washington Capitals continue to reap in abundance.

The NHL's current front-runners attempt to pin a seventh straight home loss on the Sabres while vying for a sixth consecutive win when the teams meet Saturday night.

Buffalo (17-22-4) was dealt a fifth straight defeat in regulation at First Niagara Center with Friday's 4-1 loss to Boston. It's been outscored 17-6 while producing just two even-strength goals over that stretch, which began with a 2-0 setback to the Capitals on Dec. 28.

Avoiding a first seven-game home skid since losing eight straight from Jan. 9-Feb. 5, 2014, figures to be a daunting task. Washington (33-7-3) has outscored opponents 22-8 over its streak and has gone 14-1-1 since Dec. 12 to become only the fifth team in league history to win at least 33 of its first 43 games.

The Capitals kept rolling with Thursday's 4-1 home win over Vancouver that followed a 7-1 rout of visiting Ottawa on Sunday. Alex Ovechkin had a three-game goal streak snapped by the Canucks, but Evgeny Kuznetsov recorded two goals and an assist and Braden Holtby made 29 saves for his league-high 28th victory.

"They are a good team," Vancouver coach Willie Desjardins said afterward. "They're deep all the way through. I thought we were playing pretty good in the first period, but it was still hard to generate against them."

Buffalo knows that feeling all too well, having lost both ends of a home-and-home set to the Capitals in late December. Washington completed the sweep with a 5-2 win on Dec. 30 behind Ovechkin's two goals.

The Sabres could get a break if Holtby is rested for a possible start against the New York Rangers on Sunday. The All-Star goaltender has stopped 56 of 58 shots in Washington's two wins over Buffalo and hasn't lost in regulation since Nov. 10 at Detroit. He's compiled a 20-0-2 record and 1.85 goals-against average since to move within one of Jose Theodore's club-record point streak set in 2010.

Backup Philipp Grubauer has held his own when called upon, as he did with a 32-save effort against Ottawa that lowered his GAA to 2.23 in nine appearances (eight starts).

Buffalo finally got its top goaltender back on Friday, as Robin Lehner made his first appearance since suffering a high-ankle sprain in the Oct. 8 opener against Ottawa. He finished with 27 saves but allowed three third-period goals.

The Sabres registered 34 shots but their usually solid power-play came up empty in four chances, three of which came within a 7-minute span in the second period.

"That's what makes or breaks games," captain Brian Gionta said. "Unfortunately, when you don't get a goal or get very good momentum off it, it's going to hurt you. And that's what happened."

The unit continues to be without one of its key members with Tyler Ennis still out with an upper-body injury. Zemgus Girgensons will join him on the sidelines after exiting Friday's game with an upper-body issue.

With Lehner unlikely to play back-to-back nights, Chad Johnson is expected to start on Saturday. Johnson had 38 saves in the Dec. 30 meeting with Washington and stopped 42 of 44 shots in a 3-1 loss at Chicago on Jan. 8, his third consecutive defeat.

The Capitals have won four straight in the series and are 8 of 13 on the power play in the last six matchups.

## Chara scores go-ahead goal in Bruins' 4-1 win over Sabres

By John Wawrow

AP

January 16, 2016

BUFFALO, N.Y. (AP) — Zdeno Chara and the Boston Bruins weren't going to let another game get away because of a third-period letdown.

After Boston blew leads in the final 20 minutes in its past two losses, Chara sparked a three-goal, third-period rally in a 4-1 win over the Buffalo Sabres on Friday night.

"We knew tonight's game was going to be a big game for us. We wanted to finish strong," said Chara, who snapped an 18-game goal drought. "And that's what we did. We were able to score goals, maintain the same play, be aggressive on pucks, kept up the high pace. So that's pretty much why we got rewarded, and we got two points."

Set up at the left point, Chara scored the go-ahead goal 29 seconds into the final frame by floating in a shot through a crowd and just inside the far post. Ryan Spooner scored an insurance goal with 9:07 left, and then Brett Connolly sealed the win with an empty-net goal.

The Bruins were coming off a 3-2 loss at Philadelphia on Wednesday and a 2-1 loss to the New York Rangers on Monday. They closed a five-game trip by snapping a 0-2-1 skid and improved to 2-4-1 in their past seven.

"We played on our toes in that third period and we really managed the puck well enough to not give them much," coach Claude Julien said. "That's probably the difference here between tonight and those last two games."

Spooner added two assists and linemate Matt Belesky had a goal and an assist in a game Boston overcame a 1-0 deficit.

Backup Jonas Gustavsson stopped 33 shots, including the final 24 he faced after giving up a goal to fourth-line center David Legwand.

The Sabres ended a two-game winning streak and are 0-5-1 in their past six home games. That matches Buffalo's worst home skid since losing six straight from Dec. 31-Feb. 5.

Buffalo's power play came up empty during a momentum-turning stretch early in the second period. The Sabres failed to score on three consecutive opportunities over a 7-minute stretch. The Sabres even failed to capitalize during a 20-second stretch during which two Bruins were forced to defend after their sticks broke.

