



Buffalo Sabres

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Flames-Sabres wrap up season series

Associated Press

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The Buffalo Sabres are still having trouble putting the puck in the net and have yet to win consecutive home games this season.

Their next opponent could be coming to western New York at the right time as the Sabres wrap up their season series against the Calgary Flames on Monday night.

Buffalo (6-8-4) enters the contest after surprising the defending Stanley Cup champion Pittsburgh Penguins with a 2-1 shootout win Saturday behind Cal O'Reilly's goal in the tiebreaker and 46 saves through overtime from backup Anders Nilsson.

The Sabres fell 4-3 in overtime to the Flames on Oct. 18 in Calgary, but results in Buffalo have been far different for almost 20 years. Starting on Oct. 22, 1997, the Sabres have posted a 10-0-1 home record in the series, limiting Calgary to two goals or less nine times while scoring at least three goals eight times.

However, Buffalo is 15th in the Eastern Conference and has scored just 33 goals -- an average of 1.8 per game this season. Nine of those have come at home, where the Sabres have managed one goal in each of the last five games.

Brian Gionta has an idea how the Sabres can improve.

"What we need is to play with a little more urgency, passion," he told the Buffalo News. "That's all part of it being engaged in the game. ... We need guys laying it on the line. Things can change from shift to shift with momentum, so that's the stuff we need to play more desperate.

"We're still continuing to grow and learn, but I think all those experiences are going to pay off. Those tough losses we've had, the games we've kind of given away on our own, those are all things you learn from. Those are how you change your culture by taking those lessons and turn them into positives"

Matt Moulson leads the team with six goals, and he's also the only Sabre with more than one goal at home in 2016-17. Ryan O'Reilly, Buffalo's second-leading scorer (four goals, five assists), took part in an optional skate Sunday, but could miss his sixth straight game with an oblique injury.

Nilsson may get a second consecutive start over Robin Lehner, who's 0-4-1 with a 3.15 goals-against average in his last five games, and took the loss in Calgary last month.

Calgary (8-11-1) began its longest road trip of the season -- a daunting stretch of six games in nine days throughout the Eastern time zone -- with Sunday's 3-2 win over the Detroit Red Wings.

Dougie Hamilton, who had gone without a point in 10 straight games, drew three assists. Hamilton, who needs one assist for 100 in his career, has two goals and three assists in a three-game points streak in Buffalo.

"This is huge because we're looking at these six games almost like a playoff series," Hamilton said. "We know we have to pick up some wins on this trip and this is a good start."

With captain Johnny Gaudreau out for six weeks with a broken finger, Flames coach Glen Gulutzan said this is a teaching moment for the team.

"We need to play in 3-2, 2-1 games," he told the Flames' official website. "It's going to help us evolve as a young group to learn what it takes on a nightly basis to consistently win in this league, and this injury to Johnny, we're trying to spin as a chance to grow in other departments."

The Flames, who have won three of four, are 2-1-1 in the second of back-to-back games this season.

If Gulutzan decides to stay with the hot hand in goal, he'll start Chad Johnson over Brian Elliot.

Johnson made 21 saves, and is 3-1-0 with a 1.50 GAA, a .937 save percentage and a shutout. Johnson has played for six teams since breaking into the league in 2009-10, and posted a career-best 22 wins during his only season with Buffalo in 2015-16.

Going with Elliott may not be a bad thing as he's 4-0-0 with a 1.75 GAA and .952 save percentage in Buffalo. Elliott, though, has lost in each of his last five starts and is 3-8-0 with a 3.36 GAA and .882 save percentage this season.

O'Reilly seals Sabres' 2-1 shootout win over Penguins

By John Wawrow

Associated Press

November 19, 2016

BUFFALO, N.Y. (AP) — For once, Buffalo Sabres coach Dan Bylsma couldn't complain about his team's lack of offense.

Anders Nilsson stopped 46 shots, plus three more in the shootout, to stymie the Sidney Crosby-led Pittsburgh Penguins.

And one goal in regulation, plus minor league call-up Cal O'Reilly's shootout tally, were just enough for the offensively challenged Sabres to pull out a 2-1 victory Saturday night.

"Well, it doesn't really matter at this point in time who it's against," Bylsma said. "But it's a win we desperately needed and against one of the better teams, if not the best team, in the league."

William Carrier scored in regulation for Buffalo, which hasn't scored more than twice in 10 straight games, dating to a 3-1 win at Winnipeg on Oct. 30.

In snapping an 0-4-2 skid, Buffalo's victory came on the heels of a 4-1 loss to Tampa Bay on Friday after which Sabres forward Evander Kane expressed frustration about his team's lack of offense. He sarcastically said Buffalo had become the joke of the NHL because opponents needed only two goals to beat them.

The difference on Saturday was the Penguins were unable to score twice.

It took Pittsburgh 31 shots before Crosby beat Nilsson with a power-play goal to tie the game with 14:14 remaining in regulation.

"It's just one of those games where you leave feeling like you deserve better," said Crosby, who scored his 12th of the season and the 350th goal of his career. "Ultimately, we have to find a way to bury a few chances. ... But he made some good saves. You have to give him credit."

Pittsburgh has alternated losses and wins over its past five games since a 9-2-2 start, and was coming off a 3-2 overtime win at the New York Islanders on Friday night.

The Penguins also lost to Buffalo for the first time in 10 meetings, since a 4-2 loss at Pittsburgh on April 23, 2013.

Nilsson was solid in making just his second start in 11 games, and first since a 41-save performance in a 2-1 overtime loss to New Jersey on Nov. 11.

Nilsson's toughest saves came during overtime.

A minute in, he kicked out his right pad to stop Phil Kessel's drive from the right circle. A few seconds later, Nilsson squeezed his right arm just in time to trap Trevor Daley's shot.

His best save came with 2:55 left in overtime, when he kicked out his left pad at the last moment to foil Kris Letang on a breakaway.

After stopping Crosby and Evgeni Malkin on Pittsburgh's first two shootout attempts, Nilsson sealed the win by stopping Letang's attempt to beat him through the legs.

"Obviously, they do have some very esteemed guys and some very good players in their lineup," Nilsson said. "I tried to be as patient as possible and let them make the first move and try to make the save. And today I got lucky and was able to do that."

O'Reilly scored on Buffalo's third attempt by breaking up the right wing before cutting to the front of the net and beating Marc-Andre Fleury with a snap shot to the glove side.

The goal came on the same day O'Reilly was called up from Buffalo's AHL affiliate in Rochester. And it wasn't lost on Bylsma that O'Reilly has an established reputation for being a shootout specialist.

O'Reilly has scored on six of 13 shootout attempts, with three of them game-deciding goals.

Fleury was otherwise solid in stopping 32 shots through overtime.

He was particularly sharp 2 minutes into the third period, when he got his glove up to stop Kane's shot from the left circle. Fleury then got across to his left to bat down Brian Gionta's off-balance shot from the slot.

NOTES: Crosby has 15 goals and 50 points in 32 career games against Buffalo. ... Penguins forward Patric Hornqvist missed his second game with a concussion. Coach Mike Sullivan said Hornqvist skated on his own earlier in the day, but there was no timetable yet for his return. ... Aside from O'Reilly, the Sabres recalled forward Cole Schneider from Rochester. O'Reilly was the AHL's scoring leader with 18 points (three goals, 15 assists), and Schneider was tied for second with 17 (seven goals, 10 assists). ... Linesman Greg Devorski officiated his 1,500th NHL game.

UP NEXT

Penguins: Host the New York Rangers on Monday.

Sabres: Host the Calgary Flames on Monday.

Sabres' Gionta shows fight, expects more of the same

By John Vogl

The Buffalo News

November 20, 2016

Between the regular season and playoffs, Brian Gionta has played 1,054 games. He's dropped the gloves only once, so he instantly recalled the 2002 bout with Todd Marchant on Sunday. With New Jersey teammate Scott Stevens standing by, Gionta held his own against the similarly sized Marchant, an Edmonton forward and Williamsville native.

The pugilism banter began because Gionta seemed eager to put a second fight on his résumé Saturday.

During the Sabres' 2-1 shootout victory over Pittsburgh, Gionta stood toe-to-toe and eye-to-shoulder with the Penguins' Evgeni Malkin. The 5-foot-7 Gionta gives up 8 inches to Malkin, but he wasn't going to give any ground after taking a spear. He twice went after Malkin with shoves, then stopped near Pittsburgh's penalty box for verbal sparring.

"It's part of the game," Gionta said with a laugh in KeyBank Center. "You get into it. It was a close game, and that's what happens."

Gionta wants to see more of it Monday when the Sabres host Calgary. He doesn't expect fights, of course, but he does expect tenacity throughout Buffalo's lineup.

