



Buffalo Sabres

Daily Press Clips

November 2, 2019

Jakub Vrana scores twice, Capitals rout Sabres 6-1

By Ian Quillen

Associated Press

November 1, 2019

WASHINGTON (AP) — The Washington Capitals were happy to be home and to test themselves against another division leader.

Jakub Vrana scored twice, Tom Wilson had a goal and two assists and the Capitals got out to a quick start and beat the Buffalo Sabres 6-1 on Friday night.

Brendan Leipsic added his first goal for his new team and assisted Chandler Stephenson as Washington scored four times in the first 11 minutes of the first period for the first time since March 2013. T.J. Oshie also scored, and Braden Holtby made 29 saves in the victory in the Metropolitan Division leaders' first game following five on the road.

"I think we were excited to get back home, for sure," Wilson said. "We're worried about what's going on in our room. I don't know if you came up with the measuring stick game, but we're worried about our identity. It's early in the year."

Michal Kempny added three assists and Travis Boyd had two as the Capitals won their third straight and improved to 7-0-1 in their last eight games.

"I think we're really confident right now," Vrana said. "We have lots of energy. Especially when we came back from that road trip. That brings us a lot of energy."

Henri Jokiharju scored his first NHL goal for the Sabres, who lost back-to-back games for the first time this season. Linus Ullmark stopped 28 shots for Buffalo. He allowed more than four goals for the first time in six starts this season.

The Capitals opened the scoring with a pair of goals on the break 42 seconds apart.

Vrana made it 1-0 when he reached Wilson's pass, then scored between Ullmark's pads. Then on a three-man rush, Leipsic and Boyd connected to set up Stephenson, who got Ullmark to commit, and scored on a backhand from close range with 13:01 left in the first.

The onslaught continued with Vrana scoring his second, taking a cross-ice pass from Kempny and beating Ullmark inside the right post. It was 4-0 with 9:16 left in the period on another one-timer, this time from Leipsic after Boyd skated behind the net and sent his feed in front.

"We're disappointed with what happened in the first period," Sabres coach Ralph Krueger said. "We got away from the simple game and the decisions we needed to make with the puck. We gave them, really, everything they got in the first period."

Jokiharju scored midway through the second, on a shot that deflected off the back of Capitals defender John Carlson and over Holtby on its way across the goal line. But Washington got a good bounce not long after, when Wilson redirected Kempny's shot from just inside the blue line past Ullmark to make it 5-1.

Oshie added his goal on Kempny's third assist in the third period. That completed Washington's first six-goal performance without overtime this season, with all the scoring coming at even strength.

"It felt good to get all four lines out there and everyone contributing," Wilson said. "The power play is definitely one of our best attributes. But on a night like tonight, everyone chipped in and helped get the win."

NOTES: Carlson, who was named the NHL's First Star for October, is without a point in two of his last three games for the first time this season. ... Although Sabres D Brandon Mountour is expected to return soon from a preseason hand injury, he remained inactive Friday. ... Capitals C Lars Eller became the second Danish-born NHL

player to reach 700 games. Detroit's Frans Nielsen (847) was the first. ... The Sabres outshot the Capitals 16-11 in the first period.

UP NEXT

Sabres: Host the New York Islanders on Saturday

Capitals: Host Calgary on Sunday.

Ugly first period in 6-1 loss shows Sabres have 'a long way to go'

By Lance Lysowski

The Buffalo News

November 1, 2019

WASHINGTON – As the Washington Capitals celebrated on the Capital One Arena ice Friday night, Buffalo Sabres coach Ralph Krueger walked a few steps to his right to speak to assistant coach Steve Smith.

The two men pointed toward the Sabres' net, where winger Brendan Leipsic was left wide open to score the Capitals' fourth goal in a span of 4:27 minutes during the first period. Moments later, Smith pulled out an iPad and the two coaches had another brief discussion during a stoppage in play.

The cause was obvious upon further review and the two coaches concocted a solution to address the problem. The damage was done, though. While the Sabres' play improved during stretches of the second and third periods, their poor puck management and shoddy defensive coverage resulted in a 6-1 loss to the Capitals.

There was a heightened sense of urgency in the visitors' dressing room afterward. Though the Sabres were relieved to have a chance at redemption with a game Saturday night in Buffalo, all involved knew corrections are needed for them to beat teams such as the Capitals or their next opponent, the New York Islanders, who are amid an eight-game win streak.

"The thing you take from this is we've got a long way to go," winger Kyle Okposo said. "I just think our game's been slipping a little bit. We've been playing some pretty good hockey most of the time. Maybe getting away with 10 minutes here or there and tonight obviously we didn't. I think we just have to get back to the basics. Hopefully it's a wake-up call and tomorrow night come ready to play."

The Sabres (9-3-3) had their second-best October in franchise history by playing a simple game with the puck. There weren't many mistakes in the defensive zone or the odd-man rushes that plagued them during their 10-game win streak last November.

Following the Capitals' morning skate Friday in Arlington, Va., their coach, Todd Reirden, lauded the Sabres for being "way more detailed, more organized" under Krueger. Washington (10-2-3), which had its best October in franchise history and leads the National Hockey League with 23 points, viewed Buffalo as a formidable opponent.

Despite having two practices between games, the Sabres strayed from what has made them effective. Rather than getting the puck behind Washington's net and forechecking, they forced passes across the slot. Forwards weren't getting back when defensemen joined the rush. There wasn't enough puck movement to draw the Capitals out of position, either.

The first notable mistake occurred when Jack Eichel's pass was intercepted by Tom Wilson, whose backhanded pass sprung Jakub Vrana for a breakaway that resulted in a 1-0 lead at 6:17 into regulation.

Forty-two seconds later, Chandler Stephenson pushed the lead to two on a 4 on 1 that began with Rasmus Dahlin pinching in the offensive zone. Dahlin almost managed to make a remarkable cross-ice pass to Jeff Skinner but it ended with a turnover and a Sabres forward didn't drop back in coverage.

"First two we gave them on pucks off our stick and down the ice they went," Sabres defenseman Jake McCabe said. "That 10-minute stretch in the first period obviously was the game. ... The next two were defensive lapses and falling behind like this against a team on the road, that's a hole that's tough to come out of."

The Sabres also lacked attention to detail. Washington's third goal occurred when Vrana was left alone in front of the net because neither McCabe nor Rasmus Ristolainen were able to sort out the Capitals' line rush. The defensemen didn't receive help from their three forwards, either.

Leipsic's goal exposed the issues Dahlin is having in the defensive zone this season. The latter dropped down on one knee to try to create a turnover but Travis Boyd circled around the back of the Sabres net and Leipsic was left wide open on the backdoor to push the Capitals' lead to 4-0 at 10:44 into regulation.

Though Dahlin was out of position, there wasn't a Sabres forward there to help and Henri Jokiharju couldn't break up Boyd's pass.

"We're disappointed with what happened in the first period, of course," Krueger said. "We got away from the simple game and the decisions we needed to make with the puck. We gave them really everything they got in the first period and we had some excellent opportunities that we didn't capitalize on. It could have been definitely a different game."

The Sabres failed to score on their two power-play opportunities, including one in the first period. Conor Sheary hit the post during a 2-on-1 following Stephenson's goal, a centering pass by Eichel nearly ricocheted into the net, Sheary was stopped from the high slot following a turnover in the Capitals' zone and Skinner hit the crossbar when he deflected Colin Miller's shot with one minute remaining.

