



# **Buffalo Sabres**

## **Daily Press Clips**

*January 8, 2016*

## Sabres-Blackhawks Preview

By Tom Castro

AP

January 8, 2016

The last three of the Chicago Blackhawks' five straight wins have been due in large part to defense. That doesn't bode well for a Buffalo Sabres team that's seen its offense dry up during a five-game losing streak.

The Blackhawks try for their ninth consecutive victory and sixth in a row at home in the series as they continue a four-game stretch at United Center on Friday night.

Chicago (25-13-4) defeated Pittsburgh for the second consecutive night Wednesday, winning 3-1 behind a second straight two-goal game from rookie Artemi Panarin and 17 saves from backup Scott Darling. The Blackhawks have given up three goals in the past three victories after allowing eight in first two of their streak.

"We're playing a little bit better in our own end, keeping pucks to the outside, defensive zone puck management ... so I think we're pretty pleased right now," forward Andrew Desjardins said.

Chicago allowed 31 shots Wednesday, but had 37 itself and had given up 26 or fewer in the previous three games. The club has outshot four consecutive opponents.

The offense was handled for the second straight night by Panarin, who leads NHL rookies with 15 goals and 38 points. He managed two goals in his previous 13 before getting two in a 3-2 win Tuesday and turning in an identical performance Wednesday.

"We knew he was a special player right from the outset," linemate Patrick Kane told the team's official website. "Couple (of) big games by him (and) a couple huge goals. I'm sure you'll see that more as his career goes on (with) the Blackhawks, and he'll get even more accommodated here in the United States and everything like that. He'll become a better player. Sky's the limit for that kid."

Kane assisted on Panarin's first goal Wednesday for his league-leading 60th point of the season. He has two goals and eight assists on a five-game point streak.

Kane has scored a goal in four straight meetings with the Sabres, who appear to be badly overmatched. Outscored 18-7 during its five-game skid, Buffalo (15-21-4) has given up 31 goals and scored 17 during its 0-7-1 stretch in this series.

The Sabres preceded their overall losing streak with a 4-1-1 span and totaled nine goals in the final two victories, but they've gone back to playing like one of the worst offensive teams in the league. They were dominated by Atlantic Division-leading Florida on Tuesday, falling 5-1 to complete a three-game homestand.

"I don't think our pushback was there in the third period where it needed to be," coach Dan Bylsma said. "They got the third goal, and I thought we really sagged after that."

The lone goal came from Ryan O'Reilly on the power play, and Buffalo has gone 4 for 14 in the last three games after an 0-for-21 stretch in the previous seven.

O'Reilly, with two goals in his past three contests to give him 16 on the season, was chosen Wednesday to represent the Sabres in the All-Star Game.

"He's our leader. He's our go-to guy right now," rookie center Jack Eichel told the team's official website.

Chicago's Corey Crawford, expected to return to the net Thursday, has given up two goals over his last two starts. He's won all six career starts against the Sabres with a 1.82 goals-against average.

## Loose play of Sabres' top defense pair leads to losing

By John Vogl

Buffalo News

January 8, 2016

Rasmus Ristolainen and Josh Gorges are going to dig pucks out of their own net. Buffalo's top defense pair plays against the opponent's star forwards, so it's inevitable they'll be beaten for a few goals against.

There have been too many lately.

The duo has been on the ice for five of the 13 goals scored at even strength during the Sabres' five-game losing streak, with Gorges victimized one additional time without Ristolainen. As Buffalo heads into the unfriendly confines of Chicago on Friday, the defensemen know they need to be better.

"We've been OK, but too many times I think we've been on the ice for goals against," Gorges said Thursday. "A lot of different reasons for that, but at this level, this time of year, you need to play great. That's the bottom line. Playing good is just not good enough.

"We all know as a group collectively, start to finish, top to bottom, we all have to be better, and that's no different for me and Risto."

The timing and nature of the goals has been troublesome:

- Jaromir Jagr was left wide-open during a rush chance and gave Florida a 1-0 lead.
- Henrik Zetterberg put Detroit ahead during a rush 2:27 into the third period.
- Nikolay Kulemin gave the New York Islanders a 2-0 lead with 1:07 gone in the third on a scrambly play in Buffalo's zone.
- Washington's Alex Ovechkin was left wide-open during another scramble just 19 seconds into the second period for the opening goal.

"The last couple games, they haven't been our best ones," Ristolainen said. "We've been struggling as a team, and I had a lot of ice time, so I've got to play better if I want to earn that ice time and try to help the team more."

