



Buffalo Sabres

Daily Press Clips

November 29, 2019

Toronto visits Buffalo after Johnsson's 2 goal-game

Associated Press

November 29, 2019

Toronto Maple Leafs (12-10-4, third in the Atlantic Division) vs. Buffalo Sabres (11-10-4, sixth in the Atlantic Division)

Buffalo, New York; Friday, 4 p.m. EST

BOTTOM LINE: The Buffalo Sabres host Toronto after Andreas Johnsson scored two goals in the Maple Leafs' 6-0 win against the Red Wings.

The Sabres are 7-7-2 in Eastern Conference games. Buffalo has converted on 18.8% of power-play opportunities, recording 15 power-play goals.

The Maple Leafs are 6-7-4 against conference opponents. Toronto has scored 15 power-play goals, converting on 19.5% of chances.

The matchup Friday is the first meeting of the season for the two teams.

TOP PERFORMERS: Jack Eichel leads the Sabres with 17 assists and has collected 31 points this season. Sam Reinhart has scored four goals over the last 10 games for Buffalo.

Auston Matthews leads the Maple Leafs with 16 goals and has 30 points. William Nylander has recorded 10 points over the last 10 games for Toronto.

LAST 10 GAMES: Maple Leafs: 4-5-1, averaging 3.1 goals, 5.3 assists, 2.8 penalties and 5.6 penalty minutes while allowing 2.8 goals per game with a .916 save percentage.

Sabres: 2-6-2, averaging 2.6 goals, 3.9 assists, 4.5 penalties and 11.2 penalty minutes while giving up 3.5 goals per game with a .886 save percentage.

Sabres Injuries: Rasmus Dahlin: out (upper body).

Maple Leafs Injuries: None listed.

Lindholm scores in OT, Flames beat Sabres 3-2

By John Wawrow

Associated Press

November 27, 2019

BUFFALO, N.Y. (AP) — Flames captain Mark Giordano was thoroughly impressed with how Calgary rallied rather than unraveled.

Following two-plus days of facing questions regarding the uncertain status of coach Bill Peters, the Flames showed no signs of being distracted with Elias Lindholm scoring on a wraparound 1:17 into overtime of a 3-2 victory over the Buffalo Sabres on Wednesday night.

"It's a four-game trip that's had a lot of adversity," Giordano said. "I think guys, what we did as players, we said to one another this is almost a way to get away from everything off the ice right now by playing games, practicing. And I thought we did a good job of that."

Peters has been accused of using racist slurs against Nigerian-born player Akim Aliu 10 years ago while the two were in the minors. And Hurricanes coach Rod Brind'Amour earlier Wednesday backed another former player's allegation that Peters kicked and punched players on the bench during his previous four years coaching Carolina.

Following the game, Flames general manager Brad Treliving confirmed he received a letter of apology from Peters, in which the coach acknowledged using offensive language in dealing with Aliu. The letter was initially obtained and posted on Twitter during the third period by TSN, a Canadian sports cable network.

Without specifically referencing the words he used, Peters said his comments to Aliu were the source of both anger and disappointment. He added, the incident was made in a "moment of frustration and does not reflect my personal values."

Peters says he regretted the incident and apologizes to anyone negatively affected by it.

The letter was released while Peters is away from the team while the Flames and the NHL conduct an investigation into the matter.

Matthew Tkachuk scored 4:02 into the third period to force overtime by tying the game at 2 a little over two minutes after Victor Olofsson scored for Buffalo.

Tkachuk then set up Lindholm's overtime goal as Calgary improved to 2-0-1 in its past three and closed a four-game road trip that began with a 5-0 loss at St. Louis.

"It's huge. Obviously, a lot of things going on right now. We can only affect what's going on out on the ice," Lindholm said. "We got the two points at the end, and that's all that matters."

TJ Brodie also had a goal and assist, and David Rittich stopped 34 shots with associate coach Geoff Ward behind the bench.

Jimmy Vesey also scored for the Sabres who dropped to 2-8-3 in their past 13 — and after getting off to a 9-2-1 start to the season. Linus Ullmark made 26 saves.

"It's definitely frustrating, the final result," first-year Sabres coach Ralph Krueger said.

"We definitely had the chances to put it away after 2-1, and the inability to do that and then have a D-zone breakdown to allow them back into the game is really, really disappointing," Krueger added. "It's a painful situation that we have to manage and use in the right way."

The game was decided when Tkachuk beat a Sabres defender to the puck deep in Buffalo's zone and slid a pass behind the net to Lindholm.

Lindholm came out untouched at the right post and circled atop the crease before scoring inside the opposite post.

Brodie's goal with 2:55 left in the opening period came in his second game two weeks after experiencing a frightening moment in practice when he began convulsing after falling to the ice. A series of neurological tests came back negative and the 29-year-old play-making defenseman was cleared to return in a 3-2 loss at Pittsburgh on Monday.

Despite the win, the Flames continued their offensive struggles in scoring two or fewer goals in regulation for the ninth consecutive game. It's a stretch in which Calgary has been out-scored 30-12 and shut out three times.

NOTES: Sabres D Rasmus Dahlin is out indefinitely after sustaining a concussion in being elbowed in the face by Tampa Bay's Erik Cernak in 5-2 loss Monday. ... Calgary played its 17th road game, tying Minnesota for the most so far this season. ... Sabres forward Marcus Johansson returned after missing seven games with an upper body injury.

UP NEXT

Flames: Open a three-game homestand hosting Ottawa on Saturday.

Sabres: Host Toronto on Friday.

Sabres defenseman Dahlin out indefinitely with concussion

By John Wawrow

Associated Press

November 27, 2019

BUFFALO, N.Y. (AP) — The Buffalo Sabres' list of injuries continues to grow, with defenseman Rasmus Dahlin out indefinitely with a concussion.

The play-making defenseman was hurt when he was elbowed in the face by Tampa Bay defenseman Erik Cernak in Buffalo's 5-2 loss on Monday. Cernak wasn't penalized for the hit but has since been issued a two-game suspension by the NHL.

With Dahlin's addition, the Sabres have five regulars on the injured list as they prepare to host the Calgary Flames on Wednesday night.

The Sabres also announced forward Vladimir Sobotka is out indefinitely after having surgery on an injured right knee.

The team said doctors determined surgery was an appropriate step while Sobotka recovers from a hip injury he suffered in a game against Tampa Bay played in Sweden on Nov. 8.

The 11-year veteran is in his second season with Buffalo and has a goal and two assists in 16 games.

Sabres goalie prospect Jonas Johansson exceeding expectations with Amerks

By Bill Hoppe

The Buffalo News

November 29, 2019

ROCHESTER – Before winger Victor Olofsson emerged as one of the Buffalo Sabres' top prospects, their 2014 draft ranked among the worst in franchise history.

Other than Olofsson, a rare seventh-round gem, only winger Sam Reinhart, the second overall pick, has paid dividends.

In the last five years, the Sabres have traded or let go of six other selections. None of them ever played in Buffalo.

Still, that weak 2014 class could produce one more NHL player.

Goalie Jonas Johansson, 24, has quietly developed into a strong prospect, starting eight of the Rochester Americans' first 18 games this season.

The affable Johansson has performed so well, he has stolen a little playing time from veteran Andrew Hammond.

Right now, the Amerks don't have a designated No. 1 goalie.

"It is hard to say a No. 1 or 2 or 1A, 1B," said assistant coach Gord Dineen, who served as interim coach for seven weeks. "The good thing I love to see is that Jonas is really getting an opportunity at the American League level, and he's made the most of it."

Johansson's opportunity materialized, in part, because top goalie prospect Ukko-Pekka Luukkonen, 20, wasn't ready to play until earlier this month after undergoing hip surgery in April. Luukkonen has been with the Cincinnati Cyclones, their ECHL affiliate, to continue his recovery.

Meanwhile, the 6-foot-5, 219-pound Johansson has seized his chances in Rochester, winning his last three starts.

In 10 total appearances, he has compiled a 5-2-2 record with a 2.35 goals-against average and a .916 save percentage.

"He's steady," winger Andrew Oglevie said. "He's never too high, he's never too low. He's been making some fabulous saves. For the most part, I think he's doing a good job of just staying focused."

Comfort and familiarity in the AHL have helped buoy Johansson's success.

"You know what to expect," said Johansson, who played 19 AHL games over the previous three seasons. "I just know how it works, I would say. That's a big deal."

Johansson, who came to North America late in the 2016-17 season, has spent the bulk of his career with the Cyclones, playing 54 games. While Luukkonen is regarded as the Sabres' goalie of the future, the organization views Johansson as a prospect.

They awarded him a period of NHL action in each of the last two preseasons. Last year, he was playing so well in the ECHL that he earned a recall to AHL when the Amerks had two healthy goalies.

"I love to see his development," Dineen said. "The one thing about him is he's really motivated and he really works his tail off. So I love to see him garner more opportunity because of that."

Johansson might have played more AHL games last season if he hadn't undergone season-ending surgery in February to repair a torn meniscus.

"It was not one specific situation to where it happened," Johansson said. "It was more nagging over time, and suddenly it was torn."

Johansson, who had fully recovered by training camp, said he set a goal of playing as many AHL games as possible this season.

"It made it really simple to just narrow it down and focus on myself," he said.

Some of Johansson's success can be traced to his personality. He always seems to be smiling.

Hammond said he has never seen him in a bad mood.

"That reflects on the ice that he just has the same approach every day," he said. "He's been very consistent from Day One."

The relationship Johansson and Hammond, 31, have quickly established has also helped.

"He's exactly like you want your goalie partner to be – supportive, competitive and just a nice guy," Johansson said.

The duo often spends time on the ice together before practice.

"We both enjoy the extra stuff, the details of getting out before practice and working on our skating," said Hammond, who has compiled a 7-1-1 mark with a 2.63 goals-against average, a .902 save percentage and two shutouts in nine games. "It's definitely a lot easier. It's almost like in the gym having a workout partner."

But how much longer will they be partners? The Sabres want to take their time with Luukkonen, so he could stay in the ECHL a little longer.

At some point, the Amerks will summon Luukkonen. When that happens, they might have a good problem.

"You deal with it when it comes," Dineen said of possibly having three goalies.

Nelson finds his groove

After Casey Nelson spent a season and a half in Buffalo, the Sabres waived the defenseman at the end of camp and sent him to the Amerks.

Right away, Nelson, 27, tried to embrace the demotion.

"I'm just happy and playing – playing the game that we love," he said. "That's all that matters."

Nelson adjusted slowly – "He was feeling his way back into it," Dineen said – before finding a groove.

"Sometimes it's harder to play at this level, especially for a defenseman," Dineen said. "It's maybe not as structured. (It's) more frenetic, (there's) more action. The NHL can be a little more positional. ..."

"It took him a little while to get back to his game."

Nelson has developed a more offensive style this season, regularly moving the puck.

"I'm using my feet more and more and just getting up leading the rush," he said.

Nelson, who has a knack for getting pucks on net from the point, also said he's shooting more often.

"You just get more comfortable with fake shots and moving laterally," he said.

Nelson has scored three goals and nine points in 16 games.

Amerks notes

After spending nearly two months in the NHL, the Sabres assigned John Gilmour to the Amerks on Saturday after he cleared waivers. Gilmour, who recorded an assist in Saturday's 4-2 road win over the Binghamton Devils, gives the Amerks 10 defensemen. ... Injuries forced the Amerks to use two defensemen – Brandon Hickey and Nathan Paetsch – as wingers in their 3-2 overtime win against the Cleveland Monsters on Nov. 15. While Paetsch has regularly played forward during his career, Hickey said he hadn't played up front since a brief run when he was 15. "I just kind of tried to not think and just go out there and play," said a smiling Hickey. ... With five forwards injured, the Amerks signed Brady Vail, 25, to a pro tryout on Thursday. Vail played 18 games with Rochester in 2016-17. ... The Amerks host Toronto at Blue Cross Arena on Friday, their first look at the Marlies since coach Sheldon Keefe was promoted to the Maple Leafs. The Amerks then travel to Cleveland on Saturday.

What was Sabres' Rasmus Ristolainen doing on overtime goal against Calgary?

By Mike Harrington

The Buffalo News

November 29, 2019

What happened on Elias Lindholm's overtime goal for Calgary that beat the Sabres, 3-2, on Wednesday night at KeyBank Center?

Rasmus Ristolainen was caught on the ice for the entire 77 seconds of overtime and pondered a change one time but couldn't leave. He then made a futile chase for the puck behind the net but Lindholm got in front and curled it past Linus Ullmark for the game-winner.

"I wanted off the ice but didn't think I was close to getting off," Ristolainen said Thursday. "If I change, they might have a 2-on-1 there. I don't want to put my teammates in a bad situation, have a bad change. I tried to battle through it and maybe get a whistle and it didn't work out.

"When you're tired, you make stupid plays. I guess if I was a split-second earlier, I would have caught the pass behind the net. If I was a split-second later I would have stayed in front of the net. Everything went wrong there. I thought we earned a win but it's not always going your way."

Sabres looking to avoid dubious slice of history against Leafs

By Mike Harrington

The Buffalo News

November 28, 2019

Through five decades of hockey, the Buffalo Sabres have always had plenty of success against the Toronto Maple Leafs. From the Aud to Maple Leaf Gardens and now from KeyBank Center to Scotiabank Arena, wins and goals have been plentiful. And so has the byplay in the stands.

The Sabres once scored 11 goals in a game in Toronto in 1975 and battered the Leafs, 14-4, in an 1981 game at the Aud that saw them explode for a nine-goal second period that still stands as an NHL record. In 33 of the games, they've scored at least six goals against Toronto. They even beat the Leafs in five games in the 1999 Eastern Conference finals to earn their last trip to the Stanley Cup final.

But as they try to emerge from yet another slump that has dogged their recent history, the Sabres face a dark reality this weekend: They suddenly can't beat their fiercest rival.

A loss in Friday afternoon's matinee against the Leafs downtown would be Buffalo's sixth straight against Toronto, something that has never happened since the Sabres entered the NHL in 1970. And that figure could quickly get to No. 7 as the teams meet again Saturday night in Toronto.

"That gives us motivation but just the game overall gives me motivation," defenseman Rasmus Ristolainen said after the club's Thanksgiving Day practice in the arena. "We haven't got too many wins lately so we need it bad."

The Sabres were swept by the Leafs last year for the first time (going 0-3-1) and haven't beaten them in more than 20 months, since a 3-2 win in Toronto on March 28, 2016. Buffalo's last five-game losing streak against Toronto dates to 1972, as does the last time it dropped as many as the current three in a row at home.

The timing for this home-and-home set isn't great. The Leafs are 3-0 under new coach Sheldon Keefe and letting their talent fly all over the ice with the shackles of Mike Babcock now on the unemployment line. They're coming off Wednesday's 6-0 win in Detroit that saw them unleash a 54-shot barrage at the Red Wings. The Sabres, meanwhile, are just 3-9-3 in their last 15 games.

Ristolainen often seems to be in the center of things against the Leafs but longtime adversary Nazem Kadri is no longer part of the rivalry after he was traded to Colorado following last season.

Still, when asked if the absence of Kadri put a crimp on the rivalry for him, Ristolainen said no way.

"I like it a lot. They all look the same," he said of the Leafs. "Same sweater. Same helmets. They're all enemies. Just get a win."

Captain Jack Eichel stayed to a similar party line.

"They're the next team on our schedule and it's important to get divisional wins," Eichel said. "We have to start finding wins against everyone and the Leafs are a team we play a lot in our division."

Coach Ralph Krueger knows rivalries, having been a part of some Edmonton-Calgary games during his three seasons with the Oilers as both an assistant and head coach. He said he's looking forward to his first chance at this one, even though it will not be against former Canadian Olympic team partner Babcock.

