



Buffalo Sabres

Daily Press Clips

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Top pick Dahlin scores first goal, Sabres beat Coyotes 3-0

Associated Press

By Jose M. Romero

October 14, 2018

GLENDALE, Ariz. (AP) — Five games into his first NHL season, rookie Rasmus Dahlin has his first career goal.

The 18-year-old defenseman, the first overall pick in this year's NHL draft, put in a rebound 2:45 into the game. It proved to be all the Buffalo Sabres needed in a 3-0 win over the Arizona Coyotes on Saturday night.

Dahlin was mobbed by his teammates on the ice.

"They were really glad and that makes me glad, too," he said. "A good win for us. It's a tough league, but we'll just keep moving forward."

Linus Ullmark stopped 36 shots for his first career shutout, Jeff Skinner had a goal and an assist, and Conor Sheary also scored for the Sabres. Ullmark, making his season debut, appeared in his 27th career NHL game.

"It was sweet," Ullmark said of his shutout. "I didn't have to fight much to see the puck, so all credit to the guys for helping out."

Arizona failed to score for the third time in their first four games - including the second time at home.

Antti Raanta had 20 saves for the Coyotes, who have two goals this season despite outshooting their opponents in every game.

"If we're not getting out chances or not getting our shots I'd be worried. But you can't keep moving lines every time because you're not scoring," Coyotes coach Rick Tocchet said. "A guy hits a guy in the logo, some guys, you've got to pick the corner. It's four games and I know everybody's frustrated we're not scoring goals ... at the end of the day you've got to be able to will yourself a goal."

The Coyotes went 0 for 3 on power plays and are 1 for 12 on the season. Defenseman and captain Oliver Ekman-Larsson took a nasty spill when he was tripped up late in the game on a hit by Patrik Berglund.

Ekman-Larsson was able to return to the ice moments later, just before Skinner scored on a backhand with 3:31 to play in the third.

Buffalo got started with Dahlin's goal, but Skinner did much of the work to set it up. The center, acquired from Carolina in an offseason trade, skated around Coyotes defenseman Jason Demers and Raanta, leaving the puck for Dahlin for the finish.

"I was happy for him. First one," Skinner said of Dahlin. "You watch him play and you know it's going to come for him, it was going to come. He's got so much skill. Nice for him to get it out of the way."

A cross-checking penalty on Arizona's Christian Fischer set up Buffalo's first power play of the game, and Sheary beat Raanta on his blocker side after Sam Reinhart faked a shot and dished the puck out to Sheary. The goal, with 1:54 left in the first period, gave Buffalo a 2-0 lead and was the first power-play goal allowed by Arizona this season.

The Coyotes missed a pair of good chances late in the second, with Ullmark stopping shots from close range by Richard Panik and Fischer before the period ended.

NOTES: Former Coyotes D Zbynek Michalek, who played 612 career games with the team, dropped the ceremonial first puck before Saturday's game. Michalek is second among defensemen all-time in games played for Arizona. ... F Josh Archibald (upper body injury) was scratched and has missed the first four games of the season. ... Sheary's three goals tied him with C Jack Eichel for the team lead. ... Sabres C Vladimir Sobotka

played for the first time since the season opener on Oct. 4. He then missed the next three games with an upper body injury.

UP NEXT

Sabres: At Vegas on Tuesday night.

Coyotes: At Minnesota on Tuesday night.

Memorable mileposts mark start of Sabres' trip

By Mike Harrington

The Buffalo Sabres

October 14, 2018

LAS VEGAS – Their one real chance at a day off on this Western road trip came Sunday, so the Buffalo Sabres took advantage of it.

A free day in Sin City was a fine reward for all the good things that happened during Saturday night's 3-0 win over the Arizona Coyotes in Gila River Arena.

The opener of a five-game jaunt was a memorable night of mileposts. As a result, the Sabres improved to 3-2 – forging a record with more wins than combined losses this deep in a season for the first time since they were 16-12-3 on Dec. 16, 2011.

Most notable, of course, was the first NHL goal from No. 1 overall pick Rasmus Dahlin. It came just 2:45 into the first period as the 18-year-old sprung Jeff Skinner with an outlet pass and alertly followed the play as Skinner undressed defenseman Jason Demers and got in alone on goalie Antti Raanta.

Skinner nearly scored on his own but got in too deep. Still, he was able to poke the puck into the crease, where Dahlin overpowered Arizona forward Brad Richardson to drive it into the empty net.

"It was awesome. I was very happy for him," said goalie and fellow Swede Linus Ullmark. "I didn't realize at first who scored, then I saw some small dude over there cheering a lot. I was very happy for him and I think there's a lot to come with that."

Through five games, Dahlin has become progressively more daring about getting into the play. His confidence is clearly growing about starting the rush or joining in when it's already in motion. If he's conservatively looming back at the blueline on this play, for instance, there's no chance to score.

"It comes up in situations when you can go in the rush," Dahlin said. "I take what's given. I don't force anything but when the situation comes up, I take it."

"It was a heck of a play because we've been talking about driving to the net and getting there and it happened to be Rasmus," said coach Phil Housley. "He has tremendous instincts. Just a knack of finding the open man with the puck or following up and filling in a hole adding on the rush. He just went with his instincts, went to the net and made a strong play on it to get the rebound."

Dahlin got the puck back – he thinks Skinner retrieved it for him – and plans to have it mounted. Skinner, who scored his 205th NHL goal and first as a Sabre to clinch the win in the third period, made the play happen once he corralled Dahlin's pass.

"I need to thank Skinner," said a smiling Dahlin. "When I saw the puck on the goal line, I just shot it in. He made a great move so he got open, then made a great move on the goalie too. It was an open net. So thanks, Skins."

The Sabres were thanking Skinner for more than just setting up Dahlin. He was a whirling dervish on the ice in the game and finally got rewarded with his first goal for Buffalo with 3:29 left to play.

After taking a pass from Rasmus Ristolainen, Skinner showed off his silky smooth hands by beating Coyotes goaltender Antti Raanta with a top-shelf backhand.

"It was nice, been a while for me," said Skinner, who had not hit the net since March 31. "Risto made a great play up to me. The puck was rolling a little, I tried to settle it down. It's always nice to get one and contribute."

"He's been really doing the right things. He just hasn't been rewarded," Housley said. "That was a heck of a move. It was really good hands on his part."

Nathan Beaulieu (82) and Linus Ullmark celebrate after the goalie's first NHL shutout. (Getty Images)

And there was more.

Ullmark made his first start of the season and couldn't have given the Sabres a better result. He stopped all 36 shots he faced to post his first NHL shutout.

"It's always fun to make saves, especially when you can keep it up to make enough saves for the team to win," Ullmark said dryly. "They had some pushes but we played really solid defensively. We were keeping the guys to the outside and they were giving me the shot lane."

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The Sabres return to practice here Monday to prepare for Tuesday night's rematch with the Vegas Golden Knights. Buffalo dumped the defending Western Conference champions, 4-2, last Monday in KeyBank Center and is 1-0-2 against Vegas since it joined the NHL last season.

The Golden Knights improved to 2-4 with Saturday's 1-0 win at Philadelphia but they have only scored 11 goals in their six games. The Sabres have 11 goals in five games.

Rasmus Dahlin's first NHL goal thrills Sabres, sparks victory

By Mike Harrington

The Buffalo Sabres

October 14, 2018

GLENDAL, Ariz. -- There can only be one first time.

And no matter how many goals Rasmus Dahlin will eventually score in what the Sabres hope will be a wondrous NHL career, he will always have the memory of a sleepy Saturday night in the desert.

It was here in the Phoenix suburbs, among the farthest locales in the NHL from his native Sweden, where Dahlin scored his first goal wearing Buffalo blue and gold.

"It's one of those things that you'll never forget as a young player coming into the NHL," coach Phil Housley said after the 3-0 win over the Arizona Coyotes in Gila River Arena. "You always know when you scored your first career goal in the NHL so I was really happy for him."

The moment came just 2:45 into the first period. Dahlin passed the puck to Jeff Skinner and followed the play, rather than just watch as Skinner undressed Coyotes defenseman Jason Demers and broke in alone on Antti Raanta.

But Skinner got too deep and missed trying to poke the puck in while he was already behind the goal line. No worries. Dahlin swooped in, lifted Brad Richardson's stick and pounded the puck into an open net.

"I need to thank Skinner," said a smiling Dahlin. "When I saw the puck on the goal line, I just shot it in. He made a great move so he got open, then made a great move on the goalie too. It was an open net. So thanks, Skins."

