



# **Buffalo Sabres**

## **Daily Press Clips**

*January 23, 2014*

## **Hurricanes-Sabres Preview**

By Nicolino DiBenedetto

Associated Press

January 23, 2014

A blizzard prevented the Carolina Hurricanes from visiting the Buffalo Sabres earlier this month. Another snowstorm turned this trip into the second of back-to-back games.

With the expected snow unlikely to pose an obstacle this time, the Hurricanes look to stay on track Thursday night and beat the Sabres for the fourth straight time.

Carolina (21-19-9) was scheduled to face Buffalo on Jan. 7, but a blizzard postponed the matchup until Feb. 25. The Hurricanes dealt with another blast of snow this week, pushing Tuesday's scheduled game in Philadelphia to Wednesday.

Carolina never trailed while beating the Flyers 3-2 despite mustering only 16 shots through the first two periods - a total the Hurricanes matched in the third alone.

"We weathered the storm and then started playing again and relaxed," coach Kirk Muller said. "I'm really pleased with the way we bounced back in the third."

The shifting schedule, however, could pose a challenge at Buffalo. The Hurricanes are 3-5-3 in the second of back-to-back games and 0-4-2 when that contest is on the road. They have had some success against the Sabres of late, going 7-1-2 in the last 10 meetings, including 3-0-1 in Buffalo.

Nathan Gerbe is returning to Buffalo for the first time since leaving the Sabres via free agency in the offseason. He spent his first five seasons with them after being drafted in the fifth round in 2005.

Gerbe scored for the first time in 10 games Wednesday, using a between-the-legs trick shot on a breakaway.

"It's something I always try in practice," he said. "Just right when I picked the puck up I felt like I had the gap and the speed to do it, and fortunately it went in. I wanted to show I was going to my back hand and tried to pull it through my legs as quick as I can and go far side."

Alexander Semin also found the net against the Flyers, giving him four goals in three games. The right wing has three goals and four assists in his last five against Buffalo, including the eventual winning tally and two assists in a 4-3 home victory March 5.

The Sabres are becoming familiar with that result after dropping four straight (0-2-2) games by 4-3 scores, including three at home. It happened again versus visiting Florida on Tuesday, leaving the Sabres in desperate need of re-establishing themselves defensively.

Prior to their 0-2-2 stretch as host, they allowed just 10 goals during a 6-0-1 run.

"We can't find a way to play a full 60 minutes, to play a consistent effort on both sides of the puck," defenseman Mike Weber told the team's official website.

"Pucks weren't going in and now pucks are going in, but we can't keep them out. It's just a difficult time we're trying to work through."

Ryan Miller, who made 18 saves Tuesday, has slumped a bit in net lately, losing three straight starts with a 3.21 goals-against average after going 7-2-1 with a 1.64 GAA over the previous 10 games.

Miller, who is making a case to be the United States' top goaltender at next month's Olympics, is 1-5-1 with a 2.73 GAA over his last seven against the Hurricanes.

Drew Stafford has three goals in two games after totaling four through his first 42. The right wing scored twice against the Panthers before assisting on Steve Ott's power-play tally. Stafford, though, has failed to get a point in his last six versus Carolina.

## **Sabres call up F Varone; demote D McNabb, F Porter**

Associated Press

January 22, 2014

BUFFALO, N.Y. (AP) -- The Buffalo Sabres are shuffling their roster by promoting forward Phil Varone from their AHL affiliate in Rochester.

The Sabres, on Wednesday, also demoted defenseman Brayden McNabb and forward Kevin Porter to Rochester.

Varone is in his third season with Rochester, and leads the Americans with 33 points (eight goals, 25 assists) in 38 games this season. He gets an opportunity to make his NHL debut as early as Thursday, when Buffalo hosts Carolina.

The Sabres (13-28-7) are last in the NHL and 0-2-2 in their past four.

Porter has an assist in 12 games, and McNabb has no points in 12 games with Buffalo season.

The moves provide Porter and McNabb an opportunity to continue developing in the minors during the NHL Olympic break, which opens Feb. 9.

