



Buffalo Sabres

Daily Press Clips

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Umberger snaps 50-game scoreless drought, Flyers beat Sabres

By Aaron Bracy

AP

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PHILADELPHIA (AP) — R.J. Umberger did all he could to keep his scoreless streak from overwhelming his confidence.

Umberger snapped a 50-game drought and Wayne Simmonds got his 20th goal of the season to help the Philadelphia Flyers beat the Buffalo Sabres 5-1 on Thursday night and end a three-game skid.

Umberger got his first goal since Jan. 27, 2015.

"It became a mental challenge. It can get the best of you," Umberger said. "You start to question yourself, but deep down I know what kind of player I can be. I know I can add to the team."

Brayden Schenn, Michael Raffl and Nick Cousins also scored for Philadelphia, which scored four goals during a dominant second period.

Philadelphia needs every point it can get to stay in the playoff race — the Flyers began play five points out of a postseason spot and behind five teams.

"It's huge for us, everyone pulling on the same side of the rope, having an explosion like that," said Flyers rookie defenseman Shayne Gostisbehere, who tied a club rookie record by extending his point streak to 10 games.

Jamie McGinn scored for Buffalo, and the Sabres lost their fourth in a row while wrapping up a three-game season series against the Flyers with their first loss.

Steve Mason had 41 saves while making his sixth straight start for Philadelphia.

Gostisbehere had an assist to tie Mikael Renberg's Flyers rookie record set in the 1993-94 season. It's also the longest current streak in the NHL.

Umberger put the Flyers on the board 1:23 into the second period. He took a nice feed from Sam Gagner and beat Robin Lehner over the right pad. He had been a healthy scratch the last five games but replaced Matt Read in coach Dave Hakstol's lineup after Philadelphia's lackluster performance in a 4-1 home loss Tuesday night to Anaheim.

"Not a lot of things have bounced his way," Hakstol said. "Everybody was fired up for him."

The goal was the 179th of Umberger's career.

After scoring, Umberger thrust both arms in the air and looked skyward before being mobbed by teammates. He then blessed himself and let out a huge smile while being congratulated along the Flyers bench.

"It was a little prayer to the hockey gods: thank you," he said.

Umberger's goal opened the floodgates. Schenn followed 48 seconds later with his 15th of the season on a one-timer from close range. Simmonds then got his 10th goal in the last 13 games while reaching 20 goals for the third straight season with a wrist shot that beat Lehner on the short side. Raffl finished the second-period barrage with 4:03 left, with Cousins earning his second career point with an assist. Cousins later got his first career goal.

Buffalo allowed four goals to open things for the second straight game after doing it in a 7-4 home defeat to Florida on Tuesday night.

"Mental breakdowns, turnovers, lack of coverage, it's a little bit of everything," captain Brian Gionta said.

Philadelphia's Radko Gudas was involved in two fights. The second came with 3:33 left in the game after Buffalo's Jake McCabe retaliated following Gudas' hard check of Daniel Catenacci, who had his head down when he was leveled at center ice.

Sabres coach Dan Bylsma said after the game that Catenacci was going through concussion testing. Both Bylsma and his players were upset with Gudas.

"He's an idiot," said Marcus Foligno, who fought Gudas in the second period after being leg whipped. "He gets his hits in and is dirty and has been known for it. Goes after a rookie who's been in three games and gets right at his head. Wish (I) was on ice and could've done more damage to him."

Bylsma expects the league to look into a possible suspension.

Lehner stopped 23 of 28 shots.

Notes: RW Justin Bailey made his NHL debut and had seven shots for the Sabres. The 2013 second-round pick had 10 goals and 23 points in 47 games with Rochester in the AHL. "I thought he was probably our best player tonight in the game," Bylsma said. ... The Sabres' last season sweep of Philadelphia came in 2001-02 when they went 4-0. ... Buffalo C Ryan O'Reilly leads the Sabres with 17 goals but has gone 14 straight games without a goal. ... Buffalo beat the Flyers 4-3 in overtime on Oct. 27 and 3-1 on Oct. 30. ... Buffalo went 0 for 6 on the power play.

Canadiens-Sabres Preview

By Jeff Massoth

AP

February 12, 2016

Two-month chunks of the season have brought wildly different results for the Montreal Canadiens. With about that much time left, they hope for the earlier returns to make a push.

The Canadiens look to build off their first winning streak in more than two months when they open a three-game trip against the sinking Buffalo Sabres on Friday night.

