



Buffalo Sabres

Daily Press Clips

October 30, 2014

Nolan's patience runs out with lethargic Sabres

By John Wawrow

Associated Press

October 29, 2014

BUFFALO, N.Y. (AP) — The gloves are off in Buffalo now that coach Ted Nolan's patience has run out waiting for his lethargic Sabres to start showing signs of a spark.

Nolan expressed his frustrations, including using a profanity in yelling at his team to "wake ... up," while putting his players through a grueling 90-minute practice Wednesday.

"Now is the time where taking it easy is over now," Nolan said, noting that he had purposefully given the Sabres a 10-game grace period. "We've got to go work. I'll take full responsibility for that. Maybe I didn't push them hard enough. But today's the day we have to start."

The Sabres (2-8) could use the extra work a day after sleepwalking through a 4-0 loss at Toronto. Buffalo managed a franchise-worst 10 shots and was shut out for the fourth time in six games.

The lack of effort is what ate at Nolan, particularly after Buffalo was rested and coming off its best game, a 2-1 win at San Jose on Saturday afternoon.

"It's very disturbing," Nolan said of his team's performance. "It's mind-baffling."

The expectations were already low in Buffalo entering this year. The rebuilding Sabres were coming off a season in which they finished last in the standings, lost a franchise-record 51 times and set a post-NHL-expansion era low by scoring 150 goals.

There are signs they could be even worse this year.

Not including shootouts, Buffalo has scored just 10 goals. According to STATS, that's tied for the fourth fewest through the first 10 games of a season in NHL history, and fewest since the Chicago Blackhawks scored that many in 1936-37.

Nolan isn't surprised by how low the Sabres offense has sunk.

"If we play the way we played last night, I'm quite sure we'll break some more of those records," he said. "If you're not going to shoot, you're not going to score. It's pure and simple as that. ... You can draw up all the fancy game plays that you want, but the want has to be there."

Tyler Ennis leads Buffalo with three goals, while Zengus Girgensons and Marcus Foligno have two each.

Matt Moulson, Drew Stafford and Cody Hodgson, who combined for 58 goals last season, have a goal and seven assists between them.

Moulson, a three-time 30-goal-scorer, had a difficult time coming up with a solution for Buffalo's offensive woes.

"If it was an easy fix, it would be fixed by now," he said.

Nolan is taking matters into his own hands by juggling the Sabres lines for Buffalo's home game against Boston on Thursday.

The biggest switch involves Hodgson being demoted to the fourth line. And Nolan acknowledged he's toying with the thought of having Hodgson sit out a game by saying: "He's pretty close to there, too."

NOTES: The Sabres are slightly ahead of last year's record, when they got off to a 1-8-1 start. ... Rookie first-round draft pick C Sam Reinhart is set to play against Boston. That will mark his ninth game, meaning the Sabres have to determine whether to return Reinhart to his Canadian Junior team in Kootenay, British Columbia, or have his rookie contract automatically kick in with his 10th NHL game. ... Nolan said G Jhonas Enroth will start against Boston.

Bruins-Sabres Preview

By Taylor Bechtold

Associated Press

October 29, 2014

Following a slow start after winning the Presidents' Trophy last season, the Boston Bruins stood on the verge of their fourth win in five games before blowing a late two-goal lead at home earlier this week.

The Bruins hope to get back on track Thursday night in Buffalo by replicating their last performance against the Sabres, who look to finally secure their first home victory.

Boston was outscored 17-9 while dropping four of its first six games before showing signs of the form that led the club to the most points in the league for the first time since 1989-90.

The Bruins then outscored opponents 15-7 during a 3-1-0 stretch and appeared to be on the way to another win Saturday before allowing Minnesota to score three times over a 10-minute span in the third period of a 4-3 defeat.

"It's just not good enough," Tuukka Rask, who stopped 38 of 42 shots, told the NHL's official website. "You know, 40 shots, I'm not too worried about that, but just the style we give them up, it's pretty bad sometimes."

The loss overshadowed a career night for rookie center Seth Griffith, who finished with two goals and assisted on Milan Lucic's second-period score. David Krejci added an assist to extend his point streak to seven.

"We're going to come and practice hard, and hopefully we'll be ready for Buffalo," Griffith said. "We want to be an above .500 hockey team, and we took a step back."

The Bruins (5-6-0) might not have much trouble working out their issues against the Atlantic Division-worst Sabres (2-8-0), whose four points trail only winless Carolina's two.

Buffalo started 0-8-1 at home in 2013 and has been outscored 13-2 while losing all four games on its own ice this season.

Boston dealt the Sabres one of those defeats Oct. 18, when Dougie Hamilton, Zdeno Chara, Torey Krug and Carl Soderberg scored while Niklas Svedberg had 32 saves in a 4-0 victory.

Soderberg has scored in three straight road games, and Krug has one goal with four assists in his last three meetings with the Sabres.

After picking up their second win Saturday at San Jose, the Sabres were routed 4-0 in Toronto on Tuesday to conclude a four-game trip. They finished with a franchise-worst 10 shots while getting shut out for the fourth time in six games.

Buffalo's 10 goals are tied for the fourth-fewest through the first 10 games in NHL history, and fewest since Chicago scored that many in 1936-37.

"If you're not going to shoot, you're not going to score," coach Ted Nolan said. "It's pure and simple as that. ... You can draw up all the fancy game plays that you want, but the want has to be there."

Tyler Ennis leads Buffalo with three goals, while Zemgus Girgensons and Marcus Foligno have two each. Matt Moulson, Drew Stafford and Cody Hodgson, who combined for 59 goals last season, have a goal and seven assists between them.

"If it was an easy fix, it would be fixed by now," said Moulson, a three-time 30-goal-scorer.

