



# **Buffalo Sabres**

## **Daily Press Clips**

*October 23, 2014*

## **Perry has hat trick, Ducks beat Sabres 4-1**

By Joe Resnick

Associated Press

October 23, 2014

ANAHEIM, Calif. (AP) — Corey Perry's fast start has mirrored that of the Anaheim Ducks, and Frederik Andersen's stingy goaltending has been equally beneficial.

Perry had his second hat trick of the season and the two-time defending Pacific Division champions beat the Buffalo Sabres 4-1 on Wednesday night for their sixth straight victory.

The 2011 MVP and three-time All-Star has eight goals in his first seven games — including three in the Ducks' opening-night loss at Pittsburgh. When Perry scored a career-high 50 goals four seasons ago, he didn't get his eighth until his 19th game.

"Things are going well and the whole team has been playing well. It's not just me," Perry said. "Good things are happening. I'm shooting the puck and it's going in."

Perry completed his seventh career hat trick with 1:25 left, scoring into an empty net after beating Michal Neuvirth on a one-timer from the high slot with 2:43 remaining.

"Corey is one of the best scorers in the game. And when you have that touch, the puck follows you," Ducks coach Bruce Boudreau said. "When you're a natural goal-scorer like he is, the puck tends to find your stick and good things happen."

Ryan Kesler also scored for the Ducks and Andersen made 22 saves, losing a bid for his second consecutive shutout when Tyler Ellis scored off a rebound with 5:04 to play. That ended Buffalo's scoreless streak at 192 minutes, following a 1-0 loss to Florida and 3-0 loss to Boston.

"Any time you go to the opposition's rink and their goaltender is one of the stars, you know you played well," Sabres coach Ted Nolan said. "We had our chances, we just didn't bury them. And we didn't bury them for a reason. Their goaltender made some good saves."

Andersen, who beat St. Louis 3-0 on Sunday night for his first NHL shutout, has been in net for each of the six wins. He has stopped 154 of 162 shots after John Gibson lost the opener in his hometown of Pittsburgh. Last season, the Ducks won seven straight after a season-opening loss at Colorado.

"I'm just feeling good about myself," Andersen said. "I'm playing simple, the way I want to. I'm working hard in practice and it pays off in the games."

The Sabres (1-6-0) began a four-game trip with their third consecutive loss. They failed to get a shot on net through the final 6:37 of the first period and had just 12 after two — equaling their total against the Ducks in a 5-1 loss at Buffalo on Oct. 13. They came up empty on both power plays, and are 0 for 24 with the man advantage.

"We came out hard and we matched them physically," Ennis said. "We were hitting. That's a big, strong team, and we didn't back down. We played hard, we played well. We were 2-1 with a few minutes to go. There are a lot of positives to take out of it. It was a lot better game than the last few."

The Ducks scored on their first shot on net. Perry beat Neuvirth to the stick side from the right circle at 8:50 of the first period after Devante Smith-Perry threw the puck toward the middle of the neutral zone and Ryan Getzlaf tipped it perfectly to Perry.

Kesler, who scored his first career penalty-shot goal against Neuvirth in the win at Buffalo, beat the seven-year veteran to the glove side with a 40-foot wrist shot from the slot at 9:20 of the second after Andrew Cogliano carried the puck into the zone and set him up with a cross-ice pass. Neuvirth finished with 30 saves.

Chris Stewart had a golden opportunity to cut Anaheim's lead to 2-1, but put a backhander wide of left post with 11:20 remaining after Perry lost the puck to Marcus Foligno in the left circle.

"If Buffalo hadn't gone so long without scoring, and squeezing the stick, they probably would've scored a few more goals. They deserved a better fate," Boudreau said. "Freddie kept us in it."

NOTES: A moment of silence was observed out of respect for the people of Ottawa, where gunfire erupted inside the Canadian Parliament on Wednesday morning after a soldier standing guard at a war memorial was shot to death. The Ottawa Senators' scheduled home game against Toronto was postponed as a result. ... Perry is the first player with two hat tricks in his team's first seven games since Ilya Kovalchuk in 2003, and just the sixth since 1985. ... The Sabres have never been shut out in three straight games since joining the NHL in 1970-71. ... The Ducks have outshot their opponents in only two of their first seven games. The other one was the game at Buffalo, when they had a 44-12 advantage in Neuvirth's only other start. ... Neuvirth played for Boudreau in Washington during the goalie's first four NHL seasons. ... Nolan will coach against son Jordan for the first time in an NHL game Thursday night when the Sabres face the Stanley Cup champion Kings at Staples Center.

## **Sabres fans rooting for losing are already coveting Connor McDavid**

By Stephen Whyno

Canadian Press

October 23, 2014

BUFFALO, N.Y. - Connor McDavid tries not read what's written about him, following the advice of agent Bobby Orr and so many people around him. But it's hard after Buffalo Sabres games.

"Whenever the Sabres lose, my Twitter just kind of blows up with fans kind of talking about me and stuff like that," McDavid said.

It goes beyond social media. Some fans have already had "McDavid 97" Sabres jerseys made up and wear them to games that he's not even eligible to play in.

Buffalo is tied for the fewest points in the NHL through six games and has been outshot 227-141. With the team in full rebuild mode and no expectation for success this season, some fans are on board with the idea of tanking for the No. 1 pick in June's draft.

Even with a draft lottery system in place that discourages tanking, former Sabres defenceman and current Erie Otters assistant Jay McKee understands why those looking at the long-term picture are willing to cheer for losing to get an opportunity to pick McDavid.

"They should want to get Connor McDavid, the fans here in Buffalo," McKee said. "But obviously in order to have a chance at drafting Connor, they're probably going to have to have a bad year again. And as a fan, as a player, that's not necessarily what you want, so it's kind of a double-edged sword."

On Wednesday night, McDavid will play his first game at First Niagara Center, which could be his home rink in less than a year. In something of a novelty regular-season Ontario Hockey League game, McDavid and the Otters are in town to play the Niagara IceDogs.

It's the second time Buffalo has been the stage for top 2015 draft picks. This arena also hosted the USA Hockey prospects game, and potential Nos. 2 and 3 picks Jack Eichel and Noah Hanifin, in September.

For Erie, the game is a nice bit of exposure, and coach Kris Knoblauch said it's a chance to break up the monotony of the season. For McDavid, it's a potential preview of his future.

Standing at a lectern Tuesday afternoon with a Sabres logo on it, McDavid said it was pretty weird to think about fans in Buffalo already getting his name stitched on jerseys. The 17-year-old, who's considered "The Next One" after Wayne Gretzky and Sidney Crosby, insisted he's not thinking much about the possibility that this is the first of many times he'll step onto the ice here.

"Maybe a little bit," McDavid said. "If Buffalo happens to be the one that drafts me, that'll be great and I'll be thrilled. It's the NHL. You kind of go where you're picked. Every NHL city and organization is first-class. Buffalo would be obviously a tremendous honour."

McKee played a season with Crosby and has drawn parallels between the Pittsburgh Penguins' captain and Erie's younger playmaking centre with the indescribable vision. On Tuesday, he said McDavid has the potential to be among the greatest players to play the game.

With those expectations, it's no wonder Sabres fans have their focus on McDavid instead of the likes of Cody Hodgson, Chris Stewart and off-season additions like Matt Moulson, Josh Gorges and Brian Gionta.

"Do you want to win? Do you want to have a draft pick? If you want to get a chance to get Connor McDavid, you're going to have to finish real low in the standings," McKee said. "I understand the fans and their desire and for having Connor — they should have that desire. It's just a tough situation. You don't want your home team to lose, but you do want a good draft pick."

Over the past three drafts, the Sabres have had five picks within the top 20: centre Sam Reinhart second overall this year, defencemen Rasmus Ristolainen eighth and Nikita Zadorov 16th in 2013 and forwards Mikhail Grigorenko 12th and Zemgus Girgensons 14th in 2012.

Those players so far have combined for 37 points in 171 games, and Girgensons has 24 of them in 76 games.

"You build up all those first-round draft picks that are 10th or lower in selection and you've got a pretty good recipe of building a Stanley Cup team in the future, in four or five years or so," McKee said.

No one's giving up on those young and still-developing players, but adding McDavid to the mix would change the whole landscape. Even though he believes he's no lock to make Canada's world junior team this year, the Newmarket, Ont., native leads the OHL in scoring with 25 points through nine games.

McKee called McDavid a "generational player."

"Draft picks from 1 to 10, usually the players will have a great shot or great speed or work their tail off, there's something to high draft picks that are special about all those players," McKee said. "He has all those abilities in one person."

While Eichel, a centre playing for Boston University is in the discussion, it would be hard to imagine an NHL team with the first pick passing on McDavid. To no one's surprise the Otters are some of McDavid's biggest supporters.

"I've had a lot of players with a lot of ability that I wish had more character, and I've had a lot of players with a lot of character I wish had more ability," Erie general manager Sherry Bassin said. "Put them both together, you get a star, and we've got a few of them and he's our leader."

Having seen McDavid's development up close, McKee considers his play "amazing." And he's not surprised that fans of many NHL teams want him.

