



# **Buffalo Sabres**

**Daily Press Clips**

*February 16, 2020*

## **Sabres demote Bogosian to minors, unclear if he'll report**

By John Wawrow

Associated Press

February 15, 2020

BUFFALO, N.Y. (AP) — The Buffalo Sabres have assigned Zach Bogosian to the minors after he cleared waivers on Saturday, though it's uncertain when or whether the veteran defenseman will report.

Bogosian's agent, Darren Ferris, didn't provide any hint of what his client's plans are in a text to The Associated Press.

"I will be meeting with Zach over the next couple of days to discuss his next steps," Ferris wrote.

Bogosian's options are limited after the 12-year NHL veteran went unclaimed a day after being placed on waivers. He must report to Rochester of the American Hockey League, accept re-assignment elsewhere or risk losing out on what's left of the \$6 million he is owed on the final year of his contract.

The Sabres responded by saying they had no new information to provide after announcing Bogosian's re-assignment earlier in the day.

Whatever happens, Bogosian's time in Buffalo is coming to an abrupt end, with his demotion coming a little over a week before the NHL's trade deadline, and a few months after the oft-injured 29-year-old requested a trade.

Bogosian has been limited to playing just 19 games this season after missing the first 22 while recovering from his second hip operation in three years. He was placed on waivers after being a healthy scratch in seven of Buffalo's previous eight games.

He joined the Sabres in 2015 in a multiplayer trade with Winnipeg that was then-general manager Tim Murray's attempt to rebuild the roster. The deal hasn't panned out for Buffalo, which is now on its third coach and second GM and is in jeopardy of extending the NHL's longest active playoff drought to nine years.

Bogosian has a goal and four assists this season and 53 goals and 141 assists in 636 regular-season career games.

His demotion saves Buffalo a little over \$1 million in space against the salary cap and also frees up room on what's been a crowded blue line this season.

In a separate move, the Sabres recalled defenseman John Gilmour and goalie Andrew Hammond from Rochester. Gilmour provides Buffalo with a seventh defenseman a day after the team also demoted blue-liner Lawrence Pilut.

Hammond was recalled after starter Carter Hutton missed practice Saturday for what the team called a maintenance day.

The Sabres play the Toronto Maple Leafs on Sunday night, closing a four-game homestand.

## **Amid virus outbreak, concerns about a hockey stick shortage**

By Stephen Whyno

Associated Press

February 15, 2020

Jack Eichel snapped his stick over the crossbar in frustration after an empty-net goal sealed a Buffalo Sabres loss, splintering it across the ice. He and other NHL players might want to think twice about sacrificing their sticks in a situation like that for now.

The coronavirus outbreak that began in China is affecting the production of hockey sticks used by the world's top players, raising concerns about a potential shortage. Two major manufacturers, Bauer and CCM, have factories in China that have closed.

Players are beginning to make preparations in case stick supplies dry up.

"We'll see how long it lasts," Eichel said. "Hopefully not too long. Obviously, I go through sticks pretty quickly."

Eichel estimates he goes through 100 sticks a season, and he's not alone. Dallas Stars center Tyler Seguin changes sticks each game and was worried enough about running out that he stopped at his mom's house outside Toronto before a game against the Maple Leafs to pick up two more, just in case.

"That's all that was left in the garage," Seguin said. "I'll just manage."

Bauer and CCM officials say they are monitoring the situation so clients like Eichel, Seguin and Toronto's Auston Matthews don't have to dig up old sticks in the garage. Warrior, the other major supplier of custom sticks for top hockey players, has not been affected because its production is based in Tijuana, Mexico.

Beer leagues can go on without worry. Bauer and CCM each independently said there has been no impact on the production of sticks for amateur players.

CCM said in a statement government approvals could slow the reopening of factories and expects to have a better picture of capacity and deliveries in coming weeks. Bauer CEO Ed Kinnaly said the situation remains fluid and hopes the company can re-start operations in China soon.

"We have backup stock in the U.S. and Canada to meet these needs, and we are working closely with equipment managers to understand their inventory levels and ensure players have what they need throughout this situation," Kinnaly said.

NHL equipment managers, players and their representatives are trying to navigate the situation as best as possible. Detroit Red Wings equipment manager Paul Boyer said he has enough inventory for the next couple of weeks but isn't sure what might happen after that given a two-week lag time for sticks to be delivered.

"I do have good sales guys and we came up with a plan to stock up ahead of Chinese New Year, but then the virus hit and there has been an even longer gap without producing sticks," Boyer said. "Am I concerned? Yes, but I'm not panicking."

Just how many sticks are used each season in the NHL is not known, but it's a lot. Boyer figures Red Wings players go through 70 to 120 each year, which would translate to about 1,600 for a full team — and more than 50,000 across the 31-team league.

Among players, the level of concern varies widely. Some, like Maple Leafs captain John Tavares, don't go through sticks as quickly, and teammate Jason Spezza thinks it will be fine as long as the production drought doesn't last three or four months.

Across the locker room, there are some different sentiments.

"I've got to go take stock of what I've got back there," Toronto defenseman Tyson Barrie said. "I hope I'm not running low."

Barrie uses CCM and wasn't in love with the idea of switching manufacturers.

"I mean, if I had to, I guess," he said. "But if you ask anybody it would be tough to switch. You're used to using it every day — your flex, your curve, the whole thing. It would be an adjustment to switch to something else."

American Hockey League teams have not been affected by the shortage, and the league office remains in contact with CCM. The National Women's Hockey League has also not seen an impact because it gets sticks from Warrior, which makes them six days a week in Mexico.

"We are ready and committed to help the NHL and its players meet hockey stick demand if the need arises," Warrior said in a statement. "Our thoughts remain with those whose health is being impacted by this health crisis."

NHL players understand they're far from being the most impacted by the coronavirus outbreak blamed for more than 1,300 deaths among tens of thousands of cases since December. Many were aware of the Chinese New Year and ordered extra sticks knowing fewer are made at that time.

"Any guy, pick a stick, you have it for a while, you like that stick, and that's your stick, that's what you use," Detroit's Dylan Larkin said. "Other than skates, it's one of the most important part of hockey and how you feel."

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*AP Hockey Writers John Wawrow in Buffalo and Larry Lage in Detroit and Canadian Press National Hockey Writer Joshua Clipperton in Toronto contributed.*

## **Sabres put injury-plagued D-man Zach Bogosian on waivers**

By John Wawrow

Associated Press

February 14, 2020

**BUFFALO, N.Y. (AP)** — The Buffalo Sabres placed Zach Bogosian on waivers Friday in a move that could give the injury-plagued defenseman a new home and open a spot on Buffalo's crowded blue line.

Bogosian goes on waivers just over a week before the NHL trade deadline. He asked for a trade earlier this season.

The 29-year-old has been in and out of the lineup with hip injuries and has also sat as a healthy scratch. He missed the first 22 games of this season recovering from offseason hip surgery — his second in three years — and has been a healthy scratch in seven of Buffalo's past eight games.

Bogosian counts \$5.14 million against the salary cap in the final year of his contract.

He would be assigned to Rochester of the American Hockey League if he clears waivers and would still count \$4.07 million against Buffalo's cap.

Bogosian joined the Sabres in 2015 in a multiplayer trade with Winnipeg that was then-general manager Tim Murray's attempt to rebuild the roster. The deal hasn't panned out for Buffalo, which is now on its third coach and second GM and is in jeopardy of extending the NHL's longest active playoff drought to nine years.

He has a goal and four assists in 19 games this season and 53 goals and 141 assists in 636 regular-season games with the Atlanta Thrashers, Winnipeg Jets and Sabres.

The Sabres then freed up another roster spot by assigning defenseman Lawrence Pilut to the minors. The two moves leave Buffalo with just six defensemen on its roster.

Buffalo is coming off a 4-3 overtime win over Columbus and off until hosting the Toronto Maple Leafs on Sunday night.

## **Carter Hutton's status uncertain for Sabres' game against Toronto**

By Lance Lysowski

The Buffalo News

February 15, 2020

Buffalo Sabres coach Ralph Krueger is awaiting word on whether his starting goalie will be available to play Sunday night against the Toronto Maple Leafs in KeyBank Center.

Carter Hutton, who has started six of eight games since Linus Ullmark suffered a lower-body injury Jan. 28, missed practice Saturday in LECOM Harborcenter for what the Sabres called "maintenance." Krueger told the media that Hutton's absence is not related to the goalie's collision with Columbus Blue Jackets winger Eric Robinson in the third period Thursday night.

With Hutton's status uncertain, the Sabres recalled goalie Andrew Hammond from Rochester on Saturday.

"Carter, we're quite optimistic about his rehab day today, and there was a different action, actually," Krueger said. "It wasn't the hit that caused the situation we're battling with right now."

Hutton, 34, went almost four months without winning a game, posting a 0-8-4 record and .872 save percentage from Oct. 24 through Jan. 30. He has since gone 4-2 with a .902 save percentage, winning each of his past three starts.

Hutton, who posted consecutive shutouts while winning his first six starts of the season, made 28 saves in a 4-2 overtime win over Columbus on Thursday. Jake McCabe came to Hutton's defense after the collision with Robinson by repeatedly cross-checking the Blue Jackets winger. The action resulted in McCabe receiving a double-minor for cross-checking, though the Sabres managed to kill off the ensuing power play.

"First of all, I thought Huttons got clipped a little bit high for me," Krueger said following the win. "We ended up with a penalty kill --- that was not really quite mathematically logical, but let's take it for that. I thought the reaction and the way the guys defend each other as a group is strong right now if those situations occur. But it was, of course, important. We need to fight for each other here and we've got to battle every night."

Jonas Johansson will likely make his third career start if Hutton is unavailable Sunday against Toronto. Johansson has gone 0-1-1 with an .889 save percentage in three games since joining the Sabres.

Hammond, meanwhile, could serve as the Sabres' backup for the second time in one week. He was recalled before puck drop last Sunday because Hutton was dealing with what the Sabres called a family situation.

Hammond, 32, has gone 13-11-2 with a .905 save percentage during his first season with Rochester. He last appeared in an NHL game with the Colorado Avalanche on April 22, 2018, a 5-0 first-round playoff loss to the Nashville Predators in which he allowed five goals on 37 shots.

The pending unrestricted free agent is best known for his remarkable run with the Ottawa Senators in 2015, when he went 20-1-2 with a .943 save percentage to help the team qualify for the playoffs.

### **Gilmour arrives**

Defenseman John Gilmour was also recalled from Rochester on Saturday, hours before the Sabres assigned Zach Bogosian to the Amerks.

Gilmour, 26, appeared in four NHL games after making Buffalo's roster out of training camp. He has six goals with seven assists and a minus-14 rating in 32 games since joining the Amerks in November.

Gilmour was recalled because the Sabres wanted a seventh defenseman and preferred to have Lawrence Pilut play games with Rochester this weekend. In other roster news, Marcus Johansson (upper body) returned to practice and is on track to be in the lineup Sunday night, and Michael Frolik was absent because of an illness. The latter's availability will be determined prior to the 7 p.m. puck drop against Toronto.

### **Series finale**

Jack Eichel is anticipating an emotional game Sunday night. Prior to Toronto's game in Ottawa on Saturday night, the Sabres (26-24-8) were eight points behind the Maple Leafs (30-20-8) for third place in the Atlantic Division.

With a win Sunday, the Sabres will take the season series over Toronto for the first time since 2016. Buffalo won the first matchup this season, 6-4, before losing once in overtime and once in regulation.

Leafs forward Andreas Johnsson, who is out six-to-eight weeks because of knee surgery, joined an injury report this week that also includes Cody Ceci (ankle), Morgan Rielly (foot) and Ilya Mikheyev (wrist). Frederik Andersen will start in goal for Toronto.

"The emotions will automatically be there because it's Toronto," Eichel said. "The environment should be a good one. It's an important game for both sides. Obviously, we're trying to find points any way we can and put ourselves in the best position moving forward and they're the same way. We just have to be ready to play. We know it's going to be a tough night."

## **Sabres' Zach Bogosian assigned to Rochester after clearing waivers**

By Lance Lysowski

The Buffalo News

February 15, 2020

After dealing with various injuries and experiencing some of the darkest days in Sabres history during his five-plus seasons with the team, Zach Bogosian's time in Buffalo likely came to an end Saturday.

The 29-year-old defenseman was assigned to the Rochester Americans after clearing waivers, potentially providing him with an opportunity to showcase his skill in a contract year and giving the Sabres an additional \$1.075 million in cap space ahead of the Feb. 24 trade deadline.

The next move is Bogosian's, though. His agent, Darren Ferris, told The Buffalo News in a text message that the two plan to meet in the coming days to determine the "next steps." Bogosian has yet to decide if he will report to Rochester.

Sabres coach Ralph Krueger declined to comment on the Sabres' decision to place Bogosian on waivers after he was a healthy scratch in 17 of the previous 26 games.

"It's a management, organizational conversation," coach Ralph Krueger said. "I always work with the players that are here. I have no other information for you."