"We're really excited about it. It's been highlighted on the calendar for a while, this back to back," Krueger said. "You can feel the energy in the room. We're going to make the picture nice and small and do our best to play some strong hockey here."

"The rivalry will bring emotion into the building. We know there will be a mix of people from Canada and Buffalo supporting both sides, which will create that bit of an atmosphere like I'm used to often in Europe where there's lots of road fans. It will certainly give a spark to the game."

The Sabres have played the Leafs 214 times in their history, winning 115 and getting a tie or overtime/shootout loser point in 27 other games. That's a lifetime points percentage of .600, their best against any Atlantic Division opponent.

The Leafs enter this set two points ahead of the Sabres, although Buffalo has a game in hand. After a 3-7 start on the road, the Leafs have posted wins at Arizona, Colorado and Detroit on this trip after Babcock was fired following last week's 4-2 loss in Vegas.

"I don't really think about other teams too much but I saw they got a new head coach so they're probably excited and trying to get back on track," Ristolainen said. "It's always a tough game and it's nice to have some Leafs fans here with the Sabres fans."

Auston Matthews leads the Leafs with 16 goals and 30 points while Eichel, his former World Junior teammate, tops the Sabres at 14-17-31. Matthews burned Buffalo with an overtime goal here last December in the final three seconds of the extra session.

"It's always good," Eichel said. "We always bring out the best in each other and it's good competition."

'Lack of confidence' continues for Sabres' struggling offense in overtime loss

By Lance Lysowski

The Buffalo News

November 27, 2019

Nearly all of Jeff Skinner's 19 shifts Wednesday night in KeyBank Center illustrated his ability to create scoring chances, a quality that helped him earn an eight-year, \$72 million contract from the Buffalo Sabres this past June.

This was the sort of individual performance the Sabres needed from Skinner. Yet, he had no interest in speaking highly of his own play in the aftermath of a 3-2 overtime loss to the Calgary Flames. Skinner, like each of his teammates, was consumed with frustration following another game in which the Sabres could not capitalize on opportunities.

"I have to finish and I didn't," Skinner lamented. "Keep working at it."

The analysis from the Sabres' dressing room was familiar. None of the players who spoke to the media expressed overwhelming concern. This was another game where there were signs of progress, particularly the 16 shots on goal in the third period and impressive stretches in which they controlled possession in the offensive zone.

Jimmy Vesey and Victor Olofsson provided offense on a night when Skinner, Jack Eichel and Sam Reinhart did not score. However, they did not find solace in progress. The reality is Buffalo (11-10-4) is 2-8-2 in November and sixth in the Atlantic Division. The good vibes created during a remarkable October are a distant memory.

"I don't know what it is, but we're finding a way to not close out games," Vesey said. "Maybe things are snowballing just the way it's gone. We've got to get back to the start of the year. When we were playing like that there was a really good feeling in this room and we've played that style for stretches. It's a results league and right now we have to find a way to get back."

The difference was Elias Lindholm's goal at 1:17 into overtime, a result of the Sabres' impatience during the possession-driven 3-on-3. Neither Rasmus Ristolainen, who was on the ice for all 77 seconds, nor Olofsson were able to prevent Lindholm from cutting in front of the net and tucking the puck around Linus Ullmark's right leg pad.

The Sabres had the chance to avoid an overtime altogether. Matthew Tkachuk tied the score, 2-2, with 15:58 remaining in regulation on a shift in which he eluded Jake McCabe's check in the corner and went uncovered during a scramble in front of Buffalo's net.

There is an argument to be made that Calgary (12-12-4) was lucky to be within one goal, too. After all, the Sabres had a number of opportunities during the first two periods. Skinner missed the net from the high slot, Rasmus Asplund hit the post, Vesey was stopped on a first-period shorthanded chance in front and Eichel held on to the puck too long during a 3-on-1 rush.

Vesey scored his second goal in as many games when Asplund created a turnover at the opposing blue line on a penalty kill with 13:28 remaining in the second period to tie the score, 1-1. The Sabres' 25 goals in November rank 30th out of 31 National Hockey League teams in November.

"It's probably a lack of confidence," Krueger said of the offense's struggles. "I mean, you can see Vesey now, he gets his first goal and how confident he was on that opportunity. We just need more guys firing. There's quite a few guys that are not hitting the target right now. Why is that? I mean, number one, first of all, we try to set it up so that we get the majority of scoring chances which we did again today. That's generally the plan, so the guys are sticking with the plan."

For me, it's a mindset right now, it's a negative momentum against us right now on the results. We need an explosion one day probably, have a five, six, seven goal game to really get out of this situation. But stick with it and creating scoring chances is a positive."

Buffalo almost broke through on a power play late in the second period after Eichel drew a penalty at the end of a remarkable shift in which he forced a turnover to pin Calgary in its own zone. Sam Reinhart hit the post moments later, though. Olofsson gave the Sabres a 2-1 lead 1:55 into the third period, only to have Tkachuk tie the score 2:07 later.

The Sabres had another impressive power play in the third period, but Flames goalie David Rittich stopped shots by Eichel, Skinner and Brandon Montour. Buffalo could not earn second chances in front of the net and has struggled to gain the positioning needed to tip shots from the point. The Sabres' power play is 1-for-33 over its last 12 games after ranking second in the NHL through October.

"We have to finish when we get a chance," Skinner, who has one goal in his last seven games, said. "Our power play has to get a little bit better. It seems like that sucks a little bit of momentum out of us when we can't score. We work hard, we spend time in their zone and do a good job of drawing a penalty. It just seems like we can't buy one there right now. Five-on-five, too, we have to do a better job of finishing our chances and closing out games."

There weren't any excuses coming out of the Sabres' dressing room, either. They had practiced only once in the past week and only so much can be accomplished during a morning skate. There has also been a rash of injuries during November, most recently the loss of Rasmus Dahlin, who is out indefinitely with a concussion.

The latter could be partly responsible for them generating only one shot on goal through the game's first seven minutes. Their offense was stagnant during stretches because of poor breakout passes by defensemen. However, Skinner said adversity is inevitable and the Sabres need to a better response.

"We have to work through it," Skinner said. "Every team is going to run into injuries. Every team is going to run into adversity. You have to respond and right now it's our time to respond. We've got to turn it around."

Sabres sending no messages on the scoreboard or on the ice

By Mike Harrington

The Buffalo News

November 27, 2019

There was over-the-top tough news Wednesday morning and a discouraging finish in the evening. Another rough day all around for the Buffalo Sabres.

Vladimir Sobotka's injury didn't heal like the Sabres hoped and the team announced he underwent knee surgery. It might be season-ending. Then came the injury report listing Rasmus Dahlin as out indefinitely with the concussion he suffered Monday night in Tampa.

Sobotka was taken out in the first period in Sweden on a ridiculously late hit by Lightning forward Nikita Kucherov. Dahlin took an elbow to the mush from Lightning defenseman Erik Cernak.

From the NHL's Department of Egregiously Bad Officiating, neither play resulted in a penalty. The Department of Player Safety, meanwhile, issued a minor mea culpa on the Dahlin hit and gave Cernak a two-game suspension, an absurdly light sentence given the potential for how long Dahlin could be out of the lineup.

And here's a much bigger issue: Nobody in Blue and Gold did anything about either play. Kucherov skated around scot-free in Sweden both days and didn't face any comeuppance Monday night either. Nor did Cernak.

As revealed by the Player Safety video, the Lightning had the audacity to try to defend the Cernak play by saying Dahlin's glove came up and was directed into his face by Cernak. That's a galling lack of accountability right there but it's a deeper sign of disrespect toward the Sabres.

And why should a team like Tampa Bay respect the Sabres anyway? The Bolts have six straight wins over Buffalo and are 19-3-1 in the last 23 meetings. And this is one of the teams the Sabres will have to figure out how to play against if they ever want to do anything in the Atlantic Division.

More than eight years after Milan Lucic's unanswered plummeting of Ryan Miller, the Sabres remain about as soft as Grandma's homemade pumpkin ice cream sitting out on the Thanksgiving Day countertop.

That's a sentence not typed lightly. One of the worst things you can call a hockey team is "soft." Players take massive offense to it. Coach Ralph Krueger's team clearly lacks feel for when a response is warranted.

Now, Krueger correctly pointed out the era of massive retaliatory brawls is long past. But we're not talking about that. A message-sending bodycheck once in a while would be nice.

And when things were out of hand the second night in Sweden or with a 5-2 score in the third period Monday night, how do Kucherov and Cernak both skate around with impunity and never worry about having their heads up?

"When you ask me what's changed in the game, more than anything the respect among the players is much, much higher than it was when I was here last," said Krueger, who's back in the NHL after a six-year absence. "I think there is a physicality that is allowed and if it goes over, it's punishable now. We'll learn from it for sure. This isn't that kind of a game anymore."

Maybe my eyerolls were obvious to Krueger. But asked again why his team did nothing, the coach dug in his heels.

"We'll deal with it the way we deal with it inside," he said. "We keep those conversations inside and we learn and grow from every game in many different ways and that's another one where we can get stronger in the future. But thanks for your opinion."

You're welcome.

The Sabres are in a 2-8-3 abyss after Wednesday's 3-2 overtime loss to Calgary. They did lots of good things and had 16 of their 36 shots in the third period. Jimmy Vesey scored a short-handed goal and Rasmus Asplund looks like a keeper. But the Sabres also gave up a lead in the third and Rasmus Ristolainen got stuck on the ice in OT and couldn't stop Elias Lindholm's game-winner.

You simply can't lose to Team Turmoil at home, when the Flames hit town 1-5-2 and not even knowing who their coach will be Thursday. Just can't happen.

And the bigger picture continues to gnaw at the perception of this club.

If someone took out John Carlson, would the Capitals stand by idly? I think Tom Wilson, Radko Gudas and a few others would have something to say.

What would the Bruins do if Torey Krug went down like Dahlin did? How about the Sharks with Erik Karlsson? Or the Lightning with Victor Hedman?

When Ristolainen issued a check during one game in Sweden, he was quickly swarmed by four Tampa players -- including star Steven Stamkos. That's what teams do.

Zach Bogosian is one of those guys who can answer, but the Sabres certainly don't want him getting involved in those sort of things so soon after his return from hip surgery. Jake McCabe can but he was a healthy scratch Monday. Curtis Lazar? Could, but only played nine minutes against the Lightning.

Who else? We're not talking goonery here. Before the famous Peters-Mair-Kaletka (and Marty Biron) brawl with Ottawa in 2007, remember who immediately answered Chris Neil's infamous elbow on Chris Drury?

Drew Stafford. Playing out of character is what good teams often do.

Let's not forget that captain Jack Eichel was so disgusted with everything around this team last week that he threw down against Minnesota. What did Eichel think of my notion?

"Obviously we try to play them hard and there's been some things going back and forth," he said of the Lightning. "We play each other a lot. You just want to be competitive as much as you can. That's a tough question, to be honest with you. I don't have the exact answer for you right now."

Eichel went on to say all the right things, about how the Sabres had to focus on Calgary and then they'd see Tampa Bay again here on New Year's Eve.

"I think we've done a good job of sticking together as a team," he said. "A lot of things happen during the season so as long as the room is sticking together and guys are sticking up for each other, that's important."

When Eichel disagrees with an assertion you've made, he'll tell you so and usually why his thought differs. He wasn't disagreeing here. Some things are simply better left unsaid.

In fairness, most of the players on the bench thought the Dahlin play initially came from a high stick, especially when they saw blood on the ice. Doesn't excuse them for letting Cernak go when even-up time was at hand.

"It was tough to watch," Bogosian said. "The league did what they thought was necessary and you move on from that."

The Sabres keep moving on to the road from nowhere. Now it's a home-and-home series with Mike Babcock-less and red-hot Toronto, starting here Friday afternoon at 4. The Leafs are 3-0 under Sheldon Keefe after Wednesday's 6-0 skunking of Detroit.

The Sabres have dropped five straight to their biggest rivals for the first time since the 1971-72 season. They've never lost six in a row to them. Reaching that dubious deed would be quite a way to celebrate the 50th anniversary season, eh?

Getting pushed around on the ice on too many nights is bad enough.

The Wraparound: Flames 3, Sabres 2 (OT)

By Lance Lysowski

The Buffalo News

November 27, 2019

Elias Lindholm scored 1:17 into overtime Wednesday night to give the Calgary Flames a 3-2 win over the Buffalo Sabres inside KeyBank Center.

The Sabres (11-10-4) have lost five of their last six games overall and five of their last six at home dating back to Oct. 28. The Flames (12-12-4), meanwhile, lost seven of their previous eight games.

Jimmy Vesey and Victor Olofsson scored for the Sabres, who took the lead 1:55 into the third period. Linus Ullmark made 26 saves in goal, and Buffalo had 36 shots on net. Calgary, meanwhile, also received goals from defenseman TJ Brodie and winger Matthew Tkachuk.

Opening salvo: The Flames took a 1-0 lead at with 2:35 remaining in the first period, when Brodie's shot leaked through Ullmark's leg pads. The Sabres were 1-7-1 this season when allowing the first goal and 2-6-2 when trailing after the first 20 minutes. Ullmark stopped seven of eight shots in the first period, including Mikael Backlund's attempt from the slot.

The Sabres have a negative-11 goal differential in the first period of games this season. Defensemen accounted for four of their five shots on goal in the first period Wednesday.

Strong finish: The Sabres had only one shot on goal through the game's first seven minutes, however, they had a strong finish that included two scoring chances. Rasmus Asplund hit the post after pick-pocketing Johnny Gaudreau of the puck at the opposing blue line on the penalty kill, and Jimmy Vesey followed an impressive interception of the puck with a shot that rang off goalie David Rittich's stick.

Shorthanded: The Sabres scored their first shorthanded goal since last March, when Vesey capitalized on a Flames turnover to tie the score 1-1 with 13:28 remaining in the second period. The goal was Vesey's second in as many games, and he gained possession moments after Rasmus Asplund broke up Lindholm's pass at Calgary's blue line.

The goal was Vesey's first career shorthanded point, and Asplund became just the fourth player in Sabres history to record his first NHL point while shorthanded, joining Gary McAdam (1975), Daren Puppa (1987) and Ryan Miller (2006).

Close call: Victor Olofsson skated slowly to the bench and went down the tunnel after blocking a shot midway through the second period Wednesday. However, Olofsson returned to the bench following the next television timeout and returned to his spot on the Sabres' top line.

New look: Rasmus Ristolainen quarterbacked the Sabres' top power-play unit with Rasmus Dahlin (concussion) out indefinitely. Additionally, forward Marcus Johansson skated with the first group, and Jeff Skinner played on the second unit. Sam Reinhart hit the post during the Sabres' first power-play opportunity late in the second period.

Quick strike: Olofsson gave the Sabres a 2-1 lead early in the third period with a shot from the left faceoff dot. The goal was the rookie's ninth of the season and extended his point streak to a career-high five games. Additionally, Eichel extended his point streak to a team-high seven games.

Flames answer: Calgary tied the score two minutes, seven seconds later when Tkachuk scored during a scramble in front of the net. The Flames had scored one or fewer regulation goals in eight consecutive games.

Suspended: Assistant coach Geoff Ward was in charge of the Flames' bench Wednesday night with Bill Peters suspended indefinitely and away from the team. The club is investigating allegations that Peters used a racial slur while head coach of the Rockford IceHogs in 2009-10. Additionally, former NHL defenseman Michal Jordan alleged he was kicked by Peters during a game with the Carolina Hurricanes.

Debut: Jean-Sebastien Dea, a 26-year-old forward who signed with the Sabres in July, made his debut with the team Wednesday night. He centered a line that included Rasmus Asplund and Zemgus Girgensons.

