



Buffalo Sabres

Daily Press Clips

Tuesday, February 14, 2012

Sabres coaches may need to give Ruff a shout

Mike Harrington

The Buffalo News

February 14, 2012

Lindy Ruff wanted to be back on the bench Saturday night but stayed in the press box. He's hoping to return to his normal spot again tonight against the New Jersey Devils.

James Patrick has run the team from the bench for the last three games with Teppo Numminen moving from the press box to the bench. Ruff, on the mend from three broken ribs, doesn't know if he'll keep that alignment or join Patrick, Numminen and Kevyn Adams tonight.

"Even if I do go back, I'm going to need help because there's situations there where I can't vocalize loud enough, especially with the crowd, and react quick enough to have people ready," Ruff said Monday. "So if I do go back there, I'll have James sort of in the same role."

Ruff was on the bench for practice Monday for the first time, wearing a Bill Belichick-style hooded sweat shirt. While his return to game coaching is getting close, he's still a long way away from taking the ice.

"It was nice to be down near the ice," Ruff said. "I haven't had a lot of practice time with all the games we've been playing so it was good to be involved. As drills are going on, I can't yell yet, so I'm sort of an innocent bystander."

Ruff said he was feeling better a week after his injury. A big issue, in addition to the strength of his voice, is his ability to avoid errant pucks. Four of them came on the bench during Saturday's loss to Tampa Bay and Ruff said standing in front of the tunnel as an escape route might not help him much.

"If I hung out by the tunnel, there's a good chance I get hit," Ruff said with a laugh. "If I stay in the same spot I normally do, I won't. I don't think we can change too much."

dots Cody McCormick, who missed Saturday's game with an upper-body injury, did not practice Monday but Ruff said he is getting better. Jochen Hecht had his scheduled neck procedure done last week to help with his concussion symptoms and his status remains uncertain.

"We haven't gone one way or the other with him yet," Ruff said. "Nobody has shut him down so he's still in the process of working his way back."

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A one-game stint on WGRZ in Buffalo and WHEC in Rochester in the wake of the ongoing Time Warner/MSG dispute produced the Sabres' highest television rating of the season Saturday night.

The game against Tampa Bay posted a 12.6 rating and a 21 share regionally, which translates to 81,000 households watching. Ratings peaked at a 16.2 (105,000 households) during the final 15 minutes.

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The Devils entered Monday's games second in the league in penalty killing at 88.4 percent but things really go goofy no matter which side of the man advantage New Jersey is on.

New Jersey leads the NHL with 13 short-handed goals this season and also leads in giving up shorties with 13 -- but no other team has scored more than eight or given up more than eight. By contrast, the Sabres have scored just two while short-handed and given up five.

Devils rookie Adam Henrique is tied for the league lead with four short-handed goals.

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A fourth-grade class from West Seneca East Elementary was on hand for practice as its prize for reading the highest amount of minutes in a literacy contest sponsored by the Sabres and Perry's Ice Cream. The class read for more than 120,000 minutes during the three-month program and got lunch, an ice cream party with players and photo opportunities as its reward.

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Kaleta states case with Sabres

Mike Harrington
The Buffalo News
February 14, 2012

Less than a month ago, there were serious questions about Patrick Kaleta's career. He's working hard to answer them.

For a couple of games, it seemed like the Buffalo winger would sneeze on an opposing player and get a penalty. Coach Lindy Ruff even called him a marked man and said the Angola native basically can't hit anybody anymore.

Maybe that was hyperbole but Ruff was making a point. Kaleta could no longer get away with running a player while coming from as far as his hometown of Angola and then trying to send him through the boards in downtown Buffalo on the way to Niagara Falls.

Kaleta has had to make subtle adjustments in his game and Ruff has noticed. As he gets ready for tonight's matchup with the New Jersey Devils in First Niagara Center, Kaleta is coming off back-to-back games where he has played more than 17 minutes for the first time in his career. He can still hit. He just has to do it in a more controlled, reserved manner.

"A lot of people have said I'm just a mutt, a fourth-liner, and I'm just going to run around and hit," a smiling Kaleta said after practice Monday. "I take that personally and I take that as a challenge. I love challenges and having people say that about me. It motivates me to do even more and be even better."

Kaleta scored his fifth goal of the season, fought Boston behemoth Milan Lucic and generally agitated the Bruins -- and NBC Sports Network analyst Mike Milbury -- in Wednesday's 6-0 win.

In the wake of that game, he played 17 minutes, 36 seconds Friday against Dallas and 17:20 Saturday against Tampa Bay.

"I've been non-stop working on my game since the beginning of the year knowing I had to change it," Kaleta said. "Using my speed. And when I'm able to hit, I can use that to my advantage, too. But I'm just staying patient and going out and playing hockey."

"He's definitely altered his game," Ruff said. "He realizes that he's a marked man and he doesn't get any slack one way or the other. He's skated well and stayed away from some of those situations and hasn't put himself where the referee has an opportunity to make an easy call."

In the first intermission of the Boston game, Milbury, speaking on national TV, chastised Kaleta for being a pest and largely for starting an altercation with Lucic while wearing a visor.

Kaleta laughed when asked about Milbury's comments.