Montreal (27-24-4) opened as the NHL's best team with a 19-4-3 record through Dec. 1 but posted the league's worst mark of 5-20-1 from Dec. 3-Feb. 3. That miserable stretch included no point streaks with two four-game skids and a six-game drought.

With the clock ticking on what would be a massive collapse, the Canadiens have finally found a bit of relief with three straight wins to snap a four-game skid and close a homestand 3-1.

Montreal scored 10 goals in the final three games, looking more like the team that led the league with a scoring average of 3.54 through the season's first 24 games compared to the one that fell to the bottom at 1.86 from Nov. 28-Feb. 3.

Tomas Plekanec has led the latest swing in offense, tallying three goals and five assists in the last four games after going scoreless in the previous six.

"He's going out there and playing solid defensively and creating offense as well," Alex Galchenyuk said of his linemate.

Now the key is spreading the success around. The Canadiens' top line of Plekanec, Galchenyuk and Brendan Gallagher have logged 13 of Montreal's 26 points over the last three games. Meanwhile, captain Max Pacioretty has one goal and one assist in his last nine games and David Desharnais has gone without a point in his last seven.

"We need to follow up on what other guys are doing if we want to have success and keep it going," Desharnais told the team's official website. "At the start of the year, everyone was chipping in and there was a different hero each game."

While Montreal is 3-11-1 away from home since Dec. 5, Buffalo is 1-7-2 at First Niagara Center since Dec. 19.

The first two games between these Atlantic Division foes were as opposite as the Canadiens' season has been. A 7-2 rout of Buffalo on Oct. 23 was part of Montreal's nine-game opening run, but a 4-2 loss Feb. 3 was the final loss in its extended slump.

Though the Sabres have won four of the last five in this series, Montreal has taken five of the last six in Buffalo and has points in 12 of the last 14 there.

The Sabres (21-28-6) came out of the All-Star break with their win over the Canadiens, but they have followed with four straight losses - the first two in extra time and the final two in regulation.

After falling 7-4 to Florida on Tuesday, Buffalo surrendered another handful of goals in Thursday's 5-1 loss at Philadelphia. The Sabres trailed 4-0 in each game.

"Mental breakdowns, turnovers, lack of coverage, it's a little bit of everything," captain Brian Gionta said.

Robin Lehner was pulled Tuesday after allowing four goals on 12 shots, and he surrendered five more on 28 two days later. It is unclear if he or Chad Johnson will start in net Friday.

Ben Scrivens will make his fourth straight start in net for Montreal. He has won three in a row with a .959 save percentage, though he holds just a .908 mark in six career starts against Buffalo.

Another disheartening blowout for Sabres

By John Vogl
Buffalo News
February 12, 2016

PHILADELPHIA – The Sabres struggled to win even when they were playing well. If they play poorly, they have absolutely no chance at success.

Make no mistake, they're playing poorly right now.

Buffalo got blown out for the second straight game Thursday, suffering a 5-1 loss in Philadelphia. The Flyers scored four times during the second period as the Sabres avoided defensive coverage like it was the Zika virus.

"It's disappointing for sure," defenseman Cody Franson said in Wells Fargo Center. "We didn't play our system well. We didn't execute well. Those two things left us exposed. They're a good rush team and took advantage.

"It wasn't our best effort by any stretch. We have to stick to what makes us successful, and we didn't do that."

The Sabres stayed close to teams and earned a few victories with sound defense, smart decisions and stellar goaltending. Those have all disappeared as Thursday's four-goal loss came on the heels of Tuesday's 7-4 beatdown by Florida.

The Sabres looked forward to having a bounceback game in Philly, but instead they just got bounced.

"After you have an outing like we did the other night, you want to come back and be much better," captain Brian Gionta said. "It's definitely disappointing. We had breakdowns, mental breakdowns, turnovers, lack of coverage. It's just a little of everything."

The Flyers and the officials gave Buffalo a great chance to win. The Sabres had three straight power plays at the end of the first period, but they generated nothing. After the man-advantage time ended, the Flyers struck for two goals in 48 seconds and never looked back.

"We have the three power-play opportunities and don't capitalize on them, then in short order we gave them three, four odd-man rushes that end up in the back of our net," Sabres coach Dan Bylsma said. "That's all on us and how we played to give them those opportunities. You can't give the Flyers those chances. They buried them. That's the big disappointment in that game."

Buffalo went 0 for 6 on the power play and took just six shots.

"You have that many power plays you've got to make something happen," Gionta said. "You've got to be a difference in the game, and we weren't."

