



# **Buffalo Sabres**

## **Daily Press Clips**

*Tuesday, November 08, 2011*

## **Sabres' Miller is ready to play when needed**

*Goalie for Jets is not announced.*

John Vogl

The Buffalo News

November 8, 2011

Ryan Miller has an explicit desire to return to the Sabres' net and the victory column.

*A very explicit desire.*

The Buffalo goaltender, stuck in a four-game losing streak, hasn't played since getting pulled six minutes into Wednesday's 3-2 loss to Philadelphia. He stayed on the bench Friday and Saturday as Jhonas Enroth earned back-to-back victories, the first time in nearly five years Miller watched consecutive games while healthy.

"I'm here to win," Miller said Monday. "That's the emotion you get from me. If I'm discouraged, if I'm [ticked] off, that's just how it is. I want to win. I don't want to be out there getting scored on. I don't want to be pulled out of a game. I want to, you know, I want to [expletive] win the game."

Unlike last season's playoff series against the Flyers -- when Miller literally said, "I really don't give an expletive" -- the word-measuring goalie dropped the f-bomb, an outward sign of the passion percolating beneath the face of the franchise. Believe it or not, there's a chance of an even bigger bombshell coming.

The Sabres host Winnipeg tonight in First Niagara Center, and neither Miller nor coach Lindy Ruff would divulge who will be in goal.

"I'm not going to go there," Miller said. "You want to play. My last outing wasn't the way you like to leave the ice. You want to go out and do your job, and the next chance I get I'll be ready."

"I'm just trying to do everything that's in my control. You can't always control what happens in front of you or the coach's decision or anything. You just have to react to it. Goaltenders are judged on how they react, whether it's the puck going in or if they make the save, or if they get pulled out of the game or when they get put back in. It's all about how you react. I'm just trying to do my best to be ready to react in a way that helps this club."

Lately, it's been Enroth helping the most. The rookie is 4-0 and ranks third in the NHL in goals-against average (1.41) and save percentage (.952). Miller, who started 4-1 with a 1.61 GAA and .950 save percentage, has put up 3.91 and .874 totals during his four-game slide.

"Jhonas proved he can go out and do the job. I've proven I can do the job," Miller said. "We're going to try and do our best to work together and win. It's not always going to be me who's called upon. I can live with that, but I'm going to want to be called upon."

While Ruff said he's not ready to have the keepers share the net, the fact it's come up is a change in standard operating procedure. Ruff said in training camp he planned to give Enroth 20 to 25 starts, but no one figured Nos. 3 and 4 would be on back-to-back nights a month into the season.

"I just tried to take it in stride," Miller said. "It's part of a career. It's not always going to be roses. It's not always going to be perfect. I've got to show that I can be ready when called upon, tapped, and not let past performances or bad bounces or bad goals or however things come up affect the next shot.

"We got a solid win [Friday], and Jhonas played well. It's not all that surprising. But for me, I pride myself on being able to get back in net, get back in the saddle. To have to wait about a week for that is not ideal for me. I'm going to do my best when Lindy tells me it's time to go."

The rest of the Sabres spent Monday steering clear of the issue.

"It's a non-issue in here," left wing Thomas Vanek said. "Depth is important to win in this league, and it's at goaltending, too. If Jhonas can come in and give Ryan a break and he can regroup, how great is that? I don't think there's an issue at all."

Added captain Jason Pominville: "All I can say is when they both play, they both give us a chance to win. It's fun to have a one and two goalie like that who you can rely on every night."

Ruff said he's informed the goaltenders of their schedule for the week, which includes tonight's game against the Jets, Friday's home game against Ottawa, Saturday's visit to Boston and Monday's game in Montreal.

Of course, the schedule is subject to change.

"I have deviated from the schedule three times this year: once in Europe, once in Florida and this recent week," Ruff said. "Just like last week, they know what games they're going to play, but there's always a possibility at the end of your schedule you can tweak it one way or the other."

He doesn't mind that Miller got a bit tweaked because of the recent altering.

"There's a lot of fire there," Ruff said. "He's emotional about his game, and that's what you like. I like him the way he is."

## **Jeanneret to take a well-deserved bow**

Mike Harrington  
The Buffalo News  
November 8, 2011

Rick Jeanneret is a Hall of Fame broadcaster by any account but he's always wanted to hold off on those kind of accolades during his career.

But he had a change of heart over the summer and gets a reward for it tonight when he finally accepts induction into the Buffalo Sabres Hall of Fame.

Jeanneret will be inducted in pregame ceremonies at First Niagara Center along with former Sabres center Dale Hawerchuk, who played in Buffalo from 1990-95 and is now in his second season as coach of the Ontario Hockey League's Barrie Colts. Hawerchuk was also a former No. 1 overall pick and star during the 1980s for tonight's opponent, the Winnipeg Jets.

"I had a lot of people asking me to do it," Jeanneret said Monday. "I didn't have anything against it, I just always thought I would wait until I was all done before I accepted any offers. But for various reasons, I stopped and thought about it again [this offseason] and I agreed that this was a time to do it."

Jeanneret has scaled back some of his travel this season, his 40th with the Sabres. But he's as popular as ever with fans.

"I'm just going to talk for a couple of minutes to them and I've always felt I have a nice rapport with the fans," he said. "I don't have to say a lot. Not a lot of words are needed for my gratefulness to them and what they mean. Believe me, they mean an awful lot to me."

Jeanneret said this honor is huge for him because he joins the late Ted Darling, his longtime broadcast partner, in the Hall among so many others he's worked with over the years.

