



# **Buffalo Sabres**

## **Daily Press Clips**

*November 8, 2019*

## **Buffalo faces Tampa Bay, seeks to end 3-game slide**

Associated Press

November 8, 2019

Tampa Bay Lightning (6-5-2, sixth in the Atlantic Division) vs. Buffalo Sabres (9-4-2, third in the Atlantic Division)

Stockholm; Friday, 2 p.m. EST

**BOTTOM LINE:** Buffalo aims to break its three-game slide with a win against Tampa Bay.

The Sabres are 5-3-1 in Eastern Conference games. Buffalo has scored 14 power-play goals, converting on 26.9% of chances.

The Lightning are 4-2-0 against the rest of their division. Tampa Bay is seventh in the league recording 9.1 points per game, averaging 3.3 goals and 5.8 assists.

The matchup Friday is the first meeting this season between the two teams.

**TOP PERFORMERS:** Jack Eichel leads the Sabres with 17 points, scoring seven goals and registering 10 assists. Jeff Skinner has scored four goals over the last 10 games for Buffalo.

Steven Stamkos leads the Lightning with eight total assists and has recorded 13 points. Brayden Point has collected 10 points over the last 10 games for Tampa Bay.

**LAST 10 GAMES:** Lightning: 5-4-1, averaging 3.2 goals, 5.7 assists, 4.5 penalties and 10.8 penalty minutes while giving up 3.4 goals per game with a .901 save percentage.

Sabres: 5-4-1, averaging 2.4 goals, 4.3 assists, 3.1 penalties and 6.2 penalty minutes while giving up 2.5 goals per game with a .923 save percentage.

Sabres Injuries: None listed.

Lightning Injuries: None listed.

## **Swedish legend Nicklas Lidstrom on Rasmus Dahlin: 'He's a mature player for his age'**

By Mike Harrington  
The Buffalo News  
November 8, 2019

STOCKHOLM — The teen often dubbed "The Next Nicklas Lidstrom" got to meet the real one for the first time Friday morning in the Buffalo Sabres' dressing room at Ericsson Globe.

Lidstrom, the Hockey Hall of Famer widely regarded as the best defenseman ever to come out of Sweden, chatted in Swedish with Sabres blueliner Rasmus Dahlin for a few minutes after the team's morning skate prior to its game against the Tampa Bay Lightning.

The Detroit Red Wings legend waited patiently with Swedish broadcast partner Jonatan Lindquist while Dahlin finished an interview, and then the two shook hands for the first time.

"I was shaking. I felt like a child," a smiling Dahlin said after the meeting. "Yeah. That was cool. He's the best of all time. That's the guy."

"First time I've met. I saw him play in Frolunda a couple years ago and he's he's a mature player for his age," said Lidstrom, now 49. "He was that way two years ago when I saw him play."

"As a 17-year-old, he looked poised and mature. He looked hungry, willing to get up in the play, played with lots of enthusiasm. That's what you see in today's game as well. And at 19 years old, he's still a young player."

On the Mount Rushmore of Swedish defensemen, there is Lidstrom and Toronto legend Borje Salming, both of whom were named to the NHL100 in 2017, which honored the league's all-time team.

Lidstrom entered the NHL without any of the hype of Dahlin, getting selected in the third round at No. 53 overall by the Red Wings in the 1989 draft (the Sabres took defenseman Kevin Haller at No. 14). He came to North America in 1991 and played 20 seasons for the Red Wings, retiring in 2012 as a four-time Stanley Cup champion, a seven-time Norris Trophy winner and the Conn Smythe Trophy winner as the MVP of the 2002 playoffs.

Lidstrom is fifth all-time among NHL defensemen in games played (1,564) and sixth in points (1,142). He is the only non-North American in the top 15 in scoring among defensemen.

"I was 21 when I came in. There wasn't the hype," Lidstrom said. "I was a third-rounder. I wasn't ... looked upon as a superstar or a franchise player when I came in. I came in with (Vladimir) Konstantinov, two young defensemen looking at the rebuilding of the Wings."

"It's different times now. Everything with social media and the coverage. People know who you are. It wasn't like that at all when I came in during the early '90s. It's a real different world right now."

Dahlin has endured the Lidstrom comparisons for the last three years. While they're unfair at this point in Dahlin's career, Lidstrom said, he's enjoyed hearing them.

"I take a lot of pride in being mentioned," Lidstrom said. "People are looking at me as one of the strong good defensemen coming out of Sweden so I feel proud about being mentioned like that, too."

Lidstrom said he enjoyed the mountains of hype around Dahlin heading into last year's draft.

"It was fun. It shows a great credit for Team Sweden to still be producing a lot of hockey players, for it being a small country," Lidstrom said. "We're still able to produce a lot of good players, especially young defensemen as of late. Some real good, strong young defenseman and now we have a No. 1, a first pick overall, which is real impressive."

Lidstrom, who will be in a rinkside studio for Saturday's game, said he knows Dahlin is probably nervous heading into these games in his homeland.

"I'm sure he's super excited to first of all be here and be here with his teammates. When you're playing in North America, it seems like you're far away from home," Lidstrom said. "You know people are watching on TV or following you online but now you're actually here. Now they can watch you live."

Dahlin, who procured around 30 tickets for family and friends, said he's trying to approach the games as he normally would. But he knows many former Swedish stars, such as Lidstrom and longtime NHL center Peter Forsberg, were expected to be in the building or watching on television.

"That's what I try to do, make it like another game," Dahlin said. "But Lidstrom, maybe Forsberg and those guys watching. I know it's a lot of pretty cool names. I'm just trying to focus on the game. Otherwise, I can't play."

Lidstrom said Sabres fans need to understand that this 19-year-old is still learning to play a 200-foot game even as he faces top opponents.

"But from what I've seen, he's been adopting so quickly to playing at the next level," Lidstrom said. "He showed that when he came three years ago to Frolunda to play in the highest league in Sweden. I think he showed last year stepping into the NHL with the big hype and I think he responded real well."

"That's one impressive thing with Rasmus: He's been able to adapt so quickly to being in new environments."

## **Sabres Game Day: It's a Swedish showcase in opener against Tampa Bay Lightning**

By Mike Harrington  
The Buffalo News  
November 8, 2019

Matchup: Buffalo Sabres (9-4-2) vs. Tampa Bay Lightning (6-5-2)  
Where: Ericsson Globe, Stockholm  
When: 2 p.m. Eastern time (8 p.m. in Sweden)  
TV: NBC Sports Network  
Radio: WGR 550

The NHL in Sweden: With another two-game series at hand between the Sabres and Lightning, Stockholm will be playing host to its 11th and 12th regular-season NHL games this weekend, the most among all overseas locales. All Stockholm games have been played at Ericsson Globe. Following Stockholm are Helsinki, Finland (7 games); Prague, Czech Republic (5) and Tokyo, Japan (4).

Gothenburg is the only other Swedish city to stage an NHL game, when New Jersey beat Edmonton, 5-2, in last year's season opener. Current Sabres center Marcus Johansson played for the Devils in that game.

International experience: It's the second time for each team overseas. The Sabres went 2-0 in 2011, beating Anaheim in Helsinki (4-1) and Los Angeles in Berlin (4-2). The Lightning opened their 2008-09 season by dropping a pair of 2-1 games to the New York Rangers in Prague in the NHL debut of No. 1 pick Steven Stamkos.

The Sabres and Lightning went together to Austria on a preseason tour in 1998, each beating an Austrian club team before Buffalo dropped Tampa Bay, 3-1, in a head-to-head matchup.

In the nets: Linus Ullmark (3-2-1, 3.12/.915) gets the start in goal for Buffalo today, with Carter Hutton likely to play in Saturday's game.

"We're in Sweden, good place for him to kick off our weekend," a smiling coach Ralph Krueger said of Ullmark after today's morning skate. "Nothing complex there."

Tampa Bay will counter with Andrei Vasilevskiy (5-4-0, 3.12/.904). Like his team, the reigning Vezina winner has struggled this year -- but he's been lights-out in his career against the Sabres (8-1-1, 1.58/.944/two shutouts).

Hedman good to go: Tampa Bay defenseman and former Norris Trophy winner Victor Hedman, the team's lone Swede, will play after missing his team's last two games due to an upper-body injury.

The Buffalo lineup: Victor Olofsson is back on the top line with Jack Eichel and the healthy scratches today will be Evan Rodrigues, John Gilmour and Lawrence Pilut. Rasmus Dahlin's first game in Sweden will be spent partnering with Henri Jokiharju.

Buffalo's Super Swede: The Sabres' all-time leader for career appearances and points by a Swedish-born player is Stockholm native Henrik Tallinder, who tallied 22-94-116 in 532 games with the team in two stints with the team that totaled nine seasons from 2001-14.

The Sabres have six Swedes on their roster in Ullmark, Dahlin, Olofsson, Pilut, Marcus Johansson and Johan Larsson.

Long break: Did you forget that the Sabres head into today's opener of the NHL Global Series on a three-game losing streak? It's pretty easy to because they haven't played in six days, but Buffalo is 0-2-1 in its last three, losing to Arizona (3-2 shootout), Washington (6-2) and the New York Islanders (1-0).

