



Buffalo Sabres

Daily Press Clips

March 11, 2017

Sabres, Jackets back at it again in Buffalo

Associated Press

March 11, 2017

COLUMBUS, Ohio -- John Tortorella is a glass-half-full coach.

The last two games for the Columbus Blue Jackets have not been the team's best efforts of late, yet, somehow they've found a way to win those games and continue a hot streak that started last month when they came off their five-day break.

Against New Jersey on Tuesday, they scored both goals in the third period to beat the Devils 2-0. Then, on Friday, the Blue Jackets squander two leads to the struggling Buffalo Sabres, only to get a game-winner from Boone Jenner with 5:07 left in third to pull out a 4-3 win at Nationwide Arena.

"I think it's a good sign you still find a way to win a game, when you certainly know -- and that's an important thing -- I think the players know they weren't that good" on Friday, Tortorella said.

Now, the Sabres and Blue Jackets head to KeyBank Center Saturday for the tail-end of the home-and-home series.

Columbus left winger Nick Foligno, who scored his fifth goal in Columbus' last eight home games Friday night, understands Tortorella's message. The Blue Jackets captain said the team didn't play a complete game Friday, and that allowed the Sabres to be tied with them late in the game.

"Going into their barn tomorrow, they're fighting for their playoff lives," said Foligno, whose power play goal Friday gave him a team-best 11 on the season. "So, we understand that we need to bring a better game."

With one more win, Columbus will set a franchise record for both wins and points in the regular season.

With Friday's loss, the Sabres have now lost three straight and just won two of their last 10 games. Time is beginning to run out for Buffalo, which now finds itself nine points behind the New York Islanders for the final wild card spot. The Sabres have just 14 games to make up that ground and four teams ahead of them.

"We played a hard game, battled hard in this game and did a lot of good things, but came up on the short end," Buffalo coach Dan Bylsma said.

Defense continues to be an issue for the Sabres, as they have been outscored 39-29 in their last 10 games. On Friday, it was the special teams that let the Sabres down as they gave up two power-play goals in one game for the first time since a 2-1 loss at New Jersey on Feb. 6.

"Our job is to go out there and make sure they don't score," said defenseman Josh Gorges about the penalty kill unit. "Whatever the circumstances may be of how they get them, there's usually a breakdown somewhere along the lines, and we didn't do our jobs properly."

Gorges, who scored his first goal of the season Friday, was thinking along the same lines as Tortorella after the game. Winning games is all that should matter at this point.

"Doesn't matter if you play an ugly game," the Sabres assistant captain said. "You get two points, that's the job, and it doesn't matter if you play a good game and you fall short. You didn't get the job done. Tonight was that way."

Jenner breaks late tie, Blue Jackets beat Sabres 4-3

By Mitch Stacy
Associated Press
March 10, 2017

COLUMBUS, Ohio (AP) — Sergei Bobrovsky didn't get his fourth straight shutout and didn't even play his best game, but the Columbus Blue Jackets generated enough offense to get the All-Star goalie his NHL-leading 36th win.

Boone Jenner broke a tie with 5:07 left, and Bobrovsky made 29 saves in the Blue Jackets' 4-3 victory over the Buffalo Sabres on Friday night. The teams will meet again Saturday night in Buffalo.

Nick Foligno and Sam Gagner had power-play goals, and David Savard also scored for the Blue Jackets. They have won three straight and seven of their last 10.

Jenner corralled a loose puck and wrapped it around goalie Robin Lehner, and the Blue Jackets held on for their 43rd victory to tie the franchise season record set in 2013-14.

"I don't think the intensity was there for us, especially the first couple periods," Jenner said. "But we got going and in that third period we picked up the pace and found a way to win."

Josh Gorges scored his first goal in more than a year, Evan Rodrigues and Rasmus Ristolainen also connected for Buffalo, and Lehner stopped 35 shots. The Sabres have lost four straight.

Gorges said this one was hard to take because the hard-luck Sabres matched Columbus blow-for-blow for most of the game.

"It's very frustrating," he said. "I think tonight more so than our last four or five (loses). We did a lot of good things, competed hard. That's a hard-working team on the other side and we matched them, and that's what we want. We want to have that intensity. Unfortunately, tonight we made a few mistakes and they were able to capitalize."

Buffalo struck less than three minutes into the game. Rodrigues fired a shot from the slot into the top right corner of the net with Bobrovsky leaning to the left.

