



# **Buffalo Sabres**

## **Daily Press Clips**

*January 16, 2017*

## **Lehner says Sabres need to do their job**

By John Vogl

The Buffalo News

January 15, 2017

The way Robin Lehner sees it, the Sabres aren't holding up their end of the bargain as professional athletes.

"When you lose games out of not doing our job – it's what we get paid for, you know? – it's time to accept that," the goaltender said Sunday. "This is our job, and we've got to buy into what we're supposed to do and do it."

The Sabres' inconsistency shows they haven't bought into anything. No one, including Buffalo's players, knows what the team will look like Monday afternoon when Dallas visits KeyBank Center.

"The frustrating part is there's so many positive things in our games, but then we kind of shoot ourselves in the foot," Lehner said. "We have a couple good games, then we get away from it. Taking a step forward and two steps back, we've got to find an answer."

The Sabres seem to be nearing a breaking point. There are players who are sick of seeing the same mistakes. There are players who continue to make them.

"It's not going to come from one guy," Lehner said. "It's not going to come from 10 guys. Every single guy has got to get on the same page. We've got to totally buy into the system and do things.

"It's not 10-game stretches. It's not 20 games. It's do it every game, 82 games a season."

The last time the Sabres were home, they exited on a triumphant run. This time, they'll enter in a slump. That's how it's been. Since Dec. 6, they've gone 3-1, 1-4-2, 3-0-1 and 0-2.

That kind of inconsistency can give a hockey team an early spring tee time.

"Obviously, we've got to find a way to string together eight out of 10, nine out of 10, 10 out of 10," right wing Kyle Okposo said. "It's got to come from the guys in this room. It'd be nice if it came sooner rather than later because we're halfway through the year here and now we're running out of real estate."

Lehner watched the last three games from his couch because of the flu. It gave him further insight into the team's woes.

The goalie has been preaching for team-wide consistency since the opening games of the season. He says the Sabres can get there with in-game consistency.

"Controlling momentum is the biggest thing for me sitting and watching on the couch," Lehner said. "It feels like when we score goals, we score in bunches. When they start scoring on us, we're scrambling.

"Consistency is the answer. Consistently doing the small things, consistently doing the simple plays because that opens things up.

"A lot of the good teams in this league play the same way in and out, all the time. It's play a pretty boring game for 75, 80 percent of the game, and then the 20 percent just comes with the process when teams start chasing. You go up a couple of goals and the other team starts chasing. They give you more.

"We've got to try to get to that point. Right now we're forcing a little bit, then we open up and then we're chasing. That's been the picture."

The way the Sabres have played has made it tough for anyone to gauge where they're at in the rebuild. Do they have enough talent? Do the players just need more focus and consistency? What role does coaching play?

No one knows. Maybe someday they'll figure it out.

"It's easier for the team to get better and see where pieces are missing and what we need to do to go forward if we do what we're supposed to," Lehner said. "Right now some games when it goes wrong, everyone is kind of all over the place and it's kind of hard to pinpoint."

It's not a fun conversation to have midway through a season.

"It comes with losing," Lehner said. "Winning teams don't have these conversations. If we don't want to have these conversations, we just better start putting up points."

## **Sabres Notebook: Ennis with O'Reilly; back-to-backs**

By John Vogl

The Buffalo News

January 15, 2017

After more than two months away from the Sabres, Tyler Ennis appears ready to return to the lineup. Dan Bylsma just needs to decide where to put him.

Buffalo's coach contemplated putting Ennis alongside center Jack Eichel for Monday's matinee against Dallas. Ennis once had a preseason hat trick as Eichel's winger. But based on Sunday's practice, Ennis will skate as the left winger for center Ryan O'Reilly and right wing Kyle Okposo.

"Being alongside them, using his speed and his playmaking ability could be a nice fit," Bylsma said in KeyBank Center. "Jack is one of the leaders in the league at having the puck on his stick. Tyler is also a guy who likes to have the puck on his stick. If that was the case, then they'd have to have their sticks really close together.

"Ryan O'Reilly and Kyle are more of a give-and-go type player and get open away from the puck, so Tyler would have the puck more on his stick for them to be able to do that."

Ennis is just happy having a stick in his hand again. He hasn't played since Nov. 7, missing 30 games because of sports hernia/groin surgery.

"I've got to treat it like a clean slate and go out there and do my thing," Ennis said. "I've got to come in, use my speed and provide the team with that extra burst, energy, jump."

Ennis' return will boost the Sabres' offensive depth. The lines offer the potential for balanced scoring. In addition to Ennis-O'Reilly-Okposo, Buffalo practiced with Eichel in the middle of left wing Marcus Foligno and right wing Sam Reinhart, and Zemgus Girgensons between Evander Kane and Brian Gionta.

The fourth line featured Nicolas Deslauriers centering for Matt Moulson and William Carrier, but it's likely the Sabres will recall a center from Rochester. Cal O'Reilly, Jean Dupuy and Dan Catenacci are the options. The big addition will be Ennis.

"He's a skilled player," Foligno said. "He brings puck possession to our game. When he's in the lineup, he's going to boost making creative plays in tight spaces. He lets you hold onto the puck a little bit longer, make an extra play that might open up some more room.