Find the offense: The Sabres have scored two goals or less for five straight games and are 1-3-1 in them. Krueger liked the net-front pressure his team had against the Islanders despite being shut out.

"One of the areas of growth here is the understanding of how you can get control of the offensive slot and the sacrifice that needs to happen," Krueger said. "Defensively we've learned to grow in a lot of ways but offensively that is a piece we continue to work on."

Back-to-backs: Something will give today because the Sabres are 0-3 in the first game of back-to-backs this season this season (losing to Anaheim, the New York Rangers and Washington) while Tampa Bay is 0-2 (Florida and the Rangers).

Home-ice advantage: Today counts as a Sabres home game, meaning Buffalo will have the last line change. This will be the second time in three years the Sabres will play only 40 home games in KeyBank Center instead of 41. They also did it in 2017-18, when their Winter Classic game in New York against the Rangers at Citi Field was a home game.

Buffalo is 1-3-3 in its other seven home games not held downtown, with the lone win in 2011 against Anaheim in Helsinki, Finland, during its only other overseas appearance. In addition to the games in Queens and Finland, the Sabres twice played home games in Rochester (tying New Jersey in 2003 and losing to Washington in 2005), had neutral-site losses in 1993 against Vancouver (in Hamilton) and Pittsburgh (in Sacramento), and suffered a shootout loss in 2008 to Pittsburgh at the Winter Classic in Orchard Park.

## **For Sabres fans from home and around the world, Rasmus Dahlin is in the spotlight**

By Mike Harrington  
The Buffalo News  
November 7, 2019

STOCKHOLM – Johan Eskhult drove nearly 70 kilometers from Uppsala in the countryside to the capital of Sweden on Thursday to watch the Buffalo Sabres practice. There was largely one reason why.

Rasmus Dahlin.

Sporting his navy blue No. 26 Sabres jersey, Eskhult was pondering more purchases at a souvenir stand inside the Ericsson Globe with his 11-year-old son, Albin.

"This is huge for me, very huge," said Eskhult, 41. "I watch the highlights the morning after or European Game of the Week. I'm so happy to see him play. I think he's going to be one of the greatest."

The love for Dahlin in Sweden is real. There was big applause when he took the ice Thursday and oohs and ahhs in the crowd as Dahlin scored a goal during a drill with a nifty backhand in the slot. It's the kind of play fans here hope they see more of the next two days as the Sabres face the Tampa Bay Lightning in the NHL Global Series.

"Rasmus got the fans on their feet a couple times out there," Sabres teammate Jake McCabe said after the workout. "We're used to that. We see it every day. I'm just glad all his fans in Stockholm could see that in person."

"We just like the NHL. We like hockey," Eskhult said. "I got the tickets as soon as they went on sale (in March) and we've been very much looking forward to these games."

The games are about the NHL going around the world and showcasing young stars like Dahlin as well as established veterans like former Norris Trophy winner Victor Hedman, the 28-year-old who is the only Swede on the Tampa roster. Dahlin is the biggest international brand on the Sabres' roster and is the biggest reason the team is here, just like most observers thought would happen during his draft week.

The games are a lifetime moment for Dahlin, 19, and the five other Swedes on the Buffalo roster. Of that group, only veteran Marcus Johansson has ever played an NHL game on home soil.

"For me, when I was young, there was no opportunity for me as a kid watching NHL games," Dahlin said as yet another large group of reporters from his home country chronicled his words in both Swedish and English. "I think it's a very good idea to come to Sweden for them to see a real NHL game."

There were only about 3,000 fans in the 14,000-seat arena for practice, far less than the crowd rumored to be coming earlier in the week (the games have long been sold out). Swedish fans balked at paying 150 Kroner, or about \$15, for practice tickets, so there were plenty of Americans in the stands.

The crowd may have been small, but it was certainly enthusiastic. Fans leaned over the railing hoping to get autographs or sticks and pucks. The noise grew louder when a player obliged. Dahlin handed a stick into the crowd as he left the ice following practice.

Several players said it reminded them of training camp practices in previous years, when the stands have been nearly full in LECOM Harborcenter.

"There were so many kids and it's obviously such a passionate hockey country," said Buffalo captain Jack Eichel. "It was really cool. I thought it was a great experience."

Kristian Larsen, 29, came from Oslo, the capital of Norway, to see Dahlin. He had a custom-made 50th anniversary jersey with his own name on the back and quickly made friends outside the building with Mick Ridgway, a 28-year-old from Omaha, Neb., who has grandparents in East Amherst and was going old school with a classic 70s white jersey.

"I became a fan when I was about 7 years old," Larsen said. "My dad bought NHL 97 for PlayStation and I thought Buffalo Sabres had the coolest logo. I was bad at defense but I had Dominik Hasek and I loved him.

"I like to watch Dahlin play. He has a bright future. I think he can be bigger than (former Detroit star) Nicklas Lidstrom. I really do. I think Swedish people like him very much. People everywhere do."

Ridgway became a Sabres fan because of his grandparents and said he plays pickup hockey regularly with some Buffalo natives in Omaha connected with Offutt Air Force Base. Being based in the Midwest has allowed him to travel to see Sabres games in both directions of the country. But never overseas.

"You think about what this means and I imagine this is going to be huge for Dahlin," Ridgway said. "When I was a kid, I wanted to get back into hockey so, because of my grandparents, I was like, 'Buffalo is the town' and he's our guy now."

The Sabres have allowed their Swedish contingent to relish the media attention they've been getting at home this week. Coach Ralph Krueger said he's not concerned about Dahlin succumbing to hype, especially given what the native of Lidkoping went through during his draft year.

"We had those conversations already and he's managing it really well," Krueger said. "He's excited to play and that's what he needs to be. He needs to have fun through these two games and just play his game. We're keeping it simple and he is too. It will be a wonderful opportunity for the people of Sweden to see him first-hand. We feel he's in a really good space here."

Eichel is a downtown neighbor of Dahlin and roommate Casey Mittelstadt, and said he makes sure to try to help Dahlin where needed on and off the ice.

"He's such a good player, such a good person and a great kid," Eichel said. "He's been everything and more we could ask for. He's an incredible hockey player but you don't get to see how good of a person, how nice he is. He's so humble, it's a pleasure to be around him every day."

Dahlin has just one goal so far, although he has compiled 11 points in 15 games. But his defensive issues have become a bit of a dirty little secret, as he's posted a minus-6 rating the last six games and had several notable struggles with the puck.

"I hope he turns his game back around some here," said Ryan Francis, 36, of Grand Island, who was wearing a Dahlin T-shirt while his father, Mark, sported an Eichel 50th anniversary sweater. "I think he's had a little bit of a sophomore slump. Offensively he's still putting up numbers but defensively he looks a mess. I'm hoping he wants to show off for the crowd and play at a level maybe we haven't seen before. That's where the hope is."

Rick Zinter, a Rochester native now living in Greenacres, Fla., had similar thoughts. He's here with his son Kyle, from Seattle, and friend Lukas Kotecki of Rochester, a season-ticket holder from Section 304 in KeyBank Center.

"He's been a little erratic but a lot of these guys on this team are young," said Zinter, combining his navy Dahlin jersey with a scarf from the Sabres' 2011 trip to Finland and Germany. "They've got a good core that's 19-23 years old. Over the next few years, I could see them doing really well."

The Sabres enter these games six points ahead of the Lightning in the Atlantic Division standings. Dahlin and Hedman are rivals now, a far cry from when Dahlin was 12 and met Hedman, then 21, during a 2012 summer hockey camp.

"To play against him in the NHL, it was pretty weird at first. But I'm here in the NHL, too, so I can't think about it too much," Dahlin said. "But it's awesome. It's really cool to play against him."

"He's a great overall guy. The talent is out of this world, and he's producing on a high level to start the season," Hedman said. "He's just going to become better, and that's pretty scary."

Eskhult was talking about Dahlin some more when Thunderbug, Tampa Bay's mascot, walked by and high-fived his son. The reason? Albin Eskhult was wearing the jersey of Lightning star Nikita Kucherov.

"He doesn't know any better," said his smiling father. "He's also a Oilers fan for Connor McDavid."

Albin's wish? A Tampa Bay win and some good play from Dahlin. The Sabres' fans in town certainly don't want that combination.

"How many years has it been since they've been out of the playoffs?" asked Larsen, the Norwegian. Told the number was 8, Larsen said, "That's a long time. I want to see them win some more."

## **After long wait, it soon will be time for Sabres to play hockey in Sweden**

By Mike Harrington

The Buffalo News

November 7, 2019

STOCKHOLM – There was a lot of chatter about the trip to Sweden days before the Buffalo Sabres' plane took off on Sunday night. There's been a lot of hype and a lot of free time since it landed Monday morning.

It's finally time to play hockey. The Sabres and Tampa Bay Lightning face off for the first of two games Friday night in Ericsson Globe (2 p.m. in Buffalo) and both teams should be plenty refreshed.