He was the first to score on the Columbus goalie since Alex Galchenyuk of the Montreal Canadiens in overtime in the Blue Jackets' 1-0 loss Feb. 28.

Savard tied it at 6:09 of the period with a top-shelf wrister launched from just below the blue line off a faceoff.

Later in the period, after some sharp passing around the zone by Columbus on a power play, Foligno made it 2-1 when he chipped in Alexander Wennberg's shot. Zach Werenski got the second assist, and his 40th point of the season to break the Blue Jackets record for rookie scoring. Rick Nash had 39 in 2002-03.

Gorges made it 2-2 about five minutes into the second period when his shot from the left point again caught the Columbus goalie leaning the other way. It was Gorges' first goal in 78 games.

The Blue Jackets took advantage of another power play with 1:31 left in second period. Gagner unloaded a slap shot from the top of the right circle past Lehner to make it 3-2.

The Sabres tied it again with nearly six minutes gone in the third period — with a bit of luck — when the puck was deflected by Bobrovsky and trickled over the line. Ristolainen got credit for the goal.

"The two power play goals they get are a big factor in the game," Buffalo coach Dan Bylsma said. "We come back each time in the game with a lot of good things from our guys, and with five minutes to go there we win a faceoff and somehow they get (Jenner) all alone at the net with our goaltender."

NOTES: Columbus D Ryan Murray missed his second game because of a lower-body injury. ... Buffalo F Kyle Okposo missed his fourth game with a rib injury, and D Dmitry Kulikov was out for the third straight game with an upper-body injury. ... Gagner has three goals and two assists in the last four games....Brandon Dubinsky, who got an assist on Savard's goal, has 15 points in his last 17 games.

UP NEXT:

Buffalo: Hosts Columbus on Saturday.

Columbus: At Buffalo on Saturday.

Noble efforts not good enough for Sabres to earn points

By Amy Moritz
The Buffalo News
March 10, 2017

COLUMBUS – The result remains the same.

Once again, the Buffalo Sabres did a lot of things right. Their young guns, Jack Eichel and Sam Reinhart, paired with veteran Matt Moulson, played like a top line with good, quick movement and an aggressive pursuit of the puck which created one goal and a multitude of other opportunities.

The fourth line was solid, scoring the first goal of the game, and the first goal by an opponent in Nationwide Arena in 182 minutes and 50 seconds.

Robin Lehner made impressive saves, holding off a hard-charging offense from the Columbus Blue Jackets while the Sabres' defensemen got on the board offensively with goals from Josh Gorges and Rasmus Ristolainen.

But the result was the same – a mistake in the final five minutes cost the Sabres the game-winning goal in a 4-3 loss to the Blue Jackets. It was the third straight loss for the Sabres, who have won only once in their last nine games.

A good game with a bad result. It's been one of the tunes the Sabres know by heart this season. And with 14 games left, the time for taking positives out of losses is over.

"The time for learning lessons I think is past us," said Sabres defenseman Josh Gorges, who scored his first goal of the season in the second period. "It's now about winning games. That's all that matters. That's all that should matter. I said this after last game, it doesn't matter if you play an ugly game. You get two points. That's the job. It doesn't matter if you play a good game and fall up short, you didn't get the job done. Tonight was that way."

The Sabres were in the game for the entire 60 minutes, something that hasn't been a regular occurrence. They opened the scoring at 2:50 when Evan Rodrigues capitalized on a turnover and worked a give-and-go with Nic Deslauriers. Rodrigues scored his third goal of the season, beating Columbus goalie Sergei Bobrovsky, who entered the game with three consecutive shutouts.

The Blue Jackets responded and took a 2-1 lead by the end of the first. Buffalo battled back, with Gorges' goal tying the game in the second.

Columbus took another lead. Buffalo battled back. It was a 3-3 game thanks to a bullet from Rasmus Ristolainen. But the Sabres couldn't close out the game.

"It's very frustrating, I think tonight probably more so than our last four or five," Gorges said. "Did a lot of good things. Competed hard. That's a hard-working team on the other side and we matched it. And that's what we want. We want to have that intensity. It's tough to lose a game like that no question."

"I'm not saying any one stings more than another one," head coach Dan Bylsma said. "This is one you feel like, we're in this game, we come back in this game. We're tooth and nail with this team and you, I think, just the nature of the goals they got, how they got the goal at the end of the game is what stings the most."

