



Buffalo Sabres

Daily Press Clips

February 18, 2020

Sabres suspend Zach Bogosian for failing to report to minors

By John Wawrow

Associated Press

February 17, 2020

BUFFALO, N.Y. (AP) — The Buffalo Sabres suspended defenseman Zach Bogosian on Monday for failing to report to the minors.

The team announced the suspension two days after the 12-year NHL veteran cleared waivers and was assigned to Buffalo's American Hockey League affiliate in Rochester, New York.

The Sabres declined further comment.

In a text to The Associated Press, Bogosian's agent, Darren Ferris, wrote: "We are aware of the notice of suspension and will not be providing a comment at this time."

Bogosian's options are limited, and he now risks losing out on what's left of the \$6 million he is owed in the final year of his contract.

The developments come a little over a week before the NHL's trade deadline on Feb. 24, and some three months after Bogosian requested to be traded.

The chances of the Sabres finding a trade partner were already slim in part because of the value of his contract. Another issue is Bogosian's lack of playing time.

He missed the first 22 games of the season while recovering from his second hip operation in three years. He was a healthy scratch in seven of Buffalo's eight games before being placed on waivers.

Bogosian has a goal and four assists in 19 games this season, and 53 goals and 141 assists in 636 career games. He was acquired by Buffalo in February 2015 in a multiplayer trade with the Winnipeg Jets.

In separate moves, Buffalo recalled forward Scott Wilson from the minors and demoted goalie Andrew Hammond.

The Sabres also signed minor league forward Taylor Leier to a one-year, \$700,000 two-way contract, making him eligible to be called up to Buffalo this season. Leier has seven goals and an assist in 17 games with Rochester this season.

The Sabres have won three straight and play at Ottawa on Tuesday night.

Eichel and the Sabres visit the Senators

Associated Press

February 17, 2020

Buffalo Sabres (27-24-8, fifth in the Atlantic Division) vs. Ottawa Senators (20-28-11, seventh in the Atlantic Division)

Ottawa, Ontario; Tuesday, 7 p.m. EST

BOTTOM LINE: Jack Eichel and Buffalo square off against Ottawa. He currently ranks sixth in the in the NHL with 74 points, scoring 33 goals and recording 41 assists.

The Senators are 7-8-5 against the rest of their division. Ottawa leads the league with 12 shorthanded goals, led by Chris Tierney with four.

The Sabres are 10-11-2 against the rest of their division. Buffalo has surrendered 41 power-play goals, killing 75.2% of opponent opportunities.

In their last meeting on Jan. 28, Ottawa won 5-2.

TOP PERFORMERS: Jean-Gabriel Pageau leads the Senators with 36 points, scoring 22 goals and collecting 14 assists. Brady Tkachuk has recorded 8 points over the last 10 games for Ottawa.

Eichel leads the Sabres with 33 goals and has 74 points. Rasmus Dahlin has totaled one goal and six assists over the last 10 games for Buffalo.

LAST 10 GAMES: Sabres: 5-4-1, averaging 2.6 goals, 4.1 assists, two penalties and 4.2 penalty minutes while allowing 2.7 goals per game with a .906 save percentage.

Senators: 3-5-2, averaging 2.3 goals, 3.6 assists, 3.1 penalties and seven penalty minutes while giving up 2.9 goals per game with a .914 save percentage.

INJURIES: Senators: Mark Borowiecki: day to day (personal).

Sabres: Carter Hutton: day to day (undisclosed).

Sabres suspend Zach Bogosian for failure to report to Rochester

By Mike Harrington

The Buffalo News

February 17, 2020

Zach Bogosian's status in the Buffalo Sabres' organization got a whole lot messier Monday afternoon.

The veteran defenseman has been suspended by the team after refusing to report to the Rochester Amerks. Bogosian, who has not played a minor-league game since 2009, was assigned to Rochester on Saturday after clearing waivers.

The Sabres announced the suspension in a terse two-sentence tweet and the club said: "There will be no further information or comment at this time."

Said Bogosian's agent, Darren Ferris, in a text message to The Buffalo News: "We are aware of the notice of suspension and will not be providing a comment at this time."

The suspension means Bogosian's entire cap hit of \$5.14 million is off the Sabres' books, which could give General Manager Jason Botterill a huge amount of flexibility heading into the NHL trade deadline next Monday. The Sabres had already reduced the hit by \$1.075 million with the minor-league assignment.

Bogosian was reportedly caught off guard by the AHL assignment, even though he was a healthy scratch in eight of the last nine games he was on the Buffalo roster. Two sources told The News that the Massena native flew home to the Thousand Islands region over the weekend, and one said Bogosian had no interest in playing in the AHL.

The Sabres can now negotiate a mutual termination of Bogosian's contract or continue the suspension to keep him off their cap. They also could keep working on a trade in advance of the deadline, although it's unlikely there is much interest in Bogosian at his current cap hit and the Sabres would not be interested in retaining any of his salary to make a deal.

Kyle Okposo is happy his 500th point was key goal in Sabres' victory

By Mike Harrington

The Buffalo News

February 17, 2020

While the Buffalo Sabres are clinging to longshot hopes of getting deep into the playoff race, there will be plenty of individual milestones to simultaneously play for.

One was crossed Sunday night as veteran winger Kyle Okposo notched the 500th point of his career with a third-period goal that put the Sabres into a two-goal lead en route to a 5-2 win over Toronto.

"It's something that obviously is a nice milestone, a nice accomplishment," Okposo said after practice Monday before the team headed to Ottawa for a game Tuesday against the Senators. "I'll probably look back more when I'm done at these things. I'm honestly just happy the game went the way that it did and we were able to get a big team win."

Okposo has 193 career goals and leads all Sabres in career assists (307) and points. The only current Buffalo player with more career goals is Jeff Skinner (255).

Okposo became the 486th player in NHL history to reach 500 points and it's certainly a mark he had to wonder at times if he would ever reach. He's had well-documented concussion troubles in recent years, including the fourth of his career earlier this season, and just came back from a six-game absence due to an unrelated upper-body injury.

He has just six goals this season after averaging 16 over his first three seasons with the Sabres. And his current point total of 13 is almost certainly going to end as a career low for a full season after he's averaged 39 the last three years.

Still, Okposo has found solace in his defensive game while playing with Zemgus Girgensons and Johan Larsson on a line that's given opponents fits with the way all three players can cycle the puck deep in the offensive zone.

Okposo has a minus-3 rating this year, just two seasons removed from a ghastly minus-34. And he has a 49.7% Corsi rating at even strength. Both figures are notable for the fact he's faced 62% of his zone starts in the defensive zone, by far the most of his career.