The Sabres haven't played since their 1-0 loss Saturday to the New York Islanders in KeyBank Center. The Lightning, who have been on the road for nearly two weeks, have been off since last Friday's 5-2 loss to the New York Islanders capped a three-game New York metro area trip.

"The batteries are full and we're expecting a real high battle level from both teams," Sabres coach Ralph Krueger said after Thursday's open practice in the Globe. "I know Tampa is certainly feeling the same thing as we are. That was our primary focus here: Let's get refreshed in our minds, refreshed in our bodies and let's use this space to really show the best Sabres hockey possible this weekend."

The Sabres practiced for an hour before a crowd of about 3,000 and it was a normal day-before-the-game hard workout.

"It's exciting now that we've gotten adjusted, had those few days of good team bonding and a couple good practices," said Sabres defenseman Jake McCabe. "Now all the publicity and the public stuff is over with and we focus on these two games, two big games. It's a really good team over there and we know the firepower they have. A divisional opponent and that makes it four crucial points on the line."

While the Sabres are just 1-3-1 in their last five games after an 8-1-1 start, it's probably the Lightning who have more urgency here this weekend. In the wake of a 132-point regular season that ended with their stunning first-round sweep at the hands of Columbus, Tampa Bay has gone just 6-5-2 thus far.

The Sabres have done a pretty good job against Tampa in recent meetings, going 3-3-1 over the last seven. Buffalo was 1-2-1 against the Lightning last season, but had the lead in the third period of all four games.

"It's huge for us," Buffalo captain Jack Eichel said. "Obviously we've had a couple tough games recently, played well against the Islanders but the Washington game (a 6-1 loss Nov. 1) wasn't up to our standard. This is a divisional game, it's always a pretty tight game with them."

"There's a lot going on around the game. It's obviously quite the production. The league does a tremendous job showcasing this series but at the end of the day, there's four points up for grabs and it's a divisional opponent. You kind of have to get back into mid-season form, that mid-season mindset of it's two big games and get ready to go."

...  
The Sabres made only one minor change at practice Thursday as Jimmy Vesey took Evan Rodrigues' spot on the fourth line with Casey Mittelstadt and Conor Sheary. As Thursday's lineup stands, the scratches on Friday would be Rodrigues and the defense pair of John Gilmour and Lawrence Pilut.

Tampa defenseman Victor Hedman, the former Norris Trophy winner who is the Lightning's only Swede, was a full participant in practice Thursday and worked on the team's No. 1 power play. He's missed the last two games with an upper-body injury but his presence on the power play indicates he's ready to go.

...  
A reminder on broadcast information for the series:

Friday: The game will be on NBC Sports Network at 2 p.m., with John Forslund and Pierre Maguire on the call remotely from the network's studio in Stamford, Conn. Rick Jeanneret and Rob Ray will have the radio call on WGR and will be doing the game from (716) Food and Sport.

Saturday: The game will be on MSG at 1 p.m., with Jeanneret and Ray on the call from KeyBank Center and simulcasting on WGR Radio.

. . .  
For the record, the games are being played on an NHL ice surface at 200 feet by 85 and not the larger international surface. The arena can convert to either size, shifting to the smaller rink simply by leaving extra space behind the players' benches and penalty boxes.

## **After 'getting my mind right,' Sabres prospect Sean Malone finding his game**

By Bill Hoppe

The Buffalo News

November 7, 2019

ROCHESTER – When Sean Malone’s injury-plagued, career-worst season ended in April, the West Seneca native needed a mental break from hockey.

So for about a month, Malone, a Rochester Americans forward, said he got away from the sport and “talked to a lot of people.”

“I was able to mentally step away from everything, get my mind right,” Malone said.

These days, Malone, 24, sounds refreshed. Having compiled three goals and five points in his last five games, he’s enjoying perhaps the best start of his career.

“It’s been good,” Malone said the other day in Blue Cross Arena. “I feel a lot happier right now than I did last year, and I think it’s shown in my play.”

Still, Malone has struggled defensively, interim Amerks coach Gord Dineen said. The Amerks have three extra forwards, so the lineup changes regularly. Malone has sat out the last two games as a healthy scratch.

“Very hard,” Dineen of scratching Malone for Friday’s 4-2 win against Binghamton. “The offensive side of things are one thing, and playing a complete game is another. He ... realizes the things he’s got to work on to get back into it.

“The one thing is he’s healthy, he’s really got a resolve this year, so when he gets the opportunity, I know he’s going to change his game.”

It wasn’t that long ago Malone looked finished in the Sabres organization. In the span of a few months last season, he morphed from a prospect into an afterthought in the American Hockey League.

The injuries – he hurt his knee in Buffalo’s first preseason game before enduring upper- and lower-body problems – stymied his development, limiting him to 38 games. Following his appearances, he often looked beaten down by the mental and physical toll.

“It’s hard when you’re out for a long time, and then getting back and trying to get your confidence, getting hit with another thing,” Malone said. “I care too much about this game, and it (stinks) when it happens.”

Then in June, the Sabres did not give Malone a qualifying offer as a restricted free agent. Instead, he signed a one-year AHL contract.

“I just wanted to get my game back to where I know I’m capable of,” he said. “Obviously, it’s tough not getting qualified. But I think at the same time, they saw enough in me to bring me back.”

Dineen said Malone, who played one game with the Sabres in 2016-17 after leaving college, has embraced returning to Rochester on a minor-league deal.

“You’re kind of wondering how a guy would feel about it, and ... he’s very excited about being back and getting another opportunity and being a part of this group,” he said.

The genesis of Malone’s turnaround started last spring.

“I was able to see the right people to help,” said Malone, who wouldn’t reveal with whom he spoke to.

The long offseason also helped the former sixth-round pick get healthy.

“It’s huge,” said Malone, who also battled hip problems in college. “It’s a mental burden that’s behind me.”

Malone also learned to showcase a calmer style – “Not selling out,” he said – and make himself less vulnerable when he gives or receives a hit.

“Everyday body maintenance and stuff like that is so important, and I’ve been doing a good job of getting here early and putting in the work that needs to be done as a pro hockey player,” he said. “I had a really good summer. I think it’s paid for me mentally and physically.”

The versatile Malone has played nine games this season, moving up and down the lineup at center and wing.

“I have that mental ability to play different areas of the ice,” he said.

He began the season pivoting a checking line before moving up to left wing beside center Rasmus Asplund and Tage Thompson.

“I’m playing a little more, playing with some pretty good players – offensive players,” said Malone, who compiled 12 goals and 22 points as a rookie in 2017-18. “I know that I have the ability to produce offensively. Given the opportunity, I think I can succeed.”

If Malone plays on a scoring line, he could pile up more goals. A breakout offensive season might help him earn another opportunity with the Sabres.

“I’ve been proving myself my whole life,” he said. “I just want to prove to them that I deserve to be here and hopefully work my way up someday to an NHL deal.”

#### C.J. Smith injured

Forward C.J. Smith suffered a lower-body injury in first period of Saturday's game against Utica and is expected to miss "weeks," Dineen said.

Smith was hit and did not return to the ice.

"He's somebody that we gear our team around as far as making other players better," Dineen said. "That's a significant loss, and for him, too. It's a year he wants to make an impact at every level, and so when you miss periods of time, that's disappointing."

Zach Redmond missed practice early this week with a lower-body injury and his status for Friday's game vs. Binghamton is uncertain. Dineen said he hopes the injury is short term.

Also, Taylor Leier practiced Tuesday in a non-contact jersey, his first practice of the season after undergoing offseason labrum surgery. Dineen said Leier is progressing but did not have a timetable.

## **Two games in Sweden will mean a lot to hockey in that country**

By Paul Hamilton

WGR 550

November 7, 2019

(WGR 550) - Victor Hedman is the only Swedish player on the Tampa Bay roster, but Buffalo will have the home advantage. Swedes with the Sabres include Rasmus Dahlin, Victor Olofsson, Linus Ullmark, Johan Larsson, Marcus Johansson and Lawrence Pilut.

Buffalo and the Lightning will play two games on Friday and Saturday, and I had a chance to chat with three of them about what this week means to them and what it means to their home country of Sweden:

**RASMUS DAHLIN:**

"I don't know what it's going to be like or how many people are going to show up for the games, but I'm excited to see how it's going to go." Dahlin added that he will have a strange feeling this week, "It's weird, going to dinner with all my teammates in Sweden. It couldn't be better for me."

Because of injuries, Dahlin has never gotten a chance to play in the Ericsson Globe. He said it's the premier rink in his country, "It's like Madison Square Garden. It's powerful and when you go and play there, you're super excited."

Kids in Sweden don't get to see many NHL games because it's two in the morning when many of them start. Dahlin thinks this trip will mean a lot, "There's not many people that can come over to watch NHL hockey, so it's going to be huge for all the people that can't come to America."

As a kid, the NHL wasn't really available to Dahlin, "I could always watch highlights, but games were hard. They're in the middle of the night, but I did watch the Stanley Cup Final."

Not seeing much of the NHL didn't stop Dahlin from having NHL heroes as a kid, "General NHL players, you know everything about them like the biggest stars, especially me who loves hockey so much, I knew everything about them."