"He's another piece in the lineup that we could use right now with the speed and skill that he brings. We hope that he adds a spark to the lineup, for sure."

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Defensemen Josh Gorges (hip) and Dmitry Kulikov (back) again missed practice. Gorges has sat out four straight games and will visit a doctor Monday or Tuesday for an update.

Kulikov hasn't been seen since Dec. 27.

"He is skating on his own," Bylsma said. "He had to go through about a five-day segment where he's skating on his own, and we'll see how he keeps going."

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Buffalo's top defense pair of Rasmus Ristolainen and Jake McCabe combined for a minus-5 showing during the past two games. Ristolainen played a season-low 20:54 during Friday's loss in Carolina.

"We're counting on those two guys to play big minutes and against the best players," Bylsma said. "They have to step up in their defensive role and do that. In the tough games we had against Tampa Bay and Carolina, they were too often on the receiving end."

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The Sabres will play back-to-back games twice this week. After hosting the Stars, they'll visit the Toronto Maple Leafs on Tuesday. Buffalo hosts Detroit on Friday, then visits Montreal on Saturday.

"The best recipe is getting up early, having a big lead and being able to play everybody in the first game, spread the minutes out and be more rested for the second game," Bylsma said.

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Lindy Ruff and the Stars are 2-4-1 in their last seven games, sliding to 18-18-8 overall.

"They're one of the fastest teams through the neutral zone in coming at you with speed and the rush attack," Bylsma said. "That's where they're extremely dangerous as a team."

## **Sabres' Lehner feeling much better**

By Paul Hamilton

WGR 550

January 15, 2017

Buffalo, NY (WGR 550) -- Robin Lehner returned to practice on Sunday after missing three games with the flu. Lehner was weakened by his illness, but said he's back to normal now, "I feel good, there was a flu going around and I didn't want to bring it into the room, so I stayed home."

"I'm back, it's all good, you have a couple of good days off there, you get your fluids back."

Lehner skated with the coaches on Saturday while the rest of the team had a day off.

Doing postgame interviews in Carolina, Brian Gionta maybe was as frustrated as I've ever seen him. He lamented on how the team keeps making the same mistakes over and over again. While he was sick Lehner got a chance to sit back and see how the team plays. He said, "When you sit down on the couch and turn on the TV, you get a prospective on things. It's a mix of a few things, it's the timing of things, it's the turning points in games, but I think controlling momentum is the biggest thing for me sitting watching on the couch."

"If we score a goal maybe we need to play a little simple, not take any risks for a little bit and it's the same when we get scored on, maybe we just chip it in a little bit and play real simple because it feels like when we score goals, we score in bunches, but when they start scoring on us, we're scrambling." Lehner added, "We have a couple of good games and then we get away from it. It's one step forward and two steps back. It's not going to come from one guy, it's not going to come from 10 guys, every single guy has got to get on the same page and we've got to totally buy-in to the system."

As Lehner spoke you could just see the frustration growing on his pained face. He said, "When you lose games out of not doing our job, that's what we get paid for, so it's time to accept that and it comes through me and all through the whole lineup. Some games when it goes wrong, we're all over the place."

"It comes with losing, if we're winning you guys are not going to talk about it, winning teams don't have these conversations and if we don't want to have these conversations, we'd just better start putting up points."

Dan Bylsma wouldn't comment on if Tyler Ennis would play Monday against Dallas, but many signs point to it happening. Ennis played the wing with Ryan O'Reilly and Kyle Okposo in Sunday's practice.

Bylsma said Dmitry Kulikov is skating on his own while Josh Gorges has not started skating yet.

Other lines:

Foligno Eichel Reinhart  
Kane Girgensons Gionta  
Carrier Deslauriers Moulson

Bylsma had Deslauriers at center for Sunday's practice, but he didn't rule out bringing up a center before Monday afternoon's game.

Brian Koziol will begin our coverage at 10:00 on Monday as he hosts The Instigators. Pregame starts at noon and he'll be joined by Dan Bylsma, Tyler Ennis and Robin Lehner.

## **Sabres know they must develop consistency**

By Bill Hoppe  
Olean Times Herald  
January 15, 2017

BUFFALO – When goalie Robin Lehner spent a few days at home recovering from the flu last week, the young veteran developed a different perspective on the Sabres' struggles watching two road losses from his couch.

"Playing the game or being on the bench, it's one thing," Lehner said Sunday inside KeyBank Center. "But when you sit down on the couch and you turn on the TV, you kind of get a little perspective on things. I think it's a little mix of a few things. It's the timing of things. It's the turning points in games."

And, of course, it's the consistency. The Sabres have showcased little this season entering this afternoon's tilt against Lindy Ruff's Dallas Stars.

Within games, the Sabres often cobble together only a strong period or two. Their longest winning streak this season has lasted just three contests.

After a 3-0-1 run vaulted the Sabres to within five points of a playoff spot last week, Thursday's 4-2 loss in Tampa Bay and Friday's 5-2 defeat in Carolina kicked them back down to last place.