"I'm worried about what my guys in here think of me," Kaleta said. "I'm perfectly fine going home and throwing together a Lego set and just hanging out with my buddies. I don't need tons of people to like me. If they don't, I'm doing my job."

Kaleta has a chance to play 60 games in a season for the first time this year. Durability and staying out of the penalty box have been big questions about his game.

He's moved up to the third line with Paul Gaustad and Nathan Gerbe, and has earned plenty of ice time against opponents' prominent forwards. So he could get some up-close looks tonight at the likes of Zach Parise, Ilya Kovalchuk or Patrik Elias.

Kaleta has also worked with Gaustad on the penalty kill, and played more than seven minutes combined in the last two games with the team short-handed.

"He's played well and that line has played well if you go back to the difference they've made in three of our last five games," Ruff said. "In that case, the minutes have gone up."

Kaleta has also tried to raise the fun quotient in the face of the Sabres' uphill battle for a playoff spot. He put on quite the celebration Monday when he scored in a shootout drill on Ryan Miller and joined Matt Ellis and Tyler Ennis with a stick-raised salute in the corner when Ellis back-handed a Kaleta pass out of midair to score on Jhonas Enroth on a 2-on-1 drill.

"It's really important to have fun," Kaleta said. "It makes it more enjoyable, makes the job more enjoyable. Loosens you up. Hockey is a fun game. Even more fun when you're winning and working hard."

The Sabres are 5-1-1 in their last seven games but still slipped to 14th in the East with Saturday's 2-1 loss. They are eight points out of the final playoff spot.

"We know we have to throw a string of wins together," Kaleta said. "It's a matter of us working hard and being desperate. I know people don't like that word desperate but it's just going out there and doing anything you can to win. It's going to come down to a blocked shot, penalty kill, power play. A bunch of little things are going to add up."

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When there's no choice but to be all ears

Bruce Andriatch
The Buffalo News
February 14, 2012

I rarely think about excessive sweating anymore.

Until about a month or so ago, I was thinking about it three, sometimes four nights a week. But one of the unexpectedly pleasant consequences of the ongoing Time Warner/MSG dispute that keeps Sabres games off my television is that I no longer see the disturbing commercial that seems to play somewhere in the neighborhood of 73 times per game.

There are other benefits. But the best part of this unfortunate situation is doing something I haven't done since I was a kid: listening to hockey on the radio.

For generations, this was the only way to follow a sporting event live. Every American sports fan of a certain age has a story about hearing a game on a transistor radio with an earpiece during school, or hiding under the covers with the radio turned down low so parents couldn't hear and listening to broadcasts from faraway cities.

Those calls of the games were different, almost poetic, because the broadcaster did not have video to augment his words; it was up to the listeners to imagine what was happening based only on the description they heard. It's the difference between reading the book and seeing the movie.

In Buffalo, we were blessed for more than 20 years to hear either Ted Darling or Rick Jeanneret call Sabres games on the radio. When the team began simulcasting Jeanneret on radio and TV, the venerable RJ didn't change his style one bit—thank goodness—which meant telling the viewer and the listener exactly what was going on with each movement of the puck, his voice crescendoing as the play built toward its climax.

Here is a typical Jeanneret description of a power-play sequence:

“Stafford down low, passes back to Myers at the point. Myers, looking, looking, over to Pominville. Pominville, winds up, doesn’t shoot, gives it to Roy, back to Pominville, to Myers *with the one-timer* and he *blasts* it wide. Vanek has it *in front*, and the puck is loose as they jam away at it. Lundqvist finally covers up, and now they *all pile in there*, and the bodies are flying everywhere! Oh, brother!”

It’s perfect for radio, and we still love it on TV. Here’s how a typical TV broadcaster would describe the same action:

“Stafford down low. Drew Stafford, all 6 feet 2 inches of him, grew up in the Milwaukee area and still has family in Wisconsin. In 2009, Drew scored a hat trick in Edmonton with his uncle Barrie, the Oilers’ equipment manager, on the bench for the home team, which had to be a memorable moment for the Stafford family and his many friends. Faceoff coming up to the right of Lundqvist.”

I’ll take Rick’s description any day.

I was listening the other night when the Sabres scored in the last minute to tie the game. My son raced downstairs when he heard me clap, and then the two of us stood there listening to the radio call of the shootout, only knowing what had happened when Rick said “score” or “save.” It made for a brief, fun shared experience in an otherwise frustrating year for us Sabres fans.

I do hope MSG and Time Warner settle their differences soon because I miss watching my team on these bleak winter nights. Until they do, I’m happy to hear what I’m missing.

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Sabres chase important two points against Devils

Brian Hunter

NHL.com

February 13, 2012

DEVILS (31-20-4) at SABRES (24-25-6)

TV: MSG PLUS, MSG-B

Last 10: New Jersey 5-3-2; Buffalo 5-4-1

Season Series: Fourth and final meeting. After the Devils won the first two games -- including the prior matchup at First Niagara Center -- the Sabres scored a 2-1 victory via the shootout on Jan. 24 at Prudential Center. [Jason Pominville](#) scored in the third round to prolong the penalty-shot tiebreaker, and [Nathan Gerbe](#) beat [Martin Brodeur](#) in the fourth round to end it.

