



Buffalo Sabres

Daily Press Clips

December 15, 2017

Filppula's goal leads Flyers to 5th straight win

By AARON BRACY

Associated Press

Dec. 15, 2017

PHILADELPHIA (AP) — No longer struggling, the suddenly confident Philadelphia Flyers are now able to overcome their own blunders.

Valteri Filppula scored the game-winner with 2 1/2 minutes left in the second period and Travis Sanheim netted his first career goal to help the Flyers win their fifth straight game, 2-1 over the Buffalo Sabres on Thursday night.

Brian Elliott rebounded from a costly mistake early in the game to make 19 saves for the Flyers, whose winning streak has come on the heels of a 10-game losing streak. The winning stretch began with a three-game Canadian trip that started with coach Dave Hakstol changing the team's formation to a more defensive-minded 1-2-2 alignment. Philadelphia (13-11-7) has outscored opponents 19-8 since.

Buffalo opened the scoring 1 1/2 minutes into the game thanks to a miscue by Elliott. The Flyers goalie attempted to clear the puck from behind the net, but he passed right to Buffalo's Zemgus Girgensons. The Buffalo center then passed in front to Ryan O'Reilly, who shot into an empty net for his eighth goal of the season.

"A little miscommunication and a bad play on my part," Elliott said.

But the Flyers didn't get rattled — something that maybe wouldn't have happened two weeks ago.

"You can take a punch better when you have a swagger to your game," Hakstol said.

Said Elliott, "It could go sideways in a hurry, but we sorted it out."

The Sabres (8-18-6) are in the cellar of the Eastern Conference. Buffalo was looking for back-to-back wins for the first time since Oct. 21-24. The Sabres' point streak was snapped at five games.

"We built something in the last four games and I thought we could've taken another step tonight, but we didn't execute," Sabres coach Phil Housley said.

Filppula put the Flyers ahead 2-1 after Jakub Voracek set up the play with his eighth assist in the last five games, passing to a cutting Filppula who shot high over Robin Lehner's right shoulder.

"I don't think it was our best game, but you need to win these kinds of games," Filppula said. "It's a good sign."

The Flyers tied the game at 1 just over 4 minutes into the first period on Sanheim's first career goal as the rookie defenseman's wrist shot from long range got past Lehner.

"It was a long time coming, but it was exciting to get my first one," he said.

Thirty seconds before Sanheim's tally, Elliott made a mistake similar to the one that led to Buffalo's goal. Sam Reinhart intercepted his pass from behind the net, but Reinhart's shot with Elliott out of the crease was denied by rookie center Nolan Patrick.

"Kind of desperation," Patrick said of the save.

The Sabres entered with the fewest goals in the league (67) and the first-period tally was just their 15th of the season in the opening 20 minutes.

Notes: Sabres D Nathan Beaulieu (illness) missed his fifth straight game and C Jacob Josefson (ankle) sat out his eighth in a row. . It was the first of three meetings between the clubs. Buffalo hosts the Flyers Dec. 22 before coming back to Philadelphia on Jan. 7. . Philadelphia has won all five games during the streak in regulation, something they hadn't done

since Oct. 26-Nov. 11, 2010. . Flyers LW Michael Raffl recorded an assist, extending his point streak to five contests, while playing in his 300th career game.

UP NEXT

Sabres: Host Carolina on Friday night.

Flyers: Host Dallas on Saturday night.

Consistency again the enemy for the Sabres

Buffalo News

By Amy Moritz

December 14, 2017

PHILADELPHIA — Consistency. It's been the most elusive element of the Buffalo Sabres game as they've struggled to find their footing this season.

Consistency continued to be the problem in Wells Fargo Center Thursday night as a hot start ended up in a 2-1 loss to the Philadelphia Flyers.

The Sabres had a strong first period, scoring just 1:29 into the game when a hard forecheck by Zemgus Girgensons won him the puck behind the net from Flyers' goalie Brian Elliott. He fed it to Ryan O'Reilly who finished in front of an open net for a 1-0 lead.

While the Flyers tied it two and a half minutes later, the Sabres still held the advantage in even strength play. They had long shifts in the Philadelphia zone. They got to the puck to the net. They created turnovers. They created scoring chances. It felt as if they building toward something good.

"I thought we had our chances," Sabres forward Jack Eichel said. "I don't think our execution was where it should be. We let them off the hook a few times where we had cycles and long shifts in their end. You know, it's a tough one. We thought we could have come in here and get two points and we didn't get anything. There's some good and there's some stuff we want to clean up."

The first period was the good stuff.

But the second period, that was the game changer.

For all the good the Sabres did in the first period, particularly in the offensive zone, they fell back into the bad habit of getting away from the game plan in the second. The Flyers came out with a strong counterpunch, but the Buffalo dressing room felt it was their lack of response which allowed Philadelphia to gain control of the game.

With the score tied, 1-1, the Flyers outshot the Sabres, 14-6, in the second period. Buffalo couldn't set up in the offensive zone, couldn't get through the neutral zone, and found themselves hemmed in their own end. That's how Valteri Filppula scored at 17:27 of the second, jumping into an open space in the slot and tapping in a pass from Jakub Voracek for the lead.

"I thought we did a pretty good job in the first," Girgensons said. "We had a lot of o-zone time. Then in the second we kinda started making the same mistakes we've sometimes been making. Those turnovers in the neutral zone and they took advantage of those. That was the difference I thought."

"We lost the game in the second period," O'Reilly said. "It took too much out of us. We were chasing the puck too much. We couldn't get into a rhythm. It starts with myself. I've got to shorten my shifts, do little details better. It was too tough. You could tell by the third we were pretty gassed."

But the biggest letdown in the consistency area was finding the ability to finish plays.

Even with the reduced zone time and fewer shots in the second and third period, the Sabres had plenty of scoring opportunities. Sam Reinhart had an open net with a wraparound but missed. Evander Kane had two outstanding opportunities — one on an odd-man shorthanded break in the second and then on a strong pass from Evan Rodrigues late in the third when he was all alone to the right of Elliott but couldn't find the open space. Marco Scandella also had an open net, skating hard to the far post on a rush, but tipping the puck wide of yet another open net.

"It wasn't a matter of us not getting the chances," coach Phil Housley said. "I mean we had some great looks. We had open nets. We didn't finish and that's part of the execution."

"If you look at the chances we had, we had open nets and we didn't elevate the puck," Housley said. "Goalies in this league now are going to seal the low part of the net and you've got to elevate. We could have had a two-goal lead right after we got the first goal. We could have had a two-goal lead and then it puts a little more pressure on them."