"That's what makes or breaks games," Sabres captain Brian Gionta said. "Unfortunately, when you don't get a goal or get very good momentum off it, it's going to hurt you. And that's what happened."

Gionta had the best chance during the string of power-play chances by redirecting Matt Moulson's pass into the slot. Gustavsson, however, was prepared by tracking the play and moving to his left to make the stop.

Sabres goalie Robin Lehner made 27 saves in his first appearance since spraining his right ankle midway through the second period of Buffalo's season-opening 3-1 loss to Ottawa.

"It's tough to lose, but I think there were a lot of positives in the game, too, for me personally," Lehner said. "I felt like I was pretty calm and controlled there."

Lehner could only be faulted on Spooner's goal midway through the third period. Spooner's shot from the right boards banked in off the side of Lehner's stick.

It was Lehner's first complete game since playing for Ottawa last season, when he stopped 25 shots in a 7-2 win over Edmonton on Feb. 14. Lehner sustained a concussion in his next game and missed the remainder of the season. The Sabres then gave up a first-round draft pick to acquire Lehner in a trade in late June.

NOTES: The Bruins return home to face Toronto on Saturday. ... Bruins RW David Pastrnak took part in the morning skate but missed his second consecutive game with an upper-body injury. ... Sabres C Zemgus Girgenson did not return after sustaining an upper-body injury midway through the first period. Coach Dan Bylsma said he's awaiting further evaluation, but ruled Girgenson out from playing against Washington on Saturday. ... Buffalo Bills head coach Rex Ryan and his newly hired assistant head coach/twin brother Rob were in attendance.

## **Sabres' offense still missing in action**

By John Vogl  
Buffalo News  
January 16, 2016

Robin Lehner proved he can control a game. In his second start for the Sabres and first in three months, the goaltender gloved pucks with ease, froze them when the action got harried and teed them up for his defensemen behind the net.

None of it helped the Sabres avoid yet another home loss.

Boston beat Lehner three times in a 4-1 victory Friday night, though none of the goals can really be pinned on the returning netminder. The loss gets pinned on his record, however, spoiling his return from a long injury absence.

"It's tough to lose, but I think there was a lot of positives in the game, too, for me personally," Lehner said in First Niagara Center. "I felt like I was pretty calm and controlled out there and played the puck most of the night pretty well. I've just got to keep working."

If Lehner was nervous, he hid it well. The big Swede stopped the first 11 shots he faced since suffering an ankle sprain Oct. 8, helping the Sabres build a 1-0 lead.

"I was very happy to be on the ice for the game," he said. "It was a relief. It was a lot of different emotions."

The final one was frustration, which happens often in Buffalo. The Sabres are 0-5-1 in their last six home games, dropping their record downtown to 8-14-2.

"It was a little disappointing because he looked good, looked solid, made some solid, good saves for us, and we come out on the wrong end," Sabres coach Dan Bylsma said.

The first shot that got past Lehner was a rebound of a breakaway that he stopped. The second, which broke a 1-1 tie, went through traffic with just 29 seconds gone in the third period.

"He's looking through our forward going out, their winger, our centerman, their centerman on a shot that just finds a way through by them all and into the top corner," Bylsma said. "I don't think he saw it at all."

He didn't, but what was visible was the deflation by the Sabres.

"They kind of took the air out of us there with the third-period goal," defenseman Zach Bogosian said. "It was a tough one to take."

The Bruins' third goal, which sealed the Sabres' fate, came with Lehner distracted by teammate Sam Reinhart and Boston's Matt Beleskey fighting for position at the top of the crease.

"The chances that we gave up, we didn't support him well," Sabres captain Brian Gionta said.

Now that Lehner is back, he'll need to support the Sabres. Scoring clearly remains an issue. They were held to one goal or less for the 14th time in 44 games. They've scored 10 times during the six-game skid at home.

Lehner won't help that, but he can control the tempo and allow the Sabres to get comfortable. He'll likely be the backup Saturday when the Sabres host Washington, but he has a chance to be in net Monday when Buffalo visits Arizona.

"He's just going to make strides forward now," Bogosian said. "He's probably pretty anxious to get that first game back under his belt, and it's something for him to build on."

The Sabres need to build something quickly if they want to rise from 29th place. Lehner has belief that it's possible. When he suffered a season-ending concussion with Ottawa last February, the Senators were 23rd overall. They went 21-4-3 down the stretch to make a stunning appearance in the playoffs.

"I come from a team last year in Ottawa that came from a pretty bad situation and made the playoffs," Lehner said, "so I don't see why not."

## **Sabres notebook: Legwand's goal turns out to be only offense**

By Amy Moritz  
Buffalo News  
January 16, 2016

For the first time in 21 games, David Legwand scored.

It was a great effort by his fourth line as Matt Moulson and Tim Schaller helped create pressure throughout the shift. A Boston turnover gave Legwand the opportunity to pick up the puck, move from behind the net and slip it between Jonas Gustavsson's legs.