Big Story: New Jersey enters what could be a more challenging stretch than it initially appears -- each of the Devils' next three games are against teams currently outside the top eight in their

respective conferences (Sabres, Ducks, Canadiens), but with approximately a third of the season still remaining they all figure to be playing desperate hockey, trying to make enough of a push prior to the Feb. 27 trade deadline to prove they should be buyers and not sellers. The Sabres broke out of a prolonged skid the last time they faced the Devils and went on a 5-0-1 run that ended Saturday against the Lightning.

Team Scope:

Devils: The shootout loss to Buffalo also started New Jersey on a stretch in which it picked up at least one point in seven straight games (5-0-2), but the Devils came away empty Saturday with a 3-1 loss to the visiting Panthers. While the afternoon started off promising with [Steve Bernier's](#) goal just 1:39 in, the Devils couldn't build on the lead and were stymied for most of the final two periods by the Panthers' defense and former Brodeur backup Scott Clemmensen, who improved to 4-0-0 against his old team.

"We just kind of slowed down a bit. We couldn't keep that pace up for whatever reason," captain [Zach Parise](#) said in the Newark Star-Ledger. "I don't think it was so much what they were doing as we started throwing the puck away, turning the puck over a lot and we stopped talking to each other on the ice.

"It's frustrating because we've been playing so well as of late. I'm not saying it was a step backward, but it wasn't a great effort by us."

Sabres: While its recent hot streak allowed Buffalo to gain some ground in the standings, teams like Montreal and Tampa Bay have been just as hot, and the Lightning nosed back ahead of the Sabres by virtue of a tiebreaker after their 2-1 win. Tampa Bay held a 23-13 advantage in shots over the first 40 minutes and went ahead to stay on second-period goals by Steve Downie and Steven Stamkos. Buffalo carried play in the third, as the Sabres outshot the Lightning 14-5 and got back in the game on Pominville's goal at the 7:07 mark, but they never found the equalizer.

"It took us awhile to get to a point where we could do what we needed to do to win a hockey game, and it was already coming from behind," goalie [Ryan Miller](#) said in the Buffalo News.

Who's Hot: [Alexei Ponikarovsky](#) has 2 goals and 6 assists in nine games since the Devils acquired him in a trade with the Hurricanes. ... Pominville has 3 goals and 2 assists during a four-game points streak for the Sabres.

Injury Report: New Jersey defenseman [Adam Larsson](#) has missed the last five games with a bruised lower back. Defenseman [Henrik Tallinder](#) (blood clot) and forwards [Travis Zajac](#) (Achilles) and [Ryan Carter](#) (broken finger) are on injured reserve. ... Buffalo forward [Cody](#)

[McCormick](#) (upper body) is day-to-day. Forward [Jochen Hecht](#) (concussion) is on injured reserve.

Stat Pack: [Petr Sykora](#) played his 500th game for the Devils on Saturday and is now just 10 shy of 1,000 for his NHL career. ... Sabres defenseman [Mike Weber](#) assisted on their lone goal Saturday while also blocking three shots, delivering two hits and coming up with two takeaways in 16:49 of ice time.

Puck Drop: New Jersey had two days off prior to playing Buffalo and gets another two days before Anaheim visits on Friday. The loss to Florida marked the end of a stretch of seven games in 12 days that coach Peter DeBoer said could have led to lethargic play Saturday, but the players weren't willing to hide behind that.

"That's the easiest excuse," [Ilya Kovalchuk](#) said in the Star-Ledger. "Everybody has the same schedule. We just have to find a way to win, especially in our home building. Now we've lost two in a row. We can't do that."

New Jersey (31-20-4) at Buffalo (24-25-6)

Jeff Bartl

STATS

February 13, 2012

The [New Jersey Devils](#) dropped consecutive home games after a five-game winning streak that helped put them into the thick of the Eastern Conference playoff race.

Maybe hitting the road will get them back on track.

New Jersey seeks its fifth straight win away from home when it faces the [Buffalo Sabres](#) on Tuesday night.

The Devils (31-20-4) have gone 5-1-2 over their last eight games and enter this matchup three points behind Philadelphia and Pittsburgh, which are tied for fourth place in the East.

Their winning streak came to an end with a 4-3 shootout loss to St. Louis on Thursday before they fell 3-1 to Florida on Saturday.

Coach Peter DeBoer said New Jersey's stretch won't get any easier this week facing teams battling to make the playoffs.

The Sabres (24-25-6) are eight points behind eighth-place Toronto in the East.

“They’re playing for their life, as are the other teams we’re playing this week—Anaheim and Montreal, Toronto,” DeBoer told the team’s official website. “It’s not necessarily the opponent as much as the desperation level. And right now, for me, the desperation level doesn’t get any higher than two weeks prior to the trade deadline.”

Each of those contests DeBoer highlighted with the exception of Anaheim will be away from home, though that may not be a problem for the Devils, who have outscored opponents 11-6 in winning four consecutive road games.

[Patrik Elias](#), [Ilya Kovalchuk](#) and [Zach Parise](#) each scored in a 5-3 victory in Buffalo on Nov. 16, though the Sabres have played well at home of late.