The game-winner came with 5:07 left in regulation. Ryan O'Reilly had won the faceoff to the right of Lehner but Cody Franson could not take control of the puck to clear the zone. Boone Jenner picked it up, rushed in on Lehner and tucked a backhand around the sprawling Sabres goaltender.

O'Reilly "did a good job winning the draw," Franson said. "I just started going a little early thinking the puck was going to go a little farther to the inside. I handcuffed myself and couldn't get a handle on it. It just is what it is."

It certainly wasn't the only bad note of the night as the Sabres' penalty kill came up short. The Blue Jackets entered the game in a 3-for-39 funk on the power play since Jan. 22 but went 2 for 3 with the man-advantage

against the Sabres. Nick Foligno's goal gave Columbus a 2-1 lead in the first while Sam Gagner's gave them a 3-2 lead in the second.

"They've got a good power play," Franson said. "They move it around quick. They don't really waste any time out there. They move it around and it's efficient and that makes it tough to kill. Sometimes you've got to tip your cap a little bit. They made some pretty good plays to get the goals they got."

Those were pretty plays, but the overall play of the Blue Jackets wasn't exactly up to their desired standard.

While the Blue Jackets have won four straight at home and are 7-2-1 in their last 10, the bright spot for head coach John Tortorella was that his team did not play its best but found a way to win.

"It's good to find a way to win when you're not on your game," Tortorella said. "I think it's a good sign when you know, and the players certainly know, they weren't that good."

Sabres Notebook: Bylsma tougher on the kids but Eichel ready to respond

By Amy Moritz
The Buffalo News
March 10, 2017

COLUMBUS – Dan Bylsma started answering the question before it was finished, nodding his head vigorously in agreement as he is wont to do.

Does he need to be harder on younger players – Jack Eichel and Sam Reinhart for instance – to get them to understand what the identity of the Buffalo Sabres needs to be?

"You're going to hate this answer, but yes," Bylsma said on Thursday in Buffalo's HarborCenter, a day removed from a horrible performance in a 6-3 loss to the Philadelphia Flyers and one day before taking on the Blue Jackets here in Columbus.

Friday morning, Eichel was curt when offering his response to Bylsma's statement.

Did the second-year player, baptized as the future of the franchise, feel that his journey was more difficult with his head coach being harder on the young, skilled players?

"No, not at all," Eichel said in Nationwide Arena after the team's morning skate.

Eichel entered Friday's game on an 11-game point streak, the longest active streak in the league and one game away from tying the best streak in the NHL this season.

But there is room for his game to grow and the second-year pro had a prominent teachable moment in Tuesday's loss to the Flyers. Skating through the neutral zone, he tried to get through three Flyers but turned the puck over. Philadelphia then scored the opening goal of the game.

It was one bad play in a game full of bad plays. But Bylsma sat Eichel for a shift. The forward responded with two goals and an assist.

"Jack is a star player, no question, but he's a young player as well and he's got to learn that," Bylsma said. "It's a process we're going through. Did he miss a few shifts after that play, he did. And that's got to be an indicator of where he's got to be better at and our whole team needs to be better at."

Eichel understands the need to learn when to be aggressive with the puck and when to take the more conservative approach. But he's also unabashed in his offensive skills.

"I try to play the same all 60 minutes," Eichel said. "Team asked me to make that play, so I'm going to try and make it. You know if it works, it works. If it doesn't, it doesn't. Obviously it's tough when it ends up in the back of your net and you've got to pick and choose your spots."

"It's my game. I think I said this a little earlier in the year. It's tough to put handcuffs on you when they expect you to create offense and things like that. You know, I've got to play with the puck on my stick during the game. I know I'm going to turn the puck over at some point. It's important to be careful where you do it and when you do it. But I'm an offensive player that creates stuff for our team. I'm going to continue to make plays."

The turnovers don't bother Bylsma. Turnovers are going to happen. It's sometimes a sign that the team is playing aggressive. But Bylsma wants Eichel to cultivate more discernment when making aggressive plays.

"I've implored Jack that he needs to have five turnovers a game. If he's not having a turnover, then he's not trying to do the right thing," Bylsma said. "There's a time and a place and a situation for those attempts and that wasn't a good one. But we calculate the game to have 100 turnovers, 50 aside, every game, so it's not like we're talking about no turnovers happening in the game. We're going to have turnovers. Every player has probably at least one turnover in a game. That's just a learning process that we're going through as a group."