Nolan is moving Hodgson to the fourth line against the Bruins, while Jhonas Enroth will get the start between the pipes. Enroth is 1-5-0 with a 3.13 goals-against average and 1-5-2 with a 3.89 GAA in nine games against Boston.

Sabres pay the price for another bad game

By John Vogl

Buffalo News

October 29, 2014

Ted Nolan gives his players a rope at the start of the season. It's up to them what they do with it. The Sabres' coach hopes they climb, but he knows some will fashion a noose.

This year's team is way better at hangman than hockey.

"I always give our team a 10-game grace period," Nolan said Wednesday. "You give them a little bit of rope and maybe some will hang themselves. The last 10 or so games, we saw that.

"Taking it easy is over now. We've got to work."

Nolan's message sank in lap by lap, sweat bead by sweat bead as the Sabres went through one of the hardest practices in years. They didn't do anything Tuesday during a historically embarrassing loss in Toronto, so Nolan skated their blades dull for 85 minutes in First Niagara Center.

"It was a hard practice, and we didn't expect anything less after the performance we had," said forward Torrey Mitchell, whose team hosts Boston tonight in the arena. "I've got a feeling that we're going to respond the right way."

It's hard to imagine Buffalo (2-8) getting worse. The Sabres took a franchise-low 10 shots against the Maple Leafs while getting shut out for the fourth time in six games. They've scored just 10 goals through 10 games, the fewest since the 1936-37 Chicago Blackhawks and tied for fourth fewest of all time.

"If we play the way we played last night, I'm sure we'll break more of those records," Nolan said. "I'll take full responsibility for that. Maybe I didn't push them hard enough. But today's the day we have to start.

"It's very, very disturbing. It's mind-baffling. This is our occupation. This is what we do for a profession, and we have to concentrate on what we do."

Nolan went through the obligatory line changes during practice, most notably dropping Cody Hodgson to the fourth line. The coach swore at him to "wake up" during a drill. Nolan gruffly said Hodgson is "pretty close" to getting scratched after totaling 11 shots and a minus-7 rating.

Hodgson answered "no" when asked if the demotion angered him.

"Honestly, I'm just trying to help the team like I've said every time you talk to me about it," said the winger, who skated with Nicolas Deslauriers and rookie Sam Reinhart. "We've got to figure out ways to score goals. We've got to figure out line combinations and what we can do on the ice.

"It's not one person. It's collectively we need to do this."

It's certainly not one person for the Sabres. Their woes are a team-wide problem, and they start at the top.

Entering Wednesday's schedule, 341 NHL players had scored a goal. The list did not include Matt Moulson, Drew Stafford, Brian Gionta or Chris Stewart, the first-line left winger and the top three right wingers.

"There's a lot of us that are not doing enough to get the puck in the net," Moulson said. "It's hard to score when you don't have any shots."

The Sabres have just 25 shots during the last two games. They aren't getting close to the net because their passing is sloppy, their decision-making is poor and their races to the puck are one-sided losses.

"We've just got to find ways to do the right thing," Gionta said. "We've talked about it enough. We've beaten it down. Everybody knows what needs to be done. We're just not doing it.

"The way we're playing, guys should not be happy about it."

There was some anger shown during the rough workout – Chris Stewart and Mike Weber had audible outbursts and a few sticks slammed off the boards – but most players kept their heads down and skated.

"Right now we've got a quiet group of athletes," Nolan said. "I've learned a long time ago from one of the best coaches ever in the game, Fred Shero, and he said, 'You have to learn to win with what you've got or you don't win at all.'

"We've got some good characters on this team. I've never doubted that. Sometimes we get caught up in wishing for things to turn around versus working for things to turn around. We've got to start working instead of wishing."

Jhonas Enroth will start in goal for the Sabres, while Reinhart will play the final game of his nine-game tryout. General Manager Tim Murray will then decide whether to keep the second overall pick in Buffalo or send him back to junior.

Nolan will decide what the other players do. Their rope has been reeled in.

"You've got to earn it from now on," center Zemgus Girgensons said. "If you're not going to work, you're not going to play."

Sabres prospect Grigorenko has reason to celebrate

By Amy Moritz

Buffalo News

October 29, 2014

It was a big, flashy goal celebration.

Sure it was partly because it was the goal that kick-started the Rochester Americans' offense as they erased an early two-goal deficit.

But there was another meaning to the celebration for Mikhail Grigorenko. To score in First Niagara Center, in an NHL arena, in the home of the Buffalo Sabres, was a type of statement for the 20-year-old forward.

"I was really happy to score in this building," Grigorenko said after the Amerks defeated the Hamilton Bulldogs, 3-2, Wednesday night.

He didn't elaborate, but his reaction on the ice did much of the talking.

"By their celebration you know it meant a lot to them," Rochester coach Chadd Cassidy said. "He's had a rough couple of years just being in a tough situation. ... I think scoring that goal, but also playing well tonight was a good step in his maturation process."

With the Buffalo Sabres struggling to find any offense, spark or heart through their first 10 games, there has been a buzz about bringing up some of the younger talent, like Grigorenko and his linemate Joel Armia.

Grigorenko has played half seasons with the Sabres since being drafted 12th overall in 2012 by the franchise. His first two seasons were spent primarily between the NHL and his Quebec Major-Junior League team, a frustrating shuffle for the offensively gifted Russian center. He played well in Buffalo Sabres training camp but was assigned to Rochester, a move that initially stung.

"It was tough for a couple of days ... now I'm just going to play hockey and don't really think about other stuff going on with the management," Grigorenko said. "I just try to focus on my game."

"Sometimes I think about it. Of course if I play bad, I'll never come here, so I just focus on playing good and things on the ice. It's not even all about points."