The goal gave the Buffalo Sabres a 1-0 lead and Legwand his third tally of the season.

But the Sabres offense couldn't connect again, despite opportunities, and the result was a 4-1 loss to the Boston Bruins in First Niagara Center on Friday night.

"Just a turnover and get them to open up there and slide it through the legs," Legwand said when describing his goal. "It's a good momentum thing for our line and our team but to not get the two points is a bigger frustrating point for our team."

The frustration of failing to find another goal weighed heavy with Legwand. The win was what was important, not the fact he broke a 20-game scoreless drought.

"It's a good thing but I think we're more worried about the two points in here," said Legwand who last scored Nov. 27 in a 4-1 win against Carolina. "Obviously it's a race and we think in here we're still in it. These 20 guys, we've got to start reeling off some wins in a row and putting something together here before the break."

Still, the goal was a quality play by the Sabres' fourth line and the kind of effort on which the team should be able to build momentum.

"Forecheck and offensive zone time," Dan Bylsma said of the goal. "They had a couple offensive opportunities. Legwand stayed on the puck and picked off that pass and wrapped around for a big goal for us. Best shift in the first period."

...

Where the Sabres fell short was the power play. With the 1-0 lead, the Sabres had three straight power plays early in the second period. They had a lot of puck possession and shot attempts and seven shots on net. But once again they couldn't capitalize.

"We had a couple of good opportunities, some flurries," Bylsma said, "but not the decisive shot, decisive opportunity to get the goal."

The Sabres finished 0 for 4 on the power play.

"They kept it tight," Brian Gionta said of the Bruins' penalty kill. "They blocked a lot. They kind of kept us to the outside. Anything that did get through it was back on the outside. We had a tough time penetrating."

...

Zemgus Girgensons left the game with an upper body injury in the first period.

"We'll evaluate further. We'll know more tomorrow," Bylsma said. When asked if Girgensons would play in Saturday's game against Washington Bylsma replied "highly unlikely."

...

Mike Weber was in the lineup for the 16th time in 17 games as the veteran defenseman worked his way back into the lineup. He had missed a block of 13 games from Nov. 10 to Dec. 6 – with a combination of a knee injury and healthy scratches.

With the Sabres now carrying eight healthy defensemen, Mark Pysyk was a healthy scratch for the second game since being activated off injured reserve, Weber knows his ice time is never a lock.

"It doesn't change anything in my mindset," Weber said of the abundance of defensemen and the limited playing spots. "I think every man individually has a focus and what they need to do to help this team. We kind of let the coaches decide who's in, who's out. I don't get to pick the lineups so all I can do is show up to the rink, continue to work hard, work on the things I need to do to have personal success and then obviously have success for the team. That's my main focus right now."

But focus, admittedly, can be difficult to come by these days. The Feb. 29 trade deadline is looming and with Weber set to become an unrestricted free agent, there's a chance his days in Buffalo may be numbered. The standard answer from players is that they only focus on elements within their control. The reality lies somewhere in the middle between distraction and detachment.

"I mean, you're human," Weber said with a slight smile. "There's not too many jobs out there where one day you can be somewhere and the next day you have to move your entire family somewhere else. It's an honor to be in this league. It's special to be in this league but in that aspect, obviously you think about it. It crosses your mind. But at the end of the day, it's kind of like the lineup – I can't control what the management staff does, the calls they're taking, the calls they're making. You can't control that."

"I'm a Buffalo Sabre. I've bled blue and gold here for a lot of years and I want nothing more than success here but again I can't control what happens in the next month or so."

## **Quick hits: Bruins 4, Sabres 1**

By John Vogl

Buffalo News

January 16, 2016

The Sabres, who won two straight away from Buffalo, wanted to carry that good feeling into Friday's home game with an impressive start. They got it with a solid first period.

They just forgot to start well during the other two periods.

Boston scored shortly after both intermissions, rendering the Sabres' start moot. The Bruins' 4-1 victory sent the Sabres to their sixth straight setback in First Niagara Center. They are on an 0-5-1 slide at home and fell to 8-14-2 downtown.

Goaltender Robin Lehner, playing for the first time since suffering a high-ankle sprain in the Sabres' season opener, stopped 27 of 30 shots. Brett Connolly scored into an empty net with 1:09 remaining.

Girgensons injured: The Sabres lost left wing Zemgus Girgensons to an upper-body injury with only 9:07 gone. Girgensons applied a hit to the Bruins' Colin Miller just before departing. The Sabres entered the game with 12 healthy forwards, so they'll need to recall a player from Rochester if Girgensons is expected to miss any more time.

Beat the traffic: Defenseman Zdeno Chara gave the Bruins a 2-1 lead just 29 seconds into the third period. Matt Beleskey won a faceoff in the Sabres' zone, with the puck heading to Chara at the left point. He floated a high shot past the entangled duo of Beleskey and Ryan O'Reilly and over the glove Lehner.