"Rasmus made a real nice play getting it to me in transition and obviously a real good job following it up," noted Skinner. "I tried to put it but it needed his help. I was happy for him. His first one. That's the first of many for him. Pretty cool."

Dahlin was swallowed by teammates in the corner after the goal and took enthusiastic glove taps when he returned to the bench. It was the moment that carried the night as the Sabres improved to 3-2.

"They were really glad. That makes me glad too," Dahlin said. "We have a chemistry on the team."

At 18 years and 183 days old, Dahlin became the youngest defenseman in 23 years score an NHL goal. He is the youngest defenseman in Sabres history to do so and the third-youngest in NHL history to be credited with a game-winner, behind only Craig Wolanin of New Jersey in 1985 and Red Garrett of the New York Rangers in 1942.

Dahlin is also the second born-in-2000 player to score an NHL goal. The first was Carolina winger Andrei Svechnikov, who was taken one spot after Dahlin and has two goals for the Hurricanes.

Reporters waiting outside the Sabres locker room after the game heard the applause that filled the room as the team celebrated. Dahlin headed to the hallway to do a TV interview and a beaming Jason Botterill met him to shake his hand and offer congratulations.

It was a moment the general manager had to have pictured over and over again for the last 5 1/2 months, since those lottery balls bounced his way on another Saturday night in Toronto and perhaps forever changed the fortunes of a bedraggled franchise.

"It was awesome. I was very happy for him," said goalie Linus Ullmark, himself a hero after making 36 saves to earn his first NHL shutout. "I didn't realize at first who scored, then I saw some small dude over there cheering a lot. I was very happy for him and I think there's a lot to come with that."

"He's got so much skill, obviously it's nice for him to get it out of the way," Skinner said. "I thought he played a great game. It's only five games into his career and he's only going to get better. It's going to be fun to watch him for a long time."

The play showed Dahlin's bevy of skills that made him everybody's No. 1 pick in June. There was the crisp passing in the outlet to Skinner, the smooth skating to follow the play up ice and blow past unsuspecting Coyotes, and the instinct to head for the net. Not many 18-year-olds have that package.

"It was a heck of a play because we've been talking about driving to the net and getting there and it happened to be Rasmus," Housley said. "He has tremendous instincts. Just a knack of finding the open man with the puck or following up and filling in a hole adding on the rush. He just went with his instincts, went to the net and made a strong play on it to get the rebound."

Dahlin wasn't the only Sabre to post a first in this one. Ullmark's season debut became one for his personal scrapbook and Skinner's goal with 3:31 on a sick backhand deke was his first since joining the Sabres.

Skinner took a long pass from Rasmus Ristolainen, artfully settled the puck down with his feet and torched Raanta just under the crossbar.

"Risto made a great play up to me," Skinner said. "The puck was rolling a little, I tried to settle it down. It's always nice to get one and contribute. It was flipping so high I was trying to track it down so it didn't hop over my stick."

"It was really good hands on his part," Housley said. "That was good relief for our team, a big goal obviously."

Still, it was only a sidelight to the night's main focus. Dahlin said Skinner got him the puck from his first goal. What's the kid going to do with it?

"I don't actually know," Dahlin said. "Probably put it on -- I don't know what they call it in English -- but like a painting so it can hang up on the wall."

We think Dahlin meant a plaque. Pretty good chance he'll pile up a lot of those in his career too.

The Wraparound: Sabres 3, Coyotes 0

By Mike Harrington

The Buffalo News

October 13, 2018

GLENDAL, Ariz. -- Some major firsts got the Buffalo Sabres off a to good start on their longest Western road trip since 2010 Saturday night.

Rasmus Dahlin scored his first NHL goal and Linus Ullmark notched his first career shutout while making his initial start of the season as Buffalo blanked the Arizona Coyotes, 3-0, before 15,304 at Gila River Arena.

The win in the opener of a five-game sojourn improved the Sabres' record to 3-2. Arizona fell to 1-3 with its third shutout loss of the season.

Dahlin opened the scoring at 2:45 of the first period, tapping home a loose puck in the crease as he followed up a Sabres rush and advanced deep into the Arizona zone.

The play was made by Jeff Skinner, who took an outlet pass from Dahlin, burst through the Arizona end and faked past defenseman Jason Demers to get in alone on goalie Antti Raanta. Skinner got in too deep but was able to push the puck from behind the net into the crease, narrowly missing a tap-in of his own into the open cage.

Alertly joining the play, Dahlin lifted the stick of Arizona forward Brad Richardson and pounded the puck into the empty net before being mobbed by celebrating teammates in the corner. Among them was Evan Rodrigues, who was awarded a secondary assist on the play.

Fountain of Youth, 21st Century version: Dahlin became the second player in NHL history born in 2000 to score a goal. Carolina forward Andrei Svechnikov, taken after Dahlin at No. 2 overall in the June draft at Dallas, has two goals in his first five games for the Hurricanes.

Fountain of youth, historical version: At 18 years, 183 days old, Dahlin became the youngest defenseman in Sabres history to score a goal. Current head coach Phil Housley was also 18 when he scored his first goal during the 1982-83 season.

Dahlin is the youngest defenseman to score a goal in the NHL in 23 years. Boston's Kyle McLaren was 18 years, 130 days when he scored for the Bruins on Oct. 26, 1995.

Power play connects: The Sabres made it 2-0 at 18:06 of the first period as Conor Sheary took a Sam Reinhart pass from in tight and beat Raanta on a power play. The Sabres were 0 for 7 with the man-advantage in Thursday's loss to Colorado but have gone 4 for 10 in their other four games this season.

Ullmark holds the fort: Despite their lack of goals, the Coyotes entered the game fifth in the NHL with 36.7 shots per game. Ullmark made 36 saves in the game, many from close range. Perhaps his best stop came in the second period off Richard Panik on an Arizona power play.

Inactivity no issue: Carter Hutton had played the first four games this season and Ullmark had not played since losing the Sept. 26 exhibition game at Pittsburgh. What kind of goal did the Sabres have for Ullmark in this one? Coach Phil Housley offered some pretty prophetic words before the game.

"Just get him settled in," Housley said. "We're going to have to do a good job. This is a team in the top five in shot attempts per game. We're going to have to come back, control the middle and at least try to deflect everything to the outside, have him handle those shots on the wide ice and have him get settled into the game."

The clincher: Skinner scored his first as a Sabre with 3:31 left, beating Raanta under the bar with a backhander on a breakaway after taking a Rasmus Ristolainen pass. Until that goal, the Sabres were being outshot, 13-1, in the third period.

Sabres Scoring summary: Buffalo has 11 goals this season. Sheary and Jack Eichel have three apiece. Dahlin and fellow defensemen Nathan Beaulieu and Marco Scandella have one apiece. The only other goals from forward are by Skinner, and one by Jason Pominville Monday against Vegas.

Coyotes ugly: Arizona was also shut out in its first two games and managed just two goals in Wednesday's 3-2 shootout win over Anaheim. That's two goals in four games -- and neither one was at even strength.

Throwbacks: The Coyotes wore their black 90s throwback jerseys, bringing back memories of the days of Jeremy Roenick and Teppo Numminen. They are wearing the black, red and green sweaters for each Saturday home game this year.

Up Next: The Sabres headed to Las Vegas after the game and they will be off Sunday. Lucky them. They practice Monday at T-Mobile Arena and meet the Golden Knights there Tuesday at 10 p.m. Eastern time in Game 2 of the trip.

Sabres Notebook: A road trip this long is not the norm

By Mike Harrington

The Buffalo News

October 13, 2018

GLENDAL, Ariz. — Buffalo Sabres coach Phil Housley was used to these kinds of trips when he was an assistant in Nashville. When you're in the Western Conference, it's no big deal to be gone two weeks at a time for long road jaunts.

It's not nearly as common when you're in the East.

When the Sabres took the ice Saturday night to meet the Arizona Coyotes in Gila River Arena, it was the start of their longest roadie to the West Coast since 2010.

"Just getting off to a good start on your first game, because of the long flight and the circumstances going on the road, is always critical," Housley said prior to the game. "We'd like to kick off this road trip with a win. That sort of sets the stage for the rest of the trip."

This is the fourth time in five years the Sabres have had a long October trip to either Western Canada or the Western United States. They are 3-5-2 in those games on the previous three trips.

This one continues Tuesday night in Las Vegas before moving to a game in San Jose on Thursday and a back-to-back at Los Angeles and Anaheim next Saturday and Sunday.

The Sabres have had several stretches of six or seven consecutive road games in their history but many of them were sprinkled with games against Eastern teams.

The only other time they've played five straight out West came as part of a seven-gamer in January, 2010. The trip opened with a win in Atlanta and a shootout loss against the New York Islanders before the team made the long flight.