## **Sabres' Stafford is starting to heat up**

By John Vogl

Buffalo News

January 23, 2014

When Drew Stafford returned from injury last week, he looked over at linemates Tyler Ennis and Matt Moulson. He got excited. The Sabres right winger knew he'd have an opportunity to put up points and just had to take advantage.

Stafford's best two-game stretch since March 2012 shows he has.

Stafford has three goals and four points in the last two outings, helping give Buffalo a potent first line entering tonight's home game against Carolina.

"This year's been pretty tough for everybody offensively," Stafford said Wednesday in First Niagara Center. "I feel as though I've been getting the shots and getting in the areas. They just haven't been going until recently."

Stafford, Moulson and Ennis have combined for four goals, 10 points and 31 shots in the three games since Stafford returned.

"Staff's playing great right now," Ennis said. "I'm just looking to find him because when he gets hot he gets real hot."

Coach Ted Nolan knew Stafford could help his club. Nolan put the right winger, who struggled mightily last season with six goals in 46 games, in a prominent role as soon as he stepped behind the bench.

"We all need someone to believe in us and give opportunities," Nolan said. "Drew is a proven player. He's played here for a while. I think he deserved all the respect a player of his magnitude deserves."

"He didn't disappoint. He competed, but it just didn't go in for him. Now the last few weeks the puck seems to be finding the back of the net."

Stafford has boosted his numbers to seven goals and 17 points in 44 games. He's not on pace to match his 31-goal season of 2010-11, but he likes his game since Nolan came aboard in November.

"He just wants guys to go play," Stafford said. "It's just go out there and use your strengths. Each one of us in this room is in the NHL for a reason. We're all good hockey players, and it's just a matter of finding that mind-set or making sure your heads are in the right place where you can just go out and play free, not have to think or worry about anything else."

“There’s not a lot of external stuff with Ted. He just puts guys in position where they can feel comfortable enough in their own ability and let everything else take care of itself.”

Stafford is second on the Sabres with 107 shots, and the firing point is what has helped lately. His two goals Tuesday came from the slot, and he earned an assist by driving to the net and creating a rebound goal for Steve Ott.

“He’s starting to get his groove a little bit,” Nolan said. “He’s going into those areas where you need to go. It’s finally paying off for him.”

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Phil Varone is in line to make his NHL debut tonight. The Sabres have called up the 23-year-old from Rochester while sending down forward Kevin Porter and defenseman Brayden McNabb.

Varone (pronounced vuh-Roan-ay) is the Amerks’ leading scorer with 33 points, including 25 assists, in 38 games. He’s in his third season in the Sabres’ organization and has 30 goals and 120 points in 190 minor-league games.

Porter is healthy after missing more than a month with a knee injury. He had no goals and one assist in 12 games with Buffalo.

McNabb has no points in 12 games. His departure leaves the Sabres with seven defensemen, though blue-liner Mark Pysyk skipped practice Wednesday with an injury.

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Nolan has spoken out against staged fights and line brawls, which seems at odds with the rough-and-tumble teams he had during his first stint with the Sabres. He wants it known that despite his hockey-first stance, he hasn’t gone soft.

“No, I haven’t softened at all,” the coach said. “I love aggressive hockey. I really do. It’s a collision sport, and it should be.”

“But I never once sent Rob Ray out to fight. I never sent Brad May out to fight. I never sent Matthew Barnaby out to fight. Certainly, those were the type of characters that they were, and they were very competitive, and they fought. We haven’t got those type of players. I’m quite sure if we had them, we’d probably be seeing the same thing.”

## **Varone finally gets callup to the NHL**

By Kevin Oklobzija  
Democrat and Chronicle  
January 22, 2014

When an American Hockey League coach tells one of his players that they're going up to the NHL, the moment is always exciting.

But when a player hears those words for the first time, well, the body pretty much goes numb and the mind races.

So Phil Varone learned barely an hour ago.

