



Buffalo Sabres

Daily Press Clips

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Sabres beaten to the punch in D.C.

John Vogl

The Buffalo News

December 31, 2011

WASHINGTON — In the beginning, the Sabres looked like a bunch of lost boys playing against men. In the end, they looked like an aggressive NHL team.

The turnaround still couldn't help them find a victory.

Buffalo, which has a history of slow starts, put forth one of its worst in years Friday night. Washington took advantage, going up early and staying in front for a 3-1 win in Verizon Center.

Washington captain Alex Ovechkin scored 1:42 into the game and iced it with 5:50 left, finding the net again to put his team up by two and end the Sabres' comeback hopes.

"Our first period wasn't very good, myself included," Sabres defenseman Brayden McNabb said. "Starts are crucial, and we just have to put together a full 60 minutes."

The Sabres lost their second straight and fell to 1-5 in their last six games. They have won only two of the last nine (2-6-1) and just seven of 22 (7-12-3). They also lost defenseman Christian Ehrhoff to an upper-body injury suffered during a first-period fight with Troy Brouwer.

"He's going to miss some time," Sabres coach Lindy Ruff said. "It'll probably be weeks."

The Capitals outclassed the Sabres from the opening minute to the sounding of the horn during the first. They beat Buffalo to pucks, hit harder and more often, skated faster and scored the only goal.

The Sabres' trouble started just 27 seconds into the game. Mike Weber boarded Jason Chimera, putting the league's fourth-ranked home power play on the ice. The Caps needed just more than a minute of the man advantage to take a 1-0 lead.

Ovechkin made McNabb live down to his rookie status. McNabb tried to hip-check the star along the boards. The Caps' captain flew past McNabb's attempt, the defenseman getting nothing but air.

"He came with a lot more speed than I expected and blew by me," McNabb said.

Ovechkin's pass to Brooks Laich at the side of the net never got there. It hit the stick of Ehrhoff and caromed past goaltender Ryan Miller with 1:42 gone.

"I've never seen so many bounces go the wrong way," Ruff said. "That gets you behind the eight-ball right off the bat."

The Sabres were on their heels from there. They didn't take their first shot until 7:20 remained, one of only two pucks put on Tomas Vokoun all period. The Caps, meanwhile, tested Miller 11 times.

"That lucky bounce they got for a goal really put a damper on our game," Sabres center Jochen Hecht said. "We had two shots in the first period. That's not close to being enough."

The second period started better for the Sabres, but they fell in a deeper hole 3:52 in. The Caps again made Buffalo look like a minor-league squad, using three quick passes to set up Nicklas Backstrom for a tap-in goal.

The Sabres finally dented the Capitals' dominance, pulling within 2-1 on Hecht's goal with 4:58 to go in the second. Vokoun stopped Thomas Vanek's blast, but Hecht dumped in the rebound to finally give the Buffalo contingent a reason to get loud.

Although the red-clad Caps backers in the crowd of 18,506 quickly drowned the fans out, the players in Blue and Gold continued to rally. The Sabres controlled the chances, finishing with a 26-21 shot edge despite their early no-show, but they ended up with one goal for the eighth time in 19 games.

"It's not about bad luck after awhile," Sabres center Derek Roy said. "You can have bad luck for one or two games, but after that it's about finishing your chances."

Ovechkin rifled home Backstrom's no-look pass with 5:50 left, leaving the Sabres to look toward tonight's game against Ottawa in HSBC Arena.

"We need to start a bit better, but we came back flying," right wing Patrick Kaleta said. "The second and third periods, we played really well, and that's the kind of hockey we need to play to win."

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Injury keeps Myers sidelined, frustrated

John Vogl

The Buffalo News

December 31, 2011

WASHINGTON — It's been exactly six weeks since Tyler Myers broke his wrist. The original plan called for him to be back in four to six weeks.

The plan has changed.

The Buffalo Sabres' defenseman still has no timetable for a return to the lineup. Myers missed Friday night's 3-1 loss to Washington, and he'll be scratched for the 18th straight time tonight when the Sabres host Ottawa in First Niagara Center.

"It's not quite where it needs to be for me to jump back in," Myers said Friday in Verizon Center. "It's a tough bone to break. There's not much blood supply. It's just taking a little longer than we hoped for. I'll come back as soon as I'm ready. It's just a matter of making sure I don't come back too early to put it at risk for reinjury."

Myers has been skating with the Sabres, but he's only lightly passing and shooting. The wrist, obviously, is vital for those activities. Some hockey people say an ankle injury is the most debilitating because it impacts the skating, but Myers is siding with wrist surgery.

"This bone is at least proving to me that it's just as frustrating," he said. "It's just a matter of staying positive. No point in rushing something that could be at risk for a rebreak. It's just a matter of getting to the point where I feel comfortable."

Myers had the right wrist wrapped in tape during Friday's skate. He had been wearing a hard splint, which he prefers.

"It feels better when I have the splint on, on the ice. It's more solid," Myers said. "I've kind of been going back and forth this week. It was a little sore last week, so I was wearing the splint for the last few days. Went back to the tape [Friday], and it's still a little tender."

Myers has a CAT scan scheduled for Monday. He expects it to show a healing bone, but that doesn't mean it is a bone that's ready for the rigors of hockey.

"The last CAT scan looked pretty good, so I think this one will be close to the same," he said. "For me, it needs to feel right. It needs to feel where it needs to be for me to come back."

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The Sabres have locked up another prospect, agreeing to a three-year, entry-level contract with Jerome Gauthier-Leduc. The first year of the deal will be worth \$615,000, followed by salaries of \$665,000 and \$715,000.

The defenseman, selected in the third round of the 2010 entry draft, has had a high-scoring season in juniors. He has 20 goals and 51 assists in 35 games with Rimouski of the Quebec Major Junior Hockey League. He opened the season with a 12-game point streak that included goals in eight straight games, setting the league record for blue-liners.

"Jerome has continued to improve as a player since we selected him," Sabres General Manager Darcy Regier said in a statement. "His play in Rimouski this season demonstrates the offensive abilities that he possesses."

The 19-year-old, who is 6-foot-1, 188 pounds, has 59 goals and 170 points in 216 games in junior.

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The Sabres host Ottawa tonight in First Niagara Center, a game that features the return of "Tux and Pucks."

The Sabres' alumni association will conduct six raffles, with a grand prize guaranteed to be at least \$20,011. That will be followed by five more drawings, each worth \$2,012. Tickets, which cost \$1 each, will support the Junior Sabres, the Alumni Scholarship Program and the Sabres' foundation.

Fans will also receive New Year's Eve handouts upon entering the arena. Tuxedos will be available at Tuxedo Junction up until the 7 p.m. game time, with fans able to get a complete tuxedo for \$20.12 by showing their ticket.

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The Sabres' final set of "slug" jerseys are up for auction. The sweaters, worn during the 2009-10 season, are the final ones to feature the design of the legless, charging buffalo. They are available for bid at Auctions.NHL.com until 9 p.m. Jan. 8. Proceeds benefit the Sabres Foundation.

