



# **Buffalo Sabres**

**Daily Press Clips**

*October 14, 2011*

## **Rested Sabres ready for puck to drop**

*After long break, players want to equal fans' energy during home opener*

John Vogl

The Buffalo News

October 14, 2011

It's been nearly a week since the Sabres last played. Since then, they've mixed in easy practices, hard skates, a day off and locker room tours.

"Enough's enough," forward Cody McCormick said Thursday. "Let's get busy here."

Yup, they're ready to drop the puck again.

The Sabres finally return to action tonight, with Buffalo eager for the home opener. The Carolina Hurricanes will skate into First Niagara Center to face a team that's 2-0 and hoping to show the locals that the summer of hype was justified.

"I'm expecting it to be pretty crazy out there," right wing Drew Stafford said. "With everything that's gone on with all the changes, we've got off to a decent start now, over in Europe we played pretty well, so I think fans are excited. If I was a fan, I'd be coming out and screaming my head off for us, so I'm looking forward to a great turnout."

The Sabres welcomed the time to recuperate following last week's debut in Finland and Germany. Their internal clocks reset earlier in the week, however, so the past couple of days have been respite overkill.

"Too much time here in between games," McCormick said. "You've heard the buildup through the summer, and guys are all excited. There's a lot of energy here, and we're looking forward to getting at it."

Coach Lindy Ruff's goal is to rein them in a bit. He, too, is eager to feel the energy fans will bring to the refurbished foot of Washington Street. However, he recalls how differently the team played at home last season, specifically the 0-6-1 start.

"The atmosphere is going to be great," Ruff said. "The thing we have to put aside is don't let our emotions run wild with the atmosphere. We have a game to play. We have some situations we know we have to execute in, some you can't be too hyped up for. To play your best games you have to be relaxed and you've got to be ready to play."

"Last year we had a little bit of a taste of not playing well at home to start the year, and we need to play a game where we're paying attention to our system, to how we play, and the score will take care of itself."

Carolina will play its fifth game of the season, and the Hurricanes float in on a high. After starting with a three-game winless skid, they beat defending champion Boston, 3-2, Wednesday.

"What you saw was a desperate team, a team that was sitting at [0-2-1] and looking for a win," Ruff said. "It really looked a lot like a playoff game to me. There was a lot of emotion in the game, a lot of great opportunities, great saves both directions."

The 'Canes' saves came from franchise netminder Cam Ward. Carolina's core hasn't changed, with Ward, captain Eric Staal, forward Chad LaRose and Rookie of the Year Jeff Skinner welcoming defenseman Tomas Kaberle to 'Canes Country.

"We can build from a game like [Wednesday]," Ward said. "There's a lot of positives that you take away from it."

In Buffalo, the phrase "lot of positives" is an understatement.

Fans are giddy at the prospect of finally seeing newcomers Robyn Regehr, Christian Ehrhoff and Ville Leino in a game situation. They're hoping the line of Luke Adam, Thomas Vanek and Jason Pominville can continue its torrid start, which has featured five goals and 13 points in two games. The locals want an up-close look at the squad that kept Anaheim and Los Angeles quiet while making plenty of its own noise.

Buffalo, basically, is just ready for the puck to drop.

"A good start can really make or break a season," Stafford said. "If you start behind the eight-ball, you're playing catch-up the rest of the year. You look at us last year. We started OK and we kind of trailed off for a while there. We were near the bottom, and we had to battle. You look at years past, like the year we won the Presidents' Trophy [in 2007], we started off just flying out of the gates, and it helps.

"We had a great week of practice here to make sure our habits are in order, and I think the guys are ready to go."

## **Time to see what the Sabres have got**

Bucky Gleason

The Buffalo News

October 14, 2011

Jason Pominville laughed Thursday while recalling his teammates' expressions when they took their first tour of the Sabres' dressing room. You can imagine their initial shock as they poked their heads through the door and looked inside. It was as if Gilbert Perreault and George Jetson co-produced an episode of "Extreme Makeover."

The 30,000-square-foot renovation is astonishing, really, with an attention to detail that chronicles the Sabres' past and punctuates their future. Their new changing quarters came courtesy of owner Terry Pegula and his wife, Kim, who have spared no expense in running a first-class franchise.

"They were walking around with their mouths open," Pominville said of his teammates, "and a smile on their face."

Actually, it has been nothing but smiles during eight jaw-dropping months in Pegulaville. The new owner and his brigade of creative minds made upgrades across the organization. Darcy Regier improved his roster and expanded his scouting department. Lindy Ruff added more coaches and enough state-of-the-art utensils to double the economy of the Silicon Valley.

First Niagara Center has been spiffed-up for a new age of Sabres hockey, starting with the home opener tonight against the Carolina Hurricanes. Pegula's commitment has exceeded all expectations, yes, but with it comes greater expectations for the Sabres. He wasn't building a playground. He was improving working conditions.

Job No. 1, if you recall, is winning.

Pegula has showered the organization with dollars in exchange for W's, but his financial commitment and leadership can only take the Sabres so far. The locker room itself doesn't matter nearly as much as what's inside. It comes back to management, coaches and players. Pegula isn't going to play a single shift.

"He's given us all the improvements we need," winger Thomas Vanek said. "At the end of the day, it's about winning and losing. You can have the crappiest locker room in the world. If you win, it's a fun place and fun atmosphere. He invested. He gave us what we need. We're the ones that need to perform."

Pegula made it clear he's not going to hover over his team with a dagger, but the truth is the Sabres will be short on excuses if they don't play well. They had a good team in place last season. Christian Ehrhoff, Robyn Regehr and Ville Leino added to their talent and depth.