But the pressure is back on the Sabres to see how they respond to their first loss since Dec. 2 to the Penguins in Pittsburgh. The loss snapped a four-game point streak for the Sabres who had started to find their game.

"It's unfortunate because we've built something here in the last four games," Housley said. "I thought we could have taken another step tonight against a good hockey team but we didn't execute."

Sabres Notebook: Zach Bogosian's poise, personality making a difference

Buffalo News

By Amy Moritz

December 14, 2017

PHILADELPHIA – After missing the first 25 games of the season, Zach Bogosian came back into the lineup and promptly made his presence felt.

The defenseman isn't the only reason why the Buffalo Sabres have found a bit of life, gathering points in four of his first six games back in the lineup. But having Bogosian back on the blue line has certainly been a contributing factor to the team's jolt.

"I think first of all being away that many games and then stepping in, the first two games I thought he was our best defenseman," said coach Phil Housley Thursday morning as the Sabres prepared to play the Philadelphia Flyers in Wells Fargo Center. "Then you have a little dip because of the buildup to those games, but he's been pretty consistent. His puck movement's really good. He's really strong down low. I'd like to see him shoot the puck a lot more. I think he's got a really good release and it's a heavy shot. But I think he just brings us some depth back there which we really needed."

Bogosian has been reunited with Jake McCabe as the team's second defensive pairing. For McCabe, it's a chance to skate with someone he's familiar with, who knows his game and vice versa. And there's the return of some poise to the blue line, and by extension the entire team, with Bogosian back in the lineup.

"He's a physical presence. He can skate really well and he's a do-it-all kinda guy," McCabe said of Bogosian. "I think the first couple games back it was an instant impact. He brought a lot of poise on the backend and a lot of good puck-moving ability. It's given our team a real boost."

But it's not just his skating or his shot or his puck-moving ability that's made a difference. Sometimes, it isn't even anything on the ice, but rather the way in which Bogosian approaches the game and takes ownership of his leadership role.

"From a team perspective he brings a lot of energy and enthusiasm every day to the rink," McCabe said. "He's always got a smile on his face but when it comes game time, he's dialed in. He's about as fierce of a competitor as I know. I think you've all seen that when that switch is turned. He's ready to go and he brings a lot to our team as far as leadership goes."

"He brings a lot of positivity and a lot of energy," forward Kyle Okposo said. "Just his personality. He's just a feel-good guy that plays with some fire, too. He's just really good to have around the locker room."

His energy and camaraderie with his teammates was evident in the dressing room in Philadelphia after the team's morning skate. When asked if he had a minute for a few questions, he said sure, but first he had to try and hit Ryan O'Reilly across the room with a ball of used tape.

He missed. Oh well.

OK. Ready to go.

"I think one person can help but it's not going to solve everything, right?" Bogosian said. "I think it can bleed into the group a little bit but if we're going to try and change things around here, we have to do it as a group. I do like to be positive and try to come in and be upbeat. Joke with the guys but then knowing when you put your helmet on and go on the ice, it's all business."

The business on the ice has been slowly coming around for Bogosian, who missed those 25 games with a lower body injury. In his first six games back he averaged just over 19 minutes of ice time. And as much as the Sabres have benefited from his poise, there's still more to come from his game.

"You know, I feel better and better," Bogosian said. "It's tough to jump in, in December, when guys have already had their legs under them for a few months but I just try to go out there and play smart. I don't think me going out there and playing reckless helps. I've got to be smart about what I'm doing out there because I haven't played. I missed 25 games. I feel good. I just think it will come with time. That's for sure."

* * *

Some of the best news in the Sabres organization continues to come from its American Hockey League affiliate in Rochester.

On Wednesday, the Amerks defeated the Utica Comets, 3-1, extending their point streak to 10 games. It's the longest streak since the Amerks tied the franchise record with 11 straight wins from Oct. 12 to Nov. 10 of the 2009-10 season.

Rochester has points in 16 of its last 17 games and has lost only twice in regulation dating to Nov. 1.

And those results are bringing smiles to the Sabres staff.

"It's great," Housley said. "I think Chris (Taylor) has done a great job down there with that team all buying in and playing a team game. The results are reflective of that. Anytime our guys down there can have success, once they get up here they can rely on that experience."

* * *

Defenseman Nathan Beaulieu practiced with the team Thursday morning in Philadelphia but was out of the lineup for the fifth straight game. He is recovering from an illness.

"I think he still needs to regain some strength but he's come a long way since where he was at," Housley said.

Still on the Sabres injury reserve are defenseman Taylor Fedun (lower body), who missed his 15th game, and forward Jacob Josefson (ankle), who missed his eighth game.

The lineup against the Flyers remained the same as the Sabres last game when they defeated Ottawa, 3-2, in KeyBank Center.

The Wraparound: Flyers 2, Sabres 1

Buffalo News

By Amy Moritz

December 14, 2017

PHILADELPHIA — The four-point streak for the Buffalo Sabres came to an end Thursday night in a 2-1 loss to the Philadelphia Flyers in Wells Fargo Center.

While the Sabres played a strong first period, the Flyers came with more punch in the second, hemming the Sabres in their own zone several times and wearing down the defense to break a 1-1 tie late in the period.

It was the fifth-straight win for the Flyers.

Getting the early jump: The Sabres got on the board just 1:29 into the game. Zemgus Girgensons went behind the net as Flyers goaltender Brian Elliott played the puck. Girgensons got control, skated around the net and flipped it to Ryan O'Reilly, who was alone in front of an empty net for his eighth goal of the season.

Flyers respond: Philadelphia tied the game as defenseman Travis Sanheim scored his first NHL goal at 4:20 of the first. Sanheim was a first-round pick of the Flyers in 2014. The 21-year-old is in his first season in the NHL after playing in 76 games (10 goals, 27 assists) for the AHL Phantoms last season.

Strong first period: The Sabres carried much of the pace of play in the opening 20 minutes. They worked their forecheck, got to loose pucks, and threw the puck toward the net. While the shots were tied, 7-7, the Sabres held the advantage at even strength. Four of the Flyers' seven shots came on the only power play of the first period. Goaltender Robin Lehner was again the strongest penalty killer for the Sabres.

The PK continued strong play: The Sabres had to kill off another penalty early in the second period. Again, Lehner turned away some point-blank opportunities. Evander Kane ended the penalty with a shorthanded scoring chance.