The best display of fight the Sabres showed was again with their fists. Flyers defenseman Radko Gudas drew their ire twice. First, he leg-whipped Marcus Foligno, which led to the Sabres forward following him up ice and dropping the gloves as Philly scored.

The second play caused an injury. As Sabres rookie Dan Catenacci was bent over looking for a puck, Gudas barreled in to drop the forward. The referees issued a five-minute major for charging and five minutes for fighting when Jake McCabe exchanged punches with Gudas.

"The guy's an idiot," Foligno said. "He's dirty, goes after a rookie, goes right for his head. He's an idiot."

Catenacci, who had to be helped off the ice, underwent concussion testing after the game.

"There's no question it's a head hit," Bylsma said. "I know the league will look at that hit and deal with it."

The bright side for the Sabres is they immediately get another chance to correct their mistakes. They host Montreal on Friday night. The Sabres need to play well because they've learned the hard way what happens when they don't.

"We were playing some really good hockey and just couldn't find the wins," Franson said. "For some reason we've gotten away from what makes us successful, and we have to focus on getting back to that."

Williamsville native receives taste of good life with Sabres

By John Vogl

Buffalo News

February 12, 2016

PHILADELPHIA – Justin Bailey's first taste of NHL life was a bite of calamari. That as much as anything told Karen Buscaglia that her boy had become a man.

"It was like, 'No way, for my picky kid?'" Buscaglia said. "The world is really opening up."

Bailey took a historic step in his new world Thursday night. The 20-year-old who grew up next to Matthew Barnaby and lived with Pat LaFontaine joined them as players for the Buffalo Sabres when he made his NHL debut in a 5-1 loss to the Philadelphia Flyers.

"It's something I've been looking forward to my whole life," the Williamsville native said. "From the time I got drafted till now, it's been special that it's my hometown."

Bailey showed off his rapidly developing maturity by handling the nerve-racking moment with the aplomb of a 10-year veteran. He smiled and laughed away from the ice and skated determinedly on it while soaking in the atmosphere.

"You want to take this all in," he said in Wells Fargo Center. "You're only able to do this one time, making your first callup and your first opportunity to play with the team, so you want to enjoy it."

It was a given that Bailey would include his mom in the fun. She and her mother arrived in Philly on Thursday morning, and Bailey made a post-lunch visit to two of the people who've inspired him the most.

"When I played in Kitchener, my mom and grandparents were at every single home game," said Bailey, whose final junior season in Ontario included a trade to Sault Ste. Marie. "It was a 10-hour drive and they made that trip two times. My support system's great. I'm very thankful for that."

The woman who knows Bailey best could see how much he appreciated wearing a Sabres sweater for the first time. Buscaglia also saw how prepared Bailey was for the moment.

"He just has a different calmness about him," she said. "He has a different level of calmness about his ability. He knows how hard he's working, and he knows how far he still has to go. He just wants to prove himself, and I love watching that process. It's watching your son grow literally from a boy into a man. It's exciting."

Bailey earned the callup during his first year as a pro by excelling in Rochester. He ranks second on the Americans with 10 goals and recorded five goals and 10 points in his last eight games.

"The first probably 10 games were tough," the rookie said. "The speed wasn't really an issue for me. It was more decision-making and things like that. After that I was getting opportunities and they just weren't finding the back of the net. Over probably the last 15 games, they've been going in for me."

"The way I've been playing lately, I've been doing my best to earn a spot. Whenever you are able to put points together for a string of games, it's always in the back of your head. You never know. Obviously, I'm excited that it was this year, but I wasn't expecting it for sure."

Sabres coach Dan Bylsma watched Rochester play during the NHL All-Star break and saw how much the 6-foot-3, 210-pound right winger has grown.

"Justin is using his speed and size to be effective up and down the wing, starting to learn to get on pucks, hold pucks and be a presence in the offensive zone with that big physical size," Bylsma said. "The two games I watched him, his speed up the wing and driving the net was evident."

Bailey started on a line with center David Legwand and right wing Dan Catenacci, but he moved up the lineup because of impressive play and got shifts with centers Ryan O'Reilly, Jack Eichel and Sam Reinhart in his debut. He finished with 7 shots, 1 hit and 1 blocked shot in 11:54 of playing time.

"As soon as the game started I felt like I was in the right spots," Bailey said. "I felt like I could keep up with the pace of the play. I didn't feel out of place at all. I got a lot of chances."

Said Bylsma: "He was probably our best forward, best player in the game."

The lifelong Sabres fan would have loved to make his debut in Buffalo, but Philly also made sense.