"It's pretty unique because you don't find players of his capability very often," McKee said. "It's not every year in the draft that you can find a guy like that, and I think this year is a special year."

## **Sabres find the net but wins remain elusive**

By John Vogl

Buffalo News

October 23, 2014

ANAHEIM, Calif. – The Sabres avoided the history books. They couldn't avoid another loss.

Tyler Ennis' goal with 5:06 remaining Wednesday night stopped Buffalo from getting blanked for a third straight game. It also served as a wakeup call for the Anaheim Ducks. They found the net twice after Ennis scored to dispatch the visitors, 4-1, in Honda Center.

The red goal light flashed for Buffalo for the first time in exactly 197 minutes. The Sabres had been shut out during their previous losses to Florida and Boston, and they'd never been blanked in three straight games.

That fact remains ... for now.

Corey Perry tripled the Sabres' goal total all by himself. The Buffalo tormenter recorded a hat trick, including two goals in the final 2:43 to get the home crowd of 16,067 chanting his name. Perry has 10 goals in 11 games against the Sabres.

"If you can disable the best guys on the other team, that's when you have a chance to win," Sabres center Zemgus Girgensons said. "As you see, we did not do that."

The Sabres' lack of execution for nearly 55 minutes overshadowed a decent performance. They were embarrassed by the Ducks during a one-sided 5-1 loss last week, but they played a more even game this time until Perry put them away.

"It's tough, but there's positives to take," Ennis said. "If we play like that this year and we get better at certain things, we're going to win more games."

Buffalo fell to 1-6. The Sabres hopped in a bus after the game to take the highways to Los Angeles. They play the Kings tonight in Staples Center feeling a little better about themselves.

"That's one thing we've been looking for since the start is just the effort," coach Ted Nolan said. "If the effort's there you're going to have a chance. With a little luck, it could have been a different result."

"At least it's a little bit of a moral victory for us."

Before Ennis, Buffalo's previous goal came when Marcus Foligno beat Carolina's Cam Ward 2:54 into the third period of Buffalo's 4-3 shootout victory Oct. 14. The Sabres still have goals from just four players this season. Girgensons, Ennis and Foligno have two each, while Torrey Mitchell has scored once.

The struggling Sabres also ran into the wrong goaltender Wednesday. Anaheim's Frederik Andersen was the best player on the ice for most of the game, turning aside 22 shots. A high percentage of those attempts were legitimate scoring chances, but the reigning NHL Second Star of the Week was a wall until Ennis struck.

"You have to give Andersen credit," Nolan said. "We had our chances, and we just didn't bury them. Their goaltender made some good saves."

The Sabres stormed out of the dressing room determined to show the Ducks they can compete against the NHL's elite. Buffalo took the opening three shots, quite a change after getting outshot, 17-3, during the first period against Anaheim last week.

The early work didn't produce anything. Anaheim's first attempt did.

The quick-passing Ducks moved the puck from behind their net into Buffalo's net in only six seconds. They used four passes, including a fantastic touch pass from Ryan Getzlaf, to set up Perry alone in the Buffalo zone. The former MVP sent a laser past goalie Michal Neuvirth into the top corner with 8:50 gone.

The Sabres have given up the opening goal in six of their seven games.

Buffalo had a decent second period, but once again they had nothing to show for it. Andersen turned aside all seven shots, including a pad save on crease-front Girgensons just 25 seconds into the period.

The Ducks, meanwhile, doubled their lead with another rush goal. Ryan Kesler, acquired from Vancouver, finished a three-on-two by beating Neuvirth from the slot with 9:20 gone. Perry beat Neuvirth again with 2:43 left, and the sniper found an empty net with 1:25 remaining.

"You've got to stay positive here," Sabres captain Brian Gionta said. "I thought tonight was a much better game, the way we need to play. It's a start in the right direction. If we continue to play like that, we're going to get wins."

## **Myers stays focused on team goals**

By John Vogl

Buffalo News

October 23, 2014

ANAHEIM, Calif. – Tyler Myers is in a really good place. He feels great physically. He's on a mental high.

He just wishes he could enjoy it more. The lack of team success is dragging him down.

Myers is one of the few quality performers so far for the Sabres, who came out of Wednesday night's loss to Anaheim with a 1-6 record. Myers leads Buffalo in ice time, was tied for the most shots and was only minus-1 on a team that has 13 guys worse than that.

"It's just a matter of our group pulling together to start turning things the other way," Myers said in Honda Center.

He still hopes to be part of the turnaround, but the 24-year-old's early resurgence has made him a popular man. The big names in hockey news, TSN's Bob McKenzie and Darren Dreger, consistently link Myers to the Detroit Red Wings. They say if Buffalo lowers its asking price, which reportedly includes University of Michigan center Dylan Larkin, Myers could be on the move.

The innuendo is not affecting the 6-foot-8 defenseman.

"I haven't heard too much," Myers said. "Obviously, murmurings here and there, but I had a lot of that last year at the trade deadline. It's not something that bothers me."

Losing, however, bothers him big-time. Every time he was given an opportunity to talk about his start, he turned the conversation toward the team. Buffalo had found the net just seven times in the opening six games, with no goals from the shell-shocked defense corps.

"It's going to be up to puck possession," Myers said. "It's tough for anybody, forward or D, if we're spending most of the time in the D-zone. If we focus on controlling that puck and doing the simple, little things that will create more puck time for us, then everyone will have more chances."

"I just think it gets back to as a group we need to control the puck more. I think as a five-man unit on the ice right now, there's some things that we need to clean up that will allow us to have more opportunities in the offensive zone. Right now we're spending a little too much time in our own end, and it's tough to get the chances we want as a group."

Myers has taken 15 shots this season, tied with right wing Chris Stewart for the team lead. Myers can shoot more because he's on the ice more.

Myers entered the game against the Ducks averaging 25:49 per outing, which ranked ninth in the NHL. Defensemen Andre Benoit (21:46) and Josh Gorges (21:23) were the only other Sabres above 19 minutes per game.

"I always knew I could handle those minutes, and I feel I'm in a really good spot mentally right now," Myers said. "Whether you're getting 20 or 25 minutes, you approach each shift the same way. It's just a matter of doing it for more shifts."

"Physically, I feel really good, so I don't think there's much of a conserve factor. It's just going into every shift and focusing on the same thing."

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Sam Reinhart's practice effort impressed Ted Nolan, so the rookie got another chance to try to impress people during a game. Reinhart, scratched for the Sabres' previous outing, was back in the lineup against Anaheim.

"I think he was just overwhelmed in the first number of games," Nolan said. "It's better to sit back and watch and observe and get a new perspective, so he's going in."

Reinhart replaced Brian Flynn, who was scratched along with defensemen Tyson Strachan and Nikita Zadorov. Michal Neuvirth started in goal, possibly clearing the way for Jhonas Enroth to start tonight against Los Angeles.

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The Sabres continued to do extra faceoff work during practice. They were last in the NHL in faceoffs, winning just 41.7 percent of the draws.

"In order to score you've got to shoot the puck," Nolan said. "We haven't been shooting the puck, and it starts in the faceoffs. If you don't win the faceoffs, you end up chasing the puck more so than not. We've got to really bear down on our faceoffs, get ourselves in position, move our feet, attack."

Anaheim has also been focusing on faceoffs, and the Ducks rank fourth in the league after winning 54.3 percent. Center Ryan Getzlaf was at 59.2 percent, while Ryan Kesler was at 57.5 percent.

"I know Ryan Getzlaf is one of the most competitive men I've ever met, and he doesn't want to be second in anything," Ducks coach Bruce Boudreau said. "Kess comes in here and he's doing good on faceoffs, I'm thinking that Ryan is bearing down a little more."

## **McDavid show gets rave reviews downtown**

By Amy Moritz

Buffalo News

October 23, 2014

It was near the end of the first period when it happened.

What everyone who came to First Niagara Center on Wednesday night was eager to see.

His team shorthanded, Connor McDavid picked up the puck, exploded through the neutral zone, then weaved the puck around the defender to go in one-on-one with the goalie. He didn't score. But it didn't matter. It was electric.

Speed and vision. Those are McDavid's claims to fame. And all aspects of his game were on display in front of 11,391 as the Erie Otters defeated the Niagara Ice Dogs, 8-4, in an Ontario League Hockey matchup.

He finished with a goal and three assists. The likely No. 1 pick in next summer's NHL draft has been called a generational player. With a strong possibility of McDavid landing in Buffalo in the draft, fans came out to see the young superstar and he didn't disappoint.

"It's not a whole lot of thinking that you're doing," is how McDavid described his game and that play in particular. "If it is thinking, often times you're going to get caught. It just has to be instinct. And that's something I think I may have. ... It's just creativity and looking to try different plays."

Then again, it's not a total absence of thinking. When pressed, McDavid talks through his process on that head-turning play.

"You get the pass and obviously you know," the defenseman is there, McDavid said.

"He had a good step on me. I tried to shake him a little bit and burn him wide but he stayed with me. You take one hard step and now he's gotta commit. He commits and as soon as he lunges forward, you try to cut back. I wasn't necessarily looking to try and go through his feet or anything like that. I think I was more trying to go through his stick because I thought he might have been lunging forward a little bit. It just went through his feet."