Flyers break through: As strong as the Sabres were in the first, the Flyers counterpunched in the second. Lehner had been bailing the Sabres defense out for much of the period as the Flyers held a 14-6 advantage in shots. As Philadelphia built momentum through the second, they broke through with 2:33 left. Valtteri Filppula went to the slot, untouched, and tapped home a pass from Jakub Voracek for the 2-1 lead.

Third period chances: Evander Kane saw his five-game point streak end but had several good scoring chances. With 15:13 left in the third period, he was alone at the right side of the net and took a pass from Evan Rodrigues. Kane couldn't connect as Elliott came up with a big save.

Scratches: As expected, the Sabres healthy scratches were forward Hudson Fasching and defenseman Victor Antipin. Defenseman Nathan Beaulieu was scratched again as he recovers from an illness. Philadelphia scratched center Jori Lehtera and defenseman Mark Alt.

Up next: The Sabres get back at it Friday night, returning to Buffalo to host the Carolina Hurricanes at 7 p.m. Friday. It kicks off three straight home games before the Christmas break. The Sabres host Boston at 7:30 p.m. Tuesday then welcome the Flyers to the 716 on Dec. 22. Buffalo then plays at Carolina on Dec. 23 to close out the pre-holiday schedule.

The NHL is dark Dec. 24-26 with no games, practices, or team activities. Rosters are frozen for the holiday break on Dec. 19.

Flyers stop Sabres point streak, defeat Sabres 2-1

Ryan O'Reilly scored for Buffalo

WGR550

PAT MALACARO

DECEMBER 14, 2017

The Sabres failed to gain a point for the first time in five games, with their 2-1 loss to the Philadelphia Flyers on Thursday night at Wells Fargo Center.

Brian Elliott misplayed the puck behind his own net, Zemgus Girgensons was able to stop the puck and it results in a the first goal of the night. Girgensons was able to get the puck to Ryan O'Reilly for an empty net chance. O'Reilly's eighth goal of the season was assisted by Girgensons and made it 1-0, Buffalo. Two and a half minutes later the Flyers would answer back to atone for the early miscue.

Travis Sanheim was able to score after Justin Falk's clearing attempt from behind his own goal hit off of a player and made its way into the slot. Josh Gorges was not able to meet the Philadelphia defenseman before his shot tied the score at 1-1. The goal is Sanheim's first career NHL goal, and was assisted by Dale Weise and Jordan Weal.

Each team recorded seven shots on goal in the opening twenty minutes. Kyle Okposo was called for the only minor penalty of the period when he sat for tripping. However, the Flyers did not score on the power play. The best chance during the two minute opportunity came for the blue and gold. O'Reilly and Johan Larsson gained a 2-on-1 short handed chance but failed to score.

It took until the late stages of the second period for either team to break the 1-1 tie. Valtteri Filppula was able to cut right through the slot and receive a pass by Jakub Voracek and beat Robin Lehner for a 2-1 Philadelphia lead. The goal came as the Flyers recorded 14 shots on goal in the period, compared to Buffalo's six. Voracek and Michael Raffl were credited with assists on the goal with two and a half minutes to go in the frame.

Evan Rodrigues was called for the Sabres' lone minor penalty of the period when he served a tripping penalty. Their first power play chance came after Filppula took a holding penalty with thirteen seconds left in the period. Buffalo created a scoring chance, but carried the man advantage over into the final period.

The Sabres failed to record a shot during their carry over power play time. Evander Kane and Marco Scandella each had opportunities to tie the score early in the final period, but failed to get the puck across the goal line. Scandella came in from his defensive position to take a pass at the side of the crease from one knee but could not get the puck on net.

Neither team took a minor penalty in the final twenty minutes, while combining for thirteen total shots on goal. Lehner stopped all six Philadelphia shots on goal, while Buffalo could not beat Elliott with any of their seven shots.

Game Summary

Goal Summary

First Period

BUF: 1:29 - Ryan O'Reilly (8) (Zemgus Girgensons)

PHI: 4:02 - Travis Sanheim (1) (Dale Weise, Jordan Weal)

Second Period

BUF: none

PHI: 17:27 - Valtteri Filppula (8) (Jakub Voracek, Michael Raffl)

Penalty Summary

First Period

BUF: 11:15 - Kyle Okposo (2 min., tripping)

PHI: none

Second Period

BUF: 1:06 - Evan Rodrigues (2 min., tripping)

PHI: 19:46 - Valtteri Filppula (2 min., holding)

Shots on Goal

BUF - 13 (7, 6), PHI - 21 (7, 14)

Goalies

BUF: Lehner - 25 saves

PHI: Elliott - 19 saves

Power Plays

BUF: 0 for 1

PHI: 0 for 2

Three Stars

1. Travis Sanheim
2. Ryan O'Reilly
3. Brian Elliott

What's Next

The Sabres return home, with a quick turn around. Buffalo hosts the Carolina Hurricanes on Friday night at KeyBank Center. The puck drops at 7 o'clock on the flagship home of the Sabres Radio Network, WGR Sports Radio 550. Pregame with Mike Schopp and the Bulldog starts our coverage at six from (716) Food and Sport.

From the Locker Room: Sabres-Flyers

Hear from Robin Lehner, Zemgus Girgensons, Ryan O'Reilly and Phil Housley following the 2-1 loss in Philadelphia on Thursday night
DECEMBER 14, 2017

The Buffalo Sabres were a guest in Wells Fargo Center on Thursday evening, as they looked to stunt the recent strong play of the Philadelphia Flyers. Both teams entered the contest with matching four-game points streaks with Buffalo (2-0-2) in their last four, and Philadelphia boasting a (4-0-0) record immediately after losing 10 consecutive games beforehand. After a hot start in the first period in which both teams matched goals in a span of under three minutes, the game slowed until the latter part of the second period. Philadelphia tacked on the go-ahead, game-winning goal as the Sabres lost a tough one by the final score of 2-1.

Go inside the locker room to hear from Robin Lehner, Zemgus Girgensons, Ryan O'Reilly and Phil Housley following the loss.

Robin Lehner:

On the close affair: "It was a tight game. I think the first period was a little off for both teams. I think we felt each other out a little bit. [The Flyers] took advantage of us in the second; had a good second period, then did a pretty good job shutting us down in the third."

On how he feels about his game: "I felt good today. It was unfortunate, I kind of slipped on the first goal swinging my stick. I lost my balance, but from there I think I made some good saves. The defense helped me out, too, but we have to get back and win tomorrow. It's been a better stretch mentally for all of us, and we want to get back to that."