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Ovi nets pair as Capitals skate past Sabres, 3-1

NHL.com

December 30, 2011

It hasn't exactly been a banner year for [Alex Ovechkin](#), but the [Washington Capitals](#) captain is working on ending it in stellar fashion.

Ovechkin scored twice Friday night and the Capitals gained ground in both the Eastern Conference and Southeast Division races with a 3-1 victory over the [Buffalo Sabres](#) at Verizon Center.

[Nicklas Backstrom](#)'s goal early in the second period turned out to be the game-winner and [Tomas Vokoun](#) stopped 25 shots for the Capitals, who avenged a 4-2 loss four days earlier in Buffalo in which they gave up all four goals in the opening 20 minutes.

[Jochen Hecht](#) had the only goal for the Sabres, who got 18 saves from [Ryan Miller](#).

"In the locker room, we just say we owe them," Ovechkin said, "and we just have to have a pretty good start."

Ovechkin enters Saturday's game in Columbus looking to extend his points streak to six straight to end 2011. It's been a tumultuous year for both the captain and his team -- Washington was swept out of the Stanley Cup Playoffs in the second round last spring by Tampa Bay, and a slow start this year led to Dale Hunter replacing Bruce Boudreau behind the bench. Meanwhile, Ovechkin followed up his worst season statistically in 2010-11 by scoring just 12 goals over his first 35 games this season.

A visit by Miller and the Sabres brought out the best in him Friday, however.

Buffalo defenseman [Mike Weber](#) was called for boarding just 27 seconds into the game, and on the ensuing power play Ovechkin received the puck from Vokoun and came flying down the right side of the ice. His attempted pass to [Brooks Laich](#) hit the stick of a Sabres defender and ricocheted past Miller at 1:42 to get Washington on the board.

It was the Capitals' only goal of the first period, but they outshot the Sabres by an 11-2 margin.

"I mean, they got a fortunate one on the first one," Buffalo right wing [Jason Pominville](#) said. "We kind of would like to get a few of those go our way, but that's just the way it's been going for us."

The teams traded goals in the second, with Backstrom extending the Capitals' lead to 2-0 at 3:52

before Hecht answered for the Sabres, cleaning up the rebound of a [Thomas Vanek](#) shot with 4:58 left before the intermission.

That set the stage for Ovechkin to put the game away in the third. This time it was Backstrom gliding down right wing before passing cross ice to Ovechkin for a sizzling one-timer that eluded Miller with 5:50 remaining. Ovechkin skated backwards into the boards and pumped his fists, a slightly more subdued celebration than in seasons past.

"He's a goal-scorer," Backstrom said, "and he should be up there."

Ovechkin has now scored 14 goals in 21 career games against Miller.

"When your top line scores -- Nicki and Alex and Alex -- the rest of the team plays hard," Hunter said. "And they feed off it."

Surging Ovechkin gets 2; Capitals upend Sabres 3-1

Joseph White

Associated Press

December 30, 2011

WASHINGTON (AP)—[Alex Ovechkin](#) scored a pair to grab the [Washington Capitals](#) lead in goals. [Alexander Semin](#) had another multipoint game. [Nicklas Backstrom](#) had a goal and an assist.

And the [Buffalo Sabres](#) suffered another major injury, likely losing high-priced defenseman [Christian Ehrhoff](#) for weeks.

If the Capitals are going to be a threat once again in the Eastern Conference, their best players need to be their best players. It's finally starting to happen. The top line was on form Friday night for the second game in a row, a 3-1 win over the hard-luck Sabres.

"When your top line scores—Nicki and Alex and Alex—the rest of the team plays hard," Washington coach Dale Hunter said. "And they feed off it."

If the Sabres are going to rebound, they'll have to keep patching together lineups. They were already without six injured players entering the game before Ehrhoff got into a fight with [Troy Brouwer](#) late in the first period.

The defenseman with the 10-year, \$40 million contract skated to the locker room and didn't return.

"He's going to miss some time ... probably weeks," said Buffalo coach Lindy Ruff, who did not disclose the nature of the injury.

One of Ovechkin's two goals was actually a pass attempt that got deflected into the net, but the Capitals captain has five goals in seven games, a further sign that he is emerging from the spotty play that has run parallel to Washington's slow start.

The former two-time NHL MVP has 14 goals on the season, moving ahead of Backstrom and [Jason Chimera](#) for the team lead.

"He's a goal-scorer," Backstrom said, "and he should be up there."

Backstrom's goal was the 100th in his NHL career. Semin had two assists, giving him multiple points in back-to-back games for the first time this season. [Tomas Vokoun](#) made 25 saves as the Capitals got one back against their worst nemesis of the season.

Washington has had two of its most deflating performances in Buffalo, losing 5-1 in the last game before coach Bruce Boudreau was fired. They then fell behind 4-0 in a 4-2 loss on the day after Christmas, showing they still have a ways to go before getting a consistent rhythm under new Hunter.

But the Capitals came home from Buffalo to play perhaps their best game of the season, Wednesday's 4-1 win over the [New York Rangers](#).

Now they've beaten those pesky Sabres.

“In the locker room, we just say we owe them,” Ovechkin said. “and we just have to have a pretty good start.”

Washington and Buffalo have been hovering close to each other in the bottom half of the Eastern Conference standings, but the Capitals have pulled three points ahead of the Sabres and have won seven of 14 under Hunter.

[Jochen Hecht](#) scored the Sabres’ goal. [Ryan Miller](#) made 18 saves.

The game was only 27 seconds old when [Mike Weber](#) was whistled for a boarding call for a nasty hit on Chimera. Ovechkin capitalized on the ensuing power play, albeit purely by accident, when his cross-ice pass to [Brooks Laich](#) was deflected by Ehrhoff toward the net, catching Miller off guard.

Washington’s second goal featured crisp passes in the offensive zone that went from Ovechkin to [Roman Hamrlik](#) to Semin to Backstrom.

The Capitals outshot the Sabres 11-2 in the first period, but the Sabres gained momentum in the second and scored when Hecht put in a rebound off a shot by [Thomas Vanek](#). Buffalo outshot Washington 15-6 in the period.

But Ovechkin put the game away with a one-timer from high in the slot from a feed by Backstrom with 5:50 remaining in the third.

Afterward, the Sabres sounded like a team in need of a good bounce or two.

“I mean, they got a fortunate one on the first one,” right wing [Jason Pominville](#) said. “We kind of would like to get a few of those go our way, but that’s just the way it’s been going for us.”

Notes: The Capitals have even more reason to be excited about 2010 first-round Yevgeni Kuznetsov after the Russian captain had three goals and six assists in a 14-0 win over Latvia at the world junior hockey championship in Canada on Thursday. Kuznetsov plays in Russia’s Kontinental Hockey League. “He should here next year,” Washington general manager George McPhee said. “He’s ready to play here, and he needs to be in a better league.” ... Buffalo D [Andrej Sekera](#) missed his first game with an upper-body injury that is expected to sideline him for weeks. He was replaced by [Marc-Andre Gagnani](#), who had been a healthy scratch for the past four games. ... After the game, the Capitals recalled F [Cody Eakin](#) from Hershey of the AHL. To make room, D [Mike Green](#) (right groin) was played on injured reserve. The move is retroactive, so Green can come off at any time.