Bogosian is in the final year of a \$36 million contract he signed with Winnipeg in July 2013. He had one goal with four assists in 19 games this season after undergoing hip surgery last April and suffering a setback during his rehab over the summer.

Bogosian played 10 consecutive games for the Sabres after making his season debut Nov. 24, and he reportedly requested a trade when he was a healthy scratch against Nashville on Dec. 12. General Manager Jason Botterill was unable to find a team interested in taking on Bogosian's \$5.142 million cap hit. His last game as a Sabre was Feb. 4, a 6-1 loss to Colorado in which he had a minus-3 rating in 17:09.

Bogosian was part of former General Manager Tim Murray's plan to expedite the Sabres' rebuild amid the tank season in 2014-15. Bogosian, a former third overall draft pick, was acquired in February 2015 along with Evander Kane and goalie Jason Kasdorf from Winnipeg in exchange for Tyler Myers, Drew Stafford, Joel Armia, Brendan Lemieux and a first-round draft pick.

Bogosian had 114 points in six seasons between Atlanta and Winnipeg, while Kane was a former 30-goal scorer. The trade, and others like it, depleted the Sabres' depth.

Kane scored 68 goals in parts of three seasons in Buffalo before he was traded to San Jose in February 2018. Bogosian, meanwhile, did not play more than 65 games in any of his six seasons in Buffalo, missing 170 games due to injury during that span.

Bogosian underwent two hip surgeries, the first of which limited him to 18 games in 2017-18. He has not played more than 70 games in any season since 2010-11 with the Atlanta Thrashers.

"He's had a tough road here dealing with the rehabs and trying to get himself back to what he feels is his best," Sabres captain Jack Eichel said. "When you have surgeries like the ones he's had, it doesn't happen overnight. It's something that takes a while. He's been in here early every single day working out, trying to get himself back. Trying to make himself feel like he did before. I think all the guys on the team recognized that and he's somebody you honestly enjoy coming to the rink and seeing every day."

Bogosian made a significant impact off the ice in Buffalo. He served as an alternate captain under former coach Phil Housley and was as a mentor to Eichel and defenseman Rasmus Dahlin, who was drafted first overall in 2018.

Since its inception in 2015, Bogosian's nonprofit foundation, the Bogo Bunch, donated \$155,000 to Roswell Park, including a \$75,000 gift last March. He also worked with the Sabres on a tickets for troops program in which he provided a pair of 100-level seats to a member of the military during every home game.

Though Eichel gave a short response when asked for his reaction to the Sabres' decision, he became emotional when discussing how he was impacted by his friendship with Bogosian.

"Honestly, I do have the organization and the team to thank for the relationship that I was able to create by being here with him," Eichel said. "I think my biggest message to him through this whole thing has been the best part about all of it – obviously to play the game and everything – but at the end of this, whenever the two of us are done playing, he'll be a lifelong friend of mine. He's somebody that – there's not a lot of people in the world that I'm closer with. We have a really special relationship. I don't want to get emotional here talking about him, but that's all I've got."

Bogosian was unable to surpass the six other defensemen on the Sabres' roster: Dahlin, Rasmus Ristolainen, Brandon Montour, Henri Jokiharju, Jake McCabe and Colin Miller. In addition to opening a roster spot, Botterill also provided himself with salary-cap relief ahead of the trade deadline.

According to CapFriendly.com, Botterill currently has \$3.673 million of cap space. In addition to Bogosian, the Sabres have five pending unrestricted free agents who could be traded before the deadline: Zemgus Girgensons, Johan Larsson, Conor Sheary, Jimmy Vesey and Michael Frolik.

## **Sabres recall John Gilmour, Andrew Hammond from Rochester**

By Lance Lysowski

The Buffalo News

February 15, 2020

The Buffalo Sabres' roster shakeup continued Saturday with defenseman John Gilmour and goalie Andrew Hammond recalled from Rochester.

Gilmour, 26, will likely replace defenseman Zach Bogosian, who was placed on waivers Friday. If another team does not claim Bogosian before noon Saturday, the Sabres could assign him to Rochester or loan him to another American Hockey League team. Bogosian could also remain on the Sabres' roster, though that is unlikely after Gilmour joined the team.

Hammond, meanwhile, joined the team because Carter Hutton missed practice Saturday for "maintenance." Michael Frolik (illness) did not participate in the on-ice session, while Marcus Johansson (upper body) rejoined the team after not playing Thursday against Columbus.

Coach Ralph Krueger will address the media following practice Saturday morning.

Gilmour has six goals with seven assists and a minus-14 rating in 32 games with Rochester. He made the Sabres out of training camp and appeared in four games before being assigned to the Amerks in November.

Hammond, 32, has a .905 save percentage in 28 games with Rochester. He has not played in an NHL game since April 22, 2018.

## **Sabres of the 2000s keep their hopes up for Blue and Gold in the 2020s**

By Mike Harrington

The Buffalo News

February 15, 2020

No decade in Buffalo Sabres history had such wild swings of emotion as the 2000s. When former owner Tom Golisano and a couple of dozen ex-players gathered in town this week, they were largely celebrating the near misses of the Stanley Cup runs in 2006 and 2007.

How long ago they seem.

The Sabres currently own the longest playoff drought in the NHL, dating to 2011, and have not won a series since they beat the New York Rangers in the second round in the spring of '07. The last appearance in the playoffs was a seven-game defeat to Philadelphia in 2011, just more than two months after Terry Pegula took ownership of the team. It was a series in which the Flyers' best player was former Buffalo captain Daniel Briere.

"That was the last playoff round for the Sabres? Wow, I knew the the last few years have been tough. I didn't realize that was the last time," Briere, now vice president of the ECHL's Maine Mariners, said here Thursday night. "It's hard to imagine almost. I look at their team and there's a great base there to have a special team. I don't want to speculate what needs to be done. That's not my job. But you look at the top-end players that they have and there's definitely a recipe to have a great team here."

"I'm a little disappointed but I feel bad for Terry because I know how much it means to him," said Golisano, who still watches most every game on television. "And obviously to the coaches and the players. So I'm rooting for him. I wish they could do better."

Much like current fans, everyone associated with the 2000s is hopeful about the Sabres of the 2020s. The 2010s, of course, were mostly a washout as the team has failed to reach 90 points since that 2011 run to the postseason.

"It's a sport where it is cyclical. You see what happened with Chicago and LA," said ex-Buffalo center Paul Gaustad, referring to former Cup champions who have now fallen on hard times. "There's some luck to it for sure with draft picks because they don't always work out. It's not an exact science. It takes time, vision, trust. I know it's been a long process."

"It takes time and I know it's been a while. Buffalo has been waiting, but it takes time. You talk about us in '05-06, well, you think about '02-03, '03-04, the lockout. It's not good years there, not pretty. But there have been reloads here. I believe in Jason Botterill. He's an extremely smart hockey person. He's earned the right to be in the position he's in the NHL."

Gaustad said he's impressed by the work and mental fortitude of coach Ralph Krueger and has heard great things about the first-year coach from goaltender and former Nashville teammate Carter Hutton. And Gaustad said all the alums believe in the burgeoning star power of current captain Jack Eichel.

"I don't know if we've had a guy like that in Buffalo in a long time," Gaustad said. "Danny and 'Dru' (Briere and Chris Drury) were great players, but Jack is an elite, elite player. That's what you build around and I remain excited for this because of that."

Briere said the Sabres benefited from many of their players staying together in Rochester during the '04-05 lockout season and being of similar ages.

"You hope that your players kind of grow and come up with their best years all at the same time," Briere said. "A salary cap era, that's a little bit of what happens now. The best team, you have to have your core and your depth players have their best year all together."

"This is one of the best places to play and have everybody behind you. I hope they get to feel it, with what's going on with the Bills and see how passionate the fans are with their team. If they get to be a team that

contends again, I know the fan base will be ecstatic and they'll be there for them. That relationship is extremely special."

### **The noise**

The Sabres of the 2000s had strong leadership in coach Lindy Ruff and general manager Darcy Regier, rock-solid goaltending from Ryan Miller and all sorts of options on offense and defense. What they also developed was a visceral connection between the players and the fans that is still a talking point today. The camera shots from the Party in the Plaza, when games going on inside the building were shown outside to thousands of fans, became staples of the telecasts.

One moment stands out. It came in Game 6 of the 2006 East final against Carolina, when Briere's overtime goal gave the Sabres a 2-1 win and sent the series to its ill-fated showdown in Raleigh.

The fans knew it might be the last home game of the season and they partied in the seats not wanting to leave but hoping to return the next week for the Cup final against Edmonton. Eventually, they moved to the arena's giant atrium, roaring and chanting their way down the escalators and the staircases – just on the other side of the wall from where the team's old changing room was.

"People hanging out in the atrium in the front. Nobody wanted to leave," Briere said. "That's my greatest memory of the Sabres fan base."

"I remember that vividly," defenseman Brian Campbell said. "We were all in the change room asking, 'What is that sound?' It was amazing. We all stood around and were quiet for a second asking what is that? We all figured out it was the fans in the atrium going crazy. One of those stop-in-time kind of things."

Managing partner Larry Quinn spearheaded construction and design of the arena in the mid-'90s and foreshadowed the atrium becoming the gathering place for celebrations someday. But even Quinn was blown away on this night.

"The night Briere scored the OT goal in Game 6, I went downstairs and that wall was visibly moving by 8 or 9 inches," Quinn said. "We were all looking at it going, 'Oh my God.' "

In those times, the players were like rock stars in town. And it wasn't hard to find them rocking hard some nights on Chippewa or Franklin streets, or on Elmwood Avenue.

"We embraced the fans, had a good group of guys that knew the fans were important to us. It was fun," Campbell said. "You wanted to have a beer with a fan or they wanted to have a beer, it was like, 'Hey, let's have a beer.' Obviously times have changed with the era of phones and camera phones, but that was a great era of time where you could still enjoy the moment and have fun with people."

"That's part of the reason why it was so cool playing here," Briere said. "People cared about their team. That side of it was really special. The bond we created with the fans, we kind of came out of nowhere coming out of the lockout. It was unexpected for the fans and they just ran with it."

### **A triumphant and troubling decade**

So much more went on during those 10 years. Both triumph and troubles.

The Sabres started the decade strong with the afterglow of the trip to the No Goal Stanley Cup final of 1999. They were 78 seconds from the Eastern Conference final in 2001 but lost both Game 6 and Game 7 of the second-round series to Pittsburgh and it was five long years before they were back in the postseason.

And what a five years they were.

The team went bankrupt in the wake of the Rigas/Adelphia scandal, fell into NHL control and relocation seemed like a definite possibility until Golisano completed his purchase in 2003. And the entire league, of course, was shut down for the 2004-05 season due to the owners' lockout.

Coming out of the lockout, there were no expectations. But the team suddenly blossomed. The fans returned. The 2005-06 season went until June 1, all the way to Game 7 of the East final at Carolina. It's the one Buffalo team most everyone agrees probably should have won the Stanley Cup had injuries not gotten in the way.

"I always felt when I was traded, the first day I stepped off the plane, there was a special feeling around here," recalled Briere. "We had some great years and a special team there. We were so close to winning it all. Those things always stay with you."

"People predicted us last before the season and it was one of those things were we wouldn't accept it," added Gaustad, whom fans again serenaded with "Gooooose" chants Thursday night. "We said, 'We won't accept it in this locker room. If you want to accept it, don't be here.' It was such a fun time in our lives, such a fun group. We all bought in."

The final blow, of course, was the leg infection that felled stalwart defenseman Jay McKee the night before Game 7 in Carolina. The Sabres had a 2-1 lead through two periods but lost, 4-2.

"That's sports. It sucks. All the teams go through it and get banged by it," Gaustad said. "It happens in Game 7 to us and I remember being on the plane and thinking, 'Where's Jay? He's going to miss the flight. We can't take off.' "

Winger J.P. Dumont says he's still upset about the team's near miss.

"I would have loved to go back there. Like Jay, make sure he washes his leg there or something so it doesn't get infected," Dumont joked. "All those big injuries for defensemen. I would love to see what would have happen. You don't want to have ifs. It was really tough to swallow."

### **The goals**

Lots of memorable playoff overtime goals stand out in the 2000s. Stu Barnes went bar-down to beat Pittsburgh in Game 5 in 2001. There was Briere's heroics against Carolina, and the Maxim Afinogenov goal in 2007 against the New York Rangers after Drury's "Who else?" goal tied the game with 7.7 seconds left in regulation (Buffalo has just one playoff OT winner since then, by Tyler Ennis in Game 5 in 2011 in Philly).

The Sabres posted three of their four wins against Ottawa in 2006 after 60 minutes. Drury won Game 1, 7-6, with a goal after just 18 seconds, Dumont won Game 3 on what he called a "fluffer" and Pominville's Game 5 short-handed goal that won the series lives forever as one of the two or three most memorable goals in franchise history.

"I blacked out to be honest with you," Pominville said. "Jay McKee couldn't believe it. He was the first guy to me coming out of the penalty box. ... To score a goal of that magnitude you take a step back now and you realize how much that meant to the team and the organization and myself for my career. Definitely a proud moment."