The points seem to come naturally between Grigorenko and Armia. With the Amerks trailing, 2-0, they teamed up to assist on each other's goals to tie the game in the second period. Luke Adam had the game-winner as the Amerks improved to 5-2-0-0.

Through the first seven games of the season, Grigorenko now leads the team with four goals. Armia is tied for the team lead in points with seven.

The maturity in the games of both Grigorenko and Armia comes from learning to play with structure and allowing their teammates to get them the puck.

But it also comes from staying focused on the task at hand and letting the NHL deal sort itself out.

"It's not easy," to keep them focused "because every player in our room thinks they can play here in Buffalo," Cassidy said. "And that's not saying anything about their team or anything like that. There's a lot of players in the American league that can play in the National league. But are they ready to be consistent contributors? I would be the first to tell Mikhail and Joel Armia both, they're not ready, maybe right now, to be a consistent contributor

at that level. We're not going to send you there ... until you're ready to do that. Because it doesn't do any good for them to come up here and struggle and spin their wheels. We want to make sure they're ready.

"There's plenty for them to learn in the American league right now. ... They've been good players for us, but they've got to continue to grow. It's a process. It takes a long time and when the time is right for them to be here they will."

Amerks top Hamilton in Buffalo

By Kevin Oklobzija

Rochester Democrat & Chronicle

October 29, 2014

BUFFALO – Mikhail Grigorenko has been here before. Often actually.

On the ice of the First Niagara Center, competing in front of Buffalo Sabres fans and trying to prove he belongs here.

Much of the time, those minutes in the FNC weren't memorable. His stints the past two seasons with the Sabres were hardly impactful.

But Grigorenko is determined to be back, to make the downtown Buffalo arena his home, to be a game-breaker for the team that selected him 12th overall in 2012 NHL draft.

Just like he was on Wednesday night for the Rochester Americans in a 3-2 victory over the Hamilton Bulldogs.

The vastly skilled centerman scored the first goal off a pass from Joel Armia at 8:34 of the second period and then, 2:55 later, won a faceoff that led directly to Armia's tying goal.

Just like that, in two shifts, the duo turned a 2-0 deficit into a 2-2 tie, and when Luke Adam found the net on the next shift, the Amerks had a lead that they would protect right to the final buzzer.

"We just kept playing our game and it worked," Armia said. "That's the way you score goals."

For the second time in three games, Grigorenko and Armia were the difference-makers they were drafted to be.

"I thought they were the best players on the ice," Amerks coach Chadd Cassidy said. "They got a lot of tough shifts. They were always against their second line or top line."

That's a pretty dramatic change. They weren't always trusted with prime minutes against the best the other team has to offer. But they have made distinct improvements in their game, which is why Cassidy rewarded them with that role.

"That wasn't always the case before," Cassidy said. "They got a lot of guarded minutes."

The Sabres fans who turned out — there were maybe 5,000 fans — saw their future. And Grigorenko saw his after he scored his fourth goal of the season, driving a one-timer past goalie Joey MacDonald after Armia set him up at the top of the slot.

He pumped his arm, then dragged his glove along the ice for a few feet as he curled to the left wing boards and glided out toward the blue line. That was his most demonstrative goal celebration by far.

"I was really happy to score in this building," he said. "It's an NHL building and I just love playing here."

Armia, meanwhile, downplayed the significance that his third goal of the season came at the FNC, where he has yet to wear a Sabres sweater.

"It's the same everywhere," he said.

Said Cassidy: "By their celebrations you know it meant a lot to them."

Adam's goal meant a lot, too. It was his first, though he had five assists in the first six games.

"I was starting to wonder," he said about scoring. "Those were a couple big goals by Grigo and Joel and we were off to the races."

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Kevin's 3 stars

1. **Mikhail Grigorenko**, C, Amerks ... Scored the first goal, set up the second, played solid all-around game.
2. **Joel Armia**, RW, Amerks ... Set up the first goal, scored the second, and was equally strong at both ends.
3. **Luke Adam**, LW, Amerks ... Scored the winning goal, made several slick plays in the offensive zone.

Sabres back home to face injury-plagued Bruins

By John Manasso

NHL.com

October 29, 2014

BRUINS (5-6-0) at SABRES (2-8-0)

TV: NESN, MSG-B, BELL TV

Season series: In their first game this season, the Boston Bruins defeated the Buffalo Sabres 4-0 on Oct. 18 at First Niagara Center. Defenseman Dougie Hamilton had a goal and an assist. The Bruins also received a goal from defenseman Zdeno Chara, who is currently out 4-6 weeks with a knee injury.

Bruins team scope: The proverbial injury bug has hit the Bruins. Defenseman Torey Krug will miss 2-3 weeks with a broken finger, the Bruins announced Wednesday. They recalled defensemen Joe Morrow and David Warsofsky from Providence of the American Hockey League. Left wing Brad Marchand left practice early Wednesday and did not return, the Boston Globe reported. Bruins coach Claude Julien told reporters after practice that Marchand "tweaked something." It was uncertain as to whether Marchand would be available Thursday. The Bruins enter having lost two of their past three games. Both losses came at home, including on Tuesday against the Minnesota Wild, 4-3. With Chara out, Hamilton, 21, logged a career-high 28:32 in ice time Tuesday.

Sabres team scope: Rookie center Sam Reinhart will play Thursday, according to the Buffalo News, which would represent his ninth game. After that, the Sabres will have to decide whether to return Reinhart to his junior team. Once he plays in his 10th game, the first year of Reinhart's entry-level contract kicks in. Reinhart, the second pick in the 2014 NHL Draft, has averaged 10:41 of time on ice and has no goals and one assist and is minus-1. The Sabres enter having lost five of their past six games, including 4-0 on Tuesday at the Toronto Maple Leafs. The Sabres just concluded a four-game road trip in which they went 1-3-0. They scored a total of three goals on that trip and have been shut out in each of their past two (non-consecutive) losses. They enter Thursday with a scoreless streak of 74 minutes and 3 seconds. The Sabres are the lowest-scoring team in the NHL, averaging 1.00 goal per game. They also are allowing the most shots in the League at 36.7 per game.