The Sabres went 1-3-1 on the Western segment, beating Phoenix and losing a shootout in Los Angeles. The Sabres lost in Anaheim, San Jose and Vancouver.

This is the first time they've played five straight on the road anywhere since going 0-4-1 from Feb. 28-March 11, 2015. That trip ended in Toronto after the team came home.

So this is the first time they're going five straight away from home since going 1-4 from March 18-27, 2014. They won in Edmonton and lost in Calgary, Vancouver, Montreal and Nashville.

Linus Ullmark made his first start of the season in goal for the Sabres after Carter Hutton went 2-2 over the first four games with a 3.06 goals-against average and .912 save percentage. Both of those figures were bloated by Thursday's 6-1 loss to Colorado. Ullmark had not played since a 5-1 exhibition loss Sept. 26 at Pittsburgh.

Winger Vladimir Sobotka, who missed the last three games with an upper-body injury, returned to the lineup Saturday night. Johan Larsson, who was ineffective while making his season debut Thursday against Colorado, became a healthy scratch along with Remi Elie.

The Sabres have played the same six defensemen each game this season. Matt Tennyson has been a healthy scratch in all five games and Zach Bogosian, who was injured Sept. 25 during the Hockeyville exhibition in Clinton, again sat out but is on the trip and could play at some point in the next week.

Jason Pominville played in his 665th game as a Sabre, snapping a tie with former captain Mike Foligno and current Buffalo Beauts coach Ric Seiling for 10th on the club's all-time list.

Pominville is just 16 behind Rick Martin (681) for ninth place and 47 behind Alexei Zhitnink (712) for eighth. He's the first Sabre to crack the top 10 in games since Zhitnik moved into eighth during the 2003-04 season.

Center Patrik Berglund played in his 699th career game and is scheduled to play No. 700 in Vegas.

The Coyotes think Dylan Strome is finally finding his game. The No. 3 overall pick in 2015 is trying to shed the stigma about being picked immediately behind Connor McDavid and Jack Eichel and not becoming an NHL regular.

Strome broke the Coyotes' goal drought at more than 137 minutes in Wednesday's win at Anaheim after Arizona was shut out in its first two contests. He has has 13 points in his last 13 games dating to last season, when he was also an AHL All-Star for Tucson after collecting 22 goals and 53 points in 50 games. Strome entered Saturday second in the NHL in faceoff percentage at 69.2.

So much for the Valley of the Sun.

Nearly 1 1/2 inches of rain pounded Phoenix and environs Saturday with a second storm system that swooped after rain started Friday night from the remnants of Tropical Storm Sergio. Emergency cell phone alerts warning of flash flooding went off three times during the morning and afternoon.

A couple of freeways heading from downtown to Glendale were flooded and closed in the afternoon before reopening a couple of hours before the opening faceoff. Less than halfway through the month, this has already been the second wettest October on record in Phoenix.

Dahlin's first NHL goal gives Sabres quick start on road trip

By Mike Harrington

The Buffalo News

October 13, 2018

GLENDAL, Ariz. — It took four games and just a shade into Game 5 but Rasmus Dahlin has his first goal in the National Hockey League.

The No. 1 overall pick in the June draft batted home a loose puck in the crease 2:45 into the first period Saturday night to give the Buffalo Sabres a 1-0 lead over the Arizona Coyotes in Gila River Arena.

The play was made by Jeff Skinner, who took an outlet pass from Dahlin, burst through the Arizona zone and faked past defenseman Jason Demers to get in alone on goalie Antti Raanta. Skinner got in too deep but was able to push the puck from behind the net into the crease, narrowly missing a tap-in of his own into the open cage.

Dahlin, alertly following up on the play, lifted the stick of Arizona forward Brad Richardson and pounded the puck into the empty net before being mobbed by celebrating teammates in the corner.

The large number of Sabres fans in the crowd cheered loudly when Dahlin's name was announced and the public address system noted it was the 18-year-old's first goal in the NHL.

Dahlin is the second player in NHL history to score a goal while being born in the year 2000. Carolina's Andrei Svechnikov, drafted No. 2 behind Dahlin in June, entered Saturday with two goals for the Hurricanes.

Dahlin had one assist on the Sabres' opening homestand. That came in Thursday's 6-1 loss to Colorado in KeyBank Center.

The assist by Skinner was the veteran's first point as a Sabre.

Sabres prospect Justin Bailey aims to get career back on right track

By Bill Hoppe
The Buffalo News
October 12, 2018

ROCHESTER – Justin Bailey and Chris Taylor go back a few years.

In Bailey's rookie season three years ago, Taylor, then an assistant coach with the Rochester Americans, helped the youngster adjust to the AHL and his new life as a pro hockey player.

The Williamsville native quickly developed a trust in Taylor, now the Amerks' head coach.

"He was someone my first year that was really, really big for me," said Bailey, who earned a promotion to the Buffalo Sabres five months into his first season.

Now, though, Bailey, 23, is no longer one of the organization's top prospects. The winger is coming off an injury-plagued season in which he played only 49 total games. The Sabres waived him earlier this month. After he cleared, they assigned him to the Amerks to begin his fourth AHL campaign.

Following Bailey's minus-3 performance in an opening night loss last Friday, Taylor scratched him the next night. The Amerks wanted more attention to the details from Bailey and a better effort.

"It's not the way I wanted to start the season," Bailey said Wednesday after returning to the lineup in a fourth line and penalty-killing role. "It's part of the game. It definitely sucked."

In a hallway outside the dressing room in Blue Cross Arena following his 161st AHL appearance, Bailey was introspective discussing his career and belief in Taylor.

Bailey said clearing waivers is "definitely a wake-up call." He's cognizant he must start showcasing the talents that helped him compile 43 goals over his first two AHL seasons.

"I got to get back to what I was doing my first couple years," he said. "I was having success scoring and competing. (I was) playing my best hockey probably my first couple years. Last year was a tough year with injuries.

"I just got to get back to playing with speed, playing with a lot of passion and making sure I get back on the right track."

The former second-round pick said Taylor's guidance is key to getting on that track.

"I trust him, I trust in what he's got going for me," Bailey said. "Even though sometimes that's tough, I think he's got my best interests at heart."

So to ignite Bailey and help him get back to the NHL, Taylor benched him, a move he said the former AHL All-Star wasn't happy about.

"We don't want anybody to be happy that they're being sat out," Taylor said.

Taylor, who played 149 NHL games, said, "Everybody goes through waivers." He said he experienced the process about 15 times over his 19-year pro career.

To Taylor, passing through waivers isn't a bad thing for Bailey.

"It just means that he's got to realize it's time to keep getting better and better and climbing and doing all the little things," Taylor said. "I've never given up on Justin at all. I've never given up on anybody. ...

"It's how you respond and what you're doing. I think Justin's got a long future. We're trying to get him back to where he wants to be at."

Bailey, who grew up a rabid Sabres fan, said he still sees a future in Buffalo.

"It's a dream for me every day to be able to be a part of this organization," he said. "I've been here for six years. It's a dream being close to home, dream being able to put that jersey on when I could. Yeah, I want to be here for as long as I can."

At his best, the 6-foot-4, 214-pound Bailey is a speedy power forward with a scoring touch. Late in Wednesday's 6-3 win against the Syracuse Crunch, he displayed those talents, bursting down the right wing and creating a scoring chance.

"I think my third period tonight is how I want to play," Bailey said. "I think I can help the team out. My speed, my size and pushing the pace is definitely how I need to play."

Taylor liked Bailey's second effort this season a lot more than the first one.

"His PK was good, good stick," Taylor said. "That's where we need him – create some energy, get on the forecheck, use his body and use his speed. He's got all of that."

Sabres juggle lines to help boost Jeff Skinner ahead of road trip

By Rachel Lenzi
The Buffalo News
October 12, 2018

Casey Mittelstadt and Jeff Skinner skated on a line with Kyle Okposo in the Buffalo Sabres' morning skate Friday at KeyBank Center, a move Sabres coach Phil Housley made in hopes of creating chemistry and particularly for Skinner's benefit.

"I thought they had some really good shifts the last game," Housley said. "He's been held off the board as far as goals go, so I'm trying to get him going. They think the game alike, and we're just trying to encourage some chemistry."

Skinner, a left wing, skated on a line with center Patrik Berglund and right wing Kyle Okposo in a 6-1 loss Thursday to Colorado. Skinner joined the Sabres in a trade in August from Carolina and is scoreless in his first four games. He had 24 goals and 25 assists last season for the Hurricanes.