Pominville is 37 now, and did not have a team to play for this year after the Sabres didn't re-sign him. He became a 30-goal scorer in the NHL but forever has this one moment.

"I still get talked about it quite a bit so I realize it now," he said. "When you're playing, you're in the moment and we were riding the wave. I was young, clueless, having fun and going with it."

Dumont said his goal still pumps him up if he watches it before men's beer league games at home in Nashville.

"I remember scoring and turning around and I see everybody charging at me," he said. "I did the half-running man I think to celebrate and Teppo Numminen was right there. I'm not going to lie about that one. It was definitely a fluffer. I knew where it was going. Everything happened quick."

### **More tough times**

To many fans, of course, the decade is black-marked by July 1, 2007, the day that Briere and Chris Drury left via free agency after ownership made the decision to move on from Briere, only to see Drury leave too.

"It wasn't my decision. I had to move on unfortunately," said Briere, who led Philadelphia to a Cup final in 2010 and beat the Sabres in a seven-game first-round series in 2011. "It's just the way it was. It was the way it happened. I've moved on from that. There's no hard feelings. I thought I was going to be a Sabre for the rest of my career honestly. Things happen for a reason. It's done. We can't change anything about it."

The heart and soul of the Sabres was gone in one fell swoop and has never really returned. The Sabres have yet to win a playoff series since.

" 'Dru' would play in basically every situation," recalled Pominville. "Win faceoffs, PK, block shots and you're like, 'Man, if this guy's doing that I've got to do that.' Danny was maybe a little more quiet but every night found a way to be on board and score the big goal at the key time."

The Sabres missed the playoffs in 2008 and 2009, the latter miss coming on the final weekend of the season. They won the Northeast Division in 2010 and squeezed into the playoffs on the second-last day in 2011, losing in the first round both times.

"Danny and 'Dru' and others leaving made it difficult, especially with them being the leaders," Gaustad said. "We were still young and I don't know if we were quite ready. We were close, just not able to take a hold of it all. We were climbing that stepping stone and it was just a little too far for us to reach. But we fought those years."

The loss of the captains was impossible to overcome. Their acquisitions were pulled off by Regier in two of the best trades in franchise history. They were irreplaceable.

"Everyone grew up together and I think there's something to be said about that," said Angola native Patrick Kaleta, who made his NHL debut in 2007 during the game that led to the infamous brawl with the Senators. "You have a team built up with passion, with guys who would do anything for the logo. That mixture is a force to be reckoned with."

"You mix the highly skilled, the great goaltending and the sandpaper and that's a team. You grew up together, you go to bat for each other and it's a brotherhood that you hate losing so much that it's not acceptable."

That '06 team certainly hated losing. The group didn't get to the Cup final or win the whole thing, but it's remembered ultra-fondly, even as it sits as the greatest "what if" in franchise history and a dream for current fans that seems a long way away.

"Of course you wonder 'what if.' Anybody in sports wonders 'what if' every day of their lives probably," said Golisano, now 78. "I'm no exception and I'm sure (partners) Dan DiPofi and Larry Quinn felt the same way. It was just such an exciting time to see the crowds outside the arena, much less inside. It was just awesome. I think about it all the time."

## **From Sabres to Amerks to healthy scratch, John Gilmour hopes to rebound**

By Bill Hoppe

The Buffalo News

February 14, 2020

ROCHESTER – John Gilmour knows he deserved to be a healthy scratch. The high-scoring defenseman's erratic play made him the Americans' biggest liability.

Gilmour said he wasn't showcasing much poise, trusting his instincts or moving his feet enough.

So last Saturday, hours after a rough outing in the Amerks' 5-2 home loss to the Syracuse Crunch, coach Chris Taylor benched Gilmour, who began the season as the Buffalo Sabres' eighth defenseman.

"I wasn't playing to my standard the last few games, and especially the Friday game, I didn't like my game at all," Gilmour said. "I probably deserved to be sitting in the stands. We have such a deep blue line. I learned that anybody on any night can be in the stands."

Gilmour, 26, is one of the Amerks' highest-paid players. After scoring 20 goals and 54 points in 70 games with the Hartford Wolf Pack last season, he signed a one-way contract with the Sabres worth \$700,000.

In October, Gilmour earned a spot on the Sabres' opening night roster. But he played just four games before they waived him in late November.

After the Sabres assigned him to Rochester, Taylor said Gilmour "wanted to prove that he was a player still available to play in the NHL."

"So he wanted to come to Rochester and show that he could score a lot of points," he said. "I think his defensive habits got away from him there. That's the biggest thing, as a team we count of defense first and then bring the offense.

"I think from other teams he was with he was more offensive and didn't really have to worry. So I think we're in just a learning process getting to know him and making sure he understands what we want as well."

Gilmour said he creates trouble for himself by overthinking and trying to do too much.

"Then next thing you know, it ends up hurting you and the team in a way," said Gilmour, who has compiled six goals, 13 points and a team-worst minus-14 rating in 32 games. "So (I'm) definitely trying to find a good balance between trying to make great plays and just a simple play."

When the Sabres sent Lawrence Pilut to the Amerks for last Saturday afternoon's road game against the Toronto Marlies, Taylor scratched Gilmour.

"We felt with the D we had John was the guy that needed to sit out," he said. "He's had good games but he's also had some ones he'd like to have back. I just felt it was time to take a step back for a game and let him watch."

Taylor said Gilmour handled sitting out "very well and very professionally."

"He knew he wasn't playing up to his standards and what we want, so we had a good talk," he said. "His last couple games I thought he played a lot better."

Gilmour said watching the Amerks' 4-0 loss from the stands helped him "take a deep breath" and "kind of revamped" him.

Taylor inserted Gilmour for the Amerks' back-to-back road set against the Charlotte Checkers on Tuesday and Wednesday. He scored in Tuesday's 4-2 loss.

"I was eager for my next shot to get back in and show why I can be a really good player in this league," he said. "Sometimes there's going to be setbacks and some adversity. At 26 years old, it's not just going to be smooth sailing from here on out, and that just reaffirmed it, that I got to be sharp every day. I could be out just like everyone else."

## **Tom Golisano's busy week: a book, a homecoming, an ovation**

By Tim O'Shei

The Buffalo News

February 14, 2020

Tom Golisano eased back in a chair, collar open, his sportcoat left with the doorman downstairs so it wouldn't soak up the smoke from the cigar in his hand.

It was 3:30 p.m. on Thursday afternoon in the Buffalo Club. And it was a moment of respite during an otherwise busy week for the 78-year-old businessman, who splits time between his home in Florida and his hometown of Rochester, where he started the payroll company Paychex nearly 50 years ago.

Two days earlier, Golisano was in New York City to give a series of interviews and talks for the release of his book, "Built Not Born: A Self-Made Billionaire's No-Nonsense Guide for Entrepreneurs." The promotional efforts were working: Golisano received word that the book was No. 1 in Barnes & Noble's business section, and the book retailer's No. 11 overall.

"The most common reaction I've gotten to the book is, 'Why didn't you write it 20 years ago?' " said Golisano, whose chapters offer advice in areas including raising capital, developing products, generating sales, and protecting your business assets. ("Get a prenup!" writes Golisano, who is married to the former tennis star Monica Seles.)

This evening was a break from book promotion. In a few hours, Golisano would be making his return to KeyBank Center for the Buffalo Sabres' celebration of their 2000s decade. Golisano, who purchased the team out of bankruptcy in 2003 and turned it into a profitable business, would be reconnected with several of his former players, and with Terry and Kim Pegula, to whom he sold the team in 2011.

Golisano was going to be recognized during an on-ice ceremony before the Sabres' game against the Columbus Blue Jackets, which raised an obvious question: How would the fans react? Would they recognize Golisano as the billionaire from Rochester who stabilized, and likely saved, the franchise? As the owner whose 2005-06 and 2006-07 teams were among the most exciting in franchise history? Or would they remember him as the businessman who acknowledged when he bought the team that he wasn't a hockey fan, and as the owner whose team lost two of its best players – Chris Drury and Daniel Briere – to free agency on the same day?

Would it be gratifying to get a positive fan reaction? Or to be blunt – and as Golisano writes in his book, he prefers people be straightforward with him – does he care?

"I'll tell you what: These two guys deserve it," Golisano said, pointing to his left and right. He was flanked by Larry Quinn, who was managing partner of the Sabres under Golisano, and Dan DiPofi, who oversaw the team's finances. Both men earned equity stakes in the Sabres and, when Golisano sold the team for \$189 million to the Pegulas, became wealthy.

Quinn and DiPofi got money, but in Golisano's mind, there's something else they didn't receive. "They did the hard work," he said, "and they did not get credit for it."

Neither man had high expectations of a rousing reaction from fans.

"It would be nice, but I stopped investing in that a long time ago," said Quinn, who in the mid-1990s oversaw construction of the hockey arena under the Sabres' original owners, the Knox family, and then served as team president until he was fired by the next owners, the Rigases. But the Rigas family ownership crumbled when their main business, Adelphia Communications, went bankrupt and patriarch John Rigas and his son Timothy were sent to federal prison on multiple counts of fraud. With the Sabres' future in question, Quinn and DiPofi ultimately helped Golisano make a bid to National Hockey League Commissioner Gary Bettman, who was overseeing the franchise until a buyer was found.

"When we first showed him our business plan, it was basically a business plan that showed him he was going to continue to lose money year after year," DiPofi said.

At the time, Golisano was curious why Quinn and DiPofi bothered to present him with the opportunity.

"Why did you give me a projection that does that?" Golisano asked.

"It happens to be the truth," Quinn said.

Golisano thanked them, but said he couldn't do it. But over the next few months, he gave it more thought. Golisano concluded that by treating the Sabres like a business designed to make a profit – rather than as a billionaire's real-life equivalent of a free-spending fantasy hockey team – he could make it work. But he wanted Quinn and DiPofi to run it.

"We tried to give him a realistic view," DiPofi said. "He probably looked at us as someone he could entrust running the business."

He still does. Quinn and Golisano are in regular contact, and Quinn served as a pre-publication reader for Golisano's book. DiPofi, after spending eight years in retirement, went back to work for Golisano recently, helping him vet and manage private investments in startup companies. In late 2019, Golisano made large investments in two Buffalo companies: He invested \$20 million in PostProcess Technologies, a 3D printing technology company, in November, and put another \$20 million in December into Viridi Parente, a clean energy company.

Golisano and DiPofi met with both companies during the day on Thursday.

"We were just at some board meetings today where they handed out packages this big," DiPofi said, using his thumb and forefinger to approximate a thick written report. This is a Golisano no-no. In "Built Not Born," he advocates strongly for brief, to-the-point business plans – documents that are precise in vision and devoid of unneeded details, graphics and pictures.

"They haven't learned yet," DiPofi said, his eyes glinting. This is a common lesson Golisano teaches the people around him.

"You've got to give them a copy of the book," DiPofi said.

Golisano laughed. He told the executives earlier that day to cut their presentations to the core details.

"I think I've been accused of being very direct," Golisano said. "I want to be treated that way. Would you say that's fair?"

"Absolutely right," Quinn said. He recalled a Sabres executive who was nervous about presenting to Golisano and prepared a detail-laden, 50-deck slideshow. "That's the worst thing you can do with Tom," Quinn said. "Just be able to get on your feet and talk about our sales and what you expect."

And know your numbers. This is both a key Golisano bit of advice from the book, and expectation if you work for him. Or even if you don't.

One time at a Sabres game, Golisano was hosting former President Bill Clinton. Golisano was a significant donor to the Clinton Global Initiative, which was designed to bring together influential leaders from around the world to tackle international problems. But after the first meeting of the Clinton Global Initiative, Golisano had some concerns about spending and wanted to review them. Golisano pulled out a ruler he carries with him – one with a magnifying glass in the middle, perfectly designed for reviewing spreadsheets – and asked Clinton to sit with him in the Sabres' office. Together, they reviewed the budget, including details such as cutting down on exotic breakfast foods that Golisano noticed people weren't eating.

"I was pleasantly surprised the way he reacted, because he listened to me, and he made some decisions based on the input that I gave him," said Golisano, who also tells this story in his book. Clinton and Golisano remain friends, and were talking on the phone several days ago about their grandkids – and still joking about the line-item review. "(His) staff didn't like it too much," Golisano said, "but Bill Clinton handled it really well."

Another Golisano rule is maintaining a graceful public image, something he had the chance to exercise Thursday night. After his wife arrived at the Buffalo Club, Golisano, Quinn, DiPofi and their friends, family and staff headed to the arena. After catching up with Bettman and the Pegulas, Golisano was led to the Sabres' media room for a pregame scrum of media interviews. Standing in the room finishing his own interviews was Daniel Briere, a star on Golisano's Sabres whom the team didn't re-sign as a free agent in 2007. Briere has expressed disappointment over the years that the team didn't keep him, and the departure that summer of both Briere and his co-captain Chris Drury has been a sting many Sabres fans and media have never quite soothed.

Briere was diplomatic about it Thursday night.

"There's not hard feelings," he said. "I thought I was going to be a Sabre for the rest of my career, honestly. After the season, things happened. Things happen for a reason. I'm not trying to throw anybody under the bus. It's done. We can't change anything about it."