Coach Dan Bylsma broke up the pair during Thursday's practice, with Ristolainen starting as the extra blue-liner. He eventually subbed in, with Bylsma saying he just wanted to get right-handed Zach Bogosian some reps on the left side. No matter the reason, the coach acknowledged he needs more from Ristolainen and Gorges.

"We've looked at it and talked about it with the pair," Bylsma said. "There's certainly some instances where the puck has gone in the net, rush plays that have gone in, and we've looked at those.

"But a lot of it's been their execution with the puck. They're playing against good lines and top lines, and their execution with the puck out of the defensive zone and breaking out has been a big part of the problems that they've faced."

The Sabres can't afford to be sloppy if they want to avenge the 3-2 shootout loss to the Blackhawks on Dec. 19. Gorges and Ristolainen were in the penalty box when Chicago tied the game with 34 seconds left, and the Sabres haven't forgotten about it heading into the rematch.

"It's one of those games that you should be excited to play in," Gorges said. "It's a tough test against a really good team with a lot of high-end players, but those are the games that you want to be a part of, being pushed to your best."

"Not to mention the way things unfolded last time we played them. We owe them another real good game, and I think we'll be prepared for it."

While Ristolainen continues to play the most minutes for the Sabres – he skated 27:31 against Florida, bumping his average to 24:48 per game – Bylsma has begun to ease back with Gorges. The 31-year-old averages 20:24 but is at 18:39 during the last five games. Bogosian and Jake McCabe have picked up ice time.

"We are more by committee," Bylsma said.

Ristolainen remains the committee chairman. He's tied for 11th among NHL defensemen with 26 points, but he has no goals in 11 games and has found the net in just one of the last 25, though the lone game was a hat trick.

"It wasn't his strongest game last game, his play with the puck, but we're talking about a guy who's been a big part of our team and how we have played and gets big minutes and big assignments," Bylsma said. "He's been really good at that for us."

## **Sabres notebook: Lehner to get plenty of work in with Amerks**

By John Vogl

Buffalo News

January 8, 2016

The Rochester Americans are celebrating their 60th anniversary Friday night, with alumni from as far back as the 1961 team expected to be in attendance. Most eyes, though, will be on a guy making his Amerks debut.

Robin Lehner, who hasn't played since the Sabres' season opener Oct. 8, will make his first of up to three rehab starts with Rochester. The goaltender has practiced for two days with the Amerks, who play three games this weekend. They host Hershey on Friday, visit Binghamton on Saturday and host Syracuse on Sunday.

"He'll get a couple games, for sure," Buffalo coach Dan Bylsma said Thursday. "He needs to get in the net and see shots, stop shots. He wanted to go down for practice the last few days to get a full volume of shots and to get that there and get in a game and see game action. He's pretty excited about it."

Lehner was hopeful of playing in Binghamton, where he won the Calder Cup in 2011, but it's not clear if the organization will use him in back-to-back games. Since the Sabres will be on the road until next Friday, it's possible Lehner will remain with the Amerks through Wednesday's game in Albany.

Buffalo defenseman Mark Pysyk will also make his rehab debut with Rochester on Friday. Bylsma said Pysyk, who has been out since breaking a bone in his foot Nov. 17, will likely play in all three of the Amerks' games this weekend.

Among the former Sabres expected to be part of Rochester's anniversary celebration are Richie Dunn, Andrew Peters, Daren Puppa and John Van Boxmeer.

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The Sabres kick off a three-game road trip Friday in Chicago, followed by games in Winnipeg and Minnesota. They headed west without an extra forward.

"Conditioning stints are on your roster, so the 23-man roster includes Pysyk and Lehner, so we are at 23," said Bylsma, who has 12 forwards, seven defensemen and two goalies.

The coach swapped wingers on his third and fourth lines Thursday, bumping up Marcus Foligno to skate with Johan Larsson and Brian Gionta while dropping Matt Moulson down with Tim Schaller and David Legwand.

Moulson has no goals in 27 games. Foligno had three shots and three hits in just 8:29 of ice time Tuesday against Florida.

"It's one to build on with his play and the type of player he can and needs to be for us," Bylsma said. "He's going to get a bigger opportunity to do that because of it."

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One day after the NHL selected Ryan O'Reilly as an All-Star, the American Hockey League named his brother to its All-Star Game. Cal O'Reilly will represent the Amerks in the two-day event Jan. 31 and Feb. 1 in Syracuse.