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Sabers' [sic] Ehrhoff out 'probably weeks' with injury

Associated Press

December 30, 2011

WASHINGTON (AP)—[Buffalo Sabres](#) high-priced defenseman [Christian Ehrhoff](#) will be out for an extended period after he was injured in Friday night's 3-1 loss to the [Washington Capitals](#).

Ehrhoff left the game after a fight with Washington's [Troy Brouwer](#) late in the first period and did not return.

Buffalo coach Lindy Ruff said Ehrhoff was going to "miss some time ... probably weeks." Ruff did not disclose Ehrhoff's injury.

The Sabres traded for Ehrhoff this summer and signed him to a 10-year, \$40 million contract. He has three goals and 14 assists this season.

Buffalo has been hit hard by injuries. Among those missing Friday's game were defenseman [Tyler Myers](#) and forwards [Ville Leino](#), [Corey Tropp](#), [Tyler Ennis](#), [Nathan Gerbe](#) and [Colin Stuart](#).

DULLED FINISH

Kevin Snow

Sabres.com

December 30, 2011

WASHINGTON, DC --- The Buffalo Sabres threw everything they had at the Washington Capitals on Friday, but all it took was two shots from one of the NHL's most dangerous goal scorers to be the deciding factor.

Alex Ovechkin scored twice as the Sabres extended their road losing streak to five games when they were handed a 3-1 defeat at the Verizon Center. The Sabres dropped to 17-17-3 on the season, and will next face Ottawa at home on Saturday to close out the calendar year.

Buffalo finished the game with 26 shots on goal, along with 23 blocked shots and 14 missed shots. [Jochen Hecht](#) scored Buffalo's only goal, and was responsible for eight shot attempts (5-1).

The game got off to an inauspicious start for the Sabres when [Mike Weber](#) took a boarding call for a hit on Jason Chimera just 27 seconds after the opening faceoff. Ovechkin scored the game's first goal 75 seconds later when his shot from the right wing was redirected behind [Ryan Miller](#) by [Christian Ehrhoff](#)'s upturned stick blade.

Lindy Ruff said it wasn't how he wanted to start the game, but wouldn't lay any blame on Weber.

"You start by taking a penalty. Webby is a physical player. I don't think it was that bad a hit when I look at it," Ruff explained. "Sometimes that early call is an easy one to make and they made it. That gets you behind the eight ball right off the bat. It's hard not to tell a guy to not finish his check."

The first period was all Caps as they outshot Buffalo 11-2. Buffalo didn't record a shot on goal until [Drew Stafford](#) directed a puck at Tomas Vokoun 12:40 into the game.

"They came out hard; we expected them to come out hard after the way they played in our building (on Monday)," said [Jochen Hecht](#). "They had something to prove. We had two shots in the first period and that's not close to being enough."

After Nicklas Backstrom put the Caps up by pair early in the second, the Sabres came to life. They attempted 32 shots at the Capitals net in the period – but 10 were blocked and they missed on seven others.

Hecht used his muscle to cut the lead in half at 15:02. [Thomas Vanek](#) patiently held on to the puck in the slot before firing a shot at Vokoun. The rebound kicked left, and Hecht outworked a double-team to get Buffalo on the board. Vanek's assist on the play extended his point streak to seven games.

Despite their aggressive play in the second and third period, Buffalo's inability to put pucks in the net ultimately cost them again. The Sabres have now scored just nine goals on 137 shots over their last five games.

"It's about finishing. It's not about bad luck after a while," said [Derek Roy](#). "You can get bad luck for one or two games, but it's about finishing your chances. We had a couple of chances where it was just laying behind them and we didn't poke it in. We have to outbattle the guy and put it in the back of the net."

Buffalo took another hit on defense when Ehrhoff left the game with an upper body injury following a first period tussle with Troy Brouwer. The two never really threw any punches, but Brouwer landed awkwardly on top of Ehrhoff as they tumbled to the ice. Ruff said after the game that Ehrhoff is expected to be out for a few weeks. With [Andrej Sekera](#) already sidelined with an upper body injury, Buffalo will be forced to recall a blueliner from Rochester for Saturday's game.

NOTES: The Sabres haven't won in Washington since April 3, 2009 ... Sekera (upper body) and [Tyler Ennis](#) (ankle) were Buffalo's scratches ... Lindy Ruff said before the game that [Nathan Gerbe](#) could be ready to return to the lineup for Saturday's game against Ottawa.

SABRES INK GAUTHIER-LEDUC TO ENTRY LEVEL CONTRACT

Sabres.com

December 30, 2011

Buffalo Sabres General Manager Darcy Regier today announced that the team has signed defenseman [Jerome Gauthier-Leduc](#) to a three-year entry-level contract. Buffalo selected Gauthier-Leduc in the third round (68th overall) of the 2010 NHL Entry Draft.

“Jerome has continued to improve as a player since we selected him [in the 2010 NHL Entry Draft],” Regier said. “His play in Rimouski this season demonstrates the offensive abilities that he possesses.”

Gauthier-Leduc (6’1”, 188 lbs., 7/30/92) currently ranks 12th among all QMJHL skaters with 51 points (20+31) in 35 games. Gauthier-Leduc’s 51 points give him a wide lead in scoring among QMJHL defensemen – 14 more than the next closest blueliner. His nine power play goals tie him for sixth among QMJHL skaters.

In June, Gauthier-Leduc was invited to Team Canada’s National Junior Team Development Camp. He followed that up by opening the 2011-12 season on a 12-game point streak, during which he recorded 26 points (11+15). In the midst of that streak, Gauthier-Leduc scored a goal in eight consecutive games, breaking the 31-year-old QMJHL record for defensemen set in the 1970-80 season by Gaston Therrien.

In four QMJHL seasons, the native of Quebec City, Quebec has 170 points (59+111) and 81 penalty minutes in 216 games for Rimouski and Rouyn-Noranda. He joins fellow Sabres 2010 third-round pick [Kevin Sundher](#), who was signed to an entry level contact on Dec. 15.

Sabres Lose to Caps 3-1; Ehrhoff out with Upper Body Injury

WGR 550

December 30, 2011

The Buffalo Sabres were in Washington, D.C., hoping to stay undefeated against the Capitals on the year. Buffalo was unsuccessful, they fell 3-1 to the Caps.

Buffalo got off to a bad start in the first period. Mike Weber went to the box for boarding Jason Chimera just 27 seconds into the game. Shortly thereafter, Alex Ovechkin made it 1-0 Caps with a power play tally at 1:42. Goalie Tomas Vokoun got the assist. The Sabres couldn't get anything going offensively early on. They got their first shot on goal 12:40 into the first.

