



# **Buffalo Sabres**

## **Daily Press Clips**

*Friday, November 18, 2011*

## **Sabres must get ready for weekend**

*Buffalo leads the league in back-to-back outings*

John Vogl

The Buffalo News

November 18, 2011

The Sabres are in the midst of a long stretch -- extending from Halloween until Christmas -- in which it's silly to ask them a simple question. The inquiry, "Hey, what are you doing this weekend?" will get the same response over and over.

They're playing back-to-back games.

Buffalo begins its third straight set of Friday-Saturday outings when it visits the Carolina Hurricanes tonight and follows that by hosting Phoenix. The schedule will repeat itself for the next month, giving them seven straight weekends filled with hockey.

"We're used to it by now," right wing Drew Stafford said Thursday. "Last year we had this kind of a schedule, so it's just a matter of focusing a little bit more of your energy on trying to stay fresh and taking care of yourself."

The Sabres lead the NHL in back-to-back games for the second straight season. They have 21 sets this year after playing 22 last year. It wasn't much easier the previous two seasons with 18 sets in 2009-10 and 17 double dips in 2008-09.

Does it have to be that way, though? Does Buffalo need to play that many back-to-backs? The short answer is yes.

Friday night has long been a traditional home game for the Sabres, whose fans say TGIF for more than a quarter of the contests in First Niagara Center (11 of 40). Meanwhile, most of their rivals, particularly Northeast Division mates Toronto, Montreal and Ottawa, crave Saturday night home games.

Although this weekend is a rare instance of Friday on the road and Saturday at home, the Sabres probably won't alter their traditional Friday dates. It's been discussed within the organization, though.

"It's something we've talked about when it comes to scheduling," coach Lindy Ruff said before flying to North Carolina. "Even some of the teams in our division are the Thursday-Saturdays, which you would say is a little bit of a competitive advantage. But going in, we know what our schedule is like. It's been like that for a long time."

The Sabres have gotten better playing on consecutive nights over the past season-plus:

\* In 2008-09, they went 10-6-1 on the first night and 5-9-3 on the second.

\* In '09-10, they went 11-5-2 during the openers and 6-9-3 in the second.

\* Last season, they had records of 12-8-2 and 11-8-3.

\* This season, they boast 3-1 records on both nights.

"It's a tough schedule. We've got to make sure we get our points," defenseman Christian Ehrhoff said. "We've had a couple games where we've lacked a little energy, but overall it's good. It's more mentally being ready at the start of the game."

The Sabres, who are also in the midst of a strenuous stretch of six games in nine nights, have taken various steps to keep their energy level up. Game-day skates have been optional, while Thomas Vanek and Patrick Kaleta took Thursday's practice off for "maintenance."

"We've been through it before, so it's just a matter of paying a little extra attention and trying to stay fresh," Stafford said. "Be a little more focused on shift length, keeping it short, keeping everybody fresh, keeping everybody into it. When the shifts start getting longer and fatigue starts setting in your game, it's harder to get that back, especially when you've got to play the next night."

The hardest part of back-to-backs, Stafford said, is forgetting about the first game while preparing for the second.

"If things aren't going well or we don't have a very good game, it's a whole other thing when you've got to put that behind you the next day," he said. "It's a whole other team, a whole other set of systems. This kind of schedule definitely makes it a lot more challenging."

"At the same time we know if we work hard and get through it with some good wins, we have the downtime after. It makes the recovery better when you know you've worked hard and you're playing well."

## **Sabres' defense gets a shuffle, Myers gets a break**

John Vogl

The Buffalo News

November 18, 2011

The Sabres' defense wheel spun 'round and 'round Thursday. When it stopped, T.J. Brennan hit the jackpot, Tyler Myers earned a gift and Mike Weber's stay was short-lived.

Weber, who had played in consecutive games after being a healthy scratch for 15 of the first 16, is out for "some time" after suffering an upper-body injury during Wednesday's 5-3 loss to New Jersey. His absence prompted the Sabres to call Rochester and summon Brennan, their first pick in the 2007 draft who could make his NHL debut tonight in Carolina.

Myers, meanwhile, was neither fined nor suspended for his high hit to New Jersey's Dainius Zubrus. The NHL's department of player safety decided that although Zubrus' head was the principal point of contact, Myers did not target Zubrus. Therefore, the incident was not in violation of Rule 48, which governs head shots.

Brendan Shanahan, the vice president of player safety, called Sabres General Manager Darcy Regier and was scheduled to call Myers to talk about the hit.

The call Brennan received was even more exciting. The Sabres summoned the 22-year-old defenseman, who is in his third season with the organization, for the first time. Brennan, taken with the opening pick of the second round (the Sabres did not have a first-round selection in 2007), has two goals and six points in 16 games with Rochester. He had 15 goals and 39 points in 72 games last year in Portland.

Weber was absent from the Sabres' practice in First Niagara Center.

"Mike sustained an injury that may take some time," coach Lindy Ruff said. "I don't know exactly when it happened."

Weber's final shift came during a penalty kill with 5:36 left. The play-by-play doesn't list him as blocking a shot or being involved in a hit.

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Sabres owner and Penn State benefactor Terry Pegula has called upon people at his alma mater to speak out regarding the child sex abuse scandal that has engulfed the university.

"Our concern and compassion should be for the children involved in these terrible allegations," Pegula said in a telephone interview with Canadian sports outlet TSN. "Whoever may have been involved in any way, anyone who knew anything, they've got to come clean. They've got to step forward and say, 'Here's what I know, here's what happened ...' and that includes you-know-who [former football coach Joe Paterno]."

"Telling the truth now will go a long way towards getting everyone through this. If there's going to be a blind allegiance to anyone or anything here, it needs to be the university and to the truth. ... That's how we get to the bottom of what happened. That's how we get our image back."