"I really like the way he's working and forechecking," Housley said of Skinner. "He steals pucks, he strips pucks and the way he's coming back into our zone. There's nothing evolving from that point. But he's doing the little things well."

"The goal we scored last night (from defenseman Nathan Beaulieu), the crossing screen, really, his work. He's just got to continue to do that. He can create things and he's a proven goal-scorer, so I'm not worried from that aspect."

...

Linus Ullmark could get his first start of the season Saturday against the Coyotes at Gila River Arena in Glendale, Ariz. Carter Hutton started Buffalo's first four games.

This is an opportune time to give Hutton a day off.

"It's been quite some time now, and Hutton has been playing terrific all these games," Ullmark said. "Hats off to him, and I'm looking forward to getting my start."

Ullmark was 21-12-4 in 44 games with Rochester of the AHL in 2017-18, with a 2.44 goals-against average and a .922 saves percentage. He was 1-2 in five games with the Sabres last season, with a 2.00 goals-against average and a .917 saves percentage.

Housley, however, remained coy when asked about the possibility of Ullmark getting his first start.

"We're thinking about it, but we haven't made that decision yet," Housley said. "Obviously, we're going to try to give Linus an opportunity on the road trip, so we'll evaluate that tomorrow."

...

The consensus among the Sabres is that their five-game, nine-day road trip that starts at Arizona and continues through Las Vegas and California through Oct. 21, is a good thing.

A team that just got waxed the previous night would say that.

"Obviously we've brought in a lot of new players, so it will be good to spend time together and get to know each other and get closer as a group," Sabres captain Jack Eichel said. "It's good to have a road trip this early in the year, but it's also tough. It's not going to be easy, it's a tough swing."

"We just can't look past our first game in Arizona. That's the biggest thing. We need a bounce-back effort from last night."

...

Zach Bogosian will accompany the team on the trip, Housley said. Bogosian has not played since Sept. 25 because of a lower body injury.

Sabres' Ullmark plays his first game of the season and gets his first NHL shutout

By Paul Hamilton

WGR 550

October 14, 2018

(WGR 550) - Linus Ullmark got his first start of the season and stopped all 36 shots he faced to pick up his first NHL shutout. He was very sharp when Richard Panik was left alone because Nate Beaulieu and Casey Nelson were caught out on an extended shift and couldn't get off. He also had to make some big saves in the third period as the Sabres were defending a two goal lead.

The Sabres got back to playing with speed in Arizona and it showed up in spades on the Sabres first goal. Jeff Skinner blew around the Coyotes defense to walk in on Antti Raanta. Skinner hit the post, but Rasmus Dahlin used his speed to get right to the top of the crease and pop the rebound in for his first NHL goal. As it turned out, his first NHL goal was also a game-winner.

Casey Mittelstadt got to play this game with Skinner and I think it was the young center's best game of the season. Mittelstadt seemed confident and drew a penalty coming down the slot. Skinner was skating well for a lot of the night as scored a goal scorers goal. As he came in on Raanta the puck stood up and was bouncing. The winger still kept control and lofted a backhand under the bar.

Buffalo's second goal came on the power play after a 0-for-7 performance against Colorado. Jack Eichel, Sam Reinhart and Conor Sheary all showed a lot of patience with their passing and Reinhart put the puck on to his backhand and found Sheary who picked the far corner.

We've spoken many times about how Eichel has worked on his defensive play. In the third period, there was a turnover in the Buffalo zone and Eichel turned on the jets to bother Brad Richardson at the net. Its little plays like that that are going to help the Sabres win the one goal games instead losing them.

Arizona has now played four games and has been shut out in three of them. The Sabres are 3-2-0 and have six points in the Atlantic Division. That's good for third place, one point ahead of Montreal and Ottawa and two points in back of Boston.

After a day off the Sabres play in Vegas on Tuesday.

Dahlin, Ullmark notch career firsts in 3-0 win over Arizona

WGR 550

October 13, 2018

The Sabres enjoyed a night of firsts in Arizona on Saturday -- Rasmus Dahlin scored his first NHL goal, Jeff Skinner picked up his first goal wearing a Buffalo sweater and Linus Ullmark picked up his first career shutout in a 3-0 win over the Coyotes.

Dahlin's goal, which proved to be the game-winner, came just 2:45 into the game. The rookie defenseman kickstarted the play by feeding a pass to Skinner, whose scoring chance got behind Antti Raanta but came up short of the goal line. Dahlin swept in to slam the puck home for the 1-0 lead and his first career goal. At 18 years and 183 days, Dahlin became the youngest defenseman to score a goal since Kyle McLaren of the Bruins on October 26, 1995.

Later in the period, Conor Sheary put the Sabres up 2-0 on the power play. Jack Eichel and Sam Reinhart passed the puck back and forth along the near wall before Reinhart found Sheary in front with a backhand pass. Sheary hammered it past Raanta for his 3rd goal of the young season. The score remained 2-0 until 16:29 of the 3rd period. Skinner took a long, looping pass from Rasmus Ristolainen, controlled a bouncing puck, walked in on net and tucked a shot under the crossbar to give Buffalo a three-goal advantage.

Ullmark, seeing his first action of the season, was sharp in net, coming up with 36 saves. The Coyotes have now been shut out in three out of their first four games.

GAME SUMMARY

Goal Summary:

First Period:

BUF: 2:45 - Rasmus Dahlin (1) (Jeff Skinner); 18:06 - Conor Sheary (PPG) (3) (Sam Reinhart, Jack Eichel)
ARI: NONE

Second Period:

BUF: NONE
ARI: NONE

Third Period:

BUF: 16:29 - Jeff Skinner (1) (Rasmus Ristolainen)
ARI: NONE

Penalty Summary:

First Period:

BUF: 12:36 - Casey Mittelstadt (Hooking - 2 min.)
ARI: 16:55 - Christian Fischer (Cross checking - 2 min.)

Second Period:

BUF: 4:04 - Sam Reinhart (Slashing - 2 min.)
ARI: 11:13 - Ilya Lyubushkin (Holding - 2 min.)

Third Period:

BUF: 2:42 - Kyle Okposo (Delaying the game - 2 min.); 17:11 - Rasmus Ristolainen (Roughing - 2 min.)

ARI: 16:44 - Oliver Ekman-Larsson (Slashing - 2 min.); 17:11 - Kevin Connauton (Slashing - 2 min.)

Shots on Goal:

BUF: 23

ARI: 36

Goalies:

BUF: Linus Ullmark - 36 saves

ARI: Antti Raanta - 20 saves

Power Plays:

BUF: 1 for 3

ARI: 0 for 3

Three Stars:

1. Linus Ullmark - BUF

2. Rasmus Dahlin - BUF

3. Conor Sheary - BUF

What's Next:

Buffalo's five-game road trip continues on Tuesday with a 10:00 p.m. faceoff at Vegas. The defending Western Conference champs are 2-4 to start the season and return home following a five-game road swing of their own, which included a 3-1 loss in Buffalo last Monday. Hear the call of Sabres-Golden Knights on Monday. Pregame with Brian Koziol begins at 9:00 p.m.

The Sabres have their first road game of the season in Arizona

By Paul Hamilton

WGR 550

October 13, 2018

CATEGORIES: Sabres News Top Stories

(WGR 550) - The Sabres visit Arizona tonight after going 2-2 at home. The Coyotes are 1-2 overall, but 0-1 at home. The home game was a 1-0 loss to Anaheim.

Arizona is 1-for-9 on the power play and are perfect on seven penalty kills. The biggest problem for the Coyotes is they were shutout in their first two games of the season before scoring three in a shootout win over the Ducks. That means in two games, only two goals have gone into the net. Dylan Strome is finally with the NHL team and he has one of the two goals.

Buffalo is 7-2-1 in its last 10 vs. the Coyotes. The Sabres are 8-2 in their last 10 in Arizona.

The Sabres came into the Colorado game 3-for-8 on the power play, but went 0-for-7 against the Avalanche. The Sabres had killed 5-of-6 penalties, but the Avalanche went 2-for-4.

Carter Hutton has played all four games for the Sabres. Phil Housley said on Friday that Linus Ullmark will play on this trip. It's possible Zach Bogosian could return very soon.

Join me and Brian Koziol for the pregame starting at 8:00. You be able to hear from Phil Housley, Jack Eichel and Linus Ullmark.

Sabres' Ullmark will get his chance to play this road trip

By Paul Hamilton

WGR 550

October 12, 2018

CATEGORIES: Sabres News Top Stories

Buffalo, NY (WGR 550) - Linus Ullmark had hoped he wouldn't have to wait five games to get in net, but it will be at least that long. Carter Hutton went 2-2-0 to start the season with 3.07 goals against and .912 save percentage.