Buffalo cleaned up its defensive mistakes in the second period. It was even the better team for a stretch of play and Jokiharju's first career NHL goal at 10:40 cut the deficit to three. However, Tom Wilson made it 5-1 by tipping Michal Kempny's shot from the point and the Capitals' sixth goal occurred on another blown defensive coverage.

The Sabres are tied with the Boston Bruins for first place in the Atlantic Division and have a six-point lead over the Tampa Bay Lightning. Additionally, Buffalo entered Friday having allowed the fifth-fewest goals in the Eastern Conference.

However, the Sabres are showing they are far from a finished product and must improve in several areas if they are going to beat one of the NHL's best.

"That's a good hockey team over there and you can't make mistakes like that," Okposo said.

The Wraparound: Capitals 6, Sabres 1

By Lance Lysowski

The Buffalo News

November 1, 2019

WASHINGTON – For stretches of play Friday night, the Buffalo Sabres showed they have the talent and structure to compete against one of the best teams in the National Hockey League.

That wasn't much of a consolation following a 6-1 loss to the Washington Capitals inside Capital One Arena. The Sabres (9-3-2) allowed four goals during a 4:27 stretch in the first period, the result of turnovers and bad defensive-zone coverage.

Jakub Vrana scored twice for the Capitals (9-2-3), who also received goals from Chandler Stephenson, Brendan Leipsic, Tom Wilson and T.J. Oshie. The Sabres cut the deficit to three at 10:40 into the second period when Henri Jokiharju scored his first career NHL goal on a shot that deflected off Capitals defenseman Jonas Siegenthaler.

However, Washington pushed its lead back to four goals when Wilson tipped a shot from the blue line. Oshie scored with 6:17 remaining in regulation to push the Capitals' lead to five goals. Linus Ullmark was solid under difficult circumstances but suffered his second regulation loss of the season.

Washington leads the NHL with 23 points, recorded its best October in franchise history and has won seven of its last nine games. Buffalo has lost three of its past four games, including two in regulation.

Jack Eichel played his 300th career NHL game but was held without a point. Rasmus Dahlin recorded his 10th assist of the season but was on the ice for three goals against.

Opening salvo: Vrana opened the scoring when he collected a backhanded pass from Wilson and beat Ullmark with a low shot to the left post at 6:17 of the first. The Sabres had scored the first goal in 10 of their first 13 games this season.

High-wire act: Dahlin's gamble didn't pay off. The 19-year-old defenseman joined the rush in the offensive zone and almost connected with Jeff Skinner on a cross-ice pass for what would have been a goal.

However, the pass resulted in a turnover and the Capitals had a 4-on-1, which ended with Stephenson scoring 42 seconds following Vrana's goal.

Bad coverage: The Capitals pushed their lead to 3-0 when defenseman Michal Kempny retrieved a puck in the corner and sent a pass to the front of the net to Vrana, who scored his sixth goal of the season at 9:29.

Deja vu: Travis Boyd circled around the Sabres' net to create space in front and sent a pass across the slot for Leipsic to one-time past Ullmark for a 4-0 lead at 10:44.

Strong finish: The Sabres outshot the Capitals, 16-11, during the first period and had several scoring opportunities. Conor Sheary hit the post during a 2 on 1, Skinner hit the crossbar when he deflected Colin Miller's shot and Jack Eichel was stopped on a breakaway.

However, Washington goalie Braden Holtby, who had an .888 save percentage entering the game, stood tall. He needed to make only one save on Buffalo's power play in the first period.

Milestone: Jokiharju, a 20-year-old defenseman, has been more active in the offensive zone recently and had three shots on goal in the first period Friday night. His fifth ended up in the net, when a shot from the left point deflected off Siegenthaler and sailed over Holtby's shoulder to make the score 4-1.

Tip-in: Wilson spoiled the Sabres' momentum when he tipped Kempny's shot into the net at 16:53 into the second period to push the Capitals' lead to 5-1. Moments earlier, Dahlin poked a loose puck toward the blue line and it was retrieved by Kempny.

Next: The Sabres will not hold a morning skate ahead of their game Saturday night against the New York Islanders in KeyBank Center.

Sabres' Victor Olofsson named NHL rookie of the month

By Lance Lysowski
The Buffalo News
November 1, 2019

WASHINGTON – Victor Olofsson received the first award of his National Hockey League career Friday, when the Buffalo Sabres winger was named the league's rookie of the month for October.

Entering Friday, Olofsson led all rookies with six goals, all on the power play, and his 10 points were tied with three others for first. The 24-year-old also led all rookie forwards in ice time per game (17:27) and became the second Sabre in as many seasons to earn the honor.

Rasmus Dahlin was named the NHL's rookie of the month last November. Olofsson, a former seventh-round draft pick, has helped transform the Sabres' power play, which ranked second in the league entering their game Friday against the Washington Capitals at Capital One Arena.

Olofsson also plays left wing on the Sabres' top line with Jack Eichel and Sam Reinhart. While Olofsson's impact offensively earned him the award, coach Ralph Krueger and his staff have been impressed with the rookie's impact defensively.

"Victor has stepped into that role in a very strong way in that he gives us confidence without the puck and is able to play against the top lines of the other team and work together with Jack and Sam in being a very responsible line defensively," coach Ralph Krueger said before puck drop Friday. "Everybody is excited about his offense but for us, that's been primarily been generated on the power play. On the 5 on 5, he's still working on ways to get more opportunities and we see some adjustments that he can make. We're working with him on those on a daily basis and we're sure that there's still a lot of upside in Victor's game."

Olofsson made history last month when he became the first player in NHL history to score each of his first eight career goals on the power play, breaking the previous mark shared by Jeff Norton of the New York Islanders, Craig Norwich of the Winnipeg Jets and Sylvain Turgeon of the Hartford Whalers.

Olofsson, who was drafted 181st overall in 2014, scored 30 goals among among 63 points in 66 regular-season games for Rochester in 2018-19 -- his first year playing professionally in North America. He made his debut for the Sabres against the Detroit Red Wings on March 28, 2019, and scored two goals among four points in six games to finish the regular season in Buffalo.

Olofsson won rookie of the month over Toronto Maple Leafs winger Ilya Mikheyev, Washington goalie Ilya Samsonov, Vancouver defenseman Quinn Hughes and Colorado defenseman Cale Makar.

Eichel milestone

Sabres captain Jack Eichel played his 300th career game Friday night against the Capitals. The 23-year-old entered the game with 108 goals among 276 points, which puts him in elite company in franchise history.

Among all Sabres in their first 300 games, excluding Friday night, Eichel ranked sixth in points, 11th in goals, sixth in assists and only five players had more even-strength goals: Rick Martin, Alexander Mogilny, Danny Gare, Rene Robert and Dave Andreychuk.

Eichel's 75 even-strength goals entering Friday were tied with Donald Audette, Gilbert Perreault and John Tucker.

"He's such a big, strong skater," Capitals winger T.J. Oshie said of Eichel following the team's morning skate in Arlington, Va. "He has great hands, sees the ice well. Anytime you have a guy of his size that's able to move like he does, it creates a lot of problems on the ice. He can create a lot of offense by himself and sometimes those are the most dangerous players."

Montour sits

Sabres defenseman Brandon Montour, who has yet to play in the regular season because of a hand injury, was out of the lineup Friday night against Washington. Montour, 25, returned to practice last Sunday and has only been able to use a stick for approximately two weeks.