Backup goaltender Drew MacIntyre hails from Prince Edward Island, the smallest province in Canada with a population of under 150,000. Word spread fast when MacIntyre inherited Buffalo's net midway through the third period Wednesday, just his third NHL appearance.

"I got a lot of text messages," said the 28-year-old, who hadn't played since getting two games with Vancouver in 2007-08. "That's a good thing about coming from a place like I do. It's such a close-knit community."

MacIntyre, up from Rochester with Ryan Miller injured, got sent in by Ruff with 9:33 left, shortly after Jhonas Enroth allowed his career high-tying fifth goal.

"It was at the end of a TV timeout. It was like, 'Drew, Drew, get in there,'" MacIntyre said. "No time to think about it, and I felt really good actually. It was only seven, eight minutes, but it was a blessing."

\* \* \*

With forward Cody McCormick (upper body) still out and left wing Thomas Vanek and right wing Patrick Kaleta skipping practice for "maintenance," injured forwards Jochen Hecht (concussion) and Tyler Ennis (ankle) skated on lines. Ruff said one of them could play this weekend, but he wouldn't divulge which one.

The only line carried over from Wednesday's game featured Brad Boyes centering left wing Ville Leino and right wing Drew Stafford. Boyes had been playing right wing on other lines.

"After Boyes went in the middle, I thought that line was starting to generate some opportunities," Ruff said. "We're trying to find what will click."

## **Ex-Sabres, doctors back fundraiser for research on child concussions**

Henry L. Davis

The Buffalo News

November 18, 2011

Former Buffalo Sabre Andrew Peters took notice this summer when the deaths of three hockey players known for fighting -- Derek Boogaard, Rick Rypien and Wade Belak -- triggered debate again in the NHL over concussions.

Peters, who made his professional career as an "enforcer," worried if the many punches he took to the head would one day exact a price. "I was a limited player who needed to fight to stay in the lineup," he said Thursday at the announcement of a hockey tournament in Cheektowaga to raise funds for research into childhood concussions and stroke.

Peters and former Sabre Matthew Barnaby, who has a history of concussions, joined several Buffalo physicians involved in an effort to increase awareness of concussions in children, including the physical and psychological consequences years later as well as their connection to stroke.

"We're seeing an epidemic of children concussions, many of them sports-related," said Dr. Elad I. Levy, co-director of the Gates Stroke Center at Kaleida Health and a member of University at Buffalo Neurosurgery.

UB Neurosurgery and the Dent Neurological Institute teamed up to form the Program for Understanding Childhood Concussions and Stroke. The physicians, in partnership with the Buffalo Sabres Alumni Association, are holding a charity hockey tournament Nov. 27 at Holiday Twin Rinks.

Six adult hockey teams will play in all-day USA Hockey-endorsed games, starting at 8 a.m., with the team that raises the most money for research here playing the Sabres alumni at 5 p.m. Admission is free, although it's hoped spectators will donate to the cause.

Former NHL great Eric Lindros, whose career slipped away as a result of concussions, will be playing with the Sabres alumni and participating in an autograph session.

Concussions and their disabling and potentially life-threatening effects have been receiving increased attention. Most recently, the concussion that Sabres goalie Ryan Miller suffered has spurred talk of additional protection for goalies.

But the issue also has become a focal point in youth sports, including hockey.

Emergency room visits by children with concussions and other brain injuries related to sports increased 60 percent over the last decade, according to a recent government report.

It's not clear if more young athletes are getting hurt, if parents and coaches are more aware of the problem, or if it's a combination of trends.

"Kids are faster and stronger, and we, the public, are more aware. What we also know is that concussions are a harbinger of disaster," Levy said.

One of the dangers with concussions is that many of them go undiagnosed. Another is a culture that, for years, neglected their potential harm.

Looking back at his career, including minor league hockey, Barnaby estimated he suffered as many as 15 concussions.

"In five or six of those instances, I should not have been on the ice. But that was the mentality," said Barnaby, who has experienced severe depression and still has such symptoms as headaches and inability to concentrate for long periods.

Like many NHL teams, the Sabres are no strangers to concussions. Jochen Hecht just returned to full-contact practice after suffering a concussion setback in October. Former center Tim Connolly suffered from multiple concussions that forced him to miss many games.

The rate of concussion injury for youth hockey is only slightly less than that for professionals, according to Levy. However, he and Dr. Laszlo L. Mechtler, director of the Dent Headache Clinic, said few tools exist to diagnose, monitor and treat concussions in youths.

Mechtler stressed that parents and coaches should learn "the ABCs" of concussions: assess the situation, be alert for signs and symptoms, and contact a health care professional.

The players said their experiences with head injuries have changed their views. "Kids have to let their parents know," Peters said.

"It's not a joke. This is your brain. It's not like a broken wrist or leg."

Barnaby, now a parent, voiced similar concerns.

"My son is 13 years old," he said. "It's worrisome that what happened to me and others could happen to him one day."

## Canes look to solve defensive woes against Sabres

Brian Hunter

NHL.com

November 18, 2011

**SABRES (11-7-0) at HURRICANES (6-10-3)**

**TV: MSG-Buffalo, FS-Carolinas (HD)**

**Last 10:** Buffalo 6-4-0; Carolina 3-7-0

**Season Series:** Second of four meetings this season. [Jeff Skinner](#)'s power-play goal with 1:24 left in regulation carried Carolina to a 4-3 win in Buffalo on Oct. 14. [Drew Stafford](#) had tied the game for the Sabres just 57 seconds earlier.

**Big Story:** Heading into Thursday's action, Carolina had allowed the most goals in the NHL (67) and had the second-worst goal differential (minus-21, with Columbus at minus-26). While the struggles of [Eric Staal](#) (4 goals, 8 points, League-worst minus-18 rating) have been well-documented, it's the Hurricanes' inability to keep the puck out of their own net that is front and center in their recent struggles.