The Sabres, during their first two games in Europe, confirmed they could create matchup problems, particularly with their balance along their top three lines. Their defense is significantly more mobile and better overall. Ryan Miller was solid overseas in victories over Anaheim and Los Angeles.

Rookie Luke Adam performed admirably while playing between Vanek and Pominville on what could become a dangerous scoring line. He certainly plays bigger and tougher than Tim Connolly, who — surprise, surprise — remains sidelined with Toronto. Still, there are questions about whether the Sabres are strong enough down the middle.

Now, the fun begins.

Not since 2006-07, after the Sabres reached the conference finals following the lockout, has so much anticipation accompanied a home opener in Buffalo. The Sabres long ago moved past their darkest summer in franchise history and the consecutive DNQs that followed. They're beyond first-round knockouts the past two years.

The Sabres are fully equipped for the next step. If they're going anywhere, the Sabres will need to play well at home and build off their 2-0-0 start. There was a sense in the dressing room Thursday that they couldn't wait to begin.

Finally, it's time to open the door and reveal what's inside.

## Hecht to sit until he passes team 'physical'

John Vogl

The Buffalo News

October 14, 2011

Jochen Hecht should get ready. The Buffalo Sabres are going to essentially torture him during practice. They're going to pound him physically at every chance. Once they're convinced he'll survive, they'll put him in a game.

Hecht, who missed the Sabres' opening two games because of concussion symptoms, is out until at least next week. The forward will sit out tonight's home opener against Carolina and Saturday's visit to Pittsburgh.

Coach Lindy Ruff has decided to be extra cautious with Hecht's return because of the 34-year-old's concussion history. The forward suffered one late last season and returned too early, which forced him to miss additional time.

"Jochen won't be ready for this weekend," Ruff said after practice Thursday in First Niagara Center. "We gave him a little extra today, but we need to be sure this time around. We need to pound him physically and take him to the limit, which we haven't taken him to the limit yet. We're getting close, but it's not a case where we're going to put him in and guess or put him in because we're close.

"In Jochen's case, there's a history, which changes a lot of things. The couple of instances at the end of last year, that history makes his situation different than anybody else's. You monitor how he feels. If his head doesn't feel right — which he hasn't given it the, 'Jeez, I feel great; I feel good' — he still doesn't seem like he's there yet, and that's why you keep him out of contact. The real heavy stuff we'll ramp up in the next few days. We don't know if we get to the battle stuff if he'll make it through it."

Hecht feels as though he's progressing. He hasn't suffered headaches since before departing for Europe on Oct. 1. He began full-contact practices Tuesday but has yet to skate with linemates.

"It's been small steps, and I'm taking my time, making sure," Hecht said. "It's been good, but I've still got to get my legs underneath me. I've been off for three weeks, so I've got to get my conditioning back. I'm still trying stuff out there, did a little extra with [Matt Ellis] at center ice there, banging heads. I'm going in the right direction."

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Concussion recovery also was a big topic for one of the Sabres' weekend opponents. Pittsburgh superstar Sidney Crosby received clearance for full-contact practices, a positive sign for the center who has been out since early January.

"It's a big step," Crosby told Pittsburgh reporters. "I've got to get hit at some point during practice, but we're playing so much that it's tough to get hit."

There is no timetable for Crosby's return, and it's unlikely he'll face the Sabres.

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Patrick Kaleta has taken steps to avoid another broken hand. The Sabres' right winger showed off his new gloves Thursday, a pair of mitts with more protection over the index fingers. The gloves have noticeably wider padding for Kaleta, who twice broke his hand blocking shots last season.

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The Sabres will begin an online auction today featuring game-worn jerseys and old locker room memorabilia, with proceeds benefiting the team's foundation.

White road jerseys worn at the end of last season will come with a certificate of authenticity. Among the items up for bid from the dressing room are locker name plates, stick rack signs, the logo from the door and a sign featuring owner Terry Pegula's quote that the Sabres' reason for existence will be to win the Stanley Cup. Bidding will begin at 5 p.m. at Auction.NHL.com and will continue until 9 p.m. Oct. 23.

The Sabres have also announced the return of the "Ultimate Sabres Fan Experience," which is available for bid at the NHL auction site. The package includes two tickets in Section 111, Row 1, the opportunity to watch the pregame skate from the penalty box, recognition on the team's TV telecast and attendance at Ruff's post-game news conference.

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The Sabres' back-to-back outings give them a chance to catch the Buffalo Bills in number of victories. The football team is off to a 4-1 start, while the Sabres are 2-0.

Said Ruff: "I hope they keep winning and we keep winning because it makes this a fun city to live in."

## Unbeaten Sabres host 'Canes in home opener

Pete Jensen

NHL.com

October 14, 2011

**HURRICANES (1-2-1) at SABRES (2-0-0)**

**TV: NHLN-CANADA, FS-Carolinas (HD), MSG-B**

**Season Series:** It's the first of four meetings between the teams this season. The Sabres and Hurricanes split their games last season, with all four decided by one goal.

**Big Story:** After kicking off the regular season in Europe with victories over the Anaheim Ducks and Los Angeles Kings, the Sabres can expect a tumultuous welcome as they return to Western New York for their home opener at the renamed First Niagara Center. The Hurricanes, meanwhile, are coming off their first win of the season -- a 3-2 home win over the defending champion Boston Bruins. This is the first of a four-game trip for the 'Canes.

### Team Scope:

**Hurricanes:** Carolina was still in search of its first win of 2011-12 when the reigning Stanley Cup champions invaded the RBC Center on Wednesday night. [Cam Ward](#), who guided the Canes to their only Stanley Cup championship back in 2005-06, found a way to give his team the jolt it needed to break the ice on the new season. Ward stopped 26 shots and Carolina got third-period goals by [Anthony Stewart](#) and [Jiri Tlustý](#) to hold off the Bruins for their first win in four games.