"I do think the Swedish stars are bigger because you know how they play, so my biggest idol was in Frölunda."

As far as the food, he's treating his teammates to this week. Dahlin said, "Kebabtallrik, it's meat with fries and everyone eats them and it's the best food you can have." Dahlin took the boys to the candy store too.

**MARCUS JOHANSSON:**

Johansson has played in Sweden before as a member of the New Jersey Devils. Even though it's happened before, he's still looking forward to it, "I'm very excited. I get to play in front of family and friends in Sweden in an NHL game and it's pretty special. It's something you didn't even dream of growing up, so it's very fortunate to be able to do that."

"It's great for young players to get to watch who maybe don't get to watch otherwise. It's great to get to see the best league in the world in your home country is a cool thing."

There were more demands on the Swedish players this week, but Johansson is OK with that, "It's kind of fun. You get to hang out with family and friends and just to be able to go to lunch with your pals back home. It's pretty special. It's busy, but definitely worth it."

Johansson is older than Dahlin, which means he had less exposure to the NHL as a kid, "They didn't really broadcast the way it is now when I grew up, so we just saw highlights and stuff every now and then."

"For the kids that get to go to the game, I hope they enjoy it because I think it's very special."

Peter Forsberg paved the way for a lot of Swedish players. Johansson said, "It's tough to say. Technically it was before him, but for me, a couple years ahead of me it was Backstrom and some of those guys kind of made us realize that it was possible."

VICTOR OLOFSSON:

A few years ago, Olofsson didn't know if he'd ever play in the NHL. Now to be able to play in the NHL in front of family and friends? The winger never thought it would be possible, "To be able to play in front of them in Sweden, it's something that you really can't imagine ever doing."

Olofsson is from the same place as Hedman, and he said the Lightning defenseman has meant a lot to him, "We started working out together this summer and I've known him for awhile, and he's a great guy to look up to and I tried to catch him in workouts, so he's been a great sparring partner for me and if there were any questions I had about playing over here, he knows everything."

Olofsson is really looking forward to seeing what these two games do for Sweden, "I think it means a lot. It's great for kids to watch this game live. It's hard with the time change, so it's not like you can stay up and watch a lot of games as a kid, so it'll be a great time for them and they'll be able to learn a lot."

Join me and Joe DiBiase on Friday for the pre-game starting at 1:30 right after One Bills Live.

## NHL Global Series: Swedish stars pick their own All-Swede Team

By Joe Smith

The Athletic

November 7, 2019

STOCKHOLM — When you ask a Swedish-born hockey player to build his own all-Swede team, you may get a lineup without him in it.

Perhaps it's just the polite and humble nature of the country's stars, but it still came as a bit of a surprise that when Sabres defenseman Rasmus Dahlin and Penguins veteran Patric Hornqvist were charged with creating their teams, they left themselves off.

Norris Trophy-winning defenseman Victor Hedman didn't even want to pick a lineup — he didn't want to leave anybody out.

But many other Swedes — including legends Nicklas Lidstrom and Daniel Sedin — helped me out with my latest idea for The Athletic. With the NHL's Global Series in Stockholm this week for back-to-back games between the Lightning and Sabres, I asked top Swedish players to create a full lineup — four lines, three defensive pairs and two goalies — with current NHLers from their country.

It's a tribute to the depth of talent from the hockey-crazed nation that many players took a few days to think about it.

"Oh, you want a full team?" Predators defenseman Mattias Ekholm asked.

"That's a tough one," Avalanche captain Gabriel Landeskog said.

There are many no-brainers, of course, and Landeskog and Ekholm are included in most of the lineups. As are Hedman and fellow Norris winner Erik Karlsson. The Canucks' Calder Trophy winner, Elias Pettersson, was another top pick. Choosing just six for the blue line might have been the group's biggest challenge.

This may not be the proverbial "golden age" for Swedish hockey, but the blend of dynamic speed, skill and experienced veterans makes the current core of players pretty special.

"It's always tough to compare to '06 when we won the Olympics and had a really good team: (Peter) Forsberg, the Sedins, (Henrik) Zetterberg and (Niklas) Kronwall were in their primes," Ekholm said. "But we're pretty strong for a small country. I feel we have a lot of impactful players on both sides of the ice."

So, without further ado, here are the top Swedish stars' picks for their All-Swede Team. (The charts have been beautifully put together by our Shayna Goldman.)

Nicklas Backstrom, the Capitals star center, was a nearly unanimous pick as the No. 1 center for the All-Swede team. The elite playmaker is one of the game's most skilled passers and has six straight 50-assist seasons. Along with Washington captain Alex Ovechkin, Backstrom has been the face of the franchise, the club leader in assists and is second all-time in points (behind Ovi). Our Scott Burnside wrote over the summer how Backstrom could be the greatest Swedish forward of all time.

One player who has quickly put himself on this list was Pettersson, who took the league by storm last season with Vancouver, racking up 28 goals and 66 points in 71 games. Our late writer Jason Botchford wrote how Pettersson changed everything in the city.

"He was really good in Sweden in the playoffs and all that," Ekholm said. "But in the way he came over here, I was maybe surprised that he so quickly transitioned into an NHL player."

Dahlin may have not cracked his own lineup, but he made the cut on Backstrom's squad. Understandably, it was difficult for a lot of guys to come to a consensus on the blue line. The Hedman-Karlsson combo was common, and the Stars' John Klingberg was another regular. Coyotes captain Oliver Ekman-Larsson is someone who everyone raved about and most included in their lineups.

There were a couple of wild cards in the bottom pair, like Backstrom's pick of Alexander Edler and Dahlin picking Niklas Hjalmarsson and Erik Gustafsson.

While some decided to leave themselves off their own list, Anton Stralman didn't want to waste an opportunity to put himself back alongside Hedman, his long-time partner with Tampa Bay.

"It all depends on do you want it to be an all-offense blueline?" Stralman said. "Or a good mix?"

In goal, the Rangers' Henrik Lundqvist was a near-unanimous pick as No. 1. "Hank is still the king," Stralman said. But the Canucks' Jacob Markstrom was the starter on Hornqvist's team. Robin Lehner, a Vezina Trophy candidate last year, was a backup on a few of the lists, and Linus Ullmark was on teammate Dahlin's lineup.

Now for the legends.

Nicklas Lidstrom, the Red Wings Hall of Famer, and Daniel Sedin, the recently retired and future Canucks Hall of Famer, were kind enough to give me their lists, too. It was good to get their perspectives, especially Lidstrom's on the blue line. Sedin has played against all of these forwards in his career, too. Sedin picked Adrian Kempe, who played for his hometown club Modo.

Goldman thought it would be fun to see if we could build a salary cap-compliant team of these Swedish stars. So she gave it a shot.

The goal was to feature as many players as possible who were featured on the above lineups. Unfortunately, there had to be some casualties of the cap.

Goldman's lineup brings us to a collective \$80.62 million cap hit. Players like Ekman-Larsson and William Karlsson were cap casualties, which opened up spots for Ekholm and Järnkrok. The ELCs of Dahlin, Rasmus Andersson, Jesper Bratt and Oscar Lindblom helped us balance costs.

We could make tweaks to fit others, of course. To fit Lundqvist and his \$8.5 million cap hit and change the forward depth, an elite defender like Erik Karlsson could be subtracted since the blue line could stay balanced without him. With some reorganization, plus a couple of additions like Hjalmarsson, costs are lowered.

Similarly, removing Elias Lindholm's \$4.85 million hit lets us spread out the forward depth differently. The below chart adds up to \$81.45 million, just below the 2019-20 salary cap.

Another option, said Goldman, would be to create a younger Team Sweden where we make the cutoff players who will be 30 or under at some point before the Stanley Cup is awarded next spring. With this lineup, the most cap space is dedicated to the forward group, with some salary subtractions on defense and in net. This is our most cost-effective iteration, coming in at \$76.65 million.

Who did we miss? These pieces always make for fun debate, so feel free to offer yours in the comment section.

## **Buffalo Sabres Top Six: Keeping an Eye on the Prospects**

By Greg Vorse

Spectrum News

November 7, 2019

The Sabres have been off for a few days as they prep for the Global Series in Sweden, so I figured we'd focus this week's Top Six Observations on the prospects I've kept a close eye on.

### 1) Dylan Cozens

— The seventh overall pick in this year's draft has been dominant for Lethbridge of the WHL. The center has racked up 26 points (12 goals, 14 assists) in just 17 games for the Hurricanes. What might be most impressive is when you look at his game log: he only has two where he didn't score and six times he had a multi-point game. Cozens should push for a roster spot next season.

### 2) Matej Pekar

— Pekar has always been an intriguing prospect after he showed a willingness to throw his body around in development camp while also providing a scoring touch. The 94th pick in 2018 has shown those abilities while in the OHL, netting 13 goals and 9 assists in 16 games for the Barrie Colts. The numbers that stick out the most though are his pair of hat tricks in those 16 games. Oh and that willingness to hit things, Pekar is averaging one penalty per game as well.