"It's Ted but so many other people I've been involved with," he said. "Ex-players, organization people, so many friends. Look at someone like Jim Lorentz [the former player and longtime broadcaster inducted last year]. That was another reason. Once I got to the point where I said, 'OK, it's time to do this, RJ,' then I kind of grasped how great it would be."

Jeanneret will have many family members in attendance, including his 91-year-old mother, who lives near him in Niagara Falls, Ont. In addition to displays in the Center pavilion, he and Hawerchuk will join the new display on the runway leading from the Sabres' locker room to the ice. Jeanneret will make his speech and then take his normal perch in the MSG booth.

"The Sabres really came up big. Again," Jeanneret said. "I was given the option of not doing the game but I'm being installed in the Sabres Hall of Fame and then don't broadcast the game? That doesn't fly. I'll be there. I might not make the opening faceoff but I'll do 90 percent."

Now with his blessing, the Greater Buffalo Sports Hall of Fame will likely call Jeanneret's name. The Hockey Hall of Fame in Toronto has to be in line, too.

"I'm not dwelling on that but I would think I will be considered along the line some day," he said. "And if that comes to be, I am certainly willing to stand up and accept that award.

"The Hockey Hall of Fame in Toronto would really be great. No doubt about it. But to be honest, the icing on the cake is to be honored here in Buffalo."

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Jochen Hecht is starting another return process, as the concussed forward skated alone after practice Monday. It was his first appearance in more than a week. Coach Lindy Ruff termed Hecht "symptom-free."

Tyler Ennis is getting close to skating on his injured ankle but his return remains on a week-to-week basis.

Ennis will likely skate in the next day or two.

"Usually with that type of injury, it's a light skate to see how it feels and you judge from there," Ruff said. "It's doing good off ice but the on-ice part is the part you need to test."

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Winnipeg will be on the final leg of a seven-game road trip tonight -- its longest of the season -- and will be making its first visit to Buffalo since Nov. 5, 1995. The Jets, the former Atlanta Thrashers, fell to 3-2-1 on the trip with Sunday's 3-0 loss to the New York Rangers.

## Seven-game road trip for Jets ends against Sabres

Brian Hunter

NHL.com

November 7, 2011

**JETS (5-7-2) at SABRES (8-5-0)**

**TV: TSN-JETS, MSG-B**

**Last 10:** Winnipeg 4-4-2; Buffalo 6-4-0

**Season Series:** First of four meetings and the initial matchup between the Sabres and the new Jets. Last season, the Sabres won three of four against the franchise's predecessor, the Thrashers, with 13 different players netting at least one goal. [Tyler Ennis](#) led the way with 3 goals and [Ryan Miller](#) was in net for each game.

**Big Story:** When the announcement was made that Winnipeg would regain a franchise for the 2011-12 season, fans in Manitoba could hardly wait to see the Jets in action. Early on, though, they've been watching the team mostly on television. Entering Tuesday, the Jets and Blues had played an NHL-low four home games to this point -- St. Louis hosts Chicago, so Winnipeg will hold that distinction by itself at the end of the night. The good news is this stop marks the end on a seven-game road trip for the Jets, who play four of their next five at the MTS Centre.

### **Team Scope:**

**Jets:** Regardless of what happens Tuesday, it's fair to say Winnipeg acquitted itself well on its lengthy trip. The Jets got it started with a wild 9-8 win over the Flyers and are 3-2-1 through the first six games. However, they stumbled a bit over the weekend. After rallying from a two-goal, third-period deficit Saturday only to fall to the Devils in overtime, they were blanked 3-0 on Sunday night by the Rangers. [Ondrej Pavelec](#) dueled Martin Biron to a scoreless stalemate for the first half of the game before allowing a pair of goals on 24 shots. The final goal was into an empty net.

"I thought Pavelec did a heck of a job getting us in the game and keeping us in the game," coach Claude Noel said. "We looked tired. We didn't have much energy. I think our team wore down from back-to-back games."

**Sabres:** This continues a stretch during which Buffalo plays seven of eight on home ice. In the one game away from HSBC Arena, the Sabres gutted out a six-round shootout victory over the Senators on Saturday, finally prevailing 3-2 when [Derek Roy](#) got the puck past Craig Anderson. Roy, who was struggling with just 1 goal in 12 games coming in, also scored in regulation along with [Jordan Leopold](#). [Jhonas Enroth](#) improved to 4-0-0 while starting for the second night in a row.

"It's not an easy decision to make because we need both guys going," coach Lindy Ruff said. "I think Jhonas has stepped in and played well, his numbers are good and just on a hunch I decided to give him

back-to-back games."

**Who's Hot:** With backup [Chris Mason](#) sidelined, Pavelec has started every game on the Jets' trip. He stumbled against the Flyers, but has posted a .949 save percentage since. ... Enroth has already matched Miller in victories while posting a 1.41 goals-against average and .952 save percentage.

**Injury Report:** A strained groin has Mason on injured reserve for Winnipeg along with defensemen [Tobias Enstrom](#) (broken collarbone), [Ron Hainsey](#) (upper body) and [Derek Meech](#) (lower body), and forward [Eric Fehr](#) (shoulder). Defenseman [Randy Jones](#) (ankle) and forward [Nik Antropov](#) (hand) are day-to-day. ... Ennis has missed the Sabres' last five games with an ankle sprain, while forward [Jochen Hecht](#) is on injured reserve with a concussion.

**Stat Pack:** Antropov has missed the last two games for the Jets and was one of their hottest players when he went down, registering 2 goals and 6 assists over his last half-dozen contests. ... The Sabres started the week as the third-best team in 5-on-5 play, averaging 1.37 goals for every goal they allowed. Only the Capitals (1.41) and Oilers (1.38) were better.