### Team Scope:

**Sabres:** After going almost a full calendar year without a regulation loss, [Jhonas Enroth](#) gave up five goals and ended up being pulled in the third period of Wednesday's 5-3 defeat at the hands of New Jersey. On the plus side for Buffalo, defenseman [Tyler Myers](#) returned to the lineup after being a healthy scratch for the first time in his career and responded with his first two goals of the season. The 6-foot-8, 227-pounder also delivered a big hit on Dainius Zubrus that left the Devils forward momentarily dazed.

"I think playing more physical is what ultimately helped my game. Playing that tough in the zone is what gets me in the game a lot more," Myers told the Sabres' official website. "I'm gonna have to find a way to do that every night. Obviously there are going to be nights when fatigue is going to set in, and it's going to be harder to play that physical for a full 60. It's something that I really have to bring back into my game."

**Hurricanes:** With seven of the next nine games on home ice, Carolina hopes to reverse a trend that has seen it outscored 30-14 while losing six of the last seven. The offense was stymied Wednesday night in Montreal by Carey Price, who turned aside all 25 shots in dealing the Hurricanes a 4-0 defeat that dropped them to the bottom of the Southeast Division.

"No question there's concern," Staal said. "Obviously, if we keep losing we're not going to be in the mix for the playoffs. So we've got to figure this out and get back to winning some games because if you keep losing, you're going to be out of the picture before you know it and the season's going to be wasted."

**Who's Hot:** A pair of Sabres assisted on Myers' first goal Wednesday to extend their points streaks to five games: [Thomas Vanek](#) (3-4-7) and [Jason Pominville](#) (2-5-7) remain 1-2 on the team in scoring with



23 and 22 points, respectively. Vanek entered Thursday tied for second in NHL scoring, while Pominville was tied for fourth.

**Injury Report:** Buffalo goalie [Ryan Miller](#) (concussion) and forward [Tyler Ennis](#) (ankle) are out indefinitely. Forward [Cody McCormick](#) (undisclosed) is day-to-day. Forward [Jochen Hecht](#) (concussion) is on injured reserve. ... Carolina defenseman [Joni Pitkanen](#) has missed the last three games with a lower-body injury.

**Stat Pack:** All three Sabres goals against the Devils came from defensemen, as [Jordan Leopold](#) closed out the scoring. ... Skinner is on pace to improve the numbers he put up during his Calder Trophy-winning 2010-11 season, as he's posted 18 points in 19 games to lead the team in scoring. He had 63 points in 82 games as a rookie.

**Puck Drop:** Buffalo coach Lindy Ruff isn't afraid to bench a player to send a message, and he seemed to think Myers had received his well after rejoining the lineup Wednesday.

"I thought Tyler skated well, got up in the play, and made obviously an excellent shot getting up. But he was in on four or five other opportunities. I thought he probably skated as well as he's skated. He had a little bit of edge to him too, which was nice," Ruff told the team's website.

## WEBER INJURED; BRENNAN RECALLED

Kevin Snow

Sabres.com

November 17, 2011

There were a few bodies missing from Thursday's practice at First Niagara Center, and it looks like two of them will remain off the ice for the short term.

Defenseman [Mike Weber](#), playing in just his third game of the season, sustained an upper body injury at some point during last night's against New Jersey. Ruff didn't have specifics on the injury timeline, only saying that it "may take some time."

With Weber out of the lineup, the Sabres have recalled defenseman [TJ Brennan](#) from Rochester.

Brennan (6'1", 214 lbs., 4/3/89) joins the Sabres on his first career recall. In his third professional season, the 22-year-old Brennan has played 16 games with Rochester, compiling six points (2+4) and eight penalty minutes. In 2010-11, he ranked second among Portland Pirates (AHL) defensemen with 39 points (15+24) in 72 games. Brennan was selected by the Sabres in the second round (31st overall) of the 2007 Entry Draft.

[Cody McCormick](#) also has an upper body injury, and Ruff said he's "not ready to get back yet." McCormick didn't dress for last night's game after only playing the first two periods in Montreal on Monday.

[Thomas Vanek](#) and [Patrick Kaleta](#) also missed practice on Thursday, but Ruff said they were simply just maintenance days. [Ryan Miller](#) hasn't practiced since suffering a concussion against Boston last Saturday.

Ruff also hinted at the possibility of either [Tyler Ennis](#) or [Jochen Hecht](#) returning to action for one of the back-to-back weekend games against Carolina (Friday) and Phoenix (Saturday). Ennis has missed 11 games with an ankle sprain, while Hecht has yet to play in the regular season after suffering a concussion on the second day of training camp.

## **SABRES' PEGULA SPEAKS OUT ON PENN STATE SCANDAL**

Bob McKenzie

TSN

November 17, 2011

As a father of five children, three of them still teenagers, and a proud alumnus of Penn State University, Terry Pegula has nothing but concern and compassion for the victims, whomever they are and however many of them there are, in the ongoing PSU scandal.

But the billionaire owner of the Buffalo Sabres -- whose \$88 million "gift" to PSU in September of 2010 to build a hockey arena and start an NCAA Division 1 hockey program is reportedly the largest single donation ever to the school -- also has some strong feelings on how the university needs to conduct its affairs now and how the vast majority of "Penn Staters" need not hang their heads.

"I am standing behind the university," Pegula told TSN in his first interview about the PSU scandal, although he did issue a press release last week re-affirming his financial commitment for the D1 hockey program that is set to begin next fall.

"Our concern and compassion should be for the children involved in these terrible allegations," he said in a telephone interview from Boca Raton, Fla. "Whomever may have been involved in any way, anyone who knew anything, they've got to come clean. They've got to step forward and say, 'Here's what I know, here's what happened...'" and that includes you know who," a seemingly obvious reference to Penn State legendary football coach Joe Paterno.