With a four-game trip coming up, Ward knew the 'Canes desperately needed a win.

“We're talking about the fourth game of the year, but we did treat it like a must-win game,” Ward said. “It's important that we get a win and feel good about ourselves and know what it's like to win hockey games. We can build from a game like this. There are a lot of great positives that you can take away from it.”

**Sabres:** The Sabres are used to getting strong goaltending from [Ryan Miller](#) -- and they got it during their wins against Anaheim and Los Angeles in Europe, with Miller allowing just three goals. The good news was that the offense generated eight goals -- four in each game.

[Thomas Vanek](#) set the tone with two goals in Buffalo's season-opening 4-1 win in Helsinki, and rookie [Luke Adam](#) scored twice in a 2:20 span to pace Buffalo to a 4-2 win over Los Angeles in Berlin to complete an impressive sweep.

Coach Lindy Ruff was impressed by his team's balanced effort in both games, but knows his team must get back to the basics in order to carry over the positive momentum to its home opener in Buffalo.



“One thing we’ve talked about as a team is to wrap our arms around everything that’s going on and embrace it, but at the same time, we have to be a team that wants to continue to get better from night to night,” Ruff said. “At the end of the year, we want to improve on our numbers. The attention to detail in the two games overseas was good, but we can’t play a different game when we get back home. We need to play a game where we’re paying attention to our system and how we play, and the score will take care of itself.

**Who's Hot:** Vanek paced Buffalo’s power-play attack during the team’s trip to Europe, notching two goals with the extra man and five points overall in two games. ... Last year’s Calder Trophy recipient, [Jeff Skinner](#), has shown no signs of a sophomore slump early on this season. The 19-year-old forward has five points in four games.

**Injury Report:** Buffalo forward Jochen Hecht (head) remains questionable. ... The Hurricanes are healthy.

**Stat Pack:** Stewart (26 games) and Tlusty (20 games) both ended lengthy dry spells by scoring against Boston. Carolina surrendered five power-play goals in 13 tries before holding Boston scoreless on five tries. ... The Sabres haven't won their first three games since opening the 2008-09 season by going 4-0-0.

**Puck Drop:** With new owner Terry Pegula providing the kind of financial resources the Sabres haven't had, expectations are high in Buffalo. The two-game sweep in the Compuware NHL Premiere series has only whetted the fans' appetites for the Stanley Cup the Sabres haven't been able to win since entering the NHL in 1970.

The players were glad to get a few days off to get re-accustomed to the time differential.

“It’s not easy coming back [from Europe] with the time change and it wasn’t easy going over there, but now we’re fine after some days to rest up,” captain [Jason Pominville](#) said. “There’s a lot more buzz around the city and around this team. We have to keep our composure and keep doing the things that made us successful in Europe.”

## **Carolina (1-2-1) at Buffalo (2-0-0)**

Noey Kupchan

STATS

October 14, 2011

After nearly a week off, the [Buffalo Sabres](#) have surely had plenty of time to let their tremendous start to the season sink in.

While there's already a palpable level of excitement surrounding the team, Friday night's home opener is sure to create even more hoopla.

The Sabres try to open with three consecutive wins for the first time in three seasons when they meet the [Carolina Hurricanes](#).

After defeating Anaheim 4-1 in Helsinki in last Friday's season opener, Buffalo concluded its European trek with a 4-2 win over Los Angeles in Berlin the next day.

[Ryan Miller\(notes\)](#) stopped 60 of 63 shots during the trip, and the line of left wing [Thomas Vanek\(notes\)](#), rookie center [Luke Adam\(notes\)](#) and first-year captain [Jason Pominville\(notes\)](#) sparked the Sabres offensively.

The trio scored five of Buffalo's eight goals and is just one of the many reasons why Sabres fans have high hopes for this season.

"There's a buzz everywhere. Doesn't matter where," coach Lindy Ruff said. "Anybody you bump into is talking about the team and expectations. I don't know if it's ever been this high before. I think it's probably a little bit out of proportion but it's great to have, it's a great place to be."

Vanek is more than pleased with the team's recent efforts but knows continuing at its current pace won't be easy.

"The season is long, and you're going to have good stretches and bad stretches," said Vanek, who leads Buffalo with five points. "I think I've been around long enough where you welcome it and take it as they come. But it's the same as when you win and lose games, you try to stay even keel."

The Sabres haven't started 3-0-0 since winning their first four in 2008-09, and they now face a Hurricanes team coming off its first win.

Carolina (1-2-1) had surrendered 13 goals - five on the power play - over its first three games before killing all five of Boston's chances with the man advantage during Wednesday's 3-2 win.

“We’re talking about the fourth game of the year, but we did treat it like a must-win game,” said [Cam Ward\(notes\)](#), who made 26 saves. “It’s important that we get a win and feel good about ourselves and know what it’s like to win hockey games.

“We can build from a game like (Wednesday). There’s a lot of great positives that you can take away from it.”

Defenseman [Joni Pitkanen\(notes\)](#) gave the Hurricanes a 1-0 lead in the second period before [Jiri Tlusty\(notes\)](#) and [Anthony Stewart\(notes\)](#) - left wings on Carolina’s third and fourth lines - scored in the third.

“Teams are going to key on those two (top) offensive lines that we have,” coach Paul Maurice said. “The big goal for me is Stewart’s goal ... confidence-wise for that line and for me wanting to put them on the ice in a tight game. They’ve had some offense there, and if we can get comfortable with four lines that can play, we’re going to be able to play in these kinds of games.”