Return: Johansson returned to the lineup Wednesday after missing the previous seven games with an upper-body injury. This was also the first time this season that Johansson started the game at wing. He had won only 38.6 percent of his faceoffs entering Wednesday.

Scratches: Forward Curtis Lazar and defenseman Colin Miller were healthy scratches for the Sabres. The latter has been out of the lineup in six of the last eight games. Goalie Carter Hutton, meanwhile, has started only two of the past seven games.

Next: The Sabres are scheduled to practice Thursday in preparation for their game Friday night against the Toronto Maple Leafs in KeyBank Center. Puck drop against the Leafs is 4 p.m.

Sabres game day: Marcus Johansson returning to lineup against Flames

By Lance Lysowski

The Buffalo News

November 27, 2019

Matchup: Buffalo Sabres (11-10-3) vs. Calgary Flames (11-12-4)

Where: KeyBank Center.

When: 7 p.m.

TV: MSG.

Radio: WGR 550.

MoJo back: Center Marcus Johansson was on the ice for the Sabres' morning skate Wednesday and will be in the lineup against the Flames. The 29-year-old has missed the past seven games with an upper-body injury sustained during the second game of a back-to-back against the Tampa Bay Lightning in Sweden.

Johansson, who signed a two-year contract with the Sabres in July, has four goals among 10 points in 17 games. He should provide a boost both at 5 on 5 and the power play. However, coach Ralph Krueger told reporters Johansson also will help the Sabres off the ice.

"I think everyone knows from Day One that Marcus Johansson has been an important leader for this group and was dearly missed here since Sweden," Krueger said. "Of course we're pleased to have him back, not only for what he brings us on the ice and the roles that he fills and the added tool that he is in our game. It's what he brings off the ice and the calmness of his personality and experience. It's definitely good to have Johansson back."

Johansson, though, was not reunited with Jeff Skinner on a line during the morning skate. Instead, Johansson skated with Casey Mittelstadt and Jimmy Vesey. More important, Johansson took a line rush on the wing, though he would not say if he's playing a different position against Calgary.

"I want to be a part of it," Johansson said of sitting out. "You win together, you lose together. You want to be on the ice no matter what. You want to be a part of what's going on. I think this group will come out learning a lot from this. It was fun to watch the Boston game. I thought we played some really good hockey. We played the right way, I think the way we started the season."

Lineup: The Sabres' line rushes during the morning skate indicated forward Curtis Lazar and defenseman Colin Miller will be healthy scratches against Calgary, though it's important to note Krueger has experimented with different looks during skates earlier this season.

Victor Olofsson appears to be on the top line with Jack Eichel and Sam Reinhart, however, most of the lineup will be different from Monday in Tampa Bay. After all, the Sabres gained Johansson and defenseman Rasmus Dahlin (concussion) is out indefinitely. Linus Ullmark will start in goal for the fourth time in five games.

The Sabres will also be without Evan Rodrigues (lower body), Kyle Okposo (concussion), Tage Thompson (upper body) and Vladimir Sobotka, who underwent surgery on his right knee.

Here is how the Sabres lined up during the morning skate:

Olofsson-Eichel-Reinhart

Vesey-Johansson-Mittelstadt (90, 37 rotated at center)

Skinner-Larsson-Sheary

Girgensons-Asplund-Dea

Bench change: Assistant coach Geoff Ward will serve as the Flames' head coach Wednesday night against the Sabres. Bill Peters, who is in his third season as head coach, is under investigation by the team for allegedly using a racial slur with the American Hockey League's Rockford IceHogs in 2009-10.

Ward, 52, is a longtime assistant coach, spending time on the staffs of the Boston Bruins (2007-14), New Jersey Devils (2015-18) and Flames. He has not been a head coach since a one-year stint with the Iserlohn Roosters (2006-07) in Germany.

Rookie sensation: Olofsson's goal (eight) and point (18) totals have him on pace for the most goals by a Sabres rookie (27) since Donald Audette's 31 in 1991-92 and the most points (62) by a Sabres rookie since Ray Sheppard's 65 in 1987-88.

Olofsson has recorded points in eight of his last nine games, including an assist in each of his last four home games. He enters Wednesday on his third four-game point streak of the season.

Captain watch: Jack Eichel has recorded eight multipoint games this season, tying for 12th-most in the NHL before games Tuesday. He has recorded at least three points five times this season, matching his previous career-high total set in 2016-17. Eichel's three games with at least four points were tied with Edmonton's Connor McDavid for the league lead entering play Tuesday.

Eichel also enters the game Wednesday on a six-game point streak that began Nov. 16. His six goals among 11 points lead the NHL during that span.

Not-so-special teams: The Sabres' power play is amid a 1-for-31 slump and their penalty kill has allowed a goal in nine consecutive games. For context, Buffalo did not allow a power-play goal in more than four consecutive games last season. There were tangible signs of progress during the final two games of the road trip.

Defenseman Zach Bogosian's return to the lineup is a boon to the penalty kill. Additionally, Krueger experimented with different personnel by using Olofsson Tuesday night in Tampa Bay. The Flames' power play ranks 22nd in the NHL, though their penalty kill is fifth.

"It's part of why we're not winning, I think," Skinner said of the Sabres' special teams. "A lot of stuff goes into a game. I think there's still a lot of time 5 on 5 that we can improve on things. ... Specialty teams definitely need to be better for us, and we're going to find a way to work through that."

Sabres' Rasmus Dahlin out indefinitely with concussion

By Lance Lysowski

The Buffalo News

November 27, 2019

The Buffalo Sabres are unsure when Rasmus Dahlin will return from the concussion suffered Monday night against the Tampa Bay Lightning.

Dahlin, a 19-year-old defenseman, was listed as "out indefinitely" on an injury report released by the Sabres ahead of Wednesday's game against the Calgary Flames in KeyBank Center, and he was not among the seven defensemen on the ice during the morning skate.

Dahlin was injured in the second period against the Tampa Bay Lightning, when he was elbowed in the face by defenseman Erik Cernak. Dahlin was carrying the puck through the left-wing circle and was hit moments after he left a drop pass to Jack Eichel on a power play.

There was blood on the Amalie Arena ice when Dahlin skated to the bench, and he did not play in the third period. Cernak was suspended two games and fined \$7,500 by the NHL Department of Player Safety for the hit, which Tampa Bay unsuccessfully argued was Dahlin's fault.

"We said after the game that judgment will be made," Sabres coach Ralph Krueger said. "It's clear that it's been seen as a foul, it's a penalty, it's not allowed. And the length, it's not up to me to judge. We're just going to accept the result as it is and I've said it before, I'll say it again: You would always rather have the five minutes in the game because now the suspension doesn't do us any good. We'll just accept it now for what it is."

In a video released as part of the suspension announcement Tuesday, George Parros, who is in charge of the department of player safety, explained that Tampa Bay thought Dahlin caused the high hit by driving Cernak's elbow upward. Cernak explained to reporters Wednesday in Tampa, Fla., that he "didn't mean to hurt Dahlin" and called the incident an "unlucky situation."

Cernak added that he texted Dahlin, who accepted an apology. That is little consolation to the Sabres. Entering Wednesday, Dahlin, who was drafted first overall in 2018, ranks second on the Sabres with 15 assists and third among their qualifying defensemen in average ice time per game (18:58).

In addition to being the Sabres' top offensive threat from the blue line, Dahlin quarterbacks their top power-play unit. His absence is the latest during a difficult month on the injury front for Buffalo.

Vladimir Sobotka is out indefinitely after undergoing surgery on his right knee from an injury suffered against the Lightning in Stockholm, Sweden, on Nov. 8. Forward Evan Rodrigues (lower body) was listed on the injury report Wednesday as "week to week" with a concussion, Kyle Okposo remains out indefinitely with a concussion and Tage Thompson is expected to miss the next three to five weeks with an upper-body injury.

Dahlin's teammates, including Eichel, had not seen the illegal hit yet when broached with the topic following the Sabres' 5-2 loss in Tampa. However, Eichel called Cernak's elbow "frustrating" following the Sabres' morning skate Wednesday.

"Obviously, going back and seeing the video, it's frustrating," Eichel said. "Those are the type of things you want to get out of the game. He's such an important part of our team, so we're going to miss him. The league took care of it, so I'll just leave it at that."

Dahlin's injury left the Sabres with seven healthy defensemen entering the game Wednesday: Jake McCabe, Rasmus Ristolainen, Brandon Montour, Henri Jokiharju, Marco Scandella, Zach Bogosian and Colin Miller. Though Krueger is equipped with capable replacements, the Sabres lost one of their franchise players amid a difficult stretch in the schedule.

Krueger said his focus is on whom he can play in the lineup and getting Dahlin healthy. Jeff Skinner also declined to give his opinion on Cernak's suspension.

"It's really not my decision, so it really doesn't matter," Skinner said. "Obviously that's a hole we have to fill. He makes a lot of plays back there for us and we have to find someone to step up and it's going to be an opportunity for someone to fill those minutes."

Sobotka's status

Sobotka was initially expected to miss four to six weeks with an upper-body injury sustained on a blindside hit by Tampa Bay's Nikita Kucherov in Stockholm, Sweden, on Nov. 8. However, the Sabres announced Wednesday that Sobotka required surgery on his right knee, and Krueger called injury "long term."

Sobotka, a pending unrestricted free agent, had one goal among three assists in 16 games before the injury. He provided a defensive presence on a line with Jeff Skinner and Marcus Johansson.

"We're really sad about it," Krueger said. "Sobey was an amazing leader in how we want to play here. He was an example on video over and over again of playing the right way without the puck. So, we'll tap into him to help mentor some of the younger players here as he's injured and use his wealth of experience in that way."

Peters update

The Flames abruptly ended their morning skate Wednesday and assistant coach Geoff Ward, who filled in as the head coach, told the media he had not spoken to Bill Peters. Peters is away from the team and suspended indefinitely while the Flames investigate allegations that he used a racial slur as head coach of the American Hockey League's Rockford IceHogs in 2009-10.

Skinner played under Peters during the latter's four seasons as head coach of the Carolina Hurricanes from 2014-18. Former Hurricanes defenseman Michal Jordan alleges that Peters kicked him and punched another player during a game.

"He was fine with me, but obviously there's a lot of stuff going on," Skinner said of Peters. "I'm sure Calgary will get to the bottom of it, but I don't really have a comment. ... I don't really want to get into it."

The Sabres lose in overtime to the floundering Flames

By Paul Hamilton

WGR 550

November 27, 2019

Buffalo, NY (WGR 550) - Both teams came into this game struggling, and in the first 40 minutes, both teams played it very carefully. Yes, there were some scoring chances, but they were kept at a minimum.

David Rittich had to make consecutive saves on Jeff Skinner, who was skating very well in this game. Skinner had another partial breakaway that Linus Ullmark set him up on, passing the puck over three lines. The line didn't look like much in the morning, but I have to admit, Skinner with Conor Sheary and Johan Larsson worked pretty well. They were Buffalo's best line.

After the game, Skinner was very frustrated. He was very happy with playing with Larsson, and said the center made his job easy. Skinner had seven shot opportunities, but missed the net on three of them. All three were very good scoring chances. Skinner simply stated that it's his job to finish those chances.

Rasmus Asplund did a nice job of causing a turnover while killing a penalty and walked in and hit the post. He did it again in the second period and Jimmy Vesey found himself with the puck and a breakaway. Vesey made no mistake scoring his second goal in two games. The assist was Asplund's first NHL point. Asplund was Buffalo's best player, yet he wasn't one of the three stars.

Sam Reinhart had a great chance to give the Sabres the lead on the power play, but he hit the post.

The Sabres had a very good third period and put plenty of heat on Rittich. Victor Olofsson came through the left circle and just flicked his wrist and ripped home his ninth of the season. That gave Buffalo a 2-1 lead, but as usual lately, they couldn't hold it.

A bouncing puck around Linus Ullmark was tapped in by Matthew Tkachuk and in overtime, Rasmus Ristolainen lost his man and Elias Lindholm came out and won the game. Ralph Krueger said, "We need to stay more man-on-man focused." He also pointed to Ristolainen getting caught in a long shift. Ristolainen's shift lasted all of the 1:17 played in overtime.

I thought Wednesday was a good bounce back game for Jake McCabe. The alternate captain was a healthy scratch at Tampa Bay and was very active offensively, and under control defensively playing with Henri Jokiharju. It helps McCabe when he's not on the top pair playing too many minutes and going up against the other team's best players.

That's four games in a row where the Sabres played very well in large parts of the game, but in the end they only picked up three out of eight points.

Buffalo has a 4:00 game Friday at home against Toronto.

I hope you all have a great Turkey Day!

Sabres fall in overtime, 3-2 to visiting Flames

By Kyle Powell

WGR 550

November 27, 2019

The Buffalo Sabres battled hard on Wednesday night, but could only managed to pull out a point in a 3-2 overtime loss to the Calgary Flames at KeyBank Center.

Flames forward Elias Lindholm scored the game-winner at the 1:17 mark of overtime as he gave Calgary just its second win in nine games.

The Flames grabbed a 1-0 lead late in the first period as a shot from defenseman T.J. Brodie trickled its way ever-so lightly through the five-hole of Linus Ullmark at the 17:55 mark. Mark Giordano and Sean Monahan received assists on Brodie's first goal of the year.

Through 20 minutes of play, Buffalo held a 9-8 shot advantage and began to come alive after totaling just two shots in the first eight minutes of action.

The Sabres were able to tie the game up at 1-1 about six-and-a-half minutes into the second period. After their Monday night hiccups against the Lightning where they allowed a pair of shorthanded goals, they got one of their own this night courtesy of Jimmy Vesey.

After a strong forecheck by Sabres forward Rasmus Asplund leads to a turnover in the Calgary end, Vesey chased down a loose puck in open ice for a breakaway. Vesey was able to go to the forehand and beat Calgary goalie David Rittich for his second goal of the season, and second in as many games.

With the lone assist on the shorthanded tally, Asplund recorded his first point in the National Hockey League.

With the game still tied at 1-1 early in the third period, the Sabres' top line went to work. With less than two minutes gone in the period, Victor Olofsson buried the go-ahead goal with his ninth of the season as he fired a wrist shot past the far side, glove hand of Rittich to give Buffalo a 2-1 advantage. The goal extended Olofsson's point streak to a career-high five games; it also extended Jack Eichel's active point streak to seven games.

Less than two minutes later, the Flames tied the score at 2-2 as forward Matthew Tkachuk jammed a loose puck past Ullmark for his 11th goal of the season.

That 2-2 score held through the remainder of play in regulation, forcing overtime in downtown Buffalo.

It took just 77 seconds for the Flames to score the game-winner as Lindholm dropped the curtain on the Sabres for the 3-2 win on the road.

GAME SUMMARY

Goal Summary:

First Period:

BUF: NONE

CGY: 17:55 - T.J. Brodie (1) (Mark Giordano, Sean Monahan)

Second Period:

BUF: 6:32 - Jimmy Vesey (2) SH (Rasmus Asplund)

CGY: NONE

Third Period:

BUF: 1:55 - Victor Olofsson (9) (Jack Eichel, Sam Reinhart)

CGY: 4:02 - Matthew Tkachuk (11) (Mikael Backlund, Michael Frolik)

Overtime:

BUF: NONE

CGY: 1:17 - Elias Lindholm (12) (Matthew Tkachuk, T.J. Brodie)

Penalty Summary:

First Period:

BUF: 12:31 - Jack Eichel (Tripping - 2 min.)

CGY: NONE

Second Period:

BUF: 5:35 - Marcus Johansson (Holding - 2 min.)

CGY: 18:10 - Dillon Dube (Holding the stick - 2 min.)

