



Buffalo Sabres

Daily Press Clips

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With Sabres' roster hit by injury, competition for jobs continues

By John Vogl
The Buffalo News
October 6, 2016

Dan Bylsma wanted to have the Sabres' roster wrapped up by now. He usually dresses the opening-night lineup for the final preseason game, which gives players a chance to get accustomed to their roles.

That's not going to happen Friday. Not even close.

Buffalo will finish its seven-game exhibition schedule in Ottawa (7:30 p.m., Radio WGR-AM 550), but the game will feature a makeshift roster. Ryan O'Reilly, Kyle Okposo, Dmitry Kulikov and Zach Bogosian will be out with injuries, while Rasmus Ristolainen remains unsigned.

Roster hopefuls such as Alexander Nylander, Casey Nelson, Brendan Guhle and Hudson Fasching could get one more chance to show they belong. That means Bylsma has more roster uncertainty than usual with the 2016-17 season starting Thursday.

"I'm still a little hesitant to finalize that given the situation on the back end with the defensemen and Ristolainen still unsigned," the coach said in KeyBank Center. "Especially on the defensive side, it's still going to be guys competing for opportunities."

The Sabres started training camp with one spot available at forward and defense. There's probably still just one opening up front, but the blue line is certainly in flux.

Kulikov hasn't skated since suffering a butt bruise last Friday. He was checked into the door to Toronto's bench, which opened on contact. Bogosian skated on his own before practice Thursday to start his comeback from a groin strain suffered Sept. 29. Though Bylsma is confident the Sabres will sign Ristolainen before Montreal visits Thursday, the defenseman's spot is in pencil, not ink.

That's as many as four blue-line positions available. There are four defensemen competing for them: Justin Falk, Taylor Fedun, Guhle and Nelson.

The Sabres have given Nelson the greatest opportunity to shine, using him in prominent pairings and on the power play. Fedun has been unable to play because of a foot injury. Guhle, the Sabres' second-round pick in 2015, is earning a long look after watching nearly all of the other junior-eligible players get sent home.

"It's cool to know that I've really, truly made it this far, but I want to keep going," Guhle said. "I don't want it to be over yet."

Sabres General Manager Tim Murray is high on Guhle, and he could opt to give the 19-year-old a nine-game tryout.

"It's definitely a little nerve-racking," Guhle said. "There's a lot of unknown for me. I'm not asking too many questions. I'm just trying to do my own thing and play my best."

The competition at forward is also a four-way fight. In addition to Fasching and Nylander, Derek Grant and Cal O'Reilly are still around.

"It's definitely a challenge coming in and trying to prove something to everybody," Fasching said. "You definitely get the feeling you're competing for spots. The competition's high."

Each forward brings something different. Fasching is a power forward who can control plays down low. O'Reilly is a responsible playmaker. Grant has shined as a two-way center with size and scoring ability. Nylander, the first-round draft choice, has the speed to create plays.

"My goal for this year is to make the team," Nylander said. "I'm just going to work my butt off to try and do that."

Similar to Nelson, the Sabres have given Nylander the best opportunities. The 18-year-old has manned the point on power plays and skated with Jack Eichel.

"It means they believe in me and they know I can be a good player and I can play, which I think I can do," the right winger said. "They're giving me an opportunity, and I need to take it."

Ryan O'Reilly suffered back and midsection spasms during the Sabres' exhibition Wednesday. He is not expected back on the ice until Sunday at the earliest. After facing the Senators, Buffalo will take Saturday off.

"He should have a few good days here of rest, treatment and rehab," Bylsma said.

Okposo has a bruised knee after getting hit by a slap shot in practice Monday.

"He's gotten better each day to this point in time, so it's continuing to improve," the coach said.

Kulikov may skate on his own Friday. Defenseman Tyson Strachan, signed to a minor-league contract, is also expected on the ice to test his ankle sprain. There is no timetable for prospects Dan Catenacci (hamstring) and Nicholas Baptiste (back).

Bylsma is confident the Sabres and Ristolainen will work out a new deal before the season starts. The restricted free agent is still practicing with the team.

"We all believe we'd be better with Risto in the lineup," Bylsma said. "I think it will get done, and I think we'll have him in the lineup on the 13th."

The Sabres sent six players to Rochester, including goaltender Linus Ullmark and defenseman Erik Burgdoerfer. Justin Bailey, Jean Dupuy, Cole Schneider and Brady Austin were demoted for the second time. Buffalo sent them down Saturday but recalled them for the back-to-back road games Tuesday and Wednesday.