Insurance goal: The Bruins extended their lead to 3-1 with 9:07 left on a goal by Ryan Spooner. With Sabres forward Sam Reinhart tied up with a Boston player at the top of the crease, Spooner sent a shot from the right boards along the ice. As Lehner slid to play the puck, it hit his pad and trickled through his legs and into the net.

Rare lead: For just the second time in the last 10 home games, the Sabres opened the scoring. The fourth line of Tim Schaller, Matt Moulson and Legwand did the honors with 5:23 left in the first. Shortly after Schaller hit the post, the Bruins had an opportunity to clear the zone. Instead, defenseman Colin Miller gave Legwand the puck behind the net. The center came out front and beat Bruins backup Jonas Gustavsson between the pads to end a 20-game goal drought.

Bruins rebound: Boston tied the game, 1-1, with just 1:01 gone in the second period. Jake McCabe lost coverage on Spooner at the blue line, but Lehner covered for the defenseman by stopping the breakaway. The rebound, however, went to an open Beleskey, and he ripped home a high shot from the left circle.

Power outage: Boston took three penalties in a span of 4:42 early in the second period, giving Buffalo a prime opportunity to regain the lead. Despite seven shots on the opening two power plays, the Sabres failed to capitalize. Buffalo entered the night with power-play goals in four of the previous six games.

Rare fight: Johan Larsson, who had just one fight in his NHL career, turned into a pugilist on the shift after Legwand's goal. Larsson earned a decision over Boston's Max Talbot, landing several punches early and rallying late. Larsson's other fight was against San Jose's Tyler Kennedy on Nov. 5, 2013, according to HockeyFights.com.

Shot disparity: The Sabres' run of power plays allowed them to take 13 of the opening 16 shots in the second period. They opened a 22-12 lead and finished the second period with a 26-18 advantage.

Captain collision: After putting a second-period shot on net, Sabres captain Brian Gionta took an extra whack at the covering Gustavsson. It drew the attention of Chara. The Boston captain, who stands 6-foot-9, quickly engulfed the 5-7 Gionta along the boards.

Counting the house: The Sabres announced a crowd of 18,704, with Bills coaches Rex and Rob Ryan taking in the game from the 200 Level.

Up next: The Sabres go back-to-back as Washington visits the arena Saturday night. The Capitals' coaching staff got an early look their opponent after watching Friday's game from the press box. Washington is 2-0 against the Sabres this season.

Fans who donate a new carbon monoxide detector at the game will receive two free tickets to the Buffalo Auto Show. The promotion is part of Carbon Monoxide Awareness month, with the Sabres partnering with the Amanda Hansen Foundation.

# Spooner, Gustavsson lift Bruins past Sabres

By Joe Yerdon

NHL.com

January 16, 2016

**BUFFALO** -- The Boston Bruins got the strong third-period performance they've been searching for Friday against the Buffalo Sabres.

Ryan Spooner had two of his three points in the third, including an assist on the game-winning goal, to help Boston end its three-game losing streak with a 4-1 victory at First Niagara Center.

The Bruins went ahead 2-1 when Spooner set up defenseman Zdeno Chara for his sixth goal 29 seconds into the third period. Chara's wrist shot floated through a screen and past Sabres goalie Robin Lehner for his first goal in 19 games.

"That was a big game for us," Chara said. "We started the road trip well, then we lost some games due to not playing 60-minute games, so we knew that tonight's game was going to be a big game for us. We wanted to finish strong, and especially improve our third period, and that's what we did. We were able to score goals, maintain the same play, be aggressive on pucks and kept up the high pace. So that's pretty much why we got rewarded and we got two points."

Jonas Gustavsson made 33 saves for Boston (22-16-5), which blew third-period leads in losses at the New York Rangers on Monday and at the Philadelphia Flyers on Wednesday.

"Even in those last two games, it's not that we didn't skate or we didn't try to make it happen," Bruins coach Claude Julien said. "I think it's the mistakes that we made in the third periods that really ended up costing us. I didn't think we played on our heels, but we needed to be better with our decision-making and tonight we played well."

Spooner made it 3-1 with 9:07 left in the third with his 10th goal. He sent the puck from the right-wing wall toward the net, and it bounced off the paddle of Lehner's goal stick and into the net with Matt Beleskey providing a screen.

"I'm just trying to get someone in the lane, get in front of the net and try to take away his eyes, and that's something we worked on every day, and today it paid off," Beleskey said.

Spooner has a goal and four assists during a three-game point streak.

"He's been good," Julien said. "Tonight, a couple of times there he got rid of the puck early ... but he's been a real good asset for us or a real good replacement for David Krejci since he's been down. He's been really skating well, making things happen, backchecking; so [I'm] really happy with the way he's taken on that responsibility of losing David and coming in and giving us that second line that's been pretty good offensively."

Brett Connolly scored an empty-net goal with 1:09 left.

The Sabres (17-23-4) lost for the first time in three games.

The Bruins had to kill three straight penalties called in a span of 4:42 in the second period to keep it 1-1 and set up their big third period.