When Golisano entered the room, he held off on answering questions until he could greet Briere.

"Wait a minute," Golisano told reporters. "I want to say hello to this guy." He tapped Briere. "When I heard you were coming, I was very glad."

"It's good to see you too," Briere said politely. "Awesome."

"We'll have some fun tonight," Golisano said.

The fun seemed to happen. When Golisano, along with Quinn and DiPofi, were introduced before the game, the crowd delivered a standing ovation. A video tribute to Golisano acknowledged that he came into the Sabres as a businessman looking to save a franchise, and left as a hockey fan. It ended with the line, "Thank you for believing in Buffalo." And the crowd cheered again.

## Would Sabres have won Stanley Cup with healthy Tim Connolly in 2006?

By Jason Wolf

The Buffalo News

February 14, 2020

Tim Connolly dropped off the radar after his final season in the NHL, the uber-talented and oft-injured former Buffalo Sabres center suddenly absent from the game for the first time in his life.

"I traveled around a while, got engaged, got married, had a kid, tried living down South, but I'm a Northeasterner, so I ended up back in Rochester," Connolly said Thursday night at KeyBank Center, as the Sabres welcomed him back along with players from the 2000s as part of the team's 50th anniversary celebration. "My wife's family and my family is both from Buffalo and Syracuse, and we have a lot of friends in Rochester, so we ended up settling down there and I've been there for a few years now."

Connolly, 38, was raised on the outskirts of Syracuse and played eight of his 11 NHL seasons with the Sabres after being drafted fifth overall by the New York Islanders in 1999. Two years later, Connolly was dealt to Buffalo as part of a package for Michael Peca.

Connolly recorded 94 goals and 320 points in 464 games with the Sabres. After missing the entire 2003-04 season with a concussion, he said he felt he was playing at the height of his abilities on offense and defense during the 2006 postseason, when he scored the tying goal late in the third period of the Sabres' 7-6 overtime victory in Game 1 of their playoff series against the Ottawa Senators.

The Sabres tied the game five times before winning.

"It was a fun game to play in because it was back and forth, back and forth. They would score, we would score, they would score," Connolly said, "and I think really they were more of a favorite than us to win that series. And I think Game 1, tying it up late and then scoring in overtime, Chris Drury, I didn't even see the goal. I was in the locker room getting my skate worked on. I think that was a pivotal game in that series and gave us some confidence to beat them."

Connolly scored 11 points in eight games that postseason, but a concussion in Game 2 sidelined him for the remainder of the playoffs and nearly the entirety of the 2006-07 season.

"He was almost like the wild card for us," former teammate Daniel Briere said. "We had different lines. The Drury line. My line, Derek Roy's line. Tim kind of came out of nowhere and he was a force. He didn't have a specific line, but he could do so much for you. He was so talented, so skilled. You could plug him in anywhere because he was so smart. He was the wild card, definitely a special talent."

Former teammate Paul Gaustad still marvels at Connolly's performance that postseason.

"That Ottawa series, I don't know if I've seen a guy play that good and be that dominant and that impactful in a series in a long time," Gaustad said. "He was unbelievable, another level in those first games. He was tremendous. We always had the next-man up idea but it was hard in that case when he went down. 'TC' was so good at that point and I know if you ask him, it was the best hockey of his career. He was a huge part of everything and a big loss for us."

Connolly said he's often thought about how the Sabres might have won the Stanley Cup that season were it not for a rash of injuries, including his own.

"But where's that going to get you, really? Woulda, shoulda, coulda," Connolly said. "I definitely feel myself, personally, that was the best hockey I was playing both offensively and defensively and it's unfortunate what happened, but the team went on to make a really solid run and just came up a little short. But it was fun. Those couple of runs there that we had were fun and we had a legitimate shot to win the Cup."

Connolly was dogged by injuries throughout the remainder of his playing days – including bone spurs that required season-ending hip surgery in 2008 – but set a career high with 65 points in 73 regular season games in 2009-10.

He spent his final NHL season with the Toronto Maple Leafs in 2011-12, was waived and played in 28 games the next season with the AHL's Toronto Marlies.

Connolly returned to hockey last season as a part-time youth hockey coach with the Rochester Monarchs – his neighbor's son plays for the team, he said – and he helps with the 12U AAA team this season.

"You'd be surprised – I think it's a lot harder being a coach than being a player," Connolly said. "They're at an age right now where they're still soaking up a lot and learning a lot, so it's fun to teach them and travel with them and to be with them..."

"My one major skill in life was hockey, so you get away from the game a little while but you kind of get dragged back in. You never really leave."

Connolly marveled that goalie Ryan Miller, his former teammate, is still playing at 39 years old.

"When he was a rookie, he was my roommate, lived with me," Connolly said. "His condo was being built. He said it'd be two weeks and he ended up living (with me) the whole year. But he was a first-team all-star, so he had to stay and live with me. I'll take credit for that."

Connolly laughed. He said he's happy with how his pro career played out, for the most part.

"I'd like to subtract the injuries out of it," Connolly said, "but it's what happens, you've just got to roll with it and work at it. I had a great time playing. There's no other job I'd rather have."

"If you get a decade, I think you're pretty lucky and fortunate."

## **Sabres place Zach Bogosian on waivers, send Pilut to Rochester**

By Mike Harrington

The Buffalo News

February 14, 2020

Zach Bogosian's days with the Buffalo Sabres may be over.

The Sabres announced Friday they have placed the veteran defenseman on waivers, as they are clearly looking to get out from under at least part of the big contract they inherited from the Winnipeg Jets for the injury-plagued blueliner in 2015.

Bogosian, 29, has one goal and four assists in 19 games this season after undergoing serious hip surgery last season and missing training camp. He has been a healthy scratch for eight of the last nine games and was brutal in his most recent appearance, posting a minus-3 rating in the 6-1 loss to Colorado Feb. 4 in KeyBank Center.

Bogosian reportedly asked for a trade in December but no team is going to be interested in a journeyman defender carrying a cap hit of \$5,142,857 with a major injury history. He has not played more than 70 games in a season since 2010-11, his third year with the Atlanta Thrashers.

The cap hit makes it unimaginable that any team would claim Bogosian. Once he clears waivers, the Sabres could send Bogosian to Rochester or arrange to loan him to another AHL team, as they did the last two seasons with forward Matt Moulson, and save \$1.075 million of his cap. They could also do nothing and keep him on the roster.

Bogosian is not on unconditional waivers that would allow the team to work out a mutual termination with him to get the entire cap off its books. That would seem unlikely anyway because Bogosian's actual salary is \$6 million and he would have to be willing to waive what he's owed for the rest of the season.

Bogosian came from Winnipeg in 2015 along with forward Evander Kane in one of former General Manager Tim Murray's biggest deals. Bogosian played parts of six seasons with the Sabres and his best efforts came in 2015-16, when he had seven goals and 17 assists in 64 games.

But Bogosian's speed and effectiveness have been hampered by a pair of hip surgeries and several other ailments. He has played 636 career NHL games, second-most to teammate Jeff Skinner among active players who have never appeared in the playoffs.

Later Friday, Buffalo sent defenseman Lawrence Pilut to Rochester. He has been a healthy scratch the last two games and the Amerks play Saturday against Syracuse and Sunday against Utica, the team they enter the weekend one point behind in the AHL's North Division. Pilut has six goals and 16 assists in 31 games this year for Rochester and no points in 11 games with the Sabres.

## **Sabres hit practice ice after a day off**

By Pat Malacaro

WGR 550

February 15, 2020

The Sabres got back to the practice ice on Saturday morning after having the day off on Friday. Buffalo was busy preparing for the Toronto Maple Leafs on Sunday after six games in the last 10 days.

Marcus Johansson missed Thursday night's win with an upper body injury. Head coach Ralph Krueger is optimistic that he will be in the lineup tomorrow after taking part in practice on Saturday. The veteran moved back to the wing with success on Tuesday. The head coach believed that Johansson "seems to be in a really good place right now, and we need all four lines firing against Toronto for us to be competitive and so Johansson feeling good and feeling confident is just another boost." He had a goal and an assist against the Detroit Red Wings on Tuesday.

Carter Hutton was given a maintenance day on Saturday, and as a result Andrew Hammond was recalled from the Rochester Americans. Also, with Zach Bogosian clearing waivers and being sent to Rochester John Gilmour was also with on the ice with the blue and gold on Saturday. Michael Frolik also missed the skate due to illness, with his status for Sunday's tilt still to be determined.

Krueger said that Gilmour's recall will allow Lawrence Pilut to get back to consistent game action, instead of being a healthy scratch with Buffalo.

Heading into Saturday, the Maple Leafs sit in third place in the Atlantic Division, two points better than the Florida Panthers while Buffalo sits six points back in sixth place in the division. Sunday will be the final meeting of the regular season between the two teams, with the head coach adding that, "it's an exciting one off, without all of the other add ons, the three games to date we are 1-1-1 and the atmosphere in both buildings has been really special and the guys have fed off of that" Krueger continued, "the game alone is special but because of our situation right now and the opportunity for us to inch closer and put some pressure on them is an experience for us." Toronto is in Ottawa to play the Senators tonight.

The top line with Victor Olofsson and Sam Reinhart flanking Jack Eichel remained untouched during the hour skate on Saturday. Johansson was on the wing with Jimmy Vesey, and Curtis Lazar in the middle. The other line combinations were:

Olofsson-Eichel-Reinhart  
Vesey-Lazar-Johansson  
Skinner-Rodrigues-Sheary  
Larsson-Girgensons-Okposo

Defensively, Gilmour worked into the practice as the seventh defenseman, while the other pairings remained the same:

Dahlin-Miller  
McCabe-Jokiharju  
Ristolainen-Montour

Buffalo and the Maple Leafs will drop the puck on Sunday night at seven o'clock. The pregame coverage begins at six p.m. on the flagship home of the Sabres Radio Network – WGR Sports Radio 550.

## **Bogosian clears waivers, assigned to Rochester**

By Brayton Wilson

WGR 550

February 14, 2020

After being placed on waivers by the Buffalo Sabres on Friday, defenseman Zach Bogosian cleared waivers at noon on Saturday and has been assigned to the Rochester Americans of the American Hockey League.

According to our own Pat Malacaro, Bogosian does not expect to report to the Amerks in time for Saturday evening's matchup with the Syracuse Crunch. In addition, multiple reports indicate that Bogosian's agent Darren Ferris will be meeting with his client over the next couple of days to determine his future.

The 29-year-old defenseman had only appeared in 19 games this season for the Sabres with a goal and four assists since returning to the lineup in November from offseason hip surgery.

Back in December, Bogosian reportedly requested a trade out of Buffalo, but never got into the details as to why he wanted out of the organization. Since his request back on Dec. 12, Bogosian had only played in nine games, scoring a goal and picking up an assist.

Bogosian is in the final year of a contract with a \$5.142 million cap hit and is going to be an unrestricted free agent this summer. He signed his contract while with the Winnipeg Jets during the 2013-14 season, and it carried over to the Sabres when he was traded to Buffalo five years ago.

The move will save the Sabres around \$1.075 million on the salary cap.

In 243 career games with the Sabres, Bogosian has scored 13 goals and registered 54 assists for 67 points, but has missed a total of 169 games as a healthy scratch or due to a number of injuries suffered throughout his entire career.

## **Adams: 'We all understand that we're fortunate to have such a passionate fanbase'**

WGR 550

February 14, 2020

The 2019-20 Buffalo Sabres season has been a trying one to some fans around the Western New York area.

The Sabres currently sit with a 26-24-8 record and 60 points in the Eastern Conference standings, which has the team eight points behind the Toronto Maple Leafs for the third and final playoff spot in the Atlantic Division.

Even though the struggles on the ice have had some fans feeling unsettled, the organization's recent off-ice problems have also been the focus of discussion surrounding the fans. The in-game experience has lacked in the past, which may be a product of the team's absence in the Stanley Cup Playoffs for eight consecutive seasons, but some fans believe that the Sabres could be doing a better job of providing a better product regardless of the on-ice play.

Sabres Vice President of Business Administration Kevyn Adams joined the Howard and Jeremy Show on Friday to discuss some of those concerns with the fans.

Here is some of what he had to say:

### **Adams on the organization's understanding of the frustration from the fans:**

"Saturday I was there when the fans were out in the plaza. I walked around, I talked to people, and to be honest, thanked them because the passion is there. We all understand that we're fortunate to have such a passionate fanbase. We get it, we understand where they're at. Obviously I'm in a unique position being from here and growing up going to the Aud, and Gilbert Perreault was my guy. I totally understand how engrained this passion is in the community, and I need to make sure everybody understands that no body has invested more into this team and into this community than Terry and Kim Pegula. They're completely engaged, they understand the frustration, they share in it. We're all in this together. That's the message from Terry and Kim down through the organization is we're all a piece of the puzzle, including fans, players, the front office, it all has to work together. That's been the message."