Eichel's career-best 11-game point streak includes five goals and 11 assists. In the time since his return on Nov. 29, he is tied for eighth among all NHL skaters with 45 points (18 goals, 27 assists) and leads the league with 188 shots on goal.

The key to his point streak lies in some classic hockey intangibles.

"I'd say just the consistency," Eichel said. "I think adding a little more grit and compete in your game and getting in corners, getting pucks back, a little more physical. Little stuff like that gives you a little more room, opens stuff up. It helps a lot when you're playing the power play like we have. We've been pretty good lately with that. I just try to come ready to play every night with the same mindset of move your feet, get after the puck, get on the puck and skate."

Columbus Blue Jackets goaltender Sergei Bobrovsky entered Friday's game tied for the league lead in wins with 35 while ranking second in save percentage (.929) and third in goals-against (2.05). More impressively, he posted three straight shutouts.

Columbus coach John Tortorella said he stays out of the way of Bobrovsky. "I don't know anything about the position," he said when meeting members of the media Friday afternoon in Nationwide Arena.

And the most impressive thing hasn't just been the saves but the way Bobrovsky has moved the puck.

"There's no extra motion. He's not chasing it," Tortorella said. "Quite honestly, I think one of the best parts of his game has been his puck handling. Forget about the saves that he's made; he's moved the puck pretty well. He's gotten us out of problems as far as forechecking. You know how I feel – I just want him to stop the puck. I'm not going to coach him. I'm just going to try to stay out of the way."

The Buffalo Sabres Green Team will hold a hockey equipment drive at KeyBank Center beginning Saturday and running until March 31. All equipment donated will benefit Hasek's Heroes. The collection will be located outside the Sabres Store and anyone donating equipment will receive a coupon for 30 percent off at the Sabres Store.

Quick Hits: Blue Jackets 4, Sabres 3

By Amy Moritz
The Buffalo News
March 10, 2017

COLUMBUS -- The Buffalo Sabres solved the riddle that had been Sergei Bobrovsky. They got to the goaltender who had shut out three straight teams and tagged him for three goals.

But with 5:07 left in the third, Boone Jenner picked up a loose puck off a faceoff in the Sabres zone and made a move around a sprawling Robin Lehner to break a tie and give the Columbus Blue Jackets a 4-3 win in Nationwide Arena.

It was the fourth straight home win for the Blue Jackets. It was the third straight loss for the Sabres, who have one win in their last nine games.

Fourth line goes to work: Before the game, Blue Jackets coach John Tortorella noted the Sabres had plenty of good goal scorers in its lineup. He wasn't referring to Evan Rodrigues. But the forward used his speed to create a turnover and work a give-and-go with Nicolas Deslauriers to open the scoring at 2:50 of the first period. It was the third goal of the season for Rodrigues and first point of the season for Deslauriers, who was playing his 35th game of the season.

End of a streak: The goal ended a shutout streak for Bobrovsky, who had gone three straight games without allowing a goal. The last goal he gave up was an overtime game-winner at Montreal Feb. 28.

Tying it up off the faceoff: The Blue Jackets tied the game, 1-1, at 6:09 when Ryan O'Reilly lost the faceoff to Brandon Dubinsky in the Sabres zone. Dubinsky drew the puck back to David Savard, who got a nice wrister through Justin Falk and past Robin Lehner.

Power play goal 1: With Tyler Ennis in the box for a delay of game penalty, the Blue Jackets had some slick passing and puck movement on their power play. Lehner twice stymied attempts on the doorstep, one by Cam Atkinson and one by Nick Foligno, but Foligno deflected the puck past Lehner for his 11th power play goal of the season, 23rd overall.

Getting goals with the screen: The line of Jack Eichel, Sam Reinhart and Matt Moulson had a good shift, moving the puck quickly. Eichel set a screen in front of Bobrovsky that allowed a shot by Josh Gorges from the point to get through. The goal tied the game, 2-2, at 4:56 of the second.

Power play goal 2: The Blue Jackets cashed in on their second power play of the game. With just four seconds left in Justin Falk's cross-checking penalty, Brandon Saad provided the screen for Sam Gagner's shot from the right faceoff dot.

About that Blue Jackets' power play: Columbus had been in a 3-for-39 funk on the power play since Jan. 22. They went 2 for 3 against the Sabres.

Another blue line goal: Rasmus Ristolainen scored early in the third period, his shot from inside the blue line hitting Bobrovsky in the pads, then trickling over the goal line. It was the first goal for Ristolainen since Feb. 9.