It's the type of "wow" play people have come to expect from McDavid.

But McDavid also had a complement of talented teammates who have been putting on an offensive show through the first 10 games of the Otters' season. It was the second time this year the Otters have scored eight goals in a game. They've scored seven goals in two other games, too.

Rookie Alex DeBrincat scored twice. So did Kurtis MacDermid. Dylan Strome had two assists and goaltender Devin Williams turned away some excellent scoring opportunities by the IceDogs.

It's one of the marks of McDavid's success. The 17-year-old with incredible skill, vision and speed is also a teammate who makes everyone else not only better, but feel valued. And the coaching staff doesn't treat the superstar any differently, especially since McDavid is getting his first stint as a penalty killer this season.

"If he makes a mistake we let him know," assistant coach and former Buffalo Sabre Jay McKee said. "I remember a game in Saginaw ... he took a penalty while we were already shorthanded. It was a penalty that he shouldn't have taken and that was addressed in front of all the players.

"So he is an exceptional player. He leads by example. He does all the right things but he is human. He does make mistakes and like every other player we correct him as well."

McDavid told the fans after the game that he'd love to come to Buffalo.

Well, first things first – he'd love to play in the NHL. Whichever team drafts him, McDavid will be all smiles on draft day. But if it is Buffalo?

"The fans are incredible," McDavid said. "For 11,000-plus to come out to watch a junior hockey game, it just kinda speaks to their love for hockey and their passion. ...

"The fans in Buffalo have been great to me. If I was fortunate to play here it would be unbelievable."

## **A slice of heaven in 97**

By Leo Roth

Rochester Democrat & Chronicle

October 23, 2014

BUFFALO – The night had the electric feel of a Stanley Cup playoff game. Only the First Niagara Center is a long ways off from hosting Stanley Cup playoff games again.

Instead, fans from western New York, Pennsylvania and Southern Ontario, Canada who root for the Buffalo Sabres, who are in the throes of a rebuilding project, flowed through the doors Wednesday night to get a sneak peek at what a potential major building block looks like. And they were pleased.

Connor McDavid, "the LeBron James of hockey," and his Erie Otter teammates faced off against the Niagara Ice Dogs in an Ontario Hockey League major junior A game played in the Sabres home building. A place where McDavid could very well call home next year if Buffalo does its part (read: try hard but still lose) and the NHL's lottery gods are kind.

"I came out to see Connor McDavid, nothing else," said Todd Kopcinski, 37, of Buffalo who wore a Rochester Americans jersey because he's sworn off supporting the parent club until things improve. "The Sabres really need someone like him."

After finishing with the NHL's worst record last year and getting off to a 1-5 start this season heading into a late game at Anaheim, that's like saying a wilting flower needs water.

Like the Buffalo Bills, the Sabres haven't hit rock bottom enough to land the kind of player that can turn a franchise's frown upside down, a Wayne Gretzky, a Mario Lemieux, a Sidney Crosby, a Patrick Kane. But boy are they hitting it now, willing to weather some pain for a lot of gain. The Sabres have three first-round picks in the 2015 NHL draft and two in the second round. Now predicting how 18-year-old juniors will pan out in the pros is like throwing pucks at a dart board.

But every generation comes a can't-miss pick, or as *Hockey Night* in Canada legend Don Cherry called McDavid "a can't-can't miss guy. He's special."

That was on display from the get-go against the overmatched Ice Dogs as McDavid dazzled with three assists to help Erie, the home team, to a 4-2 first-period lead that snowballed into an 8-4 victory in front of 11,391 very impressed patrons. The eight Otter goals matched the Sabres' season total.

When he wasn't setting up teammates, McDavid was corkscrewing defenders into the ice with the kind of hands, moves and effortless skating not seen on this end of Lake Erie since the days of Gilbert Perrault. He finished with four points (1-3).

I could fill this whole column up with special things McDavid did, but his one-handed toe drag around a baffled defenseman was the stuff of video games. When goalie Brent Moran made a terrific pad stop, the crowd groaned in both agony and appreciation.

"He's amazing," said Tim May, 44, an Otters' fan who made the trip with hundreds of others from Erie, Pa. "Every time McDavid touches the puck, the whole place is waiting for something to happen. Seems like a lot of people are here tonight just to see the future."

It's been an incredible past two years and 10 games for Otter fans who welcomed McDavid, a native of Newmarket, Ont., as a precocious underage 15-year-old playing under "Exceptional Player Status." With 65 goals, 132 assists and 197 points in 129 games, McDavid has averaged 1.53 points per game in the world's best junior league.

May is rooting hard for McDavid to land with Buffalo.

"I'd be thrilled," he said. "Then I'd only have an hour and a half to see him in a Sabres uniform. I can continue my love affair with Connor McDavid."

McDavid would be thrilled as well to land in Buffalo. Fans cheered him wildly when starting lineups were announced and they cheered when he was named first star.

"It's been unbelievable," McDavid said. "It's a pretty impressive facility and the fans are obviously incredible. To have 11,000 plus come out to watch a junior hockey game speaks for their passion for the game and they've been good to me. If I'm fortunate play here, it would be a dream come true."

## **Andersen, Perry lead Ducks to sixth straight win**

By Curtis Zupke

NHL.com

October 23, 2014

ANAHEIM -- The Buffalo Sabres finally ended their scoreless streak, but it wasn't enough against Frederik Andersen, Corey Perry and the rest of the Anaheim Ducks.

Andersen made 22 saves to match his career-high sixth straight win and Perry had a hat trick in Anaheim's 4-1 win Wednesday against Buffalo at Honda Center.

Perry ripped a slap shot past Buffalo goalie Michal Neuvirth at 17:17 of the third after captain Ryan Getzlaf outworked a defender to the puck to set it up. Perry completed his second hat trick this season on an empty-net goal at 18:55.

The slap shot came from far out, an unorthodox spot for Perry.

"I don't score too often from out there," Perry said with a laugh. "It just found a nice bounce off the wall, but I found a nice screen in front. Kind of a seeing-eye shot."

Perry became the fastest player in Anaheim history to eight goals, in seven games.

The superlatives continue to roll in for Andersen, who became the first goaltender in NHL history to win 26 of his first 31 decisions. Andersen was 5:06 away from his second straight shutout when Tyler Ennis pushed a rebound by him to make it 2-1. Andersen had gone 152:06 without allowing a goal, and Perry said the past two games are indicative of a Ducks makeover that is taking shape. Anaheim is 6-1-0.

"I think guys are starting to fit into their role and starting to know where they fit and how they're going to play, where they're going to play," Perry said. "It's all a feeling-out process at the start of the season. The team that can come together the quickest is going to get off to the best start, and that's what we're trying to do."

Ennis' goal allowed Buffalo to avoid being shutout for the third straight game for the first time in team history. The Sabres' scoreless streak lasted 198 minutes, dating to a goal by Marcus Foligno in the third period of a shootout win against the Carolina Hurricanes on Oct. 14.

Ennis found little relief in ending the drought but it was a much better showing than the 5-1 loss to Anaheim on Oct. 13.

"We came out hard," Ennis said. "We matched them physically. We were hitting. That's a big strong team. We didn't back down. We played hard. We were [down] 2-1 with three minutes to go on the road against that team. I think there's a lot of positives to take out of it. It was a lot better game than the last one."

Andersen again had to be good early for Anaheim. He made a right skate save on Matt Moulson in the crease in the first period and a left skate save on Zemgus Girgensons early in the second. Andersen also skirted danger when Chris Stewart missed on a backhand and two follow-ups midway through the third.

"He was the one that kept us in," Anaheim coach Bruce Boudreau said. "If Buffalo hadn't gone so long without scoring and squeezing the stick, they probably would have scored a few more goals because they definitely outplayed us. They deserved a better fate."

Ryan Kesler made it 2-0 at 9:20 of the second period with a wrist shot from the top of the circles that went through traffic and found the right side of the net. Perry finished a great tip pass from Getzlaf when he broke down the right side and snapped a shot that beat Neuvirth on the far blocker side at 8:50 of the first.

The opening period was also highlighted by a sustained two-minute-plus shift by Anaheim in Buffalo's zone in which the Ducks changed lines while Sabres defensemen Tyler Myers and Josh Gorges were stuck on the ice.

That was the rub for Buffalo, which needed to play a strong possession game to spark its offense but had a tough time against Kesler, among others. The Ducks won 36 of 57 faceoffs, including 12-of-18 by Kesler.

The Sabres were 0-for-2 on the power play to fall to 0-for-24, the longest slump to begin a season since the New York Rangers went 0-for-32 to start the 2003-04 season.

Buffalo will have to take optimism from the game into Thursday against the defending Stanley Cup champion Los Angeles Kings.

"At least we attacked the net a little bit here tonight," Buffalo coach Ted Nolan said. "We shot the puck. We had a lot of great opportunities and saw the net on a lot of them. When things are going bad, usually luck doesn't follow you. When you turn it around, usually it does."