Buffalo—5-1-1 in its last seven overall—fell 2-1 to Tampa Bay at First Niagara Center on Saturday, ending a 10-game home stretch in which it earned at least one point (6-0-4). The Sabres are aware they’ll be in for a tough matchup with the Devils, whom they beat 2-1 in a shootout in the most recent meeting Jan. 24.

“They like to clog up things in the neutral zone and they do a good job in the ‘D’ zone trying to surround the puck with a lot of guys,” said [Derek Roy](#), who hasn’t recorded a point in three meetings this season. “We were trying to work on spreading the ice out, getting guys up high, trying to create some confusion in the offensive zone.”

Coach Lindy Ruff, who watched his third straight game from the press box Saturday while recovering from broken ribs, said Buffalo needs to play hard for a full game if it expects to make the playoffs.

“We played one period, but one period is not good enough,” said Ruff, who isn’t sure if he’ll be on the bench Tuesday.

[Ryan Miller](#) made 26 saves and lost in regulation for the first time in seven starts after going 5-0-1 with a 1.11 goals-against average.

Miller has allowed one or no goals in five of his last six starts versus the Devils, going 4-1-1 with a 1.14 GAA.

DeBoer said [Martin Brodeur](#), 5-1-2 with a 1.27 GAA in his last nine appearances against the Sabres, will get the start in net.

Elias has two goals and three assists versus Buffalo this season, including two assists in a 3-1 win Dec. 28.

SABRES READY FOR ANOTHER TRAP GAME

Chris Ryndak

Sabres.com

February 13, 2012

The Buffalo Sabres schedule recently has been filled with teams that like to lock it down on defense. They defeated Dallas in a shootout on Friday and then fell to Tampa Bay by one goal in regulation on Saturday. The Sabres will go up against another team known for the trap tomorrow night when they host the New Jersey Devils at First Niagara Center.

The Devils currently sit in sixth place in the Eastern Conference and fourth in the Atlantic Division. While New Jersey is 11th in the league in scoring and in the middle of the road in goals against, they still have a reputation as a tight checking team that can frustrate opponents.

“They like to clog up things in the neutral zone and they do a good job in the D zone trying to surround the puck with a lot of guys. So we've got to be ready,” said Sabres center [Derek Roy](#) after this morning's practice. “We were trying to work on spreading the ice out, getting guys up high, trying to create some confusion in the offensive zone.”

Head coach Lindy Ruff called many of the mistakes his team made against Tampa Bay “self-inflicted.” When preparing for New Jersey, he indicated that his team has been working on getting more pucks on net and driving to the goal.

“It had a lot more to do with what we were doing than what Tampa was doing,” Ruff said. “I think almost every team in this league has learned to be frustrating defensively and if you can't frustrate the other team, especially when you have a lead, you usually end up losing the game.”

Ruff watched today's practice from the bench for the first time since breaking three ribs in practice a week ago. He's coached the last three games from the press box and assistant coach James Patrick has been in charge of calling out the lines down on the ice. Although he's feeling better, Ruff still wasn't sure after today's practice if he'd be back behind the bench tomorrow night.

“I was hoping for last game,” Ruff explained. “Even if I do go back, I think even if I go back tomorrow, I'm going to need help because there are situations where I still can't vocalize loud enough and especially with the crowd, [I won't be able to] react quick enough to have people ready. If I do go back there, I'll have James sort of in the same role.”

Last game, Ruff said four pucks were shot into the bench during Saturday's game and he joked that standing back there may not be the safest place to be.

“Teppo got hit with one of them. I'd like to laugh about it, but I don't want to because I don't want to get hit at the same time,” Ruff said. “If I hang out by the tunnel, there's a good chance I'd

probably get hit. If I stay in the same spot I normally do, I won't. I don't think we can change too much.”

Lines from today's practice:

Thomas-Vanek-Derek Roy-Jason Pominville

[Nathan Gerbe](#)-Tyler Ennis-Drew Stafford

[Ville Leino](#)-Paul Gaustad-Patrick Kaleta

[Brad Boyes](#)-Matt Ellis-Zack Kassian

All seven defensemen and goaltenders [Ryan Miller](#) and [Jhonas Enroth](#) participated as well.

Winger [Cody McCormick](#) did not skate. He suffered an upper-body injury on Friday and Ruff said he's improving.

Ruff also updated the media on the condition of center [Jochen Hecht](#), who has been out with post-concussion symptoms since Jan. 21 after being hit by T.J. Oshie in St. Louis. Hecht underwent a non-surgical procedure on his neck and as of now, there's still a chance he may be back before the end of the season.

“Nobody has shut him down so he's still in the procedure of working his way back,” Ruff said.

RJ'S WORLD

Find out what's on the mind of Sabres play-by-play voice Rick Jeanneret

Rick Jeanneret

Sabres.com

February 13, 2012

Ever since I started taking these in-season breaks, people always ask me what I do when I'm off. When I was away last month, I was in Florida at Belleair Beach on the Gulf side. I spent the better part of two weeks there, doing the dog track and race track thing. I'm going to have the opportunity to head back down to Florida in another 10 days or so, but I'll be joined by my grandkids this time. And with the grandkids there, you know the vacation won't be on the Gulf side. This time I'll be a little closer to Disney World and Universal Studios.