Tempers started to flare up at that point. Weber and Chimera tried to settle their differences with their fists at 12:26. And at 16:49 Christian Ehrhoff mixed it up for the second time as a Sabre, going toe-to-toe with Troy Brouwer. Ehrhoff was apparently hurt in the scrum. He left the game with an upper body injury and did not return.

Fans hoping for a better jump at the start of the second were in for a rude surprise. The Caps made it 2-0 at 3:52 on a beautiful passing play. The Sabres defense was completely befuddled leaving Nicklas Backstrom wide open for an easy tap-in past Miller. Alex Semin and Roman Hamrlik picked up the assists.

Buffalo finally showed some signs of life toward the end of the second. They picked up the offensive pressure and the top line finally put the Sabres on the board at 15:02. Jochen Hecht got his fourth goal of the year with assists from Thomas Vanek and Jason Pominville.

Things looked promising for much of the third period. Buffalo buzzed around the Washington net, creating plenty of chances but they just couldn't bury any. At 14:10, the Sabres left Ovechkin open in the slot where he took a pass from Backstrom and rifled home a one-timer to make the score 3-1 and that's the way the score would stay.

Next up it's the Senators at First Niagara Center on New Year's Eve.

Sabres Adam trying to fit in

Paul Hamilton

WGR 550

December 30, 2011

Washington, DC (WGR 550) -- Luke Adam started the season centering Thomas Vanek and Jason Pominville. It went well to start with had two goals and two assists in the two games in Europe. In his first 11 games he had four goals and seven assists for 11 points. Since then he's played 25 games scoring six goals and three assists for nine points.

The line went into a slump and Adam has been shuffled ever since. He's played LW, he's played center and had many different line mates.

Currently he's with Matt Ellis and Zack Kassian. Adam said he's familiar with one of them, "I played with Matty a lot last year in Portland, probably 40 games and it was nice to get back to him. He's a good player, a hard worker, you know what you're going to get every night from him. He's a great communicator on the ice as well. He helped me out a lot last year and he continues to help me so having a guy like that and myself and Zack have built some chemistry so hopefully we can put a couple in tonight."

With all the shuffling around Adam has done, it's hard on a second year player. He said, "I don't know if it's difficult, it's different, that's for sure. One game playing the left side, one game playing the middle. I've kind of been in stretches here, I think the last three games I've been in the middle, before that it was seven or eight on the wing and before that I was in the middle so it's been back and forth, but with the injuries we've had you're going to have different linemates. Coach has been known and he likes to switch lines up a nice bit so, at this level everyone's such a great player you just try to mesh as quickly as you can, everyone knows how to play hockey here and everyone knows the system so even though it is different players, with some different tendencies, most guys are pretty similar."

I did have to ask him if he'd like to land with Pominville and Vanek again. Adam said, "Yah that would be nice. Those guys are great players and they continued success so you never know."

Adam lost his 11th goal of the season in New Jersey when his tip of a Brayden McNabb shot was disallowed due to Adam's stick too high. MSG never showed an on ice view and Adam said that would've told a different story, "Usually you know whether you high stick a puck or not. I thought it was a good goal. It was almost similar to my goal at home against Phoenix same height as the tip. This was a shot that went up, I don't think McNabb got all of it, it went up and it was coming down and I got it on its way down, but they called it a no goal on the ice and I don't think the video angle was too good, you couldn't really tell. If they called it a goal on the ice, I think it might have stayed a goal. It would've been nice to get that one."

Amerks are everything Sabres should be

Matthew Coller

WGR 550

December 30, 2011

The Buffalo Sabres and Rochester Americans are going in different directions. Never has it been more evident than on Friday night that the Amerks are everything the Sabres were expected to be.

The Amerks came into Friday night's game against the Hamilton Bulldogs one point out of first place in the North Division. The Sabres came into Friday's game in fourth place in the Northeast. Rochester entered play winning four in a row. Buffalo stepped on the ice in Washington dropping four of their last five.

Rochester did not win Friday at Blue Cross Arena. Neither did Buffalo. The AHL club lost 5-4 to the Bulldogs in front of around 9,800 fans. Buffalo fell 3-1 to Washington. Despite the loss, Rochester's game was many things Sabres games have not been, starting with physical.

"We battled hard, I mean, the whole team," veteran center Paul Szczechura said after the game. "I thought we took it to them most of the game."

Anyone watching the game would agree. Rochester put 39 shots on goal. They often out-worked Hamilton and pushed back whenever the Bulldogs tried to shove them around. Gritty forward Maxime Legault embodied the Amerks' strong physical play with several big hits.

"That's one I enjoyed, that's why I'm getting paid, actually," Legault said after the game. "Not to run people, but just to do my thing like hitting people, bringing energy for the guys and I think it worked."

Unlike in Buffalo, standing up for teammates isn't seen as a chore in Rochester, but as a duty. Tough guy Travis Turnbull, who last week immediately stepped into a fight last week after an Oklahoma City player ran the Amerks' goalie, did something similar Friday night. He explained why the team enjoys standing up for one another.

"I think it comes from being such a close-knit group," he said. "We're basically a family here and we want to look out for each other. At the end of the game, a guy was going after Max (Legault) and I wanted to be the first guy in there. You have to pick up your teammates, that's how you win."

Words like those have not – and could not – be spoken this year in Buffalo.

The crowd was different too. Goalie Drew MacIntyre gave up three very saveable goals. He was not booed. Each hit, each goal, each scoring chance came with loud outbursts. When there was under three minutes remaining in a one-goal game, nobody left. In fact, many stuck around to boo Hamilton's two stars.

“When there's such a big crowd like that, it really helps out the team a lot,” Turnbull said. “We came from two emotional games in Oklahoma City and a tough travel day, we were all tired but you can't be tired when there's a crowd like that behind you.”

And, while injuries have been an excuse in Buffalo - right or wrong – there haven't been any excuses in Rochester. Friday night's roster was minus Stuart, Zack Kassian, Brayden McNabb, Corey Tropp, Shaone Morrisonn, Michael Ryan and Rankin.

During post-game interviews, there was no mention of players missing. Rather, Amerks coach Ron Rolston talked about his players staying motivated despite obstacles.

“It's a daily process of getting better,” Rolston said. “It's making sure you are always getting better and never hanging your head. They are a proud group. Even when we go through a losing streak, they go to practice and want to get better as a group and that's why we've been able to rebound.”

The Rochester players often travel to Buffalo to watch the Sabres play when games don't conflict. You have to wonder if it should be the other way around.

ADDITIONAL NOTES

- Coach Rolston had some interesting things to say about Marcus Foligno's one-game stint in the NHL:

“I think Marcus was playing really well before he went up. That game gave him a taste of where he wants to be and what he needs to do. He's been getting better every day, he's doing a great job in taking responsibility for his growth as a player and that's huge.”

“It's hard for guys when they just go up for one game because that game he was playing against his brother with his whole family there, so the first half of that game had to be complete anxiety. You want to play well and don't want to screw up. It's easier when you can go up there and stay for three or four games.”