Cal O'Reilly is second for Rochester in scoring with 19 points, including 16 assists, in 28 games.

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The Sabres are auctioning game-worn jerseys, and Jack Eichel's first sweater is getting plenty of attention. The bidding started at \$250 for every player's jersey, and the auction for the sweater worn by Eichel in his NHL debut had soared to \$6,126 at 6 p.m. Thursday.

The auction, which is available at [Auction.NHL.com](https://www.auction.nhl.com) and benefits the Sabres' foundation, will run until 9 p.m. Monday.

## **Sabres in strong negotiation position as TV, radio deals near end**

By Alan Pergament  
Buffalo News  
January 8, 2016

Despite their position near the bottom of the National Hockey League standings, the Buffalo Sabres' TV ratings are up about 50 percent from a year ago at just about the perfect time.

The team's TV contract with the Madison Square Network expires after the 2016-17 season and the strong ratings put the Sabres in a position of strength in negotiations that have already begun.

"We are encouraged by our preliminary renewal talks with MSG," said Mark Preisler, the executive vice president for Media & Content for Pegula Sports and Entertainment. "We share the mutual goal of wanting to provide our fans more extensive Sabres and Bills coverage across WNY."

It is likely the Sabres goal to have MSG agree to add a separate Buffalo feed here to provide more Buffalo sports programming. If that happens, there would no need for Bills and Sabres owners Terry and Kim Pegula to start their own regional sports network similar to the former Empire Sports Network. A regional sports network would be a much more expensive proposition than having a separate MSG channel to carry more Sabres and Bills programming.

Of course, the devil may be in the financial details. The Sabres are expected to get a \$10 million rights fee in the final year of their TV deal and want to substantially increase that in a new deal.

Time Warner Cable already carries two MSG channels on nights that the Sabres and the New York sports teams have scheduling conflicts.

There is much more time to work out a TV deal than a radio deal. The Sabres current deal with Entercom, which owns sports station WGR, expires after this season.

The Sabres have done some radio experimenting this season. Most notably, a handful of games haven't been simulcast with MSG and there are several more coming with two different announcing teams.

There are multiple reasons for the experiment. The team is preparing for life after Hall of Fame play-by-play man Rick Jeanneret, whose popularity is the primary reason for the simulcasts. Additionally, if the Sabres were to buy a local radio group to produce the games, they most likely would have separate radio and TV teams next season.

That isn't out of the question if talks sour with Entercom, which also owns WBEN and WKBW on the AM dial and WKSE and WLKK on the FM dial in the Buffalo market.

One potential acquisition property is Cumulus Media. There hasn't been any talk that it has put its Buffalo stations or any stations up for sale, but Cumulus is struggling nationally and any group in that position might consider a sale if the price is right. This week, it had a share price of 33 cents. It owns 97 Rock, 103.3 The Edge, 104.1 and 1270 The Fan. The Pegulas could buy the group, put the Sabres games on one of the powerful FM stations and try to sell the other stations in the market. Radio sources say it wouldn't be easy, but add it could possibly be done.

The Bills contract with Entercom also expires after the 2016 season, which could be another incentive for the Pegulas to buy local radio stations.

But that could be getting ahead of the game.

Entercom, which has one of the strongest sports stations in the country in WGR, wouldn't want to lose the Sabres or the Bills without a fight.

**Jeff Silver** is out as the general manager of the Townsquare Media radio stations in town, which include FM stations WYRK, WBLK-FM, WMSK (Mix 96) and WBUF (Jack FM, 92.9)

Rob Williams, who is based in Greenwich, Conn., is the interim general manager as the company starts a search for Silver's replacement. Williams was the general manager of WJYE-FM (now Mix 96) and WECK-AM more than 20 years ago.

"Jeff has done a terrific job in this market for close to 20 years," praised Williams.

## **Blackhawks go for sixth straight win, host Sabres**

By Brian Hedger

NHL.com

January 8, 2016

**SABRES (15-21-4) at BLACKHAWKS (25-13-4)**

**TV: NHLN, MSG-B, BELL TV, CSN-CH**

**Season series:** Chicago Blackhawks forward Patrick Kane keyed a 3-2 shootout win against the Buffalo Sabres in the first game at First Niagara Center on Dec. 19. Kane forced overtime by scoring a 6-on-3 goal at 19:26 to cap a power play with the Blackhawks' net vacated. He then scored the only goal in the shootout. Defenseman Cody Franson and center Ryan O'Reilly scored Buffalo's goals.