I obviously keep in touch with the team even though I'm not around them all the time. I'm still a part of the Sabres, doing 75 percent of the games. It's not as if I've gone away and disappeared – I've just cut back a bit. But I carry a tablet with me at all times and I have NHL GameCenter, so I'm always keeping track of the team while I'm away. I don't go out at night too much, which means I usually have the chance to watch at least some of the games when I'm relaxing. I was able to watch a couple of the games in January when I had the opportunity. Unfortunately, it was

at that time when the Sabres weren't going to well on that long road trip.

These breaks have worked out exactly as I'd hoped they would. The Pegulas and Ted Black were so generous to me, giving me this opportunity to maintain my career and still keep in touch with the team and what's going on. When I originally came up with the idea to have some off time during the season, I envisioned that I'd be spending some time down south, and that's exactly what has happened. Hopefully as a result of this it's going to elongate my career and I'll be able to hang around for a little bit longer – if they'll let me back.

I feel very refreshed right now, and I'm absolutely pumped up and ready to go for the rest of the season. There's no doubt about that whatsoever. I feel a lot more rested than I ever have at this time of the year. In fact when I came back from Florida in January and looked at the schedule, I thought to myself, 'Why did I cut out those other games? I could've done a few more!' But my wife also mentioned that I haven't had to walk through six feet of snow yet this winter, so that's probably got something to do with it as well.

As far as the team itself goes, I've never seen a rash of injuries like this in my life. And just when they finally get healthy again – their coach goes down with three broken ribs! I know first-hand how tough that injury can be to deal with. I had a broken rib several years ago and I worked through it while I was broadcasting games. It was just one broken rib, and it was in the front, not the back. I spent the nights that I worked holding on to my rib – and I was well drugged up when I was doing it and it still hurt like hell. I can only imagine what kind of pain Lindy has been going through since the accident.

Sabres agitator Kaleta earning more ice as he alters his style

Bill Hoppe

Niagara Gazette

February 14, 2012

BUFFALO — For six years, Patrick Kaleta's heard calls and insults he's merely a talentless agitator trying to thump bodies. The Sabres winger bristles at the scorn.

The 25-year-old's earned a regular shift for several seasons. He scored 10 goals in 55 games two years ago, four of them winners. He kills penalties.

"I know a lot of people have said I'm just a mutt, a fourth-liner; I'm just going to go out and hit," Kaleta said Monday inside the First Niagara Center after the Sabres prepared for tonight's tilt against the New Jersey Devils. "I take that personally. I take that as a challenge. I love challenges and I love having people say that about me because it motivates me to do even more and be even better."

He's been at his best during the Sabres' 5-1-1 run, playing 34:56 during the past two games, the first time he's ever skated more than 17 minutes in consecutive contests.

Kaleta and Paul Gaustad, an offseason workout partner, have formed a strong penalty-killing duo, helping swing momentum and bumping up Kaleta's minutes. He's averaging 13:40 a night this season, about three minutes more than usual.

In the Sabres' 6-0 trouncing of Boston on Wednesday, Kaleta scored a goal, fought and laid a game-high seven hits while getting under the Bruins' and NBC analyst Mike Milbury's skin.

"When I watch that Kaleta ... start a fight with that big shield (visor) on, it makes me want to go to the men's room," Milbury said during the telecast.

What's Kaleta's response to those harsh words?

"It just drives me to do better," he said. "I'm worried what my guys in here think of me. I'm perfectly fine going home and throwing together a Lego set, just hanging out with my buddies. ... I don't need tons of people to like me. If they don't, it means I'm doing my job."

Yes, Kaleta still enjoys Legos. He loves having fun.

But what if Milbury hears that Kaleta still plays with toys?

Like it or not, Kaleta's reputation has always superseded his talent. Officials and opponents target him. The Angola native's a marked man.

NHL discipline czar Brendan Shanahan cited past offenses while explaining Kaleta's four-game head-butting suspension in November. Another player likely would've gotten off.

Clearly, Kaleta's cognizant he's being watched. He's calmed down recently and started showcasing a more responsible style.

"He's definitely altered his game," Sabres coach Lindy Ruff said. "I think he realizes he's a marked man and he doesn't get any slack one way or the other. But he's skated well. He's stayed away from some of these situations and he hasn't put himself where the referee has an opportunity to make an easy call."

Kaleta said he's "been working non-stop on my game since the beginning of the year."

"I had to change a little bit using my speed," he said. "When I'm able, I can use that to my advantage, too. Overall, (I'm) just staying patient and going out there and playing hockey."

Kaleta and Gaustad spent much of the summer working out together on and off the ice. Their chemistry illustrates it.

Ruff said the Kaleta, Gaustad and Brad Boyes combination was the Sabres' top line during a recent stretch. Nathan Gerbe and Ville Leino have replaced Boyes in the past few days.

"That line has played well," Ruff said. "... You (can) go back to the difference they've made probably three of the last five games."

The line sometimes faces the opposition's best.

"We really take pride in that," Kaleta said. "We worked hard in the summer together in trying to build a tandem out there so we know where each other are and what's going to happen. I take pride in going out there and trying to shut down, take away the other team's top guy."