"Consistency is the answer – consistently doing the small things, consistently doing the simple plays because that opens things up," Lehner said. "You can open your game up and start playing ... and be creative, but you do it when they let you. A lot of the good teams in this league play the same way, in and out, all the time."

Lehner said those teams play "pretty boring" for about 80 percent of the game.

"Then (there's) the 20 percent that comes with the process when teams start chasing or you go up a couple goals," he said. "The other team starts chasing and they give you more. We've got to try to get to that point. Right now, we're forcing (it) a little bit and then we open up."

The gap between last place and third place in the Atlantic Division, the final playoff spot, has opened up a bit. Right now, the Sabres trail upstart Toronto by seven points.

Realistically, the Sabres must rattle off a long winning streak if they want to end their six-year postseason drought.

"We got to find a way to string together eight out of 10 (games), nine out of 10, 10 out of 10," Sabres winger Kyle Okposo said.

He added: "We're running out of real estate. We got to try to find that confidence in our game. I think we're doing a lot of good things."

While there was no official word Sunday, winger Tyler Ennis' 70-day wait to play following groin surgery could be over.

"We'll see about that," coach Dan Bylsma said when asked if the Sabres' longest-tenured player could return today.

But strong signs point to Ennis, 27, playing his first game since Nov. 7. Ennis' full practice Sunday included regular work beside Okposo and top center Ryan O'Reilly and some action on the second power-play unit.

"When I come back, I've got to insert myself with a lot of energy and give this team a boost that we need to make the playoffs," said Ennis, who suffered a season-ending concussion Dec. 30, 2015.

Today would be Ennis' 36th appearance since the start of 2015-16. Whenever he returns, he won't be 100 percent for two or three weeks, Bylsma said.

Still, Ennis, a three-time 20-goal scorer, offers things the Sabres sorely need: offense and speed.

"I've just got to be a confident player," said Ennis, who has one goal this season and has missed 30 games. "I think I'm at my best when I have the puck and I'm making plays and I'm confident in myself. I might have to do certain things, but I can make a mistake or two when I'm doing that but I'm also making more good plays and being creative and being confident."

With Ennis on a top line Sunday, Jack Eichel centered Marcus Foligno and Sam Reinhart, who has recently been playing center. Zemgus Girgensons, meanwhile, pivoted Evander Kane and Brian Gionta on the third line.

"There is more balance on there," Bylsma said. "We've seen Tyler play a little bit with Jack and a little bit with Ryan, so we think the combination of Ryan and Kyle together and Tyler being along side them using his speed, his ability, his playmaking ability could be a nice fit."

The fourth line consisted of wingers William Carrier, Nick Deslauriers and Matt Moulson. Bylsma said Deslauriers, a former defenseman, could see some time at center "perhaps for a couple shifts." Eichel and O'Reilly could also move back there.

The Sabres could also recall a center, most likely Cal O'Reilly.

**Notes:** Lehner practiced Sunday after the flu sidelined him three games. The Swede also skated the last two days without his teammates. ... Bylsma said defenseman Dmitry Kulikov (back) has been skating on his own and "hopefully progressing." Meanwhile, Bylsma said defenseman Josh Gorges (hip) should see a doctor in the next day or two. ... Ruff's Stars are 2-4-1 in their last seven games and 18-18-8 overall. Ruff coached the Sabres from 1997 until 2013.

## **Sabres far from fine in Carolina wipeout**

By Mike Harrington

The Buffalo News

January 13, 2017

RALEIGH, N.C. -- A strong first period gave way to a complete disaster in the first 10 minutes of the second. For the Buffalo Sabres, it was a brief throwback to the tank days of a couple years ago, where they spent many nights doing their Washington Generals impression while opponents looked like the Globetrotters.

The damage tab Friday was three goals by the speedy Carolina Hurricanes in the first 6:51 of the middle period, including two from Jeff Skinner in a span of 55 seconds. That stretch proved to be the catalyst for a 5-2 Carolina win that left the Sabres pointless on their two-game Southern swing.

Buffalo led, 1-0, after 20 minutes on William Carrier's goal but Skinner burned Anders Nilsson at 1:48 of the second and the game instantly changed for good.

"They get a goal and you just see us drop. We got affected by it," said center Ryan O'Reilly. "They come right back down and they score again. From there it was trying to climb back. We couldn't do it. We didn't have the collective everyone-together kind of thing. When things aren't going the right way, we tend to get a little selfish and you can see it breaks us down."

"Same stuff. Same stuff that's been happening," muttered captain Brian Gionta. "Turnovers. Not playing with enough urgency. It's the same thing."

The Hurricanes came flying out of the locker room in the second period and the Sabres, in their second night of a back-to-back set, simply didn't have another gear to match them.

The root of the Carolina blitz came on Skinner's goal, a quick snapshot from the left circle that blew through Nilsson's glove.

"I thought I saved it but it went off my glove and ended up in the net," Nilsson said. "After that, they came pretty hard and pretty fast and got some momentum from the first goal. It's bad that I changed the game a little bit."