Coach Ralph Krueger has grown to trust the Larsson line implicitly in key spots, especially in its own end.

"It's been a really rewarding year for me on that end with how we've played as a line, how we've jelled and created momentum for our team," Okposo said. "I think we're a better team when our line is playing well and going and we've been doing that most of the year. It's definitely nice to have two guys to play with who play the right way and are predictable. It's been a lot of fun rolling with those guys this year."

"Kyle is a guy that you know where he's going to be all times," Girgensons said recently. "He works so hard every shift and is such a good veteran to have that it really makes a difference for our line."

Okposo's goal came as he outworked Toronto forward Alex Kerfoot in the neutral zone and then abused defenseman Rasmus Sandin, tipping the puck around the rookie to claim it and beating goalie Frederik Andersen high to the top left corner.

"Until I got by Kerfoot, it was kind of a moot point who was back there," Okposo said. "Once I got by him, then I just kind of looked up and saw (Sandin) was reaching. I don't know. Probably shouldn't do that in this league. A young kid. I just tried to make a move and go around him."

Larsson and Okposo both scored in the game as the Sabres took the season series from the Leafs, 2-1-1.

"All four lines, all three D pairs contributed offensively," Krueger said. "They were all plus in scoring chances throughout the game."

Larsson, who missed practice Monday due to a maintenance day, and Girgensons are both unrestricted free agents. It remains to be seen if either will be moved by the Sabres at the trade deadline.

"It's never an easy time. It's a bit of an unsettling time as a player," Okposo said. "It's one thing that's different about this business. You watch friends, colleagues come and go. It's definitely a tough part about the business, but that's not what our focus is on.

"Our focus is on Ottawa. We didn't get anything in the offensive zone the last game. They really suffocated us and didn't give us a lot of time and space. We're going to have to work tomorrow night. It's going to be grab your lunch pail and go to work."

Sabres could find charged atmosphere in Ottawa after Chris Phillips jersey retirement

By Mike Harrington
The Buffalo News
February 17, 2020

The Buffalo Sabres have lost their last two meetings with the Ottawa Senators and face an unusual challenge when they visit Canadian Tire Centre on Tuesday night.

Attendance woes have plagued the Sens this season but they're not likely to be nearly as pronounced Tuesday as Ottawa is planning a large pregame ceremony to retire the No. 4 jersey worn by longtime defenseman Chris Phillips.

The ceremonies mean faceoff for the game against the Sabres will be pushed back to 7:52 p.m.

"That's going to be a mental test for us from the pregame skate being normal to a delayed start due to a very well-deserved recognition of Phillips," Sabres coach Ralph Krueger said after practice Monday. "Let us find our proper path to what we need to do."

Phillips, 41, played a club-record 1,179 games for the Senators from 1997-2015 after being taken with the No. 1 overall pick in the 1996 draft out of Prince Albert in the Western Hockey League.

He finished his career with 71 goals, 288 points and 756 penalty minutes, and was a key member of the 2006 and 2007 Ottawa clubs that met the Sabres in memorable playoff series. The '07 Sens lost to Anaheim in the Stanley Cup Final after beating the Sabres in five games in the Eastern Conference final.

The Sabres posted a 4-2 win over Ottawa on Nov. 16 in KeyBank Center as Jack Eichel had his first career four-goal game. They suffered a 3-1 loss Dec. 23 in Ottawa and then fell to the Sens again, 5-2, here on Jan. 28.

"How we've done in the past against them should only motivate us to see that when Ottawa plays a good game and they're on their game, they're dangerous," Krueger said. "If there's one thing I credit them with, is they do work hard. They do not quit, they try their best and they're dangerous if you let them be. And that's what we're concentrating on with all the extracurricular activities. But so far, our team's done well when there's been noise in the building, and there's going to be noise in that building."

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Sabres goalie Carter Hutton missed his second consecutive practice Monday due to a maintenance day. Center Johan Larsson sat out for a similar reason, but Krueger said both should be ready for the game. Michael Frolik (flu) continues to be dogged by illness and did not travel to Ottawa.

Hutton has won his last four starts, posting a 2.23 goals-against average and .926 save percentage in those games. He stopped 20 of 22 shots in Sunday's win over Toronto.

"The maintenance is always a wide-open situation," Krueger said. "But we feel comfortable with him dealing with this maintenance here today. It's something that we expect to go away."

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In a move that could be a precursor to a deal involving one of their current forwards, the Sabres signed Rochester Amerks left winger Taylor Leier to a one-year, two-way contract worth \$700,000. Leier, who was on an AHL contract, will be assigned to Rochester once he clears waivers.

Leier, 26, has seven goals and one assist in 17 games for the Amerks this season. He had 12 goals and 23 points in 35 games for Rochester last year after arriving in a trade from Philadelphia for Williamsville native Justin Bailey.

Leier underwent surgery to repair a torn labrum on June 3 after an accident while stickhandling on roller blades at a tennis court near his home in Saskatoon, Saskatchewan. He didn't play this season until December.

The Sabres have several forwards who are unrestricted free agents and could move at next week's trade deadline, including wingers Frolik, Jimmy Vesey, Conor Sheary and Zemgus Girgensons. The contract puts Leier in position for a call-up if a trade goes down.

Krueger on the trade deadline now being less than a week away: "I haven't felt or heard anything that has distracted us. Now, that could change as we hit the weekend after the Ottawa game when it will be more of a reality. But at the moment I have to say it's not in our room at all."

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The Sabres' three goals in a 91-second span of the third period in Sunday's 5-2 win over Toronto were their fastest since Brian Holzinger, Matthew Barnaby and Vaclav Varada scored in a 68-second span during a 5-4 win over Boston on April 3, 1998.

Eichel opened the barrage with a power-play goal, the 14th goal of his career against Toronto in 17 games. His rate of 0.84 goals per game against the Leafs surpassed surpassed Washington's Alex Ovechkin (0.82) as the most per game among any active player against Toronto (minimum five games played).

Eichel's figure is sixth in the expansion era among players with at least 10 games against the Leafs. He's behind only Blaine Stoughton and Mario Lemieux (0.94), Wayne Gretzky (0.87), Cam Neely (0.84) and Ulf Nilsson (0.83).

Sabres sign Amerks winger Taylor Leier to NHL contract

By Mike Harrington

The Buffalo News

February 17, 2020

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Sabres sign Taylor Leier to NHL deal

By Brayton Wilson

WGR 550

February 17, 2020

The Buffalo Sabres announced on Monday that the team has signed forward Taylor Leier to a two-way contract for the remainder of the 2019-20 season.