AUDIO: <http://www.wgr550.com/media/audio-channel/12-14-robin-lehner-post-game>

Zemgus Girgensons:

On the effort, and some past demons rearing their ugly heads: "I thought we did a pretty good job in the first. We had a lot of offensive zone time. In the second, though, we started making the same mistakes we've been making in the past, like turnovers in the neutral zone. They took advantage of that, and that was the difference in the game."

On Philadelphia's stingy defensive play, making it tough for entries: "I don't think it was them as much as it was us. It was more on us just to get those pucks in deep and playing simpler, instead."

AUDIO: <http://www.wgr550.com/media/audio-channel/12-14-zemgus-girgensons-post-game>

Ryan O'Reilly:

On the back-and-forth possessional affair: "I don't think we created enough in the neutral zone, but we lost the game in the second period there. It took too much out of us. We were chasing the puck too much, we couldn't get into a rhythm, and it starts with myself. Shorten my shifts, do the little details better. It was too tough; by the third, we were pretty gassed. We couldn't get it going like we needed to."

On his line's aggressive forechecking and pressure: "[Kyle] Okposo and Girgensons played really well tonight. They made a lot happen. I thought we should've been on the board a couple more times. We had some grade-A chances."

AUDIO: <http://www.wgr550.com/media/audio-channel/12-14-ryan-oreilly-post-game>

Phil Housley:

On what changed for Buffalo between the first and second periods: "Execution. Breakouts out of our own end. Defensive zone faceoff wins. We didn't execute in the neutral zone, we didn't get the puck behind [Philadelphia] when we had the opportunity. That's where the momentum shifted."

Philadelphia didn't blanket us, per sé, we were just lacking in certain areas: "We had control of the game in the first period. They got a fortunate bounce on the first goal; it hits a stick and we're out of position. I think Robin may have hit a rut or something, because it was unusual by him. Otherwise, he played a solid game and kept us in there. It was more or less what we didn't do. When we do the right things and play the right way, we get results."

AUDIO: <http://www.wgr550.com/media/audio-channel/12-14-phil-housley-post-game>

5 Observations: Flyers top Sabres 2-1

WKBW

Matt Bove

Dec 14, 2017

BUFFALO, N.Y. (WKBW) - For the first time in nearly two weeks, the Buffalo Sabres dropped a game in regulation, falling to the Philadelphia Flyers 2-1. With the loss, the Sabres fall to 8-18-6 and remain in the basement of the Eastern Conference.

In honor of the release of "Star Wars: The Last Jedi" you'll notice some references from a galaxy far, far away.

Five observations from Thursday's loss:

"In my experience, there is no such thing as luck." – Obi-Wan Kenobi

Sorry Obi-Wan, I'm going to disagree with this one. When you throw pucks on net every once in a while you'll get a lucky bounce or a weird goal. Against the Flyers the Sabres had some quality chances, they just didn't throw nearly enough pucks to the net.

When the final buzzer went off the Sabres had only 20 shots. Philadelphia deserves some credit for playing some stingy defense but seven shots in the third period when playing from behind isn't going to cut it.

Return of the Jedi

Ryan O'Reilly has some Jedi like qualities, right? Just minutes into Thursday's game the Sabres assistant captain scored his first goal in 13 games, returning to the score sheet.

O'Reilly has been inconsistent this season, especially compared to his first two years in Buffalo. Despite his struggles, O'Reilly is third on the Sabres with 21 points in 32 games.

O'Reilly will be the first to tell you that he needs to play better. For the sake of the Sabres, hopefully, his first goal since November 17th will be a step in the right direction.

The Phantom Menace

We can all agree that the worst movie in the Star Wars series is "Star Wars: Episode I - The Phantom Menace". So naturally, this observation is reserved for the sloppiest play of the night.

In the first period, just minutes after the Sabres scored a sloppy goal, the Flyers returned the favor. Justin Falk tried to make a play behind the net, only for the pass to be blocked, eventually finding Travis Sanheim's stick in front of the net. Seconds later, Sanheim fired a wrist shot past Lehner, scoring his first NHL goal.

Falk doesn't deserve all the blame, he could've been bailed out by a teammate picking up Sanheim or a nice save by Lehner. However, this really killed the momentum the Sabres started the game with.

Zemgus Girgensons.....now that's a name I haven't heard in a long time

It has been a forgettable season for Zemgus Girgensons. He returned to the lineup on Sunday against the St. Louis Blues and has looked like a different player after he was a healthy scratch twice last week.

The former All-Star gave the Sabres an early spark, crashing into the boards and forcing a turnover from Flyers goaltender Brian Elliott. Girgensons then slid the puck in front of the net to a wide-open O'Reilly, who scored the Sabres first and only goal of the evening.

So just how bad have things been for Girgensons offensively? His first-period assist was his first point since October 14th. If Girgensons wants to stay in the lineup he'll need to play like he did against the Flyers every night.

Matthew Bové

✓

@Matt_Bove

Great pressure by Girgensons to make that play. I would've popped that one in.

7:11 PM - Dec 14, 2017

2 2 Replies 1 1 Retweet 8 8 likes

[Twitter Ads info and privacy](#)

A New Hope

Robin Lehner continues to play some really impressive hockey, keeping his team in games they have no business in. On Thursday, Lehner stepped up once again, allowing two goals on two sloppy plays by the Sabres.

Lehner hasn't allowed more than three goals since the first day of December in a 4-0 loss to the Pittsburgh Penguins. For what it's worth, I think Lehner should be in net again on Friday night against the Carolina Hurricanes.

Flyers defeat Sabres for fifth straight win

Limit Buffalo to 20 shots; Sanheim scores first NHL goal for Philadelphia

NHL.com

by Adam Kimelman

December 14th, 2017

PHILADELPHIA -- Travis Sanheim didn't think it would take so long to score his first NHL goal.

The rookie had three goals in six preseason games to lead NHL defensemen, but it took until Thursday, his 28th regular-season game, to score his first goal in the League, helping the Philadelphia Flyers to a 2-1 victory against the Buffalo Sabres at Wells Fargo Center.

Valterri Filppula scored the go-ahead goal, and Brian Elliott made 19 saves for the Flyers (13-11-17), who won their fifth straight game, their longest streak since winning 10 in a row Nov. 27-Dec. 14, 2016.

Ryan O'Reilly scored for the Sabres (8-18-6), and Robin Lehner made 25 saves. It was Buffalo's first loss in regulation in five games (2-1-2).

