



Buffalo Sabres

Daily Press Clips

April 2, 2019

Sabres face the Predators on 7-game slide

Associated Press

April 2, 2019

Nashville Predators (44-29-6, third in the Central Division) vs. Buffalo Sabres (31-38-10, seventh in the Atlantic Division)

Buffalo, New York; Tuesday, 7 p.m. EDT

BOTTOM LINE: Buffalo heads into the matchup with Nashville after losing seven straight games.

The Sabres have gone 20-14-5 in home games. Buffalo scores 2.6 goals per game, the fewest in the Eastern Conference. Jeff Skinner leads the team with 37 total goals.

The Predators are 21-15-4 on the road. Nashville has given up 43 power-play goals, killing 82.4 percent of opponent chances. In their last meeting on Dec. 3, Nashville won 2-1.

TOP PERFORMERS: Jack Eichel leads the Sabres with 77 total points, scoring 27 goals and adding 50 assists. Rasmus Dahlin has recorded four assists over the last 10 games for Buffalo.

LAST 10 GAMES: Predators: 5-4-1, averaging 2.2 goals, 3.2 assists, 3.8 penalties and 8.2 penalty minutes while giving up 2.2 goals per game with a .927 save percentage.

Sabres: 1-8-1, averaging 1.7 goals, 2.9 assists, 2.8 penalties and 5.9 penalty minutes while giving up 4.1 goals per game with a .878 save percentage.

Sabres Injuries: Marco Scandella: day to day (foot), Zach Bogosian: day to day (undisclosed), Rasmus Ristolainen: day to day (illness).

Predators Injuries: Dan Hamhuis: out (lower body), Juuse Saros: day to day (illness), Rocco Grimaldi: day to day (upper body).

Travis Yost's Sabre Metrics: Ryan O'Reilly trade looks worse by the day

By Travis Yost

The Buffalo News

April 2, 2019

Whenever a team makes a roster decision of materiality, I think it is critical to conduct a postmortem – regardless of how pleasant or unpleasant it might be. These decisions (be it free agency signings, trades, coaching hirings and so on) are made based on the present-day understanding of teams during continuous roster and personnel evaluations, but there is always a bit of forecasting baked into the equation, too. It's here where most roster decisions are "won" or "lost," and it's here where the more successful organizations see a much higher rate of return on their investments.

A lot of what we have talked about lately is Buffalo's now epic second-half collapse. Remember: The Sabres were the top-ranked team in the NHL around Thanksgiving. Since then, the Sabres have been the worst team in the league, playing at a 54-point pace over the last four months.

A Western Conference team has had the Sabres season, but in reverse. The St. Louis Blues were in dead last at the turn of the calendar year, and were almost certainly preparing for a major fire sale at the trade deadline. Then, fortune changed. Since New Year's Day, only Tampa Bay has been more successful in the standings. The Blues have played at a 116-point pace over the last three months and could be the biggest threat to emerge out of the Central Division come playoff time.

What's keyed St. Louis' bounce back in the standings? Some of it had to do with puck luck and the introduction of Jordan Binnington into the crease. The Blues saw their all situations save percentage jump from 89.2 to 92.0 percent, worth about 30 goals in the standings over the second half of the year. Some of it also had to do with their best players making sizable impacts. At the top of that list is former Sabres center Ryan O'Reilly.

O'Reilly was traded last summer for a package including two draft picks, Tage Thompson, Vladimir Sobotka and Patrik Berglund. There were surely a handful of reasons as to why O'Reilly was traded – an expensive and buyout-proof contract, some blunt criticism from the player after missing the playoffs and the opportunity to secure some future assets, but a bet against O'Reilly and the aging curve probably sit near the top of the list.

Whatever the case, one thing is certain – O'Reilly's game hasn't slowed down. His 2018-19 campaign with the St. Louis Blues could end up being his best season.

O'Reilly has been a regular two-way producer since the 2011-12 season, and this season has been easily his most impressive offensively speaking. Through 77 games, O'Reilly has 27 goals and 46 assists (73 points; 35th in the NHL), which is indisputably first-line performance. The underlying numbers are more impressive though, and show just how effective O'Reilly has been at impacting both ends of the ice.