Ward is 2-1-0 with a 1.02 goals-against average over his last three visits to Buffalo, posting his second shutout during that span in a 1-0 win March 15.

Miller has gone 6-3-0 with a 1.69 GAA over his nine most recent home meetings with the Hurricanes, allowing two goals or less in all but one of those matchups.

## ATTITUDE ADJUSTMENT

*Drew Stafford looks to build on last season's career-high 31 goals*

Kevin Snow

Sabres.com

October 14, 2011

By Kevin Snow - Sabres.com

When [Drew Stafford](#) arrived at training camp last month, even head coach Lindy Ruff said he took a double-take when Stafford walked through the door. Stafford's lean frame from the previous year had now become trimmer and even more toned. Coming off a career-high 31 goal season – and armed with a new four-year-contract – Stafford spent the summer refining the workout regimen that contributed to his success last season.

“It all started two years ago when I wasn't playing as well as I could have been,” he explains. “I felt like I could've been doing more to get better, and it started with my conditioning and fitness in the summertime. I lost a lot of weight and I trimmed up. This allowed me to get a little faster and a little more explosive. I also worked on my shot a lot more. I shot a lot more pucks in the summertime and that definitely translated to the ice.”



Stafford

Stafford scored 31 goals in 62 games last season, and was among the league leaders with a 17.3 shooting percentage (31g/179 shots). His 62 games played were second only to Sidney Crosby for fewest games played by a 30-goal scorer; and he was tied for fifth in the league with an average of .50 goals per game. Stafford also tied with Washington's Alexander Semin by scoring a league-high four hat tricks – with all four coming in a span of 60 days from December 15 to February 13.

Buffalo's first pick (13th overall) in the 2004 Entry Draft, Stafford says his on-ice improvement is not only a direct result of what has happened away from the rink, but from getting older as well.

“

I thought I maybe had it figured out when I was younger, but I really had a ways to go in my development and the type of player I could be. - [Drew Stafford](#)  
It really came down to what I could control – my work ethic and my fitness. But it also had to do with the natural maturing process. I finally started to grow up.”

Now in his sixth NHL season, the 25-year-old Stafford (he turns 26 on October 30) was rewarded by the coaching staff last week when he was named as one of Buffalo's four alternate captains along with [Thomas Vanek](#), [Paul Gaustad](#) and [Derek Roy](#).

“It was a little bit of surprise. But for me personally it's definitely an honor. It's something that I definitely appreciate a lot. I'm very grateful for them recognizing me in that kind of way.

“At the same time, I’m not going to change anything. I’m going to do what I’ve always been doing. On or off the ice, I’m not really a ‘rah rah’ kind of guy. I mainly just try and play and lead that way. It’s not going to change how I prepare or play. We have such a diverse group of guys, it doesn’t matter who’s got a letter because everyone leads in their own way.”

Stafford gained national attention recently when his “Fu-Man Drew” workout went viral on YouTube, and it’s currently at more than 32,000 views. He had become known for his satirical videos and Twitter usage a few years ago, but don’t expect this video to take Stafford away from his current focus. He’d much rather let his play on the ice speak for itself.

“I just kinda got of sick of Twitter and all that stuff. I don’t have time for that anymore. Besides, I don’t really have much to say anyway.”

## A NEW HOME IN BUFFALO

Kevin Snow

Sabres.com

October 14, 2011

For the last four months, nearly 300 workers from 15 different companies worked feverishly to build the Sabres new locker room facilities at First Niagara Center. Frank Cravotta, the team's Director of Creative Services, was one of the main cogs in the projects. He sat down with Kevin Snow from Sabres.com today to discuss some of the highlights of the project, along with the challenges they faced along the way.

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### *When did the design process begin?*

About three weeks after the Pegula's purchased the team is when we started. Stan Makowski (VP of Arena Operations) and I had a meeting with Kim, then later with Terry. A lot of their experiences come from the new arena in Pittsburgh, and that place is a palace. Their locker room is exceptional. Ours was 15 years old. One of the first things they wanted to do was quickly come in and put a logo on the floor, just to say 'hey we're here and we are thinking about making things better.' But it was really at that point, when the logo was in the floor, that Stan and I were already flying around to a lot of the other clubs to do research, meeting with the architects to try and get as much information as we could for our project.

### *Did you have some ideas in your head already?*

Everyone talks about Vancouver as the benchmark. But what I found in my travel was that the Montreal Canadiens' practice facility was clearly the best that I saw; just the way that it was done proportionately. Pittsburgh is just huge, and we knew that we didn't have that kind of space to work with. But in Montreal the layout worked really well, the spaces weren't overly large. The flow from coaching to training to equipment to the player lounge – it all worked really well. Stylistically Vancouver was the nicest. And they had a similar challenge to us because they re-did their room in an existing building. We took a little of all the places we saw, and brought it all back here to start working with our architects.

### *Did you encounter any major construction issues?*

I think we knew what we were in for. The challenge with these projects has always been time. Vancouver had well over a year to do it; Pittsburgh had three years, and they were building from scratch. Kim and Terry asked if we could do this. We asked our people, they said it would be tight. Even though it looks done now, we are still tweaking it. The issue was always time working against us, trying to make something that was world class and innovative in just five months.

### *How much input did players and management have?*

I met with several players towards the end of last season and on locker cleanout day. I had an opportunity to present my ideas to Terry, [Ryan Miller](#), [Jason Pominville](#) and [Nathan Gerbe](#). Ryan was very excited about the project and the direction it had taken. We'd already had a few different floor plans at that time, so everybody wanted to take a peek at what we wanted to do. We also got a lot of input from Darcy (Regier) and Lindy (Ruff) because they were around all summer. We did our best to get them involved

early. Then we worked with the coaching and equipment staffs. The players had input, but those are the guys who will be working in the spaces and they had the most direct input. There was a lot of back and forth throughout summer.