[WATCH: All Sabres vs. Flyers highlights]

Sanheim's goal at 4:02 of the first period tied the game 1-1. Lehner went behind the net to play the puck, but his pass went off Flyers forward Dale Weise and rolled to Jordan Weal in the left corner. Weise got it back from Weal below the goal line and passed to Sanheim in the left face-off circle for a one-timer past Lehner.

"I saw their winger was cheating a bit toward the boards, and I jumped down low," Sanheim said. "Made sure I placed it where I wanted to."

Weise retrieved the puck from the net for Sanheim.

"He's been pressing for a little while," Weise said. "So happy to see him get it, see the smile on this face. That's going to do wonders for his game."

Sanheim's first NHL goal
00:48 • December 14th, 2017

Filppula put the Flyers ahead 2-1 at 17:27 of the second period. After defenseman Robert Hagg got his stick on a Sabres clearing attempt, Michael Raffl was first to the loose puck and passed it to Jakub Voracek at the bottom of the right face-off circle. Voracek faked a shot and then sent it to a cutting Filppula, who one-timed it over Lehner's right shoulder.

The assist was Voracek's NHL-leading 31st of the season.

O'Reilly gave the Sabres a 1-0 lead 1:29 into the game. Elliott went behind the net to play a dump-in but shot it into Sabres forward Zemgus Girgensons, who passed it in front to O'Reilly for a shot into an open net.

Buffalo nearly took a 2-0 lead when another Elliott miscue left Sam Reinhart with an open net, but Philadelphia forward Nolan Patrick blocked the shot on the goal line at 3:43.

O'Reilly's opportunistic tally
00:48 • December 14th, 2017

The Flyers took control in the second period, outshooting the Sabres 14-6.

"We didn't execute in the neutral zone, we didn't get pucks behind them like we did when we had the chance like in the first," Buffalo coach Phil Housley said. "That was when the momentum shifted there. When we did do that, we had great [offensive] zone time, we created a lot, we shot the puck, and even though they weren't getting to the net, we had a lot of attempts. We got away from that in the second, and that was the difference."

Goal of the game

Filppula's goal at 17:27 of the second period.

Filppula's one-time tally

00:57 • December 14th, 2017

Save of the game

Elliott stopping Sabres forward Evander Kane at 4:47 of the third period.

Elliott's toe save on Kane

00:08 • December 14th, 2017

Highlight of the game

Patrick's block of a Reinhart shot on the goal line at 3:43 of the first period.

Patrick's alert goal-line stop

00:15 • December 14th, 2017

They said it

"Wasn't a matter of us not getting the chances; we had great looks, we had open nets, we didn't finish. That's part of the execution. It's unfortunate because we had built something in the past four games. I thought we could have taken another step tonight against a good hockey team, but we didn't execute." -- Sabres coach Phil Housley

"I saw that was the option [Sabres forward Evan Rodrigues] was looking for. [Sabres forward Evander Kane] was backdoor, and we didn't really have anybody back there. I just tried to push across, get big, and it hit my stick and pad and whatever else was down there." -- Flyers goalie Brian Elliott on his lunging save against Kane at 4:47 of the third period

Need to know

Philadelphia lost 10 straight games (0-5-5) prior to their winning streak. They are the fifth team in NHL history to win at least five consecutive games after going 10 or more without a win, first since the San Jose Sharks lost 10 in a row (0-7-3) from Nov. 5-30, 2005, before winning six straight from Dec. 2-16, 2005. ... O'Reilly's goal was Buffalo's 15th in the first period, the fewest in the League. ... The Sabres started the third period with 1:47 of power play time but failed to get a shot. ... The Flyers are 3-4-7 in one-goal games. The three wins are tied with the Detroit Red Wings for the fewest in the NHL. ... Raffl played in his 300th NHL game and has three goals and two assists during a five-game point streak.

What's next

Sabres: Host the Carolina Hurricanes on Friday (7 p.m. ET; MSG-B, FS-CR, NHL.TV)

Flyers: Host the Dallas Stars on Saturday (7 p.m. ET; NBCSP, FS-SW+, NHL.TV)

Flyers edge Sabres for fifth straight victory

Sports Xchange

Chuck Gormley

Dec. 14, 2017

PHILADELPHIA -- During their 10-game losing streak last month, the Philadelphia Flyers couldn't find a way to win a one-goal game, losing six of them during that stretch.

The Flyers (13-11-7) have been far more decisive in close games since and Thursday night, they won for the fifth straight time, carving out a 2-1 victory over the Buffalo Sabres.

"I think it was a boring game," said Flyers right winger Jakub Voracek, who set up Valtteri Filppula's game-winning goal late in the second period. "It wasn't fun to watch."

Defenseman Travis Sanheim netted his first NHL goal and goaltender Brian Elliott turned aside 19 shots to improve his career record against Buffalo to 12-1-2.

Ryan O'Reilly scored the only goal for the Sabres, who saw their modest four-game points streak (2-0-2) come to an end.

Goaltender Robin Lehner made 25 saves for Buffalo (8-18-6), which has the NHL's second-worst record behind Arizona.

The Sabres have scored one or fewer goals in 12 of their 32 games this season and rank last in the NHL with 68 goals in 32 games (2.1 per game).

"We've got to find a way to find the back of the net more," said Sabres center Jack Eichel, who was held without a shot for only the second time this season and was held without a point for the 13th time. "We had our chances. I don't think our execution was where it should be."

Elliott was a big reason the Sabres didn't have more Thursday night. After a rocky start, he made several key saves in the third period, including two stops on Evander Kane.

The Flyers entered the third period with a 2-1 lead, thanks to Filppula's eighth goal of the season with 2:33 remaining in the second. The 33-year-old veteran took a nice feed from Voracek and roofed a shot over Lehner. It was only the fourth goal in the last 25 games for Filppula, who started the season with four in his first seven contests.

It was also the 31st assist of the season for Voracek, who is among the league leaders in that category.

"It was a nice pass," Filppula said. "Jake made a good play to me and I was happy to see it go in."

Elliott had trouble handling the puck in the opening period. His clearing attempt from behind the net was intercepted by Zemgus Girgensons, who quickly fed O'Reilly for an open netter. It was O'Reilly's eighth goal of the season and first in 13 games.

A few minutes later Elliott again gave the puck away, this time to Sam Reinhart, whose open-net attempt kicked off the skate of Flyers center Nolan Patrick.