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Eight days after breaking three ribs during practice, Ruff hopes he can go back behind the bench tonight. He's been watching from the press box and letting assistant James Patrick run the show at ice level.

If Ruff goes back down, he'd need help.

"There's situations there where I still can't vocalize loud enough, especially with the crowd and react quick enough to have people ready," Ruff said. "I think if I go back there, I'll have James sort of in the same role."

Ruff counted four pucks that went behind the bench Saturday. He said one hit assistant Teppo Numminen.

Would Ruff consider moving from his normal spot to the tunnel area?

"I'd like to laugh about it, but I don't want to get hit," he said. "At the same time, I think if I hung out by the tunnel, I'll probably get hit. If I stay in the same spot I normally do, I won't."

xxx

Ruff said winger Cody McCormick (upper body) is feeling better. The winger missed practice Monday, however.

Meanwhile, concussed center Jochen Hecht underwent a neck procedure and is doing "OK."

"We haven't gone one way or the other yet," Ruff said.

Hecht, who's had three concussions in 10 months, isn't out for the season, Ruff said.

Sabres Kaleta's role expanding

Paul Hamilton

WGR 550

February 13, 2012

Buffalo, NY (WGR 550) -- Pat Kaleta has seen more ice time because the Sabres have been using him and Paul Gaustad against the other team's best lines. For the most part it's gone well.

Gaustad has three goals and four assists for seven points in ten games.

Kaleta has two goals in six games and went from nine to 14 minutes in a game to close to 18 minutes. As you know, Kaleta likes to hit and talk trash on the ice which doesn't make him a favorite around the league. When his assignment is shutting down the other team's best player he said he uses physical and mental tactics, "I do both, whatever way I can make them adjust and worry about me and at the same time, for myself to play my game and do things that I need to do, either way it'll work."

The other thing those two players have done is restored the penalty kill. The Sabres were #1 in the NHL earlier this season, but then slipped badly. Once everybody got back from injury the Sabres have killed 11-out-of-12 penalties and are 14th overall. Penalty killing is something Kaleta always tries to get better at, "We've been working and watching video of the penalty kill, we'd like it to be a little bit better and we know we can bear down here down the stretch because killing penalties is going to be real important for our team so whatever has happened in the past, we've learned from and we've got to move forward."

Wednesday game was on National Television on the NBC Sports Network. During the intermission Mike Milbury, who while playing went into the stands and beat a Ranger fan with a shoe said that Kaleta made him sick because of all the things he does on the ice with a visor on. Kaleta said, "It just drives me to be better. I'm worried about what my guys in here think of me and I'm perfectly fine going home and throwing together a Leggo set or just hang out with my buddies, I'm perfectly fine with that, I don't need tons of people to like me and if they don't, that means I'm doing my job."

Sabres Ruff may come back limited

Paul Hamilton

WGR 550

February 13, 2012

Buffalo, NY (WGR 550) -- Lindy Ruff really wanted to get behind the bench for the Tampa Bay game, but decided he just wasn't healthy enough. Now he's thinking about Tuesday and the head coach said, "I was hoping for last game. Even if I do go back Tuesday, I'm going to need help because there are situations there where you can't vocalize loud enough, especially with the crowd and react quick enough to have people ready so if I do go back there, I'll have James sort of in the same roll." Ruff actually was glad he didn't go back against the Lightning, "I think there were four pucks that went into the bench last game and Teppo got hit with one of them. I'd like to laugh about it, but I don't want to because I don't want to get hit." Ruff added, "I am feeling better, I'm in the seven to 10 day range where you get rid of some of the spasms and some of the stuff that has kept me away from participating."

Ruff has been in the stands for practice, but Monday he was down on the bench. Ruff said, "It was nice to be down near the ice, I haven't had a lot of practice time with all the games we've been playing so it was good to be involved. I said a few things, we went through practice before hand so there wasn't a lot I was going to say during practice and as drills are going on I can't yell yet so I'm an innocent bystander."

Robyn Regehr of course is new to the Sabres and was just getting used to Patrick running the "D". Now with Adams doing it, he says it's different, "It's been quite a bit different because you get used to the guy behind there and now you're missing Lindy, you add Teppo there too and now having Kevyn as a former forward coaching us, sometimes he sees some different things which is a fresh perspective on things for us."

Cody McCormick still wasn't ready for practice.

Jochen Hecht has had his procedure, but Ruff has no idea when he'll be back.

Sabres prove a good Saturday nite TV draw

Buffalo Business First

February 14, 2012

The [Buffalo Sabres](#)' game against the [Tampa Bay Lightning](#) on Feb. 11 drew the highest local television rating this season.

Viewership helped along by a one-time agreement to have the game broadcast on WGRZ-TV and WHEC-TV in Rochester while a contract stalemate between MSG Network and Time Warner cable drags on.

Sabres' officials said the game at [First Niagara Center](#) posted a 12.6 rating and a 21 share regionally.

Those two stations were allowed to broadcast the game by MSG Network, which holds the Sabres' broadcast rights. MSG, however, has been off [Time Warner Cable](#) in New York state since Jan. 1 in a contract dispute. That has effectively blacked out hundreds of thousands of cable subscribers. The dispute is also impacting viewers and sports teams in metropolitan New York city.