“We always ask the guys how they think they did and I thought he played really well at the end of that game and was starting to get comfortable, but he's got things to work on and he knows it. He will be there, he's going to be a great player in this organization.”

-Szczechura and Derek Whitmore aren't hanging their heads about being sent back to Rochester. Whitmore had a Gordy Howe hat trick and “Chewy” scored two points in the 5-4 loss.

Without deal, Time Warner to lose Sabres

George Richert

WIVB

December 30, 2011

BUFFALO, N.Y. (WIVB) - Buffalo Sabres fans can see the Tux & Pucks game on MSG New Year's Eve, but the party's over with the arrival of a new year unless Time Warner strikes a deal with the cable network first.

Time Warner officials are quick to point out that if the Sabres games do go black, that is MSG's decision to make. But with less than two days to go until the deadline, all Sabres fans want to know is: will they be able to see the games?

The Pearl Street Bar and Grill is packed on nights when the Sabres play, whether it is a home or an away game. But after Saturday night, even the popular spot might not be able to show the game on their TV screens.

General manager Bill Casale said, "A very large portion of our business is hockey-oriented. Not only before and after, but a lot of people stay here to watch the games because of the high energy for the games. We have invested a lot of money into 45 TVs in the building with high-def, wiring, etcetera, so we have a lot invested into hockey here at Pearl Street."

Time Warner Cable is the area's biggest cable provider, but the company can't agree to terms on a new contract with MSG, which carries most of the home and away Sabres games.

Time Warner says, "We have hundreds of employees who live here in WNY. We love our Sabres and we understand that sports costs are rising. We were close to an agreement for a 6.5 percent increase in the price we pay but MSG reneged on that offer a few weeks ago. We offered an extension at close to that rate until September 2012 so we could continue negotiating. MSG refused. We've given them multiple proposals, but at this time, they're not actively engaged in anything other than a public battle."

MSG counters, "Unfortunately, we have not had any recent, meaningful discussions with Time Warner Cable. They have rejected every one of our fair proposals for nearly two years, and are unwilling to value our programming in the same manner as other distributors or even engage in good faith negotiations on behalf of their customers. We are not going to participate in unproductive public rhetoric."

The dispute doesn't just involve Buffalo - it applies to all of New York State. So if the Sabres games go black, so do the Islanders, Rangers, Devils, and the NY Knicks.

Sabres On Cable? Race Against Clock

WBEN.com

December 30, 2011

As the clock clicks closer to New Year's Day, there is an increasing possibility that Sabres games, and other programming from MSG network will drop off of Time Warner Cable systems in greater Buffalo.

The two sides are at odds in a contract dispute. Their current contract expires on January 1.

Neither side seems to be moving much, if this latest article from the Wall Street Journal is any indication

Facing a heated battle with MSG sports network over rising rates, Time Warner Cable Inc. Chief Executive Glenn Britt said sports channels should be sold separately from the main cable-TV package of channels.

"What was a minor problem is turning into an astronomical problem," Mr. Britt said in an interview Wednesday, referring to the cost of sports programming generally. "The ultimate solution is to get that programming on some sort of smaller packaging scheme."

Mr. Britt spoke as rhetoric between Time Warner Cable and MSG network owner Madison Square Garden Co. has been escalating ahead of a New Year's Eve deadline for resolution of a dispute between the two companies. If unresolved, the sports network could be blacked out in roughly two million New York-area homes on New Year's Eve. The network carries games of the New York Knicks and New York Rangers, also owned by Madison Square Garden Co.

When asked for comment Wednesday, an MSG spokesman referred to the company's Tuesday statement in which it said "it is important that our fans don't miss their favorite programming."

Cable Chief Fires Back at MSG Sports Network

Christopher S. Stewart and Sam Schechner

Wall Street Journal

December 22, 2011

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An advertising war has broken out between Time Warner Cable and Madison Square Garden Co. as a Dec. 31 deadline looms, Sam Schechner reports on the News Hub. Photo: Getty Images.

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When asked for comment Wednesday, an MSG spokesman referred to the company's Tuesday statement in which it said "it is important that our fans don't miss their favorite programming."

The drama is only the most recent clash over the rising cost of sports channels, which is forcing up overall cable rates. That has caused some TV executives to warn lately that costly sports programming threatens the TV subscription business.

Shifting sports channels to a separate tier, as Mr. Britt said, would allow cable operators to shift the cost for sports channels to those sports fans who want the programs—and cut the cable bills for nonsports fans. But that idea faces intense opposition from entertainment companies that own the channels.

The New York Rangers played the Philadelphia Flyers at Madison Square Garden in November.

Mr. Britt said these broader issues applied "100%" to the dispute with MSG. It centers on how much Time Warner Cable will pay for a new contract with the regional sports network, which expires at midnight on Dec. 31. Negotiations broke down last Friday, the same day that Time Warner Cable fully dropped MSG's music channel Fuse.

Since then an advertising war has ignited. On Tuesday, MSG published local newspaper ads, warning that "Time Warner Cable might cancel your New York Sports." Time Warner Cable fired back on Wednesday with ads featuring a giant flattened basketball and made reference to a National Basketball Association labor dispute that scuttled the first months of the pro basketball season: "First they lock out the Knicks, now MSG wants to block out the fans."

Cable and satellite operators pay roughly \$2.48 per household per month for MSG, and \$2.17 per month for its sister channel MSG Plus, according to estimates from SNL Kagan. Those costs are up more than 70% from five years ago, SNL Kagan estimates show, more than almost any other regional sports network. Madison Square Garden is controlled by the Dolan family, which also controls [Cablevision Systems](#) Corp., the largest TV distributor by subscribers in the New York metropolitan area.

MSG is now pressing for a 53% increase, according to Time Warner Cable, which said that it was willing to agree to a 6.5% rate increase. "Its current price—never mind what they're asking—is one of the most expensive sports networks in the country," Mr. Britt said.

MSG contested those numbers, saying in its Tuesday statement that Time Warner Cable has "grossly mischaracterized our negotiations," and that MSG was looking for "fair and reasonable terms."

Rochester Amerks unsteady in goal in loss to Hamilton

Kevin Oklobzija

Rochester Democrat & Chronicle

December 31, 2011

With the building nearly packed and with a chance to move into first place, the Rochester Americans put on a good show but left the ice angry.

Goaltending failed them.

Despite opening a one-goal lead three times — 2-1, 3-2 and 4-3 — the Amerks were never able to hold on and ended up losing 5-4 to the Hamilton Bulldogs in front of a season-high 9,771 at Blue Cross Arena at the Rochester Community War Memorial.

They can beat the American [Hockey](#) League's best team, Oklahoma City, on back-to-back nights on the road but they can't beat the Bulldogs on home ice.

If the Amerks were just .500 against Hamilton instead of 1-4-1-1, they'd be leading the North Division and not still a point behind the Toronto Marlies (36-35).

"We have to find a way to beat this team," said center Paul Szczechura, who scored one goal and set up another but was robbed by goalie Robert Mayer early in the third period.