**Puck Drop:** Roy averaged 71 points a season from 2006-10 and was a point-per-game player last season before a torn quadriceps sidelined him until Game 7 of Buffalo's first-round series loss to Philadelphia. He's battled some minor ailments and inconsistency early this season and was thrilled to contribute in Saturday's victory over Ottawa.

"It's been coming for a while," Roy said. "I've been missing a lot of chances, some glorious opportunities. But tonight it was great to get a goal for the team and help win the game."

## **Winnipeg (5-7-2) at Buffalo (8-5-0)**

Mike Lipka

STATS

November 7, 2011

The [Winnipeg Jets](#) will finish their longest road trip of the season Tuesday night, and they'll have the chance to make it a very successful one.

It remains to be seen if [Ryan Miller](#) gets an opportunity to end a far less prosperous stretch.

[Buffalo Sabres](#) coach Lindy Ruff won't reveal whether the struggling Miller or the red-hot [Jhonas Enroth](#) will be in net against the Jets.

Miller was sharp to begin the season, winning four of his first five starts - including two victories in Europe, a 40-save performance in a 3-1 win at Montreal and a shutout at Florida.

### [AdChoices](#)

Since then, however, the 2010 Vezina Trophy winner is 0-4-0 with a 3.91 goals-against average, including three home defeats. In his last appearance, he was pulled after allowing three goals on 11 shots in just 6:23 during Wednesday's 3-2 loss to Philadelphia.

Enroth started for Buffalo (8-5-0) on Friday and Saturday, beating Calgary and Ottawa to improve to 4-0-0 with a 1.41 GAA. Miller, who's averaged more than 66 starts the last four seasons, isn't used to sitting on the bench for back-to-back games, and he showed some emotion after Monday's practice.

"I want to win," Miller said. "I don't want to be out there getting scored on. I don't want to be pulled out of a game. I want to (expletive) win the game.

"I pride myself on being able to get back in net, get back in the saddle," he added. "To have to wait about a week for that is not ideal for me, but I'm going to do my best when Lindy tells me it's time to go."

Ruff said he's told his goaltenders when that will be, but he won't announce the schedule publicly.

"Winnipeg is here, and they're listening, and that makes their job a little bit easier," Ruff said. "I'm not going to make their job easier."

Buffalo's first meeting with the Jets may present a good opportunity to get Miller back in net.

Miller went 11-2-5 with a 2.50 GAA against the Atlanta Thrashers, stopping 69 of 72 shots during a pair of home victories last season.

“My game’s not that far off,” said Miller, who’s never lost five straight starts in regulation. “It’s a question of doing the little things and getting back to what makes me a successful goaltender. Sometimes the difference is very minuscule between winning and losing, and making a save or letting a puck go by.”

The Jets (5-7-2) couldn’t get any pucks past [New York Rangers](#) backup [Martin Biron](#) on Sunday, losing 3-0 and getting shut out for the second time on their seven-game road trip.

They’re still 3-2-1 on the trek, and finishing it with a victory would go even further toward helping them bounce back from a disappointing start.

“I think it’s been a positive trip for us, but this next game is so huge,” defenseman [Mark Stuart](#) said. “This next game is the biggest one by far.”

If [Ondrej Pavelec](#) starts his seventh consecutive game on the trip, he’ll try to overcome a rough history in Buffalo. He’s 0-2-1 with a 3.79 GAA overall against the Sabres, having allowed seven goals in four periods in western New York.

Winnipeg hopes [Nik Antropov](#) will be available after the team’s leader with 11 points missed the last two contests with a hand injury.

## **JUST ANOTHER MANIC MONDAY**

Kevin Snow

Sabres.com

November 7, 2011

The Buffalo Sabres returned to First Niagara Center for practice on Monday, with much of the attention focused on goaltender Ryan Miller. Head coach Lindy Ruff surprised many observers when he started Jhonas Enroth on Saturday in Ottawa, keeping Miller in a backup role for a second straight game. Enroth backstopped the Sabres to a 3-2 shootout win, improving his record to 4-0-0 along with a 1.41 GAA and .952 save percentage.

Miller said he was informed of the move by Ruff on team's flight to Ottawa on Friday night. While he was somewhat surprised by it, Miller said he took the change in stride.

"It's part of a career. It's not always going to be roses, not going to be perfect," said Miller. "I've gotta show that I can be ready when called upon, and not let past performances, bad bounces or bad goals or however things come up, affect me on the next shot.

Miller hasn't been in the Sabres net since the team fell behind 3-0 in the first seven minutes against Philadelphia last Tuesday. For Miller, the biggest adjustment in this process has been trying to get used to having some much time in between game action. He's expected to get the start tomorrow against Winnipeg, and he's more than ready to get back between the pipes.

"I always try to use my time to the best of my abilities, and this week's no different. We had practice time, and we also had some down time when I did what I could to just relax. My last outing wasn't the way you like to leave the ice. You want to go out and do your job. The next chance I get I'll be ready."

Ruff said that having a goaltender of Enroth's capabilities on the bench can be viewed as a luxury for a team like the Sabres, who play a league-high 21 sets of back-to-back games this season.

"Considering we're the team that plays the most back-to-back games, it's a good thing for our team. You can stick a fresh goaltender in there that you know is going to play well in those situations. I think it gives us something that could put us almost on a level playing field against the teams that aren't playing back to back when we walk into their building. I look at it as an equalizer for us."