Krueger said Montour and Jimmy Vesey (upper body) will be evaluated Saturday morning and a decision will then be made whether they can face the New York Islanders.

"There will be a very small pregame skate with three or four guys on the ice, but we'll make a decision then tomorrow if he's good to go," Krueger said. "But it's looking good. His curve is in the right direction and his hands are feeling much more natural again after four or five days, and we're optimistic about his next steps."

Luukkonen assigned

Ukko-Pekka Luukkonen took one step closer to making his first start of the season Friday when the 20-year-old goalie was assigned by the Sabres to the Cincinnati Cyclones of the ECHL.

Luukkonen underwent double-hip surgery in April and has practiced with the Rochester Americans since being assigned there last month. One of the sport's top goaltending prospects, Luukkonen is expected to play multiple games for the Cyclones before returning to Rochester.

A second-round draft pick in 2017, Luukkonen stopped 32 of 34 shots for Rochester to earn his first professional win last April. Last season, he was named the Ontario Hockey League's Most Valuable Player and top goaltender by posting a 38-11-4 record in 53 games for Sudbury. He led the league in wins and shutouts (6).

70s night in Buffalo

More than 20 alumni will be in attendance Saturday when the Sabres hold 70s Night for the team's game against the New York Islanders in KeyBank Center.

Prior to the game, alumni will greet fans in the 100 Level and will then be welcomed onto the ice before the opening faceoff. Sabres equipment manager Rip Simonick, who is in his 50th year on the team's staff, will also be recognized. The first 10,000 fans in attendance will receive a 1970s-themed Sabres pennant.

Alumni expected to attend include Robert, Gare, Gerry Meehan, Don Luce and Jim Schoenfeld.

Sabres game day: With Sweden trip near, focus turns to facing Capitals

By Lance Lysowski

The Buffalo News

November 1, 2019

Matchup: Buffalo Sabres (9-2-2) vs. Washington Capitals (9-2-3)

Where: Capital One Arena

When: 7 p.m.

TV: MSG

Radio: WGR 550

Montour close: Brandon Montour, whom Buffalo acquired at the trade deadline last February, is not in the lineup Friday night against Washington but will be evaluated Saturday morning in hopes of playing against the New York Islanders on the second night of a back-to-back.

Montour, 25, recorded a career-high 35 points, 10 with Buffalo, last season. He hasn't played in a game since suffering a hand injury during a preseason loss at Columbus on Sept. 17.

The plan was for Montour to not play in a back-to-back. Having him sit Friday will allow one more day of preparation for a possible regular-season debut.

Sabres' lineup: Goalie Linus Ullmark will start Friday night against the Capitals. Otherwise, the Sabres' lineup will remain the same. John Gilmour will remain on defense and Evan Rodrigues will play on Casey Mittelstadt's wing.

Marking corrections: The Sabres were finally able practice back-to-back days Wednesday and Thursday. That allowed Krueger to put his players through a series of drills that focused on skill development and gave his coaching staff an opportunity to analyze what the Sabres need to correct ahead of their second back-to-back of the season.

Special teams seem to be trending in the right direction. The Sabres have scored a power-play goal in three of their last four games and the penalty kill has held opponents to 1-for-11, though the goal against occurred Monday night against Arizona.

Krueger's focus was likely on the Sabres' play in the defensive zone. Their coverage was spotty against the Coyotes, resulting in at least 40 shots allowed for the second consecutive game. Buffalo won't be able to play as loose defensively against the Capitals, who led the NHL with 21 points entering play Thursday.

Washington also had the most goals scored (53) and ranked sixth on the power play. This back-to-back could be tricky, though. The Sabres are preparing to leave Sunday for their trip to Sweden. Jack Eichel told reporters Thursday the goal is to not overlook the Capitals or Islanders.

"Guys are excited about it but we do have four points to get here, which is the most important thing right now," Eichel said. "They're going to be four hard points, two tough opponents and it's a great chance to show our maturity right now. Take care of business first. We're so excited about our trip and looking forward to going overseas, but we have to take care of this first."

Capitals injuries: Evgeny Kuznetsov participated in the Capitals' morning skate and is expected to play against the Sabres. Nic Dowd, on the other hand, did not skate, which forced Washington to recall forward Liam O'Brien from Hershey.

Goalie Braden Holtby, who has a .911 save percentage in 14 career games against Buffalo, is expected to start. Here are the Capitals' expected lines for tonight:

Ovechkin-Backstrom-Oshie

Vrana-Kuznetsov-Wilson

Hagelin-Eller-Hathaway

Leipsic-Stephenson-Boyd

Kempny-Carlson
Orlov-Gudas
Siegenthaler-Jensen

*looks like is Kuznetsov in; Dowd not playing

Leaderboard watch: With his overtime goal Tuesday in Toronto, Alex Ovechkin became the National Hockey League's 12th-highest goal scorer with 669 during his career. The 34-year-old has been a thorn in the Sabres' side since he was drafted first overall in 2004, scoring 32 goals among 48 points in 48 career regular-season games against Buffalo.

Ovechkin needs 16 more goals to surpass Teemu Selanne for 11th all-time.

It took just 4:27 to put the Sabres out of the game in Washington

By Paul Hamilton

WGR 550

November 1, 2019

(WGR 550) - It took the Sabres 4:27 of horrendous play in the first period to clinch their third loss in four games. Washington netted four goals in the first period and never looked back. Buffalo has now lost two games in a row for the first time all season.

Buffalo had much better of the play in the final nine minutes of the first period, but during that 4:27, it was just a bad, bad effort.

At 6:17 Jack Eichel didn't get a puck in deep and off went Jakub Vrana on a breakaway.

Just 42 seconds later, Rasmus Dahlin puts a pass to an open Jeff Skinner behind him and off go the Caps on a 4-on-1.

Vrana was left wide open for the third goal and on the fourth goal Travis Boyd turned Dahlin totally around and then Casey Mittelstadt chased behind the net along with Dahlin leaving Brendan Leipsic wide open to make it 4-0.

The Sabres actually outchanced Washington and easily could've made this game 4-4, but didn't score at all. Conor Sheary hit a post, Jeff Skinner tipped a Colin Miller shot off the cross bar, Jack Eichel missed a breakaway, Evan Rodrigues missed a 3-on-1 and Eichel had a pass go off of John Carlson and deflect right to Braden Holtby. Holtby has been struggling all season, but the Sabres gave him some confidence putting 15 shots and many Grade-A chances on him.

The Sabres have only scored seven goals in their last four games which is why they've lost three out of four.

Buffalo has no time to feel sorry for itself as the Islanders come to town on Saturday with an eight-game winning streak. New York took down Tampa Bay on Friday 5-2 and are 9-3-0 overall. The loss dropped Buffalo to 9-3-2.

Join Brian Koziol for the pregame starting at 6:00.

Sabres fall in Washington, 6-1 to Capitals

By Kyle Powell

WGR 550

November 1, 2019

The Buffalo Sabres lost 6-1 on Friday night at the sticks of the Washington Capitals, and were felled primarily by a crushing 4:27 span in the first period in which they allowed four goals inside Capital One Arena.

The loss dropped the Sabres' record to 9-3-2 through 14 games in 2019-20, and paired with their shootout loss to Arizona on Monday, tonight's defeat marked the first time this season that Buffalo dropped consecutive decisions.