"They came hard and there was a little miscommunication," said Elliott, who benefited from 19 blocked shots, including five from Andrew MacDonald. "A bad play on my part. That can go sideways in a hurry, but we sorted it out."

Flyers coach Dave Hakstol agreed, saying his team might have had trouble handling an early goal against the way they did Thursday.

"It is different now," Hakstol said. "You can take a punch a little better when you have a little swagger to your game."

Immediately after Patrick's skate save on Reinhart, the Flyers quickly broke down the ice and Sanheim snapped a shot over the right shoulder of Lehner for his first NHL goal in his 28th NHL game.

"Obviously, it was a long time coming, but it's exciting to get my first one," Sanheim said.

Lehner was upset about the goal after the game, calling it "unfortunate."

"I kind of slipped on their first goal and lost my balance," Lehner said. "Now we've got to go back home and win tomorrow."

NOTES: Sabres D Rasmus Ristolainen entered the game leading Buffalo in average ice time (27:07), hits (68) and blocked shots (44). Only Minnesota Wild D Ryan Suter has averaged more ice time per game (27:23). ... The Sabres return home to face the Carolina Hurricanes on Friday, the Boston Bruins on Tuesday and the Flyers on Dec. 22. ... LW Michael Raffl played in his 300th NHL game, all as a Flyer. ... Philadelphia continues its five-game homestand Saturday night against the Dallas Stars. They'll face the Los Angeles Kings on Monday and the Detroit Red Wings on Wednesday before a four-game road trip

Watch the first episode of Sabres-Rangers ‘Road to the Winter Classic’

NBCSports

By Sean Leahy

Dec 14, 2017

We’re less than two weeks away from the Buffalo Sabres and New York Rangers meeting on a hockey rink at CitiField in New York for the 2018 Winter Classic.

This is the 10th anniversary of the game, typically played on New Year’s Day, and features one of the teams that took part in the inaugural event against the Pittsburgh Penguins in 2008. The Penguins would win that one 2-1 after a shootout during a snowy day Ralph Wilson Stadium. Memories were created that afternoon in Buffalo, but so was a staple event on the NHL’s annual calendar.

With participation in the Winter Classic comes the requirement of starring in the all-access show that follows both teams leading up to the New Year’s Day game. This season, “Road to the Winter Classic” has moved to NBCSN. The first episode premiered Wednesday night and will air each week NBCSN, Sportsnet and NHL Network.

You can watch the first full episode here

“Road To The NHL Winter Classic” presented by Honda on NBCSN (all times Eastern)

Premiere – Wednesday, Dec. 13 at 11:30 p.m. immediately following Boston Bruins-Detroit Red Wings

Episode 2 – Wednesday, Dec. 20 at 11:30 p.m. immediately following Detroit Red Wings-Philadelphia Flyers

Episode 3 – Wednesday, Dec. 27 at 11:30 p.m. immediately following Washington Capitals-New York Rangers

Episode 4 – Sunday, Jan. 7 at 11 p.m. immediately following Boston Bruins-Pittsburgh Penguins

“Road To The NHL Winter Classic” presented by Honda on Sportsnet (all times Eastern)

Premiere – Thursday, Dec. 14 at 7 p.m.

Episode 2 – Friday, Dec. 22 at 7 p.m.

Episode 3 – Thursday, Dec. 28 at 7 p.m.

Episode 4 – Friday, January 5 at 7 pm (SN1)

“Road To The NHL Winter Classic” presented by Honda on NHL Network (all times Eastern)

Episode 1 – Sunday, Dec. 17 at 10 p.m.

Episode 2 – Sunday, Dec. 24 at 10 p.m.

Episode 3 – Sunday, Dec. 31 immediately following live World Junior Championship coverage (approximately 10:30 p.m.)

Episode 4 – Monday, Jan. 8 at 10 p.m.

World Junior hockey ticket sales lagging behind projections

Buffalo Business First

By James Fink

Dec 15, 2017

The first signs of the 11-day IIHF World Junior Championship being staged in Buffalo will be visible in the next few days.

Shortly after the Buffalo Bills finish their Dec. 17 game at New Era Field against the Miami Dolphins, crews will start building the outdoor rink for the Friday, Dec. 29 preliminary round Team USA vs. Team Canada game. Weather permitting, much of the stadium conversion will be done by Dec. 22.

Team USA will practice on the rink on Dec. 27 and Team Canada the following day. A public skate on the rink is also set for that day.

And, while work and marketing efforts have been ramped up, ticket sales are running below initial projections.

“We are disappointed about (advance) ticket sales,” said Michael Gilbert, Buffalo Sabres administrative president. “We thought they’d be much further along.”

When Buffalo and the Sabres hosted the 2010-11 World Juniors, more than 331,000 tickets were sold.

Just from the participating 10 international teams and supporting staff, Visit Buffalo Niagara pegs the World Juniors economic impact at \$7 million and that doesn’t include money being spent by fans and visitors. More than 7,300 downtown hotel room nights have been booked for the tournament.

The World Juniors, featuring the best under-20 men amateur hockey players, has the potential to leave behind the largest economic impact of the more than 53 amateur sporting events held in Buffalo this year.

The games start on Dec. 26 and run through Jan. 5, with most set for either KeyBank Center and the neighboring HarborCenter. This marks the first time in World Juniors history all of the games, except one, are being held in adjoining facilities.

This year, outside of the medal round games — set for Jan. 5 at KeyBank Center — the event’s signature game is an outdoor contest on Dec. 29 between Team USA and Team Canada. The game, set for New Erie Field, has sold somewhere in the “mid-30,000” range tickets so far, Gilbert said.

Officials will tarp the stadium’s end zones and are hoping to attract sales in the mid-40,000 range.

“But, we’ve got a lot of work to get to that point,” Gilbert said.

Several factors are contributing to the softer than expected advance ticket sales. The World Juniors were held last winter in both Toronto and Montreal, and elevated ticket prices were blamed for lagging attendance. Southern Ontario hockey fans account for a significant portion of the ticket-buying public and the Sabres may be dealing with a World Juniors “burn out” factor.

“Right now, Canadian sales are just not as robust as last time,” Gilbert said.

Another factor is the weakened Canadian loonie compared to the U.S. dollar. The last time the World Juniors were held in Buffalo, the dollar and loonie were almost even with each other.

Southern Ontario and Western New York make up the largest percentage of World Juniors ticket buyers.

Still, there is reason for optimism.

“In the last 10 days, we have seen an increase in ticket sales,” Gilbert said.