Third Period

BUF: NONE

CGY: 8:47 - T.J. Brodie (Hooking - 2 min.)

Overtime:

BUF: NONE

CGY: NONE

Shots on Goal:

BUF: 36 (9, 10, 16, 1)

CGY: 29 (8, 8, 12, 1)

Goalies:

BUF: Linus Ullmark - 26 saves

CGY: David Rittich - 34 saves

Power Plays:

BUF: 0 for 2 (0%)

CGY: 0 for 2 (0%)

Three Stars:

Elias Lindholm - CGY

Matthew Tkachuk - CGY

Jimmy Vesey – BUF

Sabres' Dahlin is out indefinitely with a concussion

By Paul Hamilton

WGR 550

November 27, 2019

Buffalo, NY (WGR 550) - The Sabres' injury report came out and Rasmus Dahlin is out indefinitely with a concussion, while Vladimir Sobotka had knee surgery and will be out a long time.

The biggest thing is both Dahlin and Sobotka were taken out by dirty hits from Erik Cernak and Nikita Kucherov. Cernak was suspended by the NHL for two games, and Jack Eichel said, "Obviously going back and seeing the video, it's frustrating. Those are the type of things you want to get out of the game. He's such an important part of our team and we're going to miss him. So the league took care of it, so I'll just leave it at that."

Ralph Krueger takes things in stride and always talks about all the great things happening in the room. After Wednesday's morning skate, he got upset for the first time publicly when he was told Tampa Bay responded when one of their players was hit and his team has done nothing. Krueger shot back at the question, "Thank you for that opinion and we'll deal with it the way we deal with it inside. We learn and grow from every game in many different ways and that's another one where we can get stronger in the future."

At first, Krueger said in both situations, nobody in the rink read it. He talked about after Dahlin's hit, they're trying to win a hockey game and they're on a power play losing 3-2. With all that acknowledged, the part that many can't understand is why wasn't it addressed once the score got to 5-2? Krueger said the game isn't played that way anymore, "The game has evolved, and what's changed since the last time I coached is the respect of the players is much, much higher. I think there is a physicality that's allowed and if it goes over, it's punishable now and it isn't that kind of a game anymore where everybody jumps over the bench and you clear the benches because something like that possibly occurred."

Marcus Johansson is returning after missing seven games due to an upper-body injury. Jake McCabe is also back in the lineup after being a healthy scratch. Krueger said, "We walked into this stretch of our season saying that we have a wealth of defensemen, and we will be sitting different bodies out at different times, and that's all we've been doing, rotating."

"Each and every one of them that has been sitting out has been excellent and professional and learning from being an observer, and I think for McCabe it was good to sit and watch that one and he'll comeback stronger tonight I'm sure."

The Sabres have one win in five games and have just one power play goal in their last 31 attempts. That covers 11 games. They have also given up at least one power play goal in nine straight games. When you lose the special teams battle every night, you won't win many games.

Linus Ullmark will start in goal.

Calgary is in complete turmoil as head coach Bill Peters has been accused of racial slurs in the AHL and abusing players in Carolina. He will not coach on Wednesday as assistant Geoff Ward takes over.

Jeff Skinner played for Peters with the Hurricanes, but didn't want to say too much, "He was fine with me, but obviously there's a lot of stuff going on. I'm sure Calgary will get to the bottom of it, but I don't really have a comment."

"I don't really want to get into it. Obviously, they're gathering facts. They're doing their job and I'm sure you'll find out more from them. They'll get to the bottom of it. They're sorting through all the facts."

The Flames have lost seven of eight games, and players that normally produce aren't. Johnny Gaudreau has five goals this season and hasn't scored in his last eight games. Sean Monahan has six goals and just one goal in six games.

Calgary has been shutout in three of its last six games.

Join Schopp and the Bulldog for the pregame at 6:00 live from (716) Food and Sport when they'll be joined by Krueger, Eichel, Skinner and Johansson.

Wednesday's lines:

Olofsson - Eichel - Reinhart
Johansson - Mittelstadt - Vesey
Skinner - Larsson - Sheary
Girgensons - Asplund - Dea (Lazar)

McCabe - Bogosian
Montour - Ristolainen
Scandella - Jokiharju (Miller)

Which Sabres team was the best in their 50-year history?

By John Vogl

The Athletic

November 29, 2019

The first team proved Buffalo belonged in the NHL. The second was overshadowed by a dynasty. The third featured the best goalie in the world. The fourth was mesmerizing. The fifth was presidential.

But which edition of the Sabres was the best in their 50-year history?

Even after laying out all the numbers and weighing expert opinions, it's still debatable. But one team has an edge.

There are five candidates, including the only two Sabres squads to reach the Stanley Cup final (1974-75 and 1998-99). The back-to-back Eastern Conference finalists of 2005-06 and 2006-07 each have their own identity and earned spots. The Sabres' 1979-80 team was also one of the last four standing in the NHL and has two banners hanging in the KeyBank Center rafters.

Let's start with the basics.

	Wins	Losses	Ties	OTL	Points
1974-75	49	16	15		113
1979-80	47	17	16		110
1998-99	37	28	17		91
2005-06	52	24		6	110
2006-07	53	22		7	113

The candidates account for the four highest point totals in team history. In the organization's fifth year of existence, the 1974-75 team set the standard for victories, a record that lasted more than three decades.

It was eclipsed twice during the golden era of the mid-2000s, but those teams had the benefit of overtime and shootout wins. The 2005-06 team had 41 regulation victories plus six in overtime and five in the shootout. The 2006-07 squad recorded 38 regulation wins plus five in overtime and 10 in the shootout.

As for the 1998-99 team, it had a pedestrian regular season. The point total is just 17th in franchise history as the Sabres finished seventh in the Eastern Conference. But, man, once the playoffs started ...

	Record
1974-75	10-7
1979-80	9-5
1998-99	14-7
2005-06	11-7
2006-07	9-7

The 1998-99 squad was a postseason wrecking crew, winning three more games than any other Sabres team. They swept Ottawa in four games, knocked off Boston in six and trounced Toronto in five before losing the Cup to Dallas, four games to two.

The 2005-06 team was "scary good" in the playoffs, ranking second in team history with 11 wins. If it weren't for injuries, players say, they would have won 16 games and the championship. The victory total dwindled the following year as Ottawa eliminated Buffalo in just five games during the conference final.

Before losing the Cup to Philadelphia in six games, the 1974-75 squad beat Chicago 4-1 and Montreal 4-2. The 1979-80 team easily cruised to the league semifinals before losing in six games to the New York Islanders, who went on to win their first of four straight Cups.

Each of the five teams carved its own path to the postseason. Four of them outscored people. Two used stellar goaltending. They all knew how to put opponents in a hole and bury them there.

Here are the NHL rankings from each season, followed by a team-by-team breakdown.

	1974-75	1979-80	1998-99	2005-06	2006-07
Points	1st	2nd	8th	5th	1st
Wins	2nd	2nd	10th	3rd	1st
Goals	2nd	3rd	17th	5th	1st
Goals allowed	6th	1st	2nd	10th	13th
Power-play goals	4th	6th	22nd	4th	12th
PPG allowed	6th	2nd	13th	2nd	17th
Win % scoring first	2nd	1st	1st	3rd	11th
Win % not scoring first	3rd	3rd	14th	5th	1st
Penalty minutes	3rd	19th	4th	25th	14th

	1974-75	1979-80	1998-99	2005-06	2006-07
Top goal scorer	3rd	1st	7th	42nd	5th
Scorers in top 40	6	3	2	0	4
Top point-getter	7th	4th	25th	42nd	10th
Top 40 in points	6	3	1	0	2
20-goal scorers	9	7	4	6	6

	1974-75	1979-80	1998-99	2005-06	2006-07
Playoffs					
Goal scorers	13	14	15	16	13
Players with points	16	19	19	21	18
Points per game > .5	7	9	8	9	7

1974-75

In addition to scoring a franchise-best 4.42 goals per game, the team would punch people in the mouth, too.

"Teams feared playing the Buffalo Sabres in '74-75," says lifelong equipment manager Rip Simonick. "They were not happy coming into the Aud. We were a tough team."

The squad had it all, including an incredible nine 20-goal scorers. Rick Martin led the way with 52, followed by French Connection linemates Rene Robert (40) and Gilbert Perreault (39), Don Luce (33), Danny Gare and Rick Dudley (31), Craig Ramsay (26), Jim Lorentz (25) and Peter McNab (22).

"We had three solid lines and our fourth line was no slouch," Simonick said. "I've always told people: The French Connection was great because Don Luce, Danny Gare and Craig Ramsay practiced against them all the time. They honed their skills daily in practice."

The defense was a mixture of toughness and skill led by Jerry "King Kong" Korab (12 goals, 56 points and 184 penalty minutes), Jim Schoenfeld, Larry Carriere, Bill Hajt and early season acquisition Jocelyn Guevremont.

"The internal competition was always there, and I think that was good for our team," Gare says. "I remember in practices we used to have fights sometimes because guys wanted to be better. I think that was important for our team at the time."

The goaltending was solid until health problems hit. Pancreatitis limited No. 1 netminder Roger Crozier to 23 regular-season games (17-2-1 record) and just five postseason contests (3-2). Gary Bromley carried the load during the regular season with 50 starts and Gerry Desjardins took over in the playoffs, but his .863 save percentage in 15 appearances ranked 15th out of 19 goalies.

Still, it was almost enough for Buffalo to bring home the Cup.

"When we went to the finals," Gare said, "that's when Buffalo became an NHL-legitimate team around the nation."

1979-80

The Sabres won the Prince of Wales Conference with 110 points, trailing only the rival Flyers of the Clarence Campbell Conference (116 points). Gare led the NHL with 56 goals, tying Hartford's Blaine Stoughton and the Kings' Charlie Simmer for first.

The balanced offensive attack remained with seven 20-goal scorers as Martin (45), Perreault (40), Ric Seiling (25), Derek Smith (24), Tony McKegney (23) and Ramsay (21) followed Gare. John Van Boxmeer (11) and Schoenfeld added 20 goals from the blue line, which also featured Richie Dunn, Larry Playfair and rookies Lindy Ruff and Mike Ramsey.

Behind them was the Vezina Trophy-winning tandem of Don Edwards and Bob Sauve, who combined to allow the fewest goals in the NHL (the Vezina criteria at the time). Edwards went 27-9-12 in 49 appearances while Sauve was 20-8-4 in 32 games.

"We were a good experienced team," says Scotty Bowman, who began coaching the Sabres that season after successful runs with St. Louis and Montreal. "They had a lot of balance on the team. It was a tough division to get through, especially in the playoffs."

The Sabres made it to the final four but ran into the Islanders buzzsaw featuring Bryan Trottier, Mike Bossy, Denis Potvin and Billy Smith.

"I was lucky to be part of many good teams from '75 onward, playing with amazing players," Perreault said. "We had a pretty good chance to win the Cup, but there was always one or two guys missing, I guess. I don't know. We had a great team but just didn't make it."

1998-99

There's no denying the legendary status of Dominik Hasek. Still, even to this day, players dispute the notion they were an average team with a great goalie.

"We were a good team – a really good team," says center Stu Barnes. "That's probably the most important word. There's nobody that goes that deep in the playoffs and has that much success without a great goaltender, and we had that with Dom. And I think everything out in front of him, we were teammates and people working together as a team.

"That was a good hockey team."

The raw numbers aren't impressive. Miroslav Satan (40 goals, 66 points) was the lone player to rank in the top 40 in scoring. Michael Peca (27), Dixon Ward and Michal Grosek (20 each) were the only other players to reach the 20-goal mark.

But the team didn't need to score. Hasek led the league with a .937 save percentage. The Sabres went a league-best 31-4 with four ties when scoring first. There was no reason to take chances offensively with The Dominator making leads stand up.

The defense was in the steady hands of Alexei Zhitnik, Jason Woolley, Darryl Shannon, Richard Smehlik, James Patrick, Jay McKee and late-season acquisition Rhett Warrener. Peca and fellow forward Curtis Brown were two of the better two-way forwards in the league. Brian Holzinger and Geoff Sanderson added timely goals, while Rob Ray policed the ice and scored one of the most smile-inducing goals in Sabres playoff history.

The Sabres hit their stride in the postseason. Their goals per game jumped from 2.52 to 2.81, ranking fourth in the league as 15 different players scored. Barnes, Ward and Brown led the way with seven each, followed by the five-goal duo of Peca and Vaclav Varada.

Alas, it all ended with Brett Hull's foot in the crease as Dallas skated away with the Cup in Game 6.

"We were close," Barnes said, "and I'd like to think if we had another crack at it in Game 7, we could have got 'er done."

2005-06

There were no goal-scorers in the top 40. No one reached the top 40 in points. The goaltending ranked 10th.

But it was arguably the most exciting season in team history.

As a plucky young team kept winning and winning, Western New York couldn't get enough. Coming out of a lockout that canceled an entire season, the Sabres took advantage of rules designed to make the game faster. Buffalo's special teams dominated in a penalty-filled season as the power play ranked fourth and the penalty killers finished second. The balanced offense ranked third overall.

The Sabres had six 20-goal scorers. Chris Drury led the way with 30 goals, followed by Thomas Vanek, Daniel Briere and Ales Kotalik (25 each), Maxim Afinogenov (22) and J.P. Dumont (20). If they hadn't missed significant time with injuries or minor-league stays, the 18-goal trio of Jason Pominville, Jochen Hecht and Derek Roy might have joined the list. Tim Connolly, too, after 16 goals in 63 games.

Goaltender Ryan Miller was just coming into his own following stellar showings in college and the minors. Buffalo's puck-moving defensemen fit right in with the "new" NHL. Brian Campbell, Teppo Numminen, Henrik Tallinder, McKee, Toni Lydman and Dmitri Kalinin were a smooth six-pack.

But like a tasty beer, they went down in the playoffs. Numminen, Tallinder, McKee and Kalinin were all on the sidelines when Carolina came back to win Game 7 of the Eastern Conference finals.

It still stings, but the opening-round demolishing of Philadelphia and the second-round upset of Ottawa made the Sabres the toast of the town.

"I was almost mesmerized by that team," says announcer Rick Jeanneret, "to the extent that I, RJ, who never goes near the dressing room usually, went down at the end of the game in Carolina and shook everybody's hand. I was overwhelmed by what they'd done. It knocked my socks off that they even got as far as they did considering how short-handed they were."

2006-07

The Sabres picked up where they left off – and then some. They opened the regular season with 10 straight victories and went wire-to-wire, winning the only Presidents' Trophy in team history.

Unlike the previous season, the Sabres were all over the NHL's league-leader page. Vanek finished fifth overall with 43 goals, Drury was 14th with 37 while Pominville (34) and Briere (32) also finished in the top 40. The Sabres got goals from 25 players in leading the NHL at 3.63 goals per game.

Buffalo added rookie Drew Stafford and trade acquisition Dainius Zubrus to the core that included Afinogenov, Roy, Hecht and Kotalik. Jaroslav Spacek replaced McKee on defense, but Campbell, Numminen, Tallinder, Lydman and Kalinin remained.

After having their hearts broken the previous season, the Sabres set the Cup as their lone goal.

"Those guys were very competitive. They were like the '74-75 team," Simonick said. "We'd have competition in the locker room, friendly player-to-player competition like, 'I want to score a goal.' It wasn't an ego thing, it was, 'I want to be the best player on the ice tonight.'"

Until the playoffs, they were the league's best team. They just couldn't recapture the magic of the previous season as Ottawa returned the favor with an upset in the conference final.