It was all Capitals early and often in this one. The scoring started just over six-minutes into the opening period, and did not stop until there were four goals past Linus Ullmark and the Sabres' defense.

Washington forward Jakub Vrana got the party started in breakaway fashion. Vrana beat Ullmark five-hole as he was sprung free by Tom Wilson to make the score 1-0. The home side doubled the fun just 42-seconds later as it was forward Chandler Stephenson cashing in on a golden opportunity.

Stephenson met Ullmark with company as the Capitals broke out with a 4-on-1 opportunity, and all that was left to do was play tic-tac-toe in the Sabres' end for the team's second goal in less than a minute.

Two-and-a-half minutes after Stephenson's tally, it was Vrana striking again for his second of the night to swell the Buffalo deficit to three. Then, shortly after the midway marker of the first stanza, Washington racked up their fourth goal in rapid succession as forward Brendan Leipsic did the damage with his first goal of the season.

The Capitals ended up doing all their damage in a 4:27 span, from the 6:17-to-10:44 mark of the first period inside Capital One Arena.

Ullmark ended up allowing four goals on just 11 shots in the opening 20-minutes of play. Capitals netminder Braden Holtby stopped all 16 shots sent his way.

The second period had much less action in comparison to the first. Buffalo was able to keep Washington at bay after their raucous four-goal opening frame, and with more than half the period gone the Sabres finally scratched the scoreboard. The blue and gold were the beneficiaries of some puck luck, as defenseman Henri Jokiharju's shot was knocked in off a Capitals defenseman in front.

Though it wasn't pretty, it was still Jokiharju's first career goal in the NHL. Rasmus Dahlin recorded his 10th assist of the campaign on the goal that made it 4-1 in D.C.

Washington would then extend their lead back to four goals, at 5-1, with just over three-minutes left in the middle stanza. After a failed clearing attempt by Buffalo, Tom Wilson connected on his fifth goal of the campaign with help from defenseman Michal Kempny, who kept the puck in the zone.

The Capitals kept pouring it on with 6:17 left in the third, after a bit of a lull in play from both sides. Seconds after Washington killed off a tripping penalty from defenseman Dmitry Orlov, T.J. Oshie found the twine behind Ullmark for the veteran forward's eighth goal of the season. With the goal, the Capitals had now scored in each period of play inside their home building. Kempny racked up yet another assist on the goal; his third of the night for the men in red sweaters.

That goal proved to be the last of its kind on this night, as the final score stood at 6-1 Washington.

GAME SUMMARY

Goal Summary:

First Period:

BUF: NONE

WSH: 6:17 - Jakub Vrana (5) (Tom Wilson); 6:59 - Chandler Stephenson (2) (Travis Boyd, Brendan Leipsic); 9:29 - Jakub Vrana (6) (Michal Kempny, Tom Wilson); 10:44 - Brendan Leipsic (Travis Boyd, Radko Gudas)

Second Period:

BUF: 10:40 - Henri Jokiharju (1) (Rasmus Dahlin)

WSH: 16:53 - Tom Wilson (5) (Michal Kempny)

Third Period:

BUF: NONE

WSH: 13:43 - T.J. Oshie (Michal Kempny, Alex Ovechkin)

Penalty Summary:

First Period:

BUF: NONE

WSH: 2:42 - Dmitry Orlov (Elbowing - 2 min.)

Second Period:

BUF: NONE

WSH: NONE

Third Period:

BUF: 18:24 - Johan Larsson (Slashing - 2 min.)

WSH: 11:10 - Dmitry Orlov (Tripping - 2 min.)

Shots on Goal:

BUF: 30 (16, 9, 5)

WSH: 34 (11, 8, 15)

Goalies:

BUF: Linus Ullmark - 28 saves

WSH: Braden Holtby - 29 saves

Power Plays:

BUF: 0 for 2 (0%)

WSH: 0 for 1 (0%)

Three Stars:

1.) Jakub Vrana - WSH

2.) Tom Wilson - WSH

3.) Brendan Leipsic - WSH

What's Next:

The blue and gold come back home for a matchup with the New York Islanders tomorrow night inside KeyBank Center. It will be "70's Night" for the Buffalo Sabres as part of the promotional celebrations for the team's 50th season in the National Hockey League. Puck drop is set for just after 7:00 p.m., the Paul William Beltz Pre-Game Show starts at 6:00 with Brian Koziol from (716) Food and Sport on WGR Sports Radio 550.

Sabres' Olofsson is the NHL's Rookie of the Month

By Paul Hamilton

WGR 550

November 1, 2019

Buffalo, NY (WGR 550) - Victor Olofsson has been named NHL Rookie of the Month for October.

Olofsson scored all six goals he had in the month in his first seven games. All six goals were also scored on the power play. He does not have a 5-on-5 goal in his brief NHL career.

Olofsson added four assists to give him 10 points on the month. Toronto's Ilya Mikheyev had four goals and six assists on the month, while Colorado defenseman Cale Makar had a goal and nine assists.

Washington goalie Ilya Samsonov was 4-1-0 with a 2.46 goals-against average and .913 save percentage. Samsonov was the man the Sabres would've drafted in 2015 had they not traded their first round pick to Ottawa for Robin Lehner.

The Sabres are in Washington tonight. Join Schopp and the Bulldog for the pre-game show starting at 6:00 when they'll be joined by Ralph Krueger, Marcus Johansson and Brandon Montour.

The Sabres visit the red-hot Capitals

By Paul Hamilton

WGR 550

November 1, 2019

(WGR 550) - It's been a while since the Sabres have played a team with more points than them in the standings. Washington has 21 points, while Buffalo has 20. If you go by point percentage, the 9-2-2 Sabres are second in the NHL at .769, while the Capitals are third at .750.

Marcus Johansson has played 501 of his 601 NHL games in Washington, where he was a first round pick in 2009. The Sabres center said it's still fun to go back to D.C., "It was my home for a long time. I have a lot of friends there and it's always a special place to go, so I'm looking forward to it."

In 14 games, defenseman John Carlson has seven goals and 16 assists for 23 points. That ranks him third in league scoring, and Johansson is not surprised at all, "I think he's getting better. He's gotten more and more responsibility over the last few years and he's been really good I think all the time, but it's cool to see that he keeps improving and at the rate he's going right now, it's pretty insane."

Alex Ovechkin is third in league goal scoring with 11. Teams always try to slow him down, but they can't. In 48 career games against Buffalo, the Washington captain has 32 goals and 48 points. Since he played with him so long, you'd think Johansson would know how to slow him down, "It's tough to answer. With Ovie, the way he shoots the puck and the way he can score in many different ways, he feels like one of a kind."

Nicklas Backstrom is so good at carrying the puck and attacking the offensive zone, I can tell Johansson picked up some things from him in his game. Backstrom might be the Capitals' best player at transitioning through the neutral zone and gaining the blue line. Johansson said he did learn a lot from Backstrom, "He's someone I've always looked up to and was fortunate enough to play with him for seven years, and both on and off the ice I've learned a lot from him. I think it's very fortunate to see a player like that every day for that long and what he brings to the table every night."

Brandon Montour has said he's ready to play and has been working with the top-six in practice. If he plays his first game of the season, John Gilmour would be scratched.

The Sabres have lost two of their last three games and are 2-1-1- in their last four. Goals have dried up lately as they only netted two in each of the last three games.