"What we need is to play with a little more urgency, passion," Gionta said. "That's all part of it, being engaged in the game.

"You see guys like Marcus Foligno blocking shots at the end of periods, end of games. That's what we need. We need guys laying it on the line. Things can change from shift to shift with momentum, so that's the stuff we need to play more desperate."

The Sabres did a lot of things right Saturday in ending their six-game winless skid. The little things – Foligno blocking a shot at the buzzer, Gionta challenging Malkin – were noticed in the dressing room.

"We want to be a group that sticks together and has our backs together on the ice," coach Dan Bylsma said. "That's something we can be better at and need to be better at, and we were."

The Gionta incident led to all 10 skaters on the ice getting involved. The captain has led in words, determination, attitude and work ethic during his three seasons with Buffalo, but this was new.

"That was an interesting scrum," said right wing Kyle Okposo, a teammate of Gionta for the first time.

"He's a consummate professional. He does things the right way, and I think as a captain that's what you have to do first and foremost. Set the best example you can, and he certainly does that."

Like most of the Sabres, Gionta is in an offensive rut. He has no goals and one assist in his last eight games. He's still fifth on the team in scoring with three goals and seven points.

Even with Saturday's victory, Buffalo has been held to two goals or fewer in 10 straight games. It's led to Bylsma talking about the need to win, 1-0. Gionta is uniquely positioned to help the Sabres through that challenge.

"I'm used to that," Gionta said. "I grew up playing in Jersey, so that's a recipe for success.

"He's just saying that we need to take care of our D-zone and be on the D side of the puck and make sure that we're not giving up odd-man rushes. You look at a game like Tampa," Gionta said of Thursday's 4-1 loss, "you're trying to play run-and-gun with them and trade chances with a team like that, it's not a recipe for success for us.

"While he's saying win, 1-0, he's not saying to sit back. It's just not taking those unnecessary chances to try and force things, especially when we're in a rut like we were."

Gionta is always pleased when he sees the Sabres learning lessons. The organization brought him in specifically for his leadership qualities. It's proving to be a winding road from last place to playoffs, but the captain notices when the team gets in the proper lane.

"Just to get that win, it's good on the psyche," Gionta said. "We've made huge strides since my first year. Even from last year we've made strides.

"We're still continuing to grow and learn, but I think all those experiences are going to pay off. Those tough losses we've had, the games we've kind of given away on our own, those are all things you learn from. Those are how you change your culture by taking those lessons and turning them into positives."

Sabres get a chance to exhale after beating Penguins

By John Vogl

The Buffalo News

November 19, 2016

Cal O'Reilly has been in the Sabres' dressing room enough to recognize the temperature of the place. He was around when Buffalo was struggling last year. He was a fixture late in the season when things were going well.

When the center arrived Saturday morning on his first recall of 2016-17, he noticed players weren't in the best frame of mind.

"Guys were obviously a little tense," O'Reilly said. "They really needed a win. The pressure was starting to get on them a little bit."

If he could sense it after a few minutes, imagine how the players living through the six-game winless skid felt. Then picture how relieved they were to finally celebrate.

"It's a feeling you would like to have after every game," Sabres goaltender Anders Nilsson said after a 2-1 shootout win over Pittsburgh. "This was a huge confidence boost. Hopefully, we can take this win with us and continue the path, continue to develop and improve our game, play an even better game Monday."

In the moments after a long-awaited victory, the Sabres were already setting a goal of two straight. They host Calgary on Monday in KeyBank Center, and one win has rejuvenated the formerly downtrodden club.

"We needed something for our confidence," left wing Marcus Foligno said. "We're looking forward to Monday's game, going in fresh. We battled, and that's what we want to have the rest of the year."

O'Reilly and Nilsson provided the defining moments Saturday night, allowing the locals to let out a roar at the final buzzer. O'Reilly scored the only goal of the shootout, while Nilsson earned First Star honors. He made 46 saves in regulation and overtime, then added three more during the breakaway challenge to end the Sabres' 0-4-2 skid.

"We really wanted to end this losing streak," Nilsson said. "We really needed these two points. Maybe it wasn't the prettiest win, but we ended up with the win. I think it's going to give us confidence moving forward."

Nilsson improved to 2-1-2 with a .951 save percentage and 1.74 goals-against average. He added to an impressive date in Sabres goaltending history. Martin Biron earned his first NHL shutout on Nov. 19, 1999, and Ryan Miller debuted on Nov. 19, 2002. Nilsson did his part and earned every accolade thrown his way.

"He was the best player out there," said Sabres left wing William Carrier, who scored his first NHL goal.

Nilsson deflected the credit like the Penguins' shots. He said Buffalo's forwards kept Pittsburgh's stars to the outside, while the defensemen cleared traffic and rebounds. He was right.

With their top players out, the Sabres need everyone in order to win. Everyone finally showed up.

"It's great to win, especially that way," center Johan Larsson said. "We had to fight every minute, and every guy did a great job. That's a really good team on the other side, so that was a great win for us."

The Sabres still scored just one goal in 65 minutes, so there's room for improvement. Coach Dan Bylsma feels the improvement will come now that the team knows it can win a 2-1 game after losing a couple of them. Buffalo won for the first time in five overtimes and shootouts.

"A win we desperately needed against one of the better teams, if not the best team in the league," Bylsma said. "We want to be comfortable in a tight game. Our guys did a great job of battling within that framework."

They did so well, they're ready to do it again.

Said O'Reilly: "It's definitely good for the team confidence."

Sabres Notebook: Fedun fitting in; O'Reilly still day-to-day

By John Vogl

The Buffalo News

November 20, 2016

Taylor Fedun knows as well as anyone it's not easy being the new guy. Contributing immediately certainly helps the transition.

Fedun has assists in his first two games with the Sabres, making him a welcome addition to Buffalo's defense corps and score sheets. He'll go for three games in a row Monday when the Sabres host Calgary.

"So far I've adjusted fairly well," Fedun said Sunday in KeyBank Center. "I got a little bit more of an opportunity last game, and for the most part I think it went fairly well. I'm feeling fairly comfortable out there."

Fedun skated 15:21 against Pittsburgh on Saturday, including 4:36 of power-play time. The defenseman earned his assist when William Carrier tipped his point shot at even strength. Fedun picked up a power-play assist during his Buffalo debut Thursday against Tampa Bay.

"You're never comfortable being the new guy," the 28-year-old said, "but it's a hockey locker room, so the camaraderie's there. It's a situation where you can get into it and feel comfortable relatively quickly."

Fedun has needed to acclimate often through the years. The Princeton graduate played for Edmonton, San Jose, Vancouver and their minor-league teams during the previous three seasons. He's played in just 14 NHL games, but he's put up seven assists and nine points.

"It's difficult at times, but it just makes it that much more exciting and that much sweeter when it finally does happen," Fedun said of recalls. "When you do get that opportunity, it makes it that much more important to try and make the most of it."

He's certainly off to an impressive start.

"You want to have him on the ice right now to see if he can continue to make those plays," coach Dan Bylsma said. "He showed a ton of poise in the game. ... His shot's no better than average, but he's very good at finding ways to get it through to the net."

Center Ryan O'Reilly and goaltender Robin Lehner were among the handful of players to practice Sunday, but it's unclear if either will play against the Flames. O'Reilly is still day-to-day with the oblique injury that has sidelined him for four straight and five of the last six.

Lehner is healthy but may have to watch after Anders Nilsson stopped 46 shots plus all three in the shootout during Saturday's 2-1 victory over Pittsburgh. Bylsma will announce the starter Monday.

Calgary is likely to go with Brian Elliott after using Chad Johnson on Sunday night in Detroit. Johnson, who appeared in 45 games for the Sabres last year, has started four straight for the Flames.

Elliott is 3-8 with an .882 save percentage and 3.36 goals-against average. However, in 13 appearances against the Sabres, he is 11-0-2 with a .943 save percentage and 1.68 GAA.

Marcus Foligno certainly earned Sunday's itinerary of rest and recovery. He went to the dressing room for medical attention twice Saturday. He was cross-checked into the boards during the second period and blocked a shot at the end of regulation, but he should play.

"Marcus earned his paycheck yesterday in a lot of ways," Bylsma said. "There's a number of bumps and bruises as we go along here that we've been dealing with. They've been playing, but they've got bumps and bruises. Marcus is on that list.

"He left the ice for the concussion protocol, which was not an issue at all for him. He came back in the game. He got another bruise from the blocked shot, but it was more that it struck him in the side of the knee and hit his nerve."

