



Buffalo Sabres

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November 14, 2019

Sabres face the Hurricanes on 5-game slide

Associated Press

November 14, 2019

Carolina Hurricanes (10-7-1, fifth in the Metropolitan Division) vs. Buffalo Sabres (9-6-2, fifth in the Atlantic Division)

Buffalo, New York; Thursday, 7 p.m. EST

BOTTOM LINE: Buffalo aims to stop its five-game skid when the Sabres play Carolina.

The Sabres are 5-5-1 in Eastern Conference games. Buffalo has allowed 11 power-play goals, killing 77.1% of opponent chances.

The Hurricanes are 7-5-1 in conference matchups. Carolina ranks eighth in the league recording 9.1 points per game, averaging 3.3 goals and 5.7 assists.

The teams square off Thursday for the first time this season.

TOP PERFORMERS: Jack Eichel leads the Sabres with 11 assists and has recorded 19 points this season. Sam Reinhart has five goals and three assists over the last 10 games for Buffalo.

Dougie Hamilton leads the Hurricanes with 19 points, scoring eight goals and registering 11 assists. Jaccob Slavin has recorded six assists over the last 10 games for Carolina.

LAST 10 GAMES: Hurricanes: 4-5-1, averaging 3.3 goals, 5.7 assists, 3.8 penalties and 8.5 penalty minutes while allowing 2.9 goals per game with a .894 save percentage.

Sabres: 4-5-1, averaging 2.3 goals, 4.3 assists, 2.9 penalties and 5.8 penalty minutes while giving up 2.9 goals per game with a .916 save percentage.

Sabres Injuries: Vladimir Sobotka: day to day (lower body).

Hurricanes Injuries: Erik Haula: day to day (lower-body).

As search for offense continues, injuries may force Sabres to shuffle deck

By Mike Harrington

The Buffalo News

November 13, 2019

The Buffalo Sabres reconvened in KeyBank Center on Wednesday, their first time on the ice together since Saturday's second game in Stockholm.

Their offensive troubles still looming large during their 1-5-1 slide, coach Ralph Krueger isn't looking at wholesale changes for Thursday's visit by the Carolina Hurricanes. First of all, Krueger is going to have to figure out who he has up front.

Vladimir Sobotka is going to be out 4-6 weeks with a lower-body injury suffered on the hit from Nikita Kucherov he took in Friday's game against Tampa Bay. Marcus Johansson (upper body) is day to day and did not practice Wednesday while Curtis Lazar was called up from Rochester and is expected to make his Sabres debut.

The top line of Jack Eichel between Victor Olofsson and Sam Reinhart stayed together Wednesday, as did the grinder trio of Zemgus Girgensons-Johan Larsson and Kyle Okposo.

With Johansson out, Evan Rodrigues stepped in at center between Jeff Skinner and Conor Sheary. Lazar joined Jimmy Vesey on the wings with Casey Mittelstadt.

Krueger said the Sabres will re-evaluate Johansson Thursday morning to see if he can play.

"We don't expect it to be long term. It's just something we're being careful about," Krueger said.

The Sabres are hoping to parlay their strong first period from Saturday's 5-3 loss to the Lightning, when they had 17 shots on goal and several strong scoring chances, into a more consistent effort across 60 minutes.

"It was a great period and the second we were rolling a little bit, too," Mittelstadt said Wednesday. "When we're on the perimeter we have to do a better job making plays and when we're on the inside we have to do a better job of being tougher. We've gone to tough areas pretty well. That second game in Sweden we get another bounce, it's a completely different game."

The Sabres have just 12 goals over the last seven games and their power play is only 2 for 17 in that stretch. Slumps are everywhere across the lineup.

Vesey has no goals all season in 14 games while Girgensons, Larsson and Okposo are all stuck at one goal through the first 17. Okposo hasn't scored in his last 15 games and Larsson in his last 12. Sheary doesn't have one in nine games while Mittelstadt and Johansson have been held without a goal in the last eight.

The Sabres' depth is going to be tested by a stretch of 10 games in the final 17 days of November. It starts with three games in four nights as Ottawa is here Saturday before the Sabres play in Chicago on Sunday.

The first game is a difficult one: The Sabres have lost nine straight to Carolina (0-6-3) and have not beaten the Canes since a 3-2 win in Raleigh on March 22, 2016.

Maybe Lazar can help. Lazar, who can also play center, got the call over winger Tage Thompson, the Amerks top goal and point man (6-6-12).

"We really liked Curtis in training camp," Krueger said. "The way he executed and the kind of role he seems to be able to give us, we want to test him in that situation: The physicality, penalty kill, the depth scoring he can bring."

Lazar is at 4-5-9 in 11 games with the Amerks and continued to play well in the AHL after narrowly missing the Buffalo roster last month.

"You can say disappointed but I had a really strong training camp and that's where the chips fell," Lazar said. "I was just waiting for an opportunity like this, waiting for my name to be called."

"He can help us out a lot," Mittelstadt said. "We saw in the preseason what he can do. He's tough but he can make plays with the puck and be a skill guy around the net. It's definitely going to help us."

Sabres' Zach Bogosian practices for first time since April hip surgery

By Mike Harrington

The Buffalo News

November 13, 2019

Nearly seven months after his second hip surgery in two years, defenseman Zach Bogosian was back on the ice with the Buffalo Sabres at practice Wednesday in KeyBank Center. The team still lists Bogosian as week-to-week, but that's OK with him. This was the start of a pseudo-training camp for the veteran and he was a full participant in his first workout.