### **Adams on their messages that come from ownership:**

"They're as accessible and engaged as they've ever been. Just from myself and the business side of the organization, we talk on a daily basis with Terry and Kim. I know that [general manager] Jason [Botterill] does as well on the hockey side. What should give fans hope is that we're being challenged by the Pegulas to figure out every year of our business to make it better. What can we do through league metrics, studying around the league? Where are we with certain things compared to other teams in the league? Where are we with our fan surveys? What are our fans telling us? How can we improve? Even our own analytics say, okay, what are these saying to us and how can we improve the fan experience? These are all ongoing conversations that come from Terry and Kim at the top. I just think it's really important that our fans understand that just because they haven't set out and held a press conference doesn't mean they're not engaged. They love this team, love this community, and they're all in."

### **Adams on the fans' concerns with the challenges throughout the 50th season:**

"There's been some things that have happened here, but it's been a phenomenal of celebrating this great organization. The theme nights, the decade nights have been really well received. Our alumni have been thrilled to come back, so for me, the '70s and '80s Nights, a lot of these guys I watched. And I didn't want to make them feel old, but I said, 'guys, you know it's cool to be in the room with you guys and thanks for back.' And all the way through to last night, I thought it was a great celebration, and we obviously have more to come."

### **Adams on his interactions with the fans:**

"I think it's part of our responsibility as an organization is to look people in the eye, listen and understand their frustration and say, 'we're with you.' We know that we need to be better in every area of our organization. Terry and Kim on down through the organization all feel that way. I just felt it was important that staff members were there and walking around and saying hello. There are markets in the National Hockey League that would die to have fans that passionate that are willing to either call into radio stations or stand out in a plaza in 15-degree

weather. For me, that's easy. Those are the things that we want to be sure that we're out there, engaged and talking and listening."

**Adams on maintaining a strong connection with the fans:**

"It is probably the most important thing we can do right is being engaged and listening. I believe, and this is such a great hockey community, that the five/six-year-old that listens to R.J. [Rick Jeanneret] or watches Jack Eichel score a big goal is a fan for life. We have to, as an organization, be putting ourselves in a position where we are learning from fans. There's no better person to sit down and talk to than someone, whether you're sitting in the 300s, sitting in a suite, sitting along the glass. They all have a different perspective, they all are spending their hard-earned money to come and watch our team on the ice, but also to give us feedback on the team experience."

## **The Satchel: Tim Graham on Bills' PFF snubs and how low this Sabres season is on the Buffalo spectrum**

By Tim Graham

The Athletic

February 14, 2020

The Buffalo sports scene is jumbled and perturbed. The Bills' season was entertaining but not compelling enough to douse the molten angst engulfing the Sabres.

Excitement in Orchard Park evaporated quickly. Attention, most of it negative, has been refocused downtown.

Answers have been in short supply, but not here at The Athletic Buffalo.

When we find ourselves in times of trouble, The Satchel comes to you, speaking words of wisdom.

***Do the Bills really not have a player worthy of PFF top 101 players? — Alexander S.***

***I wanted to see if I could get your take on PFF, what you think of it and what you think about how they came to the conclusion that first-team All-Pro Tre'Davious White was NOT worthy of being on their top 101 players of 2019. — Boog T.***

Bills fans were upset with Pro Football Focus' season-ending rundown of the NFL's best players. All 32 teams aren't equal, and the Bills perform greater than the sum of their parts, but you would think a postseason qualifier would land somebody among the top 101 players, especially from a defensive unit that ranked second in points allowed and third in yards allowed. Football Outsiders ranked Buffalo fifth in DVOA pass defense.

Bills cornerback Tre'Davious White was voted All-Pro and finished sixth in Defensive Player of the Year balloting. He tied for the NFL lead with six interceptions and ranked fourth with 17 pass breakups. Quarterbacks had a 38.9 passer rating, second best for defenders who faced at least 60 targets, when throwing into White's coverage.

On the 599 targets PFF charted against White, he surrendered zero touchdowns. Seems like an elite season to me.

So I went to PFF senior analyst Sam Monson for insight into why White didn't make the 101 cut.

"White at least was a top-quality player, though not quite as good as the consensus in our opinion," Monson said. "He gave up significantly more yardage than other elite zone corners like Richard Sherman.

"White was close to making the list."

The same could not be said for Jordan Phillips, who led all NFL defensive tackles with 9.5 sacks and will be looking for a lucrative contract as a free agent.

"Just watch his 10 sacks," Monson said, referring to the way PFF analyzes half-sack plays as though they're full sacks. "There's, like, one legit dominant play in there. The other nine are slow, grinding, hustle plays — stunt, clean-up or pursuit sacks.

"I'm not saying they're bad plays, but they are plays defensive linemen luck into all the time, and he just happened to luck into nine of them. He had, like, 25 total pressures over the season, and 10 of them were sacks.

"That's just — for want of a better term — lucky. You're not going to repeat that, and it doesn't earn a good PFF grade."

As our Matthew Fairburn noted in his recent analytics-based look at Bills free agency, SportRadar credited Phillips with only 19 total pressures, 65th in the league.

Data suggests Phillips' gaudy campaign was an outlier. He will turn 28 in September and prior to last season had 5.5 sacks over four years. The Miami Dolphins waived him.

The Athletic NFL reporter Sheil Kapadia rated Phillips the 64th best free agent on the market. Throw in all the other players under contract, and Phillips wouldn't come close to a list of NFL's 101 best players.

***Who would win a fight in each of their primes: Rob Ray or Joe Mesi? — Jonah B.***

Quick answer: Ray wouldn't last a round.

But let's take a closer look at the matchup.

Mesi went 36-0 with 29 knockouts and by 2004 became the World Boxing Council's top-rated heavyweight contender to champion Lennox Lewis.

Ray holds the record for most penalty minutes with one team, brawling his way to 3,189 over his Buffalo Sabres career. He led the NHL in penalty minutes twice and finished in the top five six times. He amassed 704 over his second and third seasons alone.

Mesi is 6-foot-1 and weighed in for his bouts at around 220 to 230 pounds. Ray is 6-feet and played in his prime at 215 to 220 pounds.

Ray has a massive problem in that Mesi's "practices" were strictly fighting, often against sparring partners. Mesi knows how to throw and absorb body blows. Hockey enforcers rarely throw punches anywhere other than at an opponent's head. A shot to the ribs or, worse yet, the liver and Ray doesn't get off his knees for half an hour.

To be thorough in this assessment, I reached out to both Thursday for their opinions.

Mesi got back to me first and, without quoting him directly, finished his text with five laughing-tears emojis.

Ray's take: "Two different styles of fighting. Hockey is more of a brawl, while boxing is more technical. Biggest question would be if we're on ice or off. On ice, I win. Off ice, Joe wins."

All right, so all Mesi needs to do is know how to skate, and I'd still give him the edge regardless.

I followed up with him.

"He's right," Mesi said of Ray's answer. "I ski, but I don't skate."

A downhill slalom brawl sounds like a compromise and a pay-per-view that I would buy.

***How do you do it? How do you guys cover these teams? It's exhausting enough vaguely paying attention to them. I can't imagine having to watch them and think about them all the time. — David D.***

The most important factor is not taking the triumphs and defeats personally. Sanity is preserved by knowing that a Sabres four-game win streak or a close Bills loss to the New England Patriots doesn't impact my quality of my life one way or the other. My job is to find and share the most interesting stories, and those angles avail themselves regardless of our local clubs' successes or failures. Drinks help, too.

***How much does next year's expansion draft affect any potential moves that Jason Botterill makes this year and next? — Christopher P.***

Probably not much. The NHL expansion draft is 16 months away, and the Sabres' roster should look significantly different by summer. It damn well better, anyway. With a busy 2020 trade deadline expected and so many expiring contracts, Buffalo will have tremendous flexibility to prepare its roster between now and Seattle's arrival.

One of the ways Seattle can most impact another team is by helping to unload salaries. In exchange for absorbing a dud contract to meet the NHL's imposed minimum payroll, Seattle would receive a player or draft picks as a favor. That shouldn't apply to Buffalo's situation. While the Sabres are up against the salary cap this

season, sports finance site Spotrac.com projects them as having the NHL's third-greatest 2020-21 flexibility before re-signing their restricted free agents.

Expansion deals also will be made to protect players. To ensure that an asset isn't lost, a team might work out a side agreement to give Seattle something else to look the other way. Maybe the Sabres retain someone like defenseman Colin Miller to offer up instead of losing a young player such as Casey Mittelstadt, Rasmus Asplund or Lawrence Pilut.

For the record, Seattle's expansion draft will be the same as it was when Vegas joined the league, with Vegas being exempt from this process. The other 30 clubs can protect seven forwards, three defensemen and one goalie or eight skaters of any type and one goalie.

No-trade clauses must be protected. That will pertain to any significant free agents the Sabres want to sign this offseason and change the complexion of this conversation.

Seattle must collect at least 14 forwards, nine defensemen and three goalies among their 30 expansion-draft selections.

If you're curious who the Sabres protected from the Golden Knights' 2017 expansion, they were forwards Tyler Ennis, Marcus Foligno, Zemgus Girgensons, Evander Kane, Johan Larsson, Ryan O'Reilly and Kyle Okposo, defensemen Nathan Beaulieu, Jake McCabe and Rasmus Ristolainen and goalie Robin Lehner.

***What position, other than wide receiver, do you think the Bills must strengthen during the offseason? — Momcilo V.***

Once in my career, I'd love to cover a Bills offense that features a dangerous tight end. Brandon Beane's approach last year was thorough, loading up on different types. Beane signed Tyler Kroft and blocker Lee Smith in free agency before drafting Dawson Knox and Tommy Sweeney.

The hope was that a committee approach would develop at least one consistent weapon for Josh Allen, but that didn't materialize.

SportRadar data showed Buffalo tight ends ranked 24th in targets, 26th in catches, 24th in yards, 24th in touchdowns, 22nd in red-zone touchdowns and 25th in first downs.

Buffalo's tight end stats: 46 catches for 604 yards, four touchdowns and 26 first downs. The NFL average was 76 catches for 822 yards, six TDs and 42 first downs.

Also on the Bills' wish list (aside from receiver) should be a tailback to spell Devin Singletary, an edge rusher and at least one more cornerback.

***Is this year's Sabres team the low point of Buffalo sports during this century? — Colin C.***

Social media creates a community where fans can exchange opinions immediately. Those reactions feed off each other. Anger resonates more than satisfaction, and fans are P-to-the-O'd over the Sabres organization's inability to resurface from the abyss.

This season, however, is not nearly the low point. In July 2002, Adelphia Communications founder and Sabres owner John Rigas and his son were arrested for securities fraud, handcuffed and paraded into a squad car for television cameras. The Sabres went bankrupt and Empire Sports Network, the region's cable-sports station and Sabres rights-holder, went out of business. The NHL ran the club for nearly a year, and the threat of losing the team to another market was real, especially after the league's further embarrassment, announcing local businessman Mark Hamister had submitted the winning bid only to learn his financial backer was as crooked as the Rigases.

On the ice, the Sabres were atrocious. They won 27 games, the fourth-worst Sabres total in the pre-shootout era. Those Sabres didn't have anybody close to All-Star caliber, let alone an MVP candidate like Jack Eichel. The bankrupt Sabres averaged 2.3 goals a game, half a goal lower than this season.

A massive scandal would need to erupt along with a worsened on-ice product for the Sabres to match those depths again.

***In another lost season and a contract year for Sam Reinhart, why is it that the Sabres are so reluctant to move him away from Jack Eichel, let alone try him at center? Especially since they have a huge hole behind Jack, a skill set that seems to be tailor-made for the position and a shooter they can pair with him in either Jeff Skinner or Victor Olofsson. — Mike M.***

I reached out to Kris Baker (follow him on Twitter @SabresProspects) for his thoughts. He is all for splitting up Reinhart and Eichel this season once the postseason is out of reach. Baker explained why:

"The argument that Reinhart already failed once at center is unfair, considering where he was in his career when they tried. Anyone who watched him rise through the ranks as a young, developing prospect knows he has elite hockey sense and understated ability to support his defensemen, along with high-end vision and passing skills. Bundle in the fact that he's not a natural shooter/scorer, and his skill set lines up with an ideal center.

"He doesn't have elite speed, but I would challenge the thought that his skating game would not allow him to patrol the center lane and drive his own line. I always said that Reinhart would beat Ryan O'Reilly in a lap around the ice.

"I think the issue facing the Sabres is that giving Reinhart second-center minutes would cover one hole while creating another next to Eichel. One of the reasons Reinhart and Eichel work so well together is the way that Reinhart applies a playmaking mindset to the wing position while evolving as a rock-solid, net-front forward.

"Still, moving Reinhart into that second center role is a gamble I would take all day long in order to achieve a balanced lineup. The lack of secondary scoring has plagued the Sabres for far too long. Jack and Sam can still play together on the power play, but if the Sabres are out of the playoff hunt in the final weeks of the season, I am breaking them up at even-strength to test that theory heading into the offseason."