Skinner's second goal came on a 100-foot stretch pass from defenseman Justin Faulk, who saw the Sabres making a terrible change. Faulk got the puck to Skinner, who outpaced Matt Moulson, Zach Bogosian and Cody Franson to the net. He beat Nilsson off the far post to put Carolina up for keeps.

"It's all details in our game. Little things that add up to a lot," Gionta said. "Our details have been terrible."

Especially in the second period, with the long change for your defense, you have to be more detail-oriented. The Sabres have struggled with that point all season. Sometimes players lollygag off the ice and don't give newcomers a chance to get in the play. Sometimes, too many leave at once and opponents get far too much room to roam.

"You've got to be more intelligent," O'Reilly said. "You want to make sure you have two fresh guys on but have three staying and holding it down so they can't go quick-up and expose us."

"Some of it is puck management, where we put the puck and who's changing," said coach Dan Bylsma. "The defensemen are the farthest people from the bench and the forwards have to realize getting the puck deep and playing the puck in the offensive zone is the chance for them to get off the ice and get fresh guys out. We weren't good at doing that in the second period."

Just a week ago, the Sabres went toe to toe on the road with the New York Rangers and Chicago Blackhawks. They were majorly disappointed to only get three of four points after blowing a late lead in Chicago and losing in overtime.

By contrast, this trip was a complete wipeout. And the irony of frittering away the first goal and getting good starts both nights -- a seasonlong talking point -- was not lost on Bylsma.

"I thought that on both nights," Bylsma said, referencing Thursday's 4-2 loss at Tampa Bay. "Both on the road, getting the first goal, having good starts. Different scenarios but then both getting erased."

"We did do some good things but we have to stick with them," O'Reilly said. "We can't deviate like we did tonight. You're going to make mistakes over the course of a game but you can't take as much time off as we did during that one. There's no excuse."

## **Sabres Notebook: Numbers games from the first half**

By Mike Harrington

The Buffalo News

January 13, 2017

RALEIGH, N.C. -- The second half of the season opened for the Buffalo Sabres Friday night in PNC Arena. The Sabres took a 16-16-9 record into their game against the Carolina Hurricanes, good for 41 points in 41 games.

Last year, the Sabres were just 15-22-4 for 34 points at the halfway mark but improved in the second half by going 20-14-7 to finish with 81 points. Prior to Friday's game, coach Dan Bylsma said he's hoping this team can put on a similar push.

"We just need to learn to get consistency in our game, in how we play and our emotions," Bylsma said. "We've ridden some highs of winning games and the lows of disappointment not winning key games. We feel that (potential for a second-half push). We feel that coming from the last 17 games or so. That's what we have to keep focusing on: Getting consistency in our game. Keep driving. Keep racking up points, getting wins and doing it at a playoff-type pace."

Three players entered the game sharing the team scoring lead at 27 points. Rasmus Ristolainen (3-24), Sam Reinhart (9-18) and Kyle Okposo (12-15) all reached that number. Okposo had the team lead in goals, one ahead of Evander Kane.

Here's a by-the-numbers look at Buffalo's first half:

Home: 9-8-3. Road: 7-8-6

Vs. East: 9-13-7. Vs. West: 7-3-2

Vs. Atlantic: 4-8-3. Vs. Metropolitan: 5-5-4

Vs. Central: 3-2-1. Vs. Pacific: 4-1-1

By month: October 3-3-2, November 5-6-3, December 5-6-3, January 3-1-1.

Power play: 21.6 percent (10th in league)

Penalty kill: 73.4 percent (30th in league)

One-goal games: 9-3-9.

Games decided by two or more goals: 7-13

Leading/Trailing after one period: 8-1-3/3-10-2

Leading/Trailing after two periods: 10-0-4/4-14-2.

Overtime: 2-4. Shootouts: 1-5.

Record in 10-game segments: 4-4-2, 3-4-3, 5-3-2, 4-4-2. Thursday's loss to Tampa in game 41 opened the season's fifth 10-game set.

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The Hurricanes entered the game last in the NHL in attendance, averaging just 11,449 tickets sold per game. In-house counts have often been quite a bit lower than that. Next on the list are the New York Islanders, whose average in Barclays Center is 12,819. Arizona (12,954) is the only other club that entered Friday even under 14,000.

"Last time here we had our own fair share of fans here in the building," Bylsma said, recalling Buffalo's shootout loss on Dec. 17. "And it was a little bit of a back and forth between the fans when we came back to tie it late in the game and played overtime."

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---The Sabres had no extras on hand for the two-game road trip. Robin Lehner (flu), Josh Gorges (hip), Tyler Ennis (hernia) and Dmitry Kulikov (back) all stayed home.

---Sabres defenseman Zach Bogosian played in his 500th career game Friday, the last 107 coming with the Sabres after he was acquired in the blockbuster trade with Winnipeg in Feb., 2015. His blueline partner, Cody Franson, played in his 498th game.

---Carolina goaltender Cam Ward played his 600th regular-season game, all with the Canes. He entered Friday with 285 wins, 15 shy of becoming the 32nd player in NHL history to win 300.