**Sabres team scope:** Buffalo is looking to prevent its second six-game losing streak of the season. The Sabres, who've lost five in a row and six of their past seven, tried out some new looks defensively at practice Thursday. Struggling most are defensemen Josh Gorges and Rasmus Ristolainen. Gorges has a minus-6 rating in his past six games and Ristolainen has a minus-6 rating in the past seven. Ristolainen, 21, sat out some drills at practice, but coach Dan Bylsma said it wasn't a message. "It wasn't his strongest game last game, his play with the puck, but we're talking about a guy who's been a big part of our team and how we have played," Bylsma told the Sabres' website. The Sabres will not recall a forward from the minors to start their three-game road trip. They have a full 23-man roster, because goalie Robin Lehner (high ankle sprain) and defenseman Mark Pysyk (fractured foot) are on conditioning assignments with Rochester of the American Hockey League. Players on conditioning assignments take up roster spots. Bylsma said Lehner, who's scheduled to start two games this weekend, will be the Sabres' top goalie upon his return.

**Blackhawks team scope:** Chicago is riding a season-high five-game winning streak after sweeping a home-and-home against the Pittsburgh Penguins. The Blackhawks' 54 points in 42 games is second only to the Dallas Stars in the Central Division and Western Conference. Chicago didn't practice Thursday, heading into its fourth game in six days. Crawford is expected to get back in net after Scott Darling made 17 saves in the Blackhawks' 3-1 win against the Penguins at United Center on Wednesday. Rookie left wing Artemi Panarin scored two goals in each game against Pittsburgh, including two game-winners, and has points in four of the past five. Panarin, 24, leads NHL rookies with 15 goals, 38 points and nine multipoint games. "The last two shots, well all of [his] shots, but the two that came out real fast there, top shelf, you don't even really see them go in ... in and out so fast," forward Andrew Desjardins said. "It's pretty unbelievable, when you get him shooting, how dangerous he is." As of Wednesday, recently acquired forward Richard Panik hadn't arrived while trying to get his U.S. work visa.

## Sabres still work in progress halfway through season

By Bill Hoppe  
Olean Times Herald  
January 8, 2016

BUFFALO – Sabres coach Dan Bylsma noticed almost immediately, way back in September, and it surprised him. Training camp had just started with an overhauled roster – about 10 new faces, in fact – yet his players were already forming close bonds.

“They enjoy being a part of this team and part of this group,” Bylsma said Thursday inside the First Niagara Center. “It has developed. It is a part of what we are. ... It is a calling card of our team.”

Almost four months later, the Sabres have only grown closer.

“We enjoy each other’s company,” said center Ryan O’Reilly, the Sabres’ only NHL All-Star. “That’s definitely a big part going forward for us. In order to have success, we have to be able to talk about everything.”

The Sabres have a lot to talk about these days. They’ve lost five straight games and fallen to 29<sup>th</sup> in the 30-team NHL heading into tonight’s tilt against the Chicago Blackhawks, the start of a three-game road trip and the official halfway point of the season.

On the surface, the Sabres might not appear to be much better than last season, when they finished dead last. At 15-21-4, they have only 34 points. A year ago at this time, they had 31 points and were in the midst of their epic 14-game regulation losing streak.

Of course, it’s been well documented how much the Sabres have improved. They’re competitive, can execute a rigid system and often outplayed their opponents.

The Sabres, more or less, have morphed back into a real team. They have 13 one-goal losses. Players will tell you they’re on the right path. Still, they haven’t seen the results they want to, and that can make it difficult to believe you’re doing the right things.

“It’s still a process for our team in developing how we’re going to play, in developing who we are,” Bylsma said. “And not getting the results and looking at yourself in the standings, it can be difficult. But we do have to stay focused here on the process.”

Clearly, Bylsma, who was hired in May, has created a new standard.

“I think that was evident right from the start of training camp,” Sabres defenseman Josh Gorges said. “It’s not OK, it’s not acceptable to be average. It’s not OK to lose games. ... The expectation has changed, and I think that’s why when we’ve lost a couple like we have here recently, guys take it personally. They take this to heart.

“This is serious, because we’re a better team than what our record has shown here lately.”

Here are some of the reasons the Sabres have improved so much but still rank among the league’s bottom-feeders.