One player that does remain hot is Jack Eichel, who has three goals and four assists for seven points in his last four games. Eichel is eighth in league scoring with 17 points in 13 games.

Linus Ullmark is coming off a 41-save shutout, while Carter Hutton made 42 saves in the shootout loss to Arizona. Hutton is eighth in NHL goals-against average and save percentage at 2.21 and .926. Ullmark is fifth in league save percentage at .932. Overall, the tandem has a .926 save percentage, which only trails Boston.

Buffalo is back to second in league power play numbers at 29.8%. Boston leads at 30.9%.

Washington has won 6-of-7 games. They've scored five or more goals in four of their last six.

I talked about Carlson earlier, and he has points in every game except two. Carlson also has a very high shooting percentage for a defenseman at 20%.

Join Schopp and the Bulldog for the pre-game show starting at 6:00 when they'll be joined by Ralph Krueger, Montour and Johansson.

Still open to NHL opportunities, both Thomas Vanek and Jason Pominville are happy just being hockey dads right now

By John Vogl

The Athletic

November 2, 2019

Thomas Vanek and Jason Pominville are just a couple of hockey dads now. They skate with their sons at practice, cheer for them during games and talk about their day on the way to tournaments.

"I've been able to be there for every game and every practice," Pominville said this week. "To be able to be there all the time has been a lot of fun. My little guy really enjoys it, too."

The Vanek boys are also having a blast. Vanek can see it in their grinning faces. But just the other day, as he was driving his three sons to the rink, they asked him an important question.

"They asked, 'Are you going to stay and coach all year?'" Vanek said Friday. "I'm like, 'I'm not sure. For right now, we're going to enjoy every minute of it.'"

The way their smiles were apparent even through the phone line, it's clear Vanek and Pominville are truly happy being everyday fathers. If this is how they're going to spend the next six months, shuttling their kids back and forth to hockey, that's fine by them.

Still, a few times a week, they each head to the rink alone. There's NHL ability on the outside and a fire inside. Neither Vanek nor Pominville is ready to finalize his retirement papers.

"I'm still working out and skating as much as I can just to keep myself somewhat sharp," Pominville said from Buffalo. "I don't know if I'm really doing this for a reason, but I still feel like I owe it to myself in case something happens."

"Hockey is our passion," Vanek said from Minnesota. "It's mine and I know it's Pommers' too. I'm still skating and staying in shape and if the right thing – and it would absolutely have to be the right thing – would come along, then I would think about it very hard to come back and give it one more shot."

It's not a case of two over-the-hill players just holding on. Both wingers scored 16 times and topped 30 points last season. Pominville, who turns 37 this month, finished fourth in goals for the Sabres. Vanek, who turns 36 in January, tied for fifth in Detroit. They know they can keep up.

"It's been hard because I still think I can score 20 goals in the right role and be productive in 12-14 minutes," Vanek said. "That's all I really would want anyways."

The problem is money and fit. Pominville would love to stay home in Buffalo, but the Sabres are over the salary cap, promoted Victor Olofsson and added Marcus Johansson and Jimmy Vesey. Vanek turned down one team because the well-traveled veteran has winning on his mind.

"I've moved around a lot," said Vanek, who has played for Buffalo, the Islanders, Montreal, Minnesota, Florida, Vancouver, Columbus and Detroit. "But there's always a chance of winning somewhere and that's what I've been chasing."

"Obviously, my career is important to me, but family is way more important. So I kind of made the choice that it's time for me to stay here. But like I said, if the right thing comes along, then I might have to be selfish again for five more months and try to hopefully win a Cup. Then it would be an easy choice to walk away from the game."

Vanek's twins are about to turn nine and his older son is 12. Those are formative years, as he vividly remembers.

"I remember my mom and dad being at most of my games and that was great," he said. "I couldn't wait to get in the car and talk to them about it, at least with my dad, who loves the game of hockey. When you can only make so many games in the winter with your own kids and they've got to explain every pass and everything that happens, it's hard."

"It goes by quick. I left home at 14, so that's the thing. I look at my son – not that I think he's going to go anywhere at 14 – but you just never know."

Pominville did everything he could last season to watch his son, who just turned 10. When the Sabres landed in cities for road games, he'd head to a restaurant by himself for a quick, early dinner, then rush back to his hotel room to watch his son's games on LiveBarn, a website that streams youth sporting events.

"If they didn't have it, my wife would be filming his shifts and sending me his shifts," Pominville said. "Those nights were tough where I wanted to see his games."

That's why it means so much for the dads to be there all the time now.

"That part has been great, doing the practice plans and being involved more," Vanek said. "And I can see it in their face: They really enjoy that dad is finally home and being a full-time dad and not a part-time."

While Vanek is in the Minnesota youth system, Pominville is coaching a Junior Sabres team along with former Buffalo forward Matt Ellis.

"I've been able to teach while he coaches, so I'm always trying to talk to the kids after shifts and trying to see what they did well, what they could do better," Pominville said. "It's been a lot of fun."

But, again, he also knows he'd enjoy going to his own games.

"Seasons are long and some teams might need someone later on," Pominville said. "If it makes sense where family-wise it's good enough, I might decide to go. But so far it just hasn't been the case."

He and Vanek came into the NHL together in 2005, helping lead the Sabres to back-to-back Eastern Conference finals. Including the minor leagues and two seasons in Minnesota, they were teammates for 11 years. It would be fitting if they both said goodbye together.

Whether that happens this year or next remains a lingering question.

"If it happens, it happens," Vanek said of finding a team. "If not, then life goes on."

Top Sabres goalie prospect Ukko-Pekka Luukkonen sent to ECHL

By Bill Hoppe

Olean Times Herald

November 1, 2019

The Rochester Americans assigned Ukko-Pekka Luukkonen, the Buffalo Sabres' top goalie prospect, to the Cincinnati Cyclones today.

Luukkonen, who hasn't played since undergoing hip surgery in late April, will likely start one game for the Sabres' ECHL affiliate this weekend.

The Cyclones play the Brampton Beast on the road Saturday and Sunday.

The 6-foot-5, 220-pound Luukkonen is expected to become the Amerks' No. 1 goalie. Veteran Andrew Hammond and youngster Jonas Johansson have split most of the action early this season.

The Sabres sent Luukkonen to the Amerks on Oct. 20 to begin practicing.

Luukkonen briefly joined the Amerks late last season after a stellar junior campaign with the Sudbury Wolves in which he was named the Ontario Hockey League's MVP and top goalie. He played one regular-season game with Rochester before having surgery.

The Sabres drafted Luukkonen in the second round in 2017, 54th overall. Last season was his first in North America.

Sabres' Victor Olofsson named NHL's Rookie of Month for October

By Bill Hoppe

Olean Times Herald

November 1, 2019

A record-setting start has earned Buffalo Sabres winger Victor Olofsson NHL Rookie of the Month honors for October, the league announced today.

Olofsson scored all six of his goals on the power play, becoming the first NHL player to register his first eight goals on the man advantage.

The Swede, who possesses a lethal wrist shot, also scored two power-play goals during a six-game stint late last season.

Overall, Olofsson has scored six goals and 10 points in 13 games this season. He has recorded eight points on the power play. He hasn't scored a goal in his last six outings.

The former seventh-round pick spent his first full month in the NHL skating on the Sabres' top line beside captain Jack Eichel and Sam Reinhart.