***Did you go through several versions of the layout?***

Absolutely. For example, in the early stages working with Cannon Design (of Grand Island, NY), I would guess that we went through dozens of different ways of how the team would get to the ice from the locker room. When we got to something that was close to our final plan, we knew that we were creating a locker room facility that would have a dynamic entrance to the ice where we were able to showcase the history of the team.

***Who came up with the historical concept for the entrance?***

That was my idea. My background is in exhibit design so I've done things like this in the past. In working with Cannon, the story I was trying to tell is that when the players are in the locker room, there are no ties to the past. That's their room, and they feel like they own it. Then as they left the room, they'd walk through the history of the franchise. It takes them through time and shows them where they are coming from. But there are also empty areas for future recognition. This way they can experience the past, but also realize that there's room for them on that wall in the future.

***Whose idea was the fireplace in the lounge?***

That idea came from Cannon. Kim liked it when she first saw it, and I loved it. The idea is that the lounge is a home away from home. A lot of these guys have fireplaces in their own homes. When they are sitting around talking and relaxing with each other, you want to make them feel as comfortable at the rink as they are at home. They also have an Xbox back there with other homey items, so it's just a way to fill out the room and make it unique at the same time. It was the architect's choice, but something that the team really liked.

***You've done all this in four months – how long should it have taken?***

Probably about a year. Vancouver took over a year. But for me personally, this was the greatest professional experience I've ever had. To work closely with Lindy, Darcy, the players, the ownership to creatively tell stories – you can't beat it. It's been a lot of weekends and late nights. Even though I've been telling a lot of the story, Stan (Makowski) has been there with me from the beginning. If we only had three and half months to do it, we'd still get it done. It's been truly amazing, and the reaction to everything has been overwhelming and rewarding at the same time. It's really been worth it.

## Myers, Regehr make quite a pair

Bill Hoppe

Niagara Gazette

October 14, 2011

BUFFALO — Newcomer Robyn Regehr and Tyler Myers have quickly jelled on the ice for the Buffalo Sabres. Right now, just two games into the season, they look like a formidable No. 1 defense tandem for the team. The duo hasn't spent much time together away from the rink, though. So earlier this week, Regehr invited Myers over for dinner.

He figured they'd bond. Myers could meet his family, see his new home in Buffalo. But Regehr called too late. Myers was already cooking for himself.

"I think we're doing a rain check," Regehr said Thursday after the 2-0 Sabres prepared for tonight's home opener at the First Niagara Center against the Carolina Hurricanes.

They'll eventually enjoy a dinner. Heck, in a few months, the two might know each other like brothers. If Sabres coach Lindy Ruff gets his wish, Regehr will rarely leave Myers' side.

"I would like them to last together a whole year together like (Henrik) Tallinder and Myers stayed together," Ruff said about his top duo two years ago. "That would be ideal. There may be some offensive situations where you may see two offensive (defensemen), (Andrej) Sekera or (Marc-Andre) Gragnani going with Myers if we're down or if we need some offense.

"But that's a pair that we'd love to see stay together."

When the Sabres acquired Regehr, 31, from Calgary in June, Ruff said he wanted the respected veteran to play with the talented Myers, 21.

During his Calder Trophy campaign, Myers dazzled beside Tallinder from Day One. Then, after the Swede left in free agency, Myers stumbled much of last season with several new partners.

By March, Myers had regained his old form beside youngster Chris Butler, who was later dealt for Regehr. Clearly, though, Myers thrives with a permanent, veteran partner.

"To play with Hank all 82 games of the year, it helped me out a lot (as a rookie)," Myers said. "It made it easier for me to get used to playing with one person. Last year, we were switched around the entire season, so I kind of got used to that. I've kind of had a taste of both, but it's definitely nice when you have a constant partner to develop that chemistry with."

Despite their hulking size — Myers is a lanky 6-foot-8 and 222 pounds, while Regehr is a thick 6-foot-3 and 225 pounds — the defensemen have different styles.

Myers is a dynamic skater and puck-rusher, an offensive defenseman by any definition. Regehr is more of a stay-at-home defender, someone who's a beast for opponents in the defensive zone.

Together, Ruff believes he's created "a defense pair that we think has some offense to it and a pair that



can play against any top line.”

“I told (Myers), ‘If you want to get up ice, go ahead, feel free if you think the opportunity is right for you,’” Regehr said. “I think for me I feel more comfortable around the back and making sure everything’s OK and protecting that middle of the ice.”

Myers began showcasing a fearless, rough-and-tumble game during the postseason. Now, Ruff hopes Regehr’s attributes — his stick work, how hard he is on skills players down low — will further Myers’ development.

“I understand he’s a bigger, stronger man than Tyler right now,” Ruff said. “But the small things in the game are the things you want to rub off.”

Regehr’s style has been rubbing off on Myers for more than a decade. As a boy growing up in Calgary, Myers looked up to Regehr. Why?

“It’s just the same thing that I see now,” Myers explained. “It’s just the intensity he brings when he plays, especially in the D-zone. I think he’s one of the most hardworking, intense players in the D-zone that I’ve seen. I think that’s something I can really learn from.”

Myers even attended a Christmas party last decade with Regehr and three other future Sabres teammates — Jordan Leopold, Toni Lydman and Steve Montador.

Regehr felt “a little bit old” when he found out.