"Obviously, when you kill those three, you get some momentum from that and you feel the energy maybe goes a little bit our way, so obviously that was huge," Gustavsson said. "We've been showing lately that we have a

pretty good [penalty kill], so we trust we can step up and make those plays and the offense is going to take over."

Buffalo went 0-for-4 on the power play.

"They kept it tight," Sabres captain Brian Gionta said. "They blocked a lot. They kind of kept us to the outside. Anything that did get through was back on the outside. ... We've got to take advantage of those. It's part of the game. It makes or breaks games."

David Legwand gave Buffalo a 1-0 lead with 5:23 left in the first period with his third goal of the season and first in 21 games. Legwand gathered the puck behind the Boston net and put a wraparound shot past Gustavsson.

Beleskey tied it 1-1 at 1:01 of the second period with his eighth goal. He followed up a rebound of a shot by Spooner and put a shot over Lehner's shoulder.

"We got on the forecheck and we were just getting pucks to the net," Beleskey said. "I think both goals, three goals, we had traffic or a rebound or something, so it was something we've been working on and it worked tonight."

Lehner made 27 saves in his first start since he sustained a right high-ankle sprain in the season opener on Oct. 8.

"It's tough to lose, but I think there [were] a lot of positives in the game, too, for me personally," Lehner said. "I felt like I was pretty calm and controlled out there and played the puck most of the night pretty well."

"It was a lot of different emotions. I'm just excited to be back and keep building on this."

Sabres forward Zemgus Girgensons left the game with 9:07 left in the first period after he collided with Bruins defenseman Kevan Miller in the neutral zone. He did not return.

"Upper body right now, and we'll evaluate further and maybe know more tomorrow," Sabres coach Dan Bylsma said.

Bylsma said it's "highly unlikely" Girgensons will play against the Washington Capitals on Saturday, and Buffalo will recall a forward from Rochester of the American Hockey League.

## **Third period dooms Sabres in loss to Bruins**

By Bill Hoppe  
Olean Times Herald  
January 16, 2016

BUFFALO – Those good feelings the Sabres created earlier this week by winning two straight road games vanished Friday in a mostly boring, uninspired 4-1 loss to the Boston Bruins inside a quiet First Niagara Center.

In No. 1 goalie Robin Lehner's return after missing more than three months with a high ankle sprain, the Sabres lost for the seventh time in nine games and dropped their 16<sup>th</sup> home contest (8-14-2).

Graying veteran David Legwand's third goal this season and first in 20 games opened the scoring in the first period. But the Sabres missed some golden opportunities to seize the game early in the second period, blowing three straight power plays after Matt Beleskey tied it 1:01 into the period.

Zdeno Chara's wrist shot past a screened Lehner 29 seconds into the third period held up as the winner.

"We didn't play a bad game, but we didn't play a good game, either," Sabres captain Brian Gionta said. "We got to look at ourselves and figure out what it is. We didn't do enough to win."

The Sabres, who host the NHL-leading Washington Capitals tonight, are 9-9-2 on the road but have the most home losses in the league.

To make matters worse, the Sabres lost winger Zemgus Girgensons to an upper-body injury in the first period. The Latvian will likely miss tonight's contest, Sabres coach Dan Bylsma said. The Sabres plan to recall a forward from the Rochester Americans.

Girgensons was injured when he hit Kevan Miller. Bylsma said the Sabres might have an update today.

The Sabres have scored just one goal or been shut out in 14 of their 44 games this season. Their ninth-ranked power play has buoyed them at times, but the units didn't do much Friday before the 18,704 fans.

"We got to take advantage of those," Gionta said. "It's part of the game. It makes or breaks games."

He added: "They kept it tight. They blocked a lot. They kind of kept us to the outside. Anything that did get through was back on the outside."

The Bruins sealed just their third win in 11 games with goals from Ryan Spooner and Brett Connolly (empty net).

If the Sabres are looking for a silver lining, Lehner performed strongly and played a 60-minute NHL game for the first time since Feb. 14, 2015, two days before he suffered a season-ending concussion.

"It tough to lose, but I think there was a lot of positives in the game, too, for me, personally," Lehner said. "I felt like I was pretty calmed and controlled out there and played the puck most of the night pretty well."

The Swede's right ankle, which he injured 28 minutes into his Sabres debut opening night, Oct. 8, held up fine during his 27-save performance.

"I felt like my foot could hold 60 minutes," said Lehner, who was acquired from Ottawa for a first-round pick June 26. "I felt like I'm getting better every day now."

Bylsma added: "I thought he looked real good and real (in) control through the first period."

Backup goalie Chad Johnson will likely start tonight, Bylsma said.

## **Sabres' Marcus Foligno and Johan Larsson finally contributing**

By Bill Hoppe  
Olean Times Herald  
January 16, 2016

BUFFALO – For perhaps the first time all season, enigmatic forwards Marcus Foligno and Johan Larsson are playing well at the same time, meaning the Sabres have *finally* started receiving some notable contributions from their third line.