New menu items for Sabres games feature twists on local fare

By Aaron Besecker

The Buffalo News

October 6, 2016

If you get hungry at a Sabres game this season, there's new chow waiting for you at the concession stands. And when the hockey season kicks off next week, many of the new offerings at KeyBank Center will come with local flair.

Here are the six new foods available at concession stands on the 100 and 300 levels of the arena, courtesy of Delaware North:

A trio of street tacos is on the newcomers list. (Aaron Besecker/Buffalo News)

At all the Mexican food stands, you'll have the choice of three kinds of what are being called street tacos: beef barbacoa, chicken tinga, as well as a veggie option. Toppings galore, too, including corn, cilantro, pickled onions, radishes, guajillo-ancho salsa, salsa macha and cotija crema.

The Broadway Polish Plate is a trifecta of treats from Polonia: smoked kielbasa, Ru's pierogi and kapusta (braised cabbage).

A new Polish dish at the arena: the Broadway Polish Plate. (Aaron Besecker/Buffalo News)

A Go-Ru (Japanese for goal) Noodle Bar will be located on the 100 level serving up made-to-order stir fry with Ramen noodles.

Made-to-order stir fry with Ramen noodles will be on the 100 level at the Go-Ru Noodle Bar. (Aaron Besecker/Buffalo News)

A Beef on Weck Burger - combining traditional beef on weck and a cheeseburger - will include Yancey's Fancy horseradish cheddar and come with potato chips.

Delaware North put a traditional beef on weck together with a cheeseburger. (Aaron Besecker/Buffalo News)

The Chef's Signature Grilled Cheese Kabob combines grilled cheese sandwich pieces, fried pickle, onion ring and jalapeno popper. It was designed to be easy to carry back to your seat and eat piece-by-piece, said Andy Altomare, director of food and beverage for Delaware North at KeyBank Center.

The Grilled Cheese Kabob comes with a fried pickle, onion ring and jalapeno popper. (Aaron Besecker/Buffalo News)

And for dessert (or your main course), the Perry's Ice Cream waffle sandwich, with the waffle batter made with Lucky Charms and Cheerios cereal (an ode to KeyBank Center neighbor the General Mills plant). You pick the ice cream flavor.

Perry's Ice Cream waffle sandwich is a nice item for general concessions at Sabres games. (Aaron Besecker/Buffalo News)

There's new grub in the suites and on the 200 level, too.

The suite food includes lobster rolls, Moroccan tricolor couscous salad, shepherd's pie and Wegmans sushi.

One of the new foods available in the suites is a lobster roll, made with lobster salad and lemon on grilled split-top buns. (Aaron Besecker/Buffalo News)

On the club level, you'll be able to grab Sahlen's Topped Dogs, including one with sriracha ketchup and mac 'n cheese.

There will be a couple kinds of Sahlen's Topped Dogs, including one with sriracha ketchup and mac 'n cheese. (Aaron Besecker/Buffalo News)

Another dog will be topped with chipotle guacamole. Other new food in the 200s also will include a footlong Polish sausage on a pretzel bun, Sahlen's Pretzel Parka (which comes with a warm beer-cheese dip), Blazing Nachos (pulled Buffalo chicken nachos with fondue), the West Side Chicken in the Grass sandwich, General Tso Sliders, as well as Wegmans sushi.

Delaware North Sportservice didn't disclose any prices during their food preview event Thursday.

Sabres' Marcus Foligno primed for breakout season

By Bill Hoppe
Olean Times Herald
October 7, 2016

BUFFALO – Almost halfway into last season, frustration began overwhelming Sabres winger Marcus Foligno. Maddening inconsistency, not goals or a powerful game, had become his trademark five years into his enigmatic career.

For a week or so, the 6-foot-3, 225-pound Foligno, would play an authoritative game and score, teasing he had arrived. Then he might disappear for a month or more.

So the affable Foligno, who always seems to be laughing or smiling, said he voiced some frustration. He talked to the coaching staff and tried to find answers. He wanted to define his role.

"I needed to get back to where I was," Foligno, 25, said Thursday inside KeyBank Center. "I needed to be the forward on this team that's a powerful forward."

The positive criticism he received helped him.

"From there, I kind of never looked back," Foligno said. "You got to look at the man in the mirror sometimes, and that's what I did, just know that I got to get back to helping this team."