"Obviously, it's been a long journey," said Bogosian, 29. "But it was great to be out there with the guys and have that camaraderie. It's something I live for, I cherish it. It was a lot of fun to be out there."

Bogosian missed the final eight games of last season and had surgery in April. He played only 18 games in the 2017-18 season before it ended early and he had surgery on the other hip.

Bogosian had three goals and 16 assists last season and his 65 games were the most he had played since 2011-12 but again ended in injury in a career that's full of them. He was emotional at times while speaking about his most recent ordeal to reporters Wednesday.

"It's been a good learning experience. I found out a lot about myself," he said. "It's kind of tough to put into words how it feels to go through something like that unless you've been through it. To sit here and try to put it into words would probably give it a disservice to everything I've been through and the people around me who have helped me out so much."

In addition to a training camp type of mentality, this marked the first time Bogosian has been on the ice with new coach Ralph Krueger.

"The good thing is 'Bogo' has been in every single meeting that's had any tactical or strategic element to it since Sept. 13," said Krueger.

"It's important to be part of the group, if you're in the lineup or not," said Bogosian, in the final year of a contract that carries a \$5.142 million cap hit. "We're all going through everything together – wins, losses, what have you. We're a tight group in here. Anytime you can at least have something to do with the group, it's something I felt is important to be a part of."

On one drill, Bogosian got physical with defenseman Henri Jokiharju and drove the first-year Sabre into the boards.

"It just played out that way," Bogosian said with a laugh. "It was just the way the drill was going. It was either that or he was going to go by me. So that's probably six, seven months of built-up excitement there."

Bogosian acknowledged the proper route to perhaps have taken in 2018 was to have surgery on both hips at the same time.

"In hindsight, it looks like a great idea right now. But this is the hand that I'm dealt, and I'm very comfortable," he said. "There's no one else I'd rather be able to go through this situation than myself and I'll leave it at that. Obviously looking back, I probably could've got both done. But that's not the way. I don't work with what-ifs or should've, could've, would've. It's just the way it is, but I feel good now."

Bogosian said he's been skating hard for a month and would have practiced with the team sooner were it not for the trip to Sweden. The club left him home to continue his rehab.

"I've been skating really hard. It's not like I've been skating once or twice a week," he said. "I've been going at a pretty good pace for a solid month now. So there's a lot of stuff that goes on behind the scenes that people have helped me get back into practice."

Defenseman Marco Scandella also returned to practice after missing the last six games with a lower-body injury, believed to be a groin strain. The only regular to miss the trip to Sweden, Scandella could be back in the lineup Thursday night against Carolina.

"It was bad timing for that but now I'm healthy and feeling good," Scandella said. "I've practiced well, got some contact in, feel pretty good."

Scandella was off to an excellent start to the season, with two goals, two assists, a team-best plus-8 rating and a 53.8% Corsi rating in his first 11 games. The Sabres were 1-4-1 without him.

"It's not like the season ended. I'm back at it and feeling good," Scandella said. "I feel like we took the time and the training staff did a good job getting me healthy. I'm ready to go 100%."

Scandella was happy to immediately regain his role playing alongside Jokiharju.

"We have really good communication on the ice and use each other really well," Scandella said. "He's a good skater, wants the puck. You can't just teach that chemistry. It kind of happens. It happened for us pretty quick. Even getting back on the ice with him today, I felt comfortable and having fun out there."

The schedule compression caused by the trip to Sweden has Krueger breaking the 21 remaining games before Christmas down into smaller groups. Thursday's game starts a five-day set before the club's next day off, followed by two six-gamers and a set of four.

"We need to use the whole lineup. We need four lines going. We need more than six 'D' going," Krueger said. "There's a possibility with a healthy D that somebody will go in and out to use fresh energy. We need to use our roster and manage it by keeping the picture small and continually within this pace look for improvement."

Krueger said he's going to be flexible in upcoming weeks and that the team might skip practices some days between games and opt to return to a morning skate.

The team had two days off after its travel day back from Sweden as part of the NHL/NHLPA mandating that schedule for teams returning from Global Series games.

Sabres call up Lazar in place of injured Sobotka, announce Bogosian's return to practice

By Mike Harrington
The Buffalo News
November 13, 2019

The Buffalo Sabres returned to the practice ice at KeyBank Center today after their trip to Sweden last week and announced several notable pieces of injury-related news in the hour before the workout began:

- The team's injury report says forward Vladimir Sobotka will be out 4-6 weeks with a lower-body injury suffered on the hit he took from Tampa Bay's Nikita Kucherov during Friday's game in Stockholm.
- To replace Sobotka, the team has called up forward Curtis Lazar, who is tied for second on the Rochester Amerks with nine points (four goals, five assists) in 11 games.
- The team announced that Marcus Johansson (upper body) and Marco Scandella (lower body) are day to day. Scandella, who was injured in the October 24 game at New York and has missed the last six games, is practicing today. Johansson is not. Coach Ralph Krueger said it's possible both would be available for Thursday's game here against Carolina.
- The Sabres continue to list defenseman Zach Bogosian as week to week coming back from his offseason hip surgery, but Bogosian practiced today for the first time under Krueger. Bogosian had surgery in April after missing the final seven games of last season.

Sabres' Bogosian returned to practice

By Paul Hamilton

WGR 550

November 13, 2019

Buffalo, NY (WGR 550) - It's been a long ways back for Zach Bogosian.

In the past few years, he's had both hips operated on, and then this summer, he had a setback. On Wednesday, Bogosian joined his teammates for practice for the first time this season, which put a big smile on his face, "It was nice. Obviously it's been a long journey, but it was great to be out there with the guys and have that comradery is something I live for. I cherish it and it was a lot of fun to be out there."