The Buffalo Sabres are a terrible team that is somehow getting worse

By Adam Gretz

CBS Sports

October 29, 2014

There are a lot of different ways to rebuild an NHL team.

The Buffalo Sabres have decided to go with the scorched Earth theory where they burn their organization down to an unrecognizable pile of rubble and attempt to building something useful out of the smoldering ashes with a collection of top draft picks.

It's a high-risk, high-reward strategy. The upside is you get Sidney Crosby and Evgeni Malkin, or Jonathan Toews and Patrick Kane, and you win a Stanley Cup or two like Pittsburgh or Chicago have been able to do. The downside is that for every Pittsburgh and Chicago that made it work, there have been teams like Edmonton, Florida, and the old New York Islanders or Atlanta Thrashers (if you want to go back to them) that were stuck in a perpetual state of bad hockey they were never able to climb out of it.

Either way, the Sabres are powering on in the NHL's great tank battle and have spent the past few years stockpiling as many first-and second-round picks as they can possibly can, and have actually acquired some players that have the potential to be the foundation for an interesting team in a couple of years. And they have even more top picks coming.

The ultimate prize, though, is in the 2015 draft.

Even though nobody with the team will admit it, this season is all about being bad. Bad enough to finish in a spot where they can land one of Connor McDavid, the puck-destroying phenom that is a man against boys in the Ontario Hockey League and is already playing the occasional game in Buffalo, or American-born sensation Jack Eichel, currently doing his NHL prep work at Boston University. It's been years since the NHL has had two prospects this hyped entering the league in the same year, and it truly is a year where it could pay off in the long-run to be terrible in the short-term.

But before they can get to the top of the draft and land what they hope is a franchise changing cornerstone player, they're going to have to play a lot of bad hockey along the way to get there. So far, it's mission accomplished. During their 4-0 loss to Toronto on Tuesday night they may have reached a new low. And considering where this team was coming from, that is astonishing. It's also embarrassing.

The Sabres were already by far the worst team in the NHL last season, winning only 21 of their 82 games, a performance that was so bad that it would be almost impossible to duplicate. That is, until you realize the Sabres were probably not only kept in a few games they had no business being in last season because of the play of Ryan Miller in net (before he was traded to St. Louis at the deadline), but that they also lost their best defenseman over the summer when they bought out the remaining years of Christian Ehrhoff's contract. Now you're left with with the 2014-15 Sabres, which somehow seem to be even worse than the previous year's version.

Just consider for a minute that ...

1) On Tuesday, they were thoroughly dominated, completely out-classed, and systematically destroyed by a Toronto team that is at best a borderline playoff team in a weak Eastern Conference. The Sabres set a franchise record-low by recording only 10 shots on goal. They allowed Toronto to take 37. Since the 1987-88 season, which is as far back as the hockey-reference database tracks shots on goal data, there were only seven teams that prior to Buffalo that had a similar performance (10 shots or fewer and giving up 37 or more).

2) They have scored only 10 goals in 10 games and have already been shut out four times this season. There were seven teams that went the entire 2013-14 season that were not shut out that many times. Five more teams were shut out four times in 82 games.

3) After 10 games last season the Sabres were 1-8-1 and had been outscored 12-28. Tuesday was their 10th game of the 2014-15 season and they have already been outscored 10-33 (they do, however, have a 2-8-0 record ... so there's that).

I get what the Sabres are doing. It might even work out in the long-run if they end up with a McDavid or Eichel and they turn out to be everything they're advertised to be.

But in the meantime, their fans, which are among the best in the NHL, are left to watch ... this and pay NHL prices for it.

And amazingly, that is all part of the plan.

Ted Nolan just realized what's going on with Sabres this season

By Greg Wyshynski

Puck Daddy

October 29, 2014

There are different kinds of roles for actors. There are prestige projects, in which you sweat and bleed and get fat or get skinny and give everything you have to make art. And then there are paycheck jobs, in which you show up as General Hawk for 10 minutes in "G.I. Joe: Buy This Toy."

After 10 games, Buffalo Sabres coach Ten Nolan has to realize this is a paycheck team.

This is a collection of players that know they've been set up to lose, from the crease out, and know that help isn't on the way until Bill Daly flips over their logo card at the draft lottery next April.

He has to know that this historically bad start – their 10 goals in 10 games is the fourth-fewest in NHL history – isn't indicative of anything beyond this being a paycheck team.

But he's a prideful guy, and thus he skated the Sabres through a wall on Wednesday: Bellowing expletives through 85 minutes of muscle-aching practice.

"I always give our team a 10-game grace period. Give them a little bit of rope, and maybe some of them will hang themselves," he said. "Taking it easy is over now. Maybe I didn't push them hard enough."

Buffalo Sabres goaltender Michal Neuvirth watches the puck after making a save against the Toronto M ...

It's not exactly rocket surgery to see who isn't pulling their weight. Drew Stafford has 16 shots in 10 games for a minus-6. Cody "Fourth Line" Hodgson is a minus-7 with two points in 10 games. Tyler Myers is a minus-2 with no points in 10 games.

All three were here last season, and you figure at least one of them is waiting for his inevitable trade out of Buffalo.

"We got some good characters on this team. I've never doubted that. But sometimes we get caught in wishing things will turn around, instead of working to turn them around," said Nolan.

"We're the kind of team that has to work. If we don't work, we're in trouble."

And so Nolan gets angry and skates them hard, hoping for some fire or anger or anything. "We've got a quiet group of athletes," he said.