"I grew up watching the rivalry between the Sabs and the Flyers," Bailey said. "I remember when Danny Briere went to the Flyers, it was one of the worst days for me as a fan. You grew up, you watched the Flyers and it's crazy. It seems just like yesterday there was the Brian Campbell hit in the playoffs. Just little things like that I think of when I think of the Flyers. It's special for sure."

He's hopeful of making his home debut Friday. The Sabres will host Montreal in First Niagara Center, and there's a chance he'll be in the lineup.

"That rink, I remember being a little kid and being able to skate on the ice," Bailey said. "If I can play a game there, that would be awesome for sure."

Quick hits: Flyers 5, Sabres 1

By John Vogl

Buffalo News

February 12, 2016

PHILADELPHIA – The Flyers gave Buffalo every chance possible to take the lead and bounce back from a dispiriting loss. When the Sabres failed, Philadelphia buried them for it.

Buffalo's winless streak reached four games Thursday night with an ugly 5-1 loss to the Flyers in Wells Fargo Center. The Sabres had three first-period power plays, with the final one carrying over into the second period, but the unit failed to generate anything. After killing off the last one, Philly struck for two goals in 48 seconds to start the Sabres running toward the bus.

The Sabres have won just one of their five games since the All-Star break, going 1-2-2 to drop their record to 21-28-6. They've been outscored, 12-5, in the past two games.

Four-goal period: The Flyers lit the goal lamp four times during the second period to turn a scoreless game into rout. R.J. Umberger got open for a tap-in with 1:23 gone to score his first of the year. Brayden Schenn made it 2-0 almost immediately.

Even when the Sabres made a good play, it didn't work out. They broke up a rush by high-scoring defenseman Shayne Gostisbehere, but the puck went to Wayne Simmonds and he easily beat Buffalo goaltender Robin Lehner. Michael Raffl scored on a breakaway with 4:03 left in the second.

McGinn scores: A long shift in the Flyers' zone midway through the third period helped Jamie McGinn increase his contract and/or trade value. The winger deposited a rebound with 9:56 left for his 12th goal of the season.

Give them five: The public-address announcer hadn't even called out McGinn's goal when the Flyers rebuilt their four-goal lead. Nick Cousins scored his first NHL goal on a slap shot between Lehner's pads just 29 seconds after Buffalo scored.

Power-play woes: Philadelphia took three penalties in a span of 5:02 late in the first, then took two more just 2:12 apart in the second. It didn't matter. Buffalo managed just five shots on the five power plays.

Productive start: Buffalo's Justin Bailey was on the ice for just 1:54 during the first period, but he made the most of it. Bailey took four of the Sabres' 14 shots. He had a wraparound and two close-range rebound attempts. Through two periods, Bailey had five shots, one hit and one blocked shot in 5:01 of ice time.

No surprise: The teams skated into the first intermission tied at 0-0. It was no surprise. Buffalo (27 goals) and Philly (29) are the two lowest-scoring first-period teams in the NHL. Buffalo limited the Flyers to just six shots.

Streaking rookie: Gostisbehere received an assist on Simmonds' goal, running his point streak to 10 games. It's the longest by a rookie defenseman since the Colorado Rockies' Barry Beck in 1977-78. Gostisbehere also tied the Flyers' rookie record set by Mikael Renberg in 1993-94.

No Gudas fans: Philadelphia defenseman Radko Gudas leg-whipped Marcus Foligno just prior to Raffl's goal, with Foligno fighting Gudas as the other Flyers celebrated. With 3:33 to play, Gudas picked up a five-minute charging major for knocking Dan Catenacci out of the game. Jake McCabe fought Gudas following the hit, which was delivered to the head as Catenacci bent over looking for the puck

Reinhart in the middle again: The Sabres drafted Sam Reinhart as a center, but they've eased him into the NHL as a right winger. Because of various injuries, Buffalo has been forced to move the rookie back to the middle. He played in the middle of left wing Evander Kane and captain Brian Gionta. He went 1-5 on faceoffs through two periods after winning just one of seven Tuesday against Florida.

"At some point you're thinking he's going to have to get an opportunity to play center," coach Dan Bylsma said. "He stepped in and played center last game and other than the faceoff circle, which he struggled with, I thought he looked pretty comfortable in that position."

Larsson close to ready: Center Johan Larsson didn't join the Sabres on their one-game road trip and missed his second straight game. He might return from his lower-body injury Friday when Buffalo hosts Montreal.

Forward Zemgus Girgensons (lower body) was placed on injured reserve retroactive to last weekend, so the earliest he can return is Sunday when the Sabres host Colorado.