"This is not about covering your ass. Telling the truth now will go a long way towards getting everyone through this. If there's going to be a blind allegiance to anyone or anything here, it needs to be the university and to the truth...that's how we get to the bottom of what happened, that's how we get our image back."

Pegula attended Penn State from 1969 to 1973, graduating from the petroleum and natural gas engineering program. In the years since then, he's been a big booster of the school but by his own admission was never directly involved in the day-to-day affairs of the institution or administration. Since he announced his \$88 million gift to the university for the establishment of the D1 hockey program, he has been directly involved in issues pertaining to the building of the arena, but his focus and involvement has been relatively narrow and hockey-centric. But now that Penn State has become synonymous with bad news, Pegula says he intends to be more active in doing what he can to make sure the "right things are done" and to help repair the reputation of what he calls "a really good school."

Pegula says he's convinced that John Surma, the former CEO of U.S. Steel who is the vice-chair of the PSU board of trustees, is the right man to lead the charge to clean up this mess and get to the core of what happened.

"I've talked to John and he's a good man and he's already on this," Pegula said. "There needs to be transparency, we need to get to the raw truth, we need to eliminate agendas, eliminate egos

and find out how this could have gone on at our university. John, believe me, is well along on that page and probably ahead of me and everyone else. We're both Penn Staters and we want the truth."

But Pegula also has some very strong feelings about how this story has played out in the media and the consequences for another group of "victims."

"Let's not have anything but concern and compassion for the primary victims here, for the children," he said, "but with the coverage there's been of this, I'm starting to see a second victim and that is the students who study there, the instructors who teach there, the people who work there...there are more than 40,000 Penn State people who've been implicated in this and they have absolutely nothing to do with it..."

And that is why Pegula never even considered not reaffirming his financial and emotional commitment to the institution.

"To me, it was (a) very easy decision," he said. "If you are a student at Penn State or an instructor or an administrator, imagine how your life has changed. It would be enough to put your head down. It's such a terrible thing and you would almost want to blame yourself...but the students there can't be blamed for what happened. They shouldn't put their head down. They should be proud to be at Penn State and carry on with their lives. It's a great school and an unprecedented thing has happened here.

"There are a lot of people at Penn State not involved in any of this. Most of them, actually. It doesn't help to make them feel any worse. I talked to an instructor who was teaching a business class and he went into the class and could just see how down the students were, they were hanging their heads and he told them, 'Don't you hang your heads. You did nothing wrong.' After the class, he had so many students come up to him and say, 'thank you, I feel so much better now. I was starting to question what we're all about.' Those 40,000 to 50,000 people who are there now, to say nothing of the thousands and thousands of graduates, they need to feel good about themselves and their school. They're not responsible for this."

And for those who suggest that it's wrong to be playing out the balance of the PSU football season when the program is so interconnected with the scandal, Pegula had some strong words.

"I hear people say they shouldn't be playing football, that football doesn't matter now," he said. "Well, I have nothing but compassion for the victims and I want the truth rooted out as badly as anyone, but I don't think anyone should be going up to (Penn State senior defensive tackle) Devon Still and telling him he can't play in the final games of his collegiate career, that he needs to pay the price for the mistakes of others. That's not how you do things. I would say to Devin, 'you play,' I would say to Penn State, 'you play,' and while you're playing we're going to clean up this mess."

In the meantime, Pegula is hoping his strong words, not to mention the reaffirmation of his \$88 million commitment to the hockey program, will mitigate against the potential problems facing Penn State head hockey coach Guy Gadowsky as he tries to get the fledgling program off the

ground and onto the ice for next fall. Gadowsky, an Edmonton native who came to Penn State after a successful coaching tenure at Princeton University, is busy selling recruits on the benefits of Penn State, which given the publicity of late, isn't an easy task.

"I wanted to make sure everyone knows I'm solidly behind Penn State hockey because others were using (the scandal) against us in our recruiting efforts," Pegula said. "I heard some of our recruits were maybe wavering a bit so I wanted to make sure they knew we're fully committed to running a first-class program that stands for all the right things. That's what we're all about."

Pegula says he knows things could conceivably get worse at Penn State before they get better and there's a long and difficult road ahead for the institution, but is confident that if people like Surma and himself put a premium on exposing the truth, however raw and ugly it may be, the healing process for Penn State will have already begun.

"I don't like what has happened, no one does," Pegula says. "But I guess I'm used to controversy. I'm an oil and gas man and people love to hate the oil and gas industry...we'll get this done and get to the truth and make people proud to be associated with Penn State."

## **Stafford undeterred by struggles**

Bill Hoppe

Niagara Gazette

November 18, 2011

BUFFALO — A few years back, if Drew Stafford had been mired in a six-game goal drought, if he had scored just once in 14 contests, the Sabres winger would be taking the slump hard.

Doubts might be rattling around inside his head by now, the frustration overwhelming him.

Over time, however, Stafford, a six-year veteran, said he's matured and learned to handle adversity differently and better.

"One hundred percent. Absolutely," Stafford said Thursday, barely letting the question leave a reporter's mouth. "You just got to focus on things you can control such as your habits, how you're working and not getting distracted. I know that if things aren't going well for me, all I need to focus on is making sure I'm strong on the puck, making sure I'm skating and everything else will take care of itself.

"Whereas in years past, I think it's a little bit of a maturity thing, where a younger guy, you don't quite know how to handle the frustration as well. You can let that creep into your game."

Sabres coach Lindy Ruff said Stafford's dealt with his slumps better "at times."

"I think there's still a little frustration in his game when things aren't going well," Ruff said inside the First Niagara Center after the Sabres prepared for tonight's tilt in Carolina against the Hurricanes.

Stafford's a 26-year-old assistant captain now. He underachieved much of his first four seasons, until a breakout 2010-11 campaign in which he tallied 31 goals and 52 points in only 62 games earned him a new four-year, \$16 million contract.