For the last four games, Foligno, Larsson and captain Brian Gionta have been one of the Sabres' strongest trios, contributing some much-needed offense and grit while often facing the opposition's best.

Larsson, the center, skated a season-high 17 minutes, 59 seconds in Tuesday's 3-2 win in Minnesota, a game Gionta scored the winner, only his fifth goal. Foligno scored the winner in Sunday's 4-2 win in Winnipeg, only his fourth goal.

"We're doing the little things," Gionta said Friday prior to the Sabres' 4-1 loss to the Boston Bruins inside the First Niagara Center. "You watch us play, we're cycling down low. We're spending time in the offensive zone, but it's us coming out of the D-zone."

Foligno, 24, has been utilizing his 6-foot-3, 226-pound frame up and down the ice.

"It's got to be a north-south game," Sabres coach Dan Bylsma said about Foligno. "He gets a little away from it when he goes east-west. There's a couple of plays that he has a tendency to make that we're trying to get away from his game.

"He's played north. He's been first on pucks, big-bodied. He's been a physical presence for us on that line. I think his best and most effective hockey has been the last four games."

Like the last three seasons, Foligno has been inconsistent all year. He sat out five straight games a month ago.

"It's been frustrating at some times," Foligno said about his season. "You feel like you've been feeling pretty good and playing pretty good. It just hasn't been getting the result out there. But right now, I feel really comfortable with my game. We're getting results out there."

Meanwhile, Larsson, 23, had been a colossal disappointment this season. The Swede's assist Sunday was only his fifth point. He still only has one goal.

Recently, though, Larsson has been showcasing some of the tenacity that helped him thrive as the Sabres' No. 1 center late last season. Larsson fought Boston's Max Talbot in the first period Friday, his second NHL scrap.

"I think Lars has been maybe his best three games of the year his last three," Bylsma said. "He's played hard, he's played physical and hard to play against. He's played with an edge, he's got the other team knowing he's on the ice being physical. ...

"In the situation that line's been in, it's one we're counting on (them) to play against, in defensive situations, other teams' top lines at times, especially on the road."

xxx

With eight healthy defensemen, Mark Pysyk and Carlo Colaiacovo sat out again for the Sabres.

Pysyk, a steady defender the Sabres sorely missed as he recovered from a broken foot, has been scratched twice since he was summoned from his AHL conditioning assignment. He hasn't played since Nov. 17, a 26-game stretch.

The Sabres' two-game winning streak has kept Pysyk, who skated in the pregame warm-up Friday, shelved.

"We've won with the lineup and for the most part liked our six defensemen in those games," Bylsma said.

Pysyk will return soon, Bylsma said. The Sabres host the NHL-leading Washington Capitals tonight.

"He's not going to have to wait for a loss to get in," Bylsma said.

Colaiacovo has been scratched four straight contests and 15 of the last 16.

Some strong play from defenseman Mike Weber, a regular healthy scratch earlier this season, has impressed Bylsma and kept Pysyk and Colaiacovo sidelined.

"He's solid (and) hard guy to play against, been physical for us," Bylsma said. "I like the way ... (he's) been moving the puck for us out of trouble."

## Sabres Fall to Bruins 4-1

By Pat Malacaro

WGR 550

January 16, 2016

Buffalo, NY (WGR 550) -- The Buffalo Sabres are on the ice, looking to extend their winning streak to three games. Robin Lehner returns for the blue and gold after missing the last several months due to injury. The Sabres and Boston Bruins are scoreless in the first period. Check back throughout the game for updates and head inside for Pat Malacaro's live-game blog.

It has been a long road back for Lehner as he recovered from a high ankle sprain suffered in the season opener. His conditioning stint with the Rochester Americans officially ended yesterday with his return and the demotion of Linus Ullmark to the AHL. For more from today's morning skate, click here for Paul Hamilton's pregame primer. Feel free to comment in the thread below, and give Brian Koziol and myself each a follow on Twitter: @BrianWGR and @PatWGR.

### First Period

*16:13* - Lehner has not been really challenged yet, but he did have to make one save right off the front of his mask. It was a stinging wrist shot that hit right off of the facemask. Pretty sure that did not feel too good.

*12:03* - Buffalo has yet to record a shot on goal and really have not had any sustained zone time to this point. A lackluster start for a team coming off of two straight wins and time to rest after the road trip.

**5:23 - SABRES GOAL.** The hard work of the team's fourth line pays off, and gives Buffalo the lead after coming close twice in the sequence. **Tim Schaller** hit a goal post, and eventually **David Legwand** shoved the puck underneath **Jonas Gustavsson's** pads for the score. **1-0 BUF.**

*2:47* - Cody Franson is called for the first minor penalty of the night. Fans in the seating bowl are not happy, but it was a clear cut call for the officials. Now the blue and gold have to contend with the best power play in the NHL.