Words from the champ: Former heavyweight boxing champ Evander Holyfield took notice of Evander Kane's three-fight night Tuesday. Holyfield tweeted to Kane, "Nice overhand right." Said Kane, who is named after the boxer: "It was a nice compliment from a guy who knows a thing or two about boxing."

Neuvirth back: Former Sabres goaltender Michal Neuvirth dressed for the first time in six games after recovering from a lower-body injury. Neuvirth, who is 11-6-2 with a .933 save percentage and 2.14 goals-against average, served as Steve Mason's backup.

Up next: The Sabres will host the Canadiens at 7 tonight in First Niagara Center. Buffalo is 4-4-1 in the second game of back-to-backs. Montreal will use Ben Scrivens in goal. He has three straight victories while allowing four goals and putting up a .959 save percentage.

Umberger lifts Flyers to victory

By Adam Kimelman

NHL.com

February 12, 2016

PHILADELPHIA -- R.J. Umberger hasn't had much to feel good about this season, so there was a lot of emotion to let out Thursday.

Umberger scored his first goal in 50 games to spark the Philadelphia Flyers to a 5-1 win against the Buffalo Sabres at Wells Fargo Center on Thursday.

Early in the second period of a scoreless game, Umberger one-timed a cross-ice pass from Sam Gagner past Buffalo goalie Robin Lehner. Then he looked up toward the rafters, arms extended high over his head.

"It was praying to the hockey gods; thank you," said Umberger, who had not scored since Jan. 27, 2015. "... You don't really practice how you're going to celebrate; emotions take over. We all go through slumps, 10, 15 games. But that was a different animal."

Michael Raffl had a goal and an assist for the Flyers, rookie center Nick Cousins scored his first NHL goal and had an assist, and Steve Mason made 41 saves for Philadelphia (24-20-9), which ended a three-game losing streak (0-2-1). Brayden Schenn and Wayne Simmonds each had a goal.

Flyers rookie defenseman Shayne Gostisbehere has a 10-game point streak after assisting on Simmonds' goal; he has two goals and 11 assists during his streak. He's the first NHL rookie defenseman with a point in 10 straight games since Barry Beck of the Colorado Rockies in 1977-78, according to the Elias Sports Bureau, and is tied with Mikael Renberg (1993-94) for the longest point streak by a Flyers rookie.

Gostisbehere also is the first player to have at least one assist in nine straight games since Flyers center Claude Giroux and Pittsburgh Penguins center Evgeni Malkin had assists in nine straight in 2013-14.

In 35 games, Gostisbehere has 29 points, fifth among all rookies and first among rookie defensemen. His nine goals lead rookie defensemen.

Gostisbehere played two NHL games and five in the American Hockey League in 2014-15 season because of a season-ending knee injury sustained in November 2014, then spent the first month of this season in the AHL.

"If you were telling me I'd be doing this going into the season, I'd definitely said you were crazy," Gostisbehere said.

Jamie McGinn scored for the Sabres (21-28-6), and Lehner made 23 saves. Buffalo went 0-for-6 on the power play and has lost four straight games (0-2-2).

Umberger scored in his first game back in the lineup after being a healthy scratch in five straight.

"It was tough," he said. "You've got to be a good pro. Got to come to the rink looking for any kind of fun, anything you can do. You've got to remember you're playing hockey. It's still a sport, we're still having fun out there. It's a game. It's not life or death; it's a game. You've got to get back to that. Those five games I was out, I tried working on stuff on the ice. Really trying to score in practice as much as I could and hope it carries over. The pass by Ganger was everything. Just really second nature; I just one-timed a pass and didn't think about it."

Umberger said as excited as he was, the best feeling was seeing the reaction of his teammates. He said he even got a tap on the helmet from usually stoic coach Dave Hakstol.

"The best part of it was how excited the teammates were for me," he said. "Probably more excited than I was. That was pretty cool."

Said Mason, who played with Umberger with the Columbus Blue Jackets, "It's great to see. You feel for him. He takes it hard the way this season has gone for himself. It was definitely nice to see him have some success here tonight. Was a beautiful goal. Especially a veteran guy like that, it's a tough position and he's a proud guy. He hasn't let it affect his work ethic in practice. That's a credit to him. Goes to show if you work hard, you finally get rewarded."

The goal was the first of four in a row for Philadelphia, all in the second period.

"That gave us a big spark," Umberger said. "Was a big period for us. We had a lot of penalties, so it wasn't a perfect period. But we capitalized on our chances, and the penalty kill did its job. It set us up for the two points. Came at a crucial time of the game, so that made me feel good."