Entering tonight, the American has four goals and 11 points in 18 games, an 18-score, 50-point pace. He's tallied only once since Oct. 18. He's experiencing his 17th stretch of at least six straight goalless games in his career.

If Stafford's fretting, he's not showing it outwardly. He's been upbeat all season. Not long ago, the disappointment would've been visible on his face. These days, he realizes hockey is as much mental as physical.

"You learn how to handle certain situations and stress and pressure and frustration knowing that you're wasting energy on negative stuff," Stafford said. "That's not going to help you at all."

Shooting and going to the net will only help Stafford, an elite power forward at times. He already has 48 shots, 2.7 a game. That 219-shot pace would shatter his previous career high by 36. He averaged 2.9 shots a game last year.

“I’m always trying to look to shoot,” said Stafford, who had three assists last Friday. “It’s one of those things, especially when things aren’t going well, you got to make sure you’re constantly trying to hang around the net and battle for loose pucks there.”

Stafford hasn’t scored since Nov. 4. He was close Wednesday during the Sabres’ 5-3 loss to New Jersey, misfiring into goalie Martin Brodeur’s glove.

“If it’s six inches higher, it’s a goal,” Ruff said. “Some of the goals are going to have to be where you’re driving the paint and looking for that opportunity that may bounce off you or maybe that little rebound opportunity.”

Stafford looked sharp later in the game beside Brad Boyes, his third center in three games. Ruff switched Boyes, a regular winger, from the fourth line to the No. 2 pivot in an attempt to ignite some secondary scoring.

Derek Roy had played well with Stafford and Ville Leino, earning a promotion to the No. 1 line between scorching wingers Jason Pominville and Thomas Vanek. Luke Adam barely lasted a game in Roy’s old spot.

Almost a quarter of the way into the season, the Sabres’ scoring is too top heavy. Pominville, Roy and Vanek have accounted 24 of their 53 goals (45 percent) so far.

“I’ve definitely been struggling,” said Boyes, who has two goals this year, none in the last seven games. “A couple of us have been struggling this year. I think that secondary scoring takes the pressure of Van, Pom. Now with Roysie going, we need us to be good.”

When Boyes began playing center again shortly after his arrival in March, his offense vanished. Still, the Sabres kept winning, and Boyes played a vital role, Ruff said.

“If you look at the run we were on, Brad was playing center for us,” Ruff said. “And I didn’t see any immediate correlation between him playing the wing and more opportunities. I think if you asked him, if he said, ‘Does this mean I get a little more ice time?’ He welcomes that opportunity.”

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With Phoenix in town Saturday, the Sabres finish their fifth set of a whopping 21 back-to-back games this season.

“It’s something we’ve talked about when it comes to scheduling,” Ruff said. “Even some of the teams in our division are Thursdays-Saturdays, which you would say is a little of a competitive advantage. We know what our schedule’s like. It’s been like that for a long time. I think part of the reason at times we’ve tried to be a four-line team is to prepare ourselves for our energy levels in these types of situations.”

## **Sabres Myers not suspended. Shuffling Through Injuries**

WGR 550

November 17, 2011

The NHL has decided not to suspend or fine Tyler Myers for his hit to the head of Dainius Zubrus of the Devils. Zubrus stayed down on the ice for a few minutes, but never missed a shift. Myers was not penalized for the hit.

Paul Hamilton reports from practice at the First Niagara Center that five Buffalo Sabres are not practicing. Ryan Miller, Cody McCormick, Thomas Vanek, Patrick Kaleta, and Mike Weber are not on the ice with the rest of the team this morning.

Mike Weber has an upper-body injury and will miss some time. Head Coach Lindy Ruff says that the team will not recall a defenseman from Rochester for Weber. Marc-Andre Gragnani will just go back into the line-up and the team will use 6 defensemen.

Vanek and Kaleta just had the day off for maintenance. Both players will be fine for tomorrow's game in Carolina against the Hurricanes.

McCormick is still nursing an upper body. WGR's Paul Hamilton asked Coach Ruff specifically if McCormick's injury is a concussion and Ruff said, "upper body."

With McCormick out, Buffalo will need another forward, but Ruff said that either Tyler Ennis or Jochen Hecht would be ready to play this weekend. He would not specify which player would be ready to return.

At the beginning of the month, Buffalo had a goaltender controversy brewing with Jhonas Enroth playing well and starter Ryan Miller slumping. Now, Miller is out indefinitely with a concussion and Drew McIntyre is up from Rochester to back up Enroth. Ruff has to decide if Enroth is going to need a break at some point and if McIntyre is ready to carry the load for a game.

"I think that's just an evaluation down the road that you would look at. Obviously this is a tougher part of the schedule. We get through this, it gets a little lighter. It'll depend on how Jhonas is playing, where his energy level is at in games too."

McIntyre was inserted into the third period of Wednesday night's loss to the Devils. He stopped both shots that he faced.

Enroth is only used to being a back-up at the NHL level. Maintaining a high level of play could be something he has to get used to. Coach Ruff doesn't think that will be a problem.



"There's some concern but, he's used to playing a lot. He played a lot in the American League. At times, he played 3 games in 3 nights and I think sometimes that schedule is even tougher. When you're not playing, at this level, your workload is tougher than playing. You don't have the mental stress or anxiety but you do have the workload because you go through a lot of extra practice. You stay longer. You put in a lot more work."

Enroth has just begun to fill the role of the #1 with Miller out, and he doesn't feel fatigued yet. "Not at all. I'm feeling pretty good about myself still. I'm in pretty good shape so far, I think."

McIntyre has been a career Minor League goalie, with only 2 NHL games with the Canucks during the 2007-08 campaign. He doesn't want to be type-cast as a Minor League goalie.