The Rochester Americans' leading scorer learned from coach Chadd Cassidy that he is joining the Buffalo Sabres. Varone was promoted following the Amerks practice this afternoon and very likely will be in a Sabres sweater for Thursday night's game against the Carolina Hurricanes at the First Niagara Center.

The first thought was something like this: Wow, it finally happened. The second: Where's my phone.

"I just thought about my family; I owe a lot to them," said Varone, who has produced 8 goals, 25 assists and 33 points in 38 games. He talked about his parents, Helena and Tony, back home in Toronto. His brother Rick. His grandparents. His girlfriend.

"I've never been to a hockey school in my life; my dad taught me everything I know," he said. "My brother is 7 years older than me but we're very close. My mom's my biggest cheerleader. I could be a minus-4 and she'll still think I played well. She doesn't let me get down."

Varone has been the Amerks most consistent player, and also one of their most durable. He has not missed a game and has been the one constant in their lineup all season. The power play usually revolves around his passing. With Mike Zigomanis hurt (neck, may return next weekend), Varone is the Amerks' one center that has hands.

He was a free-agent signee by the Sabres in the summer of 2011. The San Jose Sharks drafted him on the fifth round in 2009 but never signed him.

He led the Amerks in scoring as a rookie, slumped last season perhaps because he thought too much about where he stood on the organizational depth chart, and this year rebounded well. If the AHL All-Star format wasn't just one 20-player team taking on Farjestad of the Swedish League, then he would have been a very strong candidate for selection.

What's somewhat amazing: The only time the 23-year-old Varone has worn a Sabres uniform was at the prospects tournament in Traverse City. He was never given a preseason game.

Since he hasn't even gotten to Buffalo yet, he's not assuming he will play Thursday.

"I don't know what's going to happen," Varone said. "I'm just looking forward to getting there."



## **Hurricanes continue hectic week by facing Sabres**

By Brian Hunter

NHL.com

January 23, 2014

HURRICANES (21-19-9) at SABRES (13-28-7)

TV: SPSO, MSG-B, BELL TV

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

Season series: This ends up as the first of three games between the Carolina Hurricanes and Buffalo Sabres, who were originally set to play Jan. 7 at First Niagara Center but had that game postponed until Feb. 25 due to a snowstorm. Carolina outscored Buffalo 13-7 in sweeping three games last season.

Big story: Mother Nature hasn't exactly been the Hurricanes' BFF over the past several weeks. The franchise had to juggle its schedule for this week after its road game against the Philadelphia Flyers was pushed back from Tuesday to Wednesday due to another storm. That, in turn, forced the Hurricanes to move a Friday night home game against the Ottawa Senators to Saturday afternoon because of NHL rules stating a team can't play on three consecutive days.

Team Scope:

Hurricanes: Jiri Tlustý was one of last season's breakthrough players when the Czech forward scored a career-high 23 goals in 48 games. The scoring touch hasn't been there this season, but Tlustý rescued Carolina after it blew a two-goal lead in Philadelphia. His goal with 6:10 remaining and Anton Khudobin's 22 saves gave the Hurricanes a 3-2 win to take with them to Buffalo.

While its opponent Thursday has struggled in close games of late, Carolina continues to excel. The Hurricanes have now played 27 one-goal games and come away with at least one point in 24 of them (15-3-9).

"We got the result we wanted," coach Kirk Muller said. "The guys came up big and played strong. That's a good win for us."

Sabres: Mired in a four-game winless stretch (0-2-2), Buffalo on Wednesday assigned forward Kevin Porter and defenseman Brayden McNabb to Rochester of the American Hockey League and recalled forward Philip Varone, who was leading the Americans in scoring with 33 points in 38 games.

All four losses (including a pair of shootouts) in the Sabres' current skid have been by 4-3 scores. While forward Marcus Foligno pointed after practice Wednesday to the offense coming around, it's now the defense that must follow suit.

"It's a difficult time we're trying to work through," defenseman Mike Weber said. "It's frustrating overall because of where we are in the standings. This isn't where we want to be."