“I said to him, ‘Wait about 10 years and you’ll probably be in the same situation dealing with younger players coming in,’” Regehr said. “It was flattering to hear that from Tyler. ...It’s something we had a good chuckle about.”

It probably won’t be their last, either.

“To have a chance to play with him after watching him all those years in Calgary, it’s pretty funny actually when you look at it,” Myers said. “I’m very lucky to have a guy like that next to me.”

### **Some quotable Ruff:**

On the excitement in the city surrounding the team: “There’s a buzz everywhere, it doesn’t matter where. Anybody you bump into is talking about the team, expectations. I don’t know if it’s ever been this high before. I think it’s probably a little bit out of proportion, but it’s great to have. It’s a great place to be.”

On the high expectations: “We’ve talked about as a team, wrap your arms around what’s going on, embrace it. At the same time, we have to be a team that wants to continue to get better night to night.”

## Adam Emerges For Sabres

Matt Spielman

The Post-Journal

October 14, 2011

Two games into the season Luke Adam is the de facto No. 1 center for the Buffalo Sabres.

Did the organization expect that entering the 2011-12 campaign? Probably not. Will the team accept that on its depth chart this early in the season? I would assume so.

The 2010-11 Dudley (Red) Garrett Memorial Award as the AHL's outstanding rookie has ascended quickly through the Sabres' minor league system. Adam played four full seasons in the Quebec Major Junior Hockey League from 2006-2010, amassing 90 points in 56 games during his final season before jumping up to the Portland Pirates for the playoffs in 2010. The 6-foot-2-inch center then scored 62 points, including 29 goals, in 57 games in the AHL while also tallying four points in 19 games with the Sabres last season as a 20-year-old.

"I learned a lot from guys like Matt Ellis and Mark Parrish. Mark Mancari was there," Adam said recently about his American Hockey League experience. "I look back and it was a huge year for myself."

This past offseason, Adam joined other Sabres youngsters at the now-annual Traverse City prospect tournament and centered the most impressive line there with Marcus Foligno and Zack Kassian. Fans on message boards from some of the other teams at the tournament complained that Adam shouldn't be allowed to compete because he played with the Sabres in 2010, but some players on the other teams were actually two or three years older than Buffalo's second-round pick in the 2008 entry draft.

"Ever since the end of last year my goal has been to play on this hockey team," Adam said. "I took it one day at a time this summer, one day at a time throughout training camp just trying to get better and better every day. Fortunately enough I found myself on the opening-day roster. There's a lot of work ahead to stay here."

So far this season, Adam has looked right at home between seven-year veterans Jason Pominville and Thomas Vanek. It is by no accident that head coach Lindy Ruff has surrounded the raw talent of Adam with leadership in Pominville, who was named the captain while the team was overseas in Finland, and by Vanek, who was named one of four assistant captains.

"Both 'Van' and 'Pommer' are both great players," Adam said. "For myself to be fortunate enough to be given the opportunity to play with those guys. It makes the game a lot easier for me. It's early in the season. we can't forget that."

While in Europe, Adam assisted on two of the wingers' goals in a 4-1 win over Anaheim in Helsinki, and found the back of the net twice in the Sabres' 4-2 victory over the Los Angeles Kings in Berlin. Adam's second goal came on a tap-in after a great pass from Vanek.

"Both our goals came from great battles down low," Adam said. "Vanek's a special player and he's really got the work ethic, too, to make those plays."

The native of St. John's, Newfoundland and Labrador, was named the first star of the game in Berlin.

While Derek Roy came into the season annointed as the team's "No. 1 center," he is still working his way back from a gruesome leg injury suffered last season and a nagging shoulder injury sustained in the preseason and may take some time to get back up to full speed. Ville Leino was signed in the offseason to add some depth down the middle, but if Adam can prove he belongs in the middle of Buffalo's top line throughout this season it will go a long way toward showing that the Sabres are a team to be reckoned with in the Eastern Conference and the National Hockey League.

## Getting Set for the Sabres!

WKBW

October 14, 2011

BUFFALO, NY ( WKBW ) The season home opener for the Buffalo Sabres is tonight at the First Niagara Center in downtown Buffalo.

Our hometown team takes on the Carolina Hurricanes. The puck drops at 7:30p.m.

Don't have a ticket to the game? No problem, you can enjoy the excitement from the "Party On The Plaza" outside the Arena. The festivities kick off around 5p.m...and Channel 7's Eyewitness News will be there with complete coverage.

Channel 7's Jaclyn Asztalos spent the morning at the First Niagara Center showing off what's new for the team and the fans. Click the video to check it out!

The Buffalo Sabres website has more from NHL.com on the matchup with the Hurricanes:

Season Series: It's the first of four meetings between the teams this season. The Sabres and Hurricanes split their games last season, with all four decided by one goal.

Big Story: After kicking off the regular season in Europe with victories over the Anaheim Ducks and Los Angeles Kings, the Sabres can expect a tumultuous welcome as they return to Western New York for their home opener at the renamed First Niagara Center. The Hurricanes, meanwhile, are coming off their first win of the season -- a 3-2 home win over the defending champion Boston Bruins. This is the first of a four-game trip for the 'Canes.

Team Scope:

Hurricanes: Carolina was still in search of its first win of 2011-12 when the reigning Stanley Cup champions invaded the RBC Center on Wednesday night. Cam Ward, who guided the Canes to their only Stanley Cup championship back in 2005-06, found a way to give his team the jolt it needed to break the ice on the new season. Ward stopped 26 shots and Carolina got third-period goals by Anthony Stewart and Jiri Tlustý to hold off the Bruins for their first win in four games.