That meeting helped ignite the best four-month stretch of Foligno's career. Sabres coach Dan Bylsma quickly awarded him more ice time and responsibility. He finished with a career-high 10 goals and 23 points and skated around 15 minutes a game in the winter.

"(He) was ... not sure of what his game is ... and how he needs to play to be effective every night," Bylsma said. "I think last season Marcus grew into that, and for the last 45 games grew into that on a consistent basis."

Foligno settled into a regular role as the left winger beside center Johan Larsson and captain Brian Gionta, the team's most consistent and sturdiest line in years. The checking combination, the third trio, should open the season together next Thursday at home against the Montreal Canadiens.

"Marcus' game can't change and fluctuate," Bylsma said. "He has to be a hard guy to play against. He has to be a big, physical presence. He's got to be a guy who plays on the inside and is tough to play against. That is a prototypical third-line type of role."

This season has a different feel for the Buffalo-born Foligno, who joined the Sabres for good late in 2011-12. Back then, the Sabres were a high-priced, underachieving club filled with veterans.

The ensuing years have often been difficult. The Sabres began gutting the roster in 2013, the start of a dramatic and difficult rebuilding process in which they became a laughingstock.

Foligno, a veteran of 267 NHL games, is one of two holdovers from an era long gone. Only winger Tyler Ennis, 27, has a longer tenure.

It's no coincidence, either, the Sabres improved 27 points in 2015-16 with Foligno thriving.

The stability Foligno feels these days is special. Incredibly, Bylsma, who's beginning his second season, is his fourth coach.

"I think a lot of things are positive coming into this year," Foligno said. "I think a lot of things are set in stone – coaching staff ... the systems. Everyone is knowing what they have to do. They know their role, everyone's on the same page. That's kind of a breath of fresh air for everybody."

He added: "You get different coaches rolling in, you're being told different things. I think when you have that steady voice with Dan behind the bench, it really helps out."

Foligno's line should also help out. As the Sabres constantly moved players for two or three years, they rarely had any reliable trios for more than a few weeks.

Foligno, Larsson and Gionta clicked right away when Bylsma put them together in the winter. While the line was often charged with shutting down the opponent's best talent, it also has some offensive upside.

"We kept it simple every night," Foligno said. "We knew that it was our job to maybe play a little bit more defense before offense. Defense contributed to offense, so we capitalized on a lot of our chances, just kind of snowballed from there, confidence grew with our line."

To Gionta, Foligno seems poised for a breakout season.

"I think the biggest thing is he doesn't know how good he can be or how strong he is out there," Gionta said. "He just started to touch that surface last year. If he continues to progress and find confidence in himself, his game, I think you'll see him take off."

Sabres' Ryan O'Reilly day-to-day

By Bill Hoppe
Olean Times Herald
October 6, 2016

BUFFALO – Sabres center Ryan O'Reilly is day-to-day after leaving Wednesday's 3-2 preseason loss early as a precaution because of a spasm in his back and midsection, coach Dan Bylsma said.

O'Reilly, who was playing his first preseason game following the World Cup of Hockey, didn't practice this afternoon inside KeyBank Center. He's out of Friday's exhibition finale in Ottawa, Bylsma said.

The Sabres, of course, are dealing with a slew of injuries exactly one week before the season opener.

Some other updates from Bylsma:

- Winger Kyle Okposo (bruised knee) has "gotten better each day."
- Defenseman Zach Bogosian (groin) skated alone this morning.
- Defenseman Dmitry Kulikov (bruised tailbone) could start rehab skating Friday.

"I don't like talking about the bruised butt he has," Bylsma said.

- Winger Nick Baptiste is still dealing with a back issue.
- Forward Dan Catenacci hurt his hamstring in Wednesday's shootout loss to Carolina.
- Defenseman Tyson Strachan (ankle) will skate Friday.

If the Sabres were healthy, then Bylsma said he would probably know his final roster.

"If we could nail that down for sure, then I probably could tell you 13 (forwards) and seven (defensemen)," he said.

As of now, the Sabres still have some intriguing rookies in camp, including wingers Alexander Nylander, 18, and Hudson Fasching, 21, and defenseman Brendan Guhle, 19.

"I think it's been getting better every game I've been playing," said Nylander, the eighth overall pick in June. "I feel more comfortable, getting more natural with the systems."

The Sabres sent forwards Justin Bailey, Jean Dupuy and Cole Schneider and defensemen Brady Austin and Erik Burgdoerfer and goalie Linus Ullmark to the AHL Rochester Americans today.

