



Buffalo Sabres

Daily Press Clips

January 30, 2018

Sabres out to prove western wins not fool's gold

Buffalo News

Amy Moritz

January 29, 2018

There were no magic potions. No heroic individual feats of skill and strength. Instead, the Buffalo Sabres put together a three-game winning streak on their western road trip with the hockey essentials – attention to detail, a sense of urgency, and team play.

They beat the Flames in Calgary, 2-1 in overtime, followed that with a 5-0 win over the Oilers in Edmonton and a 4-0 win over the Canucks in Vancouver.

Now the Sabres return to KeyBank Center, out to prove the three wins weren't just fool's gold as they host the New Jersey Devils at 7 p.m. Tuesday

"You know what, it's going to be a good test for us," Sabres forward Kyle Okposo said Monday afternoon as the Sabres returned to practice in HarborCenter after the NHL All-Star break. "I think that we need to keep taking steps as a team. I think that was probably step No. 1. We needed to put a few games together where we really showed what we can do and really played well for three games. Now we've got to take another step. We've got to come back home and be really good on home ice. We've got to start being better on home ice and defending our building."

Defending home ice has been an issue for the Sabres who are just 6-12-3 in KeyBank Center (although their road mark of 8-14-6 isn't much better). The Sabres will have plenty of opportunity to win at home as 20 of their final 33 games of the season are in KeyBank Center.

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Playoff hopes, while mathematically possible, are nonexistent, but rewarding Buffalo sports fans and setting a new tone are certainly on the list of goals for this final stretch.

"The fans have come and supported us all year," Sabres coach Phil Housley said. "But when you're winning in Buffalo, it's unbelievable. The fans are behind you and when you can be a physical team, a team that gives a great effort night-in, night-out. I think that's what they're looking for and if you can do that, you'll get results."

When last the Sabres faithful saw the team in Buffalo, they weren't watching much of an effort in a 7-1 drubbing by the Dallas Stars.

Maybe the team needed to hit rock bottom. Maybe it shouldn't have taken rock bottom for a change to happen.

But undeniably something clicked after that loss.

"That was a pretty low point for sure," Okposo said of the 7-1 loss. "We've all been searching for answers this year. Maybe we found it in that game and just getting embarrassed like we did. They just worked. That's all they did was work. We had no time, we had no space, we had no anything."

"I think we did a similar thing on that three-game road trip. All we did was work and then things started to happen. And hey, if you work every game, you're not going to win every game but you're going to be in most games. If we don't bring that top work ethic then we're not going to win many games."

Work ethic has been a key preached by the Sabres staff all season. So too has a defensive mentality. It's what helped goaltender Robin Lehner to register back-to-back shutouts for the first time in franchise history since Ryan Miller did it in 2012.

And the defense wasn't just about the six defensemen. It was about a commitment from all five skaters on the ice at a time.

"We defended. We started playing defense," Lehner said when asked what flipped for the team last week. "The amount of work our forwards did over the last three games, they were incredible. Just them coming back so hard and making it easy for our D and making it easy for me. We were defending with three, four, five guys. It makes a big difference.

"It's hard to fall apart when we're five guys playing together," Lehner said. "If one breaks, there's another guy. If that guy breaks, there's another guy. It's been small margins before where we haven't been those layers. We play with one layer and when that layer breaks, it's breaks totally. It all starts from the worth ethic of our team an understanding that our defense starts in the offensive zone."

So how do the Sabres go about replicating that success?

Again, there's no magic. It's all about effort and simplicity.

"We need to put our foot down here and have the same type of effort," Housley said. "We don't need to change anything. We have to just play a simple game and when we do that, we'll have success. We don't have to create things that aren't there. We have to take what the game gives us and try to start something here at home for the remainder of the season."

Sabres Notebook: Team success leads to individual honors; Beaulieu back at practice

The Buffalo News

Amy Moritz

January 29, 2018

The individual honors are nice. Of course they are.

But Buffalo Sabres goaltender Robin Lehner is quick to point out that those honors come about because of team success.

"It's always nice but my teammates made it easy for me," said Lehner on Monday after he was named the NHL's third star of the week. Forward Jack Eichel was the second star while Vancouver forward Brock Boeser was the first star. "The honors that both me and Jack got, every single one of us is a part of that."

Lehner had back-to-back shutouts before the All-Star break. He made 33 saves in the 5-0 win in Edmonton then made 30 saves in the 4-0 win over Vancouver becoming the first Sabres goaltender to post consecutive shutouts since Ryan Miller did it Feb. 29-March 1, 2012.

But Lehner called those shutouts the "least hard games" he's had this season.

"I think I saw one odd-man rush in two games and I didn't have to make that many big ones and I think it was a great step for us as a team," Lehner said. "When we play like that as a team, that's when individuals are going to get success, too, not the other way around."