Bylsma took time to praise center Sam Reinhart and the defensive pairing of Rasmus Ristolainen and Josh Gorges. All three helped hold the Penguins, Sidney Crosby and Evgeni Malkin to no goals at even strength.

"I thought Sam Reinhart, especially in the third period, dug in hard and battled against the Crosby line on numerous occasions," Bylsma said. "I thought that was the hardest and the best battle I've seen out of Sam, and he did it against one of the best players in the game.

"Risto and Georgie had to check two lines last game with the Malkin line and the Crosby line. Thirty minutes for Risto. Georgie, he exchanged a few words with Crosby throughout the game and played him tough."

Sabres battle for a win that proves they can still compete

By Mike Harrington

The Buffalo News

November 19, 2016

If you're having a hard time processing what we saw Saturday night in KeyBank Center, you're not alone.

But the one takeaway from the Sabres' riveting 2-1 victory over the Pittsburgh Penguins is this: When times get tough from this point forward, look back to Nov. 19.

To the night when the Sabres got through a 65-minute game against Sidney Crosby & Co. and didn't allow a goal at even strength. To the night when they were again outmatched but finally refused to cave. To the night when six players you would have ticketed for Rochester in September and a goalie you expected to simply be the backup during training camp helped beat the defending Stanley Cup champions.

And to the night when they proved they should still be able to compete even with all their injuries. Enough feeling sorry for this team. Maybe enough of them feeling sorry for themselves too. This six-game losing streak didn't have to go down like it did.

It made me think back to a rant Toronto Blue Jays third baseman Josh Donaldson had early in his 2015 MVP season. The Blue Jays were in Houston, and were swept in a four-game series to fall to 17-21. Donaldson, a competitor to the 10th degree, didn't want to hear about how the club was battling.

"It's really just about going out there and either getting the job done," Donaldson said that day. "This isn't the 'Try League.' This is the 'Get it Done League.' And you know, eventually they're gonna find people who are going to get it done."

Donaldson's words became a mantra for the first division championship season in Toronto in 22 years. Profound stuff. The Sabres have been talking about the try part too much of late. It's about time we saw some of the get-it-done part. Good for them to get there.

Now, there was too much spirit on the ice, on the bench and (finally) in the crowd to go all negative here but let's not forget this was yet another one-goal game for the offense. And the Sabres are 10 for 10 in November scoring two goals or less. Coach Dan Bylsma had to love beating his old team and even he could push that aside on this night because the big picture was far more important.

"It doesn't really matter at this point in time who it's against," Bylsma said. "But it's a win we desperately needed against one of the better teams, if not the best team in the league."

Quick quiz: If I told you in training camp my prediction was that the Sabres would beat the Penguins in November on a goal by William Carrier and a shootout winner from Cal O'Reilly, what kind of reaction would that elicit? You'd say I was insane.

But we saw it. Carrier connected for his first NHL goal on an artful tip from defenseman Taylor Fedun, who has two assists in two games and looks completely comfortable back in the NHL.

"I had a few chances in games before so it's nice to get that first in," Carrier said. "Me and Fedun have been practicing that play down in 'Roch' and in every morning skate so it's pretty nice to get that one."

"He deserves it," said O'Reilly, the Amerks captain who joined the Sabres on Saturday morning. "I knew when he came up that with his work ethic and tenacity that they would love him here. It was great to see him get rewarded."

This team still needs to get more -- a lot more -- from its regulars. Kyle Okposo has no goals in his last seven games. Evander Kane has none in the six games he's played. Brian Gionta hasn't scored in 10 games, Johan Larsson in nine. But all of them had good moments on one end of the ice or the other in this one.

Rasmus Ristolainen and Josh Gorges endured a four-minute shift during one second-period stretch, getting only a quick Bylsma timeout after an icing. Larsson, Gionta and Marcus Foligno were all on the ice for three minutes.

"Really, we wanted a 0-0 game and to get the dirty win," Carrier admitted. "The team played really well. We all pushed together, all played the same way. We were chipping pucks in, chipping pucks out. It feels great as a team right now."

It was certainly one of Bylsma's better games behind the bench in a while. The timeout, which he said was just the second he's used on icing in the era of coaches saving them for challenges, was totally the right call. So was using O'Reilly in the shootout, where he was 6 for 13 in his career. And so was not telling O'Reilly until right before sending him over the boards. Keep the player engaged in what's going on but don't make him overthink things.

Then there was Bylsma's curious choice of starting goaltenders, for which he was rewarded handsomely.

Anders Nilsson made 46 saves and improved his season totals in five starts to a 1.74 goals-against average and .951 save percentage. When asked about the choice following the morning skate, Bylsma tried to pass it off as just giving Nilsson a chance during a busy schedule of games.

Call bullhockey on that.

You're at home on a Saturday night playing the defending Cup champs and you play the backup goalie? There was a message there. Robin Lehner has hardly been bad, with a goals-against average of 2.53 and a .919 save percentage, but he's lost his last three starts and given up 11 goals in the process. Lehner is like everyone else on this team. Be better.

Naturally, I prodded the elephant in the room when I asked Bylsma: Doesn't he have to come back with Nilsson Monday against Calgary?

Bylsma smirked and kind of rolled his eyes at that one.

"It's a good win, wasn't it?" he said. "Just wanted to see how I'd react?"

Actually, yep.

It was a funny moment. A great reaction. Just like what we got from Bylsma's team. Finally.

Sabres Notebook: Pittsburgh fails to capitalize

By Amy Moritz

The Buffalo News

November 19, 2016

Sidney Crosby described it as one of those games that got away.

The Pittsburgh Penguins fired 47 shots on goal while their netminder, backup Marc-Andre Fleury, made a series of spectacular saves in overtime. The Pens controlled zone time and their penalty kill kicked it into high gear when it was needed.

The only thing missing were goals.

The Penguins back-to-back games in New York State went back-to-back overtime. After an OT win against the New York Islanders in Brooklyn on Friday, they came up short in a 2-1 shoot out loss to the Buffalo Sabres in KeyBank Center Saturday night.

"It was just one of those games where you leave feeling like you deserve better but ultimately we've got to find a way to bury a few chances," said Crosby, who scored the Pens' lone goal on the power play in the third period. "I thought we created a number of them, especially in the third.

"We've got to work hard in those areas to find rebounds and when we get the chances we've got to find a way to put them in but tonight I think it wasn't lack of effort."

It was an interesting end to a three-game road trip for the Penguins which started with a 7-1 loss to the Washington Capitals on Wednesday, the worst loss under coach Mike Sullivan. They rebounded with a 3-2 overtime win, their first win in OT this season, against the Islanders.

Then came the game in Buffalo where everything went right except the puck going into the net.

"Obviously when you generate close to 50 shots you hope that you'd score more than one goal," Sullivan said.

"You try to control the process. You try to play the game the right way. Some nights you score and some nights you don't. I thought our guys stuck with it. They played hard throughout the course of the game. Our power play gets a big goal for us to get us to the overtime and we had plenty of opportunities to score; it just didn't go in for us."

Crosby's power play goal got the Penguins to overtime but it was Fleury who got the team to the shootout. He made six saves in overtime, nearly all of them highlight-reel material.

"You never know what to expect," Fleury said of overtime. "There's a lot of room, a lot of time for the guys. Just try to focus on the shooter and our guys came back to help out.

"It is harder because every shot feels like they have a good scoring chance. They've got more time, more room to make plays and also it makes it a little tougher."

Tougher, too, for Fleury who made his first start since Nov. 10 when he made 40 saves in a 4-2 loss to the Minnesota Wild. He came into the game with seven straight wins against the Sabres, including three shutouts, allowing six goals against in 420 minutes.

But it took him a few shots in the game to find his groove as he figures out how to be an effective back-up.

"It felt better as the game went on," Fleury said. "I haven't played much and also it's good to go in and get a few shots early. I felt better as the game went on."

"It's a little bit of a different mindset going into games," Fleury said of the sporadic starts, "but it's the way it is and I've got to find ways to be ready to be sharp and help my team win games."

Cal O'Reilly earned his first call-up of the season after leading the American Hockey League in scoring with 18 points. He played 12:38 centering Zemgus Girgensons and Matt Moulson while playing 2:40 on the power play.

O'Reilly scored the shootout winner improving to 6-for-13 (46.2 percent) in his NHL career including three game-deciding goals.

While others have made their way on the I-90 shuttle between Rochester and Buffalo, O'Reilly knew he just needed to be patient.

"Just being patient," O'Reilly said before Saturday's game. "If the call came, great. If not it's really out of my control. I'm just trying to play well and lead that team down there."

The 30-year-old O'Reilly is the older brother of Sabres center Ryan O'Reilly who will miss his fourth game with an oblique injury and Cal said it's been a trying time for Ryan.