## **Quick Hits: Hurricanes 5, Sabres 2**

By Mike Harrington

The Buffalo News

January 13, 2017

RALEIGH, N.C. -- Jeff Skinner and Brock McGinn scored two goals apiece as the Carolina Hurricanes exploded for all of their offense in the final 40 minutes to drub the Buffalo Sabres, 5-2, Friday night in PNC Arena.

The loss was the Sabres' second in two nights on their brief road trip and left them 0-2-1 against the Hurricanes this season. Carolina improved to 13-1-1 in its last 15 home games and is 14-4-1 here for the season.

**Quick jump:** The Sabres scored first for the third straight game as William Carrier had an easy tap-in at 4:24 of the first period for his third goal of the season. It came after Ryan O'Reilly stripped Jacob Slavin to the left of the net.

**First-goal blues:** Until this trip, the Sabres had lost in regulation just twice in 19 games this year when scoring first. Then it happened twice in two nights, dropping Buffalo to 11-4-6 when taking the 1-0 lead.

**Double trouble:** Skinner got Carolina even at 1:48 of the second period with a quick snapshot from the left circle that blew through Anders Nilsson's glove. He made it 2-1 at 2:43 by beating Nilsson from the right circle on a shot just inside the post. The Canes took advantage of a slow line change, as Justin Faulk's long stretch pass found Skinner at the Buffalo blue line ahead of Zach Bogosian and Matt Moulson.

**Speed demons:** The Canes' speed continually gave the Sabres trouble in the first half of the second period, with McGinn's goal at 6:51 making it 3-1 and adding to the evidence. Elias Lindholm beat Rasmus Ristolainen along the wall and the puck got to the front of the net, where McGinn backhanded it home.

**Creeping closer:** Brian Gionta got a gift-shorthanded goal at 11:49 of the second, stealing a lazy clear from Canes goalie Cam Ward and coming out from behind the net to stuff the puck home. It was the first short-handed goal -- for or against -- the Sabres have been involved with this season.

**Pulling away:** The Canes pushed the lead to 4-2 as Victor Rask put home a rebound off the backboards at 4:15 of the third period. McGinn's second came at 7:58 after Jordan Staal eluded Cody Franson while Zach Bogosian and Sam Reinhart dropped coverage in front.

**Dominating in the circle:** The Canes were a stunning 16-1 on faceoffs in the first period, with Jack Eichel and Zemgus Girgensons both going 0-4 and Ryan O'Reilly 1-7. The final count was 30-21 in favor of Carolina.

**Up the leader board:** Skinner's first goal was his 300th NHL point and his second goal gave him 17 this season and 160 for the Canes, fifth all-time since the franchise relocated from Hartford in 1997.

**Up next:** The Sabres will take Saturday off and return to practice on Sunday to get ready for another ultra-busy week. They host Dallas in a Martin Luther King Day matinee Monday at 1, play Tuesday night at Toronto, host Detroit Friday night and travel to Montreal for a Jan. 21 game as part of a back-to-back.

## **Skinner keeps Canes rolling at home with win over Sabres**

The Associated Press

January 13, 2017

RALEIGH, N.C. (AP) — Giving Jeff Skinner too much open ice can be dangerous, and the Carolina Hurricanes left wing showed the Buffalo Sabres why on Friday night.

Skinner had two quick goals in transition early in the second period and later added an assist, lifting the Hurricanes to a 5-2 win.

Skinner's eighth multipoint game of the season, in which Brock McGinn also scored twice, moved Carolina to within three points of the Philadelphia Flyers for the eighth and last playoff spot in the Eastern Conference with two games in hand.

Carolina swept its three-game series against Buffalo and won its third straight game overall. The Hurricanes are 14-4-1 at home, including 13-1-1 in the last 15 games in Raleigh.

Skinner's first goal gave him his 300th NHL point.

Carolina's Cam Ward stopped 36 shots while playing in his 600th NHL game, all with the Hurricanes.

Buffalo's Anders Nilsson had 33 saves.

Victor Rask scored Carolina's other goal while Jordan Staal added two assists for the Hurricanes.

"We got some good momentum swings for sure, and then we gave it a little bit back at times," said Hurricanes coach Bill Peters, who was celebrating his 52nd birthday. "(Skinner) got us going for sure. That's a good way to get your 300th and then follow it right up. He did a lot of good things."

William Carrier and Brian Gionta scored for Buffalo.

Buffalo took advantage of a mistake to claim the lead 4:24 into the game. Carolina defenseman Jacob Slavin, attempting to clear from the right corner, instead sent the puck straight to the Sabres' Ryan O'Reilly. He set up Carrier for a tip-in from the left side of the net.

"We're playing a quick team and a fast team," Buffalo coach Dan Bylsma said. "Especially in the second period, playing with the puck and managing the puck is such a huge factor. They use it to their advantage and showed their speed, showed their puck movement."

Skinner put the Hurricanes ahead with two goals in 55 seconds. At 1:48 of the second, he beat Nilsson glove side on a rush, and then at 2:43, he beat Nilsson stick side from the right circle.

"It's a good feeling to contribute," said Skinner, who has 17 goals and 18 assists this season. "We were a little sloppy in the first period and picked it up in the second. It's good to generate some momentum."