Eichel led the NHL last week with five points (two goals, three assists) in the Sabres three wins. He started by scoring his third career overtime goal in a 2-1 win at Calgary then followed the next night with his third career four-point performance (one goal, three assists) in Buffalo's 5-0 win over Edmonton. He was held without a point in the Sabres 4-0 win over Vancouver but then made his NHL All-Star Game debut on Sunday.

Eichel has 20 goals and 49 points through 49 games, becoming the fourth player in franchise history to reach the 20-goal mark in each of his first three seasons joining Gilbert Perreault, Richard Martin and Thomas Vanek.

NHL Public Relations

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@PR_NHL

Brock Boeser (@Canucks), Jack Eichel (@BuffaloSabres), Robin Lehner (BUF) named Three Stars of the Week.
<http://atnhl.com/2BDa4Ws>

12:04 PM - Jan 29, 2018

Boeser leads 3 Stars of the Week

Vancouver Canucks right wing Brock Boeser, Buffalo Sabres center Jack Eichel and Buffalo Sabres goaltender Robin Lehner have been named the NHL's

nhl.com

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* * *

Welcome back, Brian Gionta. Well, at least for one game.

The Rochester Americans announced that Gionta, former captain of the Buffalo Sabres, is expected to be in the lineup Friday when the Amerks host the Toronto Marlies in Blue Cross Arena. The team signed Gionta to a one-game professional tryout contract for the game.

The game will serve as a tuneup for Gionta, who was named captain of Team USA for the upcoming Olympic Games. The 39-year-old Gionta, a native of Rochester, has been practicing with the Amerks since October.

"Brian has been practicing with us on a regular basis since early in the season," Amerks general manager Randy Sexton said in a team release. "These practices were part of his preparation for the Olympics and, given the Olympics are just around the corner, a game was the final tune-up for him to get ready to captain the U.S. Olympic team. The entire Buffalo Sabres organization wishes Brian all the very best in his pursuit of a gold medal."

* * *

Remember when Rex Ryan pledged his allegiance to the Buffalo Sabres?

Yeah, those days are gone.

The former Buffalo Bills coach has resumed his very public love of the Toronto Maple Leafs and was rather colorful about it in an interview with John Kryk of the Toronto Sun.

When Ryan was hired by Terry and Kim Pegula, he proclaimed his fandom for the Sabres, also owned by the Pegulas. After being fired in December 2016, his hockey loyalty went back to the Maple Leafs.

Once upon a time, Ryan sported a variety of Sabres jerseys. No more.

"Oh no, I got rid of every one of them – every damn one of them," Ryan told Kryk.

"As soon as I got fired by the Pegulas, I was like, no chance. I got rid of all my Sabres stuff. I had the (Roger) Crozier jersey, the French Connection jerseys ... I got rid of every damn one of them."

John Kryk

✓

@JohnKryk

Rex Ryan is back loving his #Toronto @MapleLeafs — and has got rid of “every damn one” of his @BuffaloSabres jerseys from his #Bills stint. “The biggest party of all time is gonna be when the Maple Leafs win the #StanleyCup” My story <https://twitter.com/thetorontosun/status/958079213520728065> ...

3:55 PM - Jan 29, 2018

14 14 Replies 2 2 Retweets 6 6 likes

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* * *

Nathan Beaulieu was back at practice Monday after missing the last two games with an upper body injury.

Beaulieu suffered the injury against Calgary in a fight with the Flames' Curtis Lazar where his chin hit the ice.

"I'm feeling good," Beaulieu said after practice on Monday. "Obviously it was a pretty scary incident but feel really fortunate with my results so I'm happy with where I'm at right now. It's just a day to day process."

It's the fourth time this season Beaulieu has been out between injury and illness, limiting the defenseman to just 33 games.

"Yeah, it's been crazy," Beaulieu said of his time on the injured list this season. "I've been really lucky in my career. I've been fairly healthy my whole career. Coming here it's been tough with four different instances where I've been out with different injuries and it's just frustrating."

* * *

The Sabres announced that Tom Tzetzko will receive the 2018 J. Michael Duffett Memorial Award at Tuesday's game. The award, named after Duffett who played at Nichols and Clarkson and worked in the Sabres hockey department until his death following a battle with cancer, recognizes a coach or administrator whose contributions in Western New York amateur hockey "best exemplify the knowledge, teaching, love of the game, and gentle humanity of Mike."

The award was established in 1984, the same year Tzetzko began working with Amherst Youth Hockey as a house and travel team coach.

Sabres' Eichel is back from a fun All-Star weekend

WGR550

Paul Hamilton

January 29, 2018

Buffalo, NY (WGR 550) - Jack Eichel was the only Sabres representative at the NHL All-Star weekend in Tampa. In the first game, Eichel had a goal and two assists, but was held off the score sheet in the second game. Through it all, Eichel had a blast, "It was a good one, it was a new experience and just to be able to be there representing the Sabres was a lot of fun."