Sabres assign six to Rochester

By Brayton J. Wilson

WGR 550

October 6, 2016

The Buffalo Sabres are now a week away from the start of the 2016-17 regular season against the Montréal Canadiens at the KeyBank Center. On Thursday, the team assigned six players to the Rochester Americans in the American Hockey League to trim the training camp roster down to 31.

The following players were assigned to the Amerks:

RW - Justin Bailey

C - Jean Dupuy

LW - Cole Schneider

D - Brady Austin

D - Erik Burgdoerfer

G - Linus Ullmark

As of right now, the Sabres have 18 forwards, eleven defensemen, and two goaltenders remaining on the training camp roster. The roster must be trimmed to 23 before Thursday night's game.

Sabres Top 20 Talents in 2016: No. 9 D Dmitry Kulikov

By Matt Bove

WKBW

October 6, 2016

BUFFALO, N.Y. (WKBW) - The Buffalo Sabres preseason is underway and the regular season is just one week away. Heading into this year it's playoffs or bust for most fans, but is the roster talented enough for the Sabres to end its five year playoff drought?

As the regular season draws near, 7ABC will take a closer look at the training camp roster and put together our list of the "Top 20 Talents."

Here's the criteria on how the rankings will be established:

-Overall skill level

-Past performance

-Age, improving/declining ability

-Potential

On to the countdown:

No. 9 D Dmitry Kulikov

Why he's here

Kulikov is a bit of a mystery heading into the 2016-2017 season. Obviously, the Sabres think highly of Kulikov, but what kind of player is he? Looking at the numbers, nothing really jumps off the page. So far, the 25-year-old defenseman has 138 career points in 460 games. Kulikov's best year came in 2011, when he finished with 28 points in 58 games. The Russian defenseman doesn't jump off the stat sheet, but scoring a ton is not his game, and it likely won't ever be.

2016 Outlook

What's truly impressive with Kulikov is how many games he's played at such a young age. This season will be Kulikov's eighth and he's still only 25. While some may say that's a lot of miles on a player, others will argue that's valuable experience. I tend to agree with the latter.

Last season Kulikov averaged slightly more than 21-minutes of ice time a game. Those minutes will more than likely increase this year, as Kulikov projects to be one of the Sabres top-four defenseman. Like mentioned earlier, don't expect Kulikov to score at the pace of Rasmus Ristolainen last season, but he should be a solid, steady player who can be sent off the bench in nearly every situation.

My prediction

Since reporting to Buffalo after the World Cup of Hockey, Sabres coach Dan Bylsma has had nothing but good things to say about Kulikov. At practice, he's looked comfortable with his teammates and sends a nice breakout pass out of the zone. I fully expect Kulikov to be paired with Ristolainen in the starting lineup sometime soon. Ristolainen, of course, is still a restricted free agent. Kulikov is battling an injury after his first preseason game. There's no timetable on when Kulikov will return, but the injury doesn't appear to be long term. Regardless, I think Sabres fans will grow to like Kulikov over the course of this season. Don't expect a ton of offense but do expect some grit, perhaps like this.

No. 20 – D Casey Nelson

No. 19 – D Josh Gorges

No. 18 – LW Marcus Foligno

No. 17 – G Robin Lehner

No. 16 – C Johan Larsson

No. 15 - D Brendan Guhle

No. 14 - C Zemgus Girgensons

No. 13 - RW Hudson Fasching

No. 12.- RW Justin Bailey

No. 11 - D Zach Bogosian

No. 10 LW Alex Nylander

Sabres battling injuries late in camp

By Jourdon LaBarber

Buffalo Sabres

October 6, 2016

There were two ways to look at the Sabres' practice at KeyBank Center on Thursday morning. You could look at the guys who were on the ice, as Brian Duff did in today's Sabres in :90, or you could look at the ones who weren't. That latter group includes a handful of players dealing with injuries and another handful sent down to Rochester to begin the day.

Ryan O'Reilly, Kyle Okposo, Dmitry Kulikov and Zach Bogosian headlined the injured group. O'Reilly left his preseason debut on Wednesday with muscle spasms in the first period, a move that Sabres coach Dan Bylsma called "precautionary." He'll miss Buffalo's preseason finale on Friday and is day-to-day.

Okposo is recovering from a bruised knee after he was hit by a shot in practice on Monday. Kulikov has, in layman's terms, a "bruised butt" from a hit in the third period of his own preseason debut last Thursday and will begin to skate on Friday, while Bogosian began skating alone on Thursday to rehab a groin injury.