The 26-year-old has appeared in 17 games for the Rochester Americans this season in the American Hockey League, scoring seven goals and registering one assist. Leier missed the first two months of the season after undergoing offseason surgery, and has missed some time during this season due to other injuries.

Leier was acquired last season from the Philadelphia Flyers in exchange for forward Justin Bailey on Jan. 17, 2019. In 35 games last season with the Amerks, Leier was able to produce 12 goals and amass 11 assists for 23 points.

The Sabres placed Leier on waivers on Monday, which means he will need to clear waivers by noon on Tuesday in order to be eligible to be called up to Buffalo.

Leier was a former fourth round pick (117th overall) in the 2012 NHL Draft.

Miller returning to form with the Sabres

By Brayton Wilson

WGR 550

February 17, 2020

Earlier in the 2019-20 season, Buffalo Sabres defenseman Colin Miller found himself in and out of the lineup as a healthy scratch with a number of NHL caliber defensemen on the roster. With him being shuffled in and out of the lineup, there was even some talk starting to grow surrounding his future in Buffalo and whether he could be traded less than a full season into his first year with the organization.

However, his play as of late has forced head coach Ralph Krueger to consistently put Miller in the lineup, which has since silenced some of the questions surrounding his future with the Sabres.

This season, the 27-year-old has appeared in 43 games, scoring a goal and registering 10 assists for 11 points. Since the turn of the calendar year, Miller has started to play particularly better and more consistently, picking up five assists in 14 games.

Despite finding himself in-and-out of the lineup from time-to-time this season, the veteran defenseman is happy to be finding some more consistent playing time as he has started to solidify his role as a top-six defenseman on this roster.

"It was frustrating, but we had a lot of defensemen that they were trying to figure out pairings and rolls and all of that," Miller said following Monday's practice at KeyBank Center. "It's just not anything that you can really control there. You just have to keep coming to the rink and working hard and doing what you can."

The Sabres acquired the 27-year-old defenseman this past offseason from the Vegas Golden Knights to bring in some much needed veteran depth and skill on the blue line. In his five-year career in the National Hockey League with the Golden Knights and the Boston Bruins, Miller has put together some decent numbers with 23 career goals and 110 points in 293 games.

Miller is on pace to finish the 2019-20 season with two goals and 15 assists in 66 games, which would be his lowest point total since his years with the Bruins, but he feels that his game is getting better as the season continues to progress.

"I think it's more consistency," Miller said. "The more games you're in, the more games you're playing and stuff like that, the more rhythm and stuff we have. So I think on the back end, we have some good consistency right now with the [defensive] pairings, so hopefully it continues."

On Sunday night, Miller ended up registering his first multi-point effort with the Sabres this season, picking up two assists on a pair of second period goals in a 5-2 win over the Toronto Maple Leafs at KeyBank Center.

His recent pace of play on the blue line has not gone unnoticed by his head coach, who has Miller averaging just over 17 minutes per-game.

"He started the season in a comfortable position. We didn't have the competition that we had, and it was a tough grind in the middle there, where we were eight-plus defensemen fighting for spots," Krueger said following Monday's practice. "We did a lot of 7-11s, and it was not easy being a defenseman in our lineup. You had to have a very good game all the time to stay in there. I think just the comfort of now being one of the top-six and knowing that the confidence is there makes him calmer in his game both defensively and offensively. He's been excellent in adding some punch, a surprising punch at times, and we all know his shot is a lethal weapon that we need to use more in our game. Yesterday was a great example, off those two shots of getting two goals, of how dangerous Colin can be. But again, I'm going to come back to the importance of our game without the puck. It's all about the pressure and the gapping, and what you need to do to be in this lineup, not only now but for the future, and he's working really hard on those fundamentals, which don't come easy, and it demands a lot from the players game-in and game-out. We like the way Colin has been evolving on both sides of the puck."

Miller has been a guy that has found himself moving around on the blue line quite a bit this offseason, filling in several different roles along with different partners. He's found himself playing plenty of time on the second

power play unit as the quarterback on the blue line, while also getting some time in critical situations in the defensive end.

As of late, Miller has found himself playing his best hockey at even strength on a pairing with 19-year-old Rasmus Dahlin. The pair have been able to drive the play into the opposition's end, while also providing some solid play in the defensive end and holding things down at bay.

Both Miller and Dahlin had gotten some playing time with one another earlier in the season, and now they both enjoy playing with one another and feeding off each other's play.

"We help each other a lot out there," Dahlin said after Monday's practice. "He's a great two-way [defenseman], he likes to have the puck on the blue line, he likes to shoot. I like to pass, and we have a really good gap together. We trust each other out there, and we just got to build on this and try to get better."

"He's fun to play with," Miller said. "Obviously he's so skilled and he's mature beyond his years, so we just try to compliment each other well and I think we've been doing a good job up-ice. As long as we take care of our own end, then it seems to work out."

With 23 games left in the season, it's crunch time for the Sabres if they want to have any hopes of making the Stanley Cup Playoffs. Buffalo currently sits at 27-24-8 with 62 points in the standings, which is eight points behind the Maple Leafs for third place in the Atlantic Division. The team has won three straight games since their 3-2 loss to the Anaheim Ducks last week Sunday, and will be looking to extend their win streak to four games on Tuesday night against the Ottawa Senators at the Canadian Tire Centre. Buffalo has yet to have a win streak of more than three games this season.

Miller believes that if the Sabres are to continue to have success as a group, the defense has to continue to do its job to help chip in offensively whenever it can.

"I think offensively as a whole, our team has done a really good job of moving it low-to-high to the [defense]," Miller said. "A lot of the [defense] has been open and getting shots through. The forwards have done a good job in front too."

At practice on Monday, the Sabres announced the forward Johan Larsson and goalie Carter Hutton were given the day off for maintenance days, but both will travel with the team for Tuesday night's matchup with the Senators. Krueger expects both players to be fine and play on Tuesday.

However, forward Michael Frolik missed another day of practice due to an illness and he will not be able to travel with the team.

The team also made some news on Monday with the signing of Rochester Americans forward Taylor Leier to a two-way contract for the remainder of the season. He was placed on waivers on Monday and will need to clear at noon on Tuesday in order for the team to be able to call him up. However, it is expected that Leier will remain with the Amerks and will not report to Buffalo.