Eichel loved playing the 3-on-3 format, but there was one thing that he really enjoyed from the weekend, "It was nice to just hangout with the guys during the skills competition and get to know some players that you don't know and spend some time with the league's best and guys I've looked up to my whole life."

Eichel has known Auston Matthews of the Leafs for a long time. The two played on a line along with Florida's Aleksander Barkov. Eichel and Matthews looked like they were having a blast and Eichel said, "We've played together before, so it was enjoyable, we had some good chemistry."

Eichel came in third during the fastest skater competition. He lost to Brayden Point and the two-time winner, Connor McDavid. Eichel feels he can do better, "I would've liked to do a little bit better and I'm a little bitter about that," Eichel said with a smile.

"Connor's a fast skater and there's a reason that he's won it two years in a row. I think he has it down pretty well, I think the crossovers are a big part and he's probably one of the best crossovers in our game and he's able to build his speed up.

"Maybe if I did a little more homework on the event itself, maybe I would've done better, but hey, it was a great experience."

Eichel was named the NHL's second star for last week. Robin Lehner was number three and that makes Eichel very happy, "It's great to see him there. He's played well for us this year and I don't think that he's gotten the type of support and credit for it and I think he's kept us in a lot of games and he's even stole some games for us."

Before the Sabres went out west and won three in a row, they lost at home to Dallas 7-1. The next day was the season's toughest practice and I wondered if the team needed to hit rock bottom to be able to snap out of it, Eichel said, "I don't think that it ever has to happen, it shouldn't take that for us to kick it into gear at all, but maybe that was a pretty big wakeup call and getting embarrassed on your home ice on a Saturday afternoon is never how you'd like to spend your Saturday night, so we were pretty upset about it and rightfully so, we should be..

"I think there was a bit of reflection, so it was nice to go out west and do what we did,"

Nathan Beaulieu returned to practice, but when I asked him if he was 100-percent from the concussion he suffered in Calgary the defenseman said, "I'm feeling good, it was a pretty scary incident, but I feel really fortunate with my results, so I'm happy with where I am right now and it's just a day-to-day process."

Eichel and Lehner earn league honors

WGR550

Paul Hamilton

January 29, 2018

Buffalo, NY (WGR 550) - For the first time in team history, the Buffalo Sabres have two of the NHL's Three Stars of the week.

Jack Eichel is the league's second star. Eichel led the NHL with two goals and three assists for five points in the three wins out west. Eichel scored the overtime game-winner in Calgary on Tuesday night.

Eichel added a goal and two assists in the NHL All-Star Game on Sunday, giving him three goals and five assists for eight points in four games.

Eichel is 19th in league scoring with 49 points in 49 games.

Lehner didn't allow a goal in his two wins at Edmonton and Vancouver. The Sabres netminder stopped all 63 shots he faced.

The number one star for the week is the NHL All-Star Game's MVP, Brock Boeser of Vancouver. Boeser scored two goals on Sunday and won the Accuracy Shooting contest during the skills competition on Saturday.

Boeser netted two goals in the Canucks' win over Los Angeles, but was held off the board by Lehner on Thursday. Boeser leads all rookies with 24 goals in 46 games.

Hot Sabres want to reward fans with home wins

Olean Times Herald

Bill Hoppe

January 29, 2018

BUFFALO – Jason Pominville sounded a little nostalgic recalling some special memories from his first stint here. Occasionally, when the Sabres winger watches a memorable goal on Youtube.com, the passion he sees from fans in the clips wows him.

“It’s pretty amazing how they respond,” Pominville said Monday inside KeyBank Center after the Sabres reconvened following the NHL All-Star break.

Right now, the Sabres are enjoying their first three-game winning streak this season entering tonight’s home tilt against the New Jersey Devils.

After the Dallas Stars pummeled the Sabres 7-1 at home Jan. 20, they transformed into a tight five-man attack last week, outscoring their opponents 11-1 on the road while showcasing some much-needed tenacity.

Sure, the Sabres still own the NHL’s second-lowest point total (37). But over the weekend, Pominville was reminded how much excitement a few victories can generate throughout the community.

“People were like, ‘Oh, great job this week, this road trip you guys were awesome,’” Pominville said. “So that’s how it is. They’re pretty passionate and they like it and hopefully we can give them a little more.”

The Sabres especially want to give their fans more at home, where they’ve been downright awful at times this season. They’ve won a league-low six home games (tied with the Arizona Coyotes) in 21 tries (6-12-3).

It’s now commonplace for surly fans beaten down by years of losing to boo the Sabres off the ice.

Tonight kicks off a season-long five-game home stand for the Sabres. They play nine of their next 11 games here and close the season with 20 of their final 33 contests at KeyBank Center.

If the Sabres want to climb up the standings, they must morph into a strong home team. They have a terrific opportunity over the next two months.

In Pominville’s early days, when the Sabres ranked among the NHL’s heavyweights and made two consecutive Eastern Conference final appearances, most opponents detested coming into Buffalo’s raucous rink.