***Why not put Jeff Skinner on Jack Eichel's line? The three best on one line works for Bruins. Take a lesson from a winner. — Wayne U.***

Skinner has a reputation of being strong at even strength, and his Carolina past includes offensive production alongside the likes of Derek Ryan and Victor Rask. Skinner, who will turn 28 in May, also receives the paycheck of someone who should be able to carry a line. Buffalo coach Ralph Krueger must conjure offense on multiple lines; Skinner's history and contract put the onus on him.

What about Reinhart centering a line with Skinner? That combo certainly could help Reinhart grasp that role.

Have you ever thought about expanding your radio show to a daily schedule? I think it would do well as competition for WGR and the syndicated radio. — Chuck M.

Thank you for listening, Chuck. While a daily show is something I've wondered about, I owe my professional existence to The Athletic. To host a regular show would divert too much time from my writing. Effective radio involves co-hosts, booking guests, research and pre-production day in and day out. A two-hour shift once a week provides a healthy fling that doesn't distract from the gig that pays my mortgage.

***I'm a Bills fan who lives in Calgary, and because of that I see a lot of Sabres content. I'm convinced that these two teams can really help each other out, both at the deadline and in the summer. I'm curious whether Montour would be available for trade? I think Calgary loves him and would part with Sam Bennett plus. And just for giggles: Would the Sabres ever move Eichel if Gaudreau and a package was going the other way? Money savings, maybe both need a fresh start? — Geoff P***

The Sabres trade Eichel? The Edmonton Oilers traded Wayne Gretzky, so I guess anything is possible. But the fact the Sabres went through the Andy Dufresne sludge pipe to get Eichel, I can't see the superstar captain in another sweater for many, many years.

Expect the Sabres to explore trade options involving defenseman Brandon Montour, who would be an excellent fit with the Flames and spent the first three seasons of his NHL career in the Western Conference. Flames center Sam Bennett is intriguing. The fourth overall pick in 2014 would help the Sabres' forward-defenseman roster imbalance but wouldn't be any real solution for their anemic scoring.

***What do you make of the minuscule turnout at the Sabres fan protest last Saturday? Is it evidence that all the Duane outrage is really just 200 fans and a dozen media members shouting into the same echo chamber, or is it a sign the fan base is more apathetic than angry? — Tim H.***

I'm sure Sabres management was relieved to see such a meager showing in Alumni Plaza. An army of disgruntled fans, swarming the French Connection statue and holding "SELL THE TEAM, TERRY" and "FIRE BOTTERILL" signs, certainly would have produced humiliating visuals to go along with Duane Alan Steinel's celebrated, spleen-spewing phone call.

That said, the small turnout doesn't indicate things are OK in Sabreland, as your second question foreshadows. Apathy is worse than anger. The passion has been wrung out of a substantial portion of a proud fan base. Rows of KeyBank Center seats, many of them already paid for, are empty each game night.

I'm curious what so many years of losing will do for a generation of young Western New Yorkers. My middle-school-aged son and his friends follow the Sabres — therefore, the NHL — only in passing. It might take a catalyst like the electrifying 2005-06 team to bring them back.

***Is it time for the Bills to pick up one or two bigger-name free agents? A name edge rusher seems to be in order to make an already good defense great. Coupled with a true No. 1 wide receiver, it could make the offense good enough to contend for a championship. — Brian M.***

Beane has plenty of salary-cap space to pursue prominent free agents, but the most attractive players — the ones who will field the most offers around the NFL — often lead to bidding wars and overpayment. Beane has stressed he's not comfortable with that and has a see-ya-later number for each free agent he'll consider.

"At the end of the day," Beane told me a couple weeks back, "it still goes back to what I said last year, when we were aggressive, is putting values on guys and staying as close as you can within those ranges."

Beane added: "You need to have the ability to walk away and not chase. Sometimes those hurt because you commit a lot of time and energy into recruiting."

The big-ticket names that would match Buffalo's most pressing needs are receivers Amari Cooper, A.J. Green and Robby Anderson and edge rushers Jadeveon Clowney, Shaquil Barrett, Matt Judon, Dante Fowler and Bud Dupree.

Might the Bills be able to find a bargain in thirty-somethings Jason Pierre-Paul or Robert Quinn? Sure. I suppose they qualify as "bigger names," although their best years likely are behind them.

***Any current rumors of likely Sabre trades for a second-line center? — J Alex F.***

NHL trade rumors are a waste of time and energy. They almost always are concocted for the sake of getting you to click on a link or hit refresh like a fiend. I understand there's an audience that enjoys daydreaming about NHL deals, but I've always felt it's journalistically irresponsible to repeat — essentially, endorse — rumors that have no credible sourcing.

A handful of reporters such as our Craig Custance and Scott Burnside as well as Bob McKenzie, Darren Dreger and Elliotte Friedman are worth sharing, but you will have heard those rumblings by the time I hit the retweet button.

***A lot of the Sabres' difficulty since the tank season has been blamed on the losing culture that was created. What are your thoughts about this? On the one hand, the coach and GM that oversaw the tank are gone. So are most of the players from that time. Are the continued problems the result of a losing culture that was created or just having substandard players? — Tom O.***

Let me start by saying that I was for tanking. Why not, I thought. Secure one of the top two draft choices that would land Connor McDavid or Eichel. Many assume I was anti-tank because I worked for The Buffalo News, and our most prominent voices were aghast at the idea. But I didn't cover the Sabres at the time, so my opinion didn't resonate like theirs did.

What I found distasteful was the way fans reveled in the organization's collapse. Much of my reaction likely stemmed from memories of being the beat writer when Western New York was filled with so much Sabres pride. It would have been more palatable for me had the fans simply checked out like they did during the bankruptcy era.

I digress.

The Sabres aren't struggling with tank "culture" anymore, but they still are recovering from their tank methodology. General manager Tim Murray not only maneuvered the Sabres into the cellar, but he also took a jackhammer to the basement floor and went super-duper subterranean to make sure they finished with the worst record.

Pro-tank thought leaders, so dismissive of the skeptics, professed McEichel would cure everything. Snag one of them, and the rest will fall into place, they said. It will be fool-proof, they said.

The argument I see most frequently on social media today is that the tank worked because Eichel is here. But it's revisionist history to claim Eichel always was just the first phase. Too many believers back then lauded Eichel as the solitary phase.

Failure has stemmed from the inability to build around Eichel. A portion of that difficulty are players, most notably O'Reilly, who have wanted out, who haven't wanted to participate in a rebuild, who were sick of losing in a small market.

And with the NHL's guaranteed contracts, turning around a roster isn't lickety-split like in the NFL. Beane bit the salary-cap bullet in 2019 and returned the Bills by dumping all of Doug Whaley's players. The earliest Bills draft choice on their roster at the end of last season was defensive end Shaq Lawson, and they picked him in 2016, a year after the Sabres drafted Eichel.

It took Darcy Regier four years of meticulous roster engineering to create a Stanley Cup contender. Regier made a Daniel Briere trade here, a three-team maneuver for Chris Drury there, hit on a fifth-round future Vezina Trophy winner, had a young core that congealed in Rochester, benefited from the NHL's post-lockout freedoms, pieced together free agents.

The Sabres need time to gather their roster. Impatience, much of it stemming from the belief Eichel's arrival would be the cure-all, is only harming the process with every GM and coaching change.

Do I think the 2015-16 tank caused what we're witnessing today?

Much more than many believe; much less than others believe. The Sabres are a roiling stew, and there's blame gravy all over the place.

***Is there anyone within Pegula Sports and Entertainment's leadership who has even hinted at understanding what a poor home game experience fans endure at KeyBank Center? Obviously, the on-ice product is insulting to fans. Its cause is subject to much debate, but every other element is in the hands of PSE's leadership. Since the "Duane rant" fans have been waiting for something or anything. I believe that acceptance of lower standards by leadership eventually seeps down to all layers in an organization, even to players. So players joining the Buffalo Sabres just have to look at how the organization presents the arena for fans paying thousand of dollars to understand how much tolerance the organization has for losing and substandard performance. Strong management dedicated to being first-class all the way would never have accepted the litany of issues that diminish the fans' in-game experience. I am so worn down by my team and only have to drive 15 miles to experience the difference one finds at a Philadelphia Flyer home game! — Dave D.***

After deafening silence, Pegula Sports and Entertainment had vice president of business administration Kevyn Adams sit down for a Q&A with Buffalo News reporter Lance Lysowski. This happened on the same day the Pegulas announced they were not renewing the contract of Adams' day-to-day managerial equivalent with the Bills, CEO Dave Wheat.

Adams, appointed to his job five months ago, answered many tough questions from Lysowski. Adams defended the Pegulas, explained the misspelled jerseys and said the team is conducting a study about arena improvements.

Problematic is that negative narratives long have been cemented on these topics due to lack of communication with the public. No matter the truth at this point, try to convince a Sabres fan now that the Pegulas love their hockey team as much as their football team.

Sabres fans have yet to hear from the Pegulas, who live in Florida for tax purposes. Their presence at KeyBank Center has withered to the point that Eichel made an unsolicited comment about Thursday night being a big game because the owners were in attendance.

***How excited are you to cover the Bills at next year's Super Bowl? — Aaron Y.***

Before I get to Tampa on Feb. 7, 2021, I'm already researching angles for the Bills putting up 50 points on Bill Belichick, for Patrick Mahomes chucking four interceptions to Matt Milano, for Adam Gase storming out of New Era Field at halftime, for Josh Allen throwing a pass 89 yards in the air to Rob Gronkowski on "Sunday Night Football," for Corey Bojorquez stoning Jakeem Grant in the open field, for showing up to Las Vegas' new stadium in matching Mark Davis haircuts.

All of it.

Nothing would make me happier than to cover a championship for the deserving Buffalo fans.

## **Jack Eichel sad to see close friend Zach Bogosian waived, leave Sabres**

By Bill Hoppe  
Olean Times Herald  
February 15, 2020

**BUFFALO** – Sabres captain Jack Eichel said he had to stop talking about defenseman Zach Bogosian before he became emotional.

Over five seasons, the teammates grew incredibly tight, becoming “probably even closer than friends,” Eichel said.

“He’s somebody that I went to for just about anything in my life,” Eichel said shortly after Bogosian cleared waivers Saturday and the Sabres assigned him to the Rochester Americans. “He’s been there since I was a rookie.”

Now, Bogosian is gone. His Sabres career is likely over.

After morphing into a spare part – he was scratched 17 of the last 26 games– and often struggling during his sporadic appearances, the Sabres waived him Friday.

There is no official word if Bogosian will report to the AHL. He is not expected to play in the Amerks’ road game Saturday against the Syracuse Crunch.

Bogosian hasn’t played in the minors since 2008-09, when he appeared in five games on a conditioning stint with the Chicago Wolves as a rookie.

Sabres coach Ralph Krueger said waiving and demoting Bogosian was “an organizational decision.”

“What’s going on there is not really my issue,” said Krueger, whose Sabres host the Maple Leafs on Sunday at KeyBank Center. “My issue is to get ready to play Toronto.”

The Sabres can still trade Bogosian, who missed the first 22 games this season after undergoing offseason hip surgery and later suffering some setbacks.

Of course, given his salary – he’s in the final season of a seven-year, \$36 million contract – and recent play, he could be tough deal, even if the Sabres absorb some money.

The Sabres could also loan Bogosian to another AHL team, a move they made two years ago when they sent graying winger Matt Moulson to the Ontario Reign, the Los Angeles Kings’ affiliate.

As Eichel spoke passionately about Bogosian, defenseman John Gilmour, who was recalled from Rochester earlier in the day, sat in his friend’s old locker several feet away.

Eichel said “there’s not many people in the world” he is closer to than Bogosian.

“I do have the organization and the team to thank for the relationship that I was able to create by being here with him,” he said. “I think my biggest message to him through this whole thing has just been the best part about all of it is ... whenever the two of us are done playing, he’ll be a lifelong friend of mine. ...

“We have a really special relationship.”

Injuries ravaged Bogosian over his five-year tenure with the Sabres, costing him a whopping 153 games following his arrival from the Winnipeg Jets. He underwent his first hip surgery in 2017-18.

The Massena native hasn’t cracked the 70-game mark in a season since 2010-11 and never made more than 65 appearances with the Sabres.

After experiencing some setbacks and making his season debut Nov. 24, Bogosian played nine straight games before becoming a healthy scratch Dec. 12. A report surfaced that day Bogosian had requested a trade.

He last played in the Sabres' 6-1 loss to the Colorado Avalanche on Feb. 4, a game in which he struggled.

Eichel knows Bogosian has endured some tough breaks.

"When you have surgeries like the ones that he's had, it doesn't happen overnight," he said. "It's something that takes a while. He's been in here early every single day working out, trying to get himself back, trying to make him feel like he did before, and I think all the guys on the team recognized that.

"He's just somebody that you honestly enjoy coming to the rink and seeing everyday. He brings a tremendous energy."

One scout who has watched Bogosian regularly throughout his career, including this season, said constantly being injured has taken its toll on the 12-year veteran. The former third overall pick has also tried to live up to the expectations his contract brought.

The scout said Bogosian "can be a strong defender" who keeps opponents "honest and somewhat on their toes," moves the puck well and kills penalties efficiently.