With a four-game trip coming up, Ward knew the 'Canes desperately needed a win.

“We're talking about the fourth game of the year, but we did treat it like a must-win game,” Ward said. “It's important that we get a win and feel good about ourselves and know what it's like to win hockey games. We can build from a game like this. There are a lot of great positives that you can take away from it.”

Sabres: The Sabres are used to getting strong goaltending from Ryan Miller -- and they got it during their wins against Anaheim and Los Angeles in Europe, with Miller allowing just three goals. The good news was that the offense generated eight goals -- four in each game.

Thomas Vanek set the tone with two goals in Buffalo's season-opening 4-1 win in Helsinki, and rookie Luke Adam scored twice in a 2:20 span to pace Buffalo to a 4-2 win over Los Angeles in Berlin to complete an impressive sweep.

Coach Lindy Ruff was impressed by his team's balanced effort in both games, but knows his team must get back to the basics in order to carry over the positive momentum to its home opener in Buffalo.

"One thing we've talked about as a team is to wrap our arms around everything that's going on and embrace it, but at the same time, we have to be a team that wants to continue to get better from night to night," Ruff said. "At the end of the year, we want to improve on our numbers. The attention to detail in the two games overseas was good, but we can't play a different game when we get back home. We need to play a game where we're paying attention to our system and how we play, and the score will take care of itself.

Who's Hot: Vanek paced Buffalo's power-play attack during the team's trip to Europe, notching two goals with the extra man and five points overall in two games. ... Last year's Calder Trophy recipient, Jeff Skinner, has shown no signs of a sophomore slump early on this season. The 19-year-old forward has five points in four games.

Injury Report: Buffalo forward Jochen Hecht (head) remains questionable. ... The Hurricanes are healthy.

Stat Pack: Stewart (26 games) and Plusty (20 games) both ended lengthy dry spells by scoring against Boston. Carolina surrendered five power-play goals in 13 tries before holding Boston scoreless on five tries. ... The Sabres haven't won their first three games since opening the 2008-09 season by going 4-0-0.

Puck Drop: With new owner Terry Pegula providing the kind of financial resources the Sabres haven't had, expectations are high in Buffalo. The two-game sweep in the Compuware NHL Premiere series has only whetted the fans' appetites for the Stanley Cup the Sabres haven't been able to win since entering the NHL in 1970.

The players were glad to get a few days off to get re-accustomed to the time differential.

"It's not easy coming back [from Europe] with the time change and it wasn't easy going over there, but now we're fine after some days to rest up," captain Jason Pominville said. "There's a lot more buzz around the city and around this team."

## **Canes get first win, 3-2 over Bruins**

Chip Alexander

News & Observer

October 13, 2011

RALEIGH -- The Carolina Hurricanes are no longer winless. In fact, the Canes have a win over the defending Stanley Cup champions.

Joni Pitkanen, Anthony Stewart and Jiri Tlustý scored the goals and Cam Ward got the job done in net Wednesday as the Canes topped the Boston Bruins 3-2 at the RBC Center. Ward had 26 saves, the Canes blocked 22 shots and stopped all five Boston power plays.

"I thought we had played three good, solid games but just hadn't gotten the win," Tlustý said of the Canes' 0-2-1 start. "We stuck with the plan. It paid off today. We worked hard, we did the little things and it paid off for us.

"You look at (the Bruins) and they have almost the same team as they had last year. You always try to beat those best teams. I think they played very well, too, but I think we outworked them."

Stewart scored his first goal as a Hurricane at 3:42 of the third to push the Canes ahead 2-0, but Tyler Seguin answered for the Bruins just 25 seconds later. Tlustý's goal, with 6:28 left in regulation, pushed the lead to 3-1.

Tlustý had a similar shot in the first minute of the game but was stopped by Tim Thomas. He also was called for a high-sticking penalty in the second period with the Canes leading 1-0.

Boston's Brad Marchand scored on a delayed penalty against the Canes with 3:25 left in the third as the Bruins (1-3-0) had an extra attacker. Marchand beat Ward with a shot from the right circle.

Allen had seven blocks and Jay Harrison five for the Canes. Allen and Tim Gleason each were plus-2 for the game and Canes coach Paul Maurice said Allen deserved to be one of the game's three stars.

"I thought our defense played a real hard game tonight," Maurice said.

The Canes made one lineup change, inserting defenseman Jamie McBain for rookie Justin Faulk. McBain had 19:05 in ice time in his first game of the season.

"I really liked Jamie McBain coming in after three games watching," Maurice said.

Pitkanen's power-play goal in the opening minute of the second period gave the Canes a 1-0 lead.

The Canes began the second with 48 seconds remaining in a power play and with fresh ice. Pitkanen had the puck on the right wing, took a look, took another look and finally took the shot. With Eric Staal screening Thomas, Pitkanen earned his first goal of the season.

Tomas Kaberle, who helped the Bruins win the Stanley Cup last year, assisted on the goal and picked up his first point as a Hurricane.

After the goal, the Canes had to kill off three penalties. Thlusty was called for the high-sticking, the Canes were called for too many men on the ice and then Chad LaRose for hooking.

The Canes then went on the power play when Johnny Boychuk crashed into Ward and was called for goaltender interference. Kaberle had an open shot between the circles but Thomas made the stop.

Late in the first, Skinner drew a penalty on the Bruins' Chris Kelly, got off a shot and then was put in a choke-hold by Adam McQuaid. Only Kelly went to the box with 1:12 left in the period.

The Canes didn't score on the power play before the period ended, but Pitkanen struck early in the second.

"We were real close the first three games," the Canes' Brandon Sutter said. "We managed to pull it off. A couple of big goals, big saves, and it's kind of the difference between that game and the first couple."