Here is how the lines looked with defenseman John Gilmour filling in for Larsson up front:

Olofsson - Eichel - Reinhart
Johansson - Lazar - Vesey
Skinner - Rodrigues - Sheary
Girgensons - Gilmour - Okposo

Later on Monday, the team announced that it has assigned goalie Andrew Hammond to the Amerks, while forward Scott Wilson has been called back up to Buffalo. The Sabres needed an extra forward available to them if Larsson is somehow unable to play in Ottawa on Tuesday.

Faceoff between the Sabres and Senators is set for 7:30 p.m. with the Paul William Beltz Pregame Show starting at 6:30 p.m. on WGR.

'I wasn't really playing and that's what you want to be doing': Evan Rodrigues explains his previous trade request

By Joe Yerdon

The Athletic

February 17, 2020

BUFFALO, N.Y. — When Evan Rodrigues made it known on New Year's Eve that he wanted to find a new team to play for, he did so because he did not see his future with the Buffalo Sabres. A month and a half later, the 26-year-old forward says it was a business decision, but there are no regrets on his part for doing so.

"You go about your daily business same way you would every day," Rodrigues told The Athletic. "Although it's a sport, it's still business and still your job. At the end of the day that's what you want, you want to be playing, you want to do your job, and you want to be contributing. That's all my focus was on. Nothing really changed from that moment on from before then. You take the emotion out of it, you make it a business and that's what I did."

At that time of his request, Rodrigues played 24 games with three assists and hadn't scored a goal since March 17, 2019. The night his demand to move on from the Sabres became public, forward Dalton Smith, who was recently signed out of Rochester, made his NHL debut against the Tampa Bay Lightning in place of Rodrigues. Part of the team's reasoning for adding Smith was to serve as a physical deterrent against a Lightning team that was responsible for injuries to forward Vladimir Sobotka early in November and Rasmus Dahlin later that month.

That it was Rodrigues who sat to make room in the lineup for Smith was a boiling point in frustration for him in part because he played well in a Sabres loss on the road against Boston two days earlier.

"You always want to be getting ice time, getting playing time, getting opportunities," Rodrigues said. "Essentially as a hockey player, it's your livelihood and when it's not coming you obviously want change. But yeah, that was about it."

At the time, he was averaging 10:42 per game in ice time. In the 13 games he's played since then, his ice time is up to an average of 12:26 per game. He's scored five goals (three against Detroit, two against Columbus) and has one assist. Of late he's centering a line with Jeff Skinner and Conor Sheary on his wings.

"I think I've been playing great," Rodrigues said. "I'm contributing, having the puck on my stick, making plays, gaining confidence. I always felt like I had the ability, I was just getting the opportunity and making the most of it."

The trade deadline is approaching next Monday and the lone moves made by the Sabres so far have been sending Marco Scandella to Montreal and acquiring Michael Frolik from Calgary. But nothing spurs action in NHL teams like a deadline. For now, Rodrigues will continue to go about his work as he has been. If the call comes to go elsewhere, he's prepared for that.

"It's just kind of the way of the business. I wasn't really playing and that's what you want to be doing," Rodrigues said. "You don't want your career to end. You just want to play hockey. You want to do the thing you love and that's pretty much it."

Rodrigues' request to be traded came a little more than two weeks after defenseman Zach Bogosian asked for a trade. While Rodrigues is still with the Sabres, Bogosian's career has taken a wild turn.

Bogosian, waived by the Sabres on Friday and assigned to Rochester on Saturday, has declined to join the American Hockey League team. The Sabres suspended him Monday for failure to report.

"We are aware of the notice of suspension and will not be providing a comment at this time," Bogosian's agent, Darren Ferris, said via text message.

The suspension removes Bogosian from the Sabres' salary chart. Even with his demotion, he was still counting more than \$4 million toward Buffalo's cap through the buried contract clause in the collective bargaining agreement. That total is wiped out, as are Bogosian's paychecks from his \$6 million salary.

The Sabres declined further comment on Bogosian, so the next steps aren't yet clear. The Sabres can continue to work on a trade. The sides can mutually negotiate a termination, which is what the team did with Patrik Berglund last year. Bogosian can also decide to report or he could sit home until becoming an unrestricted free agent July 1.

"I haven't talked to him but obviously it's not something you want. At the end of the day — whatever decision he makes — he's going to play somewhere and try to prove himself and try to prove he can play in this league, which I believe he can," Rodrigues said. "I wish him nothing but the best. He's a good player. It's just hard when you're in and out of the lineup and only playing once in a while. It's a tough spot to be in. You want to play and you want to play consistently and I think you get the best of people when you do that."

For Rodrigues, his play and chemistry with the likes of Skinner and Sheary will keep him in the lineup in Buffalo. Whether he's still in Buffalo after Feb. 24 or moving on elsewhere is to be decided. Wherever it is, he just wants to be able to be on the ice and contributing.

"I think the whole reason behind (asking for a trade) was wanting to play and wanting to get ice time," he said. "When you're doing that, that's what you want at the end of the day. It's nice to be playing, it's nice to be contributing, and that's where my head's at."

'It was just entertainment': Jack Eichel's goal celebration versus Leafs still has teammates talking

By John Vogl

The Athletic

February 17, 2020

BUFFALO, N.Y. – The Sabres needed someone to take a stand. Telling people to sit down did the trick.

Look, it hasn't been a fun time in Buffalo. So when Jack Eichel lit up the Maple Leafs with a celebration for the ages, the folks in Sabreland jumped at the chance to party.

That includes the guys in the dressing room.

"I loved it," right wing Kyle Okposo said Monday. "I had no idea that he did it, then I saw it and I started laughing.

"It was just entertainment, showmanship, so I thought it was awesome."

Okposo is far from alone in the pro-celly feelings. Long after Eichel showed up the Toronto fans who invaded KeyBank Center, Buffalo backers were still throwing social-media darts at their lifelong rivals from across the border.

"It brings the fans in," center Evan Rodrigues said. "I feel like it brings so much excitement to the game. Look how many people are talking about it, a simple thing like telling a fan to sit down."

After Sunday's 5-2 victory, Eichel didn't have much to say. He let the moment speak for itself. He opened up a little Monday, saying it wasn't premeditated (murder of those poor, unfortunate fans).

"Spur of the moment, just happens, don't even think about it," Eichel said. "Obviously, big game. We're in our home building, but it didn't seem like there were too many Sabres fans here, so it was a spur of the moment thing."

As a fan of hockey, Eichel knows old-school types shy away from expressing personality. He's also a confident 23-year-old guy from Boston, where sticking it to opponents is commonplace. There are times when it's OK to show a wild side, and this was one of them.