McGinn then made it 3-1 at 6:51, taking a pass from Elias Lindholm in the low slot and lifting it over Nilsson to the upper left corner of the net.

Gionta halved the lead on a short-handed rush at 11:49, picking up the loose puck on a ricochet from behind the goal and taking advantage when Ward lost his stick.

Rask gave the Hurricanes some breathing room at 4:15 of the third, following Noah Hanifin's shot that caromed off the end boards to beat Nilsson in traffic. Skinner had the secondary assist.

McGinn sealed it at 7:58, scoring from the low slot on Staal's pass from behind the net.

NOTES: Buffalo D Zach Bogosian played in his 500th game. ... Ward is fifth among active goalies in games played. ... Buffalo D Josh Gorges (hip) missed his second straight game while G Robin Lehner (illness) was out for his third. ... RW Ty Rattie, D Klas Dahlbeck and D Ryan Murphy were healthy scratches for Carolina. ... Staal extended his points streak to three games with his assist on Skinner's first goal.

UP NEXT

Sabres: Host Dallas on Monday.

Hurricanes: Host the New York Islanders on Saturday in the finale of their four-game homestand.

## **Sabres Fall to Canes 5-2**

WGR 550

January 13, 2017

Jeff Skinner and Brock McGinn each scored twice on Friday in Carolina's 5-2 win over the Sabres.

### **Scoring**

- The Sabres got on the board first with William Carrier's 3rd. Ryan O'Reilly forced a turnover down low and fed Carrier, who tapped the puck by Cam Ward for the 1-0 lead.
- Skinner scored a pair of 2nd-period goals in less than a minute, giving Carolina the quick 2-1 lead.
- McGinn followed Skinner's outburst with his 3rd of the season, scooping a rebound over Nilsson.
- Buffalo got back to within a goal on Brian Gionta's shorthanded effort. The Sabres captain beat Cam Ward to the puck behind the net and snuck it in for his 9th.
- The Hurricanes put it away in the final period on goals by Victor Rask and McGinn.

### **Game Notes**

- O'Reilly's assist marked his 7th point in 5 games, all since returning from an appendectomy.

### **1st Period**

#### **Goals**

4:24 - BUF - William Carrier (3) (Ryan O'Reilly)

#### **Penalties**

7:23 - CAR - Jay McClement (2 min., interference)

10:19 - BUF - Rasmus Ristolainen (2 min., holding)

15:02 - BUF - Taylor Fedun (2 min., tripping)

### **2nd Period**

#### **Goals**

1:48 - CAR - Jeff Skinner (16) (Jordan Staal, Derek Ryan)

2:43 - CAR - Jeff Skinner (17) (Justin Faulk)

6:51 - CAR - Brock McGinn (3) (Ron Hainsey, Elias Lindholm)

11:49 - BUF - Brian Gionta (9) (SHG) (Unassisted)

#### **Penalties**

10:55 - BUF - Nicolas Deslauriers (2 min, boarding)

### **3rd Period**

#### **Goals**

4:15 - CAR - Victor Rask (13) (Jeff Skinner, Noah Hanifin)

7:58 - CAR - Brock McGinn (4) (Jordan Staal)

#### **Penalties**

8:26 - BUF - Taylor Fedun (2 min., tripping)

12:02 - CAR - Jordan Staal (2 min., kneeling)

### **Goaltending**

BUF - Anders Nilsson (33 saves, 38 shots)

CAR - Cam Ward (36 saves, 38 shots)

### **Power Plays**

BUF - 0 of 2

CAR - 0 of 4

## **From The Locker Room: Sabres-Hurricanes**

**WGR 550**

**January 13, 2017**

Brian Gionta scored his 9th goal and Anders Nilsson stopped 33 shots in a 5-2 loss to the Hurricanes on Friday. Read what both players told the media after the game.

Brian Gionta

"Same stuff. Same stuff that's been happening. Turnovers, not playing with enough urgency. It's the same thing. It's a broken record right now."

"It's all details in our game. Little things add up to a lot and our details have been terrible."

Anders Nilsson

"It's obviously frustrating. I think we played two decent games, but had two losses. It's frustrating, but we've got to find a way to win."

"I'm not fatigued at all. It's obviously fun to play. It's almost easier to play more consistent. Obviously it's not fun letting in 5 goals and it's not fun losing. It's a team game and all of us need to find a way to win here."

## **5 Observations: Hurricanes blow by Sabres 5-2**

By Matt Bove

WKBW

January 13, 2017

BUFFALO, N.Y. (WKBW) - Going into Friday the Buffalo Sabres had their hands full, facing a Carolina Hurricanes team that has only one regulation loss in their last 14 home games. The Sabres jumped out to a 1-0 lead but quickly saw the tides turn, falling to the Hurricanes 5-2. Carolina is now 13-1-1 in their last 15 home games.

*Five observations from Friday's loss:*

### **Well that escalated quickly**

Things seemed to be going swimmingly for the Sabres and then the second period started. Buffalo saw a 1-0 lead disappear two minutes into the period. Less than a minute later Jeff Skinner, who scored Carolina's first goal, beat Nilsson yet again to give the Hurricanes a 2-1 lead. But Carolina wasn't done -- adding a third goal four minutes later.