Consider O'Reilly's percentile ranks in St. Louis across some key performance measures. The overarching theme is that O'Reilly greatly influences St. Louis' possession-based attack and, consequently, is a major driver of shot creation, scoring chance creation and goal creation. (All numbers via Evolving Hockey.)

Individually, O'Reilly has played like a first-liner and produces like a first-liner. Bring his teammates into the fold – his most common have been Vladimir Tarasenko, Brayden Schenn and David Perron – and the numbers don't change. The Blues consistently outshoot (53 percent), outchance (55 percent) and outscore (64 percent) the opposition when Ryan O'Reilly is on the ice, and his grades here are near industry leading. (When you consistently sit in the 75th or greater percentile across every key performance measure, that's a great sign.)

Counter that with the personnel Buffalo brought in to replace O'Reilly. Again, I think a good piece of this trade was Buffalo clearing an expensive contract and securing future assets like the pair of draft picks. But the return pieces – the players brought in by Buffalo to smooth out some of the salary imbalance in the trade – have been, well, quite different when it comes to performance and results this season.

Here is the same percentile analysis, this time focusing on Thompson and Sobotka. (I won't even count Berglund, who quit in January. His results, it is worth noting, were excruciatingly similar.)

Thompson and Sobotka (and Berglund) couldn't possibly have replaced O'Reilly's production. It's the classic case of four quarters not really equaling a dollar when it comes to analytics in a salary cap, roster-constrained industry such as the National Hockey League. But adding three players who really gave Buffalo nothing more than fourth-line minutes has been nothing short of a disaster. That Thompson, Sobotka and Berglund couldn't beat fourth-line minute performance actually lends itself to the possibility that mere replacement level players from Buffalo's farm system could have been injected into the lineup with no discernible change in performance. That's concerning.

I'd say Thompson does have something of an excuse. He played tough minutes for a 21-year-old, second-year professional. That's the combination of weak quality of teammates and heavy defensive zone deployment. The pressure will surely be on him to rebound next season in the final year of his entry-level contract.

As for Sobotka and Berglund? One is gone, and the other should be out the door in relatively short order. Which means the O'Reilly trade has been reduced to two draft picks and marginal long-term salary cap relief.

Sometimes postmortems can be ugly. Unfortunately, this is one of them.

Lottery odds about all Sabres have left to play for

By Mike Harrington

The Buffalo News

April 1, 2019

The NHL playoff race entered the final week of the season on Monday. Not in Buffalo, of course, where the Sabres are out of the hunt for the seventh straight year and will miss the postseason for the eighth season in a row.

The Sabres are at the opposite end of the standings, where their collapse to the finish line could have direct correlation to their success in the NHL Draft Lottery.

There are three games left in the regular season, starting with Tuesday's visit by Nashville to KeyBank Center, and the Sabres have slipped all the way to 28th out of 31 teams in the NHL's overall standings.

They have 72 points, just two ahead of New Jersey after the Devils' 4-2 win Monday over the New York Rangers. Los Angeles (67 points) also could pass the Sabres while only last-place Ottawa (62) can't catch Buffalo.

The Sabres are 1-12-2 in their last 15 games and have not won in regulation in 18 games, since their Feb. 23 upset of defending Stanley Cup champion Washington.

The lottery will be held April 9 in Toronto and the results will be revealed live on NBCSN. As in previous years, all 15 non-playoff clubs will qualify and there will be three drawings: The winner of the first draw will get the No. 1 pick in the NHL Draft on June 21 in Vancouver. The second draw determines No. 2 and the third draw determines No. 3.

The odds are unchanged from last year, when the Sabres finished in 31st place and won the lottery to earn the right to draft Rasmus Dahlin. The team with the fewest points will have the best odds of winning the No. 1 pick at 18.5 percent.

The odds then move to 13.5 percent for the 30th-place team, 11.5 percent for 29th, 9.5 percent for 28th and 8.5 percent for 27th, which appears to be the lowest odds the Sabres will have.