"Obviously, people are very critical when you do that," Eichel said. "People either love it or hate it, but whatever. I don't really care.

"I'm an emotional guy. I'm a competitor. I like to win, so at times my personality shows."

It usually shows against the Leafs and their loud backers who scoop up tickets that are normally unavailable in Scotiabank Arena.

"It was, I guess, fitting for the time and game," forward Conor Sheary said. "Jack's personality definitely came out there."

"He's in his element right now," Rodrigues said. "When you do stuff like that and it's not vulgar or rude or disrespectful – I guess that's the word, if it's not disrespectful – it's kind of a cool thing to see.

"He might've gained a few Leaf fan enemies with that one, but that was awesome. That was an awesome thing to see and an awesome thing to do."

Toronto has been Buffalo's archenemy since the Sabres were founded 50 years ago. From Punch Imlach to Rob Ray to Ryan Miller, beating the Leafs was important. Eichel feels the same way, as evidenced by 14 goals and 23 points in 17 career meetings.

At .82 goals per game, Eichel is sixth all time in scoring against the Leafs, joining a high-profile list that features Mario Lemieux (.94), Blaine Stoughton (.94), Wayne Gretzky (.87), Cam Neely (.84) and Ulf Nilsson (.83).

The goal also brought Eichel to 33 goals and 74 points this season, putting him on pace for 46 goals and 103 points. That would be the Sabres' highest goal and point totals since Pat LaFontaine and Alexander Mogilny went nuts in 1992-93.

It's getting noticed.

"He's really elevated his game to a complete and utterly different level," said former Sabres defenseman Brian Campbell, who lives in Chicago and works for the Blackhawks. "I think he's a top-five player now, maybe, in the league. He's definitely in the top 10. I told somebody the other day I think he's top five.

"You can see how much drive he has."

Linemate Victor Olofsson certainly sees it.

"He's obviously our best player out there," Olofsson said, "but you really see it in his eyes and the way that he acts on the ice how bad he wants it every game."

Sometimes, those actions include high-profile celebrations.

"The interactions between players and fans, that's what makes the game so exciting," center Curtis Lazar said. "The people who come and watch, they want to see a show put on. It's cool. We're talking about it the next day, so it brings a little bit of the lighter side of the game."

Some people may not like it, especially those up north in the Centre of the Hockey Universe. But the celebration is sitting well in Buffalo.

"It was funny," forward Marcus Johansson said. "That's all there is to it."

Sabres' Rasmus Dahlin showcasing evolving game, playing better defense

By Bill Hoppe

Olean Times Herald

February 17, 2020

BUFFALO – When Rasmus Dahlin suffered a concussion in November, the injury created an opportunity for the Sabres defenseman.

Coach Ralph Krueger often says the Sabres utilize an injured player's extra time by having "great coaching moments."

So during his eight-game absence, Krueger said Dahlin, 19, studied film beside assistant coach Steve Smith, who runs the defense, multiple times.

"You can really calmly go through video and reflect and discuss," Krueger said following Monday's practice inside KeyBank Center.

Analyzing games from a different perspective also helped the former first overall pick.

Dahlin showcased durability early in his NHL career, playing 106 straight games before Tampa Bay Lightning defenseman Erik Cernak elbowed him in the face Nov. 25.

As he recovered, the Swede watched his teammates from the press box, studying the action on the ice.

"I had never done that before in the NHL, so I learned a lot," Dahlin said after the Sabres prepared for Tuesday's road game against the Ottawa Senators. "I just refocused and found out some stuff I can improve on. So far, it worked out."

Dahlin struggled defensively early in his second NHL season, often lacking composure. But since returning Dec. 12, he has consistently displayed his elite playmaking abilities while playing a calmer, sturdier style.

"We don't feel he changed as much as that he evolved," Krueger said.

He added: "It was just an evolution with him being able to take a breath, gather some energy and come out with a fresh mind after the injury."

Right now, Dahlin has a four-game point streak and has compiled two goals and 14 points in his last 15 outings.

Dahlin's splits before and after his concussion don't illustrate a huge change. In his first 24 games, he registered one goal, 16 points and a plus-2 rating. In 25 contests since returning, he has compiled three goals, 19 points and a minus-1 rating.

But Dahlin has clearly morphed into stronger two-way presence over the past two months.

"He just keeps going up a notch, up a notch, up a notch since the beginning of the year, and especially defensively," said Krueger, whose Sabres defeated the Toronto Maple Leafs 5-2 on Sunday. "If you look at his game (Sunday), it was outstanding."

He added: "Defensively, he's really become comfortable up against anybody, and he's finding his way in our principles, which we're really excited about."

Krueger said earlier this season Dahlin would try to force plays "in some of the hotter situations."

"Now being patient and waiting until those opportunities and those openings are actually there," he said last week. "So it's simple play, simple play, boom, genius. Simple play, simple play, simple play, genius."

"There's a different rhythm all the time. He's finding that rhythm now, which the great defensemen do. (They find) that mix between simplicity when the team needs it and brilliance when we need it."

Sabres winger Kyle Okposo said Dahlin experienced a normal letdown earlier this season following a terrific rookie campaign.

"He's more comfortable," Okposo said of the last two months. "I thought he had such a good rookie season that at times it's difficult when you don't have that same emotion that you had in that first year, you're just so pumped up. You see so many guys go through a little bit of a sophomore slump."

Despite missing 10 games – an upper-body injury recently sidelined him two contests – at his current pace, Dahlin would score 51 points over a full season.

A Sabres defenseman hasn't cracked the 50-point mark since Garry Galley recorded 54 in 1995-96.

"Offensively, I mean, he's absolutely elite and will only continue to astound us in puck management and the ability to make plays and see the ice," Krueger said of Dahlin. "So it's a lot of fun to be on the coaching side of that skill."

Dahlin's assist on center Johan Larsson's goal Sunday was his 79th NHL point, tying him with Hall of Famer Ray Bourque for the second-most points recorded by an NHL defenseman before his 20th birthday.

Former Sabres defenseman Phil Housley, Dahlin's coach last season, recorded 132 points as a teenager during his Hall of Fame career.

Sabres suspend Zach Bogosian for failing to report to Amerks

By Bill Hoppe
Olean Times Herald
February 17, 2020

BUFFALO – The Sabres have suspended defenseman Zach Bogosian for failing to report to the Rochester Americans, the NHL club announced late Monday afternoon.

They assigned Bogosian, 29, to the Amerks on Saturday.

After morphing into a spare part – he was scratched 17 of the last 26 games – and often struggling during his sporadic appearances, the Sabres waived Bogosian on Friday.