The list continues: Daniel Catenacci also left Wednesday's game early with an injury to his hamstring and Nicholas Baptiste saw a promising camp cut short with a lower-back injury. Tyson Strachan will return to the ice from an ankle injury on Friday.

With a week remaining prior to the Sabres' regular season opener against Montreal, it's possible that some or all of O'Reilly, Okposo, Bogosian and Kulikov can recover in time to crack the opening night lineup. But their absence now will change the way Bylsma has to look at his team's final preseason game.

What would normally be a dress rehearsal for the opening night roster now becomes another chance for certain guys to continue to prove their worth. Particularly on defense, the injury situation compounded with the fact that restricted free agent Rasmus Ristolainen remains unsigned has opened the door for guys for more competition.

Ristolainen has been practicing with the team and skated with Josh Gorges, his partner for most of last season, on Thursday.

"I'm acting right now in practice and playing [him] on a pair like he's going to be there," Bylsma said. "That might change next week when we get to practice if he still remains unsigned."

Between Ristolainen's situation, the current injuries and late starts to camp for O'Reilly, Kulikov and Jack Eichel due to their involvement with the World Cup, the Sabres have yet to even get their regular power-play units on the ice.

"It's been kind of a different process," Bylsma said. "I don't particularly like the fact that we haven't had a power play together on the ice yet, at least the one that we see us having at the start of the season, and I could say that the same about line combinations and some lines."

Luckily, the Sabres seem to have some good options to fill in should they need them. With defensemen Erik Burgdoerfer and Brady Austin among the six players reassigned to Rochester on Thursday (along with goalie Linus Ullmark and forwards Justin Bailey, Cole Schneider and Jean Dupuy), the remaining players with a chance to crack the lineup on defense are Casey Nelson, Justin Falk and Brendan Guhle.

Nelson has already earned plenty of praise for his "commanding" presence at camp from Bylsma. Falk has gotten several looks in the preseason and has 171 games of NHL experience already under his belt. Guhle has played some of his best hockey as of late and can play up to nine NHL games before a decision will need to be made whether or not to send him back for another year of junior hockey.

Among the forwards still looking to crack the lineup are Derek Grant, who might already be a lock with five points (2+3) in five preseason games, Alexander Nylander, Hudson Fasching and Cal O'Reilly.

Buffalo's game in Ottawa on Friday begins at 7:30 p.m. and can be heard live on WGR 550 with Dan Dunleavy and Rob Ray on the call.

Thursday's practice

9 Evander Kane - 15 Jack Eichel - 23 Sam Reinhart
63 Tyler Ennis - 28 Zemgus Girgensons - 26 Matt Moulson
82 Marcus Foligno - 22 Johan Larsson - 12 Brian Gionta
44 Nicolas Deslauriers - 27 Derek Grant - 70 Alexander Nylander
19 Cal O'Reilly - 52 Hudson Fasching

4 Josh Gorges - 55 Rasmus Ristolainen
29 Jake McCabe - 6 Cody Franson
41 Justin Falk - 34 Casey Nelson
45 Brendan Guhle - 38 Taylor Fedun

40 Robin Lehner
31 Anders Nilsson

Sabres send six players to Rochester

Buffalo Sabres

October 6th, 2016

The Buffalo Sabres today announced the team has released six players from its training camp roster.

The following six players have been loaned to the Rochester Americans (AHL): Forwards Justin Bailey, Jean Dupuy and Cole Schneider; defensemen Brady Austin and Erik Burgdoerfer; goaltender Linus Ullmark.

The Sabres now have 31 players (18 forwards, 11 defensemen and two goaltenders) on their training camp roster.

2016-17 season preview: Buffalo Sabres

By Joe McDonald

ESPN.com

October 6, 2016

The Buffalo Sabres have not reached the Stanley Cup playoffs in the past five seasons. But the organization made important moves this offseason that could propel them into the postseason next spring.

General manager Tim Murray brought in veteran forward Kyle Okposo and talented young defenseman Dmitry Kulikov, both of whom should be solid additions to the roster.

Coach Dan Bylsma enters his second season behind the Buffalo bench and expects much more from his team in 2016-17.