An added wrinkle to the 2019 lottery is that Ottawa appears likely to finish 31st – but the Senators traded their No. 1 pick for this year to Colorado for Matt Duchene. It leaves the Avalanche in the enviable position of potentially making the playoffs and having the best odds to also get the No. 1 pick.

The lottery winner is expected to take 5-foot-10 center Jack Hughes, an Orlando native playing with the U.S. National Development Team. Hughes has 23 goals and 86 points in 41 games this season for the Under-18 club.

The No. 2 pick is likely to be 6-2 Finnish right winger Kaapo Kakko, who outplayed Hughes and scored the gold medal-winning goal for Finland in the World Junior Championships. He's playing for Liiga in the Finnish pro league.

Lottery week figures to be a huge one for Colorado, which has a great chance to get a Top-3 pick and could add the likely Hobey Baker Award winner to its lineup for the playoffs at some point.

The favorite to win college hockey's Heisman is UMass defenseman Cale Makar, who was taken No. 4 overall in 2017. Makar will be leading his team in the Frozen Four at KeyBank Center, ironically in an April 11 semifinal against the University of Denver, and is expected to earn the Hobey in an April 12 ceremony in Harborcenter. If his team loses its semifinal game, he could sign with Colorado that day as well.

Huge game for Preds

Monday was the Sabres' final scheduled off day of the season and the game against the Predators is their second-to-last at home. It's a huge one for the visitors, who are in the midst of a three-way battle with Winnipeg and surging St. Louis for the Central Division title.

The Predators have 94 points, two behind first-place Winnipeg after the Jets' 4-3 overtime win Monday in Chicago. St. Louis pulled even with Nashville thanks to a 3-2 shootout win over Colorado Monday on a game-deciding goal by former Sabres center Ryan O'Reilly. With Nashville idle, the Preds, Jets and Blues all enter Tuesday having played 79 games.

Nashville forward Viktor Arvidsson enters Tuesday's game with 33 goals and his next one will set the franchise single-season record. The Predators, who were born in 1998, have never had a 40-goal scorer. Arvidsson is tied for the franchise mark with Filip Forsberg (2015-16) and Jason Arnott (2008-09).

Sabres foes land in NHL Stars

The Sabres provided big help to two-thirds of the NHL's Stars of the Week announced Monday. The No. 1 Star was Columbus goalie Sergei Bobrovsky, who blanked Buffalo here Sunday night, and No. 2 was Detroit forward Tyler Bertuzzi, who scored the overtime winner in the Red Wings' 5-4 victory here on Thursday. The No. 3 star was Arizona goalie Darcy Kuemper.

With Phil Housley's departure looking more possible, which coaches should be on the Sabres' radar?

By Joe Yerdon
The Athletic
April 1, 2019

This isn't at all how it was supposed to go in Buffalo.

If that reads like the opening line to a drama, it's not far off from how the Sabres' tenure under Phil Housley has unfolded. When Buffalo hired Housley away from the Nashville Predators following their loss to the Pittsburgh Penguins in the 2017 Stanley Cup Final, the organization was supposed to be getting the up-and-coming head coaching prospect that would lead them out of the doldrums and back to the playoffs.

With Housley's second season nearly complete and the Sabres continuing an incomprehensible plunge to the bottom of the NHL standings, which John Vogl outlined last week, Buffalo is left looking back at a season that somehow was more disappointing than last year's 62-point effort.

Tacking on Sunday's 4-0 shutout loss to the Columbus Blue Jackets, the Sabres have lost 14 of their last 15 games, with four points to show for it. In their past 23 games, they've gone 3-17-3, a stretch that takes them back to mid-February when there was still a sliver of hope the Sabres could make a late run to sneak into the playoffs.

General manager Jason Botterill, who on Feb. 20 said he was sticking by Housley, will need to take a hard look at whether or not it's time to move on from the coach. Sabres owner/president Kim Pegula said at the NFL owners' meetings last week that leadership is not happy about how the season has gone and will review all options once the season ends on Saturday. "Something has to change," Pegula said, and as our Pierre LeBrun wrote last week, the dire turn this season has taken may force Botterill's hand on Housley even if he'd rather keep him on board.