### 3) Ukko-Pekka Luukkonen (UPL)

— The goalie returned to the ice last week for the first time since having hip surgery in April, but anytime his name comes up so does the discussion of, "How soon will he start in net for the Sabres?" I believe we are still a couple years away from that, but it is nice to see he's back on the ice, albeit for Cincinnati in the ECHL. UPL has made one rehab start for the Cyclones where he stopped 25 of 28 saves in a loss. Standing 6'5" and 220lbs, UPL is the prototypical goalie for today's NHL and will be that guy for the Amerks later this year and next once he is back in game shape.

### 4) Ryan Johnson

— Johnson isn't going to be the player who fills the stat sheet as a freshman defenseman at Minnesota, but anytime he is tweeted about it's because he started a rush or tracked someone down from behind showing off his offensive skills and speed that made him worth using the 31st pick in the 2019 draft. So far for the Gophers, Johnson does have a pair of assists in eight games which is second among blueliners.

### 5) Lawrence Pilut

— Pilut is currently with the Sabres in Sweden so if he sees ice in the Global Series he could be removed from what I consider the "prospect list." However, he has only played for the Amerks this season after having shoulder surgery in the offseason. While in Rochester, Pilut has tallied one goal and five assists in eight games and continues to display his speed and smarts in his own zone.

### 6) Tage Thompson

— Like Pilut, Thompson is a guy who many wouldn't necessarily consider a prospect, but if you aren't with the big club that's where I put you. Thompson continues to show the scoring prowess for a large forward that made Jason Botterill want him as part of the package for Ryan O'Reilly. Through 12 games with the Amerks the 6'6" winger already has five goals, six assists, and countless toe drags. If the Sabres suffer an injury skid at forward expect Thompson to see time in blue and gold at that point.

## **Dahlin meets idol Lidstrom before Sabres play Lightning in Global Series**

By Nicholas J. Cotsonika

NHL.com

November 8, 2019

STOCKHOLM -- Rasmus Dahlin found a surprise at his locker after the morning skate Friday.

Nicklas Lidstrom.

"I was shaking," Dahlin said. "I felt like a child. Yeah, that was cool."

The Buffalo Sabres defenseman had never met the Hockey Hall of Famer, who won the Stanley Cup four times and the Norris Trophy seven times with the Detroit Red Wings from 1991-2012.

The 19-year-old will play an NHL game in his home country of Sweden for the first time when the Sabres play the Tampa Bay Lightning in the 2019 NHL Global Series on Friday (2 p.m. ET; NBCSN, SN1, NHL.TV).

Lidstrom will be on a rinkside set as an analyst for Viasat television in Sweden during the second game of the series Saturday (1 p.m. ET; NHLN, SN1, SUN, MSG-B, NHL.TV).

They made small talk, with Lidstrom asking Dahlin what he and the team had been doing during the trip. Afterward, Dahlin asked the 49-year-old for a photo in the hall outside the locker room.

How much did Dahlin look up to Lidstrom growing up?

"So much," Dahlin said. "He's the best of all time, so I don't know. That's the guy, I guess."

Lidstrom has been watching Dahlin since 2016-17, when Dahlin debuted with Frolunda of the Swedish Hockey League.

Dahlin had three points (one goal, two assists) in 26 games as a 16-year-old that season, then 20 points (seven goals, 13 assists) in 41 games for Frolunda the following season before the Sabres selected him No. 1 in the 2018 NHL Draft.

He had 44 points (nine goals, 35 assists) in 82 games for Buffalo last season and was a finalist for the Calder Trophy, and has 11 points (one goal, 10 assists) in 15 games this season.

"As a 17-year-old, he looked poised, mature," Lidstrom said. "He looked hungry. He was willing to get up in the play and played with lots of enthusiasm. That's what you saw, and that's what you see in today's game as well. And he's still only 19 years old, so he's still a young player."

"I'm sure he's super excited to first of all be here and be here with his teammates, because when you're playing in North America, it seems like you're far away from home. You know people are watching on TV or following you online, but now you're actually here. Now they can watch you live. He mentioned he had 30-some tickets. He's got family and friends coming in to watch him play."

Dahlin has dealt with things Lidstrom didn't. The Red Wings selected him in the third round (No. 53) of the 1989 NHL Draft. He didn't play in the NHL until he was 21. He wasn't compared to a seven-time Norris winner, either.

Lidstrom was a Calder finalist, but remember: It took him 10 seasons to win the Norris for the first time.

"I wasn't looked upon being a superstar or being a franchise player when I came in," Lidstrom said. "I came in with (Vladimir) Konstantinov, two young defensemen, just kind of looking at rebuilding with the Wings. They had some openings from older defensemen that they let go, and we had a chance to come in and play. Different situation for me, for sure."

"It's different times now, too, with everything in social media and the coverage. People know who you are. It wasn't like that at all when I came in in the early '90s."

What does Lidstrom think of players like Dahlin being compared to him?

"People are looking at me as one of the strong, good defensemen coming out of Sweden, so I feel proud of being mentioned like that too," Lidstrom said.

That's an understatement, of course. But maybe understatement is underused. Any comparison to Lidstrom is a lot on Dahlin's shoulders.

"It is," Lidstrom said. "I've had the fortune to play a lot of years. I've had a lot of success both with the Wings and individual. He's still too young to put with that kind of pressure, I think.

"He still has to learn to play the 200-foot game, as they say. You have to be strong defensively if you want to get matched up against the other teams' top lines. So it takes time. It's not something you can just get thrown into and expect to come out on top all the time.

"But from what I've seen, he's been adapting so quickly to playing at the next level. He showed that when he came three years ago when he played for Frolunda in the highest league in Sweden, and I think he showed it last year too stepping into in the NHL with the big hype, and I think he responded real well.

"So that's one impressive thing with Rasmus, is that he's been able to adapt so quickly to being in new environments."

Dahlin will have to adjust to this one now. He said he will try to treat it like another game. But that will be difficult, especially with the likes of Lidstrom in the building.

"I'm just trying to focus on the game," Dahlin said, "because otherwise I can't play."

## Lightning vs. Sabres preview

By Shawn P. Roarke

NHL.com

November 7, 2019

LIGHTNING (6-5-2) vs. SABRES (9-4-2)

2 p.m. ET; NBCSN, SN1, NHL.TV

### The Game

The Tampa Bay Lightning and the Buffalo Sabres each will be looking to get back on track when they play the first game of the 2019 NHL Global Series at Ericsson Globe in Stockholm.

Tampa Bay is 1-2-1 in its past four games and has failed to win consecutive games in regulation this season.

Buffalo is 1-3-1 in its past five games and has been outscored 15-7.

The game will feature seven Sweden-born players. The Sabres have six: goalie Linus Ullmark, defensemen Rasmus Dahlin and Lawrence Pilut, and forwards Marcus Johansson, Victor Olofsson and Johan Larsson. Defenseman Victor Hedman is the only Sweden-born player for the Lightning.

Hedman, who has missed the past two games after sustaining a lower-body injury on Oct. 29, will play.

The second Global Series game is Saturday.

### Players to watch

Lightning defenseman Kevin Shattenkirk has three assists and seven shots on goal in his past two games, playing an average of 20:28 per game.

Olofsson has six goals this season, all on the power play. He was named Rookie of the Month for October.

### They said it

"I would be lying if I said this was just another regular-season game. It's obviously a little bit different. But at the end of the day, we know it is two big games. I can't wait for tomorrow. -- Lightning defenseman Victor Hedman on balancing the hype of playing division games in Sweden

"I think the work with Rasmus was done last week, not this week, so he was completely aware of what is coming at him and the expectations here in Sweden. He's managing it really well. He's excited to play and that is where he needs to be. He needs to have fun through these two games. ...It will be a wonderful opportunity for Sweden to see him first hand." -- Sabres coach Ralph Krueger on defenseman Rasmus Dahlin playing in his home country

### Lightning projected lineup

Tyler Johnson - Brayden Point -- Nikita Kucherov  
Ondrej Palat - Steven Stamkos - Alexander Volkov  
Alex Killorn -- Anthony Cirelli - Mathieu Joseph  
Pat Maroon -- Cedric Paquette -- Yann Gourde  
Victor Hedman -- Kevin Shattenkirk  
Ryan McDonagh -- Erik Cernak  
Mikhail Sergachev - Luke Schenn  
Andrei Vasilevskiy  
Curtis McElhinney  
Scratched: Braydon Coburn, Carter Verhaeghe, Jan Rutta  
Injured: None

### Sabres projected lineup

Victor Olofsson -- Jack Eichel -- Sam Reinhart  
Jeff Skinner -- Marcus Johansson -- Vladimir Sobotka  
Jimmy Vesey -- Casey Mittelstadt -- Conor Sheary

Zemgus Girgensons -- Johan Larsson -- Kyle Okposo  
Jake McCabe -- Rasmus Ristolainen  
Rasmus Dahlin -- Henri Jokiharju  
Brandon Montour -- Colin Miller  
Linus Ullmark  
Carter Hutton  
Scratched: John Gilmour, Evan Rodrigues, Lawrence Pilut  
Injured: Marco Scandella (lower body), Zach Bogosian (hip)

#### Status report

Krueger said that Scandella was close to returning but won't play this weekend. ...Maroon is likely to return to the lineup after missing the past two games. ... Hedman participated in his second practice in Sweden on Thursday.