So, which team was the best? Adding up the records in the regular season and playoffs, looking at scoring and defense, mixing in overall depth and sprinkling in intangibles, the 1974-75 team gets the nod over the rest. Each edition has an impressive case, but the ability to do it all from start to finish is why no team came closer to bringing the Cup home.

"Obviously, '75, the finals," Simonick said in choosing his top team. "Our second cast ended up being as good as our first and second line. It's just the inner competition that makes your team better, and that's what the Sabres were. That's what we were.

"We had potentially the best guys to ever wear Sabres uniforms on and off the ice."

'Right now it's our time to respond': Sabres seek answers as skid continues

By John Vogl

The Athletic

November 27, 2019

BUFFALO, N.Y. — Linus Ullmark, who's skated to the Sabres' crease in five of the past seven games, sees plays unfold in front of him. Like everyone involved in this 3-9-3 skid, he's witnessed mistakes.

Ullmark has a reason for it.

"It's been a lot of changes in coaches these last couple years," the goalie said after Wednesday's 3-2 overtime loss to Calgary. "Getting a system down is hard. It takes a lot of hard work, you know?"

"At the end of the day, when everything is just going unconsciously and not where you start thinking about what you're supposed to do and where you're supposed to forecheck, backcheck, whatever, it's going to be a lot easier to play these games."

When a team loses repeatedly, trends emerge in the comments. It was just 12 hours earlier when Ralph Krueger also touched on habits.

"There were portions of the last three games where you saw some of our best hockey of the season," the coach said. "But again, it was portions, and we need to stretch that out through 60 minutes, start to finish. We're disappointed that we're not able to do that.

"We've known from the start that these habits aren't going to be habits for a while. We're going to drift back to old habits. We're going to drift out of our game, and we have to work very, very hard to confirm these as habits through three, four, five, six games in a row, and that's what we're doing.

"We like the way the group is processing it as much as we don't like our results at the moment."

Krueger previously said it would take about half the season for his system to be ingrained in players' minds. The problem is will it be too late by then?

This five-week losing stretch has drained the patience of fans and is testing the resolve of players. If it goes longer, there's no telling how far down the Sabres could spiral. They might give up before the good habits even take hold.

"Right now it's our time to respond," left wing Jeff Skinner said. "Yeah, we've got to turn it around."

While frustrated, Skinner once again dispelled the notion that folks should throw up the SOS — Same Old Sabres.

"It's a different group," Skinner said when last season's freefall was mentioned. "There's a lot of new guys here, and the season's different. You could draw parallels as much as you want — it's a new year. The league's different. We just focus on getting better."

There's a lot to focus on:

- The power play is a mess. Buffalo went 0-for-2 against the Flames, falling to 1-for-33 in the last 12 games.

"It seems like that sucks a little bit of momentum out of us," Skinner said.

Indeed. When the calendar turned to November, the Sabres were 9-2-2 with the NHL's second-ranked power play at 29.2 percent. They were scoring 3.14 goals per game. Since then, they're 2-8-2 and scoring 2.45 goals per outing while connecting at a measly 3 percent on the power play.

"Our power play again is the motor," Krueger said. "I mean, it didn't score on so many chances. It's got to break out of the shell. We have to keep working on that. For me, I think the solution for the offense will be a better power play, more effective scoring chances there, and that will carry into our five-on-five."

- The offense has too many passengers. Jack Eichel has seven goals and 14 points in nine games. Victor Olofsson has three goals and nine points in 10 games. After finally breaking his season-opening goal slump at 20 games, Jimmy Vesey has scored in two straight.

But the drought list continues to include Casey Mittelstadt (no points in 15 games) and Conor Sheary (no goals in 17 games).

"There's quite a few guys who are not hitting the target right now," Krueger said.

- Overtime isn't going well. This 3-9-3 skid would look a little better at 6-9 if the Sabres hadn't lost three straight OT and shootout decisions.

"It's a big difference, of course," Olofsson said. "It's details in the three-on-three game, as well, that we can be better at. We've got to look at that, too, because that's a big part of the game today. That's three more points, which would have been huge for us."

The Sabres lost to the Flames when Ullmark accepted a drop pass and hit defenseman Rasmus Ristolainen with a pass at center ice. The puck bounced off Ristolainen's stick, and the Flames came down to score.

While Calgary doesn't gain control if Ristolainen merely corrals a pass on the tape, Krueger noted the defenseman had been on the ice for the full 1:17 of OT.

"We probably need to stay a little more patient with possession there," the coach said. "We kind of rushed it after we played it back. Maybe he didn't realize that Risto got stuck out there for a little bit. It made a difficult situation.

"It was a breakdown down in our end, and we need to stay more man-on-man focused in those situations."

- The Sabres' toughness is again coming into question. One season after then-coach Phil Housley acknowledged the team was soft, Buffalo has let injury-causing cheap shots to Vladimir Sobotka and Rasmus Dahlin slide.

"Nobody in the rink, including the referees, actually read it because the puck was not there anymore," Krueger said of the hits to Sobotka and Dahlin, the latter of which suffered a concussion Monday and is out indefinitely. "When Rasmus actually went down and then came up, until there was blood coming out of his face, we didn't really realize the situation. Spontaneously, it wasn't one of those hits from behind into the wall where everyone sees what happened.

"Is it something to learn about? Yeah, it's possible. This group is very close. This group is working hard for each other. And the way the game is today, it has evolved. We'll learn from it. But this isn't that kind of a game anymore. Hockey is not that kind of a game where everybody jumps over the bench and clears the benches because something like that possibly occurred.

"We learn and grow from every game in many different ways, and that's another one where we can get stronger in the future."

Again, it needs to be in the near future. The slide can't continue, though back-to-back games this weekend with surging Toronto could be trouble.

"When results aren't with you, of course you get a little bit frustrated," Ullmark said. "But we're keeping our heads high, and I think the guys are doing a good job of coming back for work every day. So I'm very positive for what's coming."

Sabres show how they might adjust to Rasmus Dahlin's absence

By Joe Yerdon

The Athletic

November 27, 2019

BUFFALO, N.Y. — It's an old, not-so-great memory, but the Sabres' life without Rasmus Dahlin for the time being looks a little too familiar.

As we found out Wednesday, Dahlin will be out indefinitely because of the concussion he suffered in a hit from Tampa Bay Lightning defenseman Erik Cernak on Monday. That elbow earned Cernak a two-game suspension for which he said he's sorry. But sorry won't get Dahlin back any sooner, so when the Sabres took on Calgary on Wednesday night, it was a look ahead at what life is like without him..

The Sabres rolled out defense pairs that looked like this:

Marco Scandella — Rasmus Ristolainen

Brandon Montour — Zach Bogosian

Jake McCabe — Henri Jokiharju

Yes, Colin Miller was scratched again, the sixth time in the past eight games that's happened. With one of these pairings, there's some strong familiarity, but with the other two, there's not a lot of time spent together.

The most familiar set is Scandella and Ristolainen. During Scandella's two-plus seasons in Buffalo, he's spent slightly more than half of his five-on-five ice time with Ristolainen. Via NaturalStatTrick.com, Scandella has 1,277:51 time on ice with Ristolainen and 1,217:36 away from him. Without Dahlin in the lineup, the duo was reunited, perhaps for familiarity's sake. Coach Ralph Krueger said recently that assistant coach Steve Smith sets the defense pairs, so it stands to reason that's how it would play out.

That pairing in the past hasn't been very effective despite the amount of time on ice. Scandella's and Ristolainen's shot measurements are better away from each other than when they're teamed. The same can be said for every other five-on-five metric tallied by NaturalStatTrick.com, both fancy stat and regular, which is pretty incredible.

Against Calgary, the pairing was quietly effective and had starts balanced well between the offensive and defensive zones. Scandella and Ristolainen were on for 16:42 together at five-on-five and had a 17-15 shot-attempt advantage and 8-6 in shots on goal. Scoring chances were even at seven and high-danger chances at two each. They didn't blow the Flames off the ice, but they didn't hurt the Sabres with how they played. Heck, their expected-goals percentage was over 57 percent. They'll take that from those two every day and usually go home happy.

As for Bogosian and Montour, that pairing last season didn't see a lot of time together before Bogosian's season came to an end. With 39 minutes together at five-on-five, they were able to generate 54 percent of shots attempted. Their scoring chances generated were good (23-21), but they were able to double up the number of high-danger chances (10-5). That kind of work together made them an intriguing possibility when Bogosian returned this season.

Against Calgary, it didn't shake out so well. They were out-attempted 13-8 in 13:27 on ice together. Shots on goal were 9-6 against, and they allowed four high-danger chances versus one against but no goals against.

Let's compare that with how Montour worked with Dahlin this season. It's been an admittedly tough season to this point for Dahlin even before he was injured, but that pairing in 111:55 together at five-on-five has been solid, with 54.8 percent of shots attempted in the duo's favor. Montour and Dahlin have been together for five goals for and one against and, perhaps more tellingly, Montour has helped pick up Dahlin.

In the 33:45 Dahlin has played away from Montour, he's been at 44.6 percent shots attempted for. With Miller, the defenseman Dahlin has played the most ice time with (136:52), his Corsi For percentage is 46.2. One has to imagine Montour with Bogosian is a two-fold operation in that it helps solve a problem (Dahlin's absence) and present a solution (helps out Bogosian in his return to action). Perhaps the game against Calgary winds up being just a blip when it comes to shot generation.

As for McCabe and Jokiharju, perhaps the secret MVP on the Sabres' blue line is Jokiharju. We've seen him already this season help steady things with Scandella and also with McCabe in limited time. After the Calgary game, they've played 29:58 together, and the start they're off to is great when it comes to shot generation.

At 69.8 percent shot attempts (37-16), they're doing well to help get the offense going and preventing opponents from doing what they want. Against Calgary, 15:31 of their time was spent together, and they helped out-attempt the Flames 22-10. They were on ice for Jimmy Vesey's shorthanded goal in the second period (good) but also were responsible for Matthew Tkachuk's tying goal early in the third period (not so good).

Jokiharju has earned a lot of trust from the coaches, but perhaps the success he's having, and what might help rub off on McCabe, will be in not dealing with everyone's top scorers consistently. It's not a negative that that's why Jokiharju is having success; it's a positive that he and his partners are taking advantage of their opponents.

Power-play happenings

Dahlin's absence on the top power-play unit was immediately noticeable when he was injured against Tampa Bay. The Sabres' power-play meltdown, in which the Lightning scored two shorthanded goals, was at Montour's expense. Against Calgary, it was Ristolainen who got the call to quarterback the top unit while Montour returned to the second unit.

In two power-play opportunities, the Sabres generated six shots on goal, with each defenseman on ice for three. Considering how the power play has been of late, 1-for-33 in the past 12 games, getting the kinds of scoring chances the Sabres had against the Flames was a marked improvement. Still, it's the power play that's got to help the team out of its goal funk, and it's no coincidence that the power play's strong showing is a big reason for the Sabres' hot start.

The power-play struggles occurred for a fair bit while Dahlin was in the lineup, but with Ristolainen back on the top set, it could give the unit a boost. The group is going to need it.

"Our power play again is the motor," Krueger said. "It didn't score on so many chances (Wednesday) night — it's got to break out of the shell. We have to keep working on that. For me, I think the solution for the offense will be a better power play, more effective scoring chances there, and that will carry into our five-on-five play."

Sabres prospect Rasmus Asplund quickly acclimating to NHL

By Bill Hoppe
Olean Times Herald
November 28, 2019

BUFFALO – In the second period Wednesday, Sabres rookie Rasmus Asplund grabbed a loose puck in the right corner, spun off a defender in the circle and quickly cut to the net.

Calgary Flames defenseman Rasmus Andersson hectored the 5-foot-11, 190-pound Asplund in the slot, but he fended him off before creating a prime scoring chance goalie David Rittich stymied.

Asplund's seventh NHL game, a 3-2 overtime loss, was perhaps his best performance since the Sabres recalled him Nov. 15.

Despite playing on the fourth line and killing penalties – the Swedish forward skated under nine minutes – he was noticeable all night.

Asplund recorded his first NHL point, a short-handed assist on winger Jimmy Vesey's breakaway goal, by forcing a turnover inside the Calgary blue line.

If Asplund keeps roaring to the net with authority, he could score his first goal soon.

"They called me up for a reason and they thought I was ready, and that's what it feels like," Asplund said following Thursday's practice inside KeyBank Center, where the Sabres begin a home-and-home set Friday afternoon against the Toronto Maple Leafs.

Asplund, who turns 22 on Tuesday, has played 88 AHL games over the last two seasons, establishing himself as one of the Sabres' top prospects with the Rochester Americans.

But Asplund started his pro career at just 16 in 2014-15, when he joined Farjestads BK Karlstad, a Swedish Hockey League team.

That helps explain Asplund's maturity. This is already his sixth season competing against men.

"You can just see how he's got the smarts of having played in the Elite League in Sweden and understanding the man's game that he had to play as a young kid already and adjusting it now to the North American surface," Sabres coach Ralph Krueger said.

He added: "Very, very exciting, the future with Rasmus."

Asplund could have an opportunity to earn a permanent job. While his ice time has dipped, the Sabres still have four injured forwards.

Asplund's versatility – he usually plays center – could help him stay put. On Wednesday, Krueger shifted him to left wing beside center Jean-Sebastien Dea and Zemgus Girgensons.

Krueger said he wanted Dea, who was summoned Monday, to take faceoffs. Asplund has won only 38.5% of his draws.

"We also want to see Rasmus on the wing as a potential move up the lineup," he said. "I think he's shown quick progression here in a lot of different facets. We liked his game (Wednesday). Everybody knows we like to have six forwards who are centermen in our lineup, if possible. Rasmus is showing that ability right now."

Krueger said Asplund's play this month has confirmed the potential they saw in him during his strong training camp.

"He's so mature on the ice – both with and without the puck," Sabres center Marcus Johansson said. "He's very smart. I think as everyone can see he can play big minutes and he's responsible and smart and strong. He's got all the stuff."

Earlier this week, Asplund moved the belongings he brought with him from Rochester to winger Victor Olofsson's place. The two Swedes became close friends last season with the Amerks.

When Asplund arrived in Buffalo earlier this month, he spent a few days at Johansson's house.

"It makes it easier for him, maybe helps him feel like he's welcome and comfortable and all that," said Johansson, who has skated with Asplund the last two summers in Sweden. "He's a great kid."

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Firing Mike Babcock on Nov. 20 quickly ignited the Leafs, who are 3-0 under new coach Sheldon Keefe.

They finished the Babcock era on a six-game losing streak.

Toronto torched the Red Wings 6-0 on Wednesday in Detroit, outshooting them 54-25.

In the Leafs' three wins under Keefe, who was promoted from the Toronto Marlies, their AHL affiliate, they've outscored their opponents 14-4.

"Every D-man's involved, they attack in a group of five," said Krueger, who has never coached against the Leafs with the Sabres.

Krueger said the weekend set against their fiercest rival has "been highlighted on the calendar for a while."

"You can feel the energy in the group," he said.

Krueger expects the rivalry will create an emotional atmosphere.

"We know it'll be a mix of people from Canada and Buffalo supporting both sides, which will create a bit of an atmosphere like I'm used to often in Europe, when there's lots of road fans," he said. "It'll certainly give a spark to the game."

One spark from the past, however, will be missing.

Toronto traded center Nazem Kadri, who had some memorable battles with Sabres defenseman Rasmus Ristolainen, to the Colorado Avalanche on July 1.

To Ristolainen, Kadri's absence won't matter.

"They all look the same – same sweater, same helmet," he said. "So they're all enemies."

The Leafs have won five straight meetings. The Sabres last defeated them on March 26, 2018, a 3-2 win in Toronto.