Should the Sabres part ways with Housley, there will be a wide array of coaching options out there worthy of a look, both those who have NHL experience and those who may deserve a shot. Let's take a look.

NHL veterans

Joel Quenneville, Alain Vigneault, Todd McLellan, Kirk Muller, Todd Nelson

Without a doubt, the hottest name on the market is Joel Quenneville. The three-time Stanley Cup winner with the Chicago Blackhawks has had a pretty stellar track record everywhere he's been — Chicago, Colorado and St. Louis. Like when the Sabres fired Ted Nolan and took aim at Mike Babcock, Quenneville is the best coach available. He's also going to have every team with a head coach vacancy calling him, including Los Angeles, Anaheim and Philadelphia.

Quenneville can pick his team and name his price. So, for the Sabres, it's a question of whether the situation in Buffalo appeals to the 60-year-old.

Alain Vigneault and Todd McLellan are also seasoned NHL coaches who have had a lot of success. Vigneault has taken the Canucks (2011) and the Rangers (2014) to the Stanley Cup Final and won the Jack Adams Award, for the NHL's Coach of the Year, in 2007. When you factor in his three-and-a-half seasons with Montreal in the late 1990s, he's 648-435-98 overall and has taken his teams to the postseason 11 times.

McLellan's time with the Edmonton Oilers may be better remembered for the frustrations he had with his players, and openly expressed to the media. That experience may deter him from considering Buffalo, but his success with the Sharks, and for the one season with the Oilers, make him a notable candidate. He went 434-282-90 in 10-and-a-half seasons with those two teams, guiding them to the postseason in seven of them. He led the Sharks to first-place finishes in three of seven seasons.

Kirk Muller and Todd Nelson also have NHL experience, but are a little greener than the other three.

Muller coached the Hurricanes for three seasons, going 80-80-27 before he was fired in 2014. Since then, he's spent two years as an assistant in St. Louis and three more in Montreal, where he remains in that role under

Claude Julien. Muller's experience in Carolina with Jeff Skinner (122 points under Muller) lends a connection ... if Skinner, set to become an unrestricted free agent, decides to stay in Buffalo.

Nelson, like McLellan, has history with the Oilers, albeit brief. He was an assistant under Dallas Eakins in 2014-15 and took over for him when Edmonton fired Eakins 31 games into that season. Nelson is currently an assistant under Jim Montgomery in Dallas. In the previous three seasons with the Red Wing's AHL affiliate Grand Rapids, he won a Calder Cup in 2016-17. Like Eakins, Muller is going to get another shot in the NHL; it's just a matter of when.

Eakins also would be on this list if he wasn't already next in line for the Anaheim Ducks' job.

Fresh faces

Chris Taylor, DJ Smith, Sheldon Keefe, Clark Donatelli, Jay Leach, Stu Barnes

This collection of coaches hail from the AHL, with the exception of Smith who is an assistant under Mike Babcock in Toronto. What sets them apart is that they haven't yet had a head coaching position in the NHL.

Chris Taylor stands out as a viable option based on the success he's had the past two seasons as head coach of the Americans, guiding them to the playoffs both times in a very difficult North Division. The Amerks are loose, they have fun, and they're driven to do well under Taylor. He's helped right the ship in Rochester, so could he do the same with the big club? If Housley is bounced out, Taylor will be strongly considered, especially due to his experience with many of the current Sabres and the ones tagged to be there eventually.

Clark Donatelli and Jay Leach are also guys with whom Botterill is very familiar. Donatelli took over for Mike Sullivan in Wilkes-Barre/Scranton in 2016 after Sullivan was promoted to coach the Penguins. Since then, Donatelli has led Pittsburgh's farm team to the playoffs in his first three seasons and has them fighting for a spot again this season.

The interim coach in WBS for three games after Sullivan's promotion was Leach, who now serves as head coach of the Providence Bruins. Leach and Donatelli are now competing against each other for an AHL playoff spot. Leach led the P-Bruins to the playoffs last season, his first as a full-time head coach. He's young at 39 years old and boasts a lot of potential.