Best new faces

The Sabres acquired Kulikov via trade from the Florida Panthers in exchange for defenseman Mark Pysyk on June 25. Buffalo also signed Okposo, who was an unrestricted free agent. The Sabres also acquired goaltender Anders Nilsson from the St. Louis Blues for a fifth-round pick in the 2017 draft. Okposo, the former New York Islander, should add a much-needed offensive punch and could prove to be a perfect linemate with Jack Eichel. Even though the Sabres lost Pysyk in the deal, Kulikov should be a great addition to Buffalo's top defensive pairing. He adds a physical presence.

Biggest unknowns

Eichel, 19, enjoyed a successful rookie season in 2015-16. He registered 24 goals and 32 assists for 56 points in 81 games. The talented young forward played in every situation. He also played for Team North America at the World Cup of Hockey in September, but didn't have the best tournament.

Will Eichel suffer a sophomore jinx in 2016-17? He shouldn't. He likely will build off his World Cup experience, which put him at a pace higher than a normal training camp would have. He needs to feed off that experience and get off to a fast start with the Sabres. After his successful rookie campaign, opposing teams have the book on Eichel, so he'll face more challenges in his second season because teams no doubt will focus on him. How he handles that extra burden will be critical to his success.

Once again, goaltending could be an issue for the Sabres. If starter Robin Lehner, 25, can remain healthy and have a breakout season, it could mean the difference between a playoff spot or another losing season.

Defenseman Rasmus Ristolainen remains unsigned as a restricted free agent. After playing for Team Finland at the World Cup, however, he has taken part in training camp for the Sabres but is not able to play until the sides agree on a deal.

Evander Kane's status remains uncertain. The forward was charged with misdemeanor criminal trespass and five noncriminal counts of disorderly conduct and harassment stemming from an incident at a Buffalo bar this summer. He is next scheduled to appear in court on Oct. 31.

Sure things

Depending on the Kane situation, expect Eichel, Okposo, Ryan O'Reilly and Sam Reinhart to lead the charge offensively. O'Reilly, 25, helped Team Canada to a World Cup championship, and that experience also should help him get off to a strong start. He registered 21 goals and 39 assists for 60 points in 71 games last season.

Okposo, 28, had 22 goals and 42 assists for 64 points in 79 games for the Islanders last season. The addition of his offense will be a significant upgrade for the Sabres.

Prediction

The Sabres will contend for a playoff spot for the majority of the season but will fall just short in the end. Seventh in the Atlantic.

Sabres' injury list features four important pieces

By John Vogl
The Buffalo News
October 6, 2016

Dan Bylsma likes to use his opening-night lineup during the last preseason game. That won't happen this year. Far from it.

As the Sabres prepared for Friday's exhibition finale, they did so without some of the biggest names on their roster. Forwards Ryan O'Reilly (back and midsection spasms) and Kyle Okposo (bruised knee), and defensemen Zach Bogosian (groin) and Dmitry Kulikov (butt bruise) all sat out Thursday.

O'Reilly left Wednesday's preseason game, his first with Buffalo since returning from the World Cup.

"Ryan O'Reilly mostly left the game for precautionary reasons but had a spasm in his back and midsection, is still obviously off the ice with that," Bylsma said in KeyBank Center. "Day-to-day, precautionary really at this point in time. He will not be playing tomorrow in the game, then we'll have the 8th off, so he should have a few good days here of rest, treatment and rehab."

Okposo left practice Monday after taking a slap shot off the knee.

"Still recovering," Bylsma said. "He's gotten better each day to this point in time, so it's continuing to improve."

Bogosian suffered a groin strain during an exhibition last Thursday.

"Zach Bogosian skated today, be it by himself before our practice," the coach said. "He's returned to the ice and hopefully progress over the next five days or so."

Kulikov got hurt Friday when he was hit into the door to Toronto's bench, which opened on contact.

"He's progressing as well," Bylsma said. "I don't think he was on the ice this morning, but I think we'll see him do some rehab skating starting tomorrow."

Defenseman Tyson Strachan (ankle) is expected to join the Sabres on the ice Friday. There is no time table for forwards Dan Catenacci (hamstring) and Nicholas Baptiste (back).

Buffalo closes its seven-game preseason Friday in Ottawa.

"We may have a good majority of the team looking to be in spots where they might be in the opening-night roster," Bylsma said.

Unsigned Rasmus Ristolainen continues to practice but can't play. Bylsma believes the defenseman and the team will come to terms on a contract before the season opens next Thursday against Montreal.

"We all believe we'd be better with Risto in the lineup and Rasmus on our team," Bylsma said. "I don't give too much thought or concern to 'if not, if what and when.' I think it will get done, and I think we'll have him in the lineup on the 13th."