## **McDavid showcases his skills in Sabres' home rink**

By Joe Yerdon

NHL.com

October 22, 2014

**BUFFALO** -- Being in the spotlight is something Connor McDavid has gotten used to already in his career. But playing in a NHL arena in front of NHL fans is something new.

The 17-year-old Erie Otters center is one of the most anticipated prospects in years and may wind up being the first selection in the 2015 NHL Draft. McDavid's Otters defeated the Niagara IceDogs 8-4 Wednesday in an Ontario Hockey League game at First Niagara Center and he knows the attention on him is growing.

"It's a little different," McDavid said. "But I guess I've had a little bit experience in the last two years kind of growing up, [learning how] to act. It started pretty crazy in my 15-year-old year, when everyone was kind of first taking notice. So I have a little bit of experience. Obviously, this year is a little bit ramped up. Nothing really changes."

McDavid had a goal and three assists against Niagara and impressed the Buffalo crowd with his skill, including a deke in the first period to get around IceDogs defenseman Vince Dunn that left goalie Brent Moran alone to make a pad stop.

"I was a little bit fortunate to just one-hand it around the guy," McDavid said. "If I didn't make it, I don't think coach would be too happy about that. I was fortunate, but it turned out to be OK."

It might seem farfetched that a player with McDavid's talent could get in trouble with the coach, but he's still young and there are still lessons to be learned before becoming a professional.

"Connor is treated no differently than the other players by the coaches," Otters assistant coach Jay McKee said. "When he makes a mistake we let him know; whether that's on the bench or that's on video. There was a game in Saginaw he took a penalty while we were already shorthanded and that he shouldn't have taken and that was addressed in front of all the players.

"So he is an exceptional player. He leads by example. He does all the right things, but he is human. He does make mistakes and, like every other player, we do correct him as well."

Through the first 10 games this season, McDavid has 29 points and is building on his impressive junior hockey career. With numbers like those, the attention on him has been warranted.

"I get these questions all the time about the pressure he's under," Otters general manager Sherry Bassin said. "It's not pressure to him or [Dylan] Strome or any of the guys you see in the room. It's opportunity. That's what good players are all about. We don't think about him being 17 or anything like that. You'd never know it. His work ethic away from the game, and you'll find this in our whole team, people think that if you're a good talker you're a good leader. He leads by conduct. He's got a good values system to make good judgments for himself and the team."

With a full season ahead of him and a busy May and June of 2015 with the scouting combine and draft yet to come, McDavid has gotten some advice from friends who were 2014 draft selections.

"I've been kind of texting [Florida Panthers defenseman] Aaron Ekblad and [Calgary Flamesforward] Sam Bennett, just getting their thoughts on what their idea of the draft year was," McDavid said. "I guess it gets a whole lot worse from here is what they've been saying. It hasn't been fun. It hasn't been bad, I guess."

The attention on McDavid isn't only coming from NHL scouts and executives; it's coming from the fans too. Playing in Buffalo has meant getting extra attention from Sabres fans with Buffalo off to a 1-5-0 start this season. McDavid has said he avoids reading what's written about him, but it's a bit more difficult in the internet age.

"It's pretty weird to think about," McDavid said. "Whenever the Sabres lose, my Twitter just kind of blows up, fans kind of talking about me and stuff like that. I guess it contradicts what I've been saying about reading about myself. It's a little bit different. I really can't explain it. It's pretty cool."

It's not just Sabres fans with hopes of seeing McDavid playing for their team next season, but those who have seen him nightly say the hype surrounding him is worth believing.

"For the people that have seen him play, it is pretty amazing," McKee said. "Draft picks from 1 to 10 usually the players will have a great shot or great speed or work their tail off, there's something to high draft picks that are special about all those players. Connor really ... he has all those abilities in one person."

"The fans here should want a guy like that, they should tweet him. It's pretty unique because you don't find players of his capability very often. It's not every year in the draft that you can find a guy like that, and I think this year is a special year."

## **HarborCenter in high demand, Q-and-A with Chuck Lawless**

By Staff Report

USA Hockey

October 22, 2014

Coming soon to Buffalo: one new premier facility with a first-class adult league to serve the hockey-crazy community.

In fact, there's so much demand for ice at HarborCenter, staff members are working around the clock to try and accommodate everyone.

Construction of the two-sheeted HarborCenter was spearheaded by Buffalo Sabres owner Terry Pegula, who felt the city of Buffalo needed a top-notch facility for hockey players of all ages. That includes a robust adult league.

USA Hockey sat down with Chuck Lawless, arena manager and adult hockey league commissioner at HarborCenter.

**USA Hockey:** With the facility's opening in sight, how is your adult league shaping up?

**Chuck Lawless:** We're ready to go. We'll be running an adult league every night, Monday through Sunday. We'll have 30 teams. We had over 110 teams apply to be in our league. We started off at 24 and we expanded it to 30. I was able to get creative and work out some different times on the schedule so we could accommodate six more teams. And this is just for our fall/winter seasons. We're looking to expand into the spring and summer.

**USA Hockey:** What separates your league from the rest?

**Chuck Lawless:** With adult leagues in Buffalo, there's a strong presence. We believe there are about four or five different adult leagues in the area. The neat thing about our adult league is we're going to accommodate your low-end player all the way up to your high-end player. One of the things that I've noticed throughout the years is that there are so many guys that played juniors and college and pro hockey that aren't playing right now. One of the concepts that we came up with was to start a division geared toward those guys.

**USA Hockey:** Tell us more about that division.

**Chuck Lawless:** Our premier league, we have eight teams in it, which ranges from your college player all the way up to your semi-pro to former professional players. Our premier league will be one of the best in the area, but we'll also have leagues to accommodate new players up to the amateur players. The level of competition is definitely there. For us at the HarborCenter, it's about putting a good product on the ice. We want to accommodate everyone in the area. We're trying to get as many guys on our ice as possible.

**USA Hockey:** What kind of culture are you looking to establish in your adult league?

**Chuck Lawless:** Our league is going to be one-of-a-kind. We have a no-fight rule. There aren't too many – I don't think there are any – leagues in this area that have that rule. If you get into one fight, you're done for the year. We came up with that concept because you have to get up and go to work the next day. We want to have a fun, competitive league where guys can come and play and not have to worry about the hacking or worry about getting a black eye or losing a tooth. Our rules are set in place. We have a misconduct rule – if you get three misconducts, you're done for the year. Three strikes, you're out. We want people to have a place to come and have a good time and still be competitive and play the sport that they love.

**USA Hockey:** Are you thinking about hosting any clinics or events for adults who have never skated before?

**Chuck Lawless:** Yeah – absolutely. It's something we've talked about. We want to offer beginner programs for adults. We want to get them out there. If a family has a father-son, mother-daughter, father-daughter, mother-son skate, we want those parents to be able to go out there. It's something we're kicking around. We're just trying to figure out when is the right time for us to bring it out. For beginners and for the people that just want to get on the ice and touch up on their skills, that's something we have had conversations with in the past. It's on our radar.

**USA Hockey:** What about tournaments?

**Chuck Lawless:** Same thing with adult league tournaments. We're looking at adult league tournaments for this spring. We're also looking at 3-on-3 tournaments. There are so many possibilities and we have so many ideas for down the road. We're looking to accommodate all. That's what we're shooting for.

**USA Hockey:** What are the benefits of partnering with USA Hockey?

**Chuck Lawless:** The Buffalo Sabres organization has a very longstanding relationship with USA Hockey, which extends here to HarborCenter. Because of that relationship, we're going to have two world championships here this year – the IIHF U18 Women's World Championship as well as the International Paralympic Committee Ice Sledge Hockey World Championship. The CCM/USA Hockey All-American Prospects Game takes place at First Niagara Center, which HarborCenter is connected to. That just makes this more and more of a development destination and a destination for USA Hockey events.

**USA Hockey:** It looks like the demand is definitely there. The challenge for you is to accommodate the passion and the numbers, right?

**Chuck Lawless:** Yeah – one of our biggest obstacles is that we only have two pads. For our adult league, we're looking to grow. We're looking to grow the game. That's what our goal is here at the HarborCenter, to give everybody a place to play and improve.

## **Presence of NHL Draft prospect buoys first OHL game in Buffalo**

By Alex Silverman  
Sports Business Daily  
October 22, 2014

Buffalo will host its first OHL hockey game tonight when the Niagara IceDogs take on the Erie Otters at First Niagara Center. The Sabres bought out an Otters home date in order to host the contest and had sold more than 9,000 tickets as of yesterday. Many of those tickets likely were bought by Sabres fans hoping to get a glance at Otters C Connor McDavid, the presumptive No. 1 pick in the '15 NHL Draft. Sabres President Ted Black said, "Buffalo is a very knowledgeable hockey fan base. ... They know who Connor McDavid plays for. I think that's certainly the marquee attraction."

Black anticipates attendance upwards of 12,000 with an active walk-up crowd. Tickets are \$15, but only \$10 for Sabres season-ticket holders. The Sabres and Otters have agreed to split all profits above what the Sabres paid the Otters to host the game. Otters merchandise will be for sale in the Sabres' team store, and Black said that the split on those proceeds "is obviously more heavy toward the Otters." The Sabres have promoted the game on their website, TV and radio broadcasts, and by reaching out to season-ticket holders directly.