Bogosian has spent a lot of long hard hours by himself rehabbing. He said, "It's been a good learning experience. I found out a lot about myself, and you don't really know and it's tough to put into words how it feels to go through something like that unless you've been through it."

Ralph Krueger said even though he wasn't on the ice, Bogosian was a part of every meeting. The defenseman, at least, wanted to do that, "I think it's important to be part of the group whether you're in the lineup or not. We're all going through everything together and we're a tight group in here. So anytime you can have, at least, something to do with the group, I thought it was something important to be a part of."

Bogosian said he's been skating at a pretty good pace with rehab coach Dennis Miller for over a month, and he credited many behind the scenes helping him get back into practice. However, he's not sure how long it will take to get into games. He's listed as week-to-week.

Bogosian was asked who his support system was. It was a question he had trouble answering because thinking about it choked him up, "It starts with my family." After a long pause to compose himself he said, "I'll leave it at that."

Marco Scandella also returned to practice. Krueger thinks he has a real good chance to play on Thursday.

Marcus Johansson finished the game on Saturday, but missed practice and is day-to-day with a upper-body injury. Krueger said they will talk to him on Thursday to see if he can play against Carolina. If he can't, Curtis Lazar will enter the lineup.

Sabres return to practice missing Johansson and Sobotka

By Paul Hamilton

WGR 550

November 12, 2019

Buffalo, NY (WGR 550) - The Sabres finally were able to get on the ice for practice on Wednesday and they will have a morning skate on Thursday. The Collective Bargaining Agreement mandates that a team gets two days off when they come back from international games.

Marcus Johansson and Vladimir Sobotka didn't practice, while Marco Scandella and Zach Bogosian did. Ralph Krueger said a decision on Johansson will be made Thursday morning. He did finish the game on Saturday and is listed as day-to-day with an upper-body injury.

Sobotka's lower-body injury will keep him out 4-to-6 weeks. Krueger did say that Scandella is a definite possibility to play on Thursday after missing six games with a lower-body injury.

Krueger said he enjoyed the team's time in Sweden, but he's very upset they came home with no points, "We have to separate the two different events. The one is what the group is able to learn for the long-term just to experience representing the National Hockey League as ambassadors, so I thought the players represented the Sabres and the NHL in an outstanding way.

"We're not pleased with the results. We'll look them right in the eyes and say we needed to win Game 2 especially and game management got away on us, but it's an experience that will strengthen the group moving forward for sure."

The Sabres return and play seven games in 12 days, and 10 games in 17 days. Krueger said they have a way to manage it, "We have the 21 games until Christmas and we're breaking it up into little groups. We'll have the five games, two-day pause, six games, two-day pause and then four games and I think if you break it down into smaller sections in your mind and you deal with those as you go through it, we'll have to use our experience from the beginning of the season, how to manage energy in between games and sometimes we'll leave out a practice day and do a pre-game skate."

Krueger also feels the work done since they arrived is going to pay off, "I feel they have a strong foundation. We've been doing lifting and doing a lot of work off the ice that we believe will help us and we need to use the whole lineup."

Rasmus Dahlin really enjoyed going home for the week and playing two NHL games in front of his family and friends. The young defenseman said, "Just thinking about the games, we didn't play how we wanted to play, but for me to see my family and friends and see Sweden again, it's was very good and it gave me a little push forward."

Dahlin did a food tasting for NHL.com along with Casey Mittelstadt and Jeff Skinner. He said he enjoyed being the tour guide for his teammates, "It was fun to show them around, show them some Swedish food and stuff and they hadn't really seen it, especially Casey, who hadn't been in Sweden, so that part was really fun."

Curtis Lazar was in practice after being called up. He'll have to wait to see if Johansson can play on Thursday.

Wednesday's lines:

Olofsson - Eichel - Reinhart

Girgensons - Larsson - Okposo

Vesey - Mittelstadt - Lazar

Skinner - Rodrigues - Sheary

Montour - Bogosian

McCabe - Ristolainen

Dahlin - Miller

Scandella - Jokiharju

Gilmour

PP1: Reinhart - Eichel - Olofsson - Skinner - Dahlin
PP2: Okposo - Mittelstadt - Sheary - Montour - Miller

Sabres call up Lazar from the Amerks

By Derek Kramer

WGR 550

November 13, 2019

In response to the injuries on the roster, the Buffalo Sabres have recalled forward Curtis Lazar from the Rochester Americans of the American Hockey League.

This will be Lazar's second call up to Buffalo this season, but he did not suit up for any games when he was called up back on October 13.

In 11 games this season with the Amerks, Lazar has four goals and five assists for nine points. That includes a five-point night back on October 26 in a game against the Syracuse Crunch, where he had two goals and also added three assists in a 7-6 overtime win.

The Sabres are dealing with injuries to forwards Marcus Johansson (day-to-day) and Vladimir Sobotka (out 4-to-6 weeks), and are about to play three games in four days, starting on Thursday night against the Carolina Hurricanes at KeyBank Center.

The Sabres are also expecting to get defensemen Marco Scandella (lower-body injury) and Zach Bogosian (hip) back to practice on Wednesday as they recover from injuries. Bogosian has yet to play this season and is ruled as week-to-week, while Scandella is day-to-day.

A former first round pick by the Ottawa Senators in the 2013 NHL Draft, Lazar has played in 246 NHL games in his career, scoring 15 goals and 36 assists for 51 points.