Hoping for some pride.

"This is our occupation. This is our profession," he said.

Those are two different things, of course. Every player on the roster has chosen to make hockey their profession. But majority of them probably see this season's job as an occupation separate from the grand scheme; a paycheck rather than a passion project.

There's no incentive to win, nor will there be dramatic moves to encourage it. They're six points out of the wild card on Oct. 28, and everyone has two games in hand.

But at least the checks clear.

Sabres' Cody Hodgson close to being scratched

By Bill Hoppe
Olean Times Herald
October 29, 2014

BUFFALO – Make no mistake, Cody Hodgson, the Sabres' leading scorer last season, is the new right winger on the fourth line beside center Sam Reinhart and Nick Deslauriers.

"Yeah, he's on the fourth line," Sabres coach Ted Nolan said curtly this afternoon.

Hodgson could be moved to the press box next.

"He's pretty close there, too," Nolan said.

Hodgson, like just about every Sabres forward, has struggled this season, compiling one goal, two points and a minus-7 rating in 10 contests.

The 24-year-old said the demotion doesn't anger him.

"No, honestly, I'm just trying to help the team," Hodgson said. "I've said it every time we talk about it, we've got to figure out ways to score goals."

The Sabres have only 10 goals in 10 games and have been blanked four times in the last six games, including Tuesday's ugly 4-0 loss in Toronto.

Nolan shuffled his lines for today's 90-minute practice inside the First Niagara Center.

The other new trios: Matt Moulson, Tyler Ennis, Drew Stafford; Torrey Mitchell, Zemgus Girgensons, Brian Gionta; Marcus Foligno, Cody McCormick, Chris Stewart.

"You at least try to get three lines where you think guys are giving it, and you mix and match until there's some sort of chemistry going," Nolan said.

Thursday will be Reinhart's ninth game. The 18-year-old's contract kicks in with his 10th appearance. Nolan said the Sabres haven't decided the rookie's future yet.

Nolan hinted the Sabres could recall someone if Reinhart, the No. 2 pick in June, goes back to junior.

"That's what you need – you need some sparks," he said. "I think we got some good soldiers. We just need that little bit of extra energy."

Hapless Sabres searching for answers with season unraveling

By Bill Hoppe
Olean Times Herald
October 30, 2014

BUFFALO – The anger was evident throughout the Sabres' tense 90-minute practice Wednesday inside the First Niagara Center.

At one point, coach Ted Nolan, whose reeling 2-8 team was demolished 4-0 in Toronto hours earlier, yelled, "Wake the (expletive) up!" Players exchanged words and shouted in frustration. Captain Brian Gionta banged his stick on the glass and demolished it on the bench.

Nolan said the "10-game grace period" he gives his team each season has ended.

"You give them a little bit of rope and maybe some will hang themselves," a sweaty Nolan said. "What we saw the last 10 or so games we saw that. Now's the time, taking it easy is over now. We got to work. I'll take full responsibility for that. Maybe I didn't push them hard enough. But today's the day we have to start.

"One of my favorite sayings is, 'If it's not working, maybe you're not working hard enough.' I was upset the way we worked."

Nolan's usually mild-mannered and even-keeled. Clearly, Tuesday's lethargic, 10-shot effort – one of the worst losses in recent memory – embarrassed him.

"We got to get our battle effort up," Nolan said after the Sabres prepared for tonight's tilt against the Boston Bruins. "We got to get our intensity level up. We got to get our enthusiasm up. We got to get our passion up."

Sabres center Zemgus Girgensons, who's played under Nolan more than any current player, had never seen him so angry.

Nolan relayed a strong message.

"Nothing given anymore," Girgensons said. "We got to earn it from now on. If you're not working, you're not playing."

Gionta added: "Everyone knows what needs to be done. We're just not doing it. It's mentality. It's mindset. It's the culture, and we need to change it."

Nolan keeps saying the Sabres have a good group of guys, something he repeated Wednesday.

"We got some good characters on this team," he said. "I've never doubted that. Sometimes we get caught up in wishing for things to turn around versus working for things to turn around."

But the Sabres don't have many loud, emotional players.

"Some people are very emotional, some are not," Nolan said. "Right now, we got a quiet group of athletes. They're not boisterous, they're not loud. You don't try to make something that's not there. But you have to work with what's there."

He added: "If we're quiet, then let's be a loud quiet."

Nolan cited legendary Philadelphia coach Fred Shero to illustrate his point.

"He said, 'You have to learn to win with what you got, or you don't win at all,'" he said.

Gionta said at times he hasn't seen enough anger.

"The way we're playing, guys should not be happy about it," he said.

The Sabres won't win much until they start scoring. They have 10 goals in 10 games, a stunning number. They're the first NHL team since the 1936 Chicago Blackhawks to score 10 or fewer goals in the first 10 games, according to Sportsnet.

Yes, it's been 78 years since a team began a season so anemically.

"If we play the way we played last night, I'm quite sure we'll break some more of those records," Nolan said. "If you don't shoot, you're not going to score. If you don't get people in front of the net, you're not going to score."

The Sabres, fresh off a franchise-low shot total, have been blanked four times in the last six games.

"A lot of us are not doing enough to get the puck in the net," struggling Sabres winger Matt Moulson said. "We have to compete a little harder and work a lot harder to make sure we're willing that puck in."

The Sabres' top threats have given them little or no offense.

Gionta, Moulson, Drew Stafford and Chris Stewart have all scored zero goals. The four wingers have a combined 641 NHL goals. Winger Cody Hodgson, the Sabres' leading scorer last season, has one goal and two points.

Moulson's usually a huge threat, having scored 135 goals since the start of 2009-10.