### **INJURY UPDATES**

Jochen Hecht skated on his own after practice today, and Ruff declared him as being "symptom free" again. He rode the stationary bike yesterday, and his workouts will continue to ramp up during the week ... Ruff said they hope to have Tyler Ennis back in skates this week, however he was cautious to give a definitive timetable for his return. Ennis hasn't had any problems working out off the ice since the injury, but being able to comfortably get his foot back into a skate will be the key.

## **SPECIAL NIGHT FOR HAWERCHUK**

### *Dale Hawerchuk gets Sabres Hall induction with Winnipeg in town*

Chris Ryndak

Sabres.com

November 7, 2011

Dale Hawerchuk is already a member of the Hockey Hall of Fame but he'll accept yet another honor for his illustrious playing career when he is inducted into the Buffalo Sabres Hall of Fame on Tuesday.

"I was in Buffalo for five years and I really enjoyed my time there," Hawerchuk said. "It's quite an honor. When people tell you they're going to put you in the Hall of Fame, you're speechless."

Hawerchuk and Sabres play-by-play announcer Rick Jeanneret will be inducted in a pre-game ceremony before the Sabres face-off against the Winnipeg Jets at the First Niagara Center. Now this isn't the same Jets franchise that Hawerchuk played nine seasons for in the 1980s (these Jets are the former Atlanta Thrashers), but he knows how important having an NHL team is to that city.

"Both teams are pretty close to my heart. It's very exciting that the Jets are back and Winnipeg's back," Hawerchuk, now 48 years old, said. "I know everybody in Winnipeg is really excited. It's a tough ticket to get."

Drafted first overall by the Jets in 1981, Hawerchuk went on to score 103 points as an 18-year-old rookie and won the Calder Memorial Trophy as the league's top rookie at the end of the season. He became the youngest player to reach the 100-point plateau and tallied 1,409 points over a 16-season career. Hawerchuk is currently 18th on the NHL's all-time points list. He was 10th at the time of his retirement in 1997.

It doesn't matter what size you are. The puck doesn't know who's bigger; it's a matter of who wants it more. I always played the game with that kind of edge. I wanted the puck more than my opponent. - Dale Hawerchuk

"My game was pretty, I'd say, tenacious on the puck. I always tried to play hungry," the 5-foot-11 Hawerchuk said. "I think it was just an aggressive game I had in the sense of puck pursuit. It doesn't matter what size you are. The puck doesn't know who's bigger; it's a matter of who wants it more. I always played the game with that kind of edge. I wanted the puck more than my opponent."

The Jets traded Hawerchuk and Brad May to Buffalo during the 1990 NHL Entry Draft for Phil Housley, Jeff Parker, Scott Arniel and Buffalo's first round draft pick, which turned out to be Keith Tkachuk.

"I think the only down part of the whole thing was they sent Scott Arniel back in the trade. Scott and I are pretty close. We played in junior together and we played a lot of years in Winnipeg together," Hawerchuk said. "It was kind of bittersweet that way. I really looked forward to the opportunity [to come to Buffalo]. I liked the hockey club they had, and I was looking forward to being a part of the Sabres."

In 385 games as a Sabre, Hawerchuk scored 110 goals and 385 points. His 275 assists in a Buffalo

uniform rank him eighth on the franchise's all-time assists list. He led the Sabres in scoring three times – 1990-91, 1991-92 and 1993-94. He was also the team's overall leader in goals (35), assists (51) and points (86) in the 1993-94 season.

The Buffalo teams Haverchuk played for were quite successful, making the playoffs in each of his five seasons. In fact, he missed the playoffs only once in his career – in 1989 with the Jets.

What Haverchuk really remembers about those Sabres teams from the early '90s, however, was their inability to stay healthy.

“In the playoffs, we'd always have key injuries. When you have key guys going down, it's always a challenge, especially in the playoffs,” he explains. “A big part of [becoming] Stanley Cup champions at the end of the day [is that] they stay healthy and they have enough depth. For us, I always felt like we had key guys going down just about every year.”

The 1993 Buffalo Sabres became the first incarnation of the team to advance out of the first round of the playoffs since 1983. Having lost to the Boston Bruins in three of their previous five playoff series, the '93 Sabres finally got over the hump and won the series in a four-game sweep.

Three of the games went into overtime. Haverchuk assisted on Yuri Khmylev's overtime goal in Game Three, and the series ended on Brad May's iconic “May Day” overtime goal in Game Four.

“It's funny because going into that series, we had lost I don't know how many in a row at the end of the year and everybody was counting us out,” Haverchuk said. The Sabres had in fact lost seven straight games at the end of the regular season. “And then we walked into the Boston series and swept them. We were playing really well. Really well.”

As Haverchuk remembers, however, the team quickly became “pretty decimated” by injuries to some of their key players like captain Pat LaFontaine, Alexander Mogilny and Doug Bodger. The Montreal Canadiens swept the next series, winning each of the four games by a score of 4-3 and then went on to win the Stanley Cup.

During that 1992-93 season, Haverchuk and LaFontaine set franchise records for assists in a season. LaFontaine assisted on 95 goals while Haverchuk recorded 80 helpers. Haverchuk attributes most of that success to a potent special teams unit.

“We had a wicked power play,” he said. “I think teams did not want to take penalties against us. As soon as we got on the powerplay, our whole building started jumping because they knew there were going to be some chances and good chances.”

Playing the point on that power play, Haverchuk said was able to distribute the puck to talented players like LaFontaine and Mogilny.

“We were pretty unselfish with the puck,” Haverchuk said. “We let the puck do the work. Nobody can skate as fast as you can move the puck.”