He danced down the slot on a power play shot once, then gathered in the rebound and tried to jam it past Mayer at the right edge of the crease at 3:39.

Twice the goalie was able to keep the fat part of his stick flush to the ice and deny Szczechura.

The goal horn blared, the goal light flashed but the puck was never over the line.

"I knew it wasn't in — but it should have been in," Szczechura said. "He made a good save; it could have been a turning point."

Actually, it was. Just 3:35 later, Aaron Palushaj banged in the third rebound during a Bulldogs' five-on-three power play to break the 4-4 tie.

The goal was scored against relief goalie David Leggio. He stopped the other 11 shots he faced but ended up the losing goalie.

Drew MacIntyre started the [game](#) but played only 40 minutes. He allowed four goals on only 18 shots, and three were probably goals he'd stop nearly any other night.

Light-scoring Mitch Wahl beat him twice — once from the wall on right wing, once straight-on from the slot — for his only two goals of the season. Gabriel Dumont scored the other that didn't

make coach Ron Rolston happy when he drove to the goal mouth and somehow jammed the puck under MacIntyre.

For the first time, Rolston made a goalie switch, though he waited for the second intermission.

"It's a tough position when you have an off night," said Rolston, pointing out that a forward or defenseman can be hidden even if they're playing poorly. "I know Drew was disappointed. That's the team he played for (last season)."

KEVINO@DemocratandChronicle.com

Alfredsson's 400th leads Sens past Flames in OT

Erin Nicks

NHL.com

December 30, 2011

KANATA, Ont. -- The game was on the line, and what would eventually be his 400th goal was on his stick. [Daniel Alfredsson](#) never hesitated.

"I just told myself: 'Shoot the puck'," he said.

The 39-year-old Ottawa captain hit a milestone and won the game in dramatic fashion on Friday night, as the Senators came back from a 3-0 deficit to beat the Flames, 4-3 in overtime, on a power-play goal from the Swedish veteran. A sellout crowd of 20,500 at Scotiabank Place showed their appreciation by chanting the forward's name as he circled the ice in celebration of No. 400.

The goal was especially sweet, as Alfredsson was not only able to score it in front of a home crowd, but also had plenty of family in town that had been staying with him during the holidays.

"I always said I would love to do it at home," he said. "But it's going to happen when it happens. Today, we're so caught up in the game, and I just want to win. I wasn't really thinking whether I score or not, it's going to be No. 400. I was just trying to find a lane, and if I did, I was going to shoot. I saw it go in, and I saw Erik (Karlsson) jumping towards me and that's when I realized it. Obviously having family and friends here makes it that much more special."

Karlsson, who was the first to congratulate Alfredsson on the ice, expressed his happiness about his countryman's big moment.

"I wanted him to score bad," Karlsson said. "I'm happy he did it in a game like this that was so important for us to come back. It shows that he's still the leader of this team and a great hockey player."

For the Senators, it was a happy ending to a game that definitely did not start out on the right foot.

The visiting Flames got off to a quick start just 23 seconds into the game when [Alex Auld](#) came out to play the puck to [Sergei Gonchar](#), who wasn't expecting the pass. [Rene Bourque](#) gained control and tipped it past the Ottawa goaltender for the early lead.

Calgary went up 2-0 with Ottawa forward [Nick Foligno](#) in the box for holding the stick. [Jay Bouwmeester](#) skated the puck past the net, then passed back to [Curtis Glencross](#), who fired it

past Auld at 6:25.

It was more bad luck for the Sens' special teams -- as of Friday, Ottawa had the second-worst penalty kill in the League at home, at 73 percent. The Senators have allowed seven power-play goals in their last six games overall.

The Flames would continue to pile on late in the period, when [Chris Butler](#)'s seeing-eye wrister from the top of the circle at 18:49 beat Auld high stick-side for his first of the season, making the score 3-0. [Anton Babchuk](#), back in the lineup for the first time since suffering a broken hand on Nov. 8, also had an assist on the goal.

That was it for Auld, who stopped 12 of 15 shots and was pulled in between periods in favor of [Craig Anderson](#).

The Senators got on the board in the second, when Foligno flew in on the left wing and deked [Leland Irving](#) at 3:35 for his first goal in nine games.

They made the score 3-2 at the 12:01 mark when [Zack Smith](#) fired a wrist shot from the right faceoff circle, beating Irving. It was Smith's third goal in five games.

The Senators tied things up early in the third, when Karlsson regained control of his own rebound, then skated around the net and fired on Irving for a highlight-worthy goal at 4:28.

The defenseman's high-risk maneuver to find the back of the net didn't faze coach Paul MacLean one bit.

"I thought it was a great play," he said. "I thought he read the play real well and had defensive support, coming back on the other side. That's what great players do -- they step up and make plays when the opposition is trying to do something that maybe they should be."

It was a bitter pill to swallow for the Flames, who entered having won four of their last five games.

"We all knew what we had to do, and we were talking about it on the bench, but nothing got done," Bourque said. "We lost last night, now we lose again tonight. We're just not sharp right now."

"It's just all the little things that help bottle up a team," Irving said. "We were still too loose tonight and allowing them to skate too much. There were times in the game where I thought we were in control, but obviously in the end they took it to us."

Alfie nets goal No. 400 in OT win

Don Brennan

Ottawa Sun

December 31, 2011

In their last game of 2011 at Scotiabank Place, the Senators closed the door with a bang.

And doing the honours, naturally, was captain Daniel Alfredsson. The best player in franchise history scored the 400th goal of his storied career, one-timing a slapshot past Calgary goalie Leland Irving at 3:31 of overtime to give the Senators a 4-3 victory.

Rene Bourque was in the box for holding Erik Karlsson at the time.

“It feels great. I always said I’d love to do it at home, but it’s going to happen when it happens,” said Alfredsson of 400. “We were so caught up in the game, you just want to win the game. I didn’t really think about if I score now, it’s going to be 400. I was just trying to find a lane, and if I did I was going to shoot it.

“I saw it go in and I saw Erik jumping towards me, and that’s when I kind of realized it was 400 as well. Obviously, with family and friends here it makes it more special. I put it exactly where I wanted it. It was pretty nice to see it go in.”

“I wanted him to score bad,” said Karlsson. “I wanted him to get his goal. I think he wanted it too, to be able to do it and move forward.

“He had a couple of good shots and probably could have scored at least four times on that power play there. I’m obviously really happy for him that he did it at home and a game like this, that was so important for us. It shows that he’s the leader of this team still, and that he’s a great hockey player.”

The Senators completed a comeback from a 3-0 first-period deficit when Karlsson put up a late candidate for goal of the year to tie the game just past the four-minute mark of the third.

His magnificent solo effort started when he flicked his stick out to break up a Calgary rush in the neutral zone. Karlsson then carried the puck toward the goal and ripped a wrist shot off the mask of Flames goalie Leland Irving. With Irving appearing to be momentarily stunned, Karlsson picked up the rebound, circled the net and fired the puck into the short side.