## **Phenom Connor McDavid dazzles Buffalo fans in Otters win**

By Bill Hoppe  
Olean Times Herald  
October 23, 2014

BUFFALO – Six months ago, Steve Poland paid \$110 for a discounted gold Sabres alternate jersey at the team store and had 17-year-old junior superstar Connor McDavid's last name and No. 97 stitched on it.

"I bought it as a joke for this forthcoming season," Poland said Wednesday prior to watching McDavid and the Erie Otters inside the First Niagara Center.

Poland, like a lot of rabid fans, wants the Sabres to lose all season so they have a 20 percent chance to earn the No. 1 pick in the NHL draft lottery.

"We all knew this was what this coming year was going to be about," Poland said.

For some, it's all about McDavid.

"Hopefully," Poland said, "we get the full show tonight."

The 11,391 fans watching McDavid got the full show Wednesday, a dynamic one-goal, four-point effort in the Otters' 8-4 win against the Niagara IceDogs.

The scintillating performance will only increase the fawning over the phenom.

McDavid dominated from the get-go, creating a scoring chance just 24 seconds into the contest. He recorded his first assist at 3:57 and had three before the first period ended.

Secondary assists can often just be a simple dish, but McDavid earned two by creating the first two goals. Before the period ended, McDavid scorched a Niagara defender as he roared into the zone, one-handing the puck by him.

"I was just a little bit fortunate to one-hand it by the guy," McDavid said. "If I didn't make it, I don't think coach would be too happy about that."

McDavid scored in third period, his ninth goal and 29<sup>th</sup> point in 10 games this season.

To former Sabres defenseman Jay McKee, an Erie assistant coach, McDavid is a "generational player."

"He has the potential to be as good as any player that's ever played the game," he said.

Erie general manager Sherry Bassin had a similar feeling after watching McDavid up close for the first time three years ago in Toronto.

"It was like a 9 o'clock game, minor midget game, and everybody's talking about him," he said. "The guys say, 'Wait until you see this guy.'"

When puck dropped, "He takes it like from a standing still start. It's a like a sprinter coming out of the box," he said.

Bassin likes to joke his dog, Newman, a traveling companion, knew after two shifts McDavid was the real deal.

"Here's the best way to say it," he said, "when you first saw him, you wanted to go back and see him more because you enjoyed it so much."

Erie, which bottomed out in 2011-12, selected McDavid No. 1 in the Ontario Hockey League draft. The league granted McDavid exceptional status so he could play as a 15-year-old.

"You know about the rainbow and the gold at the end of the rainbow?" Bassin said. "That's what I was thinking about."

Once-in-a-generation superstars all possess something beyond natural talent. Those close to McDavid talk about his maturity and humbleness in the same breath as his skills.

"If it wasn't established he was 17, sometimes I'd think he was 26," Bassin said.

Bassin, who said McDavid would be 60-point NHL player *right now*, traces that maturity to the value system his parents established.

"I tell people he's a better person than he is a player, and we all know how good a player he is," he said.

McDavid displayed some of his humbleness Tuesday, saying he wasn't sure if he would make Canada's world junior championship squad.

"Let me tell you this, if he doesn't make the world junior, they shouldn't even play," Bassin said. "They should just give the gold medals out first day. But that's what he is. He doesn't want anything given to him. So he's such a delight to be around."

Of course, the pressure on McDavid will only increase as the season progresses. Toronto and Montreal, two hockey metropolises, are hosting the world junior championship in December. The comparisons to Pittsburgh superstar Sidney Crosby will become more frequent as the draft approaches.

McDavid has been trying to learn about the experiences of some 2014 top draft picks.

"I've been kind of texting Aaron Ekblad and Sam Bennett, just getting their thoughts on what their idea of the draft year was," McDavid said. "I guess it gets a whole lot worse from here is what they've been saying. It hasn't been fun. It hasn't been bad."

McDavid thinks he has "a long way to go."

"My defensive game has to get better, my shot," said McDavid, who's just starting killing penalties. "You kind of just have to round off all parts of your game. Today to play in the NHL you have to be a full 200-foot player, do all the little things right. Right now, I would say I'm not that. I think I got a long way to go."

## **Sabres switch goalies**

By Paul Hamilton

WGR 550

October 22, 2014

**Anaheim, CA (WGR 550)** -- The Sabres are back in Anaheim tonight fresh off the 5-1 pasting they took from them October 13th in Buffalo.

The Ducks dominated in every way and are off to a 5-1 start.

Anaheim isn't missing Jonas Hiller as Frederik Andersen is 5-0-0 with a 1.38 goals against and .950 save percentage.

The Ducks are 5<sup>th</sup> in the NHL averaging 3.33 goals per game Corey Perry has five goals and seven points while Ryan Getzlaf has six assists and eight points.

Compare that to the worst scoring team in the NHL at 1.17 goals per game. Only four Sabres have scored goals and Matt Moulson isn't one of them. He knows he was signed to put the puck in the net and he admits to pressing and frustration, "Yes I think I allowed it to creep into my game and I've made a vow to stop letting that happen. I want to help the team and I know my job is to try to put the puck into the net, so you do let it creep in a little bit, but the only way to get rid of that is to continue to work and play the right way."

Michal Neuvirth gets his fourth start as a Sabre. He's faced 44 shots twice and 54 the other game he played. Neuvirth only game this season was against the Ducks where the team got outshot 44-12.

Sam Reinhart is back in the lineup for Brian Flynn. Ted Nolan likes what he's seen from the kid in practice and he didn't rule out maybe giving him a little power play time.

Tyson Strachan and Nikita Zadorov will also sit as the Sabres begin a four game road trip that will see stops in Los Angeles, San Jose and Toronto.

Join Brian Koziol at 9:00 for the pregame when he'll be joined by Ted Nolan, Matt Moulson, Sam Reinhart and Pat Kaleta.

## **Sabres' Kaleta is getting better**

By Paul Hamilton

WGR 550

October 22, 2014

**Anaheim, CA (WGR 550)** -- Another injury has sidelined the hard luck Pat Kaleta and although he's not ready for games yet, he is practicing with the team. Kaleta had almost every bone broken in one side of his face, but his attitude never changes, "It's amazing to be out there with my teammates again. As you know, it's been a long road for me and just to be able to come on a trip and participate, pretty much every drill is a blessing for me." The tough winger added, "As for me, I might break my face or break my hands, but when it's all said and done, it comes down to how much heart and how much determination you have to want to come back from that injury."

When Kaleta took the slap shot to the side of the face, he stayed up, but went directly to the Sabres room as fast as he could. It's amazing that Kaleta didn't lose any vision, but initially he did have fear, "Right off the bat it's pretty scary, it hurt pretty good right when it happened. The thing that scares you the most is when they talk about that your face is crushed or you've got to get your eyeball checked out the thought crosses you mind if you'll ever be able to do what you love. If I couldn't play any more hockey for the Buffalo Sabres, that would've devastated me."

Kaleta is in the last year of his contract. The coach and general manager who gave up on him last year are gone so there has to be pressure on him to perform for the new regime, "Yes, there is pressure especially for the lack of amount of games I've played and practices the last couple of years, but I love the Sabres and I love the city of Buffalo and I will do anything and everything I possibly can for the Buffalo Sabres."

Many fans often ask if after getting hurt so badly, do players shy away? Kaleta said that's not him, "If the time comes along that we need that blocked shot, I'm going to make it and if it breaks my face, then it breaks my face."

Tim Murray said the days of his bottom six forwards having no goals are over. He feels to have a successful team, but must get offensive contributions from the third and fourth lines. Kaleta has had trouble lately with goals, but five years ago he did score 10 goals. He said, "A lot of it is mindset, I've talked to Deslauriers about just letting the game come to you a little bit. You might only get six minutes some nights, but you can't make it all happen in one shift, so basically it's, relax, go out and play the game. Whatever line I may be on, we have the capability of providing some offense and I truly believe that. We'll work together as a unit and we get the job done. It starts with hard work, after hard work you create a few chances and after that, you bury a couple."

To hear more from Kaleta join Brian Koziol for the pregame beginning at 9:00.

## **Perry's hat trick leads Ducks to 4-1 win**

By Dan Cave

WGR 550

October 23, 2014

Corey Perry found the net three times and Frederik Andersen made 22 saves to lift the Ducks (6-1-0) over the Sabres (1-6-0) on Wednesday 4-1. Tyler Ennis scored Buffalo's first goal in two-plus games.

Perry opened the scoring at 8:50 of the first period, snapping the puck into the far corner of the Buffalo net, for the 1-0 Anaheim lead. Ryan Kesler made it 2-0 about halfway through the second period. Andrew Cogliano dropped a pass back for Kesler, whose shot from the high slot appeared to glance off Weber before heading into the net.

Buffalo had several opportunities to get on the board early in the final period, but couldn't solve Andersen. The Anaheim netminder came up big during a Sabres power play, and then again with a pad save on Chris Stewart moments later. Marcus Foligno swiped the puck in the Ducks zone and fed it to Stewart, who couldn't stuff it past Andersen's right pad. Andersen finished with 22 saves while Neuvirth stopped 30 shots in the loss.