Stretches like this cannot happen. In just five minutes the Hurricanes completely took over the game and just like that the Sabres were playing catch up. It's amazing how a few bad minutes can cost you a game -- and that's what happened on Friday.

### **We're still trying this Foligno - Eichel - Gionta thing, huh?**

On Thursday I adamantly said that I hated the Foligno - Eichel - Gionta line.

Judging from your tweets and comments, I wasn't alone.

Apparently, Sabres head coach Dan Bylsma disagrees, because once again the trio was together to start the game and once again they were broken up as Buffalo played from behind. Here's an idea -- just don't put them together in the first place!

### **Whaaaa happened?**

Anders Nilsson just didn't have it tonight. Don't get me wrong -- he made some nice saves and didn't get much help, but he also let in a few goals he'd like back.

This goal was probably Nilsson's softest of the evening.

It's not necessarily a surprise -- he did just play last night -- but definitely one of his shakiest starts of the season. Oh well, even the best goalies have 'bad' games -- and while I don't think Nilsson was bad, he wasn't good either.

### **No help from the blueline**

That stat is absurd. Lately the Sabres have been scoring more, at least compared to how they started the season -- but still are incredibly streaky. Lack of goals from the blue line is one of the reasons why. Obviously, you can't rely on a defenseman scoring every game, but ONLY FOUR GOALS in 42 games? That's unacceptable.

### **Missed chances**

Buffalo finished the evening with a very respectable 38 shots but they just couldn't capitalize on their opportunities. The Sabres had several odd-man rushes and partial breakaways, but no goals from those chances.

I did like that they got pucks to the net -- we didn't see that until the third period against the Tampa Bay Lightning on Thursday. Give Hurricanes goaltender Cam Ward some credit too, he played a very sound and solid game.

## **Hurricanes sweep season series with Sabres**

By Kurt Dusterberg

NHL.com

January 13, 2017

**RALEIGH, N.C.** -- Jeff Skinner had two goals and an assist, and Brock McGinn scored twice to help the Carolina Hurricanes defeat the Buffalo Sabres 5-2 at PNC Arena on Friday.

Cam Ward, playing his 600th NHL game, made 36 saves for the Hurricanes (20-15-7), who are 13-1-1 in their past 15 home games. Carolina won its third straight and swept the three-game season series with Buffalo.

"When we find a way to play at a high level, all four lines playing with pace, that's when we're at our best," Hurricanes coach Bill Peters said.

William Carrier and Brian Gionta scored for the Sabres (16-17-9), who have lost two straight.

Buffalo capitalized on a Carolina turnover to take a 1-0 lead at 4:24 of the first period. Ryan O'Reilly intercepted Jaccob Slavin's pass and quickly got the puck to Carrier at the left post for a tap-in.

Skinner scored twice in a 55-second span in the second period to give the Hurricanes the lead. He made it 1-1 at 1:48 when he scored off Anders Nilsson's glove after taking a pass from Derek Ryan. The goal was Skinner's 300th NHL point.

"I thought I saved it but it went off my glove and ended it up in the net," Nilsson said. "After that, they came pretty hard and pretty fast, and they got some momentum from the first goal and scored a few more pretty fast after that. So that's too bad. That kind of changed the game a little bit."

Carolina took a 2-1 lead on Skinner's 17th of the season. Justin Faulk made a long diagonal pass from the defensive zone to Skinner at the offensive blue line. Skinner took a wrist shot that went inside the far post at 2:43.

"It definitely sparked us throughout the lineup," McGinn said. "It was a big moment and a turning point in the game."

McGinn scored his third of the season to put the Hurricanes up 3-1 at 6:51. Nilsson gave up a rebound on Elias Lindholm's shot, and McGinn went to his backhand for the goal.

"Seeing them score and getting affected by it, you can just see us start thinking again," O'Reilly said. "We start thinking and we start to get a little more individual and it breaks us down and it's frustrating."

Gionta scored shorthanded to cut the lead to 3-2 at 11:49. After a long aerial pass by Evander Kane from the Buffalo defensive zone, Ward sent the puck behind the net, but Gionta circled the net and tucked a shot in on his backhand.

Victor Rask scored his 13th goal to make it 4-2 at 4:15 of the third period. After Noah Hanifin missed wide from the slot, Rask got to the rebound low in the right circle.

McGinn drove the net for his second of the game to make it 5-2 at 7:58, taking a pass from Jordan Staal, who circled the net to set up the goal.

### ***Goal of the game***

Skinner had a shooter's touch on his second goal, but Faulk's long pass was the key.

"I took a peak before I got to the puck and saw that they were all coming toward the bench," Faulk said. "I knew Skinner was over there, so I turned and fired it, then he did the work. It's something we practice every now and then, those cross-ice passes."

### ***Saves of the game***

With 10:35 remaining in the third period, Ward stopped Kane on a shorthanded breakaway before turning away O'Reilly on another shorthanded attempt 30 seconds later.

### ***Highlight of the game***

O'Reilly created Buffalo's first goal with a nice defensive play then a pinpoint pass to the far post.