Lack of finish dogs Sabres again in OT loss to Flames

By Bill Hoppe
Olean Times Herald
November 28, 2019

BUFFALO – In the last month, a wretched stretch in which the Sabres have lost 11 of 13 games and plummeted down the standings, winger Jimmy Vesey said he has seen some positives.

"There's a lot of games I think we liked the way we played for most of it," Vesey said after scoring a breakaway goal for the second straight game in Wednesday's 3-2 overtime loss to the Calgary Flames.

But what has that earned the Sabres? Sixth place in the Atlantic Division.

They've lost two straight games (0-1-1) and five of the last six (1-4-1).

Sure, the Sabres do some things well for stretches.

In Thursday's 3-2 loss in Boston, for example, the Sabres outshot the Bruins 17-4 in the first, yet ended the period tied at 1. On Wednesday, they pumped 16 shots on goal in the third and went up 2-1 lead when Victor Olofsson scored 1:55 into the period.

The lead lasted barely two minutes before the crowd of 17,485 inside KeyBank Center.

Matthew Tkachuk tied it at 4:02 before Elias Lindholm scored 1:17 into overtime, capitalizing after a tired Rasmus Ristolainen chased him behind the net.

"I don't know what it is, but we're finding a way to not close out games," said Vesey, who believes the Sabres must pay more attention to details. "Maybe things are snowballing just the way it's gone.

"We've got to get back to the start of the year. When we were playing like that there was a really good feeling in this room and we've played that style for stretches."

Right now, an alarming lack of finish is dogging the Sabres. They create chances but can't convert them. They registered 36 shots Wednesday.

"It's probably a lack of confidence," Sabres coach Ralph Krueger said of the missed opportunities. "I mean, you can see Vesey now, he gets his first goal and how confident he was on that opportunity. We just need more guys firing. There's quite a few guys that are not hitting the target right now. ...

"We need to create more second chances, we need to be even stronger inside to create a different type of scoring chance if we keep getting stuck like this."

Vesey, one of the Sabres' notable offseason acquisitions, was stuck on zero goals for 19 games before scoring his first in Monday's 5-2 road loss to the Tampa Bay Lightning.

The American scored again short-handed 6:32 into the second period, capitalizing after rookie Rasmus Asplund caused Lindholm to cough up the puck inside Calgary's blue line.

"I just tried to stick to the structure, the plan we came up with before the game," Asplund said of how he caused the turnover.

Krueger said: "That goal was no fluke."

Asplund's seventh NHL game might've been his best. In addition to recording his first point, the youngster, who was shifted to left wing from center, played aggressively.

"Asplund you can see as a winger is a threat," Krueger said. "He can make a play, he defends well, he's evolving here daily ... he's somebody you trust. You trust him in your own end and you trust him with the puck."

Krueger has recently developed more trust in goalie Linus Ullmark, starting him four of the last five contests.

While Ullmark received consistent action early in the season, Carter Hutton played most of the games.

Ullmark said he's "just trying to be the same old me" during perhaps his busiest stretch in the NHL.

"Keep a smile on my face, go out there every day," he said, "because I know that if I start screwing up things, Hutton is ready to take over. ... We both have full faith in each other whoever is in the net."

Sabres notes: Team focused on winning following hit on Rasmus Dahlin

By Bill Hoppe
Olean Times Herald
November 28, 2019

BUFFALO – The two-game suspension the NHL laid on Erik Cernak for elbowing Sabres defenseman Rasmus Dahlin in the face and concussing him seems light.

Cernak, who wasn't penalized for the hit, can return to the Tampa Bay Lightning's lineup Saturday. Dahlin, meanwhile, is out indefinitely, the Sabres announced prior to Wednesday's 3-2 overtime loss to the Calgary Flames.

"We're just going to accept the result as it is," coach Ralph Krueger said inside KeyBank Center. "Again ... you would always rather have the five minutes in the game because the suspension doesn't do us any good."

The Dahlin incident was the second time this month a Lightning player knocked a Sabre out of the lineup.

On Nov. 8 in Stockholm, Sweden, star Nikita Kucherov hit forward Vladimir Sobotka late and low. The Czech, who has missed nine games, is out indefinitely after undergoing surgery on his right knee, the Sabres announced Wednesday.

The days of wild brawls, of course, have ended. But the Sabres did not retaliate in any fashion after either hit.

Why?

"It was the same with the Sobotka hit in Sweden where nobody in the rink, including the referees, actually read it because the puck was not there anymore and gone," Krueger said of Cernak's hit. "At the moment, when Rasmus actually went down and then came up, until there was blood coming out of his face we didn't really realize the situation.

"So, spontaneously, it wasn't one of those hits from behind into the wall where everybody sees exactly what happened. It was within the game, within the play. Did that stick go up? Did his elbow go up? Did it not? Again, the referees couldn't read it spontaneously. We're trying to win a hockey game.

"We're on a power play and we're losing 3-2 (on Monday). Our focus was on that. Is it something to learn about? Yeah, it's possible. But this group is very close. This group is working hard for each other. And, again, the way the game is today, it has evolved. ... Respect among the players is much, much higher than it was when I was here last in (2013)."

Dahlin, 19, hadn't missed an NHL game before Wednesday, playing 106 straight.

His concussion, of course, is a huge blow to the Sabres. The Swede, the first overall pick in 2018, compiled 15 assists and 16 points in the first 24 games.

While Dahlin has struggled defensively this season, he's a dynamic talent.

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Sabres center Marcus Johansson returned Wednesday after an upper-body injury sidelined him seven games, skating with Casey Mittelstadt and Jimmy Vesey.

Johansson was one of the Sabres' most consistent presences during their torrid start before getting injured Nov. 9 in Stockholm, Sweden.

"Everybody knows from Day One Marcus Johansson has been an important leader for this group, was direly missed since Sweden," Krueger said.

With Dahlin out, defenseman Jake McCabe, a healthy scratch Monday, returned Wednesday. The Sabres also sat out Colin Miller, the sixth time in eight games the newcomer has watched.

The Sabres had been dressing seven defensemen and "rotating" some in and out. Krueger said he wants to "spread the energy out."

The Sabres made one other lineup change, inserting center Jean-Sebastien Dea for Curtis Lazar. The Sabres recalled Dea on Monday before scratching him.

Notes: Krueger moved up Johan Larsson to center 40-goal scorer Jeff Skinner and Conor Sheary. "He's an easy guy to read out there," Skinner said of Larsson. "He's strong on pucks and he wins a lot of his battles. ... When your center's winning battles like that, it's easier to create opportunities because you're able to get open and get the puck with a little bit more time and space. ... Sabres center Evan Rodrigues (lower body) missed his second straight game. Rodrigues is week to week, according to the team's injury report. ... The second annual Sabres Skills Challenge will be held on Jan. 5 at KeyBank Center.

Sabres offer Jean-Sebastien Dea much-needed stability

By Bill Hoppe
Olean Times Herald
November 27, 2019

BUFFALO – Sooner or later, it felt like Jean-Sebastien Dea would receive his first recall to the Sabres.

The Sabres, having lost seven forwards this month, sorely need help. Meanwhile, recalls and the Rochester Americans' own run of injuries whittled away their depth up front.

By last week, the AHL affiliate only had two or three healthy forwards with NHL contracts.

On Monday, the Sabres summoned Dea, who said he will play tonight against the Calgary Flames at KeyBank Center.

But make no mistake, the 5-foot-11, 168-pound Dea, 25, earned this trip to the NHL. He has scored two goals and five points in his last six AHL outings. Overall, he has compiled seven goals and 13 points in 18 games this season.

When the Sabres signed Dea to a two-year, one-way contract worth \$1.4 million July 1, it seemed like he would play NHL games or even have an opportunity to crack the big club out of training camp.

"I don't think I had the best camp, so I knew had to go back down there, find my game again and play well," said Dea, who knows Sabres general manager Jason Botterill from their days in the Pittsburgh Penguins organization. "I think it's been good the last couple weeks."

The Sabres recalled three forwards this season – Rasmus Asplund, Curtis Lazar and Tage Thompson – before summoning Dea, who joked he's "not going to toe-drag at the blue line."

"I'll probably keep it simple, use my speed, get on the forecheck, be annoying to play against, always be on the puck and stuff," he said. "That's my game."

Joining Buffalo's organization gives Dea some much-needed stability. Last season, he played for two NHL teams – the New Jersey Devils and Penguins – and three AHL clubs.

New Jersey claimed Dea on waivers in training camp before Pittsburgh reclaimed him in November. The Penguins then traded Dea to the Florida Panthers in February.

"I can breathe a little bit more," he said of having a two-year contract.

All together, Dea played 23 NHL games last season, scoring four goals and six points.

The Sabres scratched Dea for Monday's 5-2 road loss to the Tampa Bay Lightning.

Sabres' Rasmus Dahlin out indefinitely; Marcus Johansson ready to play

By Bill Hoppe

Olean Times Herald

November 27, 2019

BUFFALO – The concussion defenseman Rasmus Dahlin suffered in Monday's 5-2 loss to the Tampa Bay Lightning will sideline him indefinitely, the Sabres announced this morning.

The NHL suspended Lightning defenseman Erik Cernak two games Tuesday for elbowing Dahlin in face.

"We're just going to accept the result as it is," coach Ralph Krueger said after the Sabres prepared for tonight's game against the Calgary Flames at KeyBank Center. "Again ... you would always rather have the five minutes in the game because the suspension doesn't do us any good. But we'll just accept it now for what it is."

Cernak wasn't penalized on the play. The Sabres did not respond to the hit.

Losing Dahlin, of course, is a huge blow to the reeling Sabres, who have lost 10 of the last 12 games (2-8-2).

The Swede, the first overall pick in 2018, has compiled 15 assists and 16 points in the first 24 games.

The Sabres, however, received some good news this morning. Forward Marcus Johansson, sidelined the last seven games with an upper-body injury, will return tonight.

Johansson was one of the Sabres' most consistent presences during their torrid start before getting injured Nov. 9 in Stockholm, Sweden.

"Everybody knows from Day One Marcus Johansson has been an important leader for this group, was direly missed since Sweden," Krueger said.

He added: "The calmness of his personality and the experience, it's definitely good to have Johansson back."

Johansson, who played center 17 games, skated as a winger this morning beside center Casey Mittelstadt and Jimmy Vesey.

The Sabres have been dressing seven defensemen and rotating some in and out. Based on this morning's skate, it was unclear who could be the odd man out tonight.

Defenseman Jake McCabe, an alternate captain, sat out Monday.

"We walked into this stretch of our season saying that we have a wealth of defensemen that are good National Hockey League defensemen and we will be sitting different bodies out at different times, and that's all we've been doing is rotating," Krueger said. "Each and every one of them that is sitting out has been excellent and professional and learning from also being able to be an observer.

"I think for McCabe it was good to sit and watch that one and he'll come back stronger tonight, I'm sure. But it's more looking at our workload and our D's workload right now that we spread the energy out."

In other lineup news, forward Jean-Sebastien Dea said he will play tonight. The Sabres recalled Dea on Monday before scratching him.

Dea, 25, skated on a line this morning with center Rasmus Asplund and Zemgus Girgensons. Curtis Lazar also took reps.

Krueger assembled an interesting second line this morning, putting center Johan Larsson between 40-goal scorer Jeff Skinner and Conor Sheary.

Goalie Linus Ullmark will start, his 12th nod this season and fourth in the last five games.

Sabres' Vladimir Sobotka undergoes knee surgery, out indefinitely

By Bill Hoppe

Olean Times Herald

November 27, 2019

BUFFALO – Forward Vladimir Sobotka underwent successful surgery on his right knee and is out indefinitely, the Sabres announced this morning.

After Sobotka, 32, was injured Nov. 8 against the Tampa Bay Lightning in Stockholm, Sweden, the Sabres said he would miss four to six weeks.

However, according to the Sabres, team doctors decided surgery would be the appropriate action for the Czech's recovery.

Sobotka was injured when star Nikita Kucherov hit him low and late in 3-2 loss to the Lightning.

Right now, the Sabres, who host the Calgary Flames tonight at KeyBank Center, have five injured forwards.

Sobotka has compiled one goal and three points in 16 games this season.

Update: Sabres coach Ralph Krueger said Sobotka's recovery will be long-term.

"We're really sad about it," he said. "Sobey was an amazing leader in how we want to play here. He was an example on video over and over again of playing the right way without the puck. So we'll tap into him to help mentor some of the younger players here as he's injured and use his wealth of experience in that way."

Sabres' struggles continue in 3-2 overtime loss to Flames

By Jenna Callari

WKBW

November 27, 2019

BUFFALO, N.Y. (WKBW) — The effort was there but the result wasn't as the Sabres fell to the Calgary Flames 3-2 in overtime on Wednesday night. Jimmy Vesey scored the team's first shorthanded goal since March while Victor Olofsson added another. With the overtime loss, the Sabres are now 11-10-4. They're back on the ice Friday when they host Toronto.

5 Observations from tonight's game

For the first time in forever

Following the Sabres' first penalty kill of the night, I immediately started singing the chorus to Disney's Frozen song "For the first time in forever". That's because over the team's last nine games before tonight's, they allowed a power play goal in each game. That's a streak that dates back to November 8th when the team began a two-game series in Sweden with Tampa Bay. The Sabres wound up killing two penalties and even ended up taking advantage on one of them. See my third observation for more on that.

The struggle known as the power play

Remember my "for the first time in forever" lyrics to describe the penalty kill? Well there's another Frozen lyric that comes to mind when describing the Sabres power play as of late and that's "I never see you anymore, come out the door, it's like you've gone away". They had great opportunities tonight, especially on the second PP opportunity, but couldn't connect. While the Sabres have allowed a PP goal in nine of their last ten games, they've only managed to score one PP goal in the same period of time. They're 1-of-28 since November 8th.. just think about that. After starting the season off doing so well on the PP, it's been a giant headache to watch as of late.

Vesey getting that much-needed spark

During the off-season, the Sabres signed Jimmy Vesey and expected him to provide much needed secondary scoring. That wasn't the case though through the team's first 23 games with Vesey unable to land in the goal column. But during the team's 24th game earlier this week, Vesey got that monkey off his back and scored his first of the season. Our Matt Bove said it could "spark some offense for the winger" and for the time being, it looks like it may have. With the Sabres down in the second period, Vesey took advantage of a shorthanded opportunity to tie the game and notch his second of the season. He could always go cold, we've seen players do it before, but for now it's good to see Vesey get in on the action.

Failure to capitalize

The Sabres were fairly quiet in the first period, taking just two shots in the first ten minutes of game clock. They did have some chances though, some really good ones in fact, but couldn't capitalize. With the Flames on the power play, Rasmus Aspland had a really nice chance for a shorthanded goal but wound up hitting the post. Minutes later, the Sabres had a 3-on-1 but Eichel was unable to even get a shot off. When you don't capitalize, you allow the other team to have a shot and that's exactly what happened with the Flames taking a 1-0 lead before the first period was up.

Two more chances

After an outstanding October, there's many words to describe the month of November. The Sabres have just two wins this month in 12 games played. Those two wins sound even worse when you think about it this way: the Buffalo Bills have three wins and they've only played four games. With a home-and-home against the Toronto Maple Leafs on Friday and Saturday, the Sabres have two more chances to try and salvage what they have left of this month. If they go 0-for-2 this weekend, we're gonna call it "Nightmare November" to say the least.

Flames burn Sabres in OT, hand Buffalo 12th loss in 15 games

By Nick Filipowski

WIVB

November 27, 2019

BUFFALO, N.Y. (WIVB) – Jimmy Vesey and Victor Olofsson each found the back of the net, but it wasn't enough in a 3-2 overtime loss to the Calgary Flames Wednesday night at KeyBank Center.

Flames forward Elias Lindholm potted the final tally early in overtime, handing Buffalo it's 12th loss in 15 outings.