An Ohio state of mind: Sabres defenseman Justin Falk was a member of the Columbus Blue Jackets for two seasons, playing in 29 games from 2014-16 with one goal and five assists. Falk made his mark up the road from Columbus in Cleveland, playing 32 games with the Lake Erie Monsters, who won the Calder Cup in 2016.

Scratches: The Sabres scratched Kyle Okposo and Dmitry Kulikov. Okposo missed his fourth game with a rib injury while it was the third game missed for Kulikov with an upper body injury.

The Blue Jackets scratched defensemen Ryan Murray and Scott Harrington and forward Josh Anderson.

Attendance: There were 17,530 in Nationwide Arena Friday night.

Up next: It's the 14th set of back-to-backs for the Sabres who meet the Blue Jackets again Saturday, this time at 7 p.m. in KeyBank Center. It will be the first ever home-and-home series between the two franchises.

After that, the Sabres head out West to play at San Jose (March 14), at Los Angeles (March 16) and at Anaheim (March 17).

Dan Dunleavy attempts the impossible: following Rick Jeanneret

By Alan Pergament

The Buffalo News

March 10, 2017

Buffalo Sabres play-by-play man Dan Dunleavy has the most difficult job in local media: He is compared to the legendary broadcaster he splits the 82-game National Hockey League season with – Rick Jeanneret.

That's what made a message that Dunleavy received so special after his most memorable call of the season.

"Eichel carries, Kane BURIES," exclaimed Dunleavy after Jack Eichel assisted Evander Kane on a game-winning goal.

"Rick texted me," recalled Dunleavy during a recent interview. "'Great call on the winner.' I texted him, 'From anybody, this means the most.' "

Since adding the Eichel-Kane call to his earlier naming of the Eichel Tower after the Sabres star scores, it has been easier to warm up to Dunleavy and appreciate his solid work when Jeanneret takes off.

The play-by-play men had a more important conversation than the text exchange over the summer after Jeanneret delayed his retirement, resulting in Dunleavy having to wait longer to become the full-time play-by-play man than originally planned.

This goal by left wing Evander Kane in overtime against the San Jose Sharks could one day be thought of as a career milestone for Dan Dunleavy. (James P. McCoy/Buffalo News)

Dunleavy, who went to Niagara (Ont.) College with Jeanneret's son Chris and considers him his best friend, called to meet Rick over lunch.

"I wanted to talk with him," said Dunleavy. "My exact words were 'I need you to know that I'm not here to push you out of your chair. I'm more than willing to be a member of this broadcast team and work with you and whenever the day comes you don't want to do this anymore that's your choice.' "

Of course, Dunleavy doesn't have the power to push out Jeanneret anyway; the Sabres are content with having the legend stay as long as he wants to call the games. The bigger question is whether the Sabres still view Dunleavy as Jeanneret's eventual replacement. He enters the final year of his five-year contract next season.

Mark Preisler, the executive vice president of media and content for Pegula Sports and Entertainment, gave Dunleavy a vote of confidence and praised the phrases he coined when Eichel and Sam Reinhart score.

"Dan does a good job calling an energetic game," wrote Preisler in an email. "He connects with our fans through his signature calls like 'Eichel Tower' and 'Sam I am' to name a couple. "We are lucky to have him, not just as a member of our broadcast team, but as a member of our entire content team. We look forward to his future contributions across all our media platforms."

Dunleavy, who said he has turned down three play-by-play jobs since joining the Sabres, hasn't yet asked for an extension.

"I would love to remain in Buffalo for the rest of my career," he said. "They knew that when I came here."

The native of Georgetown, Ont., 40 miles west of Toronto, says he loves Buffalo, is engaged to marry the former graphics coordinator on Sabres broadcasts, Brenda Banister, has adopted a rescue dog, Bandit, and established roots here. His biggest problem with some fans is he is not Jeanneret. But if Mike Emrick, the lead announcer for NHL national telecasts on both NBC and NBC Sports, called Sabres games regularly, fans would probably complain, too.

The Eichel-Kane call could have been a turning point for Dunleavy, judging by the positive reaction on Twitter.

He spent February doing play-by-play while Jeanneret was off. In a way, Dunleavy is like a backup goaltender trying to find his rhythm calling games when the main guy gets a rest.