Olofsson beat out Toronto Maple Leafs winger Ilya Mikheyev (four goals and 10 points), Vancouver Canucks defenseman Quinn Hughes (one goal and nine points), Colorado Avalanche defenseman Cale Makar (one goal and 10 points) and Washington Capitals Ilya Samsonov (4-1-0, goals-against average and .913 save percentage) for the honor.

Sabres fall to Capitals, suffer first back-to-back losses this season

By Jenna Callari

WKBW

November 1, 2019

BUFFALO, N.Y. (WKBW) — In a battle between two of the top teams in the NHL, the Buffalo Sabres came up short. The Sabres fell to the Washington Capitals by a 6-1 score on Friday night, their first back-to-back losses of the season.

Henri Jokiharju scored his first NHL goal in the loss with assists from Evan Rodrigues and Rasmus Dahlin. Linus Ullmark made 28 saves, allowing the most goals he's had in a start this season.

The Sabres are now 9-3-2 on the season with 20 points and still sit near the top of the Eastern Conference standings. They'll be back at KeyBank Center on Saturday night when they host the New York Islanders.

Victor Olofsson named NHL's "Rookie of the Month" for October

By Anthony Reyes

WKBW

November 1, 2019

BUFFALO, N.Y. (WKBW) — The Buffalo Sabres Victor Olofsson has been named the NHL's "Rookie of the Month" for the month of October.

Olofsson finished the month of October with six goals and four assists for a total of 10 points in 13 games. The six goals scored this season all came on the power play.

The Swedish born winger also recorded both of his goals in the 2018-19 season on the power play, making him the first player in NHL history to record his first eight goals on the power play.

Olofsson was selected for the honor over Toronto Maple Leafs right wing Ilya Mikheyev, Vancouver Canucks defenseman Quinn Hughes, Colorado Avalanche defenseman Cale Makar and Washington Capitals goaltender Ilya Samsonov.

Caps crush Sabres 6-1

By Nick Filipowski

WIVB

November 1, 2019

BUFFALO, N.Y. (WIVB) – The Sabres had their chances, but also gave Washington plenty as well in a 6-1 loss Friday night.

Buffalo has now lost two straight game for the first time this season.

Scoreless with a little less than 14 minutes to play in the opening period, Jack Eichel turned the puck over on a blind, backhanded pass, which allowed Jakub Vrana to skate free on a breakaway and bury his fifth goal of the season.

42 seconds later, following another turnover, Chandler Stephenson flipped the puck over the outstretched pad of Linus Ullmark to make it a 2-0 game.

Vrana would add his second tally of the night shortly after that and, by the time the first period buzzer would sound, the Blue & Gold would find themselves in a 4-0 hole.

Henri Jokiharju would pull Buffalo within 4-1 with his first goal of the season midway through the second period however, Washington would score the final two goals of the night to skate to victory.

The Sabres are back in action Saturday night to battle the New York Islanders, before heading overseas to Sweden for a two-game series with the Tampa Bay Lightning on November 8 and 9.

Capitals score four in first period, ease past Sabres

By Harvey Valentine

NHL.com

November 1, 2019

WASHINGTON -- Jakub Vrana scored two of the Washington Capitals' four first-period goals in a 6-1 win against the Buffalo Sabres at Capital One Arena on Friday, their seventh victory in eight games.

Tom Wilson had a goal and two assists, Michal Kempny had three assists, and Brendan Leipsic had a goal and an assist for Washington (10-2-3), which extended its point streak to eight games (7-0-1).

Chandler Stephenson and T.J. Oshie scored, and Braden Holtby made 29 saves for the Capitals.

"It was a good four-line game for us," Capitals coach Todd Reirden said. "Got contributions from a lot of different people. I thought when we did have breakdowns, Braden was really solid tonight, so that allowed us to take advantage of the opportunities we had in the opposite direction."

Henri Jokiharju scored, and Linus Ullmark made 28 saves for Buffalo (9-3-2), which is 1-2-1 in its past four games.

"I just didn't think we were good enough, especially against a team like that," Sabres captain Jack Eichel said. "They're one of the best teams in the League for a reason, and I thought we were just sloppy with the puck. I thought we just gave them a lot of chances that we shouldn't have, and they capitalized."

The Capitals scored four goals on their first seven shots.

Wilson's backhand pass sent Vrana in on a breakaway to make it 1-0 at 6:17 of the first period.

The Capitals soon had a 4-on-1 rush off a turnover. Leipsic passed across to Travis Boyd, who centered the puck to Stephenson for a backhand to make it 2-0 at 6:59.

"They were excellent," Reirden said. "I really like a lot of things from that [fourth] line. The speed, the execution level on some of those plays was high end, and still they did a decent job in the defensive zone as well."

Vrana's one-timer from the right face-off circle made it 3-0 at 9:29.

"I just tried to find an empty spot there around the net, and it was a great pass by [Kempny], and I just tried to finish it off," Vrana said.

Boyd helped make it 4-0 when he skated behind Ullmark and sent a pass through the crease for Leipsic, who scored on a one-timer at 10:44.

The Sabres had several odd-man rushes late in the period but couldn't convert.

"We got away from the game, the simple game, and the decisions we needed to make with the puck," Buffalo coach Ralph Krueger said. "We gave them really everything they got in the first period, and we had some excellent opportunities that we didn't capitalize on."

Jokiharju's first NHL goal cut it to 4-1 at 10:40 of the second period when his shot from the left point deflected in off Washington defenseman Jonas Siegenthaler.

"Obviously, in that moment that was a feeling of happiness and it was fun to score, but after this kind of game, it's not that big [of a] memory right now, but probably a little bit later," Jokiharju said.

Wilson deflected Kempny's shot with 3:07 left in the period to make it 5-1.

"It's obviously nice to get up early," Wilson said. "Those games can be a little tough for the rest of the night, but I thought we did a good job for the most part just keeping our skating and keeping the momentum."

Oshie tipped in a pass from Kempny at 13:43 of the third period for the 6-1 final.

They said it

"The thing you take from this is we've got a long way to go and I just think our game's been just slipping a little bit. We've been playing some pretty good hockey most of the time, maybe getting away with 10 minutes here and there, and tonight, obviously, we didn't. So I think we've just got to get back to basics." -- Sabres forward Kyle Okposo

"I think we're very confident out there right now. We have lots of energy, especially coming back from that (4-0-1) road trip. Everybody's working really hard, blocking shots and playing good defensively, and that creates offense." -- Capitals forward Jakub Vrana

Need to know

The Sabres had scored two or more goals in each of their first 13 games. ... Eichel played his 300th NHL game. ... Washington defenseman John Carlson, who scored 23 points (seven goals, 16 assists) in 14 games, was named the NHL's First Star for October. He had no points in 23:33 of ice time Friday. ... Capitals forward Eller played his 700th NHL game. ... Kempny has eight points (three goals, five assists) in seven games this season.

What's next

Sabres: Host the New York Islanders on Saturday (7 p.m. ET; MSG-B, MSG+, NHL.TV)

Capitals: Host the Calgary Flames on Sunday (7 p.m. ET; NHLN, SN, NBCSWA, NHL.TV)

Olofsson named NHL Rookie of the Month for October

NHL.com

November 1, 2019

NEW YORK - Buffalo Sabres right wing Victor Olofsson , who led all rookies with 6-4-10 and six power-play goals in 13 games, has been named the NHL's "Rookie of the Month" for October.