### *End of Period*

### Goal Summary

**BUF:** 14:37 - David Legwand (3) (unassisted)

**BOS:** none

### Penalty Summary

**BUF:** 15:01 - Johan Larsson (5 min, fighting). 17:13 - Cody Franson (2 min., hooking)

**BOS:** 15:01 - Max Talbot (5 min., fighting)

### Shots on Goal

BUF - 10, BOS - 9

### Second Period

**18:59 - BRUINS GOAL.** **Robin Lehner** made some nice saves in the first period, but in the second he is just not able to corral the rebound chance and it bites him. **Matt Beleskey** buries to rebound chance and the game is tied. **1-1 tie.**

*15:01* - The Sabres are coming off of the power play, but going right back to it. Landon Ferraro gets called for

slashing Evander Kane and taking him down.

*12:48* - Now it is three straight power plays thanks to a Zdeno Chara minor for delay of game. The Sabres almost have to score on this one. They are 0-2 so far.

*10:52* - Buffalo is about to go 0-3 on the power play, and it is a bit of shame because they are doing so many things well and better than they have in recent years. I really like how they cycle the puck and do not panic. They are in control at all times, just like some of the best teams in the league. It just is not translating into goals on a consistent basis on special teams.

***7:52 - INJURY UPDATE: Zemgus Girgensons is out for the game with an upper-body injury, the team has announced. He missed much of the first period and did not return for the second. We will have to wait for Dan Byslma's postgame press conference to find out anymore.***

### ***End of Period***

#### **Goal Summary**

**BUF:** none

**BOS:** 1:01 - Matt Beleskey (8) (Ryan Spooner, Loui Eriksson)

#### **Penalty Summary**

**BUF:** 12:15 - Mike Weber (2 min., hooking)

**BOS:** 2:50 - Max Talbot (2 min., holding). 4:59 - Landon Ferraro (2 min., slashing). 7:12 - Zdeno Chara (2 min., delay of game)

#### **Shots on Goal**

BUF - 16 (26), BOS - 9 (18)

#### **Third Period**

***19:31 - BRUINS GOAL.*** Another poor start to a period has Buffalo trailing by a goal less than a minute into the final stanza. **Zdeno Chara** let go a wrist shot from the point off of a face-off, it may have hit **Matt Beleskey** on the way into the net. In any event, it is a one-goal deficit for the Sabres. **2-1 BOS.**

*13:15* - The Sabres have had the better of the play on the balance of this period, but still have yet to get the equalizer. I like the energy that the jumbled lines, due to Girgensons' injury, has not been all that poor.

***9:07 - BRUINS GOAL.*** That is a goal that **Robin Lehner** would like to have back. **Ryan Spooner** simply chucks the puck at the net and it gets through the goalie. Now it is a two-goal deficit for the blue and gold. **3-1 BOS.**

*5:50* - The Sabres are running out of time tonight and are not showing much signs that they can get back in this game, despite only being down by two goals. They need some type of spark, and soon.

***1:09 - BRUINS GOAL.*** **Brett Connolly** swing home an empty net goal, and this one has been salted away. **BOS 4-1.**

### ***End of Game***

***Boston 4, Buffalo 1***

#### **Goal Summary**

**BUF:** none

**BOS:** 0:29 - Zdeno Chara (6) (Ryan Spooner, Matt Beleskey). 10:53 - Ryan Spooner (10) (Loui Eriksson, Kevan Miller). 18:51 - Brett Connolly (6) ENG (unassisted)

### **Penalty Summary**

**BUF:** none

**BOS:** 15:43 - Ryan Spooner (2 min., hooking)

### **Shots on Goal**

BUF - 8 (34), BOS - 13 (31)

## **Sabres-Bruins: From the Locker Room**

WGR 550

January 16, 2016

The Sabres fell to 0-5-1 in their last six games on Friday, suffering a 4-1 defeat at the hands of the Bruins. Read what Robin Lehner told the media following his first full game of the season, plus thoughts from Brian Gionta and Dan Bylsma.

### **Robin Lehner**

"If I [hadn't felt] ready yet, I wouldn't have come up and played today. I felt pretty good. I felt like my foot can hold 60 minutes and I felt like I'm getting better every day now, so it's good."

"This is what I get paid to do. It's been a frustrating time. I was very happy being on the ice today for the game. It was relief, it was a lot of different emotions. I'm just excited to be back and keep building on this, and keep building on my game and take it one step at a time."

### **Brian Gionta**

"I thought [Lehner] looked good. The chances that we gave him, we didn't support him well. I thought he played pretty well. Handled the puck, controlled the game pretty good."

"We didn't play a bad game, but we didn't play a good game either. We gotta look at ourselves and figure out what it is. We didn't do enough to win."

"It's nice that we get to go back right at it. Another good team coming in here [Saturday] night, so we have to be ready right off the start."

### **Dan Bylsma**

"Thought [Lehner] looked real good, real in control. Talked about the game-winning goal which is the one from the point. He's looking through our forward going out, their winger, our centerman, their centerman and the shot that just finds a way through, by them all, into the top corner. I don't think he saw it at all."

"I was a little bit disappointed because [Lehner] he looked good, looked solid. Made some solid, good saves for us. We came out on the wrong end."