“This place can be a fun place, the building gets loud,” Pominville said. “I think we’re missing out on a lot as far as how loud this place can be and how passionate the fans are and how involved they are with us when we’re winning hockey games.”

Sabres coach Phil Housley added: “Fans have come and supported us all year. But when you’re winning in Buffalo, it’s unbelievable. The fans are behind you. When you can be a physical team, be a tenacious team, a team that gives a great effort night in and night out, I think that’s what they’re looking for. And if you do that, you’re going to get results.”

To winger Kyle Okposo, the Sabres took a strong first step – “Put a few games together where we really kind of showed what we can do,” he said – last week.

“Now we got to take another step, we got to come back home and we got to be good on home ice,” he said. “We kind of set a goal for the rest of the year we wanted to hit. We got to start better on home ice and defending our building.”

The Sabres, who have a wretched minus-49 goal differential this season, defended well in beating the Calgary Flames, Edmonton Oilers and Vancouver Canucks. Incredibly, they haven’t allowed a goal since the Flames scored 8:00 into last Monday’s 2-1 overtime win.

How did the Sabres, who haven’t won four consecutive contests since December 2014, change so quickly?

“We had a total buy-in, I think,” Okposo said. “We had a total urgency to keep the puck out of our net. We just reloaded and we worked. Anytime the possession was in question or we thought they might have a chance going the other way, everybody got back. When we did that, we were able to break out of our own zone really easily. It started with our defense.”

That defense helped Sabres goalie Robin Lehner close the trip with two straight shutouts.

“We started playing defense and understood it started in the other end of the ice,” Lehner said. “The amount of work our forwards did over the last three games was incredible, just them coming back so hard and making it easy for our D, making it easy for me. We were defending with three, four five guys. It makes a big difference.”

He added: “It’s hard to fall apart with five guys playing together. ... We haven’t been those layers. We’ve been one layer. When that layer breaks, it breaks totally.”

Lehner believes the Sabres must take the same approach they did on the road last week.

“We can look at it away or home or this or that, it’s not about that,” he said. “It’s about playing the way we just played. Play the way we just played, we’re going to get results. We get away from it, we’re not. It’s very simple.

“There’s no magic to our game. We didn’t do anything spectacular. I didn’t stand on my head, a guy didn’t play by himself. It’s about every single one of us doing our job.”

Sabres' Jack Eichel, Robin Lehner earn second, third star of week

Olean Times Herald

Bill Hoppe

January 29, 2018

BUFFALO – Splendid performances from center Jack Eichel and goalie Robin Lehner earned the Sabres the NHL's second and third star for the week ending Jan. 28.

Eichel led the league with two goals and five points as the Sabres won three straight games for the first time since Feb. 14-18, 2017. The NHL All-Star scored his third career overtime winner in last Monday's 2-1 win in Calgary. He followed up with his third career four-point night in Wednesday's 5-0 win in Edmonton.

The American compiled one goal and three points in two outings during Sunday's NHL All-Star Game.

Eichel has scored a team-high 20 goals and 49 points in 49 games this season.

Lehner, meanwhile, posted consecutive shutouts, stopping 33 shots Wednesday and 30 in Thursday's 4-0 win in Vancouver. The Swede became the first Sabres goalie to blank consecutive opponents since Ryan Miller on Feb. 29 and March 1, 2012.

Vancouver winger Brock Boeser was named first star. The rookie earned NHL All-Star Game MVP honors, won Saturday's accuracy skills competition and scored two goals in two games earlier in the week.

A few updates from this afternoon's practice inside HarborCenter, the first following a three-day break:

– Sabres defenseman Nathan Beaulieu, out the last two games after suffering an upper-body injury early last Monday, skated as a spare.

Beaulieu hit his head on the ice fighting Curtis Lazar after the Flames forward stuck his leg out behind the net.

“The intent wasn't dirty but I didn't really like what happened the first couple minutes of the game, so I thought I needed to do that,” Beaulieu said of the hit. “It's just unfortunate how I fell. I didn't think there was a need for it but that's hockey.”

– Eichel spoke to the media today but didn't practice.

Does he have a favorite memory from his first NHL All-Star Game?

“I don't know if there's one thing that you can pinpoint,” he said. “I thought that the three-on-three was a lot of fun yesterday. It was nice to just hang out with the guys during the skills competition and get to know some players you don't know and spend some time with the league's best and guys that I've looked up to my whole life.”

“I think that's probably one of the things that I'll take away from it. Just being around them was pretty cool for me, getting to know them a little bit and building a relationship.”

– Lehner credited the Sabres' strong play during the trip for his honor.

“Every part of our game was great,” he said. “I think I saw one odd-man rush in two games and I didn't have to make that many big (saves). It was great stuff for us as a team.”