"I'm quite sure once Matty gets his first one, he'll get his second and third and go on from there," Nolan said. "Right now, we're all fighting the puck."

The defense has zero goals and two assists all season.

"I think we just got to find ways to do the right thing," Gionta said. "We're losing too many battles, too many turnovers. We're just not taking care of what we need to."

The Sabres won battles Saturday in San Jose, helping them upset the Sharks 2-1.

"We're the type of team, we have to work," Nolan said. "If we don't work, we're in trouble. We've proven that. But if we do work, we proved it in San Jose. If we work, things could happen."

Sabres' Nolan said the grace period is over

By Paul Hamilton

WGR 550

October 29, 2014

Buffalo, NY (WGR 550) -- Ted Nolan said 10 goals in 10 games with only two wins is his fault and maybe he's been soft. You have to go back 68 years to have that bad of a goal scoring start and Nolan said, "I always give our team a 10 game grace period, you give them a little bit of rope and maybe some will hang themselves and what we saw in the last 10 games, we saw that so, taking it easy is over now, we've got to work and I'll take full responsibility for that, maybe I didn't push them hard enough."

I've been around Nolan a long time and it's been awhile since I've seen him that angry. He said, "It's very, very disturbing, it's mind baffling, this is our occupation, this is what we do for a profession and we have to concentrate on what we do, we don't come here and just practice to practice, we've got to practice for skill to get better and the most important skill that people underestimate is the power of working and to me it's a skill."

Nolan had a long meeting before practice on Wednesday with his captains and then put the team through a brisk 90 minutes practice. Included in that was Nolan yelling at his new fourth liner Cody Hodgson, "Come on Cody, wake the blank up." Nolan thinks he still has some character here, "We've got some good characters on this team and I've never doubted that except, sometimes we get caught up in wishing things to turn around versus working for things to turn around, so we've got to start working instead of wishing."

I asked if Hodgson is on the fourth line or in danger of sitting Nolan said tersely, "Yes, he's on the fourth line." When I asked if he may sit out Nolan said, "He's pretty close to that too."

Nolan's new lines were,

Moulson-Ennis-Stafford,

Mitchell-Girgensons-Gionta

Foligno-McCormick-Stewart

Deslauriers-Reinhart-Hodgson (Flynn-Kaleta)

Nolan wants to find the nine that want to work the most. He said, "You at least try to get three lines of the guys that you think are giving it and you mix and match until there's some type of chemistry. Cody McCormick, one thing about Cody, he gives you what he has to give and maybe by putting him with Marcus and Stewart, maybe that will rub off on those guys. With Girgensons, there's never an issue with his approach to games, practice and everything and I think if enough people watch him, they would learn that."

Matt Mouslon hasn't scored a goal yet this season. He doesn't blame Nolan for being angry, "He demands a certain amount of compete and work ethic and I don't think we've given that to him yet. I think he's trying to get the guys to show some type of emotion out there, so I'm sure he's trying everything."

Another captain is Josh Gorges. He's livid at what he's seen, "That's by far not good enough." Gorges added, "I don't know who we think we are or what kind of team we think we are or what we've accomplished to be playing like that. We haven't done anything to go out there and play a cute game. We don't deserve to play a cute game and until we figure out that we have to work and scratch and claw and grind and dig in order to give ourselves a chance to win, then we're going to have nights like that."

So the obvious question is what's the solution? Gorges said, "You can't sit in here and point fingers and say you didn't do your job or you didn't do your job. I didn't do my job and each guy has to go out and face the facts and say I've got to be better and until we have 25 guys on this team that say they're willing to do it and buy in and compete, we've got nothing, so each guy has to do it on their own."

Matt Hackett practiced with the team for the first time, but Nolan said he's still a long ways off.

Armia, Grigorenko lead Amerks to win at FNC

By Matthew Coller

WGR 550

October 29, 2014

Whether it was the oversaturation of hockey games at First Niagara Center lately or frustration from the Sabres' fan base over their brutal start to the season, the arena was mostly empty for the Rochester Americans' annual game in downtown Buffalo.

Too bad. They missed another chance to feel darn good about the Sabres' overall direction. The Amerks won 3-2 over the Hamilton Bulldogs on Wednesday night on the backs of goals by former first round draft picks Mikhail Grigorenko and Joel Armia.

The two prospects, both in the 21-and-under club, have been at the center of Rochester's strong start to the season. They have won five of seven games. Grigorenko has four goals, Armia has three goals and four assists – most of which have come from GriGoals.

Disciples of the rebuild got a shot in the arm last week when Connor McDavid posted four points under the bright lights. After a slow first period, BluePrinters – there and watching on TV - received another bit of confirmation.

Down two goals in the second period, Armia rushed across the blueline with the puck, slowed down and whipped a pass to his Russian linemate, who fired a wrist shot into the net to bring the score within one.

Grigorenko added a little extra oomph to his celebration, as if to say, "Remember me, Buffalo?"

"It meant a lot to him scoring that goal tonight," head coach Chadd Cassidy said. "And not just that, but playing well. He was really good tonight. It was another good step for him in his maturation process. Hopefully he can build on it."

Less than three minutes later, Grigorenko returned the favor, winning a faceoff back to Armia, who fired a blazing wrist shot past goalie Joey MacDonald.

Grigorenko was named the first star.

That's why he's wearing this hat.

"It feels good that we are able to help our team," Grigorenko said. "The most important thing is winning games." The Amerks' surge continued in the second as Luke Adam put his team ahead for good with a hard wrist shot that beat MacDonald on the short side.

"Great comeback," Adam said. "We knew (goalie Andrey Makarov) would hold the fort for us. He played really well for us tonight and again tonight. Couple big goals by Grigo and Joel."