"Every team brings it up all summer, when it comes to Free Agency time, I don't have NHL experience. I have lots of AHL experience. That's definitely my knock that everyone uses against me. So, I want some NHL experience."

Friday night's game against Carolina will begin at 7 o'clock. Mike Schopp and the Bulldog will have the WGR 550 pregame at 6.

## Rochester Americans' Joe Finley making a big impression

Kevin Oklobzija

Rochester Democrat & Chronicle

November 18, 2011

Considering how superstitious hockey players tend to be, it's a wonder that Joe Finley didn't asked to be packed in bubble-wrap for the Rochester Americans' 10 [games](#) this month.

November hasn't been good to him.

In his first pro season, 2009-10, a ruptured aneurysm in his ulnar artery during a November [game](#) ended his season. Last year, late in the month, he suffered damage to his medial collateral ligament.

Movember? More like, Nomorevember.

"I left the mustache out of the equation this year," he said, referring to past Novembers when he participated in the grow-a-mustache-for-charity campaign. That's where the superstition ends, though.

He refuses to change his style of play. He has been a beast on the blue line for the Amerks, thanks to his mobility, reach and big hitting.

Especially the hitting. At 6-feet-8 and 260-pounds, when Finley lines up a player for a check, there's really no way for the player to avoid that windshield vs. bug sensation.

In a span of 5 ½ minutes of the second [period](#) on Wednesday vs. Syracuse, he smeared Crunch winger Kyle Palmieri into the end boards, then bounced winger Troy Bodie to the ice with a solid shoulder check.

At one point during the 3-2 victory over the Crunch, he was engaged in a net-front battle with the 5-foot-11, 193-pound Palmieri.

"He said, 'Man, you gotta relax,'" Finley said.

Ah, no, he doesn't.

"I want to be finishing my checks; I want to be hard to play against in the corners and in front of the net," said Finley, a 24-year-old native of Edina, Minn.

Opponents will learn hard way.

"Joe did that a couple times (Wednesday), closing across laterally on guys, laying a couple big hits," coach Ron Rolston said. "The more teams see that, the more they'll be aware of his presence."

The snarl and abrasiveness are just two of the reasons why Rolston and his staff decided to pair Finley with the also-large Shaone Morrisonn (6-4, 210).

It's an imposing shut-down pairing, and they are being given the task of playing against the opponents' best.

"They have good size, mobility and reach and we just thought those big bodies would be able to match up against the other team's top lines," Rolston said.

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## **Canes' Maurice stays... for now**

Chip Alexander

Raleigh News & Observer

November 18, 2011

RALEIGH -- When the Carolina Hurricanes announced early Thursday their practice would be held at noon at Raleigh Center Ice, there were no assurances Paul Maurice would still be the coach.

After the Canes' awful 4-0 loss Wednesday to the Montreal Canadiens, after losing six of the past seven games to sink to 14th place in the NHL's Eastern Conference, speculation was mounting general manager Jim Rutherford might make a change.

And not just with the head coach. There was talk a player or two might be traded.

But at noon, Maurice was on the ice. All of the players, except for injured defenseman Joni Pitkanen, were accounted for and there was a degree of normalcy at practice.

Earlier, Rutherford had said no major changes were planned - for now.

"That was a very bad game," he said of the loss in Montreal. "I'm looking at everything (but) no decisions have been made."

With the Hurricanes (6-10-3) set to face the Buffalo Sabres (11-7-0) today, a few personnel changes were made Thursday. Defenseman Justin Faulk was recalled from the Charlotte Checkers of the AHL and forward Zac Dalpe reassigned to the Checkers.

Forward Anthony Stewart, a healthy scratch the past three games, will rejoin the Canes lineup. Stewart was used on Eric Staal's line with Chad LaRose in practice, although Maurice said Zach Boychuk also could see time on Staal's line tonight. As for a potential trade, Rutherford said that could be problematic.

"There's not anyone out there right now who's available," he said. "There might be some who become available. We'll see what we can do."

Second-year forward Jeff Skinner said the Canes need to take it upon themselves to turn things around, not rely on personnel moves to be made.

"The guys in this locker room have to figure out how to get a win," he said. "We can't be looking for outside help."

One thing everyone agreed on was that goaltender Cam Ward - or backup Brian Boucher, when he plays - needed more help. After Wednesday, the Hurricanes were 29th in the NHL in both goals against (3.47 a game) and shots against (33.1 a game.)

"We have to do a better job, everyone together, of being a five-man defensive group in our end to limit chances against," Staal said.

Ward had 37 saves in the Canes' 5-3 win over the Pittsburgh Penguins on Saturday and several were sensational. But he was lifted in the second period Monday against the Philadelphia Flyers and struggled along with the rest of his team in Montreal. Maurice said he could sense frustration in Ward's game.

"It comes from Cam believing in his heart he can play the way he did against Pittsburgh every night," Maurice said. "That's not a realistic standard. ... We can't put him in that position but we've done it."

Ward, in turn, preferred to talk more about the Sabres game, about moving on. He said with such a busy November schedule, no one can dwell too long on any one game.

"As miserable as it was in Montreal, and there wasn't a lot of good to take from it, today's a new day and you've got to prepare yourself for Buffalo and work at just righting the ship," Ward said. "It's not as easy as it sounds but it's the way you've got to approach it. You've got to be strong mentally."

"The coaches have done everything they can to prepare us as players on what we need to do on the ice. We have to hold ourselves accountable for the way we perform on the ice."

Maurice, who is in the final year of his contract, has been fired before - by the Hurricanes in 2003 and the Toronto Maple Leafs in 2008. He was asked how difficult it would be now in what might seem like a game-by-game referendum on his job.

"This is the grind that you learn to survive and deal with it as a man, deal with your players, rally your troops, have direct and honest conversations with players that need to have those," Maurice said. "And make sure that when you're standing behind the bench you show that confidence in your team."