## Checkers owner invests in Canes

Chip Alexander

News & Observer

October 13, 2011

RALEIGH -- The relationship of the Carolina Hurricanes and Charlotte Checkers now goes beyond being cross-state hockey affiliates.

On Thursday, Hurricanes majority owner Peter Karmanos Jr. announced that Michael Kahn had become an ownership partner in the NHL team. Kahn is the Checkers' owner and said he was eager to accept Karmanos' offer to invest in the Hurricanes.

"I think the time was right (to invest)," Kahn said. "Honestly, when (Karmanos) decided he wanted to look for investors, when the opportunity presented itself, I was pretty much right there. And I'm sure other people will join in."

In a visit to Raleigh a few weeks ago, Karmanos said he had completed the sale of \$20 million in equity of the Hurricanes, a franchise he valued at \$240 million. He said there were seven or eight investors but did not name them.

The financial terms of Kahn's minority investment were not disclosed. No other investors have been announced.

The Checkers are in their second season as the Hurricanes' American Hockey League affiliate, but Kahn said there were other reasons for becoming a partner.

"My commitment to hockey shows that hockey is important to me," he said. "I believe in what Mr. Karmanos and (general manager) Mr. (Jim) Rutherford are putting together, and I'm doing this for hockey in the Carolinas and hockey in the South. I really think this sport is on the cusp of getting bigger."

The Hurricanes made their first appearance in Charlotte last month, playing the Winnipeg Jets in an exhibition at Time Warner Cable Arena and drawing a crowd of more than 10,000. The Canes' Eric Staal, Jeff Skinner and Cam Ward also came in a day early to participate in the Fan Fest.

Kahn called the event a "huge success." He said the Canes playing a preseason game annually in Charlotte is something that's being "definitely considered," though he noted a game would not be scheduled next season because of the Democratic National Convention in Charlotte.

Karmanos could not be reached for comment.



Kahn was born and raised in Atlanta and has been involved in a family-owned wine and spirits business much of his life. He's the chief operating officer of Empire Distributors Inc., which was founded by his grandfather.

Kahn said his love of hockey was sparked, in part, as a young fan of the Atlanta Flames before the NHL franchise was relocated to Calgary in 1980.

"I still have my old Flames paraphernalia," he said.

Kahn said he has been a Hurricanes season-ticket holder for the past 10 years and attended the season opener against the Tampa Bay Lightning and Wednesday's game against the Boston Bruins. Now, he's an investor and partner.

"We felt with the relationship of the Checkers and the Hurricanes, this was a little deeper and could be more meaningful," he said. "This should provide more transparency to the relationship between the Checkers and Hurricanes."

Kahn said he was optimistic about the Canes' season. Carolina, which missed the Stanley Cup playoffs the past two years, was 0-2-1 before a 3-2 win Wednesday night against the Boston Bruins, the defending Stanley Cup champions.

"It's a marathon, not a sprint," he said. "I think there's a lot of talent. We have some good young kids and Cam Ward might have been the best goalie in hockey last year. I think we'll come around. I think we've got a good thing started."

## **Murphy returned to junior team**

Chip Alexander

News & Observer

October 14, 2011

RALEIGH -- Defenseman Ryan Murphy won't be making the jump from junior hockey to the NHL at age 18 this season.

The Carolina Hurricanes on Thursday returned Murphy, their first-round draft pick this year, to the Kitchener Rangers of the Ontario Hockey League.

Murphy earned a spot on the Canes' 23-man roster for the regular season but did not play in any of the first four games. He had hoped to follow the path set last season by forward Jeff Skinner, a former Kitchener teammate who was the NHL's rookie of the year at 18.

"The fact that he went beyond the start of the season with us as an 18-year-old defenseman is really exceptional and tells what we think of him," general manager Jim Rutherford said Thursday of Murphy. "We feel him staying with us an extra week and participating in practice and seeing regular-season games, getting a feel for the tempo of games and the tempo of practices, will help him this season and help in his development."

Murphy, from Aurora, Ont., was the 12th overall pick of the 2011 NHL Entry Draft and was arguably the best offensive defenseman in the draft.

"Obviously I've learned a lot," Murphy said. "I found out what it's like to be a professional hockey player but I guess it's time to go back down to junior for another year.

"I wish I had gotten in a game to see what it's like in the regular season, but that wasn't up to me and I'm happy with what I've done. I learned a lot. It's a lot faster, a lot quicker, but I'll work hard and see where that takes me."

The numbers on the back end worked against Murphy. The Canes went into the regular season with nine defensemen and Justin Faulk, a 19-year-old rookie, emerged as one of the surprises of training camp and played in the first three games.

Canes coach Paul Maurice said Murphy, slightly built at 5-11 and 176 pounds, had a chance to "see the next shift gear" between exhibition games and regular-season games. He also said he was impressed with Murphy's willingness to work on and off the ice.

"He's going to be a good player for a long time but I don't think he's quite ready," Maurice said. "But he's a heck of a draft pick."

Murphy created a bit of a stir Wednesday night after the Canes' 3-2 win over the Boston Bruins when he tweeted, "Had a great run, learned lots. Time to return to one of my favorite cities. #great ride."

Asked Thursday about breaking the news of his return to Kitchener, Murphy smiled.

"I didn't realize that," he said. "I guess that's not good then?"

No complaints from the Canes, who sent out an announcement Thursday.

Maurice said there are times when a player is sent back to junior with a glaring weakness to be addressed. Not so with Murphy, he said.

"He needs to get stronger and faster and that's just due to his age," Maurice said. "His work ethic and his conditioning are good. There's not huge holes there."