**They can’t score goals:** The Sabres have only 91 goals, just 2.28 a game. Only three teams have averaged fewer.

Veterans are underperforming across the board. Winger Matt Moulson, a three-time 30-goal scorer, has four goals and hasn't scored since Nov. 1. Bylsma recently scratched him. Captain Brian Gionta has four goals. Winger Tyler Ennis has only three goals. Winger Marcus Foligno has only two scores.

**The youngsters are picking up the slack:** Rookie center Jack Eichel, 19, has quickly become one of the Sabres' best players, compiling 13 goals and 26 points. The second overall pick has been on a tear recently, scoring four goals and 12 points in his last eight games.

Rookie Sam Reinhart, meanwhile, has nine goals and 16 points. The second overall pick in 2014 has been playing on the first line with O'Reilly.

**The goalies have been solid:** With no established NHL starters, goaltending was the Sabres' biggest question mark before the season. It became a bigger one when No. 1 Robin Lehner suffered a high right ankle sprain opening night.

"We really hadn't seen any of these guys in net for us," Bylsma said.

Backup Chad Johnson and rookie Linus Ullmark have mostly subbed admirably, alleviating some concerns.

"We've gotten ... good goaltending from both those guys," Bylsma said.

Johnson is 7-5-2 with a 2.10 goals-against average and a .930 save percentage since the beginning of November. Ullmark has slumped recently, going 1-8-2 in his last 11 starts. A lack of goal support – the Sabres have scored just twice in his last four starts – has hurt him badly. The Swede, however, won four of his first six starts.

**Rasmus Ristolainen has become the Sabres' best defenseman:** In his third season, Ristolainen has developed into a star, skating almost 25 minutes a night. The Finn has seven goals, 26 points and just two penalty minutes, an incredible number given how much he plays and the competition he faces.

Ristolainen, 21, has slumped a bit recently. He's a minus-6 in his last seven games and hasn't scored a goal in 11 contests. Still, he's enjoying a breakout campaign.

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The Sabres won't recall an extra forward for their trip, Bylsma said. Center Tim Schaller practiced Thursday after sitting out Wednesday.

Bylsma said since the Sabres officially assigned Lehner and defenseman Mark Pysyk (broken foot) to the Rochester Americans on Thursday they have reached the 23-man roster limit. Conditioning assignments count against the NHL roster.

The Amerks have three games this weekend. Lehner will likely play twice, Bylsma said. Pysyk could play all three contests. Bylsma said Lehner will be the Sabres' starter when he returns.

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Amerks center Cal O'Reilly, who has three goals and 19 points in 28 games, has been selected for the AHL All-Star Game.

## **Sabres' Rasmus Ristolainen struggling**

By Bill Hoppe  
Olean Times Herald  
January 8, 2016

BUFFALO – For a portion of today's practice, Rasmus Ristolainen watched the Sabres go through their drills from bench. Was coach Dan Bylsma sending the struggling defenseman a message?

“Not at all,” Bylsma said inside the First Niagara Center.

Bylsma said “there was nothing to read into it” and he was simply trying out some new pairings. Still, Ristolainen, the Sabres' ace defenseman all season, has been struggling beside partner Josh Gorges.

Ristolainen, 21, is a minus-6 in his last seven games and hasn't scored a goal in 11 contests. The Finn was a minus-2 in Tuesday's 5-1 loss to Florida, the Sabres' fifth straight loss.

“It's much like our team game as a group in the last couple games,” Bylsma said about Ristolainen. “It wasn't his strongest game last game, his play with the puck. But we're talking about a guy who's been a big part of our team and how we have played and gets big minutes and big assignments.”

Gorges, meanwhile, is a minus-6 in his last five appearances.

“I think we've been OK, but too many times we've been on the ice for goals against, different reasons for that,” Gorges said about the pairing. “At this level, this time of year, you need to play great. That's the bottom line. But playing good isn't good enough.”

In other news, the Sabres won't recall a forward for their three-game road trip, which starts Friday in Chicago. Center Tim Schaller practiced today after sitting out Wednesday.

Bylsma said since the Sabres officially assigned goalie Robin Lehner (high ankle sprain) and defenseman Mark Pysyk (broken foot) to the Rochester Americans today they have reached the 23-man roster limit. Conditioning assignments count against the NHL roster.

The Amerks have three games this weekend. Lehner will likely play twice, Bylsma said. Pysyk could play all three contests. Bylsma said Lehner will be the Sabres' starter when he returns.