Ticket sales notwithstanding, the Sabres and Pegula Sports and Entertainment organization are putting together what Gilbert called a “first class” visitor experience.

That includes:

- Turning the Canalside area is being turned into the “Championship Village,” which will debut Dec. 22, four days before the tournament starts.

The village will include a 51-foot by 131-foot, weather-protected glass enclosed pavilion that will house a bar and stage for live acts.

Also planned is a 40-foot high by 70-foot long tubing hill and a wide array of food trucks along with skating at Canalside’s rink.

“We want this to be a fun, family-friendly atmosphere,” Gilbert said.

- All of the teams will be in Buffalo by Dec. 24, although many are playing pre-tournament exhibition games in such places as Jamestown, Erie, Pennsylvania, and Niagara Falls, Ontario.
- TSN, Canada’s version of ESPN, will carry all 31 games and offer other extensive World Juniors coverage.

Also, the NHL Network will carry a fair number of the games and provide its own coverage while two Swedish networks will be in Buffalo for the tournament as will TV crews from Russia, Finland and the Czech Republic.

Sabres look back on missed opportunities in road loss to Flyers

by Chris Ryndak

Sabres.com

December 14th, 2017

PHILADELPHIA - The chances were there, but the Buffalo Sabres were unable to extend their point streak to five games on Thursday in a 2-1 loss to the Philadelphia Flyers at Wells Fargo Center.

Robin Lehner was once again solid in net for the Sabres, making 25 saves. He has stopped 174 of the 186 shots he's faced (for a .935 save percentage) in his last five games.

Lehner's strong glove stop
00:26 • December 14th, 2017

"It wasn't a matter of us not getting the chances - we had some great looks," coach Phil Housley said. "We had open nets. We didn't finish. That's part of the execution. It's unfortunate because we've built something here in the last four games. I thought we could've taken another step tonight against a good hockey team, but we didn't execute."

Buffalo entered the game with a 2-0-2 record over their last five games including four points over their last three road games. That came after a 1-9-2 stretch.

Alternate captain Ryan O'Reilly, who scored Buffalo's lone goal, said that consistency has been an issue.

"We haven't been consistent all year and it's tough," he said. "Lehner played a great game and made some huge saves for us and we have to be better in front of him - I have to be better in front of him - and find a way to settle things down in that second period and just get back to simple, little things."

Buffalo opened the scoring, but their lead did not last long. When Brian Elliott tried to shoot the puck around the boards behind his own net, he hit Zemgus Girgensons with it and the puck made its way to O'Reilly in front of the net. O'Reilly buried it into the empty net for his eighth goal of the year.

O'Reilly's opportunistic tally
00:48 • December 14th, 2017

But 2:33 later, and just after Sam Reinhart missed a wraparound chance for Buffalo, Flyers rookie defenseman Travis Sanheim tied the game with his first career goal. Unguarded in the slot, he one-timed a shot top shelf over Lehner, who said that he slipped during the sequence and lost his footing.

"We could've had a two-goal lead right after we got the first goal," Housley said. "We could've had a two-goal lead and then it puts a little bit more pressure on them. We let them back into the game and that was the difference."

Philadelphia took the lead with 2:33 remaining in the second period on a goal from Valtteri Filppula. The Flyers outshot the Sabres 14-6 in that period.

Perhaps Buffalo's best chance in the second was a shorthanded chance by Evander Kane early on. Kane was stopped on the doorstep early in the third period on what ended up being a great post-to-post save by Elliott. The Flyers then tightened up their game and held on for the win.

Sabres edged by Flyers, 2-1
04:24 • December 14th, 2017

Buffalo finished the night with 20 shots on goal.

"I thought we had our chances. I think a lot of it probably rides on us. I don't think that our execution was where it should be," alternate captain Jack Eichel said. "We let them off the hook a few times where we had cycles and long shifts in our end."

It's a tough one. We thought we could've come in here and gotten two points and you don't get anything. There was some good and then obviously there's some stuff we want to clean up."

Buffalo returns home for a game Friday night against the Carolina Hurricanes at KeyBank Center. Faceoff is scheduled for 7 p.m. on MSG and WGR 550 with the GMC Game Night pregame show starting at 6:30 on MSG.

"We've got to go back and win tomorrow," Lehner said. "It's been a better stretch mentally for us and we want to get right back to that."

Sabres look to extend point streak to 5 games tonight in Philadelphia

by Chris Ryndak

Sabres.com

December 14th, 2017

PHILADELPHIA - With points in four straight games, the Buffalo Sabres will look to build on the positives of the last week tonight when they take on the Philadelphia Flyers at Wells Fargo Center.

They're looking to extend their point streak to five games for the first time since they recorded points in nine straight games from March 10 to 27, 2012.

Phil Housley Pregame (12/14/17)

04:03 • December 14th, 2017

Evander Kane's production has been a big part of why the Sabres have had recent success. Kane is riding a five-game point streak (2+3) for the Sabres, his longest point streak since he had points in eight straight from Feb. 12 to 26, 2013. He leads the team with 14 goals and 28 points.

"Our compete level's there. We've been working hard these last few games and I think it's paying off for us," Kane said. "We've got some great goaltending and we've scored more goals than we have in the past. Obviously, we're encouraged to score a lot more and we need to be able to score to win. For us, it's just continuing to build and try to use this as momentum."

Buffalo has scored 11 goals over the past four games, a much better number than the one they'd scored in the four games prior.

The Sabres have also recorded a power-play goal in three straight games for the second time this season and will be looking to increase that streak to four games for the first time since March 2 to 7 of last season.

"If you have a shot and it's in the right hands, I think you have to take it," Kane said of shot selection on the power play. "But you have to try to find the other team's weakness on the penalty kill and try to exploit that. Sometimes, especially off faceoffs, I think it's important to try to handle the puck, move the puck around a little bit, and try to break down their box and their PK structure."

Dan has more on that in today's video preview:

Preview: BUF at PHI (12/14/17)

02:06 • December 14th, 2017

An improved commitment to defense has also been a big part of the recent turnaround, according to defenseman Marco Scandella.

"With the results, it just shows that we're playing the right way," he said. "We're doing a better job getting back for each other, helping each other out. Five men getting the puck out of the zone, we've just got to keep doing that."

Lehner to make fifth consecutive start

Coach Phil Housley referred to tonight's starter Robin Lehner as the No. 1 reason as to why the team has been able to earn points in each of the last four games and believes his stretch of good games goes back even farther.