Buffalo lost to Boston and Colorado by a combined score of 10-1 and beat Vegas and the Rangers by a combined score of 7-3.

The plan coming into the season was for Hutton to play a little bit more than Ullmark, but it hasn't started that way. Phil Housley said after Friday's practice that he's thinking about starting Ullmark in Arizona on Saturday, but hasn't decided yet. Housley did say Ullmark will play on the trip and the goaltender is excited about that, "Oh yes definitely, it's been quite some time now and Huts has been playing terrific all these games, so I'm just looking forward to getting my start."

Ullmark has been an AHL All-Star the past two seasons playing 44 games and 55 games with Rochester. In between, he got six games with the Sabres. He said he knows how to keep himself sharp when he's not playing, "Me and Andrew (Andrew Allen, goaltending coach) had a very good conversation regarding what I need to work on these days that I'm not playing and for me it's sticking to what I'm good at and do the things that I'm less good at."

Many players get frustrated when they're not playing and in some cases become a distraction. Ullmark says that's not him and he wants to be a good teammate, "I'm not getting frustrated by sitting on the side, but as long as we're winning games, I'm not going to be a sour guy and be grumpy, so I'm not going to fall into that trap, so I'm just going to be the same guy I've always been, just very supportive and very happy."

Over the summer, Ullmark knew he was going to spend his first full season the NHL this season, but the goaltender couldn't really look forward to it because something was gnawing at him, "We had such a short season in Rochester when we fell in three straight games and that was a real sour apple for me, so it really motivated me to push myself a little bit further and a little bit more every day in the gym."

This is a brand new team with many new faces. Coming up is the first road trip that will cover five games and 10 days. Jack Eichel said this is a perfect time to get on the road and do some bonding, "Whether it's going out to dinner or being on the plane together or being on the bus, having a couple of beers, I mean it's a good time for us to get to know each other and become closer as a group.

"I think we've been here for so long and it's just work, work, work at the rink and for a lot of guys it's home to the kids or wife, so it's good that they're able to step away from that on the road and it'll be nice just to get to know some of these guys and for the young guys, this is their first big road trip so it's be a cool experience for Dahls and Tommer and Mitts."

Zach Bogosian had a full-go practice on Friday. Housley said he liked what he saw, "It was a really good step forward for Zach. He's been skating and then moved into a couple of practices, but this was a full practice, we had some bumping and grinding drills and it was good to see him come out of that and I really liked the way he looked today."

Friday's lines:

Sheary Eichel Reinhart

Skinner Mittelstadt Okposo

Sobotka Berglund (Larsson) Thompson

Elie (Girgensons) Rodrigues Pominville

Scandella Ristolainen

McCabe Dahlin

Beaulieu Nelson

Tennyson Bogosian

‘Your first one, you’ll never forget that’: Rasmus Dahlin strikes for first goal

By John Vogl

The Buffalo News

October 13, 2018

GLENDALE, Ariz. – It’s been seven years, but Marco Scandella can still roll the play-by-play of his first NHL goal.

“Breakaway, power play, five-hole – wow,” the Sabres defenseman said. “Your first one, you’ll never forget that.”

Seven years from now, Rasmus Dahlin could have 100 goals. Teammates think he will have a Norris Trophy on his résumé. But no matter how many goals or honors he collects, he’ll look back on a rainy day in the desert with a sunny disposition.

Dahlin scored his first NHL goal in a 3-0 victory over Arizona, creating a Saturday night for the ages. Dahlin became the third-youngest defenseman in history to record a game-winner, trailing fellow 18-year-olds Craig Wolanin of the New Jersey Devils (Dec. 9, 1985) and Red Garrett of the New York Rangers (Dec. 25, 1942).

There are early plans for the commemorative puck.

“There will be like a painting over it and stuff so we can hang it up on the wall,” Dahlin said.

That’s fitting because there were picture-perfect moments in the play.

The No. 1 draft pick basically assisted on his own goal by putting a pass on the tape of Jeff Skinner in the neutral zone. Skinner followed by turning Brad Richardson inside-out and pulling goaltender Antti Raanta out of the net. Dahlin victimized Richardson again, lifting the forward’s stick to knock the puck home.

“I need to thank Skinner,” Dahlin said. “He made a great move, so he got open. He made a great move on the goalie, too, so it was an open net. Thanks, Skins.”

While Dahlin was displaying an aw-shucks attitude, the Sabres’ dressing room was filled with applause and praise for the young defenseman.

“His first one is the first of many for him,” Skinner said. “It’s only five games into his career. He’s only going to get better, and it’s going to be fun to watch him for a long time.”

No matter how long Dahlin plays, there will only be one first goal. The Swedish import struggles sometimes to find the right word in English, and that happened at one point Saturday night. But it wouldn’t have mattered if he was William Shakespeare. Some milestones are just too hard to explain.

“I don’t even know how to put it into words,” center Evan Rodrigues, who was the first to hug Dahlin, said of scoring for the first time. “You’re just so sky high, excited, elated. At first, you don’t really know what to do. Once it sinks in, it’s really cool.”

“It’s just the biggest euphoria you can ever feel,” Scandella said. “I just felt like, ‘Wow. I’m really here.’ It just gives you confidence that you belong. You just enjoy it.”

The first NHL goal is the realization of a dream that players have carried since childhood. It doesn’t matter if it was a tap-in or a breakaway, they’re all pretty.

With that in mind, here are the first NHL goals for all of the Sabres except Jason Pominville and Zach Bogosian. Pominville’s 2005 goal came when YouTube was in its infancy. It’s possible the Nashville Predators destroyed all footage of Bogosian’s goal from 2009 since he and Atlanta won the game 7-2.

Sabres rookie Rasmus Dahlin scores first NHL goal

By Bill Hoppe
Olean Times Herald
October 13, 2018

It should surprise no one Rasmus Dahlin scored his first goal because he zoomed to the net. In his early days in the NHL, the slick Buffalo Sabres rookie already showcases an aggressiveness few defensemen possess.

Dahlin, 18, joins the rush so much he often looks like a forward.

So it was fitting 2:45 into Saturday's 3-0 road win, Dahlin, who was trailing the play, moved in from the slot and buried winger Jeff Skinner's pass by Arizona Coyotes goalie Antti Raanta.

The Swede's goal held up as the winner in the Sabres' third victory this season.

It took Dahlin, the first overall pick, just over four games and about 80 minutes on the ice to score. He recorded his first NHL point on Thursday, assisting on defenseman Nathan Beaulieu's goal.

At 18 years and 175 days, Dahlin was the second-youngest player in Sabres history to record a point, trailing only center Pierre Turgeon, who was 18 years and 44 days when he had an assist on Oct. 11, 1987 against the Washington Capitals.

Sabres goalie Linus Ullmark quietly waiting to play

By Bill Hoppe
Olean Times Herald
October 13, 2018

BUFFALO – Sitting on the bench patiently waiting for an opportunity to play is a new experience for Linus Ullmark. Since coming to North America three years ago, the Sabres goalie has averaged 51 outings a season.

The Swede is used to being the guy.

But this season, Ullmark, 25, graduated to the Sabres following a three-year AHL apprenticeship. While he certainly showcased the qualities of a No. 1 NHL goalie with the Rochester Americans and during his recalls, he is now the Sabres' backup.

Right now, veteran Carter Hutton, an offseason signing, is the starter. The Sabres expect Hutton, 32, to handle the load, play perhaps 50 or more games.

So far, Hutton has started the first four contests. Ullmark, meanwhile, has been quietly preparing for his chance to play.

That could come Saturday against the Arizona Coyotes, the start of a five-game road trip. Following Friday's practice, coach Phil Housley said the Sabres were thinking about giving Ullmark the nod. Housley said Ullmark would play on the trip.

"I'm not getting frustrated by sitting on the side," Ullmark said inside KeyBank Center before the Sabres departed. "It's nice to be winning games. Huts is playing good. I'm not going to be a sour guy and be grumpy. ... I'm just going to be the same guy I always am, very supportive, very happy."

Ullmark usually has a smile etched on his face. In the past, he has explained how "Hakuna Matata," a song from the movie "The Lion King," inspires him.

Translated from Swahili, the phrase means "no worries."

"He's been very good in the room," Housley said. "He's a very good teammate, he works hard, he's everything we want in a backup goaltender. ... We really enjoy his enthusiasm every day, even though I know it's hard because he hasn't had an opportunity yet."

Housley said Ullmark's practice habits – "Trying to battle for every puck, every second opportunity," he said – have been strong.