Buffalo Sabres announcer Rick Jeanneret calls the first period against the Montreal Canadiens at the KeyBank Center on Oct. 13. (Harry Scull Jr./Buffalo News)

"It is a close analogy," said Dunleavy. "But unlike a backup goalie, I am made aware the beginning of the season what games I am going to do."

Like many Canadians, Dunleavy saw play-by-play as a dream job growing up.

"I was the kid with a blue soap on the rope walking around the house interviewing and doing play-by-play during games," Dunleavy said.

He was glued to "Hockey Night in Canada" every Saturday night and would cry until he was allowed to watch the games.

"I am an absolute junkie for (play-by-play legends) Danny Gullivan, Bob Cole, Dick Irvin, that era of hockey," Dunleavy said. "Dan Kelly was another guy I absolutely adored. And living in Southern Ontario, (the late Sabres announcer) Ted Darling. My mother and I would watch Ted Darling and she and I would try and impersonate him all the time, the way he would roll his B's."

Before coming to Buffalo, Dunleavy was calling Toronto Maple Leafs games in a similar situation to his Sabres role. He worked games on radio when Toronto's regular veteran, Joe Bowen, worked on television. Prior to joining the Leafs, Dunleavy called Ontario Hockey League games for 10 years, worked the World Junior tournament for eight years and worked at The Fan 590 for 20 years. While in college with Jeanneret's son, he worked some college hockey games on cable in St. Catharines. His resume also includes stops at a country music station and an adult contemporary station.

As a result of some uncertainty in Toronto because two media giants were fighting for control, Dunleavy was open to leaving the Leafs for the Sabres for a five-year deal in which he was named Jeanneret's heir apparent.

"I was flattered to think that somebody felt I had the ability to step into a market where you have a Hall of Fame play-by-play man who may think of retiring," Dunleavy said. "People thought I had the ability to not fill his shoes but maybe shoulder the load to be the next guy to sit in a chair that was already occupied by Ted Darling and Rick Jeanneret."

He is aware of the old saying that you don't want to replace the legend, you want to replace the man who replaces the legend. And he realizes criticism comes with the territory and one needs a thick skin.

"I can be Dan Dunleavy," he said. "I'm confident enough on how I call a game that I know I can step into this market or any market around the NHL and be myself. Which I think is an energetic, entertaining play-by-play guy."

He used to read the criticism on Twitter, but recently stopped.

"As thick a skin that you think you have, it does sting because you are trying your best," Dunleavy said. "Even if there wasn't a Rick Jeanneret here already, you are going to have your critics ... I don't want the people who expect RJ to be on the air let down with my call."

The criticism that hit Dunleavy like a crosscheck was being told after one of Jeanneret's trademark calls that he had a lot to learn about play-by-play.

"It kind of undermines all the years before today of work you put it in," Dunleavy said. "I don't mind someone saying I don't like your call, but to tell me I have a lot to learn about play-by-play you are insinuating I just showed up here without any experience or I don't have any credibility to have this position. That kind of stung. I

get that I'm not RJ and you might not like my call compared to his. But to say that I don't know what I am doing."

He appreciated some recent tweets.

"Some people have said, 'Dan has grown on me,' " said Dunleavy. "If they don't like you, they're not going to like you. But if they sit there and go, 'he's no RJ but he's growing on me a little bit then I'm OK with that.' "

Now, that is a great call for anybody being compared to a legend.

Blue Jackets Outlast Sabres 4-3

WGR 550

March 10, 2017

Boone Jenner notched a late go-ahead goal, giving the Blue Jackets a 4-3 win and extending the Sabres' losing streak to four games. Jack Eichel did not record a point, ending his streak at 11 games.

Scoring

Evan Rodrigues roofed his 3rd of the season from the slot just 2:50 into the game for the early Sabres lead. Columbus took a 2-1 lead into the 1st intermission on goals by David Savard and Nick Foligno. Foligno's 23rd, a deflection in front, came on the power play thanks to a delay of game call on Tyler Ennis.

Buffalo tied it up about five minutes into the 2nd period on Josh Gorges' 1st of the season, a shot from the point with Jack Eichel standing in front.

The Jackets struck again on the power play later in the period on a beautiful shot by Sam Gagner, but the Sabres made it 3-3 on Rasmus Ristolainen's 5th of the season.

Boone Jenner put Columbus ahead at 14:53 of the final period, pouncing on Cody Franson's turnover in front of the net.