– Former Sabres captain Brian Gionta, who's set to captain Team USA at next month's Pyeongchang Games, will play for the Rochester Americans on Friday. The Greece native signed a one-game professional tryout with Buffalo's AHL affiliate today.

Gionta, 39, passed on NHL opportunities so he could play in the Olympics.

Sabres hope to carry momentum of road trip into 5-game homestand

Sabres.com

Jourdon LaBarber

January 29, 2018

Last time the Buffalo Sabres took the ice at KeyBank Center, they witnessed firsthand how a team could dominate simply on the merit of hard work. In this instance, the team was the Dallas Stars, who the Sabres admitted had outcompeted them in a 7-1 Dallas victory on Jan. 20.

Jason Pominville said after that game that the Sabres needed to use Dallas as an example of how to turn their own season around. Over the course of the next week, it seemed like they did. The Sabres competed their way to a three-game sweep of their road trip in Western Canada heading into the All-Star break.

With a five-game homestand set to begin against the New Jersey Devils on Tuesday night - and with nine of their 14 games in February set to be played at KeyBank Center - the Sabres will now set out to make sure that they're the ones setting the tone at home ice from here on out.

"I think it's really important," coach Phil Housley said. "... We're playing a lot of teams that are in playoff contention or are in the playoffs, which is a great challenge for us. We need to put our foot down here and have the same type of effort. We don't need to change anything. We have to just play a simple game."

Phil Housley (1/29/18)

05:24 • January 29th, 2018

Housley has preached attention to detail and sticking to the game plan all season. Following the loss to Dallas, the message finally stuck. The Sabres went toe-to-toe with one of the league's hottest teams in a 2-1 overtime victory over the Calgary Flames last Monday, and then won 5-0 in Edmonton the following night.

They capped the road trip with a 4-0 win in Vancouver on Thursday, marking their first three-game win streak of the season. The team performance resulted in individual honors on Monday, when Jack Eichel and Robin Lehner were named the NHL's Second and Third Stars of the Week, respectively.

Lehner turned in back-to-back shutouts for the first time in his career. He and Chad Johnson combined to go a perfect 80-for-80 against even-strength shots during the road trip, with the lone goal against coming in Calgary with the Flames on the power play.

The recognition was nice, Lehner said, but it spoke more to the defensive performance in front of him.

"We defended," Lehner said. "We started playing defense and understood it started in the other end of the ice. The amount of work our forwards did over the last three games was incredible, just them coming back so hard and making it easy for our D, making it easy for me. We were defending with three, four five guys. It makes a big difference."

Robin Lehner (1/29/18)

04:00 • January 29th, 2018

Now that the team has proven to itself that their hard work can translate into results, Eichel said he sees no reason it can't continue coming out of the break.

"Now after doing it and doing it against some good hockey teams and consecutively, I think that we all realize that if we continue to do it that way and work and do the things that we need to do as a team to win games, then we'll be successful," Eichel said. "It just needs to be there every night."

Jack Eichel (1/29/18)

05:27 • January 29th, 2018

If it does continue, the Sabres have an opportunity to use the month of February to establish themselves on their home ice. Housley was a part of six playoff teams during his playing career in Buffalo, and recalled what it was like to play in front of the fans on a winning team.

"Fans have come and supported us all year," he said. "But when you're winning in Buffalo, it's unbelievable. The fans are behind you. When you can be a physical team, be a tenacious team, a team that gives a great effort night in and night out, I think that's what they're looking for.

"And if you do that, you're going to get results."

Beaulieu returns to practice

Nathan Beaulieu was back on the ice after leaving the team's game in Calgary following a fight with Flames forward Curtis Lazar. The defenseman said he sustained an upper-body injury upon falling to the ice at the conclusion of the fight.

"I think it's good for him to get some hard practices in and we'll see where he is tomorrow after today, because it was a pretty good grind out there today coming back from the break," Housley said.

The injury was the latest in a line of ailments that have affected Beaulieu, who was only two shifts removed from a three-game absence due to an illness when he fought Lazar. He missed five games with a separate illness in December and seven games with an upper-body injury beginning in late October.

"I feel good, enjoyed my break," he said. "It's been tough to get some games here and get it going because it seems like between sickness and injuries it's been tough. Hopefully the last 33 games of the year, I'm just wishing for a clean bill of health."

Lines at practice

With Eichel getting the day off after taking part in All-Star festivities during the weekend, Jacob Josefson filled in on the top line between Zemgus Girgensons and Kyle Okposo. Here's how the full lineup appeared in practice:

28 Zemgus Girgensons - 10 Jacob Josefson - 21 Kyle Okposo
20 Scott Wilson - 90 Ryan O'Reilly - 23 Sam Reinhart
9 Evander Kane - 22 Johan Larsson - 29 Jason Pominville
67 Benoit Pouliot - 71 Evan Rodrigues - 13 Nicholas Baptiste / 17 Jordan Nolan

6 Marco Scandella - 55 Rasmus Ristolainen
19 Jake McCabe - 93 Victor Antipin
41 Justin Falk - 8 Casey Nelson
4 Josh Gorges - 82 Nathan Beaulieu

40 Robin Lehner
31 Chad Johnson

Eichel, Lehner receive Star of the Week honors

Sabres.com

Jourdon LaBarber

January 29, 2018

Following a sweep of their three-game road trip in Western Canada, the Buffalo Sabres had two players recognized for their efforts on Monday afternoon. Jack Eichel and Robin Lehner were named the NHL's Second and Third Stars of the Week for the week ending on Jan. 28.