DJ Smith and Sheldon Keefe are both in the Maple Leafs organization; Smith as Babcock's assistant and Keefe as the head coach of the Toronto Marlies. Hiring either of them away from Toronto could be a bit tricky, especially since they would be next in line if Toronto were to take any drastic measures with Babcock.

Smith has been a Leafs assistant for four seasons. He previously coached the OHL's Oshawa Generals for three seasons, leading them a Memorial Cup title in 2015, and before that was an assistant with Windsor for six seasons. Botterill hasn't been keen on associating with Canadian junior hockey (zero CHL players drafted to date), but coaching talent speaks for itself.

Keefe won a Calder Cup with the Marlies last season and has done an excellent job with a roster that's graduated more than a few players to the NHL. Players seem to love playing for him there, too, and that's a trait that cannot be discounted in a new coach. Keefe is now in his fourth season with AHL Toronto, where he's won 50-or-more games twice. He'll be an NHL head coach someday; it's just a matter of when.

It wouldn't be a coaching list without a former Sabre, and Stu Barnes told me earlier this season he wants to be a head coach some day. So hey, let's throw the Dallas Star's assistant's name into the pool, too. He does love Buffalo.

The Euro route

Rikard Grönborg, Ralph Krueger

Rikard Grönborg is the head coach of Sweden's national team and, yes, the Sabres are loaded with Swedes throughout the organization. The possibility of him moving to the NHL coaching ranks has already been discussed. This is Grönborg's final season with Sweden and a new challenge awaits him. The Athletic's Craig

Custance spoke with him last August about that among other topics, including Rasmus Dahlin, and it feels like there is a team out there that will take a chance on him.

The Sabres have taken great interest in Swedish players, as well as how they operate over there. It seems like it'd be a natural fit to bring in a coach that knows everything about the Swedish process, especially one who began as an assistant coach at the collegiate and Canadian junior levels. Like many of the other up-and-coming candidates, it's likely a matter of "when" not "if" he'll become an NHL head coach.

Ralph Krueger is a special person on this list. He also coached the Oilers, but he did so during the lockout-shortened 2013 season after serving as an assistant there for two years. The Oilers went 19-22-7 under Krueger and missed the playoffs. Three years later, he reminded everyone what he's capable of as a coach when he led Team Europe to the gold medal series against Canada at the 2016 World Cup of Hockey.

The catch with Krueger is he's busy with soccer at the moment, as the chairman of Southampton in the Premier League. He is an innovative hockey coach who seems to get the best out of his players even when the roster lacks talent.

College ranks

Nate Leaman, Mel Pearson, Guy Gadowsky

Botterill has extensive college experience and likes to draft players who go the NCAA route. College coaches have been gaining traction on the NHL coaching market, with Dave Hakstol to Philadelphia in 2015 followed by Jim Montgomery to Dallas and David Quinn to the Rangers last year. All three were winners at the NCAA level and got their opportunity in the NHL.

Nate Leaman helped build Union College's program before moving to Providence and winning a national championship in 2015 against Jack Eichel's Boston University team. He has the Friars back in the Frozen Four this year, with Buffalo conveniently hosting the tournament. Leaman has steadily moved up the college coaching ladder and the logical next step would be the NHL — if that's what he wants.

Mel Pearson, currently the head coach at Michigan, assisted former Wolverines coach Red Berenson for 23 seasons, including the four Botterill played in Ann Arbor. Pearson landed his first head coaching job with Michigan Tech and helped get the Huskies back to prominence before replacing Berenson at Michigan last season. A guy that's been in college hockey as long as Pearson is probably set to stay there, but he has history with the GM and a long, successful track record that's difficult to ignore.

Guy Gadowsky makes this list because of his Penn State connection with the Pegulas. When Terry and Kim helped launch a varsity men's hockey team in Happy Valley in 2012, Gadowsky took the coaching reins and remains in that role. His history of reviving the programs at the University of Alaska and at Princeton shows he knows how to engineer a rebuild. Still, the NHL would be a whole new challenge and, if that opportunity comes the Sabres, would put him under the microscope immediately because of the Pegula connection.