Who's hot: Hurricanes forward Alexander Semin has four goals in his past three games. Center Eric Staal has one goal and four assists during a three-game point streak. ... Sabres forward Drew Stafford has three goals and one assist in his past two games. Forward Tyler Ennis has two goals and four assists during a five-game point streak.

Injury report: Carolina forward Drayson Bowman (lower body) was out of the lineup Wednesday. Forward Patrick Dwyer (upper body) left the game in the second period and did not return. Goalie Cam Ward (lower body) joined his team at the morning skate prior to the postponement Tuesday but remains on injured reserve. ... Buffalo forwards Cody McCormick (upper body) and Matt D'Agostini (upper body) are on injured reserve.

## **Sabres' Drew Stafford feeling good about surging game, grateful for opportunities from Ted Nolan**

By Bill Hoppe

Olean Times Herald

January 23, 2014

BUFFALO – To Sabres winger Drew Stafford, these past two months, highlighted by his current stretch of five goals in his last 10 games, have pulled him “out the abyss.”

Stafford was mired in an awful, career-worst slump when interim coach Ted Nolan replaced Ron Rolston on Nov. 13. The 28-year-old had eight goals in his last 66 games. He had lost his alternate captaincy. His ice time was dwindling.

Emotionally, everything was taking a toll on Stafford.

“We’re only human,” he said Wednesday after the Sabres, losers of four straight, prepared for tonight’s tilt against the Carolina Hurricanes inside the First Niagara Center.

Enter Nolan, who immediately awarded Stafford about 20 minutes a night on a scoring line, a no-brainer in his mind. As a veteran, Stafford, a 31-goal scorer in 2010-11, deserved respect and a clean slate.

“I think we all need someone to believe in us and give opportunities,” Nolan said. “If you don’t give opportunities, you never know. Drew’s a proven player. He’s played here for a while. I think he deserved all the respect a player of his magnitude deserves.”

This wasn’t an overnight turnaround, though. Stafford seized the opportunities, although he still couldn’t score. Recently, however, he’s been scoring and playing his best hockey in two years.

“He didn’t disappoint,” Nolan said. “He competed. It just didn’t go in for him. Now, last few weeks, the puck seems to be finding the back of the net.”

Tuesday’s 4-3 loss to Florida was arguably Stafford’s best game in years.

Stafford scored twice in the first period before assisting on Steve Ott’s late goal, his first three-point game since March 23, 2012.

Not surprisingly, Stafford scored both goals from the slot.

“You have to keep at it,” he said. “I feel like I’ve been getting there, I’ve been getting shots. I had my shots. It hasn’t been going for me. But you can’t stop doing things that work, and doing things that work are hanging around the net.”

Yes, Stafford pulled himself out of the mega slump. But it’s unlikely he would’ve received these opportunities if Rolston had kept coaching the Sabres.

Stafford said the respect Nolan showed him “right off the bat, it felt good.”

“At the same time, I needed to earn my ice time, and I was up to the challenge,” he said. “So far, so good.”

Clearly, Nolan connected with Stafford right away. Stafford called him “one of those guys you don’t want to let down.”

“(He) shows you a lot of respect,” he said. “You want to return the favor.”

How does Nolan show Stafford and the others respect?

“He’s an honest guy,” Stafford said. “He’s the kind of guy he’s not going to have any BS or real mind games or anything like that. He just lets you know exactly what he’s thinking and keeps things extremely simple, just go out and compete, go out and work. Everything else will take care of itself because this is the best league in the world.

“Everyone in this room, we’re in the NHL for a reason. It’s just a matter of playing to our strengths and making sure the compete’s there. It’s as simple as that.”

He added: “It’s mainly he puts guys in positions where they can feel comfortable enough in their own ability.”

Stafford feels comfortable skating on the right wing beside center Tyler Ennis and Matt Moulson, the Sabres’ undisputed top line.

Nolan put Stafford there when he returned from a four-game absence last week (upper body), moving rookie Zemgus Girgensons.

All season, the Sabres’ No. 1 line has been, well, the first line in name only. But in recent games it has performed slickly.