"I told him a couple days ago I really appreciate what he's doing, and I know the guys really appreciate that, that he's focusing on his body of work as far as his practice habits," Housley said.

Ullmark has also developed a routine to stay sharp. In addition to staying on the ice after practice and working out following games, he said he talks to goalie coach Andrew Allen about focusing on specific areas of his game.

"It's about sticking to the things I'm good at and trying to do all the things I'm less good at," Ullmark said. "It's a pretty broad spectrum for a goalie to be working on."

Ullmark has also worked on getting to know Hutton. In just a month or so together, the goalies have already established a strong relationship.

"You go through so many different situations throughout a year," Hutton said. "You need somebody to bounce ideas off, just have good communication lines. I think so far, we've really established that. ..."

"I want him to feel confident around me talking about things and just that if I'm telling him something, he obviously trusts that it comes from the best place."

Ullmark and Hutton carved much different paths to the NHL.

The Sabres drafted Ullmark and let him play three seasons at home before bringing him over. Days after he debuted with Rochester, the Sabres recalled him for the first time.

Hutton, a Canadian, played four years at UMass Lowell and had trouble finding work following his college career. Seven years ago, he played 14 games in the ECHL. It took him three years to earn his first NHL appearance.

Last season, Hutton's 2.09 goals-against average led the NHL. Today, he's a No. 1 goalie for the first time.

"He's a living example of trusting the process," Ullmark said. "There's always going to be good fortune for those who work hard and put their mind into it. I've always believed that if you work hard every day, you're professional, you're a good guy on and off the ice and you do whatever it takes to get where you want to, you're going to get rewarded. He's been that guy."

Sabres' Jeff Skinner moves to line with Casey Mittelstadt

By Bill Hoppe
Olean Times Herald
October 12, 2018

BUFFALO – The tenacity Sabres winger Jeff Skinner has showcased early this season impresses coach Phil Housley.

"I really like the way he's working, his forechecking," Housley said this afternoon inside KeyBank Center. "He steals pucks and he strips pucks. (I like) the way he's coming back into our zone. There's just nothing evolving from that point."

Skinner, 26, is pointless in first four outings with the Sabres. So Housley moved the left winger, an offseason acquisition from the Carolina Hurricanes, to beside slick rookie center Casey Mittelstadt and Kyle Okposo today. Skinner played with Okposo and center Patrik Berglund in Thursday's 6-1 loss to the Colorado Avalanche.

"Just trying to create some chemistry," Housley said of the move. "He's been held off the board as far as goals go, so I'm trying to get him going. I just think (Skinner and Mittelstadt) think the game alike."

Skinner, whose screen helped create defenseman Nathan Beaulieu's goal Thursday, is already frustrated. At one point during this morning's practice, the three-time 30-goal scorer whacked his stick against the glass.

Housley said he isn't worried about Skinner's slow start.

"He can create things, he's a proven goal scorer," Housley said.

He added: "He's doing the little things as well."

Berglund centered Vladimir Sobotka and Tage Thompson, Mittelstadt's recent linemate, today. Johan Larsson also took reps pivoting the line. Sobotka is close to returning from an upper-body injury.

More notes on the Sabres, who begin a five-game road trip Saturday in Arizona:

– Housley said goalie Linus Ullmark, who hasn't played yet this season, could play against the Coyotes.

"We're thinking about it, but we haven't made that decision yet," he said. "Obviously, we're going to try to get Linus an opportunity on the road trip."

– Housley said today's practice was a "really good step forward" for defenseman Zach Bogosian, who hasn't played since suffering a lower-body injury Sept. 25. Housley said Bogosian will accompany the Sabres on the trip.

A night of firsts for Dahlin and Ullmark as Sabres beat Coyotes 3-0

By Jenna Callari

WKBW

October 14, 2018

Glendale, AZ (WKBW - First NHL goal.

First career shutout.

First goal with the Sabres.

Saturday night was a night of firsts for a handful of Buffalo Sabres as the team beat the Phoenix Coyotes 3-0 on the road in their first of five games on the West Coast. The win improved the team's record to 3-2.

First overall draft pick Rasmus Dahlin finally got that first goal in the NHL after he followed up on a shot from Jeff Skinner to put the Sabres up 1-0 in the first period. Conor Sheary scored the second goal of the night, his third of the season on the power play, while Skinner added his first goal as a Sabre in the third period.

Goaltender Linus Ullmark recorded his first career shutout in his first start for the Sabres this season. He made 36 saves in his season debut.

The Sabres will take on the Las Vegas Knights on Tuesday night. Puck drops at 10 p.m.

Dahlin, Ullmark power Sabres past Coyotes

Nick Filipowski

WIVB

October 13, 2018

BUFFALO, N.Y. (WIVB) - Rasmus Dahlin scored his first career goal Saturday night, helping the Sabres get back in the win column with a 3-0 win over the Coyotes.

The No. 1 overall pick now has two points this season after registering his first career point in Thursday's loss to the Avs.

Linus Ullmark, who was making his first start of the season, stopped all 36 shots he faced to earn the win and his first career shutout.

Less than three minutes into the first period, Dahlin helped lead a breakout, pushing the puck ahead to Jeff Skinner. The winger entered the offensive zone and tried to tuck the puck around netminder Antti Raanta, who spun around to try and stop the speedy forward. Trailing the play, the No. 1 overall pick slid into the zone behind three Coyotes, and as the puck slid toward the net, buried the rebound for his first goal.

Nearing the end of the opening frame, the Sabres would strike again. On the power play, Conor Sheary scored his third goal of the season, rifling home a feed from Sam Reinhart to make it a 2-0 game.

Twitter Ads info and privacy

Jeff Skinner added a third tally to make it a 3-0 in the third.

The Sabres continue their road trip with an early season re-match against the Golden Knights on Tuesday. Buffalo beat Vegas 4-2 in the third game of the year.

Sabres fan creates a song for Rasmus Dahlin

By Rebecca Thornburg

WKBW

October 12, 2018

BUFFALO, N.Y. (WKBW) - Melody Martin created a "Woman Cave" in her basement in East Amherst filled with Buffalo Bills and Sabres memorabilia.

Martin has a passion for both Buffalo sports and songwriting. Across the hall from her "Woman Cave" she has a recording studio.

"I just think creating music is a very fulfilling feeling," Martin said.

When superstar Rasmus Dahlin was drafted, Melody was so excited she decided to write a song for him. Her song "Dahlin" is a remix to Dolly Parton's "Jolene".

"It's kinda about please help us, we have been struggling for so long," Martin said. "Everything just seem to fit well with how the original song went."

Martin has even appeared on a Swedish radio show. Martin is very surprised by the response she has gotten from Dahlin's home country.

"I have had to use Google translate about 500 times," Martin added. "So many people from Sweden have been reaching out to say they are happy that we are so happy to have Rasmus Dahlin."

Dahlin scores first NHL goal, Sabres blank Coyotes

By Alan Robinson

NHL.com

October 14, 2018

GLENDALE, Ariz. -- Rasmus Dahlin scored his first NHL goal 2:45 into the game, and Linus Ullmark made 36 saves for the Buffalo Sabres for his first NHL shutout, a 3-0 win against the Arizona Coyotes at Gila River Arena on Saturday.

Dahlin, the No. 1 pick in the 2018 NHL Draft, pushed the puck into an open net to make it 1-0 after Jeff Skinner drew goalie Antti Raanta out of the crease to play a shot near the left post that deflected to Dahlin.

"I need to thank Skinner, when I saw the puck on the goal line," said Dahlin, who at 18 years, 183 days is the youngest defenseman to score a goal in Sabres history. "He made a great move to get open, a great move on the goalie too, and it was an open net."

It was Skinner's first point with the Sabres.

The forward, acquired in a trade from the Carolina Hurricanes on Aug. 2, scored his first goal with them at 16:29 of the third period to make it 3-0, but he seemed more excited about Dahlin's goal.

"Rasmus made a real nice play getting it to me in transition and obviously a real good job following it up," Skinner said. "I should have put it in, but I was happy for him, his first one, his first of many. Pretty cool."

Coach Phil Housley moved Skinner to a line with center Casey Mittelstadt and right wing Kyle Okposo to help get him going after he was held without a point the first four games.

Conor Sheary scored on the power play at 18:06 of the first to give Buffalo a 2-0 lead. It was his third goal in four games.

The Sabres (3-2-0), off to their best five-game start since they went 4-1-0 in 2010-11, began a five-game Western Conference road trip. They were coming off a 6-1 loss to the Colorado Avalanche on Thursday, when No. 1 goalie Carter Hutton gave up all six goals.