Ennis finally got Buffalo on the board, marking the Sabres' first goal since 2:54 of the third period against Carolina on October 14. Ennis' third goal of the season cut the deficit in half, but Perry put Anaheim back up by two with his second of the evening. His one-timer from the blue line made it 3-1 and his empty-netter with 1:25 remaining sealed it for the Ducks.

The Sabres head north on Thursday to face the defending Stanley Cup champion Los Angeles Kings at Staples Center. Dan Dunleavy and Rob Ray have the call at 10:30 p.m. on WGR 550 and the Buffalo Sabres Radio Network.

### **1st Period**

#### **Goals**

8:50 - ANA - Corey Perry (6) (Ryan Getzlaf, Devante Smith-Pelly)

#### **Penalties**

2:29 - BUF - Cody McCormick (5 min., fighting)

2:29 - ANA - Tim Jackman (5 min., fighting)

2:29 - ANA - Tim Jackman (2 min., cross checking, served by Emerson Etem)

9:21 - BUF - Josh Gorges (2 min., interference)

### **2nd Period**

#### **Goals**

9:20 - ANA - Ryan Kesler (3) (Andrew Cogliano, Jakob Silfverberg)

#### **Penalties**

4:08 - BUF - Mike Weber (2 min., tripping)

13:20 - BUF - Sam Reinhart (2 min., hooking)

### **3rd Period**

#### **Goals**

14:54 - BUF - Tyler Ennis (3) (Matt Moulson)

17:17 - ANA - Corey Perry (7) (Ryan Getzlaf)

18:35 - ANA - Corey Perry (8) (EN) (Francois Beauchemin, Nate Thompson)

#### **Penalties**

5:51 - ANA - Sami Vatanen (2 min., holding)

12:02 - BUF - Tyler Myers (10 min. misconduct)

12:02 - BUF - Tyler Myers (2 min., roughing)

**Goaltending**

BUF - Michal Neuvirth (30 saves, 33 shots)

ANA - Frederik Andersen (22 saves, 23 shots)

**Power Plays**

BUF - 0 of 2

ANA - 0 of 4

**Three Stars**

1.) ANA - Corey Perry (3 G, 0 A)

2.) ANA - Frederik Andersen (22 saves)

3.) ANA - Hampus Lindholm (0 G, 0 A, +3)

## **Hamilton: Sabres skate well, but have trouble converting**

By Paul Hamilton

WGR 550

October 23, 2014

**Anaheim, CA (WGR 550)** -- Ted Nolan had commented on Tuesday how well his team practiced in Anaheim and it definitely carried over in the game, despite the 4-1 loss.

Buffalo came out fast, skated and took the play to the Ducks only to be stopped by Frederik Andersen. Buffalo had given up 44 shots to the Ducks on Columbus Day, but held them totally off the board 7.5 minutes in. By that time Andersen had made a great skate save on Matt Moulson in the crease and did the same to Drew Stafford when he bulled his way to the net from the left wing side only to have Andersen get the puck before it rolled over the line.

Devante Smith-Pelley found himself all alone in front of Neuvirth while killing a penalty and went high and wide.

The next chance they didn't miss. Ryan Getzlaf tipped a puck to a breaking Corey Perry who had beaten Cody Hodgson. Neuvirth stayed back in his net and Perry picked the corner on him. You'd like your goaltender to make a difficult, but big save there since the team is playing well.

Buffalo worked very hard in the offensive zone and set up Brian Gionta who had his shot blocked. Tyler Ennis scooped it up and fired and Andersen foiled him too.

Andersen only made five saves, but the Sabres had some glorious chances blocked or shot them wide.

In the first 30 seconds of the second period Andersen robbed Zemgus Girgensons right in front on the backhand.

Later, he didn't see a bullet from the point by Andrej Mezsaros and it hit the post solid with Sam Reinhart providing the screen.

Buffalo got caught in a change and the defense just backed in on Neuvirth with Ryan Kesler flying down the slot to score on a 3-on-2.

Reinhart got his first NHL penalty and when he came out of the box, the puck came to him and he led a 2-on-1 with Ennis. Ennis hit the high pass out of the air, but it went wide.

Buffalo only had 12 shots after two, but most of them were very good chances.

In the third, Andersen stopped a point blast from Tyler Myers. Had Sami Vatanen not held Hodgson's stick, he would've had an open net on the rebound.

"You have to give Andersen credit," said Ted Nolan. "That's why he was one of the stars in the game here tonight. Anytime you go into the opposition's rink and their goaltender is one of the stars, you know you played well. We had our chances, we just didn't bury them, and we didn't bury them for a reason. Their goaltender made some good saves."

Buffalo got another Grade-A chance when Marcus Foligno caused a turnover and sent in Chris Stewart alone. The winger deked and backhanded the puck wide. Stewart still does not have a goal. Ennis added his third of the season in the final period, making it 2-1 and snapping Buffalo's scoreless streak that extended past two games.

Perry put the game away, however, with two goals in the final minutes for the hat trick and the 4-1 Ducks win.

The bottom line is this, I think that was Buffalo's best effort and best game all season. The problem is you have to get results when you do what your coach asked you to do.

"That's one thing we've been looking for since the start, is just the effort," said Nolan. "If the effort's there, you're going to have a chance. Tonight I thought, with a little luck, it could have been a different result. [The Ducks] worked as hard as us, but they got the lucky breaks."

"You gotta try to find some positives right now," said Gionta. "I think it was a much closer game than the end score, for sure. We battled hard, especially in that third. We had a lot of opportunities tonight, so if we continue to do that, things are going to go our way."

## **McDavid puts on a show at First Niagara Center**

By Matthew Coller

WGR 550

October 23, 2014

When Connor McDavid isn't wearing skates, pads, helmet and gloves, he looks like a kid that might pass for a Buffalo suburb high school quarterback. Except he lacks the charisma and cockiness of a quarterback. He stuffs his hands in his pockets, looks down at the floor and doesn't ever reach a full smile in the presence of media and coaches. McDavid has an average hair cut, some acne, teeth that are a little big for his face and clothes fit for a first high school dance. If someone told you he was a math major, you'd believe them.

Tuesday afternoon, he stood quietly as general manager Sherry Bassin, a 76-year-old, life-long hockey man, growled praises like McDavid wasn't standing right there. Bassin waxed away with rhymes and one-liners like an older, shorter Don King, minus the afro and shady past.

"He's a better person than he is hockey player," Bassin grumbled, then looked about the room for reaction. "It took my dog Newman two shifts of seeing Connor to know how great he is," he rified.

As Bassin reached deeper and deeper into his bag of sayings – each of which he acts like he's coming up with on the spot – the celebrity of whom he speaks looked around like he was waiting at the dentist's office.

When he steps to the podium, McDavid is asked to give an opening statement. His statement consists – more or less - of, "you guys can ask questions if you want." He stands too far away from the mic, hands in pockets – making eye contact, but never raising his voice above three.

You can't help but think: "THAT is the kid whose existence is causing NHL teams to rearrange their next 15 years of planning?" In your mind, you picture him looking like a blonde Zdeno Chara, towering over midget 16-year-olds running for their lives when he steps on the ice. THAT kid doesn't look like a Canadian Ivan Drago. He looks like a character on *Boy Meets World*.

He's asked about the pressure. He shrugs, more or less. He's asked about teams tanking for him. He shrugs, smiles a little and says that fans blow up his Twitter mentions. He's asked about the World Juniors. He says he has to earn a spot like everyone else.

When the line of questioning is over, he returns to his corner, hands in pockets. Then his coach steps to the podium and says he's far above the level of this year's draft first-round draft picks. Cut to McDavid: No reaction.

After awhile, being in the presence of so much praise must surpass being embarrassing and just sound like bees, humming away in the background. "Next Crosby" buzz buzz buzz. "Lightning speed" buzz buzz buzz. He said he doesn't read what's written about him – and he's the first player in history that said it believably.

McDavid's Scottie Pippen, a center named Dylan Strome, another top prospect whose brother is an NHL'er, is the oppo-Connor. He smiles at the podium, brushes his Justin Beiber hair back and talks like he's around a few friends breaking down the old hockey game.

Strome says it is fun to have a player who's so hyped as a teammate. Like McDavid, his statement came with an air of innocent believability. We have all watched too many professional athletes give too many insincere interviews. Strome's never been burned. He knows the way he's supposed to talk – like Jonathan Toews does – but there isn't the coldness of most pro interviewees.

Pippen spins a good yarn, like Bassin has taught him a thing or two. When the team went to Barrie to play the Colts for a preseason game, the opponents posted "Home tonight vs. McDavid" on their marquee. Strome smiled earnestly at the media's chuckles.

Assistant coach Jay McKee, a former Sabre and long-time NHL'er, told the players to leave the room so they don't

have to listen to themselves be talked about. It's odd because we've been sitting there for 31 minutes talking about the Next Coming's magical hockey powers while Mr. Next Coming stood in the corner with his hands in his pockets.