"He misses the games. He takes it hard," Cal said of his brother, Ryan. "He hasn't missed many games in his career so he hasn't really gone through something like this. I think it's been really tough on him but he knows he's got to get that healthy before he comes back so it doesn't keep flaring up on him. Obviously they really miss him here. He's a key player for them."

Patric Hornqvist remained out of the Penguins lineup with a concussion. The forward sustained the injury during the Pen's 7-1 loss to the Washington Capitals on Wednesday. He had five goals and 13 points in 16 games this season.

Sabres coach Dan Bylsma and Pittsburgh coach Mike Sullivan share status in an elite club – they are among the four coaches to lead the Penguins to a Stanley Cup championship. Pittsburgh is the first team of the four major professional sports leagues (NHL, MLB, NFL, NBA) to win its first four championships with four different head coaches – Bob Johnson in 1991, Scotty Bowman in 1992, Bylsma in 2009 and Sullivan in 2016.

Quick hits: Sabres 2, Penguins 1 (SO)

By John Vogl

The Buffalo News

November 19, 2016

Anders Nilsson deserved a victory. Cal O'Reilly made sure he got it.

O'Reilly, called up earlier Saturday, delivered a much-needed win for the Sabres by scoring the only goal of the shootout. The 2-1 victory over Pittsburgh ended Buffalo's winless skid at six games.

The KeyBank Center roared in approval when Nilsson thwarted the Penguins' final shooter and thrust his hand in the air in victory.

In addition to stopping all three shootout attempts, Nilsson made 46 saves, including 18 during the first period and 15 in the third. Buffalo mustered 27 regulation shots on Marc-Andre Fleury, then peppered him with six during overtime.

Pittsburgh entered the night with a long history of dominating the Sabres. The Penguins had won nine straight overall and six in a row in Buffalo. The Sabres' last win on home ice was Feb. 19, 2012.

The dominance was even more impressive with Sidney Crosby in the lineup. The Penguins' captain had presided over 15 victories in a row against the Sabres.

Overtime chances: The teams took advantage of the three-on-three, creating numerous scoring chances. Nilsson came up big on Trevor Daley and Kris Letang, who had a partial breakaway. Fleury made point-blank saves on Taylor Fedun and Sam Reinhart, then flashed the glove on a high shot by Kyle Okposo. Buffalo had a 6-4 shot edge during the five-minute session.

First time: William Carrier scored his first NHL goal with 8:16 off the clock. The left winger started the sequence with a shot, then skated to the front and tipped Fedun's point shot past Marc-Andre Fleury. The 21-year-old Carrier was playing his eighth career game.

Fedun, called up from Rochester on Thursday, has an assist in both of his games with the Sabres.

Can't do it: The Penguins' first power-play unit resembles an All-Star team with Crosby, Evgeni Malkin, Phil Kessel, Kris Letang and Chris Kunitz. The Sabres gave them a chance to tie the game with 14:23 to go. They took full advantage.

With defenseman Cody Franson in the box for interference, the Pens erased their 1-0 deficit. Goaltender Anders Nilsson stopped Kessel's blast, but Kunitz shoveled the rebound to a wide-open Crosby. The captain buried it to run his career totals to 15 goals and 50 points in 32 games against the Sabres.

Nilsson comes out hot: The Penguins outshot the Sabres, 18-6, during the first period, but Nilsson stopped them all to send Buffalo into intermission with a 1-0 lead. Buffalo entered the night 4-1-4 when scoring first, while the Penguins were 5-2 when giving up the opening goal.

Sabres cool it down: Buffalo cut the Penguins' output in half during the second period, limiting them to nine shots while taking 10. Pittsburgh had the best sequence of the period, however, pinning the Sabres in their own zone while making three line changes. Johan Larsson was stuck on the ice for 3:16. Marcus Foligno's shift was 3:04, while Brian Gionta was stuck for 2:59.

Sam Reinhart finally relieved Larsson but promptly iced the puck, forcing Dan Bylsma to use his timeout.

Not-so-minor hit: Penguins defenseman Brian Dumoulin sent Foligno into the boards and the dressing room with 31 seconds left in the second period. Dumoulin's cross-check to Foligno's lower back thrust the forward headfirst into the boards, where he was helped up by athletic trainer Rich Stinziano. Dumoulin earned two minutes for cross-checking.

Foligno missed the opening four minutes of the third period before returning. He went to the dressing room again at the end of regulation after blocking a blast by Carl Hagelin.

Disdain: Tempers flared with 5:52 remaining, with Gionta and the Penguins' Evgeni Malkin at the center of it. Malkin jabbed Gionta with his stick, and the captain responded with a shove that led to all 10 skaters grabbing each other. Once they separated, Gionta shoved Malkin again and yelled at him on the way to the box.

Gionta and Jake McCabe picked up roughing minors for the Sabres, while Malkin and Kunitz earned the same infractions.

Still out: As expected, the Sabres played without center Ryan O'Reilly (oblique) for the fourth straight game. Dmitry Kulikov (back) missed his fifth in a row.

Needing two forwards, the Sabres called up center Cal O'Reilly and right wing Cole Schneider. O'Reilly played in the middle of left wing Zemgus Girgensons and right wing Matt Moulson. Schneider skated with center Derek Grant and Carrier.

Stripes milestone: The NHL, Sabres and Penguins honored linesman Greg Devorski for working his 1,500th game. Stephen Walkom, the director of officiating, presented the linesman with a crystal, while Gionta and Crosby each presented Devorski with a jersey signed by their teams.

Counting the house: An influx of Pittsburgh fans led to an announced crowd of 18,870. The visitors made themselves known in a hurry with a "Let's go, Pens" chant during the Sabres' pregame video presentation.

Next: The Sabres get another chance against a team finishing back-to-backs. Calgary will visit the foot of Jim Kelley Way on Monday, one night after facing off with the Red Wings in Detroit. Coincidentally, the Wings will come to town Wednesday in the annual pre-Thanksgiving game in Buffalo. That is the final game of the four-game homestand.

Sabres Top Pens in a Shootout 2-1

WGR 550

November 19, 2016

The Sabres halted a six-game losing skid on Saturday with a 2-1 shootout win over the defending Stanley Cup champs. Anders Nilsson came up with 46 saves in net and Cal O'Reilly notched the SO winner. Nilsson also stopped all three Pittsburgh skaters in the shootout -- Sidney Crosby, Evgeni Malkin and Kris Letang.

Scoring

William Carrier opened the scoring 8:16 into the game, deflecting a Taylor Fedun shot past Marc-Andre Fleury for the 1-0 Sabres lead.

The Penguins tied it up with a Sidney Crosby power play goal at 5:46 of the 3rd period. The goal marked Crosby's 12th of the season and came just 9 seconds after an interference call on Cody Franson. Cal O'Reilly, making his season debut after joining the club from Rochester, buried his shootout chance to give Buffalo the win.

Game Notes

Carrier's goal marked his first-ever in the NHL.

Brian Dumoulin hammered Marcus Foligno into the boards from behind during the final minute of the 2nd period, earning only a 2-minute cross checking penalty.

Foligno was not on the bench to start the 3rd period, but later returned. He exited for the dressing room once again in the game's final seconds after blocking a shot.

Nilsson's 46 saves two shy of a career-high (48 saves, October 2015).

1st Period

Goals

8:16 - BUF - William Carrier (1) (Taylor Fedun)

Penalties

3:46 - PIT - Trevor Daley (2 min., hooking)

12:26 - BUF - Sam Reinhart (2 min., high sticking)

2nd Period

Goals

None

Penalties

0:16 - PIT - Brian Dumoulin (2 min., holding)

9:25 - PIT - Conor Sheary (2 min., tripping)

19:28 - PIT - Brian Dumoulin (2 min., cross checking)

3rd Period

Goals

5:46 - PIT - Sidney Crosby (12) (PPG) (Evgeni Malkin, Chris Kunitz)

Penalties

5:37 - BUF - Cody Franson (2 min., interference)

14:08 - BUF - Jake McCabe (2 min., roughing)

14:08 - BUF - Brian Gionta (2 min., roughing)

14:08 - PIT - Evgeni Malkin (2 min., roughing)

14:08 - PIT - Chris Kunitz (2 min., roughing)

Overtime

Goals
None

Penalties
None

Shootout

BUF - Kyle Okposo - MISS
PIT - Sidney Crosby - MISS
BUF - Sam Reinhart - MISS
PIT - Evgeni Malkin - MISS
BUF - Cal O'Reilly - GOAL
PIT - Kris Letang - MISS

Goaltending

PIT - Marc-Andre Fleury (32 saves, 33 shots)
BUF - Anders Nilsson (46 saves, 47 shots)

Power Plays

PIT - 1 of 2
BUF - 0 of 4

Three Stars

- 1.) BUF - Anders Nilsson (46 saves)
- 2.) BUF - Taylor Fedun (1 A)
- 3.) BUF - William Carrier (1 G, 1st in NHL)

Sabres' O'Reilly skates, but no word on if he'll play

By Paul Hamilton

WGR 550

November 20, 2016

Buffalo, NY (WGR 550) -- Only a few of the Sabres took the ice on Sunday as the team prepares for Calgary on Monday.