Return from hip surgery makes Sabres' Zach Bogosian emotional, excited

By Bill Hoppe

Olean Times Herald

November 13, 2019

BUFFALO – Zach Bogosian couldn't find the words to describe what he has experienced recovering from his second hip surgery.

Injuries have ravaged the Sabres defenseman throughout his five years here, costing him a whopping 148 games.

After undergoing surgery in April – Bogosian had his other hip repaired in early 2018 – he endured setbacks. A recovery expected to take about five or six months has lasted around eight.

Finally, Bogosian, 29, joined his teammates for practice Wednesday.

"It's really been a learning experience," Bogosian said of his recovery. "I found out a lot about myself. It's ... kind of tough to put into words how it feels to go through something like that unless you've been through it.

"To sit here and try to put it into words would probably give a disservice to everything I've been through and the people who have helped me out so much."

Those people – Bogosian's support system – mean everything to him.

"It starts with, you know, my family," a choked-up Bogosian said. "Yeah, it's my family. I'll leave it at that."

Bogosian sounded emotional and excited Wednesday. He has no timetable for a return. Officially, he's listed as week-to-week, meaning he's out for Thursday's home game against the Carolina Hurricanes.

The 12-year veteran looked ready to play early in Wednesday's session, ramming teammate Henri Jokiharju into the KeyBank Center glass during a one-on-one drill.

The move looked better suited for a game.

"It was just the way the drill was going," a smiling Bogosian said. "It was either that or he was going to go by me. That's probably six, seven months of built-up excitement."

While he has been skating about a month on his own, he hadn't been on the ice with his teammates since his last game March 28.

He played 65 games last season before the Sabres shut him down.

Looking back, Bogosian knows he probably should've had both hips repaired at the same time.

"It looks like a great idea right now," he said.

He added: "I don't work with what-ifs or should've, could've, would've."

Right now, the Massena native is essentially going through his own training camp. He has stayed close to the Sabres, who have lost five straight games (0-4-1), participating in team meetings.

He did, however, remain in Buffalo to train during the team's two-game trip to Sweden last week.

"He just has to get comfortable with what we're doing," Sabres coach Ralph Krueger said. "The good thing is Bogo's been in on every single meeting that had any tactical or strategic element to it since the 13th of September. ...

"He's been involved the whole time, so he understands what we're looking at and what we're trying to do and I think he'll be able to re-enter ... quite quickly."

Bogosian said Wednesday's practice had been circled on his calendar since last week. He said he might've been able to practice a week ago if the Sabres hadn't been overseas.

"It's been a long journey, but it was great to be out there with the guys and have that camaraderie," Bogosian said. "(It) is something I live for, I cherish. It was a lot of fun to be out there."

Sabres winger Kyle Okposo said: "You get a player, a person like that in your lineup or just at practice, just to be around the guys, it's huge, and I know that he's had a long road. I know how difficult it was for him to get back to that point."

Bogosian and Marco Scandella's return Wednesday means the Sabres have nine defensemen. That depth, of course, is an asset. Still, that number is too high.

In the near future, the Sabres might make a move or two.

"It's definitely complex," Krueger said. "I've been a coach in my life that I wake up in the morning and look at who is there and who's healthy, who can play, and then deal with it, then the next day and the next day because you never know what this pace of games will bring us."

"We're happier to have that competition, internal competition, and the depth in the roster because all of us know in this grind coming up, we're going to need it. At the moment, it's not an issue yet."

Sabres notes: Curtis Lazar enjoys short trip to Buffalo

By Bill Hoppe
Olean Times Herald
November 13, 2019

BUFFALO – The 70- or so mile drive from Rochester to KeyBank Center sure beats trying to get from Stockton, Calif., to Calgary. Just ask Sabres winger Curtis Lazar.

When the Flames would recall Lazar, 24, from the Heat, their AHL affiliate about 1,300 miles away, he would have to fly out of the San Francisco airport.

Stockton is about 83 miles from that airport.

Lazar enjoyed a much easier trip to Buffalo on Tuesday night.

"You hop in a car last night, you're here an hour later, and it's back to work," Lazar said following Wednesday's practice.

When the 6-foot, 211-pound Lazar started looking for teams as a free agent in the summer, he wanted to find one with a farm club nearby.

"That (was) a big factor for myself throughout the summer and trying to decide where I wanted to go and stuff," said Lazar, who signed a one-way contract worth \$700,000 on July 1. "Rochester's right down the road, and some days I did see myself back here in Buffalo just to check things out and hang out. So it is nice."

Lazar, who has played 246 NHL games, will likely make his Sabres debut tonight at home against the Carolina Hurricanes. They scratched the former first-round pick a few times after summoning him for insurance last month.

The Sabres need Lazar because a lower-body injury will sideline winger Vladimir Sobotka four to six weeks. Tampa Bay Lightning star Nikita Kucherov hit Sobotka low and late in Saturday's 5-3 loss in Stockholm, Sweden.

Why did the Sabres recall Lazar over winger Tage Thompson, who has scored six goals and 12 points in the Amerks' first 13 games?

Sabres coach Ralph Krueger tries to put a defensive presence on each line. Lazar, who practiced at right wing beside center Casey Mittelstadt and Jimmy Vesey, can fill some of Sobotka's role.

"If you look at Sobotka going out and the role that he had until now on the team and the stabilizing factor and the experience that he brings, we felt that that was more important," Krueger said. "We really liked Curtis in training camp, the way he executed and the kind of role he seems to be able to give us. We'd like to test him in that situation."

After staying until the end of training camp, Lazar scored four goals and nine points in his first 11 outings with the Amerks.