"Buffalo had to travel east to west, and I thought we could have jumped on them," Coyotes coach Rick Tocchet said. "We've got to score goals. To win in this league, you've got to score. I'm worried about the team in this situation ... good teams know they're going to win, and some of our guys were a little sluggish early."

Raanta made 20 saves, but the Coyotes (1-3-0) couldn't follow up on a 3-2 shootout win at the Anaheim Ducks on Wednesday and haven't won two straight games in October since 2015.

Arizona, which outshot Buffalo 36-23, had at least 30 shots on goal in each game but has been shut out in three of four games to start the season, including two at home.

"We have a lot of shots, but I don't think we have those second and third (shots), we don't get rebounds like that," Raanta said. "Even though their goalie played a great game, we are making the goalies look really good right now. I think we have to get more of that eye of the tiger in front of the net and put those pucks in."

Ullmark, making his 25th NHL start and first of the season, made several difficult saves in the second period, when most of the Coyotes' nine shots were high-quality attempts from close to the net.

"It's always fun to make saves, especially if you can make enough saves for the team to win," Ullmark said. "They had some pushes, but we played real solid defensively. We were keeping the guys outside."

They said it

"You watch him play, you know it's going to come for him. He's got so much skill, it's nice for him to get it out of the way. I thought he played a great game, and it's only five games into his career. It's going to be fun to watch him, and it's going to be for a long time." -- Sabres forward Jeff Skinner on Rasmus Dahlin scoring his first NHL goal

"It's four games in and I know everyone's frustrated, everyone's frustrated we're not scoring goals. You're trying your best to figure it out, but at the end of the day, you've got to be able to will yourself a goal." -- Coyotes coach Rick Tocchet

Need to know

Sabres center Jack Eichel had an assist on Sheary's goal and has three goals and two assists in his past four games. ... Buffalo is 8-2-1 in its past 11 games against Arizona and 9-2-0 in its past 11 at Gila River Arena. ... The Coyotes outshot the Sabres 13-5 in the third period and have a 57-19 edge in that period this season. ... Arizona plays its next four games on the road. ... The Coyotes have been shut out in four of five games dating to last season.

What's next

Sabres: At the Vegas Golden Knights on Tuesday (10 p.m. ET; ATTSN-RM, MSG-B, NHL.TV)

Coyotes: At the Minnesota Wild on Tuesday (8 p.m. ET; NBCSN, NHL.TV)

Watch: 2018 first-overall pick Rasmus Dahlin notches first career NHL goal

By Mark Suleymanov

Sporting News

October 13, 2018

It's the first of, what is expected to be, many for Rasmus Dahlin.

The Swedish-born defenseman scored his first NHL goal in the Buffalo Sabres' Saturday night matchup against the Arizona Coyotes. Dahlin's first goal came less than three minutes into the first period, making the 18-year-old the youngest defenseman in Sabres history to register his first goal.

The goal was set up by Sabres' winger Jeff Skinner, who skated past Coyotes' defenseman Jason Demers, and tried to tuck it in behind goaltender Antti Raanta. Dahlin, driving to the net tapped in the loose puck for the milestone goal.

The goal caps a big week for the youngster. On Thursday, he registered his first career point when he assisted on Nathan Beaulieu's goal against the Avalanche.

Dahlin was selected first overall by Buffalo in this year's NHL Entry Draft, becoming the 15th defenseman selected in the slot all-time. At the 2018 World Junior Ice Hockey Championships he registered six assists while taking home the tournament's top defenseman honors. Dahlin was also part of Sweden's 2018 Olympic team in Pyeongchang.

Entering the 2018-19 season, Dahlin was named as the NHL's third-best prospect, behind Vancouver Canucks winger/center Elias Pettersson and Carolina Hurricanes winger Andrei Svechnikov.

Video: Sabres' Dahlin starts, finishes play for first NHL goal

By Scott Billeck
Pro Hockey Talk
October 13, 2018

Rasmus Dahlin has scored his first NHL goal.

The No. 1 pick in the 2018 NHL Draft was rewarded for following the play he helped create, pinching in from the point to latch on to a Jeff Skinner pass out front.

Dahlin started the play, picking up the puck in his own end before dumping it to Skinner in the neutral zone. Arizona couldn't handle the transition and the rest is history now.

It's still unclear what Antti Raanta was doing on the goal. The Arizona Coyotes goalie bit hard on Skinner's move, leaving his goal wide open for Dahlin to poke the puck in.

Dahlin had a single assist in four games while averaging 19:07 of ice time per night heading into Saturday's game, third highest among Sabres defensemen.

Oh, and he made history with the marker.

Dahlin, Sabres prep for 5-game road trip out west

By Jourdon LaBarber

Sabres.com

October 12, 2018

Rasmus Dahlin is aware of the charter flight, the nice hotels and the warm weather awaiting the Buffalo Sabres on the West Coast. Other than that, he admitted he had few ideas in terms of what to expect on his first NHL road trip.

It will be a doozy: five games spanning over nine days, including dates with four teams that were in the Western Conference playoffs last season. The lone exception is a visit to Arizona to kick off the trip on Saturday.

"To be honest, I have no idea what to expect," Dahlin said. "Just go and have fun."

Fun for the Sabres would mean rebounding from their loss to Colorado on Thursday and climbing back over the .500 mark. But there's also truth to the team-building aspect of an early-season road trip, especially for a roster featuring eight new players.

"I mean, whether it's going out to dinner or being on the plane together, being on the bus, in the locker room," Sabres captain Jack Eichel said. "It's a good time for us to get to know each other, to come closer as a group."

On the ice, Dahlin's increasing comfort was evident during the team's opening four-game homestand. His work along the boards in the offensive zone led to his first career point on Thursday, and he nearly scored his first goal driving to the net on his very next shift.

"Yeah, I'm getting comfortable every game," Dahlin said. "I'm growing. It's getting better and better. I think we will bounce back."

"He's just got to enjoy it," Sabres coach Phil Housley said. "He's really developed his game. There's always areas of improvement for a young player, but I like the way he's tried to attack the game and come in and try to add to our offense and good to see him get his first point."

Dahlin was adamant that the team will continue to grow, too. The Sabres were pleased with the response they had at practice on Friday, a 40-minute session spent largely on execution moving the puck up the ice.

"Yeah, we stayed focused," Dahlin said. "It looks like everyone wants to win again. It was a good practice."

Ullmark staying patient

Carter Hutton's early success in net has meant a long wait for Linus Ullmark, but that hasn't changed his demeanor in the dressing room. He was the same go-lucky goalie he's always been while speaking to the media after practice on Friday.

"I'm not getting frustrated by sitting on the side," he said. "As long as we're winning games, Hutts is playing good, I'm not going to be a sour guy and just be grumpy ... I'm not going to do that, I'm not going to fall into that trap. I'm just going to be the same guy I always am. Supportive and very happy."

That said, he's eagerly awaiting his chance to get in net. That chance will almost definitely come during the upcoming road trip and could come in Arizona on Saturday.

Waiting has been a change of pace for Ullmark, who's made at least 49 appearances in each of the last two seasons between Buffalo and Rochester. He's put in extra work to stay sharp in the meantime, which hasn't gone unnoticed.

"I just like the work that he's put into it," Housley said. "He's come to work every day, staying out late after practices, trying to battle for every puck, every second opportunity."

"I told him a couple days ago I really appreciate what he's doing, and I know the guys really appreciate that, that he's focusing on his body of work as far as his practice habits."

Lineup changes

Casey Mittelstadt and Jeff Skinner have been held without a goal through four games despite both players having generated quality chances. Based on Friday's practice, they'll have a chance to get on the scoresheet together in Arizona.

Mittelstadt centered a line with Skinner and Kyle Okposo while Patrik Berglund moved between Vladimir Sobotka and Tage Thompson. Housley said Mittelstadt's creativity in the offensive zone should make him a good match to play with Skinner.

"I think just trying to get somebody that thinks the game like him (Skinner)," Housley said. "I really like the way he's working, his forechecking, he steals pucks and he strips pucks and the way he's coming back into our zone. There's just nothing evolving from that point."

Housley credited Skinner with setting a well-timed screen on Colorado goalie Semyon Varlamov in the second period on Thursday, leading to Nathan Beaulieu's goal on a shot from the point.

"It was really his work," Housley said. "He's just got to continue to do that. He can create things, he's a proven goal scorer. So, I'm not worried from that aspect."

Sobotka could return to the lineup Saturday for the first time since sustaining an upper-body injury on opening night. Housley said the forward will make the trip, as will defenseman Zach Bogosian (lower body).

Here's how the full lineup appeared at practice on Friday.