I was in studio with Howard Simon for the Bills Roundtable, so I was not able to attend. Thanks to Sabres.com, I was able to listen to Dan Bylsma and will be able to summarize today.

Ryan O'Reilly was one of the players that was on the ice, but it isn't known if he's going to be able to return against the Flames. Bylsma said, "He's been on the ice the last few days and today it was only a handful of players on the ice, he was skating with players for the first time." Bylsma added, "I'll tell you he's day-to-day."

There were many nursing minor bumps and bruises that didn't skate on Sunday. On Saturday, Marcus Foligno was cross checking into the back wall and the NHL made him go through concussion protocol before he could return. Foligno also blocked a shot very late in regulation time to preserve the tie. Bylsma said, "I think Marcus earned his pay check yesterday in a lot of ways in taking the hit and having two huge blocked shots plus, he had seven hits in the game. So he was a big factor."

"I thought Sam Reinhart, especially in the third period dug in hard and battled against Crosby's line. There were numerous stages in the third period where I thought that was the hardest and the best battle I've seen out of Sam and he did it against one of the best players in the game."

I mentioned on Twitter during the Penguins game that I thought Josh Gorges played one of his best games. In my mind his two best games of the season have come against Crosby and Connor McDavid in Edmonton. Bylsma said, "I thought Risto and Gorgie had to check two lines last game with the Malkin line and the Crosby line and 30 minutes for Risto in the game and Gorgie exchanged a few words with Crosby throughout the game and played him tough."

Ristolainen played 29:56 while Gorges played 21:54.

Taylor Fedun put in over 15 minutes in just his second game as a Sabre. Watching Fedun and Justin Falk play, there is absolutely no reason why one of them couldn't have been up here being the seventh defenseman while Casey Nelson went down to Rochester and learned the pro game. First Nelson sat and watched and when he did get his chance, he was so bad I was wondering if it was going to destroy the youngster. Buffalo is so good at player development, but I think this one was handled very poorly.

Fedun also has an assist in both games he's played. Bylsma said, "I thought he showed a ton of poise in the game right from the first shift where he makes a play coming out of the D zone, to the play he makes coming up the ice to Carrier wide for the shot that lead to the forecheck and a turnover and the goal, the pass by him on the goal. On the power play his shot is no better than average, but he's very good at finding ways to get it through to the net."

A huge criticism of this team both by fans and people who work for this team is they don't stick up for each other. Bad hits often are not addressed and Bylsma said, "We want to be a group that sticks together and has our backs together when we're on the ice in how we play and in those situations. I think that's something we can be better at and we need to be better at and we were when all five guys were in there last night and all five of us on the ice at that time were in that together."

Bylsma wanted nothing to do with releasing who the goalie will be on Monday. Anders Nilsson is coming off a shootout win over the defending Stanley Cup champion Penguins where he made 46 saves.

Join Schopp and the Bulldog on Monday for pregame beginning at 6:00

Taylor Fedun has chance to stick with Sabres

By Bill Hoppe
Olean Times Herald
November 21, 2016

BUFFALO – At the start of a season, a Taylor Fedun-type player – a talented minor leaguer with some limited NHL experience – often has no chance to crack the big club.

“There’s just not that much opportunity when training camp starts, the rosters and the contracts,” coach Dan Bylsma said Sunday after the Sabres prepared for tonight’s home tilt against the Calgary Flames.

Opportunities, of course, inevitably materialize. As the Sabres have recently experienced, injuries often hit hard and come in waves.

Their depth – a mix of prospects and veterans – has been tested. They’ve already dressed 30 players in 18 games, including nine defensemen, one more than they used all of last season.

“We do believe we have players who would grab ahold of that opportunity when it comes, and it’s coming right now in big numbers for a lot of guys,” Bylsma said inside KeyBank Center. “You want them to step in and make the most of the opportunity and really play a game that demands that they play more games.

“Taylor Fedun is a guy who’s doing that right now.”

Fedun, a defenseman, has quickly impacted the NHL’s lowest-scoring team, assisting on both goals the Sabres have scored since they recalled him Thursday. Bylsma promoted him to the top power-play unit for Saturday’s 2-1 shootout win against the Pittsburgh Penguins.

“So far, I’ve adjusted well,” Fedun said.

Many veteran call-ups earn a look but eventually go back to the minors. Fedun, however, might have an opportunity to stick around. The Sabres need goals badly, especially from the blue line, which has scored just one goal this season.

But Bylsma and some teammates also mentioned the little things that often go unnoticed – smart plays in the neutral zone or simply getting the puck on net – Fedun has done.

“You kind of want to have him on the ice right now to see if he can continue to make those plays and be that player for us,” Bylsma said.

The sample size is small, but Fedun, 28, has consistently created offense throughout his 14-game NHL career with three other NHL teams, compiling two goals and nine points.

Fedun has also produced in the AHL, scoring 34 goals and 144 points in 277 contests. The Princeton product has two goals and 12 points in 14 games with the Rochester Americans this season.

The numbers beg for more NHL action.

“It’s difficult at times,” Fedun said of waiting for chances. “But it just makes it that much more exciting and that much sweeter when it finally does happen, when you’re putting in the time down there. When you do get that opportunity, it makes it that much more important to try to make the most of it.”

Veterans approaching Fedun’s age normally don’t become NHL regulars, but it occasionally happens. For example, Sabres captain Brian Gionta’s brother, Stephen, finally earned duty with New Jersey as a 28-year-old at the end of 2011-12. The younger Gionta stuck with the Devils until last season.

Brian Gionta sees some of the same qualities in Fedun his brother possesses.

"They have confidence in themselves knowing they can play at this level and continue to impress every time they're out there and eventually they get their break," Gionta said. "I like seeing that. I like having guys are like that. You know they're going to be there for your team."

Fedun had his choice of teams when free agency opened July 1. He quickly signed a one-year, two-way contract with the Sabres worth \$300,000 in the AHL because he said he saw "a young team with a lot of potential that's heading in the right direction."

Fedun said he also saw an opportunity as a right-handed shot, which teams often need to balance defense pairs.

"(I knew) that it's a long season with injuries and stuff, that if I took care of things on my end that hopefully there'd be an opportunity to come up here and try to contribute," he said.

Fedun now has a chance to contribute.

xxx

With three more games in the next five days, only a handful of Sabres skated Sunday, including injured center Ryan O'Reilly (oblique). O'Reilly, out the last four games, is day-to-day, Bylsma said.

Sabres notes: Cal O'Reilly's hot start with Amerks rewarded

By Bill Hoppe
Olean Times Herald
November 20, 2016

BUFFALO – Some heads turned when the Sabres awarded center Cal O'Reilly, a talented minor leaguer almost four years removed from his last NHL game, a two-year, \$1.4 million contract in 2015. But O'Reilly, the AHL's leading scorer, has morphed into a valuable asset for the organization, captaining the Rochester Americans and providing depth for the Sabres.

O'Reilly, 30, proved that Saturday just hours after earning a recall, scoring the shootout winner in the Sabres' 2-1 win against the Pittsburgh Penguins, a triumph that ended a six-game losing streak.

Why did Sabres coach Dan Bylsma pick O'Reilly to shoot in the third round?

"You want to put people in the right spots to have success," Bylsma said. "Regardless of if Cal is a call-up or not, that was the right time for Cal."

O'Reilly simply skated in and wristed a shot past Penguins goalie Marc-Andre Fleury, his sixth NHL shootout goal in 13 attempts.

"I come down and it seems to work pretty well," O'Reilly said. "I went with it tonight and it worked."

After playing 20 NHL games last season, O'Reilly has enjoyed a torrid start with the Amerks, scoring three goals and 18 points in 15 games.

"You be patient and try to control what you can control," O'Reilly said Saturday morning inside KeyBank Center.

Just 18 games into the season, O'Reilly became the 30th player to dress for the Sabres. The Sabres summoned O'Reilly because "we needed help in the center position," Bylsma said.

With top centers Jack Eichel (ankle) and Ryan O'Reilly (oblique) injured, the Sabres have been woefully thin down the middle all season. Bylsma used Sam Reinhart, a winger most of the last two seasons, at center Saturday. Third-line center Johan Larsson moved up to the No. 1 spot. Fourth-line center Derek Grant has never scored an NHL goal.