## **Sabres' top D pair beginning to struggle**

By Paul Hamilton

WGR 550

January 8, 2016

Buffalo, NY (WGR 5501) -- For much of this season the pair of Rasmus Ristolainen and Josh Gorges played very well together.

The team has lost five in a row and the pair has started to struggle. Dan Bylsma broke them up in Thursday's practice with Gorges playing with Cody Franson and Ristolainen working in after Jake McCabe and Zach Bogosian took the first shift. The first thought I had was was the head coach trying to send his young defenseman a message? Bylsma said, "Not at all, it's happened in a game where it takes Zach playing on his off side, so it was just a little practice, so there was nothing to read into it other than Zach getting some reps on his off side."

Ristolainen was on an offensive tear for 20 games where he had 19 points. In his last seven games he has no goals and two assists. In his last six games he's been minus six making him minus nine on the season. As far as how Ristolainen has played Bylsma said, "It was much like our team game. It wasn't his strongest game last game, his play with the puck, but we're talking about a guy that has been a big part of our team as he gets big minutes and big assignments and he's been really good at that for us."

Gorges will never give you much offense as penalty killing and shot blocking are what he does best. Gorges is minus seven in his last five games and minus seven on the season. Bylsma said the last five games have not gone as well for the pair because, "We've looked at it and talked about it with the pair and a lot of it has been their execution with the puck. They're playing against good lines are their execution with the puck out of the defensive zone breaking out has been a big part of problems that they've faced."

With Mark Pysyk and Robin Lehner on conditioning assignments in Rochester, they count against the roster, so the Sabres are at the 23 man limit and will not be calling up an extra forward for the three game road trip.

## **Sabres look to end skid during 3-game road trip**

By Jourdon LaBarber

Sabres.com

January 8, 2016

If the Buffalo Sabres are to snap a five-game skid in the upcoming week, they'll have to do it on the road. A matchup against the Chicago Blackhawks at United Center on Friday night will kick off a three-game road trip for the team that rolls through Winnipeg on Sunday and then Minnesota on Tuesday.

Sabres alternate captain Josh Gorges was specific when asked what he hopes to see from the team over the course of the next three games.

"I think first and foremost is that compete [level]," he said. "We've got to compete from start to finish, no matter the situation or the game, and then what comes of that is sticking together as a team. Play the systems, play the way we're supposed to play, but play it hard, play with some pride, play with some passion.

"I think if we do those things and really focus on those two details, we'll be successful."

Gorges was a part of a defensive shakeup at practice on Thursday, skating on a pair with Cody Franson rather than Rasmus Ristolainen, his partner since early in the season. Ristolainen split repetitions with Jake McCabe alongside Zach Bogosian.

Sabres coach Dan Bylsma insisted that not too much be read into these moves. The object, he said, was simply to give Bogosian an opportunity to practice on his offside for when it occurs in game situations. Bogosian skated on the right during reps with McCabe and on the left while paired with Ristolainen.

While Gorges admitted there could be improvements on his pair with Ristolainen – they have to be not just good but great, he said – he's also enjoyed the process of developing as the team's top pair during the course of the season.

"I've really enjoyed playing with him as a partner," Gorges said. "Like I said, I think we work well together, we complement each other, the communication is there and I think that as the year goes on you grow with your partner.

"You understand where he's going to be in situations and vice-versa. So I think we've taken a lot of steps in that direction and we'll see what comes out of today's practice in the lineup tomorrow."

Tim Schaller also returned to practice on Thursday after being absent Wednesday with a lower-body injury. Schaller centered the fourth line between Matt Moulson and David Legwand. Schaller and Legwand both played less than eight minutes but combined to draw three penalties against Florida on Tuesday, their first game since losing fourth liner Nicolas Deslauriers to a lower-body injury.

"I think it was all right," Legwand said. "We drew three or four penalties and I think that's something that helps the team out in the long run. I think it helps the guy who gets the power-play goal and those types of things. We've got to stay out and come with energy and give what we can every night."

With Schaller's return, the team did not recall an extra forward for their upcoming road trip. With goaltender Robin Lehner and Mark Pysyk's respective conditioning assignments in Rochester counting against the Sabres' roster, the team is already maxed out at 23 players.

As for Lehner and Pysyk, both are going to play during the Amerks' three-in-three set this weekend. Bylsma hinted that Lehner will play multiple games while he expects Pysyk to play in all three. The Amerks play in Rochester on Friday and Sunday and in Binghamton on Saturday.

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