He left Buffalo in 1995 for St. Louis as a free agent, and retired as a member of the Philadelphia Flyers organization following the 1996-97 season. He was inducted into the Hockey Hall of Fame in 2001. Hawerchuk had his number retired by the Phoenix Coyotes organization in 2007 but the banner raised into the rafters bore the old Jets colors and logo. Hawerchuk is currently in his second season as the head coach of the Ontario Hockey League's Barrie Colts.

"I'm looking forward to the day [of the ceremony]," Hawerchuk said. "I keep thinking about something like this and it may be an honor to be recognized individually as a player, but it's really a team – a family – award. I wouldn't have had the success I had without my coaches and players and trainers and then the support of my family from my parents to my wife and kids. They've always been 100 per cent behind me."

## Miller ready to get back in goal

Pat Malacaro

WGR 550

November 7, 2011

Buffalo, NY (WGR550) -- Ryan Miller was animated on and off the ice following the Buffalo Sabres workout at First Niagara Center. The team had a spirited workout on the ice in downtown Buffalo that was capped off by a shootout drill that had Miller and Ville Leino fighting for the puck in the corner of the boards.

Miller made no mistake after practice that he is here to win games and get back to top form. The goalie found that he would back-up Jhonas Enroth out on the way to Ottawa last weekend. He said as much himself, adding that emotion is part of the game, and anger is one of those emotions. Whether it is getting upset after a loss or a goal going in, "that's the emotion you're gonna get from me...I wanna 'bleep-ing' win the game."

He said he was trying to "take it in stride." He continued:

*"It's part of a career, it's not always gonna be roses, it's not always gonna be perfect. I gotta show that I can, you know, be ready when called upon to and not let past performances, or bad bounces, or bad goals, or however things come up effect the next shot."*

Head coach Lindy Ruff told us that the goaltending schedule has been made up for the week, and that both goalies know the plan for the three-game week ahead. The bench boss would not let us in on the schedule, so we will have to wait until the morning skate tomorrow. Both he and Miller agreed that the team's #1 goalie isn't "that far off" from his top level of play. Whatever the case may be, Miller is trying not to let the discussion disrupt the mission at hand:

*"You can't always control what happens in front of you or coach's decision or anything, you just have to react to it. Goaltenders are judged on how they react, whether it's the puck going in or if they make the save, or if they get pulled out of the game or when they get put back in...I'm just trying to do my best to react in a way that helps this club and that's what's going to help me."*

Ryan took nothing away from the play of Enroth, either. Having two stable goaltenders is something that we may not be used to here recently, but around the league it can be common place. Just look to Boston where Tim Thomas have been the top goalie for the better part of five, now going on six seasons. There was a time where Tuukka Rask was outperforming Thomas, but the Flint, MI-native was the one that led them to a Stanley Cup victory last spring.

Thomas Vanek does not look at this as a goaltender "controversy," saying that in the locker room the team knows what they have in both men and that Ryan is the team's top goalie. He echoed the sentiments of Ryan and Ruff, saying that depth at all positions, goaltender included, is a good thing for the team. He continued that that net minder's job is a "non-issue" in the dressing room.

Vanek was emphatic when asked, adding "Ryan is the number one goalie...it's not an issue in the locker room at all. I think people and media who haven't seen Jhonas alot all of a sudden feel like...a new goaltenders in town. But we know how good Jhonas is and I think he knows his role and that's to come in and play as good as Ryan has over the years and I think he's done that."

Miller was quick to credit Enroth for his play, and that the play of both goalies can go a long way to helping the team be successful. Ryan says he is ready when it is his turn, and so is Jhonas, saying, "Jhonas proves he can go out and do the job and I've proven I can do the job, we're gonna try and do our best to work together and win. It's not always me who's called up, and I can live with that but I'm gonna want to be called upon."

Ruff said he has deviated from the planned goalie rotation three times already this season. Once in Europe, in Florida just a few weeks ago and again last weekend. The coach looks at this as a plus, rather than a minus. He thinks that if, "you can stick a fresh goaltender you know is going to play well in those situations, I think it gives us something that can put us almost on a level playing field with the teams that aren't playing back-to-back."

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practice notes: Jochen Hecht skated after the team's workout shortly on Monday. Ruff said the forward is symptom free and will "start ramping it up again." There was no timetable placed on a possible return for Hecht. He also said Tyler Ennis would test his injured ankle this week. The forward will hopefully skate tomorrow or Wednesday. That is the next step in his return to the ice.

## Miller out to prove net worth

Bill Hoppe

Niagara Gazette

November 8, 2011

BUFFALO — Struggling goalie Ryan Miller said he understands the Sabres' current net situation. He can "live with" sitting occasionally. Still, the star's angry, frustrated with himself he hasn't played since getting yanked minutes into his last appearance last week.

The franchise netminder's performed so erratically recently he watched consecutive games for the first time in almost five years, giving way to hot backup Jhonas Enroth over the weekend and fuelling a possible goaltending controversy.

"But I want to be called upon," Miller passionately told a throng of reporters and cameras Monday inside First Niagara Center. "I'm working, getting myself ready to play. I don't want things to get mixed up. I'm here to win. That's the emotion you get from me. If I'm discouraged and if I'm (ticked) off, that's just how it is.

"I want to win. I don't want to be out there getting scored on. I don't want to be pulled out of the game. I want to (expletive) win the game."

Miller hasn't won since Oct. 20, a stretch in which he's 0-4 with a 3.91 goals-against average and .874 save percentage. He's also 0-4 at home this year. He hasn't played since allowing three goals and enduring jeers in the opening 6:23 of a 3-2 home loss Wednesday to Philadelphia.