The Sabres also recalled O'Reilly's linemate, Williamsville's Cole Schneider, the AHL's second-leading scorer with 17 points in 13 games. They returned rookie forwards Nick Baptiste and Evan Rodrigues to the Amerks on Friday.

"Cole continues to play well down there and (he's) just getting another opportunity," Bylsma said. "Kind of looking for a player to grab hold of the opportunity they're given."

Bylsma also used O'Reilly, who has 16 goals and 48 points in 134 NHL appearances, on the second power-play unit. O'Reilly had three goals and seven points with the Sabres last season.

"I think it's important you put players in situations and opportunities they can help," Bylsma said. "Cal is that guy. He's almost a point-a-game guy (in the AHL). He has poise and confidence with the puck. ... I think he can add to that second unit, being a poised puck guy, controlling the play, passing."

Naturally, O'Reilly's first NHL action last season since 2011-12 boosted his confidence.

"I proved to myself that I could still play here, contribute," he said. "That's good for anyone's confidence after being away from the NHL for a few years."

O'Reilly couldn't play with his younger brother Ryan, who missed his fourth straight game. "He hasn't missed many games in his career," Cal O'Reilly said. "He hasn't really gone through something like this. I think it's really tough on him."

xxx

Winger Zemgus Girgensons has struggled under Bylsma, who coached his 100th game with the Sabres on Saturday. Girgensons has only mustered one goal and four points in 18 contests this season. The four-year veteran scored seven goals and 18 points in 71 games in 2015-16. Remember, Girgensons, 22, thrived two seasons ago under former coach Ted Nolan, scoring 15 goals and 30 points in 61 games. Thanks to big support in his native Latvia, fans voted Girgensons into the NHL All-Star Game.

Bylsma wants better two-way play from him.

"On a scoring-chance ledger, he has not gotten enough," Bylsma said. "But he hasn't gotten enough because he's giving up too many on our ledger. He can't just try to score more by going out and looking for more offense. He's got to be able to play on both sides of the puck. He's got to play good defensively before he's going to think about how many scoring chances he needs to score goals."

Bylsma added: "He's still learning. We're all still learning. He's a determined, hardworking guy. ... He just needs to work smarter."

xxx

Brendan Guhle, the Sabres' top defense prospect, was traded from the Western Hockey League's Prince Albert Raiders to the Prince George Cougars on Saturday. Guhle, 19, impressed during NHL training camp this year before the Sabres sent him back to junior. The 2015 second-round pick has two goals and four points in 15 games this season.

Notes: Sabres defenseman Dmitry Kulikov missed his fifth straight game (back). ... Bylsma bumped defenseman Taylor Fedun, who made his Sabres debut Thursday, up to the top power-play unit against the Penguins.

5 Observations: Sabres beat Penguins 2-1 in SO

By Matt Bove

WKBW

November 19, 2016

BUFFALO, N.Y. (WKBW) - As legendary Oakland Raiders owner Al Davis would say "Just win, baby."

Saturday it wasn't pretty, but the Buffalo Sabres snapped their six game losing streak, knocking off the Pittsburgh Penguins 2-1 in a shootout. Sabres forward Cal O'Reilly scored the only goal in the shootout to seal the win.

Start building the Anders Nilsson statue

All kidding aside, Nilsson is now 2-1-2 on the season with a .951 save percentage and a 1.74 goals-against average. Wow. Saturday, he played his best game of the year -- stopping 46 shots and three more in the shootout. Buffalo, mainly because of Nilsson, was able to hold the defending Stanley Cup Champions to one goal, and that happened to come on the power play.

There aren't words to describe how solid Nilsson was tonight. He had the Sabres best goaltending performance of the year and it's the biggest reason why they were able to snap their six game losing streak. After the game Nilsson played off his performance saying "It just leaves me to do my job and stop the puck and today I was lucky enough to be able to do that."

Okay Anders, no need to be modest. Twitter basically exploded during the game with fans saying Nilsson deserves to be the starter. Following the win, Sabres coach Dan Bylsma was asked if Nilsson would get the start on Monday against Calgary. He responded that Nilsson had a great game, but that was all he would say.

I get the argument and absolutely think that Nilsson should be getting more games than he has -- but Lehner has been very good too. Neither goalie has gotten any help from the offense this year, so demoting Lehner seems a little drastic to me. That being said, If Nilsson keeps playing like this, ride the guy until he cools down.

Clutch Cal

In his first game with the Buffalo Sabres this season forward Cal O'Reilly made his presence felt, scoring the game-winner in the shootout, snapping Buffalo's woeful losing streak. "I have a move I kind of start with, I come down and it seems to work pretty well," O'Reilly said moments after the win. "I went with it tonight and I got lucky to beat him there."

Pretty well might be an understatement because O'Reilly is now 6 for 13 on shootouts in his career. O'Reilly finished with only 12:38 in ice time, but looked good during his limited minutes. In 15 games with the Rochester Americans O'Reilly has an impressive 18 points. He won't produce at that level in the NHL, but he's a reliable option for the Sabres, especially with all their injury concerns. I understand giving young guys an opportunity to play is important for long term development -- but right now a guy like O'Reilly might be exactly what the Sabres need.

Scoring woes continue

After the game, Bylsma said that this was the type of game that the Sabres needed to win. Yes, the Sabres needed to win a close game, especially one in a shootout -- but they still only have seven goals in regulation in their last seven games. Buffalo's only goal on the night came on a William Carrier deflection

(his first NHL goal) but the Sabres need to find ways to score more than one goal a game. To be fair, Penguins goalie Marc-Andre Fleury also had a fantastic night, making things a little harder on the Sabres.

Hey NHL, figure it out

With 30 seconds left in the second period Penguins defenseman Brian Dumoulin hit Marcus Foligno from behind into the boards on a scary play. Foligno remained down on the ice for about a minute until he finally got up. In my opinion, It was probably the dirtiest hit we've seen in a game involving the Sabres so far this year--yet Dumoulin was only penalized for two minutes.

When Foligno finally got up you could tell that Dumoulin was shaken up, but those are the kind of hits that can severely injure a player. A dangerous hit like that CANNOT be worth the same as a delay of game penalty. There's a good chance Dumoulin will hear from the league, but there is no way that should have been a minor penalty. Be better, NHL.

Here's what Foligno had to say about the hit after the game.

Fedun is fun

In Taylor Fedun's first two games with the Buffalo Sabres he has two assists. Not shabby. Fedun was on a tear in Rochester, scoring 12 points in 14 games -- but the change in competition hasn't seemed to bother the 28-year-old defender. Fedun has only played 14 career NHL games but has managed to record nine points during that stretch.

But it's not just the offense that has been impressive. Although it's a small sample size, Fedun has been solid in his own end -- which is certainly a good sign. With Bogosian likely out for at least a few more weeks, Fedun might be just what the Sabres were looking for.

Anders Nilsson lifts Sabres past Penguins

By Joe Yerdon

NHL.com

November 20, 2016

BUFFALO - Anders Nilsson made 46 saves, and Cal O'Reilly scored in the shootout to give the Buffalo Sabres a 2-1 win against the Pittsburgh Penguins at KeyBank Center on Saturday.

Nilsson stopped Sidney Crosby, Evgeni Malkin, and Kris Letang in the shootout to help the Sabres (6-8-4) end a six-game losing streak.

"We really needed two points today," Nilsson said. "We wanted to end this losing streak and we were fortunate to be able to do that tonight."

Starting in place of Robin Lehner, Nilsson made 18 saves in the first period.

"He had a couple of really big saves, but I thought he was at his best really being solid in net, real calm, and didn't seem to get flustered when the puck was lying in the blue paint," Sabres coach Dan Bylsma said. "You may need a performance like that to get a win against Pittsburgh and he gave it to us."

O'Reilly, who was recalled from the American Hockey League on Saturday, beat Penguins goalie Marc-Andre Fleury with a wrist shot to the high corner. He's 6-for-13 in NHL shootouts.

"Cal has experience against Marc-Andre in a shootout and Cal's good in a shootout," Bylsma said. "One of his go-to moves is that one. I don't know how he scored against Marc-Andre in 2010 (as a member of the Nashville Predators), but ... you want to put people in the right spots to have success. And regardless of whether Cal's a call-up or not, I think that was the right time for Cal, and he came through."

The Penguins (11-4-3) have lost two of the past three and three of five.

Captain Sidney Crosby made it 1-1 with a power-play goal 5:46 into the third period. Crosby received a pass from Chris Kunitz across the crease and shot the puck past Nilsson for his 12th goal of the season. He is tied for the NHL lead with Patrik Laine of the Winnipeg Jets.