While Staal is the captain and the Canes have leaders in the room, Maurice said his is the voice that needed to be heard, and he needed to provide the leadership.

"It's not on them," Maurice said. "We want to play a far superior team game (and) I will ask them to individually prepare themselves. But this is now the time, in the most heat, that it's not on the captain, it's not on the players. It's on me."

## **Down, But Not Out**

Michael Smith

Hurricanes.com

November 18, 2011

The morning after a disheartening loss in Montreal, the Carolina Hurricanes got back to work.

Amid rumors and speculation, the Canes took to the rink at Raleigh Center Ice and got back to basics, after what was an ugly 4-0 loss North of the border that saw the team struggle to generate any offense and play a porous defensive game.

“Anything that comes out sounds like an excuse, so we just won’t make any,” head coach Paul Maurice said. “We just played a very, very poor hockey game.”

That was clear in the locker room – no one was happy with last night’s effort. And everyone is aware of the situation the team is in: the Canes currently sit at the bottom of the Southeast Division and are 14th in the Eastern Conference at 6-10-3. They lead the last-place New York Islanders by four points, but the Isles have four games in hand. In their last 10 games, the Canes are just 3-7.

But the focus of today wasn’t to dwell on that; rather, the Canes are moving on and looking ahead to tomorrow night’s match-up with the Buffalo Sabres.

The team is certainly down. But no one in the room believes they are out.

“As miserable as it was in Montreal, today’s a new day and you’ve got to prepare yourself for Buffalo,” goaltender [Cam Ward](#) said. “We have to work at just righting the ship. It’s not as easy as it sounds, but it’s the way you’ve got to approach it. You’ve got to be strong mentally, and this is a challenge for ourselves.”

“It’s always tough when you’re going through stretches like this, and sure, everybody’s feeling pressure and trying to get better,” [Alexei Ponikarovsky](#) said. “It doesn’t matter – you still have to be positive.”

Staying positive in a time like this can be tough, especially with speculation running rampant on the outside. That heated up even more so after last night’s loss. Some want to see a trade, some want to see new personnel behind the bench and some want both. But Hurricanes’ President and General Manager Jim Rutherford isn’t going to make a move that jeopardizes long-term plans for a gamble on a short-term fix.

All the while, the players are blocking that conversation out, trying not to let it distract them from what they can do to get this team back on track.

“That stuff is out of our own control,” Ward said. “What we can control is how we play on the ice and how we approach the games on the ice. I think the coaching staff has done everything that they can to prepare us as players to do what we need to do on the ice.”

“The players are the ones that put on the skates and go out there and perform,” he said. “We need to hold ourselves accountable for the way that we perform on the ice.”

“Whether it’s there or not, it can’t be an excuse,” [Jeff Skinner](#) said of the rumors abound. “There’s no use in talking about it. We’ve got to go out there and figure out how to get a win. We can’t be looking for outside help. We just have to get a win and find a way to get it done.”

Maurice was frank when asked where the message comes from to get the team back in the win column in a hard time like this one.

“It’s not on the Captain. It’s not on the players,” he said. “It’s on me.”

The good news is that the team won’t have to wait long to get another crack at snagging a win – Buffalo comes to town for a 7 p.m. face-off tomorrow night.

Not facing the Ryan Miller-less Sabres will be [Zac Dalpe](#), who will get reassigned to the Charlotte Checkers of the American Hockey League today. Maurice hinted at other lineup changes coming, perhaps on the back-end. [Justin Faulk](#)’s name has been tossed into that discussion.

“Tomorrow it’s a different day, different game, different team that we’re going to play against,” Ponikarovsky said. “We know what we have to do, and that’s pretty much it.”

Ward is of the same mindset: the team simply has to perform, and it’s not going to be easy against an 11-7, second-place Buffalo team. But it’s a team the Canes have beat already once this season, and the Canes know they need the win in the worst way.

“You don’t want anybody to get to the point where you accept losing,” Ward said. “You’ve got to hate to lose. You want to try and get better and better.”

“I’m frustrated just like everybody else, but through my experience, you’ve got to be able to put it behind you and be tough mentally and get this team back on track. That’s my mindset.”



## Brothers collide: Eric and Marc Staal

Johnette Howard

ESPN.com

November 17, 2011

[Carolina Hurricanes](#) center [Eric Staal](#) claims he didn't know it was his kid brother there along the boards with his head down, fighting another Carolina player for the puck. Things happen fast in a hockey game, everyone later sighed heavily and agreed. Eric just saw a player in a white shirt. And he hit him. Hard. The raw force of the collision is clear even from still images of that Feb. 22 check, not just the gasp of the crowd that comes across loud and clear [in the YouTube video](#). The impact lifted Rangers defenseman [Marc Staal](#) off his feet, snapped back his head and sent him pinwheeling to the ice face down, with his helmet askew.

Nine months have passed. Marc still hasn't played this season because of post-concussion symptoms.

And nobody knows when he'll be back.

Still, Eric insists it's a reach to say that some dread over having to re-visit how he unintentionally injured his 24-year-old brother has anything to do with the season-long slump he was mired in by the time he pulled into the New York area last week. Carolina had a game against the [New Jersey Devils](#) and then a rematch with the Rangers for the first time since Marc couldn't play. Eric, the Canes' best player, has averaged 35.8 goals in his last six stellar seasons but he's on pace for just 18 or 19 this season.

So was that five-game scoreless streak he also brought to town (and stretched to seven by the time Rangers fans were done booing him Friday every time he touched the puck in Carolina's 5-1 loss at Madison Square Garden) really just a coincidence, as he claimed? Or was it proof of something people around the NHL were starting to wonder: Could it be there are two Staal boys stuck in limbo because of Marc's injury, not just one?

"He's a big, strong man -- this isn't a guy who's hiding in the corner; he'll answer your questions," no-nonsense Carolina coach Paul Maurice told New York reporters.