"I know the type of player that I am and I think that (I) should be," he said. "I was just waiting for an opportunity like this, waiting for my name to be called. I tried to keep tabs on these guys and what they're doing on the ice so when I do get a chance to play, then I can just pick up where I left off."

Krueger said: "We feel that he carried what we asked from him in training camp into Rochester."

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Sabres defenseman Marco Scandella (lower body, six games) practiced Wednesday and could return Thursday, Krueger said.

Scandella skated beside Henri Jokiharju, pushing Colin Miller beside John Gilmour. That could mean Miller is the odd man out Thursday.

Meanwhile, Krueger said center Marcus Johansson, who missed Wednesday's session with a lower-body injury, will be evaluated Thursday morning.

"We don't expect it to be long-term," he said. "It's really just something we're being careful about."

With Johansson out, Evan Rodrigues centered Jeff Skinner and Conor Sheary.

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Thanks to their two-game trip to Sweden – the Sabres played just twice over a 12-day stretch – they have a loaded schedule coming up.

Thursday's game is the first of five in eight days. They play 10 times in a 17-day stretch.

"We have the 21 games 'til Christmas and we're breaking it up into little groups," Krueger said. "We've got the five-game (stretch), two-day pause, six-game, two-day pause, six-game, two-day pause, four-game, and I think if you break it down into smaller sections in your mind and you deal with those as you go through it."

Krueger said the Sabres had Monday and Tuesday off because it's mandated after European trips.

Sabres' Zach Bogosian emotional after return to practice

By Bill Hoppe
Olean Times Herald
November 13, 2019

BUFFALO – Zach Bogosian wasn't about to let Henri Jokiharju skate by him today, even during a practice drill. So the Sabres defenseman rammed his teammate into the KeyBank Center glass, a move that looked better suited for a game.

"It was just the way the drill was going," a smiling Bogosian said after practicing for the first time this season. "It was either that or he was going to go by me. That's probably six, seven months of built-up excitement."

Bogosian, who underwent hip surgery in April, couldn't hide his happiness today.

While he has been skating about a month on his own, he hadn't been on the ice with his teammates since his last game March 28.

The last seven or eight months have been tough.

"It's really been a learning experience," Bogosian said. "I found out a lot about myself. It's something ... it's kind of tough to put into words how it feels to go through something like that unless you've been through it.

"To sit here and try to put it into words would probably give a disservice to everything I've been through and the people who have helped me out so much."

When Bogosian was asked about his support system, he paused for a moment and got a little choked up.

"It starts with, you know, my family," he said. "Yeah, it's my family. I'll leave it at that."

Bogosian, of course, has endured a rash of injuries over his Sabres career. In 2017-18, he had season-ending surgery on his other hip.

He played 65 games last season before the Sabres shut him down.

Looking back, Bogosian, 29, knows he probably should've had both hips repaired at the same time.

"It looks like a great idea right now," he said.

He added: "I don't work with what-ifs or should've, could've, would've."

The Sabres originally said the Massena native would need five or six months to recover before he he suffered setbacks.

Right now, Bogosian, who's listed as week-to-week, is essentially going through his own training camp. He has no timetable for his return.

Bogosian said today, the Sabres' first practice following their two-game trip to Sweden, was circled on his calendar since last week.

"If the team obviously wasn't on the trip, I may have been back with the team maybe last week if they were around," he said.

Check back later for a full story on Bogosian.

Meanwhile, Krueger said center Marcus Johansson, who missed today's session with a lower-body injury, will be evaluated Thursday morning.

"We don't expect it to be long-term," he said. "It's really just something we're being careful about."

Sabres' Zach Bogosian set to practice; Vladimir Sobotka out four to six weeks

By Bill Hoppe

Olean Times Herald

November 13, 2019

BUFFALO – More than six months after undergoing hip surgery, defenseman Zach Bogosian will return to practice today, the Sabres announced this morning.

Bogosian, who's week-to-week, will be joined by defenseman Marco Scandella, who has missed the last six games with a lower-body injury.

That doesn't mean the Sabres are healthy.

They announced this morning a lower-body injury will sideline winger Vladimir Sobotka four to six weeks. Tampa Bay Lightning star Nikita Kucherov hit Sobotka low and late in Saturday's 5-3 loss in Stockholm, Sweden.

The Sabres also recalled forward Curtis Lazar from the Rochester Americans this morning.

Some other updates according the injury report:

– Scandella is day-to-day.

– Center Marcus Johansson (upper body) is day-to-day.

Sabres' Zach Bogosian and Marco Scandella return to practice

By Jenna Callari

WKBW

November 13, 2019

BUFFALO, N.Y. (WKBW) — When the Buffalo Sabres hit the ice on Wednesday morning, two players joined them after missing time due to injuries. Defensemen Marco Scandella and Zach Bogosian both practiced with their teammates at KeyBank Center, days after the team returned from its trip to Sweden.

The biggest return was Bogosian who was skating at practice for the first time since April. Bogosian hasn't had the best luck when it comes to playing. He had initial hip surgery in the early part of 2018 that caused him to miss the rest of the season. He then had another hip surgery in April 2019 and has been re-habbing since. He's listed as week-to-week.

Scandella has missed the last six games following a lower-body injury. He's considered day-to-day which mean he could return to the lineup as soon as Thursday. Scandella has played in 11 games this season, scoring two goals and adding two assists.

The Sabres host the Carolina Hurricanes on Thursday evening.

Sabres focused on present, not past during difficult stretch

By Heather Engel

NHL.com

November 13, 2019

BUFFALO -- The Buffalo Sabres are focused on the present, not the past.