1st Period

Goals

2:50 - BUF - Evan Rodrigues (3) (Nicolas Deslauriers)

6:09 - CBJ - David Savard (4) (Brandon Dubinsky)

17:05 - CBJ - Nick Foligno (23) (PPG) (Alexander Wennberg, Zach Werenski)

Penalties

15:33 - BUF - Tyler Ennis (2 min., delay of game)

2nd Period

Goals

4:56 - BUF - Josh Gorges (1) (Sam Reinhart, Matt Moulson)

18:28 - CBJ - Sam Gagner (17) (PPG) (Jack Johnson, Seth Jones)

Penalties

6:19 - CBJ - David Savard (2 min., hooking)

16:31 - BUF - Justin Falk (2 min., cross checking)

3rd Period

Goals

5:57 - BUF - Rasmus Ristolainen (5) (Jake McCabe, Marcus Foligno)

14:53 - CBJ - Boone Jenner (14) (Cam Atkinson)

Penalties

10:46 - BUF - Rasmus Ristolainen (2 min., tripping)

Goaltending

BUF - Robin Lehner (35 saves, 39 shots)

CBJ - Sergei Bobrovsky (29 saves, 32 shots)

Power Plays

BUF - 0 of 1

CBJ - 2 of 3

From The Locker Room: Sabres-Blue Jackets

WGR 550

March 10, 2017

Read postgame quotes from Cody Franson, Evan Rodrigues and Josh Gorges following Buffalo's 4-3 loss in Columbus.

Cody Franson

"It's unfortunate that it comes down to that last goal...it's a mishandled play on my part. It's not like I was trying to do something cute with it or something out of the ordinary. I was trying to keep it simple. Just couldn't get a handle on it."

"[O'Reilly] did a good job winning the draw. I started going a little early, thinking the puck was going to go a little farther to the inside. I handcuffed myself and couldn't get a handle on it. The rest is what it is."

Evan Rodrigues

"We wanted to get a lot of shots on [Bobrovsky] in the 1st period. We had a goal to kind of throw things at the net. It was good to get one early."

"It's not like anyone did anything wrong on that last play. It's a missed puck. Everyone kind of did their job. It just happened to bounce out and the guy makes a nice move. It's just one of those things that's kind of happening."

Josh Gorges

"The time for learning lessons, I think, has passed us. It's now about winning games. That's all that matters. That's all that should matter."

5 Observations: Blue Jackets beat Sabres 4-3

By Matt Bove

WKBW

March 10, 2017

BUFFALO, N.Y. (WKBW) - The Buffalo Sabres have now lost eight of their last nine games, falling to the Columbus Blue Jackets 4-3 in the first game of a home and home. Sad!

Five observations from Friday's loss:

Peak Sabres defense

Just watch this play and tell me this doesn't perfectly describe the Sabres season? They're tied with a very good team late in the third period and all of a sudden a mishandled puck is in the back of their net and they're down 4-3.

The Sabres defense has been a problem all year, but this is just indescribably bad. Usually, a faceoff win in the defensive zone is a good thing, but not this time. Maybe the puck bounced or took a weird hop, but Cody Franson has to make a better play. Even just firing it down the ice would work.

On Twitter dot com the Robin Lehner haters were out in full force, but I don't think he deserves much blame. He was left out to dry on three of Columbus' four goals.

Three should've been enough

Before Friday, Blue Jackets goaltender Sergei Bobrovsky hadn't allowed a goal in his last three games. That's absolutely incredible.

When was the last time a Sabres goaltender had three straight shutouts? That's a serious question, if you know send me the answer!

With a goaltender playing that well you had to imagine the Sabres would've like their chances if they scored three goals. Instead, some sloppy defensive play cost the Sabres big time. Sure, the Sabres didn't generate much offense from the guys you would expect, but three goals against Bobrovsky should've been enough.

Penalties, man

Statistically, the Sabres have a better power play than the Blue Jackets this season, but on Saturday the man advantage proved to be the difference. When everything was said and done Columbus scored on two of their three power-play opportunities, while the Sabres failed to find the back of the net on their lone chance.

Hey, wha' happened?

Josh Gorges scored a goal and Nicolas Deslauriers added an assist in Friday's game against the Blue Jackets.

The goal is Josh Gorges first of the season [1G, 3A, 51GP]. Deslauriers' assist is his first point in 35 games played this year.

Wha happened?!?!

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All good things must come to an end. On Saturday Jack Eichel failed to record a point, snapping his career and league best 11-game point streak. Had he scored or added an assist, Eichel would've tied Minnesota Wild forward Mikael Granlund for the longest point streak this season [12-games].