Makarov got the nod after performing well against Adirondack on Friday night, and then appeared in relief after Nathan Lieuwen struggled on Saturday. Makky was unmoved by getting the nod in Buffalo.

"It doesn't matter where you play, it only matters if the team wins and plays a team effort," Makarov said. "It's two big points."

"It's just like the other games. Be ready, be prepared and come play the game."

Makarov may have a chance to steal the No. 1 role after finishing last season with a .927 save percentage in 10 games. After stopping 28 of 30, he has a .940 save percentage in three appearances.

The Amerks are now 5-2-0, in second place in the North Division. They play Friday on the road at Syracuse and are next at home Nov. 7.

ADDITIONAL NOTES

D – Chad Ruhwedel – Has had a pretty amazing start to the season. He's had a point in every game (!) and has nine points in seven games overall. The former Lowell-Umass defenseman has been extremely effective carrying the puck and exiting the defensive zone. He might play a role in the future as the defense shifts from its not-so-impressive current state to the next wave.

F – William Carrier – The 19-year-old winger has the task of playing with Armia and Grigorenko, which isn't always easy considering their high-end offensive skill and tendency to freelance. However, he has made an impact with his speed and ability to fight for pucks with his size. Cassidy called him a player that he could trust in any role.

D – Mark Pysyk – The Amerks' defense held Hamilton to just five shots in the third period and you can bet Pysyk was on the ice for half of the even strength ice time. The former first-round selection has made a huge impact on Rochester's defense as expected. Is he better than half of the Sabres' current defensemen? Absolutely. But it can't hurt for him to help this team now.

F – Johan Larsson – Was not a major impact player on Wednesday night, but may be Rochester's best top-to-bottom player thus far. He is deserving of being the first call-up if/when the Sabres send Sam Reinhart back or have an injury. Larsson is trying to prove he can not only play a tough defensive game and win battles like crazy, but also put up points. A tiny sample of fourth-line minutes with a terrible Sabres team last season seems to have convinced some that he can't score, but his eight points in seven games this year and 41 in 51 last season are hinting otherwise.

Nolan shows frustration at Sabres practice

By Jon Scott

TWC Sports

October 29, 2014

BUFFALO, NEW YORK - Sabres head coach Ted Nolan was not happy at practice Wednesday morning and let his team know it. His players saying afterwards that his display of anger was larger than they had ever seen from him. That may be because Nolan is shifting his early season approach to coaching.

"I always give our team a ten day grace period, ten game grace period and see how, you give them a little bit of rope and maybe some will hang themselves," Nolan said. "And what we've seen over the last ten or so games, we saw that. So now's the time, taking it easy is over now."

"We've talked about it enough, we've beaten it down, everyone knows what needs to be done, we're just not doing it," Sabres captain Brian Gionta said. "It's a mentality. It's a mindset. It's a culture. And we need to change that."

"If you're not frustrated, you're not trying enough," said Sabres forward Cody Hodgson, whose been moved down to the team's fourth line. "I think everyone, we're pulling together, we're in the same boat, we need to figure out ways to generate some offense."

Nolan not the only one showing frustration. Gionta broke his stick over the bench at one point during the practice. These are all signs of emotion that have been absent from the team during their 2-8 start to the season.

Nolan would like to see more of that, but does not know if it is in his player's DNA.

"Some people are very emotional, some are not," Nolan said. "And right now we have a quiet group of athletes. They're not boisterous. They're not loud. And you don't try to make something that's not there. But you have to work with what's there. I've learned a long time ago from one of the best coaches there is in the game, I think, Fred Sherrill. He said you have to learn how to win with what you got or you don't win at all. So we can't turn something into something we haven't got. So if we're quiet, then let's be a loud quiet."

As for Sabres first round pick Sam Reinhart, Thursday's game against the Bruins will be his ninth in the NHL. The significance of that is it is the max an underage junior can play in the NHL before burning the first year of their entry-level deal. So after the game, Nolan says he, the front office, and Reinhart will discuss what to do. If Reinhart returns to his junior hockey league, Nolan hopes the player to replace him on the Sabres roster will bring a much needed energy boost.

Sabres host the Bruins starting at 7 pm Thursday night.

Nolan: "Taking it easy is over now"

By Steve Vesey

WIVB

October 29, 2014

BUFFALO, N.Y. (WIVB) - Coming off a game where the Sabres registered just ten shots on goal, head coach Ted Nolan put his team through a lengthy workout to try and get them back on track.

"I always give our team a ten game grace period," said head coach Ted Nolan. "You give them a little bit of rope, maybe some with hang themselves. What we saw over the last ten or so games, we saw that...Taking it easy is over now."

Nolan talked several times after practice, regarding the team's work ethic.

"If it's not working, you're not working hard enough," said Nolan.

"We got some good characters on this team... sometimes we get caught up in wishing for things to turn around, versus working for things to turn around," said Nolan.

One of the players he mentioned specifically is Cody Hodgson, who spent Wednesday's practice skating with the fourth line. Nolan said, Hodgson is close to playing his way into being a healthy scratch.

The Sabres get right back to work tomorrow night, hosting Boston at 7pm.

Frustration boiling over for Sabres

By Staff Report

WKBW

October 29, 2014

BUFFALO, N.Y. (WKBW) - Sabres Head Coach Ted Nolan says he gives teams a 10-game grace period to start the season.

But, Buffalo is back where they were the majority of the time a year ago: the bottom of the NHL standings -- and fresh off a franchise worst 10 shot effort in a 4-0 loss to Toronto.

"Taking it easy is over now. We have to work and I'll take full responsibility for that," Nolan said. "Maybe I didn't push them hard enough, but (Wednesday) is the day we start."

Following that loss to the Leafs frustration boiled over in practice. Captain Brian Gionta skated over to the bench and broke his stick during drills. He says, these first 10 games have been the most trying and toughest he's been a part of in his career.