McKee – that guy looks like an NHL player, built like City Hall with hands bigger than most baseball mitts. He's got the hair, too. Back in the day, he was a skinny top prospect. But we never cared about prospects then like we care now. Even when Sidney Crosby was the next Wayne Gretzky, he was just a name that we read, not a person we could watch on Youtube and follow on Twitter. The only publications that wrote about Crosby were the major Canadian hockey magazines, not every online writer with a WordPress account. It's weird to have the curtain pulled back.

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Newman the Dog did not appear to be in attendance for Connor McDavid's second shift, but that old pup would have been proud of his scouting report on Wednesday night.

A defensive zone faceoff.  
No. 97 wins it, blazes up the right side of the ice without the puck.  
The defenseman hits him with a pass.  
He looks like Bode Miller.  
Backhand off the goalie. Rebound. Goal.

Thanks, Newman.

By the end of the first period, McDavid has three assists.

Half way through the first, the puck found Next Coming in the neutral zone. The whole arena hushed. That moment was why they came. That moment is why they have accepted the idea of the Sabres' odyssey to the bottom of the NHL. As McDavid undressed the defender with a deke, the crowd noise came to a crescendo. McDavid fired a shot stick side high...that the goalie saved.

The crowd applauded – and suddenly believed in all the things they had been told.

And more came to fruition as the game went along. Lightning quickness isn't quite the way to describe him because it has been used too often to describe players with far inferior quickness. He is elusive like Barry Sanders. Who knows if he can be knocked off his skates, because nobody can get a body on him.

"Players in today's NHL have to play a 200-foot game," McDavid had said Tuesday afternoon after mentioning that he must improve his defensive play to be ready for The Show.

In his own zone, opponents think they have room around him, but they do not. They think they can escape with a step or two and make an outlet pass with ease. They cannot. McDavid's stick darts out, pokes the puck away and he immediately has a scoring chance.

And this happens again and again.

A three-point night is nice, but all of these people didn't just come for second assists. As the third period started to wind down and goals (12 of them in total) started to pile up, it seemed McDavid was getting antsy. He isn't a showman in press conferences, but he sure as hell wanted to give the kind people of Buffalo – especially the ones who have already bought Sabres jerseys with his name on them – a reason to remember the night Next Coming was Downtown.

Four and a half minutes into the third, he fulfilled all the unreasonably high expectations of the night by slamming a rebound past the Niagara Ice Dogs' netminder.

The irony was how unspectacular the goal was. Of all the things he had done – of all the hair-raisingly spectacular things – the type that had ex-NHL players jumping out of their seats – the goal was the most underwhelming.

When the game ended, McDavid was named the first star. He had to be. For Buffalo, he had to be.

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After the game, McDavid had a little more quarterback in his swagger. In a gray suit, purple tie, he stood with his left hand clasp on the side of the podium – no hands in pockets. He swayed back and forth, answering questions with more snap and expression. He hadn't come down yet from being jacked as hell to have lit up the Ice Dogs 8-4 in front of the FNC crowd.

"I don't really know what's going to happen with the whole draft process, but if I'm fortunate enough to play for the Sabres, that would be a tremendous honor," he said.

The atmosphere felt much more like an NHL post game interview – that is until McDavid said it was pretty darn cool to be in the visitor's locker room and get a solid post-game meal.

On Tuesday he wasn't sure what to make of it all. On Wednesday night, it was obvious he had loved it all. "The fact that around 12,000 people show up for a junior hockey game, you can really tell they are passionate," he said.

They are, Connor. So much so that they'll wait for you or Jack or Noah or Rasmus or Zemgus or Grigo or Joel or someone whose name we haven't heard yet. So much so that they'll wait and believe that Newman the Dog is right and they'll believe that the kid with his hands in his pockets – or someone like him – will lead them back to being the hockey city they deserve to be.

No pressure or anything.

## **Perry hat trick leads Ducks past Sabres**

By Andrew Knoll

The Sports Xchange

October 23, 2014

ANAHEIM, Calif. -- The Anaheim Ducks and Buffalo Sabres continued moving swiftly in opposite directions. On Wednesday, the Ducks earned a 4-1 win over the Sabres with 16,067 on hand at Honda Center.

Anaheim won its sixth consecutive game since dropping its season opener while Buffalo lost its third straight since its first victory of the season, a 4-3 overtime win against Carolina on Oct. 14.

"It's all a feeling-out process at the start of the season," right winger Corey Perry said. "The team that can come together the quickest is going to get off to the best start and that's what we're trying to do."

The Ducks' top players dominated the game as center Ryan Getzlaf assisted on two of Perry's three goals. Perry added a third goal into the empty net for his eighth tally of the season. The duo leads the Ducks in points with 10 apiece and Perry's second hat trick of the season moved him into a tie with the Rangers' Rick Nash for the league lead in goals.

"When you're a natural goal-scorer like he is, the puck follows you and good things happen," Anaheim coach Bruce Boudreau said.

Goalie Frederik Andersen nearly recorded his second straight shutout. He had not allowed a goal in nearly 153 minutes on ice dating back to Friday's victory over Minnesota before he gave up a goal to Buffalo forward Tyler Ennis with 5:06 to play Wednesday.

"It's huge when you put a guy back there and he's making saves like he's making," Perry said. "On 2-on-0s and some of the stuff that we're giving up, it relieves a lot of pressure."

Perry opened the scoring 8:50 into the game. A touch pass from center Getzlaf sprung him for a partial breakaway that he finished to the far side past Sabres goaltender Michal Neuvirth's stick.

Later in the period, Anaheim would pin the Sabres down in their zone for three full shifts, although they were unable to add another goal.

In the second period, following another stretch of sustained pressure, the Ducks regrouped to score off the rush on their next possession. Right winger Andrew Cogliano's drop pass set up center Ryan Kesler, who trailed the play and finished it with a rising wrist shot 9:20 into the middle frame. Kesler now has three goals and six points in his first campaign with Anaheim.

"It's a great addition to our team. When you have depth and scoring on all four lines, you're going to pin some teams in and really go after them," Perry said.

Seconds later, Sabres defenseman Andrej Meszaros dinged the post to the left of Andersen, one of a handful of near misses for Buffalo.

Center Zemgus Girgensons had a sterling chance nullified by the lunging left pad of Andersen early in the second period. Andersen's right pad denied a pivoting backhand bid from Ennis in the first stanza. The Danish netminder also reached behind him to snag a puck on the goal line earlier in the first period when right winger Drew Stafford nearly scored on a breakaway which came off defenseman Mark Fistric's turnover.

"You have to give Andersen credit, that's why he's one of the stars of the game here tonight," said Buffalo coach Ted Nolan, who was more satisfied with his team's effort than in their 5-1 loss to Anaheim in Buffalo on Oct. 13. "We had our chances, we just didn't bury them," Nolan said.

Buffalo got on the scoreboard with just over five minutes to play. Anaheim center Nate Thompson turned the puck over in the corner of the Ducks zone to left winger Matt Moulson. Moulson put the puck on net and Ennis swooped in to score on the rebound.

"The goal got us right back in the game," Ennis said. "It felt good but then we got back down 3-1. It's tough, but there are positives to take away from tonight."

Boudreau was critical of the Ducks' carelessness in their own zone as they coughed up the puck repeatedly in dangerous situations.

"With the giveaways we had tonight, if this were the Chicago Blackhawks, the score wouldn't have been 4-1 for us," Boudreau said.

Anaheim quelled any aspirations of a Buffalo comeback with 2:43 to play when Getzlaf dished the puck to Perry for a one-timer from just inside the blue line.

With 1:25 to play, Perry completed his hat trick with an empty-net goal.

NOTES: G Frederik Andersen became the first goalie in NHL history to win 26 of his first 31 career decisions. ... D Bryan Allen (lower body), LW Dany Heatley (groin) and RW Kyle Palmieri (ankle) each missed their seventh straight game for Anaheim, while LW Patrick Maroon (knee) missed his fourth consecutive contest. ... D Mark Fistric dressed in place of D Clayton Stoner for the Ducks. ... No. 2 overall draft selection C Sam Reinhart was inserted into the Buffalo lineup in place of C Brian Flynn. ... Sabres RW Patrick Kaleta has yet to make his season debut because of a facial injury.

## **Sabres open 3-game road trip tonight in Anaheim**

By Chris Ryndak

Sabres.com

October 22, 2014

**ANAHEIM** – The Buffalo Sabres hope to open their three-game road trip on a winning note Wednesday night.

Buffalo has been shut out in back-to-back games and hopes to respond well not only to that, but to their last game against the Anaheim Ducks, a 5-1 loss at home on Oct. 13, as well. Michal Neuvirth started that game for Buffalo and he'll be back in the net against them again Wednesday night when the two teams wrap up their season series against each other.

Puck drop is scheduled for 10:30 p.m. EST. The Tops Gamenight pregame show begins at 10 p.m. on MSG-B and Bell TV. The game can also be heard live on WGR 550.

Defenseman Tyler Myers, who has led all Sabres skaters in ice time in each of the team's six games this season, ranks ninth in the League with an average of 25:49 of ice time per game. Back when Myers was a rookie in 2009-10, he led the Sabres in average ice time, skating 23:44 per game.