#### Stat pack

Palat has two goals and two assists in the past two games. He had three points against the New Jersey Devils on Oct. 30, his first three-point game since 2017. ... Ristolainen is averaging 24:14 per game, 3:10 more than any other player on the Sabres.

## Facts and Figures: 2019 NHL Global Series

By John Kreiser

NHL.com

November 7, 2019

The Buffalo Sabres and Tampa Bay Lightning will participate in the 33rd and 34th NHL regular-season games played outside North America when they play a back-to-back set at the 2019 NHL Global Series at Ericsson Globe in Stockholm. The first game is Friday (2 p.m. ET; NBCSN, SN1, NBC.TV) and the second is Saturday (1 p.m. ET; NHLN, SN1, SUN, MSG-B, NHL.TV).

Here's a look at some of the key numbers in the Global Series:

How they've fared

Buffalo can become the first team to win each of its first three regular-season games played outside North America. The Sabres defeated the Anaheim Ducks 4-1 in Helsinki, Finland, and the Los Angeles Kings 4-2 in Berlin, Germany, to start the 2011-12 season. No one on the Sabres this season was part of that team, but four members are still active in the NHL: forward Tyler Ennis (Ottawa Senators), defensemen Tyler Myers (Vancouver Canucks) and Andrej Sekera (Dallas Stars), and goalie Ryan Miller (Ducks).

The Ducks (3-3-0) and Senators (3-0-1) are the only teams to win three games outside North America.

The Lightning are also making their second overseas trip. Tampa Bay lost back-to-back 2-1 games to the New York Rangers in Prague, Czech Republic to begin the 2008-09 season.

Lightning forward Steven Stamkos is the only member of the 2008 team that played in Prague who's still with Tampa Bay. Stamkos, chosen No. 1 in the 2008 NHL Draft, was making his NHL debut. The other player on the Lightning who's played an NHL game overseas is defenseman Ryan McDonagh, who played two with the Rangers in 2011-12.

The Sabres have six players born in Sweden on their roster: goalie Linus Ullmark (Lugnvik); defensemen Rasmus Dahlin (Lidkoping) and Lawrence Pilut (Tingsryd); and forwards Marcus Johansson (Landskrona), Johan Larsson (Lau) and Victor Olofsson (Ornskoldsvik). The only Sweden-born player on Tampa Bay's roster is defenseman Victor Hedman (Ornskoldsvik).

Dahlin will be 17th NHL teen to play overseas

Dahlin, the No. 1 pick in the 2018 NHL Draft, has the ninth-most regular-season points in NHL history among teenage defensemen (55; 10 goals, 45 assists in 97 games). The 19-year-old is set to become the 17th teenager in NHL history to skate in a regular-season game outside North America. He'll be the seventh defenseman, joining Scott Hannan (San Jose Sharks, Oct. 9, 1998), Dmitry Kulikov (Florida Panthers, Oct. 2-3, 2009), Oliver Ekman-Larsson (Arizona Coyotes, Oct. 9-10, 2010), Cam Fowler (Ducks, Oct. 7-8, 2011), Samuel Girard (Colorado Avalanche, Nov. 10-11, 2017) and Evan Bouchard (Edmonton Oilers, Oct. 6, 2018).

Hannan (two assists) and Girard (one assist) are the only teenage defensemen to have a point in a regular-season NHL game outside North America. The two teens to score a goal in such an NHL game are forwards Tyler Seguin of the Boston Bruins (Oct. 10, 2010) and Patrick Marleau of the Sharks (Oct. 10, 1998)

Stamkos could reach milestone in Stockholm

Eleven years after he was one of five players to make his NHL debut overseas Oct. 4, 2008 (the others were Vladimir Mihalik and Janne Niskala with the Lightning, Paul Bissonnette with the Pittsburgh Penguins and Lauri Korpikoski with the Rangers), Stamkos comes to Stockholm two goals shy of 400 in his NHL career. Should he reach the milestone in Sweden, it would come in his 760th or 761st NHL game, and he would become the 21st-fastest player in NHL history to score 400 regular-season goals.

Regardless of when he gets No. 400, Stamkos is on track to become the second-fastest active NHL player to reach the milestone. Alex Ovechkin of the Washington Capitals scored his 400th goal in his 634th game Dec. 20, 2013.

Stamkos has scored 18 regular-season goals against Buffalo, his eighth-highest total against one team.

Hedman hopes to play for Lightning

The Lightning, off to a 6-5-2 start after tying the NHL single-season record for wins with 62 in 2018-19, hope to have Hedman back in the lineup. He sustained a lower-body injury in Tampa Bay's 4-1 loss at the New York Rangers on Oct. 29 and missed the next two games.

Three Lightning players, Hedman (Oct. 23 against Pittsburgh), Kevin Shattenkirk (Oct. 17 at Boston) and Ondrej Palat (Oct. 30 at New Jersey Devils) have scored a go-ahead goal in the final five minutes of the third period in a game this season. There have been 13 such goals scored in the 236 games played in 2019-20.

## **Dahlin, Hedman say Sabres-Lightning Global Series games dream come true**

By Nicholas J. Cotsonika

NHL.com

November 7, 2019

STOCKHOLM -- The first time Rasmus Dahlin met Victor Hedman, it was at a summer hockey school in Hedman's hometown. Dahlin was a 12-year-old from Lidköping, Sweden. Hedman was a 21-year-old from Ornskoldsvik, Sweden, three years into his NHL career with the Tampa Bay Lightning.

Dahlin got his picture taken with Hedman.

"He's been one of the best since I was a kid," Dahlin said.

Little did Dahlin know that one day he would be pictured with Hedman on a T-shirt, facing off against him on the 2019 NHL Global Series logo even though they're both defensemen, and that kids would be in the stands watching them play an NHL game in their home country.

Dahlin and Hedman global series tshirt

Dahlin and Hedman will be the headliners when the Buffalo Sabres and the Lightning play at Ericsson Globe on Friday (2 p.m. ET; NBCSN, SN1, NHL.TV) and Saturday (1 p.m. ET; NHLN, SN1, SUN, MSG-B, NHL.TV).

Hedman is back in the Lightning lineup after sustaining a lower-body injury against the New York Rangers on Oct. 29.

So barring a setback for Hedman, it will be Dahlin, the Sabres' No. 1 pick of the 2018 NHL Draft against Hedman, the No. 2 pick of the 2009 NHL Draft. It will be a 19-year-old rising star who was a finalist for the Calder Trophy as NHL rookie of the year last season against a 28-year-old established star who has been a finalist for the Norris Trophy as the best defenseman in the NHL three times, winning it in 2018.

It will be a dream come true.

"I'm here in the NHL too, so I can't think about it too much," Dahlin said. "But it's awesome. It's really cool to play against him."

And vice versa.

Dahlin had 44 points (nine goals, 35 assists) in 82 games as a rookie last season and has 11 points (one goal, 10 assists) in 15 games this season. Hedman had 20 points (four goals, 16 assists) in 74 games as a rookie in 2009-10 and has nine points (two goals, seven assists) in 11 games this season.

"He's a great overall guy, the talent is out of this world, and he's producing on a high level to start the season," Hedman said of Dahlin.

"He's just going to become better, and that's pretty scary. So for me, it's all about keep pushing my game and keep competing against those guys. It's awesome, and I enjoy that. That's going to keep pushing me for a long time, hopefully."

This has been a whirlwind for Dahlin, coming home, seeing family and friends, dealing with extra attention.

After the Sabres arrived and practiced Monday, he took a group of his teammates to Max, a Swedish fast-food restaurant. But he has been spending so much time away from the team that his usual road roommate, forward Casey Mittelstadt, said he hasn't seen him much.

When he came off the ice during the Sabres' open practices at Ericsson Globe on Thursday, kids were leaning over the rail, shouting his name.

"I think he's just as excited to be home as the kids are to see him, I think," Mittelstadt said. "He's loving being here. He was super excited to come."

The Sabres made sure to talk to him well ahead of time about the demands and distractions so he would be prepared to perform well in two important Atlantic Division games.

"He's excited to play," Sabres coach Ralph Krueger said. "That's what he needs to be. He needs to have fun through these two games and just play his game. We're keeping it simple, and he is too. It'll be a wonderful opportunity for Sweden to see him firsthand. We feel he's in a really good space here."

Hedman has been through more big NHL events, such as the 2015 Stanley Cup Final and the 2017 NHL All-Star Game.

Still, he has been busy like Dahlin, playing tour guide for his teammates, seeing his family and friends, soaking up every second of this. Kids were shouting his name too. One held a homemade sign with hearts saying he was the best in English and Swedish.

And he has never played an NHL game in Sweden before, either.

"I'm starting to get a little bit nervous, and I usually don't get nervous before games," Hedman said. "But this is a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to come back home and play for the team that I've been a part of for over 10 years. It's going to be an emotional couple of days playing in front of friends and family and the Swedish ... the people and the kids, the boys and girls, that were there for this practice and will be at the game tomorrow.