Schenn made it 2-0 when he scored his 15th goal 48 seconds later.

Simmonds scored his 20th goal to make it 3-0 at 8:33. Gostisbehere wound up for a shot from the high slot, but Sabres forward Marcus Foligno knocked the puck off his stick. It rolled to Simmonds, who beat Lehner from the right faceoff dot.

Raffl made it 4-0 when he split the Sabres' Zach Bogosian and Sam Reinhart to get to the net and score at 15:57. The goal was Raffl's second in 17 games.

Philadelphia had scored five goals in its previous three games and was coming off a 4-1 home loss to the Anaheim Ducks on Tuesday.

"This was huge," Simmonds said. "Our game against Anaheim, everyone was disappointed. We felt that was probably one of our worst three games this year. We knew we had to come back and we had to be a lot better. We didn't start off the greatest, but I thought the overall effort was a lot better."

That effort included a strong contribution from the penalty kill. Hakstol just wanted to see less of it needed.

"Our penalty-killers did an outstanding job, but we spent a lot of energy killing penalties," Hakstol said.

The Sabres had six shots on their six power plays.

"We had some good looks, some good chances," Buffalo captain Brian Gionta said. "But when you have that many power plays, you have to make something happen, you have to be a difference in the game, and we weren't."

The Sabres won't have much time to dwell on the loss; they play the Montreal Canadiens at First Niagara Center on Friday.

Sabres host Canadiens to finish back-to-back

By Joe Calabrese
NHL.com
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CANADIENS (27-24-4) at SABRES (21-28-6)

TV: 7 p.m. ET; RDS, SNE, BELL TV, MSG-B, NHL.TV

Season series: The Montreal Canadiens and Buffalo Sabres have split two games, with the road team winning each. Montreal defenseman Andrei Markov had a goal and four assists in a 7-2 win at First Niagara Center on Oct. 23. Buffalo center Johan Larsson scored the game-winning goal at 11:46 of the third period in a 4-2 victory at Bell Centre on Feb. 3.

Canadiens team scope: Montreal defensemen Jeff Petry (lower body) and Nathan Beaulieu (lower body) each missed practice Thursday because of injury. Petry won't make the trip to Buffalo; Beaulieu is listed as day-to-day and could play. Coach Michel Therrien replaced Dale Weise with Sven Andrighetto on the top power-play unit during practice. Andrighetto also skated with Max Pacioretty and David Desharnais on the top line. "I gave those guys [Pacioretty, Desharnais and Weise] opportunity to produce offensively," Therrien told the Montreal Gazette. "Putting them on the power play, put those guys on offensive-zone faceoffs as much as we can. They want to produce. The thing they need to focus on is probably better decisions with the puck, better support. Those are the things they need to focus on to get success." The Canadiens power play is ranked 21st in the NHL (17.8 percent). Montreal has won three straight games after going 1-8-1 in its previous 10.

Sabres team scope: Buffalo lost 5-1 to the Philadelphia Flyers on Thursday. Larsson missed his second straight game with a lower-body injury but may return to the lineup on Friday. Coach Dan Bylsma, looking to find consistent line combinations, moved Sam Reinhart to center. Reinhart skated on a line with Evander Kane and captain Brian Gionta against Philadelphia and went 1-for-5 on faceoffs. "At some point, you're thinking he's going to have to get an opportunity to play center," Bylsma told The Buffalo News. "He stepped in and played center last game and other than the faceoff circle, which he struggled with, I thought he looked pretty comfortable in that position." Buffalo is 4-4-1 in the second game of back-to-backs.

Flyers Cruise to 5-1 Win over Sabres

By Dan Cave

WGR 550

February 12, 2016

The Flyers scored four times in the second period en route to a 5-1 win over the Sabres on Thursday, sending Buffalo to its fourth straight loss. Robin Lehner surrendered 5 goals on 28 shots while Philadelphia's Steve Mason came up with 41 saves. Buffalo native Justin Bailey, making his NHL debut, racked up 7 shots on net in 11:54 of ice time.

Scoring

- R.J. Umberger's 1st goal of the season came 1:23 into the 2nd period, giving the Flyers a 1-0 lead. Umberger beat the Buffalo defense to the net, took a nice feed from Sam Gagner and beat Robin Lehner.
- Less than a minute later, Brayden Schenn's wrist shot put Philadelphia ahead 2-0 and Wayne Simmonds put Buffalo in a 3-0 with his 20th of the season.
- The Flyers' 2nd period onslaught continued when Nick Cousins sprang Michael Raffl on a breakaway. Raffl beat Lehner cleanly for the 4-0 lead.
- Jamie McGinn got the Sabres on the board for the first time halfway through the final period, but Nick Cousins answered 29 seconds later, slapping a breakaway shot through Lehner's five-hole.