### ***Unsung performance of the game***

Lindholm set up McGinn's first goal by protecting the puck from Rasmus Ristolainen along the wall, shifting twice to maintain possession and getting off his shot.

### ***They said it***

"Especially in the second period, playing with the puck and managing the puck is such a huge factor. They used it to their advantage and showed their speed and showed their puck movement and caught us in situations where we're desperately trying to get off the ice, and we make poor changes and they're back the other way." -- *Sabres coach Dan Bylsma*

"[Skinner] took the game over in my opinion. He was just that dominant. He really has been one of our best players all season long. To see him get a couple goals and get a milestone on his part is impressive." -- *Hurricanes goaltender Cam Ward*

### ***Need to know***

The Hurricanes won 16 of 17 faceoffs in the first period. ... Carolina has one power-play goal in the past 12 games. ... Justin Falk was the only Buffalo skater without a shot on goal. ... Sabres defenseman Zach Bogosian played his 500th NHL game.

### ***What's next***

**Sabres:** Host the Dallas Stars on Monday (1 p.m. ET; FS-SW, MSG-B, NHL.TV)

**Hurricanes:** Host the New York Islanders on Saturday (7 p.m. ET; MSG+, FS-CR, NHL.TV)

## **Sabres unable to keep Canes' speed at bay in 5-2 loss**

By Jourdon LaBarber

Buffalo Sabres

January 13, 2017

**RALEIGH, N.C.** - Brian Gionta took a brief pause as he began to describe what had gone wrong for the Buffalo Sabres at PNC Arena on Friday night. The Sabres lost 5-2 to the Carolina Hurricanes, their second loss in as many days, and there was little new that the captain could say.

"Same stuff," Gionta said. "Same stuff that's been happening. Turnovers, not playing with enough urgency. It's the same thing, it's a broken record."

The loss was indeed similar to Buffalo's 4-2 loss at Tampa Bay on Thursday in that the Sabres got the first goal but began allowing their opponent to play to their strength in the second period. In the case of both the Lightning and the Hurricanes, that strength is speed.

The Hurricanes used that speed to produce three goals in the second, including two from Jeff Skinner that came 55 seconds apart in the period's opening minutes. Skinner's first goal came as the result of good movement through the neutral zone, allowing him to take a shot that skipped in off the glove of Sabres goalie Anders Nilsson.

After that, things began to unravel. Skinner's next goal came during a long change for the Sabres, one that Hurricanes defenseman Justin Faulk was quick to recognize in his own zone. Faulk hit Skinner with a stretch pass at the Sabres' blue line, freeing him to score on a breakaway.

"The second period especially, you've got to be more intelligent," O'Reilly said. "You've got to make sure you have two, three guys that are staying on the ice. You get two fresh guys on but you have three holding it down so they can't go quick up and expose us ... Skinner's a good player and has speed, he just exposed us."

"We got taught a bit of a lesson in second-period hockey with the long change," coach Dan Bylsma added.

Carolina extended its lead at the 6:51 mark of the period when Elias Lindholm won a battle along the boards, took a shot, and Brock McGinn skated in alone to score on the rebound. Gionta put Buffalo in position to come back with a shorthanded goal - the Sabres' first of the season - before the period expired, but Victor Rask scored 4:15 into the third to restore Carolina's two-goal lead and their momentum. McGinn added his second goal of the game less than four minutes later.

"There's no excuse," O'Reilly said. "We had a chance. We started to come back, we were going to come back in the game and then to give them another goal, it just really took the wind out of our sails. It's unacceptable."

Carolina goalie Cam Ward made some big saves in his 600th NHL game, including a couple of shorthanded stops on O'Reilly and Evander Kane late in the third period. He made 35 saves on 37 shots overall, earning his third win against the Sabres this season.

Nilsson faced 38 shots and made 33 saves in his second start in as many nights.

"I'm not feeling fatigued at all. It's obviously fun to play, it's almost easier to play more consistent," Nilsson said. "But obviously it's not fun letting in five goals and it's not fun losing. It's a team game and all of us need to find a way to win here."

The Sabres got the start they were looking for, establishing their forecheck early during a first period in which they outshot the Hurricanes 11-4 at even strength. It was off the forecheck where they got their first goal, when O'Reilly forced a turnover down low as the Hurricanes looked to break the puck out and quickly fed William Carrier for his third goal of the season.

O'Reilly said it was Skinner's initial goal seemed to shake the team's confidence, forcing them to overthink the game.

"Seeing them score and getting affected by it ... We start thinking again," he said. "Once we start thinking we start to get a little bit more individual, and it just breaks us down. It's frustrating."

The other way in which the loss was similar to the game in Tampa was the squandered opportunity for points against a team in close proximity to the Sabres in the standings. The Hurricanes, who improved to 13-1-1 in their last 15 games at PNC Arena, extended their lead over the Sabres to six points.

"It's another big opportunity missed," Gionta said.

### **Up next**

The Sabres will begin yet another back-to-back set when they return home to host the Dallas Stars on Monday afternoon. Coverage begins at 12:30 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 Stars at 1 p.m.