"He is a guy if healthy can play in a third pairing and be near the top of the list in hits and blocked shots if playing the way he needs to," he said.

## **Sabres make more moves, recall Andrew Hammond, John Gilmour**

By Bill Hoppe

Olean Times Herald

February 15, 2020

**BUFFALO** – With goalie Carter Hutton absent from Saturday's practice for maintenance, the Sabres recalled Andrew Hammond from the Rochester Americans.

Sabres coach Ralph Krueger said Hutton's absence isn't related to the hit he took from Columbus Blue Jackets forward Eric Robinson in Thursday's 4-3 overtime win.

A puck also hit Hutton in mask earlier in the night.

"We're quite optimistic about his rehab day today," Krueger said when asked about Hutton's status for tonight's game against the Toronto Maple Leafs at KeyBank Center.

Hammond, 32, has compiled a 13-11-2 mark with a 2.59 goals-against average and a .905 save percentage in 28 appearances with the Amerks. The Sabres recalled him last week when Hutton missed a game for a family matter.

The Sabres also summoned defenseman John Gilmour from the Amerks on Saturday to replace Zach Bogosian, who was assigned to the AHL club after clearing waivers.

Gilmour, 26, began the season with the Sabres, playing four games.

"I'm stoked, so happy, excellent news," he said of his recall. "Just excited to be in the best league in the world again."

Gilmour, an AHL All-Star last season, often struggled defensively with the Amerks. On Feb. 8, he was even a healthy scratch.

"Definitely a different week compared to most weeks," he said. "A little adversity a week ago (before) getting a call last night.

Gilmour has compiled six goals, 13 points and a minus-14 rating with the Amerks.

Meanwhile, winger Marcus Johansson practiced Saturday inside LECOM Harborcenter after an upper-body injury sidelined him Thursday.

Johansson said he felt good and hopes he can play tonight. The Swede ended a 14-game goal drought in Tuesday's 3-2 win over the Detroit Red Wings.

Illness kept winger Michael Frolik from practicing.

Krueger said he is "optimistic" Frolik can play Sunday.

## **Zach Bogosian clears waivers, assigned to Amerks by Sabres**

By Bill Hoppe

Olean Times Herald

February 15, 2020

**BUFFALO** – The Sabres assigned defenseman Zach Bogosian to the Rochester Americans after he cleared waivers today.

Bogosian, 29, is not expected to play in the Amerks' road game tonight against the Syracuse Crunch. There is no official word on if the Massena native will report to the AHL.

Sabres coach Ralph Krueger said waiving and demoting Bogosian was "an organizational decision."

"What's going on there is not really my issue," said Krueger, whose Sabres host the Maple Leafs on Sunday. "My issue is to get ready to play Toronto."

Bogosian hasn't played in the minors since 2008-09, when he played five games on a conditioning stint with the Chicago Wolves as a rookie.

He has struggled this season, regularly getting scratched after returning from offseason hip surgery.

In other news, the Sabres goalie Carter Hutton missed this morning's practice inside LECOM Harborcenter for maintenance.

Krueger said Hutton's absence isn't related to the hit he took from Columbus Blue Jackets forward Eric Robinson in Thursday's 4-3 overtime win.

Hutton a puck also hit Hutton in mask earlier in the night.

"We're quite optimistic about his rehab day today," Krueger said of Hutton's status for the Leafs.

To replace Hutton, the Sabres recalled goalie Andrew Hammond from the Amerks. The Sabres also summoned defenseman John Gilmour to replace Bogosian.

Winger Marcus Johansson also practiced after missing Thursday's game.

Meanwhile, winger Marcus Johansson practiced today after an upper-body injury sidelined him Thursday. Illness kept winger Michael Frolik from practicing.

Krueger said he is "optimistic" Frolik can play Sunday.

## **Sabres place Zach Bogosian on waivers**

By Bill Hoppe  
Olean Times Herald  
February 14, 2020

**BUFFALO** – The Sabres placed defenseman Zach Bogosian, a healthy scratch eight of the last nine games, on waivers today.

Bogosian, 29, has become a spare part this season, sitting out 17 of the last 26 games. When the Sabres benched him for the first time Dec. 12, a report quickly surfaced he had requested a trade.

He hasn't played since struggling in the Sabres' 6-1 loss to the Colorado Avalanche on Feb. 4.

Injuries have ravaged Bogosian over his five-year tenure with the Sabres, costing him a whopping 153 games. He missed the first 22 contests this season after undergoing hip surgery in April and later suffering some setbacks.

Bogosian had season-ending surgery on his other hip in 2017-18.

The Massena native is in the final season of a seven-year, \$36 million contract that carries a \$5,142,857 salary cap hit. He will be an unrestricted free agent following the season.

It's unclear what the Sabres will do with Bogosian. If he clears Saturday – given his massive salary and recent play, he likely will – they could assign him to the Rochester Americans. He could also just stay put.

Bogosian briefly played in the AHL – a five-game conditioning stint with the Chicago Wolves – as a rookie in 2008-09. He has spent the rest of his 12-year career in the NHL.

The Sabres likely don't want a veteran taking ice time from their prospects in Rochester. They could, however, possibly loan Bogosian to another AHL team.

Two years ago, they sent graying winger Matt Moulson to the Ontario Reign, the Los Angeles Kings' affiliate, until his contract expired.

Former Sabres general manager Tim Murray acquired Bogosian and winger Evander Kane in a blockbuster trade with the Winnipeg Jets on Feb. 11, 2015.

But the deal paid virtually no dividends, and the Sabres fired Murray in 2017.

Bogosian has compiled one goal and five points in 19 games this season. He has scored 53 goals and 194 points in 636 career outings.

The former third overall pick hasn't cracked the 70-game mark in a season since 2010-11 and never made more than 65 appearances with the Sabres.

He has never played an NHL playoff game.

In other news, the Sabres sent defensemen Lawrence Pilut to the Amerks today. Pilut, 24, has been sitting as a healthy scratch with Bogosian.

The Amerks play a road game Saturday against the Syracuse Crunch. The Sabres, who had today off, could recall Pilut again before Sunday's home game against the Toronto Maple Leafs.

If Bogosian leaves, Pilut would likely be the Sabres' extra defenseman.

## **Eichel reflects on his friendship with Bogosian, who cleared waivers**

By Heather Prusak

WGRZ

February 15, 2020

**BUFFALO, N.Y.** — Zach Bogosian's career with the Sabres most likely came to an end Saturday as he cleared waivers and was assigned to Rochester.

It's unclear if he'll report to the Amerks or not, but this comes after he was put on waivers Friday.

And even though his production on the ice was declining, his presence in the locker room was not. He made an impact on some guys, especially Jack Eichel, who stopped just short of getting emotional talking about their friendship Saturday after practice.

"He'll be a lifelong friend of mine, and he's somebody that, you know there's not really many people in the world that I'm closer with. You know we have that weird, special relationship so that's it, I don't want to get emotional here talking about him, but that's all I got," Eichel said.

Although, that's not all he wanted to say as he reflected even more on how much Bogosian meant to him.

"He's honestly someone you enjoy coming to the rink and seeing everyday. He brings a tremendous energy, and he's somebody that I went to for just about everything in my life, and he's been there since I was a rookie. So we might not be seeing each other in the rink everyday, which sucks, but I'll see him all summer, and he's a lifelong friend, and probably even closer than a friend," Eichel said.

Bogosian was a healthy scratch for 17 out of the last 26 games, and he reportedly requested a trade.

Even though that didn't happen, the move doesn't come as a surprise the team is parting ways with him.

He also dealt with a number of injuries over the years, with the latest being hip surgery he had this past offseason.

"He's had a tough road here with dealing with the rehabs and trying to get himself back to what he feels is his best, and when you have surgeries like the ones that he's had, it doesn't happen overnight. It's something that takes a while, and you know he's been in here early every single day working out, trying to get himself back, trying to make himself feel like he did before, and I think all the guys on the team recognize that," Eichel said.

## **Buffalo Sabres assign Zach Bogosian to Rochester**

WGRZ

February 15, 2020

BUFFALO, N.Y. — The Buffalo Sabres announced on Friday that they placed defenseman Zach Bogosian on waivers.

On Saturday, the team announced that he was assigned to Rochester, where he would play with the Americans.

Injuries have been an issue for Bogosian during his career, especially with the Sabres. He has played in only a handful of games this season. Bogosian will become an unrestricted free agent after this season.

In December, TSN's Darren Dreger, reported Bogosian requested that the Sabres trade him.

## **Sabres waive Bogosian**

WIVB

February 14, 2020

BUFFALO, N.Y. (WIVB) The Buffalo Sabres announced Friday that disgruntled defenseman Zach Bogosian has been placed on waivers.

Bogosian came to the Sabres in a trade in February of 2015. The trade brought Bogosian, forward Evander Kane and goaltender Jason Kasdorf to the Sabres and sent defenseman Tyler Myers, forwards Drew Stafford, Joel Armia, Brenden Lemieux and a first round pick to the Winnipeg Jets.

In Bogosian's 5 years in Buffalo, Bogosian played in 243 games, scoring 13 goals and adding 54 assists. Bogosian's time with the Sabres was injury filled. He never appeared in more than 65 games in a season during his Sabres stint.

This season, Bogosian found himself a healthy scratch in many games, appearing in only 19 games. In December he asked the team for a trade.

## **Bogosian clears waivers, Sabres assign him to Rochester**

By Anthony Reyes

WKBW

February 15, 2020

BUFFALO, N.Y. (WKBW) — The Buffalo Sabres placed veteran defenseman Zach Bogosian on waivers Friday, Saturday the team announced he was assigned to the Rochester Americans.

The Sabres acquired Bogosian in a trade with the Winnipeg Jets in February of 2015.

Across six seasons with the Sabres, Bogosian has played in 243 games and tallied 13 goals and 54 assists.

Bogosian was selected in the first round, third overall by the Atlanta Thrashers in the 2008 NHL Draft.

## **Buffalo Sabres defenseman Zach Bogosian placed on waivers**

WKBW

February 14, 2020

BUFFALO, N.Y. (WKBW) — The Buffalo Sabres announced the team has placed defenseman Zach Bogosian on waivers.

The Sabres acquired Bogosian in a trade with the Winnipeg Jets in February of 2015.

The defenseman played 19 games with the team this year, registering one goal and four assists.

## **How Close Were the '05-06 Sabres to Winning a Cup? Depends Who's Asked**

By Ted Goldberg

Spectrum News

February 15, 2020

When asked about the Sabres memorable playoff run during the 2005-2006 season Thursday, Tim Connolly summed it up best – “woulda, coulda, shoulda.”

The star centerman suffered a concussion in the Eastern Conference Semifinals that sidelined him for the rest of the postseason, a harbinger of the team’s maladies to come. As many Sabres fans remember, Game Seven of the Conference Finals saw the blue and gold compete without four of their top six defensemen.

That team has become one of the great “what-ifs” in recent hockey history; could a healthy Sabres team have won the Stanley Cup that year?

“Still to this day, I felt we were the team, out of the last four, that we were the best team remaining,” said former captain Daniel Briere with zero hesitation. “I realized along the way that to win a Stanley Cup, you need more than just a good team. You need some breaks to go your way.”

Of the 2000s alumni to visit KeyBank, Briere was the most forthright in stating that the team was injuries away from hoisting the cup. Connolly and Jason Pominville were more reserved, stating that while injuries didn’t eliminate the team’s cup hopes, they just made the path more difficult.

“There’s nothing they could do about their injuries,” Pominville said. “Sometimes if it’s just a shoulder, something you can battle through with, like an ankle, you can battle through. Those guys, there was no chance that any of them would be able to play.”

“I think we would have had a good shot to win it,” Connolly said. “Every team goes through some kind of adversity. That’s what happened. Unfortunately we came a goal from making it to the cup finals.”

Since that heartbreak, the Sabres have made just three playoff appearances, and none since the 2010-2011 season.

## **TRAIKOS: Tanking Sabres trying to win back their fans**

By Michael Traikos

National Post

February 15, 2020

**BUFFALO** — On the bright side, they are not tossing waffles onto the ice. They are not even tossing jerseys.

Well, at least not yet they are not.

Give it time. While fans in Buffalo have not yet reached the point in their displeasure where they are arriving to games with paper bags covering their faces, this has been another trying year for the Sabres faithful who are looking at a ninth straight season of non-playoff hockey.

During that span, there have been epic tank jobs for the No. 1 overall pick and the kind of mid-season collapses that the Toronto Maple Leafs made famous. But this year somehow feels worse. Maybe it's because the Edmonton Oilers — that other perennial lottery team — are in a playoff spot or that Jack Eichel is having a Hart-worthy season.

Or maybe it's because fans were being sold that this year would be a little better. Buffalo didn't necessarily have to make the playoffs. But the team had to at least be in the hunt.

Instead, a Sabres team that finished with the fourth-worst record in the conference a year ago are back in the exact same position.

There's been no progress. No baby steps towards respectability. With two months left to play, they are out of it. And the fans, who are tired of hearing that next year will be better, are beyond frustrated and letting everyone — from the players to management — know it.