Trailing 1-0 after the first period, Vesey struck for the second time in as many games, firing the puck past the outstretched pad of Calgary's David Rittich to tie the game on a breakaway.

Olofsson would add his ninth goal of the season early in the third period, firing the puck off the far post and past Rittich's glove to give the Blue & Gold a 2-1 advantage.

However, that lead was short-lived as the Flames struck a little more than two minutes later.

The Sabres return to the ice Friday and Saturday with a home and home series against the rival Toronto Maple Leafs.

Matthews, Eichel thankful Granato back coaching

By Mike Zeisberger

NHL.com

November 28, 2019

BUFFALO -- This Thanksgiving Day weekend, Auston Matthews and Jack Eichel are thankful that Don Granato is still alive.

"What he went through was shocking," said Matthews, the Toronto Maple Leafs center. "It will be so great to see him."

Granato, an assistant with the Buffalo Sabres, was hospitalized during the preseason after bacteria made its way into his bloodstream which led to pneumonia and respiratory failure. The 52-year-old coach said at one point his doctor told him he could die if he did not undergo a procedure in the next five minutes.

At first following the procedure, Granato was so weak he needed a walker to get out of bed. But his strength slowly returned, and last week he was able to return to the team.

And on Friday, Granato, who coached Eichel and Matthews when they were teenagers playing for USA Hockey National Team Development Program, will be behind the bench when the Sabres host the Maple Leafs at KeyBank Center (4 p.m. ET; MSG-B, TSN4, NHL.TV).

"I don't have kids of my own, so they're as close to it as I'll get," said Granato, who returned against the Florida Panthers on Nov. 24. "They're among the many things I'm thankful for after what I've been through."

For Eichel, the Sabres captain, it was a boost to the team on more than one level.

"I think it puts a lot of things in perspective how fortunate we are to do this and fortunate to be healthy," Eichel said. "That was some serious stuff that he went through."

"Honestly, we didn't have an idea the extent how bad it was. When we were educated on the situation it was super scary. You just don't know. There's a lot of unknowns. You just hope for the best for him and his family."

"We were just so lucky to hear things started to turn for him for the better. You just pray for him that things work out and thank god that they did. He's back with us and I imagine he's extra thankful this Thanksgiving as are we."

Matthews and Eichel, who played together with the NTDP during the 2013-14 season, were among Granato's current and former players who sent him well wishes during his battle.

"From the experience I just went through, when I saw texts from players I coached, that was the neatest thing," Granato said. "Because you push guys when you coach. You work with them day to day to make them better. That's what you want for them. And after all of that, it was really incredible to see them coaching me, sending me messages that said, 'Thinking of you. We care about you. Push through this.'"

"Those messages were so impactful. It's an incredible inspirational feeling."

Matthews said he'll always be grateful for the guidance Granato has provided.

"He's had a big influence for sure," Matthews said. "It's at a time in your life where you are learning things on and off the ice. He helped prepare me for both."

"You never forget the people who've helped you like that."

Flames defeat Sabres on Lindholm's OT goal

By Heather Engel

NHL.com

November 27, 2019

BUFFALO -- Elias Lindholm scored at 1:17 of overtime to give the Calgary Flames a 3-2 win against the Buffalo Sabres at KeyBank Center on Wednesday.

TJ Brodie and Matthew Tkachuk each had a goal and an assist for Calgary (12-12-4), which finished 2-0-1 on its three-game road trip. David Rittich made 34 saves.

Lindholm won it when he took a pass behind the net from Tkachuk, skated out in front, and backhanded a shot past goalie Linus Ullmark .

"It was huge," Lindholm said. "Obviously, the way the trip started (a 5-0 loss at the St. Louis Blues on Nov. 21) was tough. Tough to lose that one, [but] I think we battled back, and at the end there, [we] come home with a pretty good road trip."

Tkachuk tied it 2-2 at 4:02 of the third period on a rebound of Mikael Backlund's shot from the bottom of the right face-off circle.

Jimmy Vesey and Victor Olofsson scored, and Ullmark made 26 saves for Buffalo (11-10-4), which is 1-4-1 in its past six games.

"We definitely had the chances to put it away after the 2-1 [goal], and the inability to do that and then have a D-zone breakdown to allow them back into the game is really, really disappointing," Sabres coach Ralph Krueger said. "Again, it's a painful situation that we have to manage and use in the right way."

"But if you look at the effort overall there was a lot of good hockey there from our side too, and I thought we recovered well from the first goal against, came back strong to take the lead and then, yeah, giving it up is definitely not acceptable."

Brodie gave the Flames a 1-0 lead on a shot from the right point that squeaked between Ullmark's pads at 17:55 of the first period.

Vesey tied it 1-1 with a shorthanded goal at 6:32 of the second when he broke in alone after Lindholm's pass attempt bounced off Rasmus Asplund.

A quick wrist shot from Olofsson inside the left circle gave the Sabres a 2-1 lead at 1:55 of the third period.

"When they make it 2-1, it's never fun in the third on the road, but we did a good job of getting back to our game, getting one and getting it to overtime," Tkachuk said. "You never know what can happen in overtime or a shootout, so it was a big extra point for us."

Buffalo outshot Calgary 16-12 in the third.

"I don't know what it is, but we're finding a way to not close out games," Vesey said. "Maybe things are snowballing just the way it's gone. We've got to get back to the start of the year. When we were playing like that, there was a really good feeling in this room and we've played that style for stretches. It's a results league, and right now we have to find a way to get back."

Calgary is being coached by associate Geoff Ward while the NHL and Flames continue investigating a claim that coach Bill Peters used racial slurs in addressing a player earlier in his coaching career.

They said it

"I think this group has been through a lot. The way last season ended, I think we as a group are pretty good and strong together and obviously, this thing going on right now, I think as a group we tried to stay calm and tried to do whatever we could out on the ice." -- Flames forward Elias Lindholm

"We have to finish when we get a chance. Our power play's got to get a little bit better; it seems like that sort of sucks a little momentum out of us. We work hard, we spend time in their zone, we do a good job of drawing a penalty. [It] just seems like we can't buy one there right now. Five-on-5 too, we've got to do a better job of finishing our chances and closing out games." -- Sabres forward Jeff Skinner

Need to know

Lindholm has two goals in his past three games. ... Tkachuk has points in consecutive games after being held without a point in the previous five. ... Olofsson extended his point streak to five games (two goals, three assists). ... Sabres center Jack Eichel had an assist to extend his point streak to seven games (six goals, six assists).

What's next

Flames: Host the Ottawa Senators on Saturday (7 p.m. ET, SN360, CITY, SNW, TVAS, NHL.TV)

Sabres: Host the Toronto Maple Leafs on Friday (4 p.m. ET; MSG-B, TSN4, NHL.TV)

Dahlin out indefinitely for Sabres with concussion

By Heather Engel

NHL.com

November 27, 2019

BUFFALO -- Rasmus Dahlin will be out indefinitely for the Buffalo Sabres because of a concussion.

The defenseman was injured on a hit by Tampa Bay Lightning defenseman Erik Cernak in a 5-2 loss Monday. Cernak was suspended two games.

Dahlin, the No. 1 pick by Buffalo in the 2018 NHL Draft, has 16 points (one goal, 15 assists) in 24 games this season. He had 44 points (nine goals, 35 assists) in 82 games in his rookie season in 2018-19 when he was a finalist for the Calder Trophy given to the NHL's best rookie.

Sabres center Vladimir Sobotka is also out indefinitely after he had surgery on his right knee Tuesday. He has not played since he was injured on a hit by Lightning forward Nikita Kucherov in the first period of a 3-2 loss at the 2019 NHL Global Series in Stockholm on Nov. 8.

"It is long-term. I never like to bookend an injury of that nature," coach Ralph Krueger said. "Let's work with him and do everything we can and try to get him back but it's definitely long-term.

"We're really sad about it. [Sobotka] was an amazing leader in how we want to play here. He was an example on video over and over again of playing the right way without the puck. We'll tap into him to help mentor some of the younger players here as he's injured and use his wealth of experience in that way."

Sobotka has three points (one goal, two assists) in 16 games this season. A fourth-round pick (No. 106) of the Boston Bruins in the 2005 NHL Draft, he has 171 points (53 goals, 118 assists) in 548 NHL games through 11 seasons with the Bruins, St. Louis Blues and Sabres.

The Sabres are also without forward Evan Rodrigues, who is week to week with a lower-body injury sustained in a 5-2 win at the Florida Panthers on Sunday. Forward Kyle Okposo (concussion) and center Tage Thompson (upper body) are also out long-term.

"It's frustrating. You don't want to lose guys to injury at all," captain Jack Eichel said. "It's part of this game, it's a physical game, it's a long grueling season, and it takes a toll on people. We're not the only team that's dealing with injuries. We've just got to find a way to get through it."

The Sabres (11-10-3) host the Calgary Flames at KeyBank Center on Wednesday (7 p.m. ET; MSG-B, SNW, NHL.TV).

Flames at Sabres preview

By Heather Engel

NHL.com

November 27, 2019

FLAMES (11-12-4) at SABRES (11-10-3)

7 p.m. ET; MSG-B, SNW, NHL.TV

The Game

Marcus Johansson will return to the lineup for the Buffalo Sabres when they host the Calgary Flames at KeyBank Center on Wednesday.

The forward missed seven games with an upper-body injury for Buffalo, which has won twice in its past 12 games (2-8-2). The Sabres are 1-4-0 in their past and have been outscored 16-6 in the four losses.

The Flames are 1-5-2 in their past eight games. They've been outscored 28-9 during that stretch and shut out three times in their past six games.

Calgary associate Geoff Ward will coach the team while NHL and the Flames continue investigating a claim that coach Bill Peters used racial slurs in addressing a player earlier in his coaching career.

Players to watch

Flames forward Johnny Gaudreau has three assists in his past eight games.

Sabres captain Jack Eichel has 11 points (six goals, five assists) in a six-game point streak and has scored in each of his past four games against Calgary.

They said it

"There's a lot of positives for us to build on. We've just got to worry about our game and put that same game on the ice tonight with hopefully a different result." -- Flames associate coach Geoff Ward on their recent play

"You win together, you lose together. You want to be on the ice no matter what. You want to be a part of what's going on. I think this group will come out learning a lot from this. It was fun to watch the Boston game (3-2 loss on Nov. 21). I thought we played some really good hockey. We didn't win the game but we played the right way, the way we started the season." -- Sabres forward Marcus Johansson

Flames projected lineup

Johnny Gaudreau -- Sean Monahan -- Elias Lindholm
Matthew Tkachuk -- Mikael Backlund -- Andrew Mangiapane
Milan Lucic -- Derek Ryan -- Dillon Dube
Tobias Rieder -- Mark Jankowski -- Michael Frolik

Mark Giordano -- TJ Brodie
Noah Hanifin -- Rasmus Andersson
Oliver Kylington -- Michael Stone

David Rittich
Cam Talbot

Scratched: Alexander Yezesin, Zac Rinaldo

Injured: Sam Bennett (upper body), Austin Czarnik (lower body), Travis Hamonic (lower body)

Sabres projected lineup

Victor Olofsson -- Jack Eichel -- Sam Reinhart
Jimmy Vesey -- Marcus Johansson -- Casey Mittelstadt
Jeff Skinner -- Johan Larsson -- Conor Sheary
Zemgus Girgensons -- Rasmus Asplund -- Jean-Sebastien Dea

Jake McCabe -- Zach Bogosian
Brandon Montour -- Rasmus Ristolainen
Marco Scandella -- Henri Jokiharju

Linus Ullmark
Carter Hutton

Scratched: Curtis Lazar, Colin Miller

Injured: Rasmus Dahlin (concussion), Evan Rodrigues (lower body), Kyle Okposo (concussion), Tage Thompson (upper body), Vladimir Sobotka (lower body)

Status report

Sobotka is out indefinitely after having knee surgery Tuesday. ... Dahlin is also out indefinitely. ... Rodrigues is week to week.

Stat pack

Montour will play his 200th NHL game. ... Olofsson has one goal and three assists in a four-game point streak. ... Lucic is two goals from 200 in the NHL. ... Backlund needs three assists for 300 in the NHL.

Sobotka out indefinitely for Sabres after knee surgery

By Heather Engel

NHL.com

November 27, 2019

BUFFALO -- Vladimir Sobotka is out indefinitely for the Buffalo Sabres after he had surgery on his right knee Tuesday.

The center has not played since being injured on a hit by Tampa Bay Lightning forward Nikita Kucherov at 14:20 of the first period in a 3-2 loss at the 2019 NHL Global Series in Stockholm on Nov. 8.

"It is long-term. I never like to bookend an injury of that nature," coach Ralph Krueger said. "Let's work with him and do everything we can and try to get him back but it's definitely long-term.

"We're really sad about it. [Sobotka] was an amazing leader in how we want to play here. He was an example on video over and over again of playing the right way without the puck. We'll tap into him to help mentor some of the younger players here as he's injured and use his wealth of experience in that way."

Sobotka has three points (one goal, two assists) in 16 games this season. A fourth-round pick (No. 106) of the Boston Bruins in the 2005 NHL Draft, he has 171 points (53 goals, 118 assists) in 548 NHL games through 11 seasons with the Bruins, St. Louis Blues and Sabres.

Buffalo is also without defenseman Rasmus Dahlin, out indefinitely after sustaining a concussion on a hit by Lightning defenseman Erik Cernak in a 5-2 loss Monday. Cernak was suspended two games.

In addition, forward Evan Rodrigues is out week to week with a lower-body injury sustained in a 5-2 win at the Florida Panthers on Sunday. Forward Kyle Okposo (concussion) and center Tage Thompson (upper body) are also out long-term.

"It's frustrating. You don't want to lose guys to injury at all," captain Jack Eichel said. "It's part of this game, it's a physical game, it's a long grueling season and it takes a toll on people. We're not the only team that's dealing with injuries. We've just got to find a way to get through it."

The Sabres (11-10-3) host the Calgary Flames at KeyBank Center on Wednesday (7 p.m. ET; MSG-B, SNW, NHL.TV).

Lightning's Erik Cernak texted Sabres' Rasmus Dahlin about hit

By Mari Faiello

Tampa Bay Times

November 28, 2019

TAMPA — Erik Cernak reached out to Rasmus Dahlin after inadvertently injuring the Sabres defenseman in Monday's 5-2 win.

He texted Dahlin on Tuesday, clarifying the hit was not maliciously intended. Cernak added that he hoped the Sabres defenseman was feeling better and would be back playing soon. Dahlin responded right away, Cernak said.

"(Dahlin) said he would be okay, that it's just hockey," Cernak said. "He knew I probably didn't mean to hurt him and put a target on his head."

The Lightning defenseman will sit out the next two games, having been suspended by the NHL's department of player safety. Cernak said the hit was unlucky and he hopes it never happens again.

"It's not the best," he said. "You just have to respect the league."

Coach Jon Cooper added that Cernak's hole is hard to fill, but the team has been playing well together using the 11 forwards, seven defensemen format over the past three games — which they'll use Wednesday night against St. Louis.

"Probably the big thing for us is going to be on the penalty kill," Cooper said. "He's the first guy over the boards on that. That's where we're probably going to have to step up and fill the void for him."

"We're going to miss him, that's it."

Rasmus Dahlin injury update: Buffalo Sabres defenseman out indefinitely with concussion

By Jackie Spiegel
Sporting News
November 27, 2019

The Buffalo Sabres listed defenseman Rasmus Dahlin as out indefinitely due to the concussion he sustained on Nov. 25 against the Tampa Bay Lightning.