“It’s worked so far statistics-wise,” Stafford said. “Unfortunately, it hasn’t translated into wins.”

Stafford has goals in two straight contests. Ennis has six points over a five-game streak. Moulson has two assists in the last three game.

“The combination of skill and playmaking translates well,” Stafford said. “I feel like I can make plays. But at the same time, if I get the puck in scoring areas, most of the time I’m going to make something happen.”

Stafford has been recently.

## **Sabres recall Phil Varone for first time, send Brayden McNabb and Kevin Porter to Amerks**

By Bill Hoppe  
Olean Times Herald  
January 23, 2014

BUFFALO – The thinking was the Sabres, with eight defensemen at their disposal, would likely send one to Rochester.

Sure enough, they assigned rookie Brayden McNabb to the AHL with forward Kevin Porter, who's finally healthy after getting hit into the boards Dec. 21.

But in a surprising move, the Sabres also recalled a youngster Wednesday afternoon, center Phil Varone, the Americans' leading scorer. The 23-year-old prospect will likely play tonight against the Carolina Hurricanes inside the First Niagara Center.

Varone has never played in the NHL or even in an exhibition contest. But he's impressed this season, compiling eight goals and 33 points in 38 games with the Amerks.

The Sabres inked Varone two years ago after San Jose, which selected him 147th overall in 2009, didn't sign him. His 52 points topped the Amerks in 2011-12.

"Phil's one of those guys I think gets overshadowed a bit, just in terms of he wasn't a draft pick within the organization," Sabres forward Matt Ellis, Rochester's captain earlier this season, said in November. "So right off the bat he's got to work for everything he gets. Phil's really built his game. He's a real dynamic player with a great skill set, great vision. Another player I think really has put himself on the map."

Varone slumped a bit last season, scoring 11 goals and 35 points in 62 games.

"The onus was on me to have a good summer, come back and show that I'm still capable of being a great player in this league," Varone said in November. "Hopefully, if I do get an opportunity to go up, to be an impact player in the NHL."

Now he has a chance.

In other news, interim Sabres coach Ted Nolan said defenseman Mark Pysyk, a scratch for Tuesday's 4-3 loss to Florida so he could rest, "was banged up a little last game."

The injury shouldn't be long-term, Nolan said.

Pysyk could get sent to Rochester soon so he's eligible to play during the Olympic break.

## **Sabres Nolan says he has not become soft**

By Paul Hamilton

WGR 550

January 22, 2014

Buffalo, NY (WGR 550) -- Many have accused Ted Nolan of being a soft coach in his second term as Sabres coach.

In his first tenure here there were fights in many games led by Rob Ray, Brad May, Matthew Barnaby and Bob Boughner.

Now he has John Scott, Zenon Konopka, Cody McCormick, Mike Weber, Steve Ott and Marcus Foligno.

Nolan says he's definitely the same guy, "I love aggressive hockey, I really do. It's a collision sport, but I never once sent Rob Ray out to fight, I never sent Brad May out to fight, I never sent Matthew Barnaby out to fight. Those are the type of characters that they were, they were very competitive and they fought. We haven't got those type of players and I'm quite sure if we had them, you'd probably be seeing the same thing, but I've softened, no I haven't softened at all, I love aggressive hockey and I want to see more hitting, to see Tyler Myers being a little bit more physical." Nolan added, "I don't tolerate, I never did, it's the stupid part of the game."

Nolan wasn't here when Milan Lucic cartwheeled Ryan Miller and the players on the ice led by Paul Gaustad all ran and hid. He of course knows of the incident very well and said, "You look at the personal, if you haven't got the personal to answer the bell, you can't get Flynn and go out and do something, that just doesn't make any sense, but if you have that type of team, that aint going to happen to your team."

The other thing running rampant in the NHL these days is a player that throws a hard, clean body check always having to fight afterwards. Back when Ted Nolan played, if you got caught by a good clean check, you retaliated by doing the same thing to the player that hit you. Nolan said, "I've watched it from not behind the bench for five or six years and almost every time there's a hit, everybody jumps somebody for hitting. I don't know why they do it. I tell our players if you get hit, get your head up, you're not going to go jump somebody because you got hit. If it's a dirty hit, then that's something that can be talked to and discussed. Hopefully you won't see that from us." Nolan added "I love body contact, that's why I love this game."