And again and again over the next four days, Eric did. Over and over, he insisted no, no, he isn't haunted or paralyzed by regrets.

Eric didn't try to sugarcoat his brother's feelings about the play, saying, "Obviously, I talked to him a lot. It's hard. ... He's upset about the hit, but he understands it's a hockey game, and things happen." Does Eric think differently about such body checks now? "No, not at all," he said. "It was unfortunate after the fact, but it's part of the game. You finish checks and you're physical. Sometimes things happen, and in his case he's been injured for a long time because of it. But he'll recover fully and will be back fine."

What was Staal, Carolina's team captain, supposed to say? He wasn't being callous, just consistent with the code of the game. "You can't admit any weakness or feelings; you just do your job and finish checks and play the same whether it's your brother out there or not," says Rangers defenseman [Michael Sauer](#), whose older brother, [Kurt](#), a [Phoenix Coyotes](#) defenseman, has played only one NHL game the past two seasons because of post-concussion symptoms.

Hockey rarely apologizes for the way it values tough guys, or the frontier justice system it's long had. But even so, the Staal case is an emotionally freighted new twist. Who had ever seen anything like this? A brother sidelining his own brother? Blood vs. blood. The other players and coaches on both teams -- not just the Staals -- still find the whole thing admittedly confusing. What should they do?

"It's definitely a weird situation because normally, if a guy took liberties with one of our star players like that, we'd key on him [next time we played]," Rangers captain [Ryan Callahan](#) said this week, four days after Eric played at Madison Square Garden. "But this ... it's brothers. It's different, you know? Obviously, I don't think he wanted to hurt him, or meant to do it."

Could Callahan tell if Eric was playing any differently?

"Aw, I don't know -- it's hard to get inside another player's head, so I don't want to speak for him," Callahan said. "But, at the same time, I think it's got to be definitely weighing on him because, you know, his brother's out, and he caused it. I know that would affect me. I mean, how could it not?"

The Staal brothers were as close as peas in a pod while growing up with their two younger brothers, 23-year-old [Jordan](#), who plays for the [Pittsburgh Penguins](#), and Jared, who is 21 and playing in Carolina's minor league system.

Until now, their family story unfurled like something of a sports fairy tale. The three oldest boys were first-round NHL draft picks, and Jared went in the second round of the 2008 entry draft. Eric has already won a Stanley Cup with Carolina and a gold medal with Team Canada at the Vancouver Olympics. Both he and Marc were All-Stars last season, and Jordan is considered a rising star. In many ways the Staals have become the unofficial first family of hockey in the active players division, anyway, taking over where the Sutters left off. All four Staals are blond, 6-foot-4 and so similar in looks and bearing that they can be difficult to tell apart. They're also justifiably proud about their family reputation for being what the Rangers' Sauer describes as, "Great guys and great leaders."

If landing four players in pro hockey was the end of their story, it'd be enough. But their upbringing evokes a touchstone of Canadian life that's the Canuck equivalent of how Americans romanticize fathers playing catch with their baseball-mad sons.

The Staal boys grew up on a farm in the almost make-believe sounding town of Thunder Bay, Ontario, playing hockey against each other on a makeshift backyard rink that their father, Henry, put together with whitewashed plywood for side boards, chicken wire instead of PlexiGlas and floodlights mounted on poles so they could play deep into the very cold nights.

That imagery -- boys playing pond hockey, like their fathers and generations before them all did -- is so central and classic in hockey lore, the NHL started its highly popular New Year's Day outdoor games because of it. And Nike asked for some of the Staal family home movies and [built a few info-mercials](#) around footage of their childhood rink.

"There was no better toy, for all of us," Jordan says in one of the spots.

The Staal boys go on to confess to trading a few kicks and shoves during those backyard games, and even to picking up a few scars. But when asked on camera if they'd ever had a hockey-related fistfight, they all start wagging their heads in unison. The answer was no. Never.

"I don't think we ever dropped the gloves," Eric says.

And yet, there he found himself last week, coming to New York knowing Marc was scheduled to travel to Boston sometime this week for a re-evaluation by Dr. Robert Cantu, the renowned concussion specialist who had ordered Marc to take a month off from physical activity because of his recurring symptoms.

Marc, who tried other doctors and acupuncture before, hasn't spoken with reporters since training camp, and he didn't surface to field any questions when Eric was in town. Someone close to the Rangers says it's just gotten "old" for Marc to have to answer the same questions every day -- 'How are you feeling now? How about today? Any better today?' -- when there was no news to report.

Marc does turn up at the practice facility now and then when reporters aren't present "just to talk a bit, see the boys -- he's still around," Sauer says.

Staal watches most Rangers home games from inside the dressing room rather than high above the rink like many scratched players do, and he was at the Garden on Friday. He had to hear the New York crowd jeering Eric, especially when Eric was involved in the two plays midway through the third period that turned what had been a taut 1-1 game into a 5-1 Rangers' rout.

First, Eric committed a high-sticking penalty that resulted in a power-play goal for the Rangers. Then he lost the ensuing faceoff at center ice and saw [Brandon Dubinsky](#) rifle in another shot, giving New York two goals in nine seconds.

The Canes' Maurice called it "the turning point" of the game.

It's impossible to prove that sequence was yet another case of Eric being uncharacteristically rattled by whatever psychological baggage he might be carrying. Callahan is right: It's hard to get inside a player's head. But Eric did speak before leaving New York about how he and Marc were able to get together during the week, calling it "an awesome couple of days spending time with him and spending time like normal families would."

And the very next night when Eric and the Hurricanes pulled into Pittsburgh to play brother Jordan and the Penguins, why ... maybe what happened next was just another coincidence heaped atop the rest.

With that rematch against the Rangers and reunion with Marc just 24 hours in his rearview mirror, Eric Staal scored a goal for the first time in three weeks.