Lehner has stopped 149 of 159 shots (.937) in his last four games. In those games, he has also stopped 110 of 114 shots faced during 5-on-5 play (.965), which includes one goal allowed with an opponent's extra attacker on the ice.

A win or overtime loss tonight would give Lehner (2-0-2) points in five straight appearances for the first time since he went 8-0-2 in his 10 starts from March 24 to Oct. 28, 2014.

"He's been playing great, making the first save," Scandella said. "But collectively, I think we're giving up less chances, less big chances. We're making it easier on ourselves as a team."

The Flyers, meanwhile, have won four in a row and have rebounded from an 0-5-5 stretch. Their 4-2 win over Toronto on Tuesday ended a six-game home losing streak (0-4-2).

Brian Elliott is expected to start in goal tonight for Philadelphia.

Tune in

The GMC Game Night pregame show from our One Buffalo Studio starts at 6:30 p.m. on MSG. Then RJ and Rayzor will call the action just after 7 on MSG and WGR 550.

Buffalo returns home on Friday for a game against Carolina at KeyBank Center.

Projected lineup

67 Benoit Pouliot - 15 Jack Eichel - 29 Jason Pominville
9 Evander Kane - 71 Evan Rodrigues - 23 Sam Reinhart
28 Zemgus Girgensons - 90 Ryan O'Reilly - 21 Kyle Okposo
20 Scott Wilson - 22 Johan Larsson - 17 Jordan Nolan

6 Marco Scandella - 55 Rasmus Ristolainen
19 Jake McCabe - 47 Zach Bogosian
4 Josh Gorges - 41 Justin Falk

40 Robin Lehner
31 Chad Johnson

Sharpen Up: December 14, 2017

by Jourdon LaBarber

Sabres.com

December 14th, 2017

It's a game day in Philadelphia. The Sabres will be looking to extend their current point streak to five games when they visit the Flyers for the first time this season tonight at Wells Fargo Center. Buffalo is 2-0-2 on their current run, coming off of a win at home over Ottawa on Tuesday.

Coverage on MSG-B begins at 6:30 p.m. with GMC Gamenight, or you can listen to the game live on WGR 550. Puck drop is scheduled for 7.

Here's what you need to know.

Looking for five

According to Sabres PR, a point tonight would give the Sabres their first five-game point streak since they went on a nine-game streak back in March of 2012. They also have an opportunity to earn a point in a fourth-straight road game for the first time since Nov. 29 to Dec. 20, 2016.

The team's run has coincided with a five-game point streak for Evander Kane (2+3), which includes a power-play goal that stood as the game winner on Tuesday. Kane, who leads the Sabres with 14 goals and 28 points this season, joined "NHL Now" to talk about the team's current run on Wednesday.

NHL Network

✓

@NHLNetwork

"We're starting to build momentum. We're starting to find our roles." - @BuffaloSabres forward @evanderkane_9 on #NHLNow.

8:30 AM - Dec 14, 2017

6 6 Replies 52 52 Retweets 195 195 likes

Twitter Ads info and privacy

"We're starting to build some momentum," Kane said. "I think we're starting to find our roles, establish what we do well and play that way."

Robin Lehner and Rasmus Ristolainen have also been key cogs for the Sabres during this four-game stretch. Lehner has started all four games in net and stopped 149 of 159 shots (.937), while Ristolainen has averaged 28:29 of ice time in his last five games and tallied two assists against Ottawa.

It's no coincidence, either, that Buffalo's point streak has coincided with a strong run on the power play. The Sabres have power-play goals in each of their last three games, and can extend that streak to four games for the first time since March of last season.

About the Flyers

Philadelphia finds itself in a similar situation to Buffalo, having won its last four games in regulation after going 0-5-5 in 10 games prior. The Flyers swept their road trip in Western Canada and then returned home to beat the Maple Leafs on Tuesday.

Also like the Sabres, the Flyers have been leaning on a strong run from their goalie. Brian Elliott was named the NHL's Third Star of the Week after going 3-0-0 with a 1.67 goals-against average and a .952 save percentage last week, which he followed with a 20-save performance against Toronto.

Jakub Voracek leads the Flyers this season with 37 points (7+30). Claude Giroux ranks second on the team with 34 points (13+12), while Sean Couturier leads the team with 15 goals.

Join us for Sabres Style

The Sabres will return home to host the Carolina Hurricanes on Friday, and it's not too late to join us for another Sabres Style event. Sabres Style, presented by Coca-Cola, is a social event designed to celebrate Buffalo's hockey-minded women.

The event will begin with a pregame happy hour at 5:30 p.m. in the KeyBank Lounge at KeyBank Center, located in the 200 level, directly behind the Harbour Club Bar. Food and drinks will be provided as attendees will also have the opportunity to mingle with Sabres alumni and talk hockey with other Sabres fans.

Shortly after 6:45 p.m., attendees will take their seats to catch the 7:00 p.m. puck drop. During the first or second intermission, those attending will be able to enjoy the Gold Carpet Experience and cheer on the Sabres before they take the ice.

More information can be found [here](#).

NHL Network to air Winter Classic Documentary

NHL Network will mark the 10th anniversary of the first Winter Classic between the Sabres and Penguins with a documentary titled NHL Network Originals: The First NHL Winter Classic®, Hockey Goes Outside. The program will air on Wednesday, Dec. 20 at 8 p.m.

From the press release:

The film features new interviews with NBC broadcasters Mike "Doc" Emrick and Bob Costas, and several players and coaches who were part of the game. Members of the 2008 Penguins, including Crosby, Colby Armstrong, Tyler Kennedy and head coach Michel Therrien, each describe what it was like to prepare for a game that counted but was also a spectacle, and ultimately ended in a thrilling shootout. The film also includes on-ice audio from Crosby, who remarked "I don't want to get off the ice" during a practice session before the game.

As the Sabres approach their second NHL Winter Classic appearance, Sabres winger Jason Pominville, former Sabres Brian Campbell and Ryan Miller and former Sabres head coach Lindy Ruff reflect on their participation in the first-ever edition, featuring Miller speaking at length on facing Crosby in the game-deciding shootout. Miller sums up the players' thoughts on the event, saying, "Hockey deserves it. We finally kind of got that model where we're just like, 'Well, there's not many of these, it's special. You can celebrate the game the entire day.'"

On Tap

The Sabres will take the ice for their morning skate around 11:30 a.m., at which point we'll have updates here on Sabres.com and on Twitter @BuffaloSabres. Check back after the game for full postgame coverage, including highlights and locker room reaction.