"It's going to be a lot of fun."

## **Global Series can benefit Lightning, Sabres all season**

By Paul MacLean

NHL.com

November 7, 2019

The Coaches Room is a regular feature throughout the 2019-20 season by one of four former NHL coaches and assistants who will turn their critical gaze to the game and explain it through the lens of a teacher. Paul MacLean, Rob Zettler, Rob Cookson and Randy Carlyle will take turns providing insight.

In this edition, Paul MacLean, former coach of the Ottawa Senators, checks in from Stockholm, where he is conducting coaching clinics in conjunction with the 2019 NHL Global Series, where the Tampa Bay Lightning will play the Buffalo Sabres at Ericsson Globe on Friday (2 p.m. ET; NBCSN, SN1, NHL.TV) and Saturday (1 p.m. ET; NHLN, SN1, SUN, MSG-B, NHL.TV).

MacLean examines how the trip could have long-term positive impacts for each team.

Sweden is a long way to come to play two NHL games, and these four available points will be important to the Sabres and Lightning.

As a coach in this situation, there are a lot of positives that can be found in such a drastic change in routine.

A trip like this can be used as a time for your team to come together. It's a little bit of a different road trip than your typical trip in North America. There, players have people around that they're close to and they have their routines on the road of where they go and what they do in each city. When they come here, it's brand new.

So it's really an opportunity for the leaders of your team to take charge of the group and get them out and see the city and come together a bit more, which is not something that would normally happen on a road trip.

Coming over here has also given them the advantage of having a practice block, which can also be a rarity during the season. Each team will have had at last three straight practice sessions to teach and work on systems, which almost never happens once the season begins. Each team has been taking advantage of that time to get some things sorted out in its game.

I think Tampa Bay needs to address being more consistent. The Lightning (6-5-2) have been a bit up and down; starting games really well and going into ebbs and flows. They have not been as good at consistently getting to a high level and staying there. Their game is fluctuating quite a bit.

Their game tends to slide when the defensive side of the game starts to get loose and there's not enough work being done to get the puck back when they lose it. That puts a lot of pressure on the goalie and the defensive structure. I think they have done a good job of recognizing what they need to do; getting on the ice here and recognizing the work without the puck is what needs to be addressed.

The strength of the Lightning is puck possession and they have to play to that. Let's face it, if you have the puck, you don't have to defend. The biggest part of Tampa Bay's success last season was it had the puck all the time. The Lightning won face-offs, created turnovers and controlled the neutral zone so well last season, creating chaos for the opposition and opportunities for them. They haven't gotten their game back to that point, and that's what they've been trying to implement here this week.

Buffalo has had a great start to the season. Ralph Krueger has come in as the coach and really given this team an identity and given them a reason to play together.

I think the Sabres (9-4-2) have always had a really good collection of players as far as draft picks, skill level and the ability to play the game. They just haven't been able to put the square pegs in the squares and the round pegs in the holes and get it sorted out. I think Ralph has done a great job with that.

Buffalo has had a great start to the season; last season, they won 10 in a row, but ended up missing the Stanley Cup Playoffs. They've been playing well, but can they sustain it? That's the job the Buffalo staff has now, to get that consistency into the team's game.

In practice, the Sabres have been trying to establish an every-day work ethic necessary to be a good team in the NHL. You work at it and you'll get better at it.

For me, the best thing that Ralph has done for the Sabres so far is he has allowed center Jack Eichel, forward Jeff Skinner and his skill players to be themselves and just go out and play. He has encouraged them to be responsible and make good decisions. He has brought the attitude that a player is able to play for himself, but also understanding the result of the game is more important than the result of the player; That's an important step for the group.

But has and what will be accomplished on this trip will go far deeper for each team than how the two games here turn out. The overseas experience and principles stressed here in the practice blocks will impact each team long after they return to North America and get back into the grind of the regular season.

## NHL experts on first-month surprises to buy or sell

ESPN

November 8, 2019

We're a little more than one month into a 2019-20 NHL season that has included some major surprises, including the Buffalo Sabres in a playoff spot, the Edmonton Oilers leading their division, Darcy Kuemper leading all netminders in save percentage and goals-against average, and the San Jose Sharks ... well, the less said about their start the better.

To help digest some of these trends, we convened our panel to buy or sell a baker's dozen of hot takes based on the results after one month:

### **2. The Sabres and Oilers will both make the playoffs.**

It's no secret: The Oilers are off to a phenomenal start, and it appears we'll get a serving of Connor McDavid and Leon Draisaitl in the playoffs. Jonathan Kozub/NHLI via Getty Images

Kaplan: Sell that it'll be both. I feel stronger about the Oilers than I do the Sabres. Edmonton is too dependent on their top players to score. But the production Leon Draisaitl, Connor McDavid and James Neal have put up is too absurd, and they could drag this team in.

Peters: Buy the Oilers. Sell the Sabres. The Pacific Division is so tight right now, but I'm not sure how good it is. The Oilers have enough to keep above the fray, assuming their top three scorers stay healthy. It's a precarious situation for them. The Sabres, meanwhile, have shown a few cracks lately. I don't know if they have the depth defensively to keep pace with a division I expect to improve.

Filipovic: Sell. It's scary to bet against McDavid and Draisaitl, but the early wins the Oilers have been piling up have regression written all over them. They've been awfully fortunate to go 6-1-2 in one-goal games, they're somehow getting top-10 goaltending out of Mike Smith and Mikko Koskinen, and I can count on one hand the number of goals they've been able to squeeze out of their bottom six.

DiPietro: Sell. Buffalo is clearly headed in the right direction, but I'm not sure this is going to be the season. The Pacific hasn't been good, and the Oilers have arguably the most dynamic offensive duo in the NHL with McDavid and Draisaitl. Mike Smith is off to a great start in net with a .931 save percentage. If the goaltending holds up, the Oilers have a good chance.

Matiash: Sell. Based on the strength of the competition in the Atlantic, the Sabres are in a tough spot. The scene in the Pacific Division isn't nearly as menacing for the Oilers.

Arledge: Sell that both will be there. I think the Oilers will slide into the postseason if the eventual Smith/Koskinen implosion doesn't completely derail them, given the weakness of the Pacific Division and their hot start. But Buffalo is still a year away in the stacked Atlantic.

Chandan: Buy Edmonton. Sell Buffalo. I expect Buffalo to have trouble in a crowded Atlantic, but Edmonton has shown that it has the firepower, and if the goalie tandem can continue to maintain enough of its performance (.890 save percentage on high-danger shots), I can see this team claiming a spot in the West.

## **To the editor: Sabres' season could really be Golden**

By Austin Sauer

Niagara Gazette

November 7, 2019

With the Sabres season rolling, and a rather optimistic start, there seems to be new signs of hope developing in the 716. There is an excitement that hasn't been felt since the days of the slug jerseys, the days when Lindy Ruff was behind the bench and Ryan Miller was making huge saves. But those days are long gone.

For the past decade, being a Sabres fan has been pretty painful. Through various players, coaches and general managers, the winning formula just seemed to never be discovered.

Well, early on this season, it seems a winning formula may be in the works.

Let's start with the addition of new head coach, Ralph Krueger. Krueger has been in the soccer world for the past four years with Southampton FC, which caused some people to question the hire. However, anyone who knew Krueger raved about how great of a hire this was for Buffalo. So far, Krueger has earned his paycheck. For the first time in a long time, Sabres are playing with purpose and structure. It seems as if the players are carrying out a game plan, which was something that seemed to be missing over the past many years.

Speaking of players, some new additions this year have revitalized the Buffalo lineup. Depth scoring has always seemed to be an issue, but that issue started getting addressed this offseason. With the trade for Jimmy Vesey and the free agent signing of Marcus Johansson, the middle six of this lineup has some needed new faces trying to net some more goals.

The Sabres also went out and strengthened their blue line. They acquired Colin Miller from Vegas and promising rookie Henri Jokiharju from Chicago. Jokiharju has played very well, especially with being so young, and will continue to develop. Miller started playing alongside 19-year-old franchise defenseman Rasmus Dahlin, allowing Dahlin to really flourish due to Miller's solid all-around game.

They also brought up arguably Rochester's best player from last year. His name is Victor Oloffson and if you don't know of him yet, get used to the name. Known for his rocket of a shot, Oloffson has also displayed excellent hockey IQ and passing ability. Not to mention he started playing on the first line and power play alongside Sam Reinhart and Jack Eichel, which meant plenty of early points and Rookie of the Year conversations. His production thus far is mostly on the power play, but the even strength goals will come as he gets more comfortable.

There could be more reinforcements on the way, as the Sabres also have guys in the minors waiting for the call up who are more than ready to go. One of them is Tage Thompson, who had a huge summer that led many to believe he should have made the Sabres out of camp. He has already started scoring in the minors, so it may only be a matter of time before we see the big number 72 back in Buffalo.

One of the most important factors in the Sabres doing well this year and maybe getting back in the playoffs is goaltending, just like every other team. If you are not getting good play from one or both of your goalies, good luck. Carter Hutton has looked very sharp out of the gate and Linus Ullmark has done very well in his games as well. However, both looked very good early on last year as well, and we all know how that ended.