It is something the Sabres have done too. Washington's Tom Wilson hammered Ville Leino with a clean hit and Foligno jumped him. Nolan said, "Marcus Foligno did it in Washington, one of our guys got hit pretty hard, but that was a little bit of a dirty hit, but to go after somebody just because he got hit, I don't think it's part of the game, but hitting is part of the game. You're also not supposed to hit

the goal scorers, I don't know why you can't hit the goal scorers. I think everybody on the ice should be in position to give a hit and receive a hit, it doesn't matter your status in the game, just keep your head up."

Foligno was speaking with me about it and he said sometimes, he may see something out of the corner of his eye and not know if it was a dirty hit or not. He said, "You want to be the guy that can make a nice hit but then again if it's against a star player or it's one of those big collisions, but I feel like now it's more like sticking up for teammates that's a big thing in dressing rooms, it shows a lot of character and guys are going to want to stick up for each other. I did it against Washington when Leino got hit. I just thought, a big guy going against Ville wasn't the best matchup. If he had taken out one of our big defensemen then he could've taken care of himself and then I might not have gone after him, but it is tough to know that the league's like that now, but then again that's hard hockey."

Mike Weber demolished Jonathan Huberdeau separating him from the puck on Tuesday. The play led to Drew Stafford's second goal. Weber had to brush off Jesse Winchester who thought Weber should have to answer for the good, hard, clean hit. Weber said, "I've got to try to stay out of those too. I've always been a guy to show up to answer the bell for whatever happens. Last night was a good example, I tried to keep the guy off and Staff made a heck of a shot for a goal. If I'm willing, we don't get that goal."

Weber has also gone after players that hit his teammates clean. He said, "It's supposed to be a rough game, it's supposed to be an in your face game, but it seems like guys want to come after you for it, but I think I'd be the same way if somebody laid out one of my better players, I'd be trying to go after the guy too."

## **Sabres give Varone a chance**

By Paul Hamilton

WGR 550

January 22, 2014

Buffalo, NY (WGR 550) -- Phil Varone's Amerks teammates have spent the afternoon congratulating him on his first NHL call up.

The centerman is undersized at 5'10, 186.

This season Varone has eight goals and 25 assists for 33 points in 38 games.

He was drafted in the 5th round of the 2009 draft by San Jose. He never signed there and has spent three seasons with the Amerks picking up 120 points in 176 games.



## **Sabres Pysyk missed practice with an injury**

By Paul Hamilton

WGR 550

January 22, 2014

Buffalo, NY (WGR 550) -- Mark Pysyk and Steve Ott were not at practice on Wednesday.

It was first thought maybe the defenseman was being sent to Rochester, but Ted Nolan said, "He's still with us here today. He was banged up a little last game and that's one of the reasons why we didn't play him." Nolan did not think it would be a long term thing. He said, "It was just one of those things that was nagging him today so we decided to give him another day off."

There are still eight defensemen on the active roster. Kevin Porter practiced on a line with Brian Flynn and Marcus Foligno, so if he plays against the Hurricanes, Buffalo would need a roster spot. As far as sending down a D Nolan said it's been discussed with Tim Murray, "We spoke after the game last night and we're going to speak again after this conference here and we'll make some decisions probably later on today."

Steve Ott was on of his usual maintenance days and he will play Thursday.

With Ott out, Zemgus Girgensons played with Cody Hodgson and Ville Leino. The Tyler Ennis line stayed intact. The fourth line stayed the same with Linus Omark working in.