The Sabres are 1-5-1 since an 8-1-1 start to the season and are winless in their past five games (0-4-1) after losing two games against the Tampa Bay Lightning at the 2019 NHL Global Series in Stockholm last weekend.

They're hoping to avoid a repeat last season when they won 10 games in a row from Nov. 8-27, putting them atop the Eastern Conference at 17-6-2. But a 16-33-8 record the rest of the way dropped them to 13th in the conference, 22 points behind the Columbus Blue Jackets for the second wild card into the Stanley Cup Playoffs from the East.

"I'm a new head coach here this year and that doesn't interest me at all," coach Ralph Krueger said. "What interests me is the way the team was playing. We've definitely looked at it and everything. But we're building a new story here and this is a completely different season with a different group of guys with a huge buy-in here and a healthy base of confidence at the moment and I don't feel anything but that.

"What are we doing now, how are we building our story this year, and what was last year is not relevant to our story that we're building."

Despite their recent struggles, there has been a different vibe in the locker room.

"Oh yeah, for sure. There's no panic," forward Kyle Okposo said. "It doesn't make any sense to think or talk about last year. [Krueger] just does such a good job communicating it and getting us in the proper frame of mind and the mind frame that he wants us to be in. There's new challenges every season and this year is presenting some different challenges. We're looking to face those and just keep moving forward."

Now the Sabres will embark on a grueling stretch in their schedule in which they'll play 21 games in 40 days leading up to the Christmas break, including 10 games in 17 days to close out November. The stretch begins against the Carolina Hurricanes at KeyBank Center on Thursday (7 p.m. ET; MSG-B, FS-CR, NHL.TV).

To help the team get through it, Krueger is breaking up the schedule into smaller sections consisting of four to six games rather than the bigger picture.

"We need four lines going, we need more than six 'D' going," Krueger said. "There's a possibility with the healthy 'D' that somebody will go in or out and things like that to use fresh energy. We need to use our roster and manage it by keeping the picture small, though, and continually within this pace look for improvement. So, there's a lot of things there, but we feel comfortable going into it. It's going to be a lot of fun. Let's show our good side here right off the hop."

The Sabres will be without forward Vladimir Sobotka, who is out 4 to 6 weeks after sustaining a lower-body injury on a hit by Tampa Bay Lightning forward Nikita Kucherov at 14:20 of the first period in a 3-2 loss in Stockholm on Friday. Sobotka, who did not play the following day in a 5-3 loss to the Lightning, had been playing in the top six as the right wing on a line with Marcus Johansson and Jeff Skinner. Johansson (upper body) did not practice Wednesday and is day to day.

However, Buffalo could soon be getting a boost on defense. Zach Bogosian, who has yet to play this season after recovering from offseason hip surgery, and Marco Scandella, who was injured against the New York Rangers on Oct. 24, practiced with the team for the first time Wednesday. Scandella is day to day and Bogosian is week to week.

Regardless of who's in the lineup, the Sabres feel this season won't end how last season did, and they hope it ends up with a berth in the playoffs for the first time since the 2010-11 season.

"Last year's last year and I think everyone has things that they would do differently, things they would change - and now's the time to do that," forward Casey Mittelstadt said. "We know we're not going to be perfect all year, we're going to have tough stretches. It's just how you face it, how you deal with it."

Sobotka out 4-6 weeks for Sabres with lower-body injury

By Heather Engel

NHL.com

November 13, 2019

Vladimir Sobotka will be out 4-6 weeks for the Buffalo Sabres with a lower-body injury.

The forward was injured on a hit by Tampa Bay Lightning forward Nikita Kucherov at 14:20 of the first period in a 3-2 loss at the 2019 NHL Global Series in Stockholm on Friday. He did not play the following day in a 5-3 loss to the Lightning.

Sobotka has three points (one goal, two assists) in 16 games this season.

Buffalo recalled forward Curtis Lazar from Rochester of the American Hockey League. He has nine points (four goals, five assists) in 11 AHL games this season.

"If you look at Sobotka being out and the role that he had on the team, the stabilizing factor and the experience he brings, we felt that was more important," coach Ralph Krueger said. "We really liked Curtis in training camp so the way he executed and the kind of role he seems to be able to give us, we'd like to test him in that situation. ... we felt Curtis was the best fit."

Forward Marcus Johansson did not practice Tuesday because of an undisclosed injury and is day to day.

"We're going to take a look at him tomorrow morning and then make our decision," Krueger said. "We don't expect it to be long-term. It's really just something we're being careful about."

Johansson, who signed a two-year contract with the Sabres on July 6, has 10 points (four goals, six assists) in 17 games.

Defensemen Zach Bogosian and Marco Scandella returned to practice. Bogosian, who missed all of training camp, skated for the first time with his teammates after recovering from offseason hip surgery and a setback during his recovery. He is week to week.

Scandella, who's been out since sustaining a lower-body injury against the New York Rangers on Oct. 24, is day to day. He could play when the Sabres, who are 0-4-1 in their past five games, host the Carolina Hurricanes at KeyBank Center on Thursday (7 p.m. ET; MSG-B, FS-CR, NHL.TV).

"It was great to see [Scandella and Bogosian] out there," Krueger said. "To have nine defensemen in an NHL practice is extremely unique and the competition will be stiff, but we're just going to take it a day at a time; otherwise you're spending time and energy on something that you don't need to. So, at the moment, I see it as a positive and we like the options that we have."

Bogosian had been skating on his own for the past month but was still involved in team meetings from the get-go.

"It's important to be part of the group, even if you're in the lineup or not," he said. "We're all going through everything together -- wins, losses, what have you. We're a tight group in here. Anytime you can at least have something to do with the group, it's something I felt is really important to be a part of."