“It’s nice to score some goals every once in a while, too,” said Karlsson. “Especially the way the game was. We started off slow and we worked ourselves into the game and really kept it up. We showed we’re still a good team and we’re going to win big games.”

Coach Paul MacLean started backup goalie Alex Auld because the game was the first of a three-in-four-night, four-in-six nights stretch for the Senators. It was also the only one of the bunch against a Western Conference opponent.

Auld was pulled after the first period for giving up three goals on 16 shots, including a damaging tone- setter just 23 seconds in.

With Craig Anderson on in relief, the Senators rallied.

Things definitely went downhill fast for the Senators in the first period.

“I thought we responded in the second and third period,” said MacLean. “First period, we weren’t very good at all. We didn’t play with enough competitive juice.”

Cheaps: Karlsson no longer the mane man

Don Brennan

Ottawa Sun

December 31, 2011

Random conversation at the dressing room stall of soon-to-be second-time all-star Erik Karlsson hours before he and the Senators tackle the Calgary Flames ...

So the sign in the SBP crowd says, "Hey Karlsson, Tame The Mane" and now you've done just that. When did you get the haircut?

Karlsson: "Thursday."

And?

Karlsson: "And it looks good."

Why, though?

Karlsson: "Because it was annoying. It was everywhere. I couldn't even get a ponytail if I wanted to."

A lot of kids were starting to let the flow grow, to look like Erik Karlsson.

Karlsson: "I know, I know. But everything has its time and the hair was a bit overdue, so I tried something new."

Are they gonna let you take another draw any time soon?

Karlsson: "I'd like to take two more so I could win them and be 66 percent."

Are you satisfied leading all NHL defencemen in scoring and being second in the league in assists, or is there another aspect of the game you'd like to conquer? (Karlsson added to his totals with his fifth goal of the season Friday night.)

Karlsson: "That would be actually be pretty funny if we had to get in net. I remember that from when we were kids. We only had one goalie usually, and if he got hurt one of the players had to jump in and take over. I did that once."

How did it turn out?

Karlsson: "I don't remember. Probaby let in a few, stopped a few. I think my teammates tried to block every shot."

Gotta be something else you could do?

Karlsson: "I don't know what it could be. Maybe take a fight, but I've never done that, I don't really want to do that."

Why don't you just grab Iginla in front of the net and rag doll him a bit?

"And be out for two months with a concussion or broken nose or something?"

You're assuming you'll lose the fight.

"Maybe. I don't know if I can take a punch."

Make any New Year's resolutions?

Karlsson: "Like promises? I don't think so. I don't really have any bad habits that I need to get rid of. I do hope that I get a nice vacation this summer. My honeymoon is going to be pretty good. Looking forward to that."

Where are you going?

Karlsson: "Thinking about South Africa right now. Go on a safari. See some crazy animals that can kill you."

You can see that in this room, though, right? What about Carkner?

Karlsson: "He's a beast."

Bet your fiancée Therese could name a bad habit of yours.

Karlsson: "She probably could. She thinks I chew too loud. When I eat candy and stuff. Smacking my lips. That's probably a bad habit. That's probably one I could get rid of. Probably be hard to get rid of, though."

What did you get her for Christmas?

"A calendar for 2012. I got her a thing from the iStore, a small purse where you can keep your phone and stuff. And I got her a watch."

What kind of a watch? Hope you spent some money on it, because it sounds like with the other gifts you cheaped out a bit.

"It's a nice watch that she can enjoy for a while."

That's nice.

"I've been smart with her. We met on Valentine's Day, so I'll never forget that date. We got engaged on her Name Day ... we have that in Sweden .. so I'll never forget that date ... and we're getting married on the 7th of July. Seven-seven. Pretty smart."

In memory of David Rundblad?

Karlsson: "Yeah, I was actually going to return his car today, to the dealership. It's been outside the house for five days. I go out 10 minutes early to start it up. Take all the ice and snow off, get in the car and there's no gas. And I have no gas station between my house all the way to the rink, so I had to drive all the way around to fill up the gas, and I get to the gas station and the thing wasn't working. So I had to go in and tell the guy, then walk out with him ... it was a stressful morning."

Your wedding is going to be in Sweden?

Karlsson: "Yes. At the same place Alfie got married."

Are we invited?

Karlsson: "Maybe. We'll see how you treat me in the papers the next couple of days."

Can I stay at your parents', to cut down on the cost?

Karlsson: "I know where there's a hostel, it's pretty cheap."

What's the meal?

Karlsson: "I don't know ... we're going to have something with shrimp, for starters. We have good seafood, it will be something with seafood probably."

What are your thoughts on the caesar?

Karlsson: "That is the most gross thing I've ever tried in my life. I accidently ordered one once ... I wanted to order a caesar salad. So I said I want a casear, and they came out with this weird drink. I'm like, what is this? So I tried it ... it's the worst ever."

STARTS AND STOPS

The \$5-million videoboard is worth every cent come fight time. Chris Neil and Tim Jackman provided the entertainment in the game's second minute ... Some of Craig Anderson's teammates believe the team's No. 1 goalie is getting some unfair criticism in the media. "You've got to remember we're a young team, we have young people on the back end and the front end," said Zenon Konopka. "When you're a young team, odd-man rushes and breakaways happen. If Andy is on a veteran team, he might be up for the Vezina Trophy." ... Like Anderson a day earlier, Daniel Alfredsson also used the word "sneaky" to describe Erik Condra's offensive talents. "Condra's got sneaky skills. He's better with the puck than guys give him credit for," said

Alfredsson. Condra, the shootout winner at the skills competition, appeared to have some added confidence. Of the 29 shots the Senators had through two periods, he had five and his centre, Kyle Turris, had four.

KONOPKA KORNER

As Nick Foligno points out, not many single guys have a pet rabbit. Especially NHL tough guys. What's the deal with Hoppy?

Konopka: "Got him six years ago in Syracuse. My girlfriend at the time wanted an animal, so she brought home this rabbit and I fell in love with him. When we broke up, she got Hoppy in the settlement, but then she went to Australia, so I got him back. He's been to Syracuse, Norfolk, he's been in New York ... he never made it to Tampa. He thought it was too hot. I guess with the fur ..."

How come you brought him to the skills competition?

Konopka: "I felt that me facing Alfredsson in the passing competition, I needed some luck. I could use a rabbit's foot, so I brought the full rabbit. It took me four pucks and it took Alfie about 14. So that was exciting.

"It's got to be legit. What are the odds of me ever having a chance in any kind of skill competition ... so the rabbit works."

Why don't you bring him to games?

Konopka: "That's for the playoffs."