Don't forget, however, Miller's start — 4-1, 1.61 and .950 — was tremendous.

Enroth, meanwhile, won both weekend nods, including a 25-save effort in a 3-2 shootout win Saturday in Ottawa, a game most expected Miller would start. The rookie's 4-0 this season and 13-2-2 going back to last year. His other stats — 1.41 and .952 — are spectacular.

Who starts tonight against the Winnipeg Jets? Sabres coach Lindy Ruff wouldn't say.

"Winnipeg's here (practicing) and they're listening, and that makes their job a little easier," Ruff said.

Ruff said he's given the goalies their schedules for the week. The Sabres also host Ottawa on Friday and play in Boston on Saturday. Any plans can be changed, however. Ruff's already done it three times — on the season-opening European trip, after Miller blanked Florida three weeks ago and then Saturday.

Miller was told he wouldn't start on the team's charter flight to Ottawa, something he accepted during a conversation that had "no emotion," Ruff said.

Nonetheless, Ruff believes "there's a lot of fire there."

“He’s emotional about his game and that’s what you like,” he said. “I like him the way he is. He’s a competitive goaltender. ... If you know Ryan, I don’t think he’s as fired up as he’s been in the past. Today was sort of a down day for him.”

Miller said sitting Saturday wasn’t “all that surprising.”

“I pride myself on being able to get back in net, get back in the saddle,” he said. “If you have to wait about a week for that, it’s not ideal for me. But I’ll do my best when Lindy tells me it’s time to go.”

That should be soon. Make no mistake, Miller’s still the Sabres’ top goalie.

“Ryan is the No. 1 goalie,” Sabres winger Thomas Vanek said. “It’s not an issue in the locker room at all.”

When “sharing the crease” was mentioned, Ruff said he doesn’t “know if we’re going to share yet.”

“We’ve looked and thought it would be important to get Jhonas 20-plus games in a season, especially with the number of back-to-backs we play,” he said.

The Sabres play a whopping 21 sets of back-to-back games, and Enroth’s proven ability to spell Miller is “a little bit of an equalizer for us,” Ruff said.

“It was great to see him play in back-to-back,” he said. “He’s played well, and you can stick a fresh goaltender you know is going to play well in that situation. I think it gives us something that could almost put us on a level playing field with the teams that aren’t playing back-to-back when we walk into their building.”

But why has Enroth, a 23-year-old neophyte, enjoyed so much success while the 31-year-old Miller, a Vezina Trophy winner, has struggled before the same players?

One theory has the Sabres playing harder in front of Enroth. Miller, after all, has bailed them so many times in the past. He’s got their backs, right?

Ruff quickly debunked that thought, pointing out the 43 shots Enroth faced Oct. 27 in a 4-2 home win over Columbus.

“Ask Jhonas at times how we played in front against Columbus,” Ruff said. “We gave up a record number of odd-numbered situations in that game. I think that you’re just trying to look for stuff that really isn’t there. We got a little bit off track. We’ve got off track in certain periods throughout the year.”

Miller’s gotten off track before, too. He struggled parts of last season, including a horrific February stretch in which he became arguably the team’s weakest link. But he bounced back splendidly.

Right now, Miller’s only about two weeks removed from a hot stretch.

“My game’s not that far off,” Miller said. “It’s a question of doing the little things and getting back to what makes me a successful goaltender. Sometimes the difference is very miniscule between winning and losing.”

Notes: Center Jochen Hecht (concussion) is symptom-free again, Ruff said. Hecht skated alone after practice Monday. He had been practicing fully until about 10 days ago, when he started experiencing headaches. Now he can “start ramping it up again.” Hecht hasn’t played yet this season. ... Winger Tyler Ennis (ankle sprain) could try skating lightly today or Wednesday, Ruff said. Ennis hasn’t played since Oct. 22.

## **Rochester Amerks pass gut-check test with OT win**

Kevin Oklobzija

Rochester Democrat & Chronicle

November 7, 2011

The first big gut-check of the American Hockey League season for the [Rochester Americans](#) came on Sunday evening.

After getting run out of the building in Syracuse by the Crunch on Saturday, the teams came to Rochester for a rematch.

Would the Amerks wilt again under the endless hitting by the Crunch, as they did in the 5-2 loss the night before? Or would they counter with their own attack?

If this really is Sabres University, as the parent team has declared, then the Amerks passed their first test.

After squandering a 4-2 lead in the second [period](#) and finding themselves down a goal with under 125 seconds to play, the Amerks forced overtime and then won 6-5 on a Brayden McNabb goal 56 seconds into the extra period.

"There were a lot of angry guys in here (before the game)," rookie winger Zack Kassian said. "We were very mad and very frustrated. If you're a competitor, you had to respond.

"We could have given up when we fell behind but we worked hard. That's going to be our team identity, that we don't give up."

Kassian set up the tying goal by Paul Szczechura with 2:04 remaining in the third period. He bounced defenseman Bryan Rodney off the puck in the left corner and then quickly spun and set up Szczechura at the left of the crease.

"We had something to prove," Szczechura said. "We hit them (tonight). We got in on the forecheck and didn't give their defensemen as much time."

The momentum of the late goal didn't last long, however. Rookie winger Marcus Foligno was tricked into taking an extra penalty by Crunch veteran winger Patrick Maroon as the next shift ended.

Foligno had bounced Crunch center Mark Bell into the Amerks net. He was quickly confronted by Maroon.

"He asked me to go," Foligno said of the fight challenge. "I went, he didn't. I got sucked in."