Return to ice special for former Sabres goalie Daren Puppa, family

By Bill Hoppe

Olean Times Herald

April 1, 2019

BUFFALO – The patchwork of equipment former Sabres goalie Daren Puppa cobbled together hardly fit his 6-foot-4 frame.

The small pads prevented Puppa from butterflying, the technique he utilized throughout his successful 15-year NHL career. He said the size 13 skates felt “like boats.” The long stick kept him from getting into the proper crouch.

Still, some ill-fitting gear wasn’t going to spoil Puppa’s comeback March 18 at HarborCenter.

“I was out there,” Puppa, 54, told the Times Herald.

Just getting on the ice again for a Sabres Alumni game held major significance. The former NHL All-Star hadn’t tended goal in 18 years.

In 2000, a bad back that still wreaks havoc forced a battered Puppa to retire from the Tampa Bay Lightning. He has experienced pain from his injuries – he also feels numbness in the arm he broke in 1989 – his entire post-hockey life.

Puppa’s wife, Meg, said she and their three children would regularly “roll” him into the back of the family’s Chevy Suburban and drive him to the chiropractor when his back gave out.

“So they lived the pain of his injuries and remember that,” said Meg Puppa, who grew up on Grand Island and met her husband while he played for the Sabres.

But their kids – they have two daughters, Ali and Isabel, and a son, Cory – don’t remember him playing. So Puppa’s outing had extra special meaning.

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Earlier this year, Meg Puppa asked Daren if he missed hockey. Around the same time, he decided he would start helping out her brother, Michael Lee, a former high school and Junior A goalie, with the Elevation Goaltending Academy, which he started last year in Raleigh.

Daren Puppa is going to analyze video of students weekly and occasionally travel to North Carolina for more hands-on work.

“So I said, ‘Hey, it’ll be great for you to get back in it, you miss it,’” Meg Puppa said. “And then the next day he goes, ‘Well, I decided I’m going to play.’”

His words shocked her.

“(I told him), ‘Wait, no, that wasn’t what we talked about,’” she said. “I was like, ‘No, no, no.’”

But Daren Puppa, who was invited to Buffalo for some alumni events, was hellbent on doing it. He started rollerblading around their neighborhood in Tampa, ramping up his workouts and “training like he used to,” according to Meg Puppa.

“My wife says I’m nuts,” he said. “I’m not getting any younger.”

Isabel Puppa, a graduate student at the University of Calgary, said her mother casually relayed her father’s plans to get back on the ice.

“She’s like, ‘Oh yeah, your dad, he’s going to go play again in Buffalo,’” she said. “And I was like, ‘What?’”

She added: "My dad didn't think it was a big deal."

But it was huge big deal for Puppa's family.

When Isabel Puppa found out the rest of her family would be flying to Buffalo to watch him, she said, "I can't miss this."

She knows her father endures pain and tries to keep it to himself.

"It was kind of painful to watch him," she said of everyday life growing up. "He doesn't complain and he doesn't really show it. ... Knowing that he's in pain and just seeing him go on and do everything anyway has always been really inspiring to me and hard to see."

Sometimes Isabel Puppa, who grew up playing sports, would accompany her father to the chiropractor for her own treatment.

"It would take him like 30 minutes to get adjusted, whereas for me, it takes like five minutes," she said.

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Daren Puppa, who now works in real estate, called his return to the ice a "last-minute thing." Since he hadn't played for so long, other than having an old mask, he needed equipment. So he asked around.

"Get me some equipment, I'm going!" Puppa said.

A friend with the Colorado Avalanche sent some items back with the Sabres when they visited last month. The Sabres and Lightning also helped.

Puppa, a two-time Vezina Trophy finalist, wondered if he would hold up in "game" action. When he told people he was going to play again, they all told him, "Don't get hurt!"

"First thing out of everybody's mouth, like over and over and over," he said. "I played in the NHL. I'm ready to play hopefully."