“There will be no further information or comment at this time,” the Sabres said in statement announcing the suspension.

The Massena native hasn’t played in the AHL since 2008-09, when he appeared in five games on a conditioning stint with the Chicago Wolves as a rookie.

A message left for Darren Ferris, Bogosian’s agent, wasn’t returned.

Bogosian has a base salary of \$6 million this season, which he will not be paid during the suspension. If he stays suspended or his contract is terminated, the Sabres would save about \$1.3 million in salary cap space, according to capfriendly.com.

That extra room, of course, could help Sabres general manager Jason Botterill make some deals before the Feb. 24 trade deadline.

Injuries ravaged Bogosian over his five-year tenure with the Sabres, costing him a whopping 153 games following his arrival in 2015. He underwent his first hip surgery in 2017-18.

He hasn’t cracked the 70-game mark in a season since 2010-11 and never made more than 65 appearances with the Sabres.

Bogosian missed the first 22 games this season after undergoing offseason hip surgery and later suffering some setbacks.

After making his season debut Nov. 24, Bogosian played nine straight games before becoming a healthy scratch Dec. 12. A report surfaced that day Bogosian had requested a trade.

In other news, the Sabres recalled winger Scott Wilson from the Amerks on Monday and returned goalie Andrew Hammond to the AHL club.

The Sabres play a road game against the Ottawa Senators on Tuesday.

Sabres notes: Carter Hutton, Johan Larsson expected to face Senators

By Bill Hoppe
Olean Times Herald
February 17, 2020

BUFFALO – Sabres coach Ralph Krueger expects goalie Carter Hutton and center Johan Larsson to play against the Ottawa Senators despite their absence from Monday's practice for maintenance.

Meanwhile, the Sabres announced illness will keep winger Michael Frolik from playing Tuesday. The Czech did not travel with the team to Ottawa. He also missed Sunday's 5-2 win over the Toronto Maple Leafs.

"We're not worried about any of these injuries," Sabres coach Ralph Krueger said after Monday's practice inside KeyBank Center.

Following a brutal stretch in which he did not win a game for more than three months, Hutton has won four consecutive starts, compiling a 2.23 goals-against average and a .926 save percentage.

Krueger said the Sabres expect Hutton's injury "to go away."

"The maintenance is always a wide-open situation," he said. "But we feel comfortable with him dealing with this maintenance."

The Sabres still have an extra goalie, Andrew Hammond, on the roster.

Following Tuesday's game, the Sabres have off until Saturday afternoon.

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Hammond, 32, hasn't visited Ottawa as an opponent since the Senators traded him to the Colorado Avalanche early in the 2017-18 season.

While Hammond wasn't sure if he would accompany the Sabres on the trip, he said returning to Canada's capital would be special.

Hammond will always own a place in Senators lore.

Five years ago at this time, he was in the midst of a dominant stretch as a rookie.

In 24 games to close the season, Hammond compiled a stunning 20-1-2 record with a 1.79 goals-against average and a .941 save percentage and three shutouts.

"A lot of memories, a lot of people in that organization I still stay in touch with," Hammond said. "If that were to happen, it would definitely be special."

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The Sabres, who have won three straight games, have struggled against the Senators this season, losing two out of the three meetings.

The Senators beat the Sabres 5-2 on Jan. 28 here and 3-1 on Dec. 23 in Ottawa.

Despite having earned only 51 points and ranking 29th overall, the Senators' strong worth ethic complements some high-level talent.

"They're very structured in the way they play and they play hard," Sabres winger Kyle Okposo said. "I just think we didn't get anything in the offensive zone the last game, they really suffocated us and they didn't give us a lot of time and space."

"We're going to have to work tomorrow night. It's going to be a grab your lunch pail and go to work."

Krueger said: "If there's one thing I credit them with, is they do work hard. They do not quit, they try their best and they're dangerous if you let them be, and that's what we're concentrating on with all the extracurricular activities (like the trade deadline).

"But so far, our team's done well when there's been noise in the building, and there's going to be noise in that building."

That noise will be the jersey retirement of former defenseman Chris Phillips, who wore No. 4 for 17 seasons with Ottawa.

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Sabres winger Kyle Okposo recorded his 500th point Sunday, scoring a nifty goal against Toronto netminder Frederik Andersen.

"It's nice, have a good smile about it and something I'll definitely look back on, for sure," Okposo said of the milestone.

Okposo registered his first point in his second NHL outing with the New York Islanders, assisting on Blake Comeau's goal on March 21, 2008 versus the New Jersey Devils. He scored his first goal later in the game.

Sabres sign Taylor Leier to one-year, two-way contract

By Bill Hoppe

Olean Times Herald

February 17, 2020

BUFFALO – The Sabres have signed winger Taylor Leier to a one-year, two-way contract worth \$700,000, the team announced this morning.

Leier, 26, has spent the entire season with the Rochester Americans, scoring seven goals and eight points in 17 games.

The 5-foot-11, 180-pound Leier underwent offseason shoulder surgery following a freak training accident and did not play his first game until Dec. 11.

The Amerks signed Leier to an AHL contract in June. Had he been healthy, he almost certainly would've inked an NHL deal.

The Sabres have assigned Leier to the Amerks pending waivers.

Leier has compiled two goals and seven points in 55 career NHL games. The Sabres acquired him last season in exchange for winger Justin Bailey.

Sabres suspend Zach Bogosian for failing to report to Rochester

By Matt Bove

WKBW

February 17, 2020

BUFFALO, N.Y. [WKBW] — On Monday the Buffalo Sabres announced the team has suspended veteran defenseman Zach Bogosian for failing to report to the Rochester Americans of the AHL.

The team announced they have no further comment on the suspension.

Bogosian, who was waived on Friday, was not claimed by another NHL team, which gave the Sabres the ability to send him to Rochester.

According to John Wawrow of the Associated Press, Bogosian's agent Darren Farris is aware of the suspension but will not provide further comment at this time.

The Sabres acquired Bogosian in a trade with the Winnipeg Jets in February of 2015. During his six seasons with the Sabres, Bogosian has played in 243 games and tallied 13 goals and 54 assists. This season Bogosian played in just 19 games with the Sabres.

Buffalo Sabres suspend Zach Bogosian for not reporting to Rochester

By Kim DeGeorge

WGRZ

February 17, 2020

BUFFALO, N.Y. — The Buffalo Sabres have suspended defenseman Zach Bogosian for failing to report to the Rochester Americans team.

Bogosian was placed on waivers Friday and then the Sabres assigned him to Rochester when he cleared waivers.