Goaltending is huge for any team trying to get to the playoffs, and it will be no different for Buffalo this year. They have a promising goalie prospect in Ukko-Pekka Luukkonen, though he is still rehabbing from hip surgery and will most likely have to spend the year in the minors anyway. But if things got very desperate, UPL could possibly get a chance this year.

All in all, Sabres have a good amount of talent that is being coached by a guy who has a plan. Playoffs are certainly in sight this year, though being in a stacked Atlantic Division means will have to be well over .500 to even just get a wild card spot. Either way, the future is very bright and there is finally some light at the end of the tunnel. Hopefully the Golden Season lives up to its name.

## **Sabres ready for Global Series matchup against Lightning**

By Chris Ryndak

Sabres.com

November 8, 2019

STOCKHOLM, SWEDEN - The Buffalo Sabres last played on Saturday, Nov. 2 and have had five days between games. Tonight, they'll finally take the ice again at Ericsson Globe in Stockholm as part of the 2019 NHL Global Series.

Buffalo will play the Tampa Bay Lightning in what will be an 8 p.m. faceoff in Sweden, but a 2 p.m. start time back in the United States. Fans can catch the game on NBCSN. Rick Jeanneret and Rob Ray will be live at (716) Food and Sport for the radio broadcast on WGR 550.

The Global Series is designed to bring regular-season NHL hockey to European markets, where games in North America typically don't start until 1 or 2 in the morning.

The Sabres have embraced their roles as league ambassadors for the trip and it's a position that coach Ralph Krueger hasn't taken lightly. He looks at Tampa Bay, for example, as one of the top teams in the league that have gotten many opportunities like this over the years on both the national and international stage.

He hopes the Sabres can continue to work towards being regulars at events like the Global Series.

"This event, for sure, is excellent for the team. All the distractions and the white noise - which again, are positive, not negative - you need to be able to still bring it in when that puck drops tonight," he said. "To be 100 percent focused then on the execution we need to have is a challenge. But I feel the group is able to manage it well and is up to it.

"We have a good feeling about the spirit of the team and the focus on what we need to be doing tonight. So, let the evolution of our team continue with an event like this."

Outside of the X's and O's, captain Jack Eichel believes that this trip has helped the team become a stronger group off the ice.

"I've gotten to some guys a little bit better on this trip and it's really great for our team moving forward," he said. "The relationships we build off the ice will contribute to on-ice success. It's been a good experience in terms of getting to know each other better and just spending time together and bonding."

However, it's now time for the players to turn their attention to the task at hand - a back-to-back set against the Lightning, who are 6-5-2 on the season and working to climb their way back into a playoff position.

"You've been waiting and waiting. It's nice to get a game day and get in the routine. You start thinking about how important this game is," Johan Larsson said. "We had a couple days, we've been enjoying it. Now it's time to go to work."

### Projected lineup

Linus Ullmark will start between the pipes for Buffalo. He's one of five Swedish players, including Larsson, Victor Olofsson, Marcus Johansson and Rasmus Dahlin, the Sabres are expected to dress tonight. Lawrence Pilut will serve as a healthy scratch.

The Tampa Bay Lightning have one Swedish player on their roster: Victor Hedman, the Norris Trophy winning-defenseman. He's been dealing with a lower-body injury that has caused him to miss Tampa Bay's last two games, but he is expected to play tonight.

68 Victor Olofsson - 9 Jack Eichel - 23 Sam Reinhart  
53 Jeff Skinner - 90 Marcus Johansson - 17 Vladimir Sobotka  
28 Zemgus Girgensons - 22 Johan Larsson - 21 Kyle Okposo  
13 Jimmy Vesey - 37 Casey Mittelstadt - 43 Conor Sheary

19 Jake McCabe - 55 Rasmus Ristolainen  
62 Brandon Montour - 33 Colin Miller  
26 Rasmus Dahlin - 10 Henri Jokiharju

35 Linus Ullmark  
40 Carter Hutton

#### International notes

According to NHL.com, Buffalo can become the first team to win each of its first three regular-season games played outside North America. The Sabres defeated the Anaheim Ducks 4-1 in Helsinki, Finland, and the Los Angeles Kings 4-2 in Berlin, Germany, to start the 2011-12 season.

NHL.com also notes that Dahlin, the No. 1 pick in the 2018 NHL Draft, has the ninth-most regular-season points in NHL history among teenage defensemen (55; 10 goals, 45 assists in 97 games).

The 19-year-old is set to become the 17th teenager in NHL history to skate in a regular-season game outside North America. He'll be the seventh defenseman, joining Scott Hannan (San Jose Sharks, Oct. 9, 1998), Dmitry Kulikov (Florida Panthers, Oct. 2-3, 2009), Oliver Ekman-Larsson (Arizona Coyotes, Oct. 9-10, 2010), Cam Fowler (Ducks, Oct. 7-8, 2011), Samuel Girard (Colorado Avalanche, Nov. 10-11, 2017) and Evan Bouchard (Edmonton Oilers, Oct. 6, 2018).

Hannan (two assists) and Girard (one assist) are the only teenage defensemen to have a point in a regular-season NHL game outside North America. The two teens to score a goal in such an NHL game are forwards Tyler Seguin of the Boston Bruins (Oct. 10, 2010) and Patrick Marleau of the Sharks (Oct. 10, 1998).

## European fans show strong support at Sabres open practice in Sweden

By Chris Ryndak

Sabres.com

November 7, 2019

STOCKHOLM, SWEDEN - The NHL is in Sweden and hockey fans are ready for it.

Fans filled sections of Ericsson Globe to watch the Buffalo Sabres and Tampa Bay Lightning practice and take part in a mini-skills challenge Thursday afternoon. The Sabres have six Swedish players on the trip - Rasmus Dahlin, Linus Ullmark, Marcus Johansson, Johan Larsson, Victor Olofsson and Lawrence Pilut - and they certainly received some of the biggest cheers during Buffalo's practice.

"For us, it's really an amazing experience coming over here. I hope the fans over here and the kids that are here feel the same way," Olofsson said. "I hope we can bring some excitement and some joy coming over. We're super excited and hopefully they are as well."

Jack Eichel and Jake McCabe compared the environment to open practices the Sabres have held over the past few years, where thousands of fans have attended.

"It was great. There were so many kids and it's obviously such a passionate hockey country," Eichel said. "It was really cool. I thought it was a great experience. It's a great opportunity to try and grow the game."

Ready for Tampa

Being the first-overall pick in the NHL Draft in 2018 and one of the most-hyped prospects in several years, Dahlin has had to get used to the spotlight shining brightly on him. He's enjoyed being back in his home country so far, but is set to get back to work.

"I can't wait for tomorrow," Dahlin said. "We're here because we're going to play games and they're important points we're playing for. We're as ready as we can [be]."

Sabres coach Ralph Krueger and his staff have put great efforts into making sure the players were ready both physically and mentally for this trip.

"Our training staff and the people working for the Sabres have done such a great job of giving us all the tools to make the transition as quick as possible and seamlessly - trying to give us an advantage tomorrow and Saturday," Eichel said.

When asked about any conversations he might have with Dahlin, in particular, over the next few days, given all the possible distractions he's facing, Krueger said that he majority of that work was done last week in the preparation stages.

"He's managing it really well. He's excited to play and that's what he needs to be - he needs to have fun through these two games and just play his game," Krueger said. "We're keeping it simple and he is too. It'll be a wonderful opportunity for Sweden to see him firsthand and we feel he's in a really good space here."

The focus during the week in Sweden has been on getting the players physically acclimated to the time change and managing their rest.

"We're just trying to let the players play with what they've learned to date and get them and their energy back up. I think that's what Sweden has done more than anything," Krueger said. "We've got a bit of a pause that's not normal in the National Hockey League. What it's done is charged up the energy of the players, the batteries are full. We're expecting a real high battle level from both teams."

"Tampa's certainly feeling the same thing as we are and that was our primary focus here - let's get refreshed in our minds, refreshed in our bodies and let's use this space to really show the best Sabres hockey possible this weekend."

Friday's game is an 8 p.m. start in Stockholm, which will be a 2 p.m. faceoff back in Buffalo. Fans in the U.S. can catch the game on NBCSN and WGR 550. Rick Jeanneret and Rob Ray will be calling the game from (716) Food and Sport.

"There's a lot going on around the game and it's quite the production. The NHL has done a tremendous job of showcasing this quick series. But at the end of the day, there are four points up for grabs and it's a divisional game," Eichel said. "You have to get back into mid-season form and that mid-season mindset of it's too big games and you've got to be ready to go."

Both Eichel and McCabe mentioned that the trip has given everyone on the team the opportunity to get to know each other better. While the Sabres' roster hasn't changed too much from last season, some of the players that have been acquired

"There are some new guys here so it's nice to have a couple days to do some fun team activities and you get to know the guys in a little bit more relaxed setting rather than, I guess, our work environment," McCabe said. "It's really been great. I think guys have really enjoyed it, but with that being said I think we've very excited to start playing some games again and get on with our season."

#### Thursday's practice

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