Olofsson edged Toronto Maple Leafs right wing Ilya Mikheyev (4-6-10 in 14 GP), Vancouver Canucks defenseman Quinn Hughes (1-9-10 in 12 GP), Colorado Avalanche defenseman Cale Makar (1-9-10 in 12 GP) and Washington Capitals goaltender Ilya Samsonov (4-1-0, 2.46 GAA, .913 SV%) for the honor.

Olofsson - who made his NHL debut March 28 and scored each of his first two goals in 2018-19 via the power play (2-2-4 in 6 GP) - continued his dominance on special teams, also registering all six of his October goals on the man-advantage. In doing so, he became the first player in League history to record each of his first eight career goals via the power play (since 1933-34), breaking the previous mark of six shared by Jeff Norton (w/ NYI), Craig Norwich (w/ WIN) and Sylvain Turgeon (w/ HFD).

The 24-year-old Ornskoldsvik, Sweden, native - who will travel to his home country next week for the 2019 NHL Global Series - spent the majority of 2018-19 with the AHL's Rochester Americans, topping the team with 30 goals and 63 points in 66 appearances. Olofsson, a seventh-round selection (181st overall) in the 2014 NHL Draft, is the second Sabres player to win "Rookie of the Month" honors in as many seasons, following defenseman Rasmus Dahlin in November 2018.

Victor Olofsson in October

Date, Opponent, G, A, PTS, Result

Oct. 3, at Pittsburgh, 0, 1, 1, 3-1 W
Oct. 5, NEW JERSEY, 2, 0, 2, 7-2 W
Oct. 7, at Columbus, 1, 0, 1, 4-3 OT L
Oct. 9, MONTREAL, 1, 0, 1, 5-4 OT W
Oct. 11, FLORIDA, 0, 0, 0, 3-2 SO W
Oct. 14, DALLAS, 1, 1, 2, 4-0 W
Oct. 16, at Anaheim, 1, 0, 1, 5-2 L
Oct. 17, at Los Angeles, 0, 0, 0, 3-0 W
Oct. 19, at San Jose, 0, 0, 0, 4-3 W
Oct. 22, SAN JOSE, 0, 1, 1, 4-3 OT W
Oct. 24, at NY Rangers, 0, 0, 0, 6-2 L
Oct. 25, at Detroit, 0, 1, 1, 2-0 W
Oct. 28, ARIZONA, 0, 0, 0, 3-2 SO L

Totals 6, 4, 10, 9-2-2

Sabres at Capitals preview

By Harvey Valentine

NHL.com

November 1, 2019

SABRES (9-2-2) at CAPITALS (9-2-3)

7 p.m. ET; SN, NBCSWA, MSG-B, NHL.TV

The Game

The Washington Capitals will try to win for the seventh time in eight games when they host the Buffalo Sabres at Capital One Arena on Friday.

Washington leads the NHL with 21 points and Buffalo is tied for second with 20.

The Capitals are 6-0-1 in their past six games and return home after going 4-0-1 on a five-game road trip.

Buffalo, 4-1-1 in its past six games, can reach the 10-win mark in 14 or fewer games for third time in its history (10-0-0, 2006-07; 10-2-1, 1975-76).

Players to watch

Sabres forward Jack Eichel has seven points (three goals, four assists) in his past four games and will be playing his 300th NHL game.

Capitals forward Alex Ovechkin had 17 points (10 goals, seven assists) in his past 11 games including at least one point in 10 of them.

They said it

"We know what's coming at us, we know we're going to have to play our best hockey here to have a chance and that's all we want to do - give ourselves a chance in Washington, in that atmosphere, in that spirit of the World Series. Let's feed on that." -- Sabres coach Ralph Krueger

"We've been able to have success on the road and we've got to carry some of that thought process, some of that mentality that you have when you go on the road, home with us. I think that can be one key element to allow us to have a little bit more success at home. "-- Capitals coach Todd Reirden on playing nine of the next 13 games at home, where Washington is 2-1-2

Sabres projected lineup

Victor Olofsson -- Jack Eichel -- Sam Reinhart
Jeff Skinner -- Marcus Johansson -- Vladimir Sobotka
Evan Rodrigues -- Casey Mittelstadt -- Conor Sheary
Zemgus Girgensons -- Johan Larsson -- Kyle Okposo

Jake McCabe -- Rasmus Ristolainen
Rasmus Dahlin -- Henri Jokiharju
John Gilmour -- Colin Miller

Linus Ullmark
Carter Hutton

Scratched: None

Injured: Marco Scandella (lower body), Jimmy Vesey (upper body), Brandon Montour (hand), Zach Bogosian (hip)

Capitals projected lineup

Alex Ovechkin -- Nicklas Backstrom -- T.J. Oshie
Jakub Vrana -- Evgeny Kuznetsov -- Tom Wilson
Carl Hagelin -- Lars Eller -- Garnet Hathaway
Brendan Leipsic -- Chandler Stephenson -- Travis Boyd

Michal Kempny -- John Carlson
Dmitry Orlov -- Radko Gudas
Jonas Siegenthaler -- Nick Jensen

Braden Holtby
Ilya Samsonov

Scratched: Tyler Lewington, Liam O'Brien
Injured: Richard Panik (upper body), Nic Dowd (lower body)

Status report

The Sabres did not hold a morning skate. ... Reirden said Dowd is day to day. ... The Capitals recalled O'Brien from Hershey of the American Hockey League.

Stat pack

The Sabres have scored the first goal in 10 of their 13 games, going 8-1-1 in those games. ... Reinhart has a goal and two assists in his past two games. ... Eller will play in his 700th NHL game. ... Carlson has 20 points (seven goals, 13 assists) in his past 11 games and points in 10 those games. ... Vrana has four points (one goal, three assists) in a three-game point streak.

Sabres look to turn the page following loss to Capitals

By Jourdon LaBarber

Sabres.com

November 1, 2019

WASHINGTON, D.C. - In the end, the Sabres looked back on their 6-1 loss to the Washington Capitals on Friday and could trace it back to a brief stretch in the first period.

The Capitals built a 4-0 lead all within a span of 4:27. The run began with a breakaway goal from Jakub Vrana, continued 42 seconds later with a goal from Chandler Stephenson on a 3-on-1 rush, and finished with one-time goals from Vrana and Brendan Leipsic.

Against the only team ahead of them in the league standings, it created a hole the Sabres were never able to climb out of.

"We're disappointed with what happened in the first period, of course," Sabres coach Ralph Krueger said. "We got away from the game, the simple game and the decisions we needed to make with the puck. We gave them, really, everything they got in the first period and we had some excellent opportunities that we didn't capitalize on.

"It could have been definitely a different game. We could have used some of those early chances. But at the end, we have to be disappointed with the first period. We just couldn't climb back into this one."

The Sabres rebounded and went on to out-chance the Capitals in the first period, 14-9 (according to NaturalStatTrick.com). Braden Holtby turned away scoring chances from Jack Eichel, Conor Sheary, and Evan Rodrigues, among others. A Colin Miller shot deflected off the post in the final minute.

Buffalo finally solved Holtby at the 10:40 mark of the second period, when Henri Jokiharju sent a shot through traffic that went in for his first NHL goal. But Tom Wilson tipped a shot past Ullmark to restore Washington's three-goal lead 6:13 later, and T.J. Oshie capped the scoring late in the third.