Eichel led the NHL with five points (2+3) in three outings, including the overtime winner in Calgary on Monday. His four points in Buffalo's 5-0 win over Edmonton on Tuesday matched a career-high, which he followed with a goal and two assists in his first career All-Star Game on Sunday.

Eichel's overtime winner

01:02 • January 22nd, 2018

Eichel's emphatic goal

00:39 • January 28th, 2018

Eichel has 25 points in 17 games dating back to his hat trick on Dec. 15, tied with Colorado's Nathan MacKinnon for the NHL lead during that span.

Lehner posted back-to-back shutouts for the first time in his career with 33 saves in Edmonton on Tuesday and 30 in Vancouver on Thursday. He has three shutouts this season and six during his career with the Sabres, placing him eighth in franchise history.

Lehner's strong kick stop

00:21 • January 25th, 2018

Buffalo's last back-to-back shutouts were logged by Ryan Miller on Feb. 29 and March 1, 2012. The Sabres' current shutout streak of 173:30 is their longest since Miller and Martin Biron combined to set a franchise record of 226:24 from Jan. 16 to 25, 2003.

Vancouver rookie Brock Boeser, who received All-Star MVP honors on Sunday, was named First Star of the Week.

The Sabres begin a five-game homestand at KeyBank Center against the New Jersey Devils on Tuesday night.

Glotov extends goal-scoring streak to 6 games for Shawinigan

Sabres.com

Kris Baker

January 29, 2018

When Vasily Glotov (2016, seventh round) was traded last offseason from the Cape Breton Screaming Eagles to the Shawinigan Cataractes, his new club knew they were getting an offensive talent. While the Cataractes have been mired in last place in the 18-team league for most of the season, the Russian shooter has managed to exceed expectations as a bright spot in an otherwise disappointing campaign.

Glotov maintained his frenetic scoring pace Friday, getting to the slot to pot his 24th goal of the year as Shawinigan came up short in a 5-2 loss at Rimouski.

The marker extended Glotov's goal-scoring streak to six games while giving him points in eight consecutive outings. Both streaks were the longest of Glotov's two-year Quebec Major Junior Hockey League career.

Kris Baker

@SabresProspects

Shawinigan's Vasily Glotov keeps the dream alive with his 24th goal of the year in Friday's 5-2 loss to Rimouski. Glotov on one of the hottest goal streaks in recent Sabres prospects history with marks in six straight games, and 12 (half his season haul) in his last 13. #Sabres

11:14 AM - Jan 27, 2018

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The streaks were snapped Sunday, though, with Glotov submitting just one shot on goal as the Cataractes got past Moncton 4-3 in overtime.

The productive run gives the yet-to-be-signed Glotov a team-best 24 goals, which ties for 10th in the QMJHL, with half of those tallies coming in his last 14 games. Through 43 games, Glotov has produced 33 total points.

WHL

Prince Albert defenseman Vojtech Budik (2016, fifth round) notched an assist Friday as the Raiders defeated Prince George 6-2.

Budik kept it going by setting a new career mark with a four-point night Saturday, ripping a shot from the right point for a goal and adding three helpers as Prince Albert cruised past Edmonton 9-2.

Kris Baker

@SabresProspects

Prince Albert D Vojtech Budik remained red-hot with another goal and three helpers last night. Six-game point streak, 20 pts in last 17 games going back to 12/1. He previously posted five points in his first 25 games this season. #Sabres

10:48 AM - Jan 28, 2018

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The Czech defender has now captured points in six-straight contests, leaving him with season totals of eight goals and 25 points in 42 games. He has 20 points in his last 17 outings dating back to Dec. 1 after registering just five in his first 25 games of the 2017-18 schedule.

Brandon Hagel (2016, sixth round) went without a point Tuesday as Red Deer got past Medicine Hat 4-1 to earn their first home-ice victory since Oct. 28.

Hagel set up the overtime winner Saturday as the Rebels defeated Kelowna 3-2 in overtime, and was kept off the score sheet Sunday in a 2-1 overtime loss to Lethbridge.

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Red Deer's Brandon Hagel has three assists in six games back after a six-week absence due to an upper-body injury. One of the three came on this long transition play in OT as the Rebels got past Kelowna.

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Hagel, who missed six weeks of action in December and January with an upper-body injury, has collected seven goals and 26 points in 34 appearances with the Rebels.