"With how we've played, given our record, how we're playing and how we're losing games, for sure," he said of the Sabres 2-8-0 record.

"If it was an easy fix, it'd be fixed all ready," Matt Moulson added. "I think it's a bunch of things. I think the main thing is we have to compete and work harder."

And, for a team that ranks last in the league in goals and shots per game those words have been a constant. Patience is wearing thin.

"It has nothing to do with a system when you're racing for a puck," Nolan said. "It's will. There's no system related when there's a battle in the corner. It's will."

Jhonas Enroth will get the start in net as buffalo tries to bounce back Thursday against Boston, who beat the Sabres 4-0 earlier this season.

Nolan pushes players in practice on Wednesday

By Chris Ryndak

Sabres.com

October 29, 2014

Tuesday night is one the Buffalo Sabres would like to put past them. After losing 4-0 to the Toronto Maple Leafs at Air Canada Centre and recording a franchise-low 10 shots on net, the Sabres took the ice Wednesday at First Niagara Center for another practice.

Coach Ted Nolan skated them for about an hour-and-a-half and at one point, he stopped a drill and yelled at some players to get a point across that they need to be more alert and have stronger communication.

Through 10 games, the Sabres are 2-8-0 and have scored just 10 regulation goals so far. Six different players have combined for those 10 goals. Buffalo has also been shut out four times.

"I always give our team a 10-game grace period, give them a little bit of rope and maybe someone will hang themselves. What we saw over the last 10 or so games, we saw that," Nolan said. "Taking it easy is over now. We've got to work and I'll take full responsibility for that. Maybe I didn't push them hard enough.

"But today's the day we have to start. One of my favorite sayings is, 'If it's not working, you're not working hard enough,' so I was upset about the way we worked and we've just got to be better."

Over the course of Wednesday's practice, a few players displayed some emotion, breaking sticks and exchanging words amongst themselves during drills.

"You can see today a little bit, the guys are pissed off," forward Zemgus Girgensons said. "That's something you kind of need to when you're struggling so it's something that can get the fire back in this locker room."

The Sabres are set to host the Boston Bruins on Thursday at 7 p.m. Jhonas Enroth will start in goal.

COMING UP EMPTY

The Sabres' offensive struggles aren't an easy fix and the players are working to find a solution. They know they'll likely need more than 10 shots most nights if they want to win a game, but finding out how to get those shots and do it consistently has been a recurring issue.

Alternate captain Matt Moulson is one player without a goal yet. He's a three-time 30 goal-scorer but this is his longest goal drought to start a season.

"We've got to get the puck in the zone to get some zone time and some shots. It's hard to score when you don't have any shots," Moulson said. "I think that's our first step, is getting some shots and maybe you can generate some rebounds. When you're in a slump, you try to get a dirty goal to get out of it or one off you and in, but it's hard to do that when you can't even get pucks on the net."

Sabres captain Brian Gionta said the team has talked enough about what they need to do and they now need to produce results on the ice. He said they have to shift their mindset if they want to change the culture.

"We've just got to find ways to do the right thing," he said. "We're losing too many battles, too many turnovers and we're just not taking care of what we need to.

"...The way we're playing, guys should not be happy about it. Frustration should be pretty high right now.

Girgensons said the message from Nolan was a simple one.

"If you're not going to work, you're not going to play," Girgensons said.

'LET'S BE A LOUD QUIET'

When it comes to talking on the ice, Nolan noted that even though he may not have the most talkative group, they need to find ways to effectively communicate.

"Some people are very emotional; some are not. Right now, we've got a quiet group of athletes. They're not boisterous, they're not loud," Nolan said. "You don't try to make something that's not there but you have to work with what's there.

"I learned a long time ago from one of the best coaches there was in the game, Fred Shero, and he said, 'You've got to learn to win with what you've got or you don't win at all.' We can't turn something into something we haven't got so if we're quiet, let's be a loud quiet."

LINE CHANGES

The lines at practice were shaken up a bit. Center Cody McCormick was promoted up to a line with Marcus Foligno and Chris Stewart.

Drew Stafford was back on the right wing with Moulson and center Tyler Ennis. Girgensons was reunited with Torrey Mitchell on the left side and Gionta on the right.

"[McCormick] gives you what he has to give. Maybe by putting him with Marcus and Stewart, maybe that'll rub off on those guys," Nolan said.

"Girgensons, there's never an issue with his approach to games, the way he approaches practice and everything. If enough people watch him, they would learn that. He's with Mitchell, who's giving us what he has to give all the time and Gionta does the same thing."

Cody Hodgson rotated in on the fourth line with Nicolas Deslauriers, Sam Reinhart, Brian Flynn and Patrick Kaleta. Nolan indicated that Hodgson may soon find himself in the press box as a healthy scratch.

In some positive news, goaltender Matt Hackett, who sustained a knee injury on April 12, practiced with the team for the first time this season. There's no clear timetable yet for his return. He's currently on the non-roster injured list.

WEDNESDAY'S PRACTICE GROUP

26 Matt Moulson – 63 Tyler Ennis – 21 Drew Stafford

17 Torrey Mitchell – 28 Zemgus Girgensons – 12 Brian Gionta

82 Marcus Foligno – 8 Cody McCormick – 80 Chris Stewart

44 Nicolas Deslauriers – 23 Sam Reinhart – 19 Cody Hodgson – 65 Brian Flynn – 36 Patrick Kaleta

4 Josh Gorges – 57 Tyler Myers

6 Mike Weber – 41 Andrej Meszaros

61 Andre Benoit – 55 Rasmus Ristolainen

51 Nikita Zadorov – 24 Tyson Strachan

1 Jhonas Enroth
34 Michal Neuvirth
31 Matt Hackett