It's been a long road back for the veteran defenseman, who last played March 23 at the Montreal Canadiens and credited his family for the role they played in helping him get through it.

"It's really been a learning experience. I found out a lot about myself," Bogosian said. "It's something ... it's kind of tough to put into words how it feels to go through something like that unless you've been through it. To sit here and try to put it into words would probably give a disservice to everything I've been through and the people who have helped me out so much."

Sabres have to make sure the disaster of 2018 doesn't become the debacle of 2019

By Ken Campbell

The Hockey News

November 13, 2019

BUFFALO – The Buffalo Sabres have done their bit for the NHL and now that they've shaken off the jet lag from their two-game set in Sweden, they now have to do their part on several fronts to ensure the Disaster of 2018 doesn't become the Debacle of 2019. And as is the case in the NHL, none of it is going to come easily.

Just over two weeks ago, the Sabres were the top team in the NHL with an 8-1-1 record. Since then, including their two losses to the Tampa Bay Lightning in Sweden, they're 1-5-1 and an offense that was scoring at a clip of better than four goals a game in October has dried up in November, scoring only 1.7 goals per game in the past seven. As a result, they've dropped 18 spots in the overall NHL standings, four spots in the Atlantic Division and out of the playoffs.

Sound familiar? About a year ago at this time, the Sabres had won 10 straight games – seven of them coming in overtime or shootouts – and sat No. 1 overall in the NHL standings at American Thanksgiving. It wasn't long before they frittered all of that away en route to failing to make the playoffs for the eighth straight season.

Starting Thursday night, the Sabres have a run of three games in four nights, 10 games in 17 days and 21 before Christmas in an effort to catch up on the action they missed when they went to Sweden. In order to avoid a repeat of last season, the coaches and players have to find a way to be better. And Sabres GM Jason Botterill, who suddenly has an overabundance of NHL defensemen on his hands, must find a way to cash one of those chips to find a top-nine forward to help his struggling offense.

Nobody is suggesting this season will be a repeat of 2018-19, but things are getting concerning for this team. When the Sabres went into the tank last season, it was basically because their secondary scoring dried up and left almost all the offensive heavy lifting to Jack Eichel and Sam Reinhart. Things are eerily similar through this last stretch. But the one difference is the Sabres are coached by Ralph Krueger, the eternal optimist who is constantly solution focused.

"I'm the new head coach here and (last season) doesn't interest me at all," Krueger said. "What does interest me is we're building a new story here and this is a completely different season with a different group of guys and a huge buy-in and a healthy base of confidence. And I don't feel anything but that. What are we doing now and how are we building our story this year? What happened last year is not really relevant to our story."

It might not be to Krueger, but it is to a lot of people who have watched this team stumble through the past eight seasons. Even through the great start, the Sabres were playing home games with more than 3,000 empty seats. Now that the team has taken a dip after that start, it could be even more difficult to convince the faithful to believe in this team. The Tampa Bay Lightning, Boston Bruins and Toronto Maple Leafs – in no particular order at the moment – are the cream of the division. The Florida Panthers have avoided their perennial terrible start and don't look now, but they have only four losses in regulation this season. On Tuesday night, they went into the third period down 4-0 to the Bruins, but scored four times in the final 20 minutes and won the game in a shootout. That's the kind of explosive scoring the Sabres need these days, and they need it from someone not named Eichel or Reinhart.

To that end, the Sabres are going to get to the point where they have more NHL defensemen than they have available spots. With Zach Bogosian participating in his first full practice of the season after off-season hip surgery and Marco Scandella returning from injury, the Sabres had nine defenseman participating in practice Wednesday.

"It was definitely chaotic," said Bogosian, who is still probably a couple of weeks away from being game-ready. "There were a lot of bodies out there."

Buffalo enters matchup with Carolina in need of a turnaround; Once-hot Sabres have lost four in a row

By Alex Brasky
Batavia Daily News
November 13, 2019

BUFFALO — Sitting at a lofty 9-2-2 while battling for first place in the Atlantic Division as the calendar turned to November, the Sabres were riding high in their first season under new head coach Ralph Krueger. Since that point, however, Buffalo has gone on to lose their first four games of this month and have found themselves now on the outside looking in at the wild card picture.

What's gone wrong for the Sabres? Well, plenty.

During the month of October (13 games) the Sabres were scoring 3.38 goals per game while allowing just 2.5 per contest. Through the first four games of November they have taken a major step back in both departments, albeit through a small sample size, as Buffalo has allowed 3.75 goals per game and have scored just 1.5 per game.

"The breakdowns we've been having, we just feel that that's certainly something in the last few games that's gotten off-track," said Krueger on November 9. "What we do, is definitely work on a better activation early on and possibly more patience ... I think sometimes it's been a lack of patience that has created opportunity for the opposition against. We need to be a little more patient as we enter the games and be more comfortable with 0-0 scores like we were earlier in the season."

Everyone seems to be slumping for the Sabres right now, as they've managed only 12 goals in their past seven games. During that span, the Buffalo power play has gone a measly 2-for-17.

"When we're on the perimeter we have to do a better job making plays and when we're on the inside we have to do a better job of being tougher," said Sabres winger Casey Mittlestadt to the Buffalo News' Mike Harrington. "We've gone to tough areas pretty well. That second game (during our trip to Sweden) we get another bounce, it's a completely different game."

Tonight vs. the Hurricanes, the Sabres will begin a stretch of three games in four nights and 10 games in the final 17 days of November. It's a stretch which, if Buffalo continues to struggle, could put them way behind the eight ball in terms of playoff positioning.