The two entities have given no indication that settlement is near.

“Since January 1st, fans have been caught in the middle of the ongoing dispute between Time Warner Cable and MSG, but Sabres fans still find ways to follow the games live at MSG-sponsored viewing parties and local bars and restaurants,” said Buffalo Sabres President [Ted Black](#). “We really appreciate MSG’s decision to buy the air time on WGRZ-TV in Buffalo and WHEC-TV in Rochester so that so many fans could watch the game in their own homes.”

The 12.6 rating indicates that 12.6 percent of television-equipped households were tuned into the game at some point during the broadcast and the 21 share means 21 percent of households watching TV in the region Wednesday night were watching the game. In the Buffalo market, that translates to approximately 81,000 households. Ratings for the telecast peaked at a 16.2 (105,000 households) during the final 15 minutes of the game.

Ruff Making Progress

Stu Boyar

WGRZ

February 13, 2012

BUFFALO, N.Y.-Sabres head coach Lindy Ruff watched practice wearing sneakers from the bench today at the First Niagara Center. Its unlikely he'll be behind the bench for Tuesday's game against New Jersey.

Ruff is a long way away from returning to the ice for practice and although considering being behind the bench for the game there are still things he struggles with. "Even if I do go back tomorrow, I'm going to need help because there's situations there where I can't vocalize loud enough, especially with the crowd, and react quick enough to have people ready. So if I do go back there, I'll have James sort of in the same role."

Being on the bench during games is not without risk. In Saturday's game against Tampa Bay a number of pucks came into the Buffalo bench including one that hit assistant coach Teppo Numminen. With his injuries Ruff's mobility is limited. "I'd like to laugh about it but I don't want to because I don't want to get hit at the same time. If I hung out by the tunnel, there's a good chance I get hit. If I stay in the same spot I normally do, I won't. I don't think we can change too much."

Jochen Hecht and Cody McCormick missed practice. Ruff said Hecht still hopes to play this season after having a procedure done on his neck. He said McCormick remains day to day.

Kids win ice cream party with Sabres

Mike Courtney

WIVB

February 13, 2012

BUFFALO, N.Y. (WIVB) - A class of 4th graders from West Seneca East Elementary earned a trip to Buffalo Sabres practice at the First Niagara Center Monday because they won the "Shoot, Score, Read More" literacy program.

The class of 17 students did more than 120,000 minutes of reading during the three-month program. The students had lunch and an ice cream party with the players, sponsored by the Sabres and Perry's Ice Cream. They even got a chance to get autographs with some of their favorite players after watching them practice.

More than 30 Buffalo area schools have participated in the program since it began in 2007, adding up to six million minutes of reading by the students.

Devils riding Martin Brodeur's success

Tom Gulitti

Bergen Record

February 14, 2012

NEWARK — With more work, Martin Brodeur has found his rhythm.

Thanks to another stellar season by goalie Martin Brodeur, the Devils are once again a team to be reckoned with in the Eastern Conference playoff picture.

That's good news for the Devils, who are looking for him to carry the goaltending workload down the stretch and, they hope, into the playoffs.

Brodeur again will be in net for the Devils tonight when they face the Buffalo Sabres at First Niagara Center.

Brodeur is 2-0-1 against the Sabres this season, allowing only one goal in each of his past two starts against them — including a 2-1 shootout loss Jan. 24 at Prudential Center.

“I think that's part of it, but this was going to be his start even if the numbers told a different story,” Devils coach Pete DeBoer said of the decision to start Brodeur. “He's rested. We're in the stretch run here. [Backup Johan Hedberg] will still get some games, but Marty's going to play a lot.”

Brodeur has started 10 of the team's past 12 games. Hedberg started in a 6-4 victory at Philadelphia on Feb. 4 — the first game of a back-to-back set — and then subbed for Brodeur in Thursday's 4-3 shootout loss to St. Louis when Brodeur was nursing a sore right ankle.

Brodeur said he had no problems with his ankle in Saturday's 3-1 loss to Florida or any residual effects Sunday.

Brodeur, who will turn 40 on May 6, had to adjust to playing a little bit less in the first half as part of DeBoer's plan to keep him fresh for after the All-Star break.

But he has picked up his game since beginning to play more often over the last month.

Over his past 10 starts, Brodeur is 6-3-1 with a 1.88 goals-against average and .919 save percentage. For the season, Brodeur is 18-13-2 with a 2.65 GAA and .899 save percentage.

“It's more of something natural to me if I'm in net and I don't feel like I have to regain my confidence and the way that I approach the game,” Brodeur said. “It's been a good little change for me to be able to play a little more.”

Brodeur physically and mentally feels ready for the stretch run, but doesn't know if that has anything to do with playing less earlier in the season.

"I feel good," he said. "I don't know if I would be fresher or not if I would have played more. For me, it worked out well just because of the injury to my shoulder early on (he missed six games in October with a right shoulder injury) and it took a while to play 100 percent and feel no pain with it. Now, I feel good with it, knock on wood, and I've just got to continue."