43 Conor Sheary - 9 Jack Eichel - 23 Sam Reinhart
17 Vladimir Sobotka - 10 Patrik Berglund / 22 Johan Larsson - 72 Tage Thompson
53 Jeff Skinner - 37 Casey Mittelstadt - 21 Kyle Okposo
81 Remi Elie / 28 Zemgus Girgensons - 71 Evan Rodrigues - 29 Jason Pominville

6 Marco Scandella - 55 Rasmus Ristolainen
19 Jake McCabe - 26 Rasmus Dahlin
82 Nathan Beaulieu - 8 Casey Nelson

40 Carter Hutton
35 Linus Ullmark

Ullmark to make season debut in Arizona

By Jourdon LaBarber

Sabres.com

October 13, 2018

GLENDAL, ARIZONA - Linus Ullmark's long wait is over. The goaltender will make his first start of the season when the Sabres open a five-game road trip against the Arizona Coyotes at Gila River Arena on Saturday night.

Ullmark, 25, has begun the season as the backup to Carter Hutton after back-to-back seasons as an AHL All-Star with Rochester. He's made 26 appearances for Buffalo over three seasons, including five games last season in which he posted a .935 save percentage.

Sabres coach Phil Housley praised Ullmark on Friday for the extra work he's put in to stay sharp since the preseason. It should come in handy against a Coyotes team that ranks fourth in the NHL with an average of 36.7 shots per game despite having only scored two goals in three games.

"We're going to have to do a good job," Sabres coach Phil Housley said. "This is a team that's top five in shot attempts per game so we're going to have to come back and control the middle of the ice, try to deflect everything to the outside."

Vladimir Sobotka will step into the lineup for the first time since sustaining an upper-body injury on opening night. Forwards Remi Elie and Johan Larsson are expected to be scratched, along with defenseman Matt Tennyson.

The contest kicks off a season-long five-game road trip for the Sabres, who split a four-game homestand to open their season. Coming off a 6-1 loss to Colorado, Housley said it will be key for Buffalo to take a page out of Arizona's book in sending more pucks to the net.

"We have to bounce back after our last game," he said. "We've got to have more of a shot mentality. Especially entering into the zone, we should be thinking shot. There's going to be plays to be made, but when we're running out of space we've got to get everything to the net."

After the Coyotes, the Sabres will visit four playoff teams from the Pacific Division in Vegas, San Jose, Los Angeles and Anaheim. Having been a part of long road trips during his time as an assistant in Nashville, Housley emphasized the importance of opening with a win.

"It's always critical," he said. "We'd really like to kick off this road trip with a win tonight. That sort of sets the stage for the rest of the road trip. We know it's an important game."

Scouting the Coyotes

Arizona was shut out in its first two games of the season prior to a 3-2 shootout win in Anaheim on Wednesday night. Dylan Strome and Brad Richardson scored goals for the Coyotes, while Antti Raanta made 23 saves.

Raanta carries a 1.96 goals-against average and a .914 save percentage into tonight's game, his fourth-straight start. The goalie's career save percentage of .922 is tied with Dominik Hasek, Ken Dryden and Tuukka Rask for second-highest among goalies with at least 100 games played.

The Coyotes are without forwards Christian Dvorak and Alex Galchenyuk and defenseman Jakob Chychrun, all of whom began the season on injured reserve.

Projected lineup*

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82 Nathan Beaulieu - 8 Casey Nelson

35 Linus Ullmark
40 Carter Hutton

*Based on Friday's practice

Dahlin's goal headlines night of firsts in win over Coyotes

by Jourdon LaBarber

Sabres.com

October 14, 2018

GLENDALE, ARIZONA - Rasmus Dahlin said prior to departing Buffalo on Friday that he wasn't sure what to expect from his first NHL road trip, one that would include five games spanning over 10 days out west.

Surely, scoring his first career goal less than three minutes in would have been hard to predict.

Only 2:45 had ticked off the clock on Saturday when Dahlin followed Jeff Skinner on a rush and buried a loose puck in the crease, marking what many of his teammates agreed afterward would be the first of many NHL goals for the 18-year-old defenseman.

Sabres coach Phil Housley said the players were thrilled for their young teammate at the time of the goal, and their enthusiasm could be heard from outside the dressing room following a 3-0 win over the Arizona Coyotes.

"They were really glad," Dahlin said. "That makes me glad, too. We have a good chemistry on the team. We're a good team."

It was, as Housley pointed out, a night of firsts for the team. Linus Ullmark, playing for the first time since Sept. 26, stopped 36 shots for his first NHL shutout. Skinner capped the scoring in the third period with his first goal as a Sabre.

But it all started with Dahlin, who showed the type of offensive prowess that made him the No. 1 pick in June. The defenseman began the play in the neutral zone with a pass to Skinner, who danced around defenseman Jason Demers to create an open path to the net.

Skinner drew Arizona goalie Antti Raanta out to the edge of the crease but ran out of room as he tried to tuck the puck into the net. The puck sat on the blue line until Dahlin drove it in as the second man on the rush.

"He has tremendous instincts and just a knack of finding the open man with the puck and following up and filling in a hole and adding on the rush," Housley said. "He just went with his instincts and finally just went to the net. He made a strong play on it to get the rebound."

"I take what's given," Dahlin said. "I don't force anything but when the situation comes up, I take it."

Watching Dahlin through Buffalo's first four games of the season, it was easy to see a goal coming. He said he was growing more comfortable with each passing contest, and it was evident. He nearly scored on a point-blank one-timer against Colorado on Thursday.

Dahlin stayed humble afterward - "I've got to thank Skinner" was the first thing he said to the media - but Skinner had no problem heaping praise on the rookie.

"He's got so much skill," Skinner said. "I think it's nice for him to get it out of the way. I thought he played a great game and it's only five games into his career so he's only going to get better. It's going to be fun to watch him for a long time."

"I was very happy for him," Ullmark added. "I think there's a lot to come with that."

Worth the wait

Ullmark dropped to one knee and pumped his fist as the clock expired. The goalie had waited five games and 17 days for his first start of the season, but the result was worth it.

"It was sweet," he said afterward.

Ullmark said he felt "a little off" to begin the game, but he looked plenty comfortable by the time the Coyotes made their push down 2-0 in the second period. In the span of just over a minute, he stopped a couple of one-time shots from Richard Panik and Lawson Crouse.

"Yeah, I was kind of settled in and I felt way better," Ullmark said. "Yeah, they had some pushes, but we played really solid defensively. We were keeping guys outside and just giving me the shot lane."

The Coyotes entered the game ranked fourth in the NHL with an average of 36.7 shots per game, a point Housley emphasized beforehand. Ullmark and his coach were in agreement that the defense did a good job of keeping shots to the outside and preventing second opportunities.

"The guys helped me out tremendously, giving me a lot of shot lanes to look at and I didn't have to fight so much to see the puck," Ullmark said. "All credit to the guys helping out."

Skinner nets his first

After helping Dahlin net his goal early, Skinner was able to find the back of the net on his own for the first time this season with 3:31 remaining. Rasmus Ristolainen lofted a counter pass into the offensive zone, leaving Skinner to skate into it with no one ahead of him.

Skinner cut across the net and buried a top-shelf shot off his backhand.

"It was nice," he said. "It's been a while for me I think. Risto made a great play up to me. The puck was rolling a little bit, I tried to settle it down a little bit and fortunately I got one there."

Housley had said following practice on Friday that he liked Skinner's game despite the lack of early results. He was happy to see the forward's efforts finally pay off.

"He's been really doing the right things," the coach said. "Not only offensively, he hasn't been rewarded, but defensively, he's coming back hard, he's stripping pucks from behind. It's good to see a guy finally get rewarded."

Rebound for the power play

The Sabres went 0-for-7 on the power play in their loss to Colorado on Thursday, and they were going against a Coyotes penalty kill that entered the night a perfect 7-for-7 on the season. That perfect season came to an end when Conor Sheary roofed his third goal of the season to make it 2-0 in the first period.

The play began with Jack Eichel, who hovered with the puck on the outer edge of the left faceoff circle. He passed down low to Sam Reinhart, who cut toward the net to create a passing lane for Sheary. Reinhart delivered a neat pass off his backhand; Sheary dropped to his knee and did the rest.

Sheary now has four points (3+1) in four games as a Sabre. All three of his goals have come on the power play, which marks a new career-high.

Up next

The Sabres continue their road trip against the Vegas Golden Knights on Tuesday. The Sabres beat the Golden Knights, 4-1, at KeyBank Center last Monday.

Coverage on MSG-B begins at 9:30 p.m. with the GMC Game Night Pregame Show, or you can listen live on WGR 550. The puck drops at 10.