Puppa, who played 215 of his 429 NHL games with the Sabres, had a simple goal.

"My goal was to stand at the end of the day," he said. "If I let 100 goals in, who cares?"

Despite having no warm-up time, Puppa survived the 40-minute game, backstopping the Sabres to a win over the Esquires All-Attorney team in front of about 10 or 15 family members and friends. He only suffered a slightly swollen knee.

While Puppa couldn't move like he used to, he still possessed enough agility to showcase the two-pad stack.

"That's the only thing I had going," joked Puppa, who plans to keep playing and is working on acquiring the proper sized equipment.

Puppa said his family took pictures, video and ate up his comeback.

"They really enjoyed the fact that they go to see me, because I looked like a goalie," he said. "Not quite the same movement."

Isabel Puppa said she never thought she would see her father return to the ice.

"I knew how much pain (he experienced) and how injured he was," she said. "It was really special, because he always came to one of my sports games growing up. He was always there. So it just felt really special to be able to actually see him play."

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The Sabres, who had Monday off, host the Nashville Predators on Tuesday at KeyBank Center.

No April fooling: Sabres tickets selling for less than a beer

By Anthony Reyes

WKBW

April 1, 2019

BUFFALO, N.Y. (WKBW) — Today may be April Fool's Day but this is no joke - tickets for the Sabres game Tuesday against the Nashville Predators can be purchased on secondary markets starting at \$6.

That means you can attend tomorrow night's game for less than you'd pay for:

A beer at the KeyBank Center

A dozen Paula's Donuts

Jim's Steakout famous steak hoagie

Mighty pack from Mighty Taco

Ted's hot dog with regular fries and regular drink

Burrito from Lloyd

Beef on weck from Charlie the Butcher's

Spaghetti parmesan from Chef's

Tickets for the final game of the season Thursday against the Ottawa Senators, which is also Fan Appreciation Night, can be purchased on the secondary market starting at \$13.

Sabres fans were riding high in November when the team rode a 10-game winning streak to the top of the standings.

Since the impressive streak ended, the Sabres have racked up one of the worst records in the NHL. Buffalo will miss the playoffs for the eighth consecutive season, the second longest drought in the league behind only the Carolina Hurricanes.

With just three games left in the season, the Sabres are 31-38-10. At 72 points, they sit in 28th place in the NHL. Only three teams have less points than the Sabres.

Stunning numbers: It was a terrible March for Sabres

By Adam Gretz

Pro Hockey Talk

April 1, 2019

Every month we take a look at some stunning numbers around the NHL.

What is standing out to us lately?

Let's take a look...

The Buffalo Sabres didn't win a game in regulation in March

The Sabres are not going to finish the 2018-19 season with the NHL's worst record, but you could probably put together a pretty convincing argument that they are, in fact, the worst team in the league as their perpetual rebuild continues to go nowhere (read more about that here).

Everything about their early season success was built around a 10-game winning streak that, while impressive, was dominated by overtime and shootout wins. That is no way to sustain success in the NHL, and the Sabres most definitely did not sustain success this season and the month of March may have been their worst stretch of them all.

Their 4-0 loss to the Columbus Blue Jackets on Sunday night, a game where they were booed off the ice after the first period, wrapped up a month where they managed to go just 2-12-2 in their 16 games. The six points they tallied in the standings was the lowest total in the league for the month, four behind the New Jersey Devils and five behind the New York Rangers, the two teams directly ahead of them. What is worse? Buffalo played one more game than both of them. Even the Ottawa Senators and Los Angeles Kings managed to pick up 13 points in their 14 games in March.

Even uglier for Buffalo? Neither of their two wins came in regulation, winning one in overtime (their first game in March against the Pittsburgh Penguins) and one in a shootout (against the St. Louis Blues). They went an entire calendar month without winning a game outright in regulation.

Even worse than that? They have only won 19 games in regulation all season, a mark that is currently tied for the worst in the NHL with the Detroit Red Wings.

Never before has a 10-game winning streak actually been a bad thing considering all of the flaws it masked with this team.