"There are a few things that we need to improve we know that," said Krueger on WGR 550 on Wednesday morning with Howard and Jeremy. "It's a constant, every day searching for little areas (to improve)."

Bogosian practices following long recovery from hip surgery

By Jourdon LaBarber

Sabres.com

November 13, 2019

Zach Bogosian issued a hard hit on fellow defenseman Henri Jokiharju along the KeyBank Center boards, then smiled as he made an announcement to the teammates in his vicinity.

"I'm back!"

Bogosian was smiling again later when asked about the play, following his first practice with the Sabres in nearly eight months.

"It just played out that way," he said. "It was just the way the drill was going. It was either that or he was going to go by me. That's probably six, seventh months of built-up excitement."

Bogosian was one of two defensemen to return to practice on Wednesday. Marco Scandella was also a full participant in the roughly 90-minute session, back from a lower-body injury he sustained in New York on Oct. 24.

Sabres coach Ralph Krueger said there is potential for Scandella to return to the lineup against Carolina on Thursday, and Scandella said he felt ready to play as well. Bogosian remains week-to-week, though the road ahead should seem miniscule compared to what's in his rearview mirror.

Bogosian last played in Montreal on March 23rd, then underwent surgery on his hip in the offseason. He had already gone through surgery on his other hip once before, in January 2018.

The defenseman was emotional while describing the support he received from his family through the recovery process.

"It's really been a learning experience," he said. "I found out a lot about myself. It's something ... It's kind of tough to put into words how it feels to go through something like that unless you've been through it. To sit here and try to put it into words would probably give a disservice to everything I've been through and the people who have helped me out so much."

What happens next is essentially an in-season training camp from an on-ice standpoint. Krueger stressed that Bogosian has been present for all home meetings since the start of actual training camp, meaning he's caught up from a tactical standpoint. He's also been skating in Buffalo for roughly a month.

The next step is putting it all together.

"Bogo hasn't missed a meeting other than not being with us in Sweden because we felt it was best for him to stay here and train," Krueger said. "He's been involved the whole time, so he understands what we're looking at and what we're trying to do, and I think he'll be able to re-enter and be a candidate quite quickly."

A well-paced, physical session on Wednesday was a good first step. Krueger could see Bogosian's enthusiasm during an on-ice chat after practice had ended. Scandella could see it in the way his fellow defenseman was skating.

"Just being back in the group where it matters and where it counts really was exciting for him today," Krueger said. "That energy may drive him to the very best version of Zach Bogosian, and I think it's going to help a lot because he's been out. There's always a positive on the other side, and that will be the energy that he brings into the room."

Johansson to be evaluated Thursday

Marcus Johansson did not practice and has been listed as day-to-day with an upper-body injury. Krueger said Johansson's status for Thursday's game against the Hurricanes will be determined in the morning.

"We're going to take a look at him tomorrow morning and then make our decision in the morning," Krueger said. "We don't expect it to be long-term. It's really just something we're being careful about."

With Johansson's status in question and Vladimir Sobotka expected to miss four to six weeks as a result of the lower-body injury he sustained in Sweden, the Sabres recalled forward Curtis Lazar prior to practice on Wednesday morning.

The Sabres signed Lazar, a first-round pick in 2013, to a one-year deal on July 1. He left a strong impression during training camp and, after being one of the last players sent to Rochester, went on to tally nine points in 11 AHL games.

"I pride myself on coming to the rink and working, working on my game, on my craft," he said. "Especially in the American League, you're always hungry to get back here and I think for myself being able to build off a strong training camp, I know how close that I am. It's been motivation for me."

Krueger said the decision to recall Lazar was made based on his ability to fill Sobotka's role.

"You look at Sobotka going out and the role that he had until now on the team and the stabilizing factor and the experience that he brings, we felt that that was more important.

"We really liked Curtis in training camp, the way he executed and the kind of role he seems to be able to give us. We'd like to test him in that situation, the physicality, the penalty kill, and so on, and the depth scoring that he can also bring."

Lines at practice

68 Victor Olofsson - 9 Jack Eichel - 23 Sam Reinhart
28 Zemgus Girgensons - 22 Johan Larsson - 21 Kyle Okposo
53 Jeff Skinner - 71 Evan Rodrigues - 43 Conor Sheary
13 Jimmy Vesey - 37 Casey Mittelstadt - 27 Curtis Lazar

Defense: 4 Zach Bogosian, 6 Marco Scandella, 10 Henri Jokiharju, 19 Jake McCabe, 26 Rasmus Dahlin, 55 Rasmus Ristolainen, 58 John Gilmour, 62 Brandon Montour

40 Carter Hutton
35 Linus Ullmark

Sabres recall Lazar as Bogosian, Scandella set for return to practice

By Jourdon LaBarber

Sabres.com

November 13, 2019

The Sabres will have a trio of fresh faces at practice this morning.

The team has recalled forward Curtis Lazar from Rochester and announced that defensemen Zach Bogosian and Marco Scandella will be back with the team for the first time since sustaining their respective injuries.

Lazar joins the Sabres in the wake of an injury to forward Vladimir Sobotka, who left the team's game in Sweden last Friday after a low bridge hit from Tampa Bay's Nikita Kucherov. The 24-year-old has nine points (4+5) in 11 games with the Amerks this season.

Scandella has been out since Oct. 24, when he sustained a lower-body injury during the team's game in New York. Bogosian last played on March 23 of last season, then underwent hip surgery going into the offseason.

The Sabres will take the ice for practice around 11 a.m.