The other week, a diehard fan called Buffalo's sports talk radio station and unleashed an epic rant directed at ownership for sucking the passion out of him. That toxicity has seeped into KeyBank Center, where fans now seem like they're looking for any excuse to rain boos down on the players.

"There is a pressure in the space around us," said head coach Ralph Krueger, whose team has won two straight at home heading into Sunday's game against the Toronto Maple Leafs. "And we need to deal with that and we need to break that too, just like some of the habits we have on the ice that are hurting us, we need to change the environment around us and get believing that nobody is going to give us that. We have to earn that.

"We're not just expecting people to just give it to us in an easy way. We are fighting for that right now. I think every game we play right now is important to establish our game on a more consistent basis."

Barring a late-season miracle, the Sabres are not going to make the playoffs. They probably won't even get close. And you won't have to look far to see where it's gone wrong.

Jeff Skinner, who was rewarded with an eight-year contract worth \$72-million after scoring 40 goals, has 11 goals in 48 games. Marcus Johansson, who was brought to Buffalo after reaching the final with the Bruins, has been a major disappointment. Casey Mittelstadt, the team's eighth overall pick in 2017, hasn't been able to stick in the NHL.

That's on GM Jason Botterill, who fans still haven't forgiven for trading centre Ryan O'Reilly to the St. Louis Blues for basically nothing a year ago.

If Botterill is replaced by the end of the season, then that will be three GMs and three head coaches for Eichel since he stepped into the league six years ago. Not that the Sabres captain is thinking of that possibility. He doesn't even want to think about what needs to happen for Buffalo to be able to climb over the five teams standing in their way of the playoff spot.

"Just try to win. One game at a time," said Eichel, as if he were reading from a script. "Obviously you have to look at the big picture at times to help you find your little picture. I think for us realizing the situation we're in,

we're going to have to go on a pretty good run here, but anything's possible. It's not out of the question. We just have to minimize that to the smaller picture every night and try to win the game."

Forget winning a playoff spot. The Sabres just want to try and win back their fans. Even that might be impossible at this stage of the season.

"We all knew this wasn't going to happen with a button push," said Krueger. "We just have to believe that the hard work is going to pay off here. That's what we're doing right now, we're working hard to establish the trust of the fan base and the environment here in Buffalo.

"What people expect here in Buffalo, they want a hard working team."

What people expect is progress — not promises. For the past several years, the Sabres have been talking about a light at the end of the tunnel, that it was only a matter of time before the young players matured and took that inevitable next step towards respectability. But Sam Reinhart is now 24 years old and Eichel is now 23 and both have still yet to play in the post-season.

Meanwhile, just down the road, Auston Matthews and Mitch Marner look like they'll be making their fourth playoff appearance in four years. No wonder Eichel is growing just as tired of the whole "next year will be better" narrative as fans are.

"Look, I'm not going to answer any questions about next year," he said. "It's frustrating that as a group we're not where we want to be."

## **Sabres clearly in need of a few more moves**

By Austin Sauer

Niagara Gazette

February 14, 2020

It's that time of year where Sabres fans begin to get restless. With the trade deadline looming, rumors surface and people begin getting anxious about the future along with the current state of the team.

But this current situation is all too familiar with the Sabres' loyal fan base. Sitting well out of a playoff spot once again, the drought that has been in effect since 2011 doesn't look to be getting broken anytime soon.

And the fans seem more annoyed than years past. With jerseys being thrown on the ice to fans calling in to local sports radio and shredding practically everything about the team, the pressure is on. Terry and Kim Pegula have done so much good for Buffalo and really have revitalized the city along with Buffalo Bills, who are one of the up and coming teams in the NFL. They have not had similar luck with the Sabres. Fans understandably are demanding answers and more importantly, results.

The question remains, what needs to be done?

The first option to look at is trade. Sabres really don't have many in-demand assets that they would actually want to trade. The main two names that would actually have some value and seem to pop up in rumors are defensemen Rasmus Ristolainen and Brandon Montour. If one or both of these players were to be moved, a top-six forward needs to be coming back.

A player that seems might be targeted would be right wing Alex Tuch from the Vegas Golden Knights. The Syracuse native is only 23 years old and is on an extremely team-friendly deal. So why would he be moved? He has not put up numbers this year and Vegas has a very solid top 6 already, in which Tuch is not included. Vegas also could desperately use defensemen who can move the puck and provide some offense from the blue line. Ristolainen and Montour both fit that mold. There have been no rumors, but considering all that, it wouldn't be surprising to see Botterill working on something behind the scenes with Vegas.

The next option for improvement would come in the offseason, and that is free agency. Sabres seem to not have the greatest luck in free agency, usually overpaying for players or just not getting who they really want.

This year there are three names that should really be focused on.

One of the most realistic scenarios would be Alex Galchenyuk. There is no secret that Galchenyuk has struggled year after year. He was just traded from the Pittsburgh Penguins as they make a playoff push. However, there is no lack of skill and if Sabres could get him cheap, he could become the bargain of the summer.

A bit more of a sure option for production would be Mikael Granlund. Although he has struggled this past year in Nashville, he is a versatile forward who can immediately improve Buffalo's top six most likely at a fairly reasonable price. He can really play any of the forward positions, which makes him an excellent asset to have.

The last option is a long shot, but Sabres fans have to be able to get excited about something. This would be left wing Taylor Hall. This would be expensive, but with proper cap management it could be done. Hall has a relationship with head coach Ralph Krueger and it has been noted that he really enjoyed him as a coach during his time in Edmonton. This would be an immediate upgrade but will be a huge challenge considering he will be in high demand.

The final option for improvement is the most likely considering no one has to be acquired or signed. That would be prospects and younger guys making the next step.

The first name will have some people rolling their eyes, but Casey Mittelstadt. There is no reason for any eye rolling. He is only 21 years old and was forced into a very tough situation last year as a rookie that that he wasn't ready for. Finally he was sent down to the minors this year and he is developing his game while gaining confidence. There is a ton to look forward to with Mittelstadt still.

The next guy is someone who is always judged super hard due to being one of the pieces coming back in the notorious Ryan O'Reilly trade: Tage Thompson. With his size, hands and wicked shot, Thompson is easily a player who can become a top line guy and improve this team. At only 22 years old, he still is finding his game and once he does, it could pay off big for the Sabres. Unfortunately in his first call up this year, he had a season-ending shoulder injury. Hopefully next season he is ready to win a spot.

The last guy, Dylan Cozens, is viewed as one of the top prospects in the league. If he is not ready next season, the Sabres should allow him to continue to develop. However, with Cozens' size, speed and work ethic, he could very well be ready to hop in the lineup next year and have an impact. There is a lot to like in his game and he should be a guy Sabres fans are excited for.

Rebuilding is not a word that should be mentioned with the Sabres anymore. They have struggled for the past decade and need to turn this team around. The fans are demanding better and they deserve better. Patience cannot be preached because the loyal people who always support this team deserve a winner.

Now to wait and see if they can pull some positives out of what has been a very negative season.

## **Bogosian clears waivers, assigned to AHL by Sabres**

NHL.com

February 15, 2020

Zach Bogosian cleared waivers on Saturday and was assigned by the Buffalo Sabres to Rochester of the American Hockey League.

The defenseman, who was unclaimed after being placed on waivers Friday, has five points (one goal, four assists) and is averaging 16:50 of ice time in 19 games for the Sabres this season since returning to the lineup Nov. 24 after offseason hip surgery. Bogosian had 19 points (three goals, 16 assists) in 65 games for Buffalo last season, the most games he's played since 65 with the Winnipeg Jets in 2011-12.

The 29-year-old is in the final season of a seven-year, \$36 million contract (\$5.14 million average annual value) he signed with the Jets on July 29, 2013.

Bogosian is in his sixth season with the Sabres since being acquired in a trade with the Jets on Feb. 11, 2015, with forward Evander Kane, for defenseman Tyler Myers, forwards Drew Stafford, Joel Armia and Brendan Lemieux, and a first-round pick in the 2015 NHL Draft that was used by the Jets to select forward Jack Roslovic.

Chosen by the Atlanta Thrashers with the No. 3 pick in 2008 NHL Draft, Bogosian has 194 points (53 goals, 141 assists) in 636 NHL games with the Atlanta Thrashers, Jets and Sabres.

## **Sabres assign Bogosian to Rochester**

By Jourdon LaBarber

Sabres.com

February 15, 2020

Buffalo Sabres defenseman Zach Bogosian cleared waivers and has been assigned to Rochester, the team announced Saturday.

Bogosian made his season debut on Nov. 24 following a long recovery from offseason hip surgery. He appeared in 10 straight games beginning that night but has since been scratched for 17 of the team's last 26 contests, including seven of the last eight.

Sabres coach Ralph Krueger said the move was an organizational decision but spoke positively of his interactions with the defenseman.

"The work together with him, he's a professional and a really good spirt and a good guy," Krueger said.

Bogosian, who is scheduled to become an unrestricted free agent this summer, has been a member of the Sabres for parts of six seasons. Injuries have limited the 29-year-old to 243 games in that span, including 65 contests last season.

In spite of his injuries, Bogosian was a prominent figure in the dressing room (he served two seasons as an alternate captain) and worked actively to give back to the community through his BOGO Bunch foundation and Tickets for Troops program.

"Honestly, I do have the organization and the team to thank for the relationship I was able to create by being here with him," Sabres captain Jack Eichel said.

"... Obviously, we play a game and everything but at the end of this, whenever the two of us are done playing, he'll be a lifelong friend of mine. ... There's not many people in the world that I'm closer with. We have a really special relationship."

The Sabres recalled John Gilmour to round out their group of seven defensemen prior to Saturday's practice. Krueger said the decision was based on both Gilmour's comfort with the group - he broke camp with the Sabres in the fall and appeared in four contests - and wanting to allow Lawrence Pilut, who was assigned to Rochester on Friday, to continue appearing in games.

The Amerks play tonight in Syracuse, then host Utica tomorrow afternoon.

### **Injury Report**

Marcus Johansson was back at practice after missing Thursday's win over Columbus with an upper-body injury. The Sabres were without forward Michael Frolik (illness) and goaltender Carter Hutton, who was out for a maintenance day.

Krueger said the team is optimistic about Frolik's availability for Sunday's home game against Toronto. Here's how the team lined up in his absence:

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

62 Brandon Montour - 55 Rasmus Ristolainen  
19 Jake McCabe - 10 Henri Jokiharju  
26 Rasmus Dahlin - 33 Colin Miller  
58 John Gilmour

34 Jonas Johansson

### **Bring on the Leafs**

Johansson acknowledged the added intrigue behind Sunday's matchup, which is the season series finale between the Sabres and their cross-border rivals. The Maple Leafs go into their game in Ottawa tonight occupying third place in the Atlantic Division, eight points ahead of the Sabres.

It's a tall order, sure. But the Sabres have maintained their game-by-game approach and, after winning their past two games, hope to keep chipping away at the deficit with a win tomorrow.

"This is a big game for us," Johansson said. "It's starting to be that time of year. Every game is big, and we want to make a push and see where it takes us. Tomorrow is huge. We kind of have to look at it with a little bit of a playoff mentality and go out and give it everything we got. That's how you got to see every shift in every game now."

The Sabres are 1-1-1 against the Maple Leafs this season. Their one win came at KeyBank Center on Nov. 29, when Jack Eichel scored two goals and an assist to fuel a 6-4 victory.

"The emotions will automatically be there because it's Toronto and the environment should be a good one," Eichel said. "It's an important game for both sides. Obviously, we're trying to find points any way we can and put ourselves in the best position moving forward and they're the same way. We've just got to be ready to play. We know it's going to be a tough night."

Coverage of Sunday's game on MSG begins at 6:30 p.m. You can also listen on WGR 550, with puck drop set for 7.

## **Sabres recall Gilmour, Hammond from Rochester**

By Jourdon LaBarber

Sabres.com

February 15, 2020

The Buffalo Sabres have recalled goaltender Andrew Hammond and defenseman John Gilmour from the Rochester Americans (AHL).

Hammond briefly joined the Sabres last week, serving as backup to rookie Jonas Johansson during Sunday's game against Anaheim while Carter Hutton was unavailable due to a family circumstance. The veteran is 13-11-2 with a .905 save percentage with Rochester this season.

Gilmour joins Buffalo after the team placed Zach Bogosian on waivers and assigned Lawrence Pilut to Rochester on Friday. He broke camp with the Sabres in the fall, appearing in four games and averaging 17:03 of ice time before being assigned to Rochester in late November.

The 26-year-old has 13 points (6+7) in 32 games with the Amerks. He scored his sixth goal of the season in Charlotte on Tuesday.

The team is scheduled to take the ice for practice around 11 a.m., with updates to follow here and on social media @BuffaloSabres.

## **Sabres assign Pilut to Amerks**

By Jourdon LaBarber

Sabres.com

February 14, 2020

The Buffalo Sabres have assigned defenseman Lawrence Pilut to Rochester.

Pilut, 24, has appeared in 11 games with the Sabres this season. He has been scratched the past two games after being recalled prior to