He may not have continued his streak, but Eichel certainly made his presence felt. On Buffalo's second goal of the evening, Eichel sent a gorgeous pass to Cody Franson, but the Sabres defender couldn't get the shot off. A few seconds later the puck went back to the point and Eichel's screen allowed Gorges shot to surprise Bobrovsky.

Eichel has played some incredible hockey as of late. Check out the company he joined by recording his 100th career point earlier in the week.

Sabres battle hard, but come up short in Columbus

By Jourdon LaBarber

Buffalo Sabres

March 10, 2017

COLUMBUS - For the first time in their last few games, the Buffalo Sabres were able to come away from their matchup with the Columbus Blue Jackets on Friday night feeling like they did more things well than not against a talented opponent. That feeling only made the outcome more difficult.

The Sabres got to Sergei Bobrovsky early and erased two deficits in the game, only to fall 4-3 on Boone Jenner's winning goal with 5:07 remaining in regulation. The loss was the eighth in nine games for Buffalo.

"The time for learning lessons is past us," alternate captain Josh Gorges said. "Winning games, that's all that matters, that's all that should matter. I said this after the last game, it doesn't matter if you play an ugly game when you get two points. That's the job. And it doesn't matter if you play a good game and you fall short, you didn't get the job done. Tonight was that way."

Gorges, Evan Rodrigues and Rasmus Ristolainen all scored goals for the Sabres. Ristolainen's goal - a shot from the blue line that was mishandled by Bobrovsky - tied the game at 3-3 with 14:03 remaining in the third period.

It was a defensive-zone faceoff that led to Jenner's deciding goal later in the period. Ryan O'Reilly won the draw, but Cody Franson - thinking the puck would drift further than it did - handcuffed himself and fumbled the puck, leaving Jenner to pick it up alone near the net.

Jenner skated across the net, drawing Robin Lehner out toward the top of the crease, and tucked a backhand shot in behind the Sabres goaltender.

"I thought we did a lot of good things in that game," Franson said. "It's unfortunate that it comes down to that last goal, the way it was. It's a mishandled play on my part. It's not like I was trying to do something cute with it or something out of the ordinary. I was trying to keep it simple, just couldn't get a handle on it."

Bobrovsky entered the game riding a stretch of three straight shutouts, so it was atop the Sabres' list of priorities to pepper him with shots early and often. They ended any thoughts of a fourth shutout when Rodrigues scored a mere 2:50 into the contest.

The rookie stole the puck at the Columbus blue line, setting up a give-and-go with Nic Deslauriers that ended with Rodrigues roofing a far-side shot from the slot.

"I think we wanted to get a lot of shots on him in the first period," Rodrigues said. "We had a goal as a team to kind of throw things at the net. It was good to get one early."

The Blue Jackets would tie the game on David Savard's goal later in the period, and then twice took the lead on goals on the power play. The first was a deflection in the slot by Nick Foligno, the second a shot by Sam Gagner from the half wall past a screened Lehner.

"Our job is to go out there and make sure they don't score," Gorges said of the penalty kill. "Whatever the circumstance may be as to how they get them, there's usually a break down somewhere along the lines that we didn't do our jobs properly. To give up two, that's tough."

Lehner made 35 saves, including several key stops when the game was tied at 2-2 in the second period. That included a breakaway save on Jenner and this glove save on Gagner at his doorstep:

The Sabres will have a chance at putting together a similar performance when they meet the Blue Jackets again in Buffalo on Saturday, and maybe then they'll come out on the right end of things. Until then, for as well as they played, they're left feeling no different than after their other recent losses.

"It had the feeling of just us letting it slip away," coach Dan Bylsma said. "Every time they get an opportunity they got it. We played a hard game, battled hard in this game and did a lot of good things but come up on the short end."

Eichel's streak ends

Jack Eichel saw his points streak end at 11 games, but he still made his presence felt. The line of Eichel, Sam Reinhart and Matt Moulson had several strong shifts throughout the night, and it was Eichel who caused the takeaway and set the screen for Gorges to score from the blue line in the second period.

"That's what makes our team tick," Gorges said. "When we're hard on pucks, hard on forechecks, creating turnovers, spending a little more zone time in the offensive zone that's when we create. That's when we make things happen."

Up next

The Sabres and Blue Jackets conclude their home-and-home set at KeyBank Center on Saturday 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 at 7 p.m.