With a visit from the New York Islanders - winners of eight straight games - coming in KeyBank Center in less than 24 hours, the Sabres have the benefit of needing to turn the page quickly. Krueger said they would fly back to Buffalo, get a good night's sleep, then head to the rink with an eye toward learning from their game on Friday.

Namely, they'll look to reinforce the principles they're still looking to establish as habits in the early part of the season. That includes simplicity with the puck on offense and consistency in their coverage on defense.

"Everybody knows that Washington's an unbelievable team and for us to make some of the errors we did, possibly, to get punished today will help us to be better the next time we play top teams or teams with this kind of quality," Krueger said. "I think today is definitely a game to learn from."

Forward Kyle Okposo echoed his coach in the locker room after the game.

"I just think the thing you take from this is we've got a long way to go," Okposo said. "I just think our game's been just slipping a little bit. We've been playing some pretty good hockey most of the time, maybe getting away with 10 minutes here and there. Tonight, we didn't.

"I think we've just got to get back to basics but hopefully it's a wakeup call and tomorrow night we come ready to play."

If there was a silver lining within the game on Friday, it was team's reaction following the difficult first period stretch. Holtby kept them from closing the gap on the scoreboard, but Okposo and Krueger both felt the conversations in the room between periods were open and direct.

They'll look to carry that over into Saturday. The Sabres responded to each of their two prior regulation losses this season with shutout victories the following night.

"We've done a good job of responding from games we don't like and luckily it's a quick turnaround," alternate captain Jake McCabe said. "Tomorrow night we're right back at it, which is a great thing for us. We're competitive. We want to get back at it."

"We know we have a lot more to give than we had tonight. Get back to our game tomorrow night on our home ice."

Jokiharju nets first goal

The first goal of Jokiharju's NHL career came on his fifth shot of the night, an attempt from the point that deflected in off Capitals defenseman Jonas Siegenthaler.

"Obviously that moment is filled with happiness and it was fun to score, but obviously after this kind of game it's not that big of a memory right now," Jokiharju said. "Probably a little bit later."

Up next

The Sabres return home to host Islanders on Saturday. It will be '70s Night at KeyBank Center, with more than 20 alumni scheduled to be in attendance. Find the full list along with more information [here](#).

Can't make it downtown? Pregame coverage on MSG begins at 6:30 p.m. You can also listen on WGR 550, with puck drop scheduled for 7.

At the Horn: Sabres 1 - Capitals 6

By Chris Ryndak

Sabres.com

November 1, 2019

A slow start sank the Buffalo Sabres on Friday. The Washington Capitals used an early lead to defeat Buffalo 6-1 at Capital One Arena.

Defenseman Henri Jokiharju scored the Sabres' lone goal for the first of his career. Linus Ullmark made 28 saves.

Buffalo outshot the Capitals 34-30. Braden Holtby stopped 29 shots for Washington. The Capitals lead the Metropolitan Division with a record of 10-2-3.

The Sabres are now 9-3-2 on the season and have yet to go back-to-back games without earning a point.

How it happened

Things got out of hand pretty quickly for Buffalo. Washington scored four times in the game's opening 10:44.

First, Jakub Vrana opened the scoring 6:17 in on a breakaway. Then on Chandler Stephenson put a deke on Ullmark to finish a 4-on-1 rush to make it 2-0 just 42 seconds later.

Vrana scored his second at the 9:29 mark and then Brendan Leipsic tallied to put the Capitals ahead by four. Washington's first four goals came within a span of 4:27.

Jokiharju put Buffalo on the board with an odd shot that found its way beyond the goal line with 9:20 remaining in the second period. However, the Capitals regained their four-goal lead when Tom Wilson scored with 3:20 left in the period.

Just as a Sabres power play ended, the Capitals made it 6-1 with 6:17 to go in regulation when T.J. Oshie scored his eighth of the season.

What it means

The Sabres are now 0-3-0 in the first game of back-to-back sets this season. They've been outscored 17-5 in the opening game.

However, they're 2-0-0 in the second game and they've outscored their opponents 5-0 with 3-0 and 2-0 victories. Will that trend continue tomorrow? A Sabres fan can only hope as the team hosts the New York Islanders on Saturday.

Coming up

The Golden Season celebrations continue Saturday night for '70s Night presented by Fallsview Casino Resort.

Over 20 alumni from the team's first decade of existence are set to attend. The list currently includes:

Gerry Meehan
John Gould
Jim Lorentz
Rene Robert
Don Luce
Larry Carriere
Rick Dudley
Jim Schoenfeld
Jerry Korab
Bill Hajt
Paul McIntosh
Morris Titanic
Gerry Desjardins
Fred Stanfield

Danny Gare
Terry Martin
Derek Smith
Don Edwards
Ric Seiling
Tony McKegney
Mike Robitaille

Prior to the game, alumni will greet fans in the 100 Level and will then be welcomed onto the ice before the opening faceoff. Equipment manager Rip Simonick, who is in his 50th year on the team's staff, will also be recognized.

The first 10,000 fans in attendance will receive a 1970s-themed Sabres pennant as well.

The Islanders beat Tampa 5-2 on Friday for their eighth-straight victory. Buffalo will face the Lightning next weekend in Sweden for a pair of games as part of the NHL Global Series.

Sabres emphasize defense entering meeting with Capitals

By Jourdon LaBarber

Sabres.com

November 1, 2019

WASHINGTON, D.C. - The Sabres made the most of their October. They went 9-2-2 for 20 points, the second-best opening month to any season in franchise history. That places them in a tie for second place in the NHL standings.

They open November against the one team ahead of them. The Washington Capitals went 9-2-3 to set their own franchise record for points in an opening month, placing them one point ahead of the Sabres entering tonight's tilt at Capital One Arena.

With both teams employing new, aggressive systems this season, Sabres coach Ralph Krueger emphasized defensive play as the potential difference maker tonight.

"It's certainly the responsibility with the puck," Krueger said. "I'm speaking about how we'd like to tighten things defensively but being consistently responsible with the puck is still something we need to learn and understand when risk is worth it and when not, how to manage leads and areas of improvement.

"Both teams tonight are going to play on their toes. It's going to be an excellent hockey game, I'm sure, with a lot of opportunities going both ways. We just need to make sure we're the better defensive team today."

The Capitals rank third in the NHL this season with an average of 3.79 goals per game. Alex Ovechkin has been himself, tied for third in the league with 11 goals. John Carlson is coming off a historic month in which he tallied 23 points (7+16), the second-most productive month by a defenseman in NHL history.

The Sabres, meanwhile, have the sixth-best mark in the league with an average of 2.46 goals against per game. They have had three days between games for the first time this season after playing 13 contests in 26 days, and Krueger said he hopes to see their renewed energy show in their defensive play.

"Defensively, we need to just tighten the spaces again," he said. "We're working in periods of excellent defense, but not necessarily consistently rights through the games. I think that was something that started, it's percentage points we're talking about here from a coaches' perspective and we want to get those back."

Linus Ullmark will start in net. Read about the measures Ullmark has taken to improve his mental game in our feature from Tuesday.

Neither defenseman Brandon Montour (hand) nor forward Jimmy Vesey (upper body) will play. Both players remain day-to-day and will be re-evaluated Saturday morning prior to the Sabres' home game against the New York Islanders.

Pregame coverage for tonight's game begins at 6:30 p.m. You can also listen live on WGR 550, with puck drop set for 7.