It was the first goal Crosby scored against the Sabres since Feb. 5, 2014. He has 15 goals and 35 assists in 32 games against Buffalo.

"It's just one of those games where you leave feeling like you deserve better," Crosby said. "Ultimately we have to find a way to bury a few chances, but I thought we created a number of them, especially in the third."

William Carrier's first NHL goal, in his eighth game, gave the Sabres a 1-0 lead 8:16 into the first period.

"It's great for him, he deserved it," O'Reilly said. "He's playing great up here and I knew when he came up his work ethic and tenacity how he plays the game, they love him and he's doing great. It's great to see him get rewarded."

Goal of the game

Carrier deflected a shot from the point by defenseman Taylor Fedun past Fleury.

Save of the game

With 2:53 left in overtime, Nilsson made a left-pad save against Letang, who broke in after a pass from Crosby.

Highlight of the game

Crosby's goal was his 350th in the NHL.

Unsung moment of the game

Sabres defensemen Josh Gorges and Rasmus Ristolainen had a 4:00 shift and center Johan Larsson had a 3:16 shift that began with 8:00 left in the second period; the Penguins trapped the Sabres in their end for 2:13. Larsson broke his stick during the shift but the Sabres kept the Penguins away from the net and held them to one shot on goal.

They said it

"We're grabbing points here along the way, we're winning some games. We would have liked to come out with two points tonight. It didn't happen, but certainly I thought our team played the game the right way." -- Penguins coach Mike Sullivan

"That's really kind of how we want to play the game. We want to be comfortable in a tight game. We wanted to play a tight game and we wanted to be comfortable playing a tight game. We had the lead for a good portion of the game until they scored their power-play goal, but even after that, that's what we wanted the game to be, and I thought our guys did a great job of battling within that framework." -- Sabres coach Dan Bylsma

Need to know

The Sabres hadn't defeated the Penguins since April 23, 2013. ... Nilsson is 2-0-1 in his past three starts with a .976 save percentage. ... Linesman Greg Devorski was honored for working his 1,500th NHL game.

What's next

Penguins: Host the New York Rangers on Monday (7 p.m. ET; ROOT, MSG, NHL.TV)

Sabres: Host the Calgary Flames on Monday (7 p.m. ET; MSG-B, SNW, NHL.TV)

Game Day: Calgary Flames at Buffalo Sabres

By Kristen Odland

Calgary Herald

November 20, 2016

Calgary Flames (7-11-1*) at Buffalo Sabres (6-8-4)

*before Sunday's game at Detroit

5 p.m, Sportsnet West, Sportsnet 960 The Fan

Last five

Flames

@ Red Wings (N/A)

vs. Blackhawks L 3-2

vs. Coyotes W 2-1 (OT)

@ Wild W 1-0

vs. Rangers L 4-1

Sabres

vs. Penguins W 2-1 (SO)

vs. Lightning L 4-1

@ Blues L 4-1

@ Devils L 4-2

vs. Devils L 2-1 (OT)

Who To Watch — Flames

C Sean Monahan

It's been a rough ride for the star centreman who snapped a nine-game goal-less drought on Friday against the Blackhawks. No where near his usual production, the Flames still need more from No. 23. Especially in the wake of LW Johnny Gaudreau's injury. Perhaps he's found some chemistry with Sam Bennett and Troy Brouwer — but he needs to be more consistent. Heading into Sunday's game at Detroit, he had five goals and three assists in 19 games.

Who To Watch — Sabres

G Anders Nilsson

If the Sabres go back to him in net, that is. With 46 saves against the defending Stanley Cup champions on Saturday, he improved to 2-1-1 with a .951 save percentage and a 1.74 goals against average.

Heading into Sunday's action, Nilsson was third in the NHL among goalies with at least 120 minutes played, behind only Andrei Vasilevskiy (.953) and Devan Dubnyk (.952). Nilsson has been excellent in his last three games (2-0-1) with a .976 save percentage and 0.97 goals against average.

What's In The Tank — Flames

Half

What's In The Tank — Sabres

So empty they barely made it to the gas station.

How They Match Up

Forwards — Flames

The Sabres can't score.

Defence — Flames

Calgary has tightened things up considerably.

Goaltending — Flames

Chad Johnson, should he play, will be motivated against his former team.

Power Play — Sabres

Much better than Calgary's man advantage.

Penalty Kill — Sabres

Also have the edge here.

Intangibles — Sabres

Well-rested and feeling good following Saturday's 2-1 shootout win against Pittsburgh.

Overall — Flames

On paper, this should be an easy assignment.

Set-up notes

LW Evander Kane had some harsh words about the Sabres' struggles as of late. "It must be a joke floating around the league: You score two goals against the Buffalo Sabres and you're going to win the hockey game," Kane said following their 4-1 loss to Tampa Bay last Thursday. "We've got to have more guys that want to be a difference maker, want to have the puck on their stick. We've got to be harder to play against." ... Sound familiar Flames fans? ... Well, it worked. The Sabres snapped a six-game losing skid as G Anders Nilsson stopped 46 shots (plus three in the shootout) to capture a 2-1 shootout win over the visiting Pittsburgh Penguins ... Still, Buffalo hasn't scored more than twice in 10 straight games, dating back to a 3-1 win at Winnipeg on Oct. 30 ...Heading into Sunday's action, the Sabres were the lowest scoring team in the league with an average of 1.78 goals a night ... Calgary, of course, was 26th

in the NHL with 2.26 goals for per game ... the Sabres powerplay was humming along at 19.3 per cent efficiency, 11th in the NHL ... Their penalty kill was 23rd at 79.4 per cent ... Calgary is embarking on its longest road trip of the year — a six game trek through the Eastern Conference with dates at Detroit, Buffalo, Columbus, Boston, Philadelphia, and Brooklyn ... the Flames have only won once in 12 visits to Buffalo, a 2-1 overtime victory on Dec. 14. Their last victory before that? A 3-1 win on March 15, 1996.

Injuries

LW Johnny Gaudreau is in sick bay for the next six weeks with a broken finger and underwent surgery on Wednesday. Flames are still without LW Lance Bouma (shoulder) and RW Kris Versteeg (groin). Buffalo's sick bay is full with C Jack Eichel (high ankle sprain), C Ryan O'Reilly (oblique), LW Tyler Ennis (hernia surgery), D Zach Bogosian (knee), D Dmitry Kulikov (back), LW Nicolas Deslauriers (knee).

Preview - Flames @ Sabres

By Jason Johnson

Calgary Flames

November 21, 2016

FLAMES (8-11-1) VS. SABRES (6-8-4)

BROADCAST INFO: 5:00 PM MT; Sportsnet West (TV), Sportsnet 960 The FAN (radio)

SEASON SERIES: Tonight's match between the Calgary Flames and the Buffalo Sabres is the second and final game between the two teams. The Flames and Sabres clashed early in the season on Oct. 18 and Calgary skated to a 4-3 overtime win. Sean Monahan notched the overtime winner 2:26 into the extra session. The Flames would enter the third period on that night down 2-1 to the Sabres but rallied with a pair of goals to tie the game. Matthew Tkachuk tallied his first ever NHL goal to draw the Flames even and send the game to overtime.

FLAMES TEAM SCOPE: The Flames edged the Detroit Red Wings on Sunday night by a score of 3-2. Mikael Backlund scored the game-winning goal at 12:14 of the third period. Garnet Hathaway scored his first NHL goal and Dougie Hamilton recorded three assists in the contest. Chad Johnson got his fourth consecutive start for Calgary and turned aside 20 shots. The Flames have won three of their last four games. Their only loss in that span was a 3-2 setback to the Chicago Blackhawks, a game which Marian Hossa scored the game-winning goal with just 2:32 left in the third period. Tonight's match will be the Flames' second of a six-game Eastern road swing that will also take them to Columbus, Boston, Philadelphia, and New York.

SABRES TEAM SCOPE: Anders Nilsson made 46 saves, and Cal O'Reilly scored in the shootout to give the Sabres a 2-1 win over the Pittsburgh Penguins on Saturday. The victory snapped a six-game losing skid for Buffalo and gave the Sabres a 6-8-4 record and 16 points on the year. Buffalo currently sits last in the Atlantic Division and have scored the fewest goals in the NHL with 32, an average of just 1.78 goals per game. Kyle Okposo, who was inked to a seven-year contract by the Sabres on Jul. 1, 2016, leads the team in scoring with five goals and 10 points in 17 games. Robin Lehner has suited up for 13 games in goal for Buffalo and has a 4-7-2 record with a .919 save-percentage and a 2.53 GAA.