Many have been wondering why Drew Stafford got the chance to play on the first line as soon as Nolan arrived. In 24 games under Nolan, Stafford has five goals and six assists for 11 points. That translates to 17 goals and 21 assists for 38 points over 82 games. Many of those points have come lately as the winger has four goals in his last six games and eight points in his last 13. Nolan has shown faith in Stafford and the head coach said, "We all need someone to believe in us and give opportunities. If you don't give opportunities, you never know, so Drew's a proven player, he's played here for a while, I think he deserved all the respect a player of his magnitude deserves, so he didn't disappoint, he competed, it just didn't go in for him." Through his career Stafford averages 21 goals and 26 assists for 47 points. In his last 90 games the winger only has 13 goals.

## **WITH GOALS COMING, SABRES WORK ON TIGHTENING UP DEFENSE**

By Chris Ryndak

Sabres.com

January 22, 2014

When Ted Nolan took over as interim head coach of the Buffalo Sabres in November, one of his first tasks was to get the team playing better defensive hockey.

The coaching staff emphasized improving play in the team's own zone when the goals weren't coming and have now shifted their focus to producing offense. Now, the team is scoring goals but the defensive zone play has been slipping.

Nolan compared the problems to the Whac-A-Mole arcade game.

"It's one of those things you keep popping down and then another one pops up. And then you pop that one down and then another one," he said after practice Wednesday at First Niagara Center. "That's why training camps are so important and that's why you go through all that stuff and you try to get a good foundation."

The Sabres have increased their offensive production lately. The team has scored three goals in each of the past four games, but is 0-1-3 and has lost each game by a score of 4-3.

"Now we just need to connect them both. We had a good meeting with the team today. We talked about execution," Nolan said. "We've gotta execute a little bit better. We can't have spurts when we go for the goals and we forget about the defensive zone and vice versa. It's a combination of executing all facets of our game."

The players are looking for answers themselves on how to put together a complete game at both ends of the rink.

"That's what we're working towards, but right now and the way it's been, we can't find a way to play a full 60 minutes, to play a consistent effort on both sides of the puck," defenseman Mike Weber said. "Right now we just have to find a way internally to figure it out. It's frustrating right now. Pucks weren't going in and now pucks are going in, but we can't keep them out. It's just a difficult time we're trying to work through."

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Mark Pysyk and Steve Ott did not practice with the team.

Nolan revealed that Pysyk has a nagging injury that caused him to miss practice. That injury also happened to play a role in why he did not play in the team's game against the Florida Panthers on Tuesday.

"He was banged up a little bit last game and that's one of the reasons why we didn't play him," Nolan said.

It's still possible that Pysyk will be sent down to the American Hockey League to play with the Rochester Americans during the Olympic break. Nolan said he, president of hockey operations Pat LaFontaine and general manager Tim Murray are having ongoing discussions about that. They could come to a decision as soon as Wednesday afternoon.

Ott was given a maintenance day and is expected to play Thursday night when the Sabres host the Carolina Hurricanes at 7 p.m.

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The Hurricanes, meanwhile, can't seem to catch a break when it comes to snowstorms.

They were scheduled to play the Flyers in Philadelphia on Tuesday, but wintry weather conditions forced the NHL to push the game back to Wednesday night.

It's the second time this month Carolina has had a game postponed due to the weather.

The last game between the Sabres and Hurricanes was supposed to take place on Jan. 7 but had to be rescheduled because of blizzard-like in Buffalo. That game will now be played on Feb. 25 at 7 p.m.

The Sabres players know they have an opportunity to jump on the Hurricanes once the puck drops in their next match Thursday night.

"We have to take advantage of it now because they're going to be playing a back-to-back game," Sabres forward Marcus Foligno said. "Unfortunately for them, they don't have good luck with snow storms. It's something where we had Florida on a back-to-back and we needed to take advantage of that and we didn't. We have to be ready for Carolina."

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32 John Scott – 24 Zenon Konopka – 37 Matt Ellis – 17 Linus Omark  
Red Non-Contact: 8 Cody McCormick

10 Christian Ehrhoff – 6 Mike Weber  
20 Henrik Tallinder – 57 Tyler Myers  
44 Brayden McNabb – 4 Jamie McBain  
52 Alexander Sulzer

30 Ryan Miller  
1 Jhonas Enroth