Skating in the offensive zone, Dahlin had the puck in the left circle and made a pass to the halfboard right before defenseman Erik Cernak sent a blindsided elbow to the 19-year-old blueliner's head.

There was no penalty on the play and Dahlin left the game. Buffalo later announced in the third period that he would not return.

Following the game, head coach Ralph Krueger confirmed Dahlin suffered a concussion.

The NHL's player safety department suspended Cernak two games for the headshot.

Dahlin, the 2018 first-overall pick has one goal and 16 points in 24 games for the Sabres.

Cernak has a goal in 20 games for the Lightning this season. During the 2014 IIHF World Junior Championships, the Slovak was suspended for a game for elbowing Finland's Mikko Rantanen with an elbow to the head.

Vladimir Sobotka injury update: Buffalo Sabres forward out indefinitely after knee surgery

By Sammi Silber

Sporting News

November 27, 2019

Buffalo Sabres forward Vladimir Sobotka will remain out indefinitely after he underwent surgery on his right knee, the team announced Wednesday.

The 32-year-old was originally said to be shelved between four to six weeks after he was injured on Nov. 8, but Buffalo said in a statement surgery was determined as "the appropriate next step" in Sobotka's recovery.

Sobotka's injury came as he followed through on a shot in the offensive zone without the puck when Tampa Bay Lightning forward Nikita Kucherov delivered a low-bridge hit, sending Sobotka over his back and onto the ice. Sobotka remained down while trainers came to tend to his injuries and help him to the locker room.

Buffalo later announced that Sobotka would not finish the remainder of the contest.

Kucherov did not receive a penalty on the play, nor did he receive further discipline from the NHL Department of Player Safety.

Rule 44 of the NHL's official rulebook defines an illegal "low hit" as "a check that is delivered by a player who may or may not have both skates on the ice, with his sole intent to check the opponent in the area of his knees." The rulebook states that a player may not "lower his body position" to check an opponent's knees.

In 15 games with the Sabres so far this season, Sobotka has registered one goal and three points. He has also won 55.22 percent of his faceoffs, which ranks first on the team among skaters who have taken at least 20 faceoffs.

Buffalo recalled Curtis Lazar from its AHL-affiliate Rochester Americans to fill in for Sobotka. He scored in his team debut on Thursday in a 5-4 overtime loss to the Carolina Hurricanes.

Sabres prep for home-and-home set with Maple Leafs

By Jourdon LaBarber

Sabres.com

November 28, 2019

Ralph Krueger got his first taste of the rivalry between the Buffalo Sabres and Toronto Maple Leafs during a pair of preseason meetings back in September. His true introduction will come this weekend.

The Sabres open a home-and-home set against the Maple Leafs inside KeyBank Center at 4 p.m. on Friday. They'll cross the border for a rematch at 7 p.m. on Saturday.

"We're really excited about it," Krueger said. "It's been highlighted on the calendar for a while, this back-to-back. You can feel the energy in the group. We're going to make the picture small here and do our best to play some strong hockey.

"Of course, the rivalry will bring emotion into the building. We know it'll be a mix of people from Canada and Buffalo supporting both sides, which will create a bit of an atmosphere like I'm used to often in Europe, when there's lots of road fans. It'll certainly give a spark to the game."

Though there is plenty of season left to be played, the games should hold significance in the standings. The Maple Leafs sit in third in the Atlantic Division with 28 points. The Sabres are two points behind them with a game in hand.

The Sabres will look to use these games to build on the positives they displayed in their last four games. They only earned one victory in that stretch - against Florida on Sunday - but held leads in all four. The next step is turning those long positive stretches into consistent habits.

"I think when we look at it after the game it's easier to digest that we're doing a lot of good things," forward Conor Sheary said. "It's kind of a mental switch that we turn off for only five minutes a game and it seems like we let other teams back in. I think that's been the case the past couple games.

"We can take a lot of the good from that and hopefully learn from it. Just keep doing more of the same and stay locked in for a full 60."

The Sabres outshot the Flames, 36-29, on Wednesday but fell 3-2 in overtime. Sheary and linemate Jeff Skinner in particular had their share of scoring chances, with four shots apiece.

"It's just putting the puck in the net," Sheary said. "Including myself, I think there's a lot of guys in here that are a little bit snake bitten. Although we are getting chances, we're not getting the result. To win in this league, you need secondary scoring. So, I think a lot of guys need to bear down in those situations and start providing for us."

Toronto has won three straight games since Sheldon Keefe replaced Mike Babcock as head coach, including a 6-0 victory in Detroit on Wednesday. Krueger said they don't expect many structural changes in their opponent, though they do expect to face an emotionally charged team.

Krueger stressed the Maple Leafs' scoring ability as a point of emphasis. They rank fifth in the league with 86 goals.

"Every D-man's involved," he said. "They attack in a group of five. Every time they've got the puck they're dangerous, and they enjoying playing that part of the game. So, we need to bring our very best defensive game to the rink tomorrow to be competitive with them."

Though they're maintaining their small picture and day-to-day approach, Sheary said the opportunity the weekend presents hasn't been lost on the players.

"One game at a time, especially against a division opponent," Sheary said. "Take two points when you can. We'll start with that tomorrow. I think we realize it's a big weekend for us and hopefully we can get a few points out of it."

Thursday's practice Forwards

68 Victor Olofsson - 9 Jack Eichel - 23 Sam Reinhart

37 Casey Mittelstadt - 90 Marcus Johansson - 13 Jimmy Vesey

53 Jeff Skinner - 22 Johan Larsson - 43 Conor Sheary

74 Rasmus Asplund - 15 Jean-Sebastien Dea / 27 Curtis Lazar - 28 Zemgus Girgensons

Defensemen: 4 Zach Bogosian, 6 Marco Scandella, 10 Henri Jokiharju, 19 Jake McCabe, 33 Colin Miller, 55 Rasmus Ristolainen, 62 Brandon Montour

Goalies:

35 Linus Ullmark

40 Carter Hutton

Power play

Unit 1: Reinhart, Johansson, Eichel, Olofsson, Ristolainen

Unit 2: Skinner, Sheary, Mittelstadt, Miller, Montour

Olofsson, Vesey score in OT loss to Flames

By Jourdon LaBarber

Sabres.com

November 27, 2019

Victor Olofsson scored to give them a third-period lead, but the Buffalo Sabres were only able to come away with a point in a 3-2 overtime loss to the Calgary Flames in KeyBank Center on Wednesday.

It was a tightly contested contest leading up to Olofsson's goal, which made the score 2-1 at the 1:55 mark of the final period. Matthew Tkachuk buried a loose puck around the Buffalo net to tie the game less than three minutes later, then Elias Lindholm scored the winning goal 1:17 into overtime.

The Sabres outshot the Flames, 36-29. Even-strength scoring chances were also in their favor by a tally of 28-22, according to NaturalStatTrick.com.

"It's definitely frustrating, the final result," Sabres coach Ralph Krueger said. "I thought it was a well-played hockey game for a neutral observer, they would have said it was a good game. It was tight. Calgary played well, played hard.

"But we definitely had the chances to put it away after the 2-1 [goal] and the inability to do that and then have a D-zone breakdown to allow them back into the game is really, really disappointing. Again, it's a painful situation that we have to manage and use in the right way."

Krueger described Tkachuk's goal as a defensive-zone breakdown, one that began with Tkachuk winning the puck in the corner and throwing it out in front of the Buffalo net. Mikael Backlund took an initial shot that was stopped by Linus Ullmark, but a second attempt bounced to Tkachuk at the edge of the right circle.

"Every team's going to make a push when they're down and they did," Sabres coach Ralph Krueger said. "We were actually resisting it quite well and it looked like we were actually close to getting the 3-1 goal.

"But, again, it was just a D-zone breakdown, lost a man out of the corner and a little bit of chaos they scored on. Yeah, it's certainly an area we got to tighten up on those kinds of situations and just deal with it better in the future."

The Sabres had chances to regain the lead throughout the remainder of the period, including a power play that saw them generate six shots against goalie David Rittich. Despite those quality chances and plenty of zone time, the power play finished the night 0-for-2.

Krueger pointed to the power play, which has been cold for the past 12 games, as an area that can spark more offense at even strength. The other is simply confidence.

"We try to set it up so that we get the majority of scoring chances which we did again today," Krueger said. "That's generally the plan, so the guys are sticking with the plan. For me, it's a mindset right now, it's a negative momentum against us right now on the results.

"We need an explosion one day probably, have a five, six, seven-goal game to really get out of this situation. But stick with it and creating scoring chances is a positive. The finishing, that's probably one of the biggest challenges. ... But we need to do more. We need to create more second chances; we need to be even stronger inside to create a different type of scoring chance if we keep getting stuck like this."

Jeff Skinner and Conor Sheary produced some of Buffalo's best chances, tallying four shots apiece in their first game on a line centered by Johan Larsson.

"There's a lot of little things I think you've got to do and those little things add up so you can't really point to one thing," Skinner said.

"I think we've got to do a good job and work hard to get inside on teams and get pucks to the net and get body position so that we can create off of rebounds. That's the way you score sometimes in this league is ugly goals and we've got to do a better job of getting some of those."

Vesey, Asplund connect shorthanded

It took Vesey until Monday night in Tampa to notch his first goal as a member of the Sabres. It wasn't for a lack of chances; Vesey ranked fifth on the team entering that game with 30 scoring chances at 5-on-5.

Sometimes, all it takes is one to go in. Vesey got another breakaway chance after an attempted breakout pass deflected high off the stick of Rasmus Asplund and beat Rittich off his forehand for his second goal in as many contests.

"We talked as a penalty kill group of being more aggressive down ice and we got a good rotation," Vesey said. "He caused the turnover. I'm not sure if anyone else on the ice knew where the puck was besides me. It fell right in front of me. It was a big goal, I think, in the moment to tie the game, but we have to find ways to get results."

Asplund earned the assist on the goal for the first point of his NHL career. His night included a shot that rung the post in the first period and another scoring chance that found him cutting across the net in the third. Afterward, he said he felt it was the best of his seven NHL games.

"Asplund you can see as a winger is a threat," Krueger said. "He can make a play, he defends well, he's evolving here daily. We really enjoy working with Rasmus Asplund. He's somebody you trust. You trust him in your own end and you trust him with the puck. That goal was no fluke for sure."

Still streaking

Olofsson's goal extended his point streak to a career-high five games. The rookie now has nine points (3+6) in his last 10 games.

The play began with a burst of speed through the neutral zone from Jack Eichel, who passed to Olofsson upon crossing the offensive blue line. Olofsson picked the far-side corner from the left faceoff circle.

The assist extended Eichel's point streak to seven games. He has 12 points (6+6) in that span.

Up next

The Sabres host the Toronto Maple Leafs to kick off a home-and-home set on Friday. Coverage on MSG begins at 3:30 p.m., or you can listen live on WGR 550. Puck drop is scheduled for 4.

Make sure to stay tuned during the first and second intermissions for the debut of Beyond Blue and Gold: Ray vs. Domi.

At the Horn: Flames 3 - Sabres 2 (OT)

By Chris Ryndak

Sabres.com

November 27, 2019

Linus Ullmark made 26 saves through regulation and overtime, but the Calgary Flames came away with a 3-2 victory over the Buffalo Sabres on Wednesday at KeyBank Center.

Elias Lindholm scored the game-winner with 3:43 left in overtime, sliding a backhand in from behind the net.

Jimmy Vesey and Victor Olofsson scored for the Sabres. TJ Brodie and Matthew Tkachuk also scored for Calgary. David Rittich made 34 saves.

Sabres rookie Rasmus Asplund recorded his first career point on Vesey's shorthanded goal, putting him in interesting company:

Asplund became just the fourth player in Sabres history to record his first NHL point while shorthanded, joining Gary McAdam (10/16/75 vs. CHI), Daren Puppa (12/9/87 at CHI) and Ryan Miller (3/16/06 vs. TOR).

What happened

The Flames opened the scoring when Brodie's shot from the point found its way past Ullmark with 2:05 remaining in the first period. Lindholm had set up a screen in front, which helped allow the puck to trickle in over the goal line.

Then, 6:32 into the second period, Vesey shorthanded on a breakaway. It was his second goal in as many games.

Breaking out after a defensive zone faceoff, Olofsson entered the Flames zone and wired a wrist shot top shelf to put Buffalo ahead 2-1 just 1:55 into the third period.

The Flames responded 2:05 later when Matthew Tkachuk hammered home a shot to tie the game.

What it means

The Sabres are now 11-10-4 on the season and 6-3-3 on home ice.

Olofsson's goal tonight extended his point streak to a career-high five games (2+3). He has nine points (3+6) in his last 10 games.

Jack Eichel, who recorded the primary assist on Olofsson's goal, extended his point streak to seven games. He has six goals and six assists in that span.

Up next

Buffalo hosts Toronto on Friday at KeyBank Center. It's a 4 p.m. faceoff with pregame coverage on MSG starting at 3:30.

Fans in the arena will be treated to the premiere of "Beyond Blue and Gold: Ray v. Domi" during each intermission. The new documentary details the rivalry between former enforcers Rob Ray and Tie Domi through their eyes as they watch each and every one of their 13 NHL fights together.

The feature will air on MSG during the Sabres' road game against Toronto on Saturday.

Johansson to return against Flames

By Jourdon LaBarber

Sabres.com

November 27, 2019

Marcus Johansson will be back in the lineup when the Sabres host the Calgary Flames tonight at KeyBank Center.

The Sabres will be without defenseman Rasmus Dahlin, who is out indefinitely with a concussion after taking an elbow to the head from Tampa Bay Lightning defenseman Eric Cernak on Monday. Cernak, who was not penalized for the incident, received a two-game suspension from the NHL on Tuesday.

"We said after the game that judgement will be made," Sabres coach Ralph Krueger said. "It's clear that it's been seen as a foul, it's a penalty, it's not allowed. And the length, it's not up to me to judge. We're just going to accept the result as it is.

"I've said it before, I'll say it again: You would always rather have the five minutes in the game because now the suspension doesn't do us any good. We'll just accept it now for what it is."

The team also announced injury updates to Vladimir Sobotka, who is out indefinitely after undergoing successful knee injury on Tuesday, and Evan Rodrigues, who is week-to-week with a lower-body injury.

Krueger said the timetable for Sobotka's recovery is long-term.

"I never like to bookend an injury of that nature," he said. "Let's work with him and do everything we can and try and get him back. But it's definitely long-term, and we're sitting here somewhere in November.

"... We're really sad about it. Sobey was an amazing leader in how we want to play here. He was an example on video over and over again of playing the right way without the puck. So, we'll tap into him to help mentor some of the younger players here as he's injured and use his wealth of experience in that way."

Johansson has been out since Nov. 14 with an upper-body injury. He skated this morning on a line with Casey Mittelstadt and Jimmy Vesey.

"I think everybody knows from day one that Marcus Johansson has been an important leader for this group," Krueger said. "Of course, we're pleased to have him back, not only for what he brings us on the ice and the roles that he fills and the added tool that he is in our game. It's what he brings off the ice and the calmness of his personality and the experience. It is definitely good to have Johansson back."

Jake McCabe will return to the lineup after sitting as a scratch in Tampa, which Krueger said was the product of a concerted effort to rotate defensemen as the Sabres navigate a stretch of five games in seven days. Colin Miller is expected to be scratched after playing on Monday.

At forward, Jean-Sebastien Dea is expected to replace Curtis Lazar in the lineup and make his Sabres debut. Dea tallied team-leading totals in goals (7) and points (13) in 18 games with Rochester.

Linus Ullmark will start in net.

Projected lineup

68 Victor Olofsson - 9 Jack Eichel - 23 Sam Reinhart
90 Marcus Johansson - 37 Casey Mittelstadt - 13 Jimmy Vesey
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