## **SABRES FALL TO BOSTON IN LEHNER'S RETURN**

By Jourdon LaBarber

Sabres.com

January 16, 2016

They earned a first-period lead, they kept the League's best power play off the board and they even outshot their opponent. But with no goals in the second and third periods, it was all for naught for the Buffalo Sabres in a 4-1 loss to the Boston Bruins on Friday at First Niagara Center.

It was the opening minutes of the second and third periods that proved most troublesome for Buffalo, as Matt Beleskey scored for Boston to tie the game 1:01 into the second period and Zdeno Chara netted the game-winner just 29 seconds into the third.

"We didn't play a bad game, but we didn't play a good game, either," Sabres captain Brian Gionta said. "We've got to look at ourselves and figure out what it is. We didn't do enough to win."

The Sabres played the majority of the contest without forward Zemgus Girgensons, who left with an upper-body injury with 9:12 remaining in the first period. Sabres coach Dan Bylsma said it is "highly unlikely" he plays against Washington on Saturday.

Evander Kane also limped off the ice with roughly 1:42 remaining, but Bylsma had no update on his condition.

Robin Lehner made 27 saves for the Sabres in his first League action since Oct. 8 and David Legwand scored to put them ahead with 5:23 remaining in the first period. Ryan Spooner tallied three points (1+2) for the Bruins, who also received goals from Beleskey, Chara and Brett Connolly.

After back-to-back wins on the road, the loss is the Sabres' sixth-straight at First Niagara Center.

"[We need to] play like we do on the road," Legwand said. "I think we play so simple on the road and so easy on the road and then we come home and we feel like we've got to be a little too fancy and that's not the case. I think it's a simple game when you put pucks behind their D and go after it."

---

### **MISSED OPPORTUNITIES**

Buffalo had three power-play chances to regain the lead in the second after Beleskey tied the game. Landon Ferraro was called for slashing 29 seconds after Max Talbot left the box for holding and, 13 seconds after Ferraro returned, Chara was called for a delay of game. All together, the three penalties came within a span of 4:42.

The Sabres put seven shots on goal combined over the course of the three opportunities but also had several that were either blocked or went wide of the net.

"They kept it tight, they blocked a lot, they kind of kept us to the outside," Gionta said. "Anything that did get through, it was back on the outside so we had a tough time penetrating the middle."

"I think you're going to end up seeing four good looks," Bylsma said. "We had maybe our best looks, a [Rasmus] Ristolainen one-timer right between the tops of the circles that got blocked ... We had a couple good opportunities, some flurries, but not the decisive shot and the decisive opportunity to get the goal."

---

### **LEHNER'S RETURN**

The result wasn't what he wanted, but finishing the game was a victory in itself for the Sabres' goaltender. The

loss marked Lehner's first complete game in the NHL since Feb. 14 of last year, when he was a member of the Ottawa Senators. Lehner sustained concussion in the Senators' game on Feb. 16 and didn't return to action until opening night of this season. However, 27:30 into his Sabres debut, he sprained his ankle and missed the next 42 games.

"It's tough to lose, but I think there were a lot of positives in the game for me personally," Lehner said. "I felt like I was pretty calm and controlled out there and played the puck most of the night pretty well. I've just got to keep working."

The goals he did allow were anything but easy. Beleskey's came on a rebound after a shot from Spooner alone on net, Chara's came from the point through net-front traffic and Spooner's was a turn-around shot that deflected in off a player out in front.

"I thought he looked real good, in real control, through the first period especially," Bylsma said. "I was a little bit disappointed because he looked good, looked solid, made some real solid saves for us and we come out on the wrong end."

---

### **LEGWAND NETS HIS THIRD**

It looked as though Buffalo might have squandered a scoring chance when a put-back attempt by Tim Schaller went off the post and, with Jonas Gustavsson having dove out of the net, Buffalo couldn't score on an empty cage in the first period.

After that play, however, Rasmus Ristolainen backtracked to retrieve the puck while still in the Bruins zone and tossed it toward the corner. Boston's Colin Miller got a hold of it and sent it behind the net, but Legwand was there to intercept the pass and scored on a wrap-around goal.

The marker was Legwand's third of the year.

"It's a good thing, but I think we're more worried about the two points in here," he said. "It's a race and we think in here that we're still in it ... We've got to start reeling off some wins in row and put some together here before the break."

---

### **MAYDAY'S MOMENT OF THE GAME**

*"Unfortunately the first shifts of both the second and third periods resulted in Boston goals. The net-front presence of Matt Beleskey was impressive."* - Brad May, Sabres Studio Analyst

---

### **CAPITALS NEXT**

The Sabres are right back at it on Saturday night when they host the Washington Capitals at First Niagara Center. It's the third and final meeting between the two teams this season, with the Capitals taking the first two contests in a home-and-home set on Dec. 28 and 30.

Pregame coverage begins at 6:30 p.m. with Tops Sabres Gamenight on MSG-B and Bell TV. The game can also be heard live on WGR 550.