BRIEFS: A source said the Devils have recalled LW Stephane Veilleux from Albany (AHL). Veilleux, who ranked second in Albany with 11 goals, is looking to make his Devils' debut. ... Defenseman Adam Larsson (bruised lower back) and D Henrik Tallinder (blood clot in left leg) again skated Monday. DeBoer said Tallinder is "weeks" away from playing. Larsson is closer than that, but won't play tonight.

Devils' goalie Martin Brodeur tweaks leg pads and has won 4 of his last 5 starts

Dave Hutchinson
The Star-Ledger
February 13, 2012

Perhaps it's a just coincidence, but perhaps [Devils](#) veteran goalie Martin Brodeur is on to something.

Since the All-Star break, the 6-2, 220-pound Brodeur has tweaked his leg pads and he's 4-0-1 and playing some of his best hockey of the season.

Brodeur has lengthened his leg pads from 36 inches to 37 inches, and increased the width at the top of the pads from 9 1/2 inches to "about 10 1/4 to 10 1/2 inches," he said. The bottom remains the maximum allowed (11 inches).

"For me, I think it protects a little more the five hole," said Brodeur, who'll be in net on Tuesday night when the Devils (31-20-4) travel to Buffalo (24-25-6). "When I go down on the butterfly there's a little more pad there then I used to have. I always played with my pads wider at the bottom and tapered at the top like goalies did in the 1990s.

"Now I'm more in line with what other goalies wear around the league. I just wanted to see if I was able to play with something a little bigger and cover a little more net. It feels pretty good."

After taking a game or two to get used to the pads, Brodeur said they feel like a second skin now. He won't say the change is the reason for his current hot streak but it certainly hasn't hurt.

"I'm feeling pretty good," said Brodeur, who is 2-0-1 vs. Buffalo this season. "I just want to continue playing well. The team is playing really well. We had a lilt hiccup the past two games, losing a few points here and there, but we're playing well."

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For Devils, bringing back Zach Parise is a matter of dollars and sense

Rich Chere

The Star-Ledger

February 13, 2012

No one could have known at the time what the impact on the [Devils](#) would be when Zach Parise hobbled off the ice at the Staples Center on Oct. 30, 2010.

His meniscus was torn, requiring surgery that would limit him to only one more game for the rest of last season. And, despite a sensational second-half turnaround engineered by the return of coach Jacques Lemaire, the Devils would miss the playoffs by 12 points.

Put simply, the loss of Parise for 69 games was costly. And it could turn out to be even more costly if lost playoff income means the financially strapped Devils don't have the money to re-sign their captain.

Is it possible that Parise's injury last season will help lead to his departure when he becomes an unrestricted free agent July 1?

Devils general manager Lou Lamoriello won't speak about the team's finances, but in an effort to aid owner Jeff Vanderbeek as he seeks help from a buyer or investor, the NHL has advanced the club money it normally would get at a later date.

All Lamoriello will say is, "We will make every effort to re-sign Zach."

Parise, who has tired of talking about whether he'll stay with the Devils beyond this season, repeated, "I love playing here" and said he would like to re-sign. But he has been honest in saying that money will be one factor in the decision he and agent Wade Arnott make.

"That's real life," said Parise, who might command \$8 million per season on the market.

So is the fact that the Devils played so well in the second half last season they might have made a significant run in the postseason had they qualified for the playoffs. And what would that have meant financially?

Two rounds of the Stanley Cup playoffs usually mean net profits of \$6 million or more. So missing the playoffs for the first time in 15 years was a financial blow.

"As players, our job is to go out there and play. We just think about winning," right winger David Clarkson said. "It stunk the way it went and it hurt everybody, not just the players. But when you're losing, I don't think it's on your mind, 'Oh, wow, the team could be losing a lot of money here.' "

The question is, how far could the Devils have gone had they made the playoffs?

“I don’t think there would have been too many teams eager to play us just because we had been fighting for our lives for three months. Maybe even longer than that,” Parise said. “We were playing our best hockey, so you never know. You sneak in and you’re playing good hockey at the right time. The way the NHL is now with teams one through eight, it’s all a tossup.”

One round, guaranteed. Two rounds, very possible. Maybe even more.

“We were playing really well,” goalie Johan Hedberg reflected. “A lot of times you see the team that had to fight for that last eighth spot go in with a lot of emotion and playing really well. They usually have momentum going into the playoffs, and anything can happen.

“I have to say that the teams that made it far in the playoffs last year were really good hockey teams. Boston still is. But we probably could’ve come in and created some interesting matchups. We believe, in the room at least, that we were good enough to win.”

Good enough to bring in some significant money. That, of course, is if a healthy Parise would have helped the Devils get in.

“I like to think we would’ve made the playoffs. Zach would’ve definitely helped,” said defenseman Bryce Salvador, who also would have helped had he not missed the entire season with a concussion.

“What he brings to the team game in and game out, he’s maybe the difference maker on those one-goal games. It’s always hard to look back and say what could’ve happened, but he’s a player you don’t want to have out of your lineup. He needs to be in the lineup every night to give this team a chance to win.”

There are some who believe that Parise’s knee injury may ultimately — and unforeseeably — prevent the Devils from affording to keep him.

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