Injuries have been an issue for Bogosian during his career, especially with the Sabres. He has played in only a handful of games this season. Bogosian will become an unrestricted free agent after this season.

Sabres Try To Ignore Rumors and Trade Rumblings Before Trade Deadline

By Ted Goldberg

Spectrum News

February 17, 2020

BUFFALO, N.Y. - Brandon Montour is no stranger to trade rumors; the Sabres defenseman says he's heard them in almost each of his five full professional seasons.

"You hear about it from family and friends, whoever it may be," he says. "It's just one of those things where you gotta watch the way - it could be rumors, whatever it may be. Until you get a phone call saying you've been dealt, you're still a part of that team. You gotta do the best you can to keep that even keel."

Montour himself was dealt to the Sabres last year from the Anaheim Ducks one day before the deadline passed. His head coach, Ralph Krueger, says rumors and rumblings have yet to creep into the dressing room.

"I haven't felt or heard anything that has distracted," he says. "That could change as we hit the weekend, after the Ottawa game, it will be more of a reality. At the moment, I have to say, it's not in our room at all."

The Sabres recent run (four wins in five games) has put the franchise in a bit of an awkward spot. They haven't played badly enough to be full-blown sellers, but will Jason Botterill make a move with his team eight points out of a playoff spot? Players have no say in that. All they're focusing on is how improved the Sabres play has been over the last two weeks.

"The team's starting to play good now," says Rasmus Dahlin. "I think we have something good going on the whole year. It's really easy to play with this group of guys. We work hard together. We help each other out there. It's good."

While Krueger agreed with his star defenseman, he added that his players are keeping an even keel.

"This group, after seeing the win last night, what it meant to our fanbase that we won the series against Toronto, you wouldn't feel that in the group today," he says. "Their feet are on the ground, they stayed focused."

The Sabres next play the Ottawa Senators Tuesday night, one of the four teams behind the Sabres in the Eastern Conference standings.

Bogosian suspended by Sabres for failing to report to AHL

NHL.com

February 17, 2020

Zach Bogosian was suspended by the Buffalo Sabres on Monday.

The defenseman failed to report to Rochester of the American Hockey League after he cleared waivers this weekend.

The 29-year-old has five points (one goal, four assists) and is averaging 16:50 of ice time in 19 games for the Sabres this season since returning to the lineup Nov. 24 after offseason hip surgery. Bogosian had 19 points (three goals, 16 assists) in 65 games for Buffalo last season, the most games he's played since 65 with the Winnipeg Jets in 2011-12.

He is in the final season of a seven-year, \$36 million contract (\$5.14 million average annual value) he signed with the Jets on July 29, 2013.

Bogosian is in his sixth season with the Sabres since being acquired in a trade with the Jets on Feb. 11, 2015, with forward Evander Kane, for defenseman Tyler Myers, forwards Drew Stafford, Joel Armia and Brendan Lemieux, and a first-round pick in the 2015 NHL Draft that was used by the Jets to select forward Jack Roslovic.

Chosen by the Atlanta Thrashers with the No. 3 pick in 2008 NHL Draft, Bogosian has 194 points (53 goals, 141 assists) in 636 NHL games with the Atlanta Thrashers, Jets and Sabres.

Sabres suspend Zach Bogosian for failure to report to AHL

By Adam Gretz

Pro Hockey Talk

February 17, 2020

The Buffalo Sabres announced on Monday afternoon that they have suspended veteran defenseman Zach Bogosian after he refused to report to the Rochester Americans of the AHL.

Buffalo placed Bogosian on waivers on Friday. After going unclaimed, he was assigned to Rochester to create a lineup spot in Buffalo.

The Sabres said they will not have any further comment or information at this time. Bogosian's agent also said they are aware of the suspension notification and also have no comment.

It has been a brutal season for Bogosian in Buffalo as a hip injury as taken him in and out of the lineup, while he has also found himself as a healthy scratch on occasion. He has played in just 19 games this season.

He also requested a trade earlier this season.

Bogosian is currently in the final year of his contract that carries a \$5.14 million salary cap hit.

The Sabres initially acquired him during the 2014-15 season along with Evander Kane from the Winnipeg Jets. He has appeared in 243 games with the team, scoring 13 goals and adding 54 assists.

As John Vogl of the Athletic points out, the Sabres can continue to attempt to negotiate a trade while he is suspended (though he probably does not have much value — unless the Sabres are willing to retain salary), they negotiate a contract termination, or simply let him sit out.

Sabres suspend Zach Bogosian for not reporting to Rochester

Toronto Sun

February 17, 2020

Defenceman Zach Bogosian was suspended Monday by the Buffalo Sabres after he failed to report to AHL affiliate Rochester after clearing waivers Saturday, the team announced.

No team claimed Bogosian, who officially requested the Sabres to trade him in December.

He has been hampered by a number of injuries during his NHL career, which began with the Atlanta Thrashers in 2008-09. During his 12-year career, Bogosian has collected 194 points (53 goals, 141 assists) in 636 games, also playing for the Winnipeg Jets (2011-15) before joining the Sabres in a trade involving multiple players.

Last April, Bogosian underwent his second hip operation in 15 months after totaling three goals and 16 assists in 65 games, the most he has played in six seasons for Buffalo. He was second on the Sabres with 116 blocked shots and third in average ice time (21:38).

Bogosian, 29, played in just 18 games in 2017-18 before undergoing his first hip surgery in January 2018.

In 19 games this season, Bogosian, in the last year of his contract with a \$5.14 million salary cap hit, has one goal and four assists.

Sabres recall Wilson from Rochester

By Chris Ryndak

Sabres.com

February 17, 2020

The Buffalo Sabres announced today that the team has recalled forward Scott Wilson from the Rochester Americans and assigned goaltender Andrew Hammond to Rochester.

Wilson, 27, has 19 points (9+10) in 29 games with the Amerks this season and two points (1+1) in six games with Buffalo. He recorded those points during his four-game stint with the team earlier this month.

Forward Michael Frolik will miss tomorrow night's road game against the Ottawa Senators due to illness.

Johan Larsson was given a maintenance day and did not practice on Monday, although head coach Ralph Krueger was optimistic that he would be available to play. Carter Hutton also did not practice on Monday due to a maintenance day. He stopped 20 of 22 shots in last night's 5-2 win over Toronto for his fifth victory in his last six appearances.

Both players traveled to Ottawa with the team.

Pregame coverage on MSG begins at 7 p.m. on Tuesday and the opening faceoff is scheduled for 7:52 due to a pregame ceremony where former Senators defenseman Chris Phillips' jersey number will be retired.