OHL

Cliff Pu (2016, third round) notched his 21st goal of the season Saturday as part of a three-point night as Kingston earned a 5-4 overtime victory in Ottawa.

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Cliff Pu scored his 21st goal as part of a three-point night in Kingston's OT win at Ottawa. Pu has deposited 11 points (5+6) in 11 games since being dealt to the Fronts. #Sabres

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The one-goal, two-assist effort, which was sandwiched between Kingston's wins over Oshawa and Peterborough, gives the 19-year-old forward 57 points (21+36) in 48 games.

Peterborough defenseman Austin Osmanski (2016, seventh round) picked up an assist Friday in the Petes' 4-3 loss to Mississauga, and logged a minus-1 rating Sunday in a 2-0 road blanking at Kingston.

Osmanski has appeared in 45 games this season, notching one goal, 13 helpers, and 65 shots on goal.

NCAA

Freshman forward Casey Mittelstadt (2017, first round) dazzled with a great neutral zone play before finishing off a rebound for the overtime winner Friday as Minnesota knocked off top-ranked Notre Dame 1-0 in overtime.

Mittelstadt completed the week by assisting on the Gophers' only goal in a 4-1 loss to the Fighting Irish on Saturday.

The freshman centerman has earned a point in three consecutive games, giving him eight goals and 22 points through 26 games played.

Boston College defenseman Casey Fitzgerald (2016, third round) was shut out Friday as the Eagles suffered a 3-2 loss at Massachusetts Lowell, and resumed production with an assist in Saturday's 5-2 home-ice victory over the River Hawks.

Fitzgerald has four goals and 14 points through 25 games.

Christopher Brown (2014, sixth round) produced an assist in back-to-back games last week as Boston College split the home-and-home series with Massachusetts Lowell.

Brown, who like Fitzgerald played his 100th collegiate game on Friday, has points in four consecutive games to enter February with a total of 15 (6+9) in 26 contests.

Jacob Bryson (2017, fourth round) was blanked Friday as Providence played to a 4-4 tie at Northeastern, and responded with a plus-2 rating Saturday as the Friars closed the set with a 2-1 overtime win.

Bryson has played in 28 games, recording one goal and a team-best 18 helpers with a plus-11 rating.

After being blanked in a 4-2 win over Penn State on Friday, Wisconsin winger Linus Weissbach (2017, seventh round) scored his eighth goal of the year Saturday as the Badgers and the Nittany Lions played to a 4-4 tie. Weissbach scored the deciding goal in the shootout to give the Badgers the tiebreaker point in the Big Ten Hockey conference standings.

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Linus Weissbach jams home his eighth goal of the year and later scores in the shootout to get Wisconsin the extra point. Weissbach had 1+1 last night to earn the game's first star, moves to 19 points on the year. #Sabres

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The productive Saturday gives Weissbach 19 points (8+11) in 26 contests.

Ivan Chukarov (2015, seventh round) recorded three shots on goal over the weekend as Massachusetts dropped a pair of 3-2 decisions to Maine, giving the third-year defender five assists and a minus-3 rating in 18 appearances.

St. Cloud State defenseman Will Borgen (2015, fourth round) logged an even rating Friday in a 5-1 loss at Minnesota-Duluth, and continued to be a smart, two-way stalwart the next night with one assist, four shots on goal, and several blocks as the Huskies earned the conference series split with a 2-1 victory.

Borgen has collected 11 points (1+10) and a plus-9 rating while appearing in all 24 of the Huskies' games.

Judd Peterson (2012, seventh round) produced a combined seven shots on goal as St. Cloud State split the conference set at Minnesota Duluth, leaving the senior forward with three goals and nine assists through 24 contests.

Sophomore power forward project Brett Murray (2016, fourth round) did not play over the weekend as Penn State played to a loss and a tie at Wisconsin. Murray, who has appeared in just one of his club's last 10 contests, has one goal and five points in 17 games.

Connecticut defenseman Philip Nyberg (2016, fifth round) contributed four shots on goal Friday in a 4-2 win at New Hampshire, and did not dress the following night as the Huskies completed the home-and-home sweep with a 3-2 triumph.

In 16 games, Nyberg has picked up a pair of power-play tallies and three total points.

Brown senior forward Max Willman (2014, fifth round) has been deemed out for the season with an injury. Prior to the premature end to the year, Willman had captured one goal, five points, and 25 shots on goal in nine appearances.

Europe

Sniping winger Victor Olofsson (2014, seventh round) stroked a one-timer for his league-leading 22nd goal of the year Thursday to help Frolunda HC to a 7-1 dismantling of Karlskrona HK. The marker gives Olofsson sole possession of first place among SHL goal scorers entering the final six weeks of the regular season.