Game Notes

- Making his NHL debut, Bailey became the 5th Buffalo-born player in Sabres history, joining Patrick Kaleta, Tim Kennedy, Marcus Foligno, and Scott Thomas.
- Bailey had several scoring chances in the 1st period, whacking away at two rebounds after his initial wraparound attempt was denied by Steve Mason. Seconds later, Bailey was stopped again on a close rebound chance after Rasmus Ristolainen hit the post.
- Bailey finished 7 shots and 1 hit in 11:54 of ice time.
- Marcus Foligno took on Radko Gudas seconds after Raffl's 2nd period goal, and received an extra 2 minutes for cross checking. Foligno was upset after being tripped up by Gudas on the play. Earlier, the Flyers defenseman caught Matt Moulson with a high stick.
- Gudas caused a stir later in the game, decking Dan Catenacci with an open-ice hit the head, and was immediately jumped by Jake McCabe.
- Buffalo failed to score on any of its 6 power play chances.

What's Next

The Sabres finish off a back-to-back on Friday, returning home to face the Canadiens who are winners of three straight. Hear Buffalo take on Montreal on WGR 550 and the Buffalo Sabres Radio Network at 7 p.m.

Sabres-Flyers: From the Locker Room

WGR 550

February 12, 2016

Marcus Foligno didn't mince words when discussing Radko Gudas and his hit on Dan Catenacci during the Sabres' 5-1 loss in Philadelphia. See what Foligno said about Gudas and check out Justin Bailey's postgame quotes following his NHL debut.

Marcus Foligno

(on Gudas) "I don't want to talk about that guy. The guy's an idiot. He gets his hits in and he's dirty, and he's been known for it. Goes after a...rookie who plays in three games and goes and gets right at his head, so I don't know. He's an idiot, that guy. That's all I can say."

"I wish that me and D-Lo [Deslauriers] were out on the ice at that time. We could have done a little worse damage to him."

"McCabe is a tough guy and stepping in for his teammates, that's what you want to see. I think anyone's going to answer the bell in that case. That's the type of team you have to have. That's a good job by Jake."

Justin Bailey

"In warmups I was a little bit nervous. I was most nervous leading up, the calm before the storm all day. But honestly, as soon as the game started, I felt like I was in the right spots. I felt like I could keep up with the pace of the play, I didn't feel out of place at all. I got a lot of chances tonight. I really, honest to God, wasn't too nervous tonight."

"The biggest thing for me, coming from juniors, even to Rochester, is I get a lot of chances in tight. In juniors, a lot of those I kind of just slap at it and it would beat the goalie. I think in the pros, you gotta get the puck up for sure. I think that's one of the harder things to do when it comes to scoring goals is getting the puck up in those tight areas. I think if I would have done that a couple of times, I would have had a couple of goals."

Dan Bylsma

(on Bailey) "Seven shots on net...he was around the net, used his speed, big bodied in front of the cage. I thought he was probably our best forward, our best player, tonight in the game."

"I know the league will look at that [Gudas] hit and deal with it."

"Disappointment in this game and disappointment in how we played, but we gotta cut it loose here and in 12 hours and get our focus to the next game, Montreal."

Outcome spoils Bailey's debut in Philadelphia

By Jourdon LaBarber

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PHILADELPHIA – Only 29 seconds had passed since Jamie McGinn had put the Buffalo Sabres on the board in the third period when Nick Cousins, a rookie playing his 19th game, stripped Justin Bailey, a rookie playing his first, in the middle of the ice at Wells Fargo Center on Thursday night.

Cousins raced to the net ahead of Josh Gorges and beat Sabres goaltender Robin Lehner with a slap shot between the pads. It was Cousins' first NHL goal, but the fifth of the night for the Philadelphia Flyers. The 5-1 score held as Philadelphia handed Buffalo its second regulation loss in a row.

"We had breakdowns," Sabres captain Brian Gionta said. "Mental breakdowns, turnovers, lack of coverage, a little of everything. Unfortunately these last two games have been the same."

Cousins' goal, in a way, was a microcosm of the Sabres' night. Anytime it seemed things were starting to go their way, be it a power play or a third-period goal, the Flyers would be the ones to strike and snatch the momentum.