Fedun making the most of his opportunity with Sabres

By Jourdon LaBarber

Buffalo Sabres

November 20, 2016

When Taylor Fedun was evaluating his options as a free agent this summer, he looked at the Buffalo Sabres and saw a young team that he thought was moving in the right direction. He also saw a depth chart that, as a defenseman with a right-handed shot, showed some opportunity for him to contribute at the NHL level.

Fedun signed with the Sabres and entered his fifth professional season with 12 NHL games under his belt compared to 263 games in the AHL, where he never scored less than 27 points in a single campaign. A foot injury kept him from participating in camp with the Sabres, so he began the season in Rochester without having had the chance to show his new organization what he was capable of.

"It's difficult at times," Fedun said of the back-and-forth nature of his career thus far, "but it just makes it that much more exciting and that much sweeter when it finally does happen. When you're putting in the time down there and when you do get that opportunity it makes it that much more important to make the most of it."

Fedun got his chance on Thursday, when he earned his first recall of the season. The door was opened when Zach Bogosian sustained a knee injury, followed by the reassignment of rookie defenseman Casey Nelson to get more seasoning in Rochester.

In two games so far for Buffalo, Fedun has made the most of his opportunity. He earned an assist on Cody Franson's power-play goal against Tampa Bay on Thursday, but it was his ability to move the puck up the ice that earned him a promotion to the top power-play unit for the Sabres' game against Pittsburgh on Saturday. He responded with another assist in that game.

"I think the message that I received was just to keep moving the puck efficiently and nice and flat for the skilled guys that we have out there," he said. "I think being in that position on the power play, that's one of the most important things is getting it to those guys in a good spot where they can work their magic."

The Sabres have been looking to get their defensemen more involved offensively this season, and Fedun has shown a knack for doing that in more ways than just moving the puck up the ice. He doesn't have a hard shot, but his ability to take smart shots that get through to the net led to William Carrier's redirect goal and later to a Sam Reinhart tip-in chance on the power play on Saturday.

"We felt pretty highly of him this summer in signing him, just unfortunately with his injury he didn't get an opportunity to do anything in camp and he was at least a month behind everybody else," Sabres coach Dan Bylsma said.

"I'm surprised and encouraged by the poise he displays with the puck. It's confidence with the puck, a couple plays in the neutral zone, the passes that he made under pressure and distributing the puck up the ice to our forwards. He shows quite a bit of poise."

Fedun also showed an ability to join the rush, setting up a 2-on-1 opportunity between him and Cal O'Reilly in the second period.

"I think there is a number of times where our defenders are able to jump into holes and fill in on the rush but I think a lot of that comes from playing effectively in the D-zone and being able to jump into those holes by beating forwards up the ice," he said.

Bogosian's timeframe to recover from his injury was labeled as "weeks" on Nov. 3, and he has yet to skate in the meantime. With that in mind, it's fair to say that Fedun will have more chances to make a positive impact on the Sabres lineup. All he needs to do is continue to make the most of them.

O'Reilly skates

The Sabres only had a handful of players take an optional skate on Sunday, but Ryan O'Reilly among the few who did take the ice. O'Reilly has missed five games with an oblique injury, and his skate on Sunday marked his first time on the ice with teammates other than Jack Eichel, who is rehabbing a high-ankles sprain.

Bylsma said that O'Reilly remains day-to-day.

Up next

The Sabres continue their four-game homestand against the Calgary Flames at KeyBank Center on Monday night. Coverage begins at 6:30 p.m. with the TOPS Pregame Show on MSG-B, or you can listen live on WGR 550. The puck drops between the Sabres and Flames at 7 p.m.

O'Reilly's shootout goal leads to win over Pens

By Jourdon LaBarber

Buffalo Sabres

November 19, 2016

Cal O'Reilly admitted that even he was a bit surprised when Dan Bylsma called on him to take the third attempt for the Buffalo Sabres in the shootout against Pittsburgh on Saturday night. He had been playing in Rochester 24 hours earlier, and now found himself skating to center ice with a desperately needed win - against the reigning Stanley Cup Champions, no less - resting on his shoulders.

Luckily for the Sabres, Bylsma had done his homework. O'Reilly had only played in 133 NHL games entering the night, yet he came in with a 5-for-12 mark in shootouts. Of those five goals, the one that came on Valentine's Day in 2010, when O'Reilly was a member of the Nashville Predators, was the one that earned him the nod. That one came against Marc-Andre Fleury, the Penguins goalie who had been brilliant in stopping the Sabres all night.

O'Reilly was surprised, but he wasn't nervous. He skated in from the right toward Fleury and executed his plan, which was to get Fleury to lower his glove and beat him with a high shot. From there it was up to Anders Nilsson, who stopped Kris Letang to complete his own perfect shootout and officially snap the Sabres' six-game winless streak with a 2-1 victory.

"Cal has experience against Marc-Andre in a shootout and Cal's good in a shootout," Bylsma said afterward. "That's one of his go-to moves ... I don't know how he scored against Marc-Andre in 2010, but I've seen him use that one in our shootouts. Again, you want to put people in the right spot to have success and regardless of whether Cal was a call-up or not, I think that was the right time for Cal."

Of O'Reilly's six shootout goals, three have now been game deciders.

"It's probably good I didn't have to think about it," O'Reilly admitted.

In order for O'Reilly to even have had the chance to win the shootout, the Sabres needed the type of performance they got from Nilsson. He made a season-high 46 saves through regulation and overtime, with the lone goal he did allow came from Sidney Crosby on a power play in the second period. Then, he stared down Crosby, Evgeni Malkin and Letang in the shootout and stopped them all.

Nilsson preached patience in reading the play when he was asked about stopping Crosby on Saturday morning, and he did so once again after the game was over.

"They do have some very skilled guys and some very good players in the lineup," he said. "I just wait, try to play [the same] as every shootout. I try to be as patient as possible, try to let them make the first move and then try to make the save. Today I got lucky and was able to do that."

With the win, Nilsson improved to 2-1-2 with a 1.74 goals-against average and a .951 save percentage in five starts for the Sabres this season. From the moment he stepped into camp, the goalie the Sabres acquired from St. Louis in exchange for a fifth-round pick this summer has been everything they could have asked for and more, and yet he pushed the credit to his teammates following his victory.

"I feel pretty confident out there overall," Nilsson said. "But it's a team game and when you have good rebound control, it's usually because your guys in front are doing a good job and keeping a good outside lane and giving me a clear view of the shots."

Even having been with the team for less than a day, O'Reilly said he could sense how desperate the Sabres were for a win. They'd struggled to score while his younger brother Ryan has been shelved with an oblique injury and were struggling to limit their opponents' scoring chances in recent losses.

Bylsma and his players admitted they knew they'd need a tight, low-scoring game in order to win, and that's what they got. The game swung like a pendulum, beginning when William Carrier scored to give the Sabres a 1-0 lead in the first period.

After that, there were times when the Penguins dominated possession in the offensive zone, such as the extended shift in the defensive zone that led to Rasmus Ristolainen and Josh Gorges being caught on the ice for four-straight minutes. There were also times when the Sabres controlled the play, like their six-shot effort in overtime.

"It doesn't really matter at this point in time who it's against but a win we desperately needed against one of the better teams if not the best team in the League," Bylsma said. "We knew it was gonna battle, we knew we wanted it to be a tight game, we wanted it to be a 1-0 game and that's exactly what we got. Our guys battled out a tough point and then we finally figured out a shootout."

"We tried to make sure we bend, but not break," O'Reilly said. "[Nilsson] made some unbelievable saves to keep us in it and it worked out tonight."

Not only was the win their first in seven games, it was their first against the Penguins since April 23, 2013. They'll have a chance to build on it too, with two more games remaining on their current homestand.

"We did need two points today, we wanted to end this losing streak," Nilsson said. "It's fortunate that we were able to do that tonight."

Carrier nets his first

When an attempted pass rimmed around the boards past Matt Cullen, Taylor Fedun immediately one-timed a shot from the blue line. Carrier, cutting through the slot, was able to redirect the puck past Fleury to give Buffalo a 1-0 lead 8:16 into the contest.

"It's pretty nice," Carrier said. "I mean I've had a few chances in the games before, I had four or five shots so it was just nice to get that first in."

Up next

The Sabres continue their four-game homestand on Monday night when they welcome the Calgary Flames into KeyBank Center. The Flames earned an overtime win in the first matchup between the two teams in Calgary on Oct. 18.

Coverage on Monday begins at 6:30 p.m. with the TOPS Pregame Show on MSG, or you can listen live on WGR 550. The puck drops between the Sabres and Flames at 7 p.m.