Foligno was given the extra minor penalty, so Syracuse had a power play for the final 1:16 of regulation and the first 44 seconds of overtime. "In the [box](#) I was biting my nails a little bit," Foligno said, "but the guys really came up big killing it off."

The goal post helped as a Kyle Cumiskey point shot clanked off it :28 into overtime. But the Amerks soon gained possession of the puck, and Shawn Szydlowski, who played little in the game, made the long outlet pass to spring the two-on-one fastbreak for the winning goal.

Szczuchura moved in on right wing and passed to McNabb, who zipped a shot past goalie Jeff Drouin-Deslauriers and into the net off the cross bar.

"I don't think I've ever scored an overtime goal," the rookie defenseman said after his first goal as a pro.

## **Miller 'here to win'**

Ed Tait

Winnipeg Free Press

November 8, 2011

BUFFALO, NY -- Hey, Ryan Miller... how are you handling being yanked from a game and having to watch the last two contests from a very unfamiliar spot -- the bench?

"I'm here to win," Miller told reporters Monday after Sabres' practice. "That's the emotion you get from me. If I'm discouraged, if I'm (ticked) off, that's just how it is. I want to win. I don't want to be out there getting scored on. I don't want to be pulled out of a game. I want to, you know, I want to (insert bad word here) win the game."

A workhorse in the Buffalo net over the last few years, Miller surrendered three goals in just over six minutes in a game against Philly last week and was replaced by backup Jhonas Enroth. The rookie netminder then won games over Calgary and Ottawa, surrendering just three goals combined.

Miller is now on a four-game losing streak but still has juicy numbers, including a .922 save percentage.

"You want to play," Miller said. "My last outing wasn't the way you like to leave the ice. You want to go out and do your job, and the next chance I get I'll be ready."

"We got a solid win, and Jhonas played well. It's not all that surprising. But for me, I pride myself on being able to get back in net, get back in the saddle. To have to wait about a week for that is not ideal for me. I'm going to do my best when Lindy tells me it's time to go."

Spying Winnipeg reporters in the house, Sabres head coach Lindy Ruff would not reveal who would start against the Jets tonight.

**INJURY UPDATE:** The Jets hope to have C Nik Antropov back in the lineup, although it could be another game-time decision. The Jets have been without their leading scorer for the last two games after he blocked a shot in the win over the New York Islanders last Thursday.

"There's a lot of things connected to him. He has reach, he has size, he has weight and handles weight. So who goes in his spot? Usually it's a lighter guy so you wear down quicker. Those are some of the things that you miss," said head coach Claude Noel.

Goaltender Chris Mason, whose name was dropped as possible trade bait with the struggling Columbus Blue Jackets, should be good to go later this week.

## **Jets flying on empty**

*Travel-weary club shows no jump in loss to Rangers*

Ed Tait

Winnipeg Free Press

November 7, 2011

NEW YORK -- The signs of a travel-weary Winnipeg Jets squad were all there: Dead legs. No jump. And, at times, displaying about as much energy as a sloth on an afternoon siesta.

But here's the cold, hard truth about the Jets after falling 3-0 to the New York Rangers in front of 18,200 at Madison Square Garden Sunday night despite another solid effort from goaltender Ondrej Pavelec: you don't score at the National Hockey League level -- heck at any level in any sport -- and you don't win.

And you don't need to be a mathematician to come to that conclusion.

"I thought we looked tired and didn't have much energy," said Jets' head coach Claude Noel. "The size of our team was worn down in back-to-back games. I thought Pavelec did a heckuva job getting us in the game and keeping us in the game.

"There's some things we are doing pretty well. We're defending pretty well as a group right now. We feel pretty comfortable at how we're playing the game without the puck. But we've got to get people on the board, there's no question about that. We've got to get some different people scoring here."

Yes, that might be a good idea.

Now 5-7-2 overall, the Jets have been held scoreless twice on this current road trip and limited to just one goal or less in six of their 14 games this season. Of the team's 35 goals this year, 25 have come from just six players: Evander Kane, Jim Slater and Kyle Wellwood -- five each -- with four from Alex Burmistrov and three from captain Andrew Ladd and Nik Antropov.

And this from the busted-record department: Blake Wheeler and Bryan Little, two players this offensively challenged club desperately needs to contribute in the goal department, are 0-for-the-campaign.

Critical in the Jets' loss was the ineffectiveness of the power play, which was 0-for-4 against the Rangers after going 0-for-3 in Saturday's 3-2 OT loss to the New Jersey Devils. Countering that was the solid work of the penalty-kill unit, which killed off eight of nine Rangers' chances, including an extended stretch of 5-on-3 in the final period.

"(The Rangers) do a good job of getting guys back in front of their net," said Jets' captain Andrew Ladd. "You've really got to work for your chances and it was one of those games where

you needed a big goal on the power play or something to change momentum and we weren't able to do that.

"We've got to get (the power play) going. In these tight games you need your power-play to step up."

Marian Gaborik led the Rangers with two goals and an assist, including an empty-netter, while Derek Stepan scored the other and added a helper. Martin Biron stopped 23 shots for the shutout, his first as a Ranger.

"It's one of those things where they come, they come and when they don't, they don't," said Biron. "I used to play it down, but not anymore. They're hard to come by in this league so when you have one you have to enjoy it very much."

Winnipeg is 3-2-1 on its longest road trip of the season, which wraps up Tuesday in Buffalo.

"Right now our biggest task is to find some more energy," Noel said. "So we're going to take it easy (Monday) so that we have some energy against Buffalo."

"We've got a tough road ahead, schedule-wise. We go home after Buffalo, play at home (against Florida next Thursday) and then we travel down to Columbus. Managing energy is going to be a big factor for us."