That happened time and time again in the game-deciding second period, which began with the two teams in a scoreless tie and Buffalo on the power play. Philadelphia's R.J. Umberger opened the scoring 1:23 into that period, less than a minute after a McGinn goal was waved off for a high stick and 15 seconds after the power play ended.

Braden Schenn scored 48 seconds later and Wayne Simmonds and Michael Raffl each tallied before period's end. The Sabres earned two more power plays in the second but went 0-for-6 on the night with a combined six shots on goal.

The proximity of the Sabres' power-play chances to each other made them even more difficult to bear. Their second opportunity came just eight seconds after their first expired, and their third came less than a minute after their second. Their fourth and fifth opportunities came 12 seconds apart.

"We had some good looks, some good chances, but [when] you have that many power plays, you've got to make something happen," Gionta said.

Jake McCabe and Mark Pysyk each earned an assist on McGinn's goal for the Sabres. Robin Lehner, making his third-straight start, allowed five goals on 28 shots while Steve Mason made 41 saves for the Flyers.

BAILEY'S BIG NIGHT

Take away Bailey's giveaway in the third period, and he was impressive in his first NHL game. The 20-year-old put his speed on display throughout the night and made his presence felt in the offensive zone with seven shots on goal.

Sabres coach Dan Bylsma smiled and looked at the stat sheet when asked about Bailey's performance. But the way he listed the rookie's qualities sound like he was reading off a checklist.

"Seven shots on net, yeah, he was around the net, used his speed, big-bodied, he was in front of the cage," Bylsma said. "He was probably our best forward tonight in the game, our best player tonight in the game."

Bailey was rewarded as such. After beginning the game on the fourth line with David Legwand and Daniel Catenacci, he eventually saw time lines centered by both Sam Reinhart and Ryan O'Reilly. He finished with 11:54 of ice time.

"He didn't get much of an opportunity through the first period with the power plays," Bylsma said. "I thought almost every shift he was on the ice he showed that speed, showed that ability to get to the net and as a result he got more opportunities as the night went on."

Bailey only had to wait until his fourth shift for his first legitimate scoring chance. Then he had another. And another. And another. In fact, Bailey's first four shots came within a 10-second span in the first period.

First, after Marcus Foligno freed the puck following a faceoff, Bailey wrapped around behind the net and attempted a backhand shot that bounced off Mason. Falling, he took another shot off the rebound, then, from one knee, another shot off the following rebound.

The puck eventually got back to the point, where Rasmus Ristolainen took a shot that deflected off the post. Bailey took his fourth shot off of that rebound, but this time Mason fell on his back to cover the puck

"I think the biggest thing from me coming from junior or even to Rochester was I get a lot of chances in tight," Bailey said. "A lot those kind of just slapping at it would kind of beat the goalie but I think in pros you've got to get the puck up for sure, it's one of the harder things when it comes to scoring goals."

TEMPERS FLARE AFTER GUDAS HIT

Just 3:33 remained when Flyers defenseman Radko Gudas delivered a high hit on Catenacci in open ice that sent the rookie forward to the dressing room. Catenacci was battling for the puck with another Flyer when Gudas charged in and leveled him to the ground.

Jake McCabe came to Catenacci's defense, jumping in to fight Gudas immediately after the hit. When all was said and done, McCabe received two minutes for instigating on top of the fighting major and a game misconduct. Gudas received a five-minute charging major and five minutes for fighting.

"I don't want to talk about that guy. That guy's an idiot," said Marcus Foligno, who also fought Gudas in the second period after a hit in which Gudas' outstretched leg clipped Foligno as he skated by. "He gets his hits in and he's dirty and he's been known for it, and he goes after a friggin' rookie who plays in three games and goes right after his head. I don't know. He's an idiot, that guy, that's all I can say.

"I wish that me and [Nicolas Deslauriers] were on the ice at that time, we probably would have done a little worse damage to him."

McCabe was on the ice, and his teammates appreciated his willingness to defend his teammate.

"Yeah, great," Foligno said. "McCabe is a tough guy and stepped in for his teammates. That's what you want to see."

Bylsma said Catenacci was being evaluated after the game but had no further update. He, too, thought that the hit was aimed at the rookie's head.

"I don't think there's too much question about it," Bylsma said. "The refs took care of it on the ice as did Jake McCabe ... I know that we'll look at the hit and deal with it."

UP NEXT

The Sabres won't have time to dwell on the loss. They host the Montreal Canadiens on Friday night at First Niagara Center, a rematch from their contest that the Sabres won 4-2 in Montreal on Feb. 3.

Coverage on Friday 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.