Dahlin feeling benefit of strides in defensive game

By Jourdon LaBarber

Sabres.com

February 17, 2020

Rasmus Dahlin is racking up points these days.

Dahlin's assist against Toronto on Sunday was his 14th point in 15 games dating back to Jan. 4, tied for fourth among NHL blueliners in that span. It was also the 79th point of his young career, matching Ray Bourque for second-most by a teenage defenseman in league history.

Yet for all that offense, any conversation with coach Ralph Krueger about the strides Dahlin has made in his sophomore season begins in the defensive zone.

"If you look at his game yesterday, it was outstanding," Krueger said after practice on Monday. "Sadly, that's our main job as coaches. We do speak to you more about the defense than the offense. We hope the offense grows out of that.

"But defensively, he's really become comfortable up against anybody, and he's finding his way in our principles, which we're really excited about."

Krueger noted prior to the team's game at Madison Square Garden earlier this month how a combination of added size and improved technique has put Dahlin in a position to win more of his 1-on-1 battles as this season has progressed.

Dahlin has learned how to approach different players defensively. He's playing smarter and thinking less, leading to a confidence on defense that has translated to his offensive game. Since his hot streak began on Jan. 4, the Sabres have a 68.4-percent share of goals scored with Dahlin on the ice at 5-on-5.

Sabres assistant coach Steve Smith, who works with the team's defensemen, explained how Dahlin's technique has improved in his own end.

"It's identifying stick positioning, it's identifying body positioning, it's identifying the strength of the other players that he's playing against," Smith explained. "Big, strong guys you can pursue a lot quicker and be a lot heavier on. Some of the lighter players you have to be a little bit more nimble as you skate into the corners.

"I think that's one of the things he's doing, is learning the league, which guys you can slam around a little bit and which guys you need to stay away from. The other side of it is some of those bigger, stronger guys, you just learn how to take away their hands versus trying to contain a guy who's 220 pounds. It's not going to be an easy task for a younger player."

It helps that Dahlin is, by all accounts, a willing student. Smith says the first time he met Dahlin last season, he wanted to hug his parents for the way the defenseman was raised.

"It's amazing how you tell him from one game to the next that he needs to do something a little more often, he tries it almost within the first shift," Smith said. "So, he really is coachable."

His learning has extended to the offensive end, too. Dahlin is capable of what Krueger refers to as moments of "genius" with the puck; he has been since before he even took the ice in a Sabres sweater. He has a forward's ability to handle the puck and a poise that allows him to make plays under pressure.

What Krueger and Smith have noticed this season is an ability by Dahlin to pick the right spots to put that genius on display.

"He's now being patient and waiting until those opportunities and those openings are actually there," Krueger said. "So, it's simple play, simple play - boom, genius. Simple play, simple play, simple play, genius. There's a different rhythm all the time and he's finding that rhythm now, which the great defensemen do, is that mix

between simplicity when the team needs it and brilliance when we need it because he can really make a play when he has that space and time."

Smith added: "When you get away with a play standing still on the blue line, you go around somebody, it looks wonderful to the crowd but in a 2-1 hockey game and you're up by a goal, you don't want him trying that stuff because it is a dangerous play.

"So, he's eventually getting to the point where he knows when to take the odds, when to play with the odds, when to go against the odds. At this point, more often than not I find him to be playing with the odds than against them. Last year, it was certainly the opposite, especially early in the season."

Miller benefitting from consistent play

Dahlin has found a steady defense partner of late in Colin Miller, who has played 10 straight games. During that stretch, Miller leads Sabres defensemen with 18 shots and a 56.5-percent shot attempt share at 5-on-5. He also has four assists, two of which came in the win over Toronto on Sunday.

After appearing in the team's first 17 games, Miller found himself in and out of the lineup while the Sabres balanced playing time among eight defensemen. He's taken advantage of this recent run of playing time both with and without the puck.

"It was a tough grind in the middle there when we were eight-plus defensemen fighting for spots," Krueger said. "It was not easy being a defenseman in our lineup. You had to have a very good game all the time to stay in there.

"I think just the comfort of now being one of the top six and knowing that the confidence is there makes him calmer in his game, both defensively and offensively. He's been excellent in adding some punch, a surprising punch at times. We all know his shot's a lethal weapon that we need to use more in our game and yesterday was a great example."

Both of Miller's assists against the Maple Leafs came on shots from the point. The first caromed off the end boards to Johan Larsson; the second was tipped into the net by Conor Sheary. It was all part of a concerted effort to go low to high and loosen Toronto's tight defense in front of its net.

But Miller's shot is a weapon even when he doesn't pull the trigger, evidenced by his assists against Detroit and New York last week. Both came on shot fakes up high that opened up lanes to the net:

"I think it's more consistency," Miller said. "The more games you're in, the more you play and stuff like that, the more rhythm and stuff you have. I feel on the back-end right now we have some good consistency with the D pairings, so hopefully that continues."

Wednesday's practice

Johan Larsson and Carter Hutton both took maintenance days but will travel with the team to Ottawa. Michael Frolik remained absent with an illness and will not make the trip.

Hutton previously did not practice on Saturday and returned to make 20 saves against Toronto on Sunday for his fourth victory in five games. Krueger said he expects the goaltender to be available against the Senators on Tuesday.

"The maintenance is always a wide-open situation," Krueger said. "But we feel comfortable with him dealing with this maintenance here today. It's something that we expect to go away."

Sabres sign Leier to 1-year, 2-way contract

By Jourdon LaBarber

Sabres.com

February 17, 2020

The Buffalo Sabres have signed forward Taylor Leier to a one-year, two-way contract worth \$700,000, the team announced Monday. He will be assigned to Rochester pending waivers.

The Sabres acquired Leier in a trade with the Philadelphia Flyers last January. He spent the remainder of the season with the Amerks, tallying 23 points (12+11) in 35 games to end the season.

An offseason injury forced Leier to have surgery as he was preparing to become an unrestricted free agent for the first time. He signed a one-year AHL contract to remain with the organization on June 28 and made his season debut with the Amerks on Dec. 11.

Leier has eight points (7+1) in 17 games for Rochester this season. He scored his seventh goal in the team's win over Utica on Sunday.

The 26-year-old was a fourth-round draft pick by the Flyers in 2012. He's tallied seven points (2+5) in 55 career NHL games.

The Sabres are scheduled to practice Monday at noon. Their next game is Tuesday in Ottawa, with coverage on MSG beginning at 7 p.m.