He's also tied for the team-lead in shots on goal with 15. Sabres coach Ted Nolan would like to see the team shoot the puck more and Myers thinks those chances will come once they start improving their possession numbers. Buffalo has been outshot 227-141 so far this season.

"It gets back to as a group, we need to control the puck more," Myers said. "As a five-man unit on the ice right now, there are some things we need to clean up that will allow us to have more opportunities in the offensive zone. But right now we're spending a little too much time in our own end."

The Sabres took part in a lively practice on Tuesday that featured some pretty competitive battles and a bit more physicality. They hope that can elevate it when it comes time to face off against Anaheim.

"It starts in practice and yesterday there was a little bit of feistiness involved," Nolan said. "Maybe we've reached that point where we realize we have to compete."

The players have been fans of the more up-tempo practices.

"We have to practice like we want to play. If we don't we're not doing anything to help ourselves," Myers said. "The pace lately has picked up and it's been a lot better. We need to translate that over."

Anaheim won 3-0 over St. Louis on Sunday and has won five in a row. Wednesday's game is the third of a five-game homestand for the Ducks. They opened the season on a four-game Eastern Conference road trip that included the game in Buffalo.

"We know they're a good team. Last time, we didn't play them the way we wanted to," Sabres forward Torrey Mitchell said. "We just need to bear down on our chances, stick together and play hard and we'll have an opportunity to win."

Rookie Sam Reinhart will be back in the lineup after sitting out Saturday as a healthy scratch.

### **PROJECTED LINEUP AGAINST ANAHEIM**

26 Matt Moulson – 63 Tyler Ennis – 12 Brian Gionta

82 Marcus Foligno – 19 Cody Hodgson – 80 Chris Stewart

17 Torrey Mitchell – 28 Zemgus Girgensons – 21 Drew Stafford

44 Nicolas Deslauriers – 23 Sam Reinhart – 8 Cody McCormick

4 Josh Gorges – 57 Tyler Myers  
6 Mike Weber – 41 Andrej Meszaros  
61 Andre Benoit – 55 Rasmus Ristolainen

34 Michal Neuvirth  
1 Jhonas Enroth

Healthy Scratches: 24 Tyson Strachan, 51 Nikita Zadorov, 65 Brian Flynn  
Injured Reserve: 31 Matt Hackett, 36 Patrick Kaleta

## **Sabres come within striking distance but Ducks pull away with 'W'**

By Chris Ryndak

Sabres.com

October 23, 2014

**ANAHEIM** – It didn't translate into a win for the Buffalo Sabres on Wednesday, but they did skate away feeling better about their play and their effort against one of the NHL's elite teams.

Tyler Ennis scored to cut the Anaheim Ducks' lead to 2-1 with 5:06 to play and put the Sabres within striking distance of leaving Honda Center with at least a point. However, the Ducks' stars came out and took the game out of reach.

Two late third-period goals capped off Corey Perry's hat trick effort as the Ducks came away with a 4-1 victory. The Ducks have now won six-straight games.

"We haven't been putting the puck in lately. To get us right back in the game, it felt good but we got back down 3-1, two goals so it was tough," Ennis said. "But there are positives to take away from tonight."

Buffalo had many good chances throughout the game, but the puck wouldn't go in for them for much of it. They entered the game having been shut out in back-to-back games and prior to Ennis' goal, the team's last non-shootout goal came at the 2:54 mark of the third period in their game against the Hurricanes on Oct. 14.

Ennis' goal came off a feed from Moulson in the corner. Ennis, alone in front, put the puck in past an out-stretched Andersen for his third goal of the season.

Perry then scored his second of the night off a slap shot from the slot with 2:43 remaining to make it 3-1. He then added an empty netter with 1:25 to play in regulation.

Frederik Andersen made 22 saves for the Ducks. Sabres goaltender Michal Neuvirth stopped 30 pucks in a losing effort.

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### **GOOD CHANCES**

Buffalo has also had trouble with their shot differential. Buffalo managed 53 shot attempts at the net to Anaheim's 69. Shots on goal favored the Ducks 34-23 but the Sabres had a few prime opportunities.

Andrej Meszaros hit the post not long after Anaheim's second goal and Sam Reinhart and Ennis were unable to convert on a 2-on-1 a short time after that. Chris Stewart came close to scoring on a chance in tight midway through the third period.

The Sabres were able to match the Ducks pretty much hit-for-hit for much of the game. Buffalo came out of the gate with a lot of energy and were finishing a majority of their checks hard.

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### **PERFECT PRACTICE MAKES PERFECT**

After a few good days of practice, Sabres coach Ted Nolan was happy with the work his club put in against Anaheim.

"If the effort's there, you're going to have a chance," Nolan said. "Tonight I thought with a little luck, it could've been a different result. They worked as hard as us and they got the lucky breaks."

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## **QUACK ATTACK**

One perfectly executed breakout gave the Ducks a 1-0 lead after one.

From behind the Ducks net, Francois Beauchemin moved the puck up to Devante Smith-Pelly in the neutral zone. With bodies in motion, Smith-Pelly passed the puck to Ryan Getzlaf at center ice, who then tipped the puck up over the line to Perry. The Ducks wing then cruised in on snapped a shot into the top corner of the net 8:50 into the first.

Getzlaf and Perry have each played 11 career games against the Sabres and have had great success against them. Getzlaf has 14 points (5+9) in those 11 games while Perry has 13 (10+3).

"That's something you have to pay attention to when you come to the game. Usually if you can disable the best guys on the other team, that's when you have a chance to win and obviously we did not do that today," Sabres forward Zemgus Girgensons said.

After that goal, the Ducks soon found themselves on the power play and poured on the pressure.

It became a 2-0 game when Ryan Kesler, an offseason acquisition from Vancouver, zipped one in on a rush 9:20 into the second.

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## **UP NEXT: THE KINGS ON THURSDAY**

"We can't dwell on things. I thought tonight was a much better game, the way we need to play," captain Brian Gionta said. "It's a start in the right direction. If we continue to play like that, we're going to get wins."

The Sabres are right back at it when they take on the Los Angeles Kings at Staples Center on Thursday at 10:30 p.m. EST.

## Amerks weekly report

By Kevin Snow

Sabres.com

October 22, 2014

### ***Saturday, October 18: AMERKS 4 – TORONTO 1***

Rochester used a three-goal second period and 24 saves from goaltender [Nathan Lieuwen](#) to cruise to a 4-1 win over the North Division rival Toronto Marlies on Saturday afternoon at Ricoh Coliseum. The game was the first of 10 meetings between the two teams this season.

Rochester again put its offense on display as four different goal-scorers found the back of the net to bring the Amerks' total to a league-high 14 goals through the first three games of the season. Dan Catenacci, Akim Aliu, Phil Varone and [Mikhail Grigorenko](#) all scored for the Amerks, while Lieuwen turned in yet another solid performance between the pipes, stopping 24 of 25 shots in his third straight start. [Chad Ruhwedel](#) and [William Carrier](#) also both picked up assists in the win to extend their respective point streaks to three games.

### **WHO'S HOT**

- **Phil Varone** (2+3) and **Chad Ruhwedel** (1+4) share the team lead with five points each.
- **Ruhwedel's** five points lead all AHL defensemen, with six players tied for second with four.
- **William Carrier** is currently tied for second among all AHL rookies with four points (1+3) through his first three professional games.
- The Amerks have now scored at least four goals in each of their first three games of the season.
- **Tim Schaller** only has one goal in three games, but has recorded a team-high 11 shots.

### **UPCOMING GAMES**

- Wednesday, October 22: Rockford @ Rochester, 7:05 p.m. – **BUY TICKETS**
- Friday, October 24: Adirondack @ Rochester, 7:05 p.m. – **BUY TICKETS**
- Saturday, October 25: Rochester @ Adirondack, 7 p.m.

### **NEWS AND NOTES**

This Friday marks the return of the "Sweets in the Suites Halloween Celebration" during Rochester's home game vs. Adirondack. Gates open at 6 p.m., and kids can meet Princess Anna and Queen Elsa from "Frozen" before the game. All kids 12 and under in attendance can go trick-or-treating in the Suite Level during first intermission. During the second intermission, all kids in Halloween costumes are invited to participate in the on-ice Costume Parade. All adults can receive one free kids ticket (12 and under) with the purchase of each \$20 Adult Ticket (for best available seating). **Click here** to purchase.

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The Amerks have partnered with RochesterWorks! to host a Downtown Career Fair on Friday, Nov. 14 at The Blue Cross Arena from 1-4 p.m. The event will be followed by a 7:05 p.m. game between the Amerks and Toronto Marlies. Businesses can reserve their spot at the Downtown Career Fair for \$300 (\$150 for 501c-3 non-profit organizations) by visiting [www.amerks.com/careerfair](http://www.amerks.com/careerfair). The cost includes one table, one free parking spot for the day, 20 tickets to the Amerks game to follow, and access to a cocktail reception prior to the game. Job seeker registration for the event is free and includes one ticket to the Amerks game that night. Job seekers must register in advance to attend the free event by visiting [www.amerks.com/jobseeker](http://www.amerks.com/jobseeker).