## **Noel defends Byfuglien**

*Looks at big picture when analyzing blueliner*

Ken Wiebe

Winnipeg Sun

November 8, 2011

BUFFALO - Let the record show that Claude Noel isn't planning to move Dustin Byfuglien from defence to forward at this stage of the game.

In fact, if all goes according to plan, Noel won't ever move Byfuglien back up front.

The head coach of the Winnipeg Jets spent a good chunk of Monday's meeting with the media defending the play of Byfuglien, who has been subject to plenty of criticism in the early stages of the season for his limited production and routinely getting caught up ice and out of position.

"He likes playing defence and I don't think he sees himself as a forward," said Noel. "If you want to go down that road, that's an area I'm not prepared to go right now. We'll keep him playing defence. There are some things he can give us back there. Right now, I'm not entertaining the thought of moving him up front."

Byfuglien was at the rink for Monday's optional skate, but didn't go on the ice and wasn't around to speak with reporters by the time the room was opened up for interviews.

Byfuglien seems to be frustrated by his play and it's clear he's trying to work through it.

But it's a process that takes time, Noel stressed.

"Dustin plays a certain way that he's played for some time," said Noel. "In there, you throw in the mix that he was a forward for a while. His play is OK. He's another guy that wants to learn, get better and improve. He enjoys playing defence.

"I understand the criticism, to a degree but you don't change your game overnight. It's a longer process and we have to be more realistic with him. The reason I say that is that it's hard to change your game that drastically when you're a little bit older. He's made some changes for us and we're continually trying to adjust some things. There are some decisions we'd like to take back but that's part of the process and we understand that. You have to look at the big picture here."

The big picture — in the eyes of Noel — shows that Byfuglien is only in his second full season on defence and is taking the necessary steps to work at refining his game.

The Roseau, Minn. product led all defencemen with 20 goals and had 53 points last season, but his production dipped considerably in the second half. So far this season, he's been limited to one goal and five points in 14 games.

Roaming and joining the rush is always going to be part of Byfuglien's game, but when you're not producing as much offence, it's a little bit tougher to put up with the defensive deficiencies.

However, there's a fine line between trying to get a player like Byfuglien to conform to the system while not giving up his ability to be a serious difference-maker.

"He plays a different game and his mentality is different," said Noel. "He's an attack defenceman, not a receive defenceman. There lies what we're trying to change a little bit. That's how he thinks. (Sergei) Zubov and (Marek) Zidlicky, these guys were a different breed of defenceman but they were pretty good. It just takes some time to shape them.

"You've got to be careful, I've done this before as a young coach, when you try to shape a guy to be more defensive than anything and then you completely lose what he does do well. (Byfuglien) can really help you. I've seen him play the high-risk game. When you try to change people this is what happens, you get caught in the middle and the reads aren't as free-spirited as they normally are and you're not getting the rewards."

The Jets are back in action Tuesday against the Buffalo Sabres and at home Thursday against the Florida Panthers.

## **Too little from Jets' Little**

*Centre trying to stay positive despite season-long slump*

Ken Wiebe

Winnipeg Sun

November 8, 2011

BUFFALO - Bryan Little believes the pendulum is about to swing in his quest to snap one of the longest droughts of his pro hockey career.

The Winnipeg Jets centre is as surprised as most that he's now gone 14 games to start the NHL season without scoring a goal and has only three assists to date.

But Little is not about to throw his hands up in frustration or wave the white flag in surrender.

"It's been tough," said Little, who was one of the Jets who hit the ice for an optional skate on Monday. "I feel like I've been playing better the past five or six games and I've been getting more chances lately. I'm just trying to do other things well. Play well in my own end, bear down on faceoffs and on the penalty kill. But it's definitely frustrating when you start the season off like this. All I can do is keep shooting."

Little and Blake Wheeler were both projected to be 20-plus goal scorers this season for the Jets and neither player has cracked the goose egg yet.

However, if Little can find a way to get one, he thinks the floodgates could open.

"You try not to be one of those (streaky) players but sometimes it happens," said Little, who had 18 goals and 48 points last season for the Atlanta Thrashers and 31 goals and 51 points as a career-high in 2008-09. "Sometimes you go cold, sometimes you're hot. I had a stretch last year when I went 14 or 15 games without scoring and then it happens and you get six or seven in five or six games. It's funny how that happens."

Clearly, the Jets need more production from Little and Wheeler, but head coach Claude Noel said he wasn't entertaining the thought of sending a message by sitting either of them out as a healthy scratch right now.

The 5-7-2 Jets face the Buffalo Sabres, who are 8-5 and riding a two-game winning streak, on Tuesday (6 p.m., TSN Jets, TSN 1290) at First Niagara Center to close out a season-long seven-game road trip.

**ANTROPOV READY:** The official word might not come down until after the warm-up, but all signs point to Jets scoring leader Nik Antropov being back in the lineup on Tuesday.

Antropov, who missed the past two games with a hand injury, took part in the optional skate Monday.

“It was a really good day, I skated and was able to shoot the puck,” said Antropov, who has three goals and 11 points this season. “It wasn’t pain free but it’s a lot better than it was a couple of days ago. Anytime you’re out of the lineup, it’s not a good thing. I just want to be able to do everything I can on the ice, I want to be able to do 100% of the things I can do on the ice and in the last two games, I wouldn’t have been able to.”

Defenceman Randy Jones (foot) and Ron Hainsey (upper-body) won’t be ready to return for Tuesday’s game.

Goalie Chris Mason (groin) continues to progress and he could be ready to go against the Sabres or Thursday at home against the Florida Panthers.