Game Day: Senators vs. Sabres

Don Brennan

Ottawa Sun

December 31, 2011

Ottawa Senators (17-15-5) at Buffalo Sabres (17-16-3)

Saturday, 7 p.m., First Niagara Center

TV: CBC **Radio:** Team 1200, CKOI 104.7 (French)

SPECIAL TEAMS

OTT: PP 17.8% No. 14; PK 79.5% No. 25

BUF: PP 19.1% No. 11; PK 84.1% No. 10

LAST 5

OTTAWA

- MTL 6, OTT 2
- CAR 2, OTT 1 (OT)
- OTT 4, FLA 3 (OT)
- OTT 4, BUF 1
- OTT 6, PIT 4

BUFFALO

- NJD 3, BUF 1
- BUF 4, WSH 2
- TOR 3, BUF 2
- OTT 4, BUF 1
- PIT 8, BUF 3

LINES

OTTAWA

FORWARDS

- Colin Greening-Jason Spezza-Milan Michalek
- Erik Condra-Kyle Turris-Daniel Alfredsson
- Nick Foligno-Zack Smith-Bobby Butler
- Kaspars Daugavins-Zenon Konopka-Chris Neil

DEFENCE

- Filip Kuba-Erik Karlsson
- Jared Cowen-Sergei Gonchar
- Chris Phillips-Matt Carkner

GOALIES

- Craig Anderson
- Alex Auld

BUFFALO

FORWARDS

- Thomas Vanek-Jochen Hecht-Jason Pominville
- Drew Stafford-Derek Roy-Brad Boyes
- Matt Ellis-Luke Adam-Zack Kassian
- Cody McCormick-Paul Gaustad-Patrick Kaleta

DEFENCE

- Robyn Regehr-Marc-Andre Gagnani
- Jordan Leopold-Mike Weber
- Brayden McNabb-Christian Ehrhoff

GOALIES

- Ryan Miller
- Jhonas Enroth

INJURIES

OTTAWA

- C Peter Regin (shoulder) is out indefinitely
- C Jesse Winchester (concussion) is out indefinitely

BUFFALO

- D Andrej Sekera (upper body) is out indefinitely
- LW Tyler Ennis (left ankle) is out indefinitely
- LW Colin Stuart (knee) is out indefinitely
- RW Corey Tropp (head) is out indefinitely.
- LW Nathan Gerbe (concussion) is out indefinitely
- D Tyler Myers (wrist) is out indefinitely
- C Ville Leino (lower body) is out indefinitely

SIZING UP THE SIDES

Forward: OTT

Injuries have kept Buffalo's scoring low

Defence: OTT

Off-season acquisitions Ehrhoff and Regehr combined minus-19

Goalies: BUF

Enroth could be the wildcard as Sens have defeated Miller twice

Power play: BUF

Sabres had eight pp goals last six games before Friday

Penalty killing: BUF

Senators have given up seven more pp goals

Coaching: BUF

Ruff has 543 career wins

Overall: OTT

Senators hold the slight edge over banged-up Sabres

PLUS

The Senators are 2-2-3 in the second of back to back games this season ... The Senators won 3-2 in Buffalo last time the teams met, with Jared Cowen scoring the overtime winner ... Buffalo native Nick Foligno leads the Senators in hits.

MINUS

The Senators lost 5-1 in Buffalo Nov. 11 ... Sergei Gonchar hasn't scored since Nov. 12 ... The Senators last four road games have gone beyond three periods, but ultimately, they've won only one of them.

ONLINE EXTRA

The Senators have lost two players to concussions last two times they've played the Sabres. First it was Milan Michalek, who was injured colliding with teammate Erik Karlsson, and then it was Jesse Winchester, who was driven head-first into the boards by Paul Gaustad ... The Sabres haven't won consecutive games in seven weeks. The last time they put together a "streak" was mid-November, when they won three in a row ... Thomas Vanek entered Friday with points in six straight games ... Before Friday, Ottawa had a team plus-minus rating of minus-3, while Buffalo was a minus-4. Ottawa was ranked 10th in hits, while Buffalo was 29th ... Buffalo had 37 first-period goals while Ottawa had just 24.

Alfredsson completes comeback with 400th goal

James Gordon

Ottawa Citizen

December 31, 2011

When he wound up to shoot the puck, Daniel Alfredsson wasn't even thinking about his 400th goal. All he thought about was the fact the Senators had a chance to win the game, most improbably, after falling behind 3-0 after the first period.

But when the puck went past Calgary Flames rookie Leland Irving at 3:31 of overtime, and Alfredsson looked to see Erik Karlsson heading toward him and leaping in the air, he remembered that, yes, the goal was indeed his 400th.

With his parents and a capacity crowd of 20,500 watching, the goal, a big one in a career of big goals, ended up being one of his more dramatic — and one of his more timely, giving the Senators a 4-3 win over the Flames.

"I always said I'd love to do it at home," Alfredsson said, just before posing with the souvenir puck.

"But it was going to happen when it happened. (Friday night), you're so caught up in the game, you just want to win the game, and I didn't really think 'If I score now, it's going to be No. 400.' "I was just trying to find a lane and if I did I was going to shoot it. And I saw it go in and I saw Erik jumping toward me and then I kind of realized it was 400, as well, and with my family and a lot of friends here, it makes it more special."

Karlsson, who earned an assist on the goal, had scored a dazzling one of his own at 4:28 of the third to tie the game at 3-3, but he seemed more thrilled to have been a part of Alfredsson's bit of history.

"Obviously I wanted him to score bad," said Karlsson.

"I wanted him to get his goal, and I think he wanted it, too, to be able to get it and move forward and kind of let it go.

"He had a couple of good shots and probably could have scored four times on that power play, and I'm obviously really happy that he did it at home and in a game like this, that was so important for our team.

"It shows that he's the leader of this team still, and he's a great hockey player."

It didn't look as if the Senators were on their way to victory after the first period.

Alex Auld started the game but was pulled for Craig Anderson after allowing three goals on 15 shots in the first period.

Rene Bourque, Curtis Glencross, Chris Butler scored to give the Flames a 3-0 lead.

But the Senators chipped away starting in the second period and got goals from

Nick Foligno, Zack Smith, and eventually Karlsson in the third to tie the game and send it to

overtime.

Anderson ended up facing 17 shots over two periods, while Irving, making just his third NHL start, faced 49.

* * * * *

GAME FILE

WHY THEY WON: Because they found their legs after a poor first period and got lucky in overtime when Rene Bourque was sent off for interfering with Erik Karlsson. That gave the Senators the opening they needed to score the winner.

STUD: Erik Karlsson. He scored a dazzling goal to tie the game at 3-3 in the third, getting his own rebound and circling the net before putting it in on the other side. One of the best goals of the year so far.

DUD: Alex Auld. The three goals he allowed on 15 shots were not entirely his fault. There was some bad luck involved. But not enough to convince coach Paul MacLean that Auld should be allowed to stay in and finish the job, so he was out after one.

PENALTY-MINUTE RACE: With the two minutes he picked up for tripping, Zenon Konopka moved within two minutes of the league's penalty-minute lead. The dubious honour is presently held by Philadelphia's Zac Rinaldo, who has 110 minutes to Konopka's 108. The two players have more than a 20-minute lead on Colorado's Cody McLeod, who is third at 84 minutes.