Kris Baker

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We've seen this a few times before....Victor Olofsson strokes a one-timer on the PP for his 22nd goal of the year. #Sabres

8:02 AM - Jan 26, 2018

3 3 Replies 8 8 Retweets 54 54 likes

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Olofsson, who was unable to crack the score sheet in a 3-0 triumph over Skelleftea AIK on Saturday, has collected 34 total points in 38 games this season, good for second on his team and ninth among all league skaters.

Djurgarden IF centerman Marcus Davidsson (2017, second round) was unable to connect in Thursday's 6-2 win over Rogle BK, but got back on track Saturday when he broke down the right side and scored his sixth goal of the year in a 5-4 overtime victory over Vaxjo Lakers HC.

Davidsson has elevated his game of late with four goals in six games since his return from the World Junior Championship to improve his career-best point total to 14 through 29 contests.

Farjestad BK centerman Rasmus Asplund (2016, second round) was blanked in two games to start the week before connecting for an assist in Saturday's 4-1 win over Lulea. The helper gives Asplund 26 points (6+20) through 40 appearances with 10 dates left on the Swedish Hockey League regular season schedule.

In Finland, goaltender Ukko-Pekka Luukkonen (2017, second round) stopped 33 of 35 shots Wednesday as LeKi fell to Espoo United 2-0. Luukkonen again earned the nod Friday with 26 saves in a 6-4 loss to SaPKo.

Luukkonen has recorded 11 victories this season while posting a 2.65 GAA and .916 save%.

Rookie defenseman Oskari Laaksonen (2017, third round) saw his ice time fluctuate last week, skating for just 3:01 Tuesday in Ilves' 3-0 loss to HIFK, and then seeing a more regular role Saturday with 13:45 of work in a 3-2 loss to SaiPa.

Laaksonen has averaged 10:21 of action through his first eight Liiga contests, along the way producing one assist, a minus-three rating, and 16 shot attempts.

Sharpen Up: January 29, 2018

Sabres.com

Jourdon LaBarber

January 29, 2018

His team came up a bit short in the end, but Jack Eichel's first All-Star Weekend was memorable nonetheless. Eichel scored a goal and two assists in the Atlantic Division's win over the Metropolitan Division, and he would have had a third assist had it not been for an overturned call on an offside challenge.

Ultimately, the Atlantic Division fell 5-2 to the Pacific Division in the final. Eichel, however, left with a mini highlight reel of his own.

His most memorable moment? That's up for debate. There was his behind-the-back exchange with Nikita Kucherov to set up a goal for his second assist:

Buffalo Sabres



@BuffaloSabres



5:34 PM - Jan 28, 2018

14 14 Replies 400 400 Retweets 1,492 1,492 likes

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Or, for fans of theatrics, there was his Auston Matthews-inspired celebration after scoring a one-time goal from the slot:

Eichel's emphatic goal

00:39 • January 28th, 2018

Eichel discussed the origins of the celebration and reflected on his All-Star experience afterward, which you can watch in the video below. You can find complete coverage of Eichel's day in our written recap.

Jack Eichel Post All-Star Game

09:39 • January 28th, 2018

Want more All-Star coverage? [Click here](#) for a recap of Saturday's Skills Challenge (Eichel participated in the Fastest Skater event).

There's no place like home

The Sabres will look to pick up where they left off as they return from the All-Star break for practice at HarborCenter this afternoon. They swept their three-game road trip in Western Canada last week, including the first back-to-back shutouts of Robin Lehner's career.

Now, their task becomes to take their defensive improvements and apply them to home ice. The Sabres begin a five-game homestand against the New Jersey Devils on Tuesday night, kicking off a month of February in which nine of their 14 games will be played at KeyBank Center.

Need a refresher on how the Sabres left off? Here are a few statistics from Sabres PR:

Robin Lehner and Chad Johnson have combined to stop all 80 even-strength shots they faced in their last three games. Buffalo last went three games without allowing an even-strength goal when Jhonas Enroth was a perfect 82-for-82 from Nov. 22 to 28, 2014.

Lehner's back-to-back shutouts are the first by a Sabre goaltender since Ryan Miller logged two in a row on Feb. 29 and March 1, 2012.

After scoring a goal in Vancouver on Thursday, Sam Reinhart has tallied seven points (3+4) in his last six games, marking the most productive stretch of his career. His linemates have been a factor - Ryan O'Reilly has eight points (4+4) in his last eight games and Scott Wilson entered the break with points in three straight.

Kyle Okposo scored a power-play goal in Vancouver, giving him 10 points (3+7) in his last seven games. Buffalo's power play as a whole, meanwhile, has been red hot as of late with nine goals in eight games.

Sabres Style returns Saturday

The Sabres welcome the St. Louis Blues to KeyBank Center on Saturday night, marking another Sabres Style Girls Night Out presented by Coca-Cola. The evening includes a pregame happy hour featuring Sabres alumni, food and drink and admission to the Gold Carpet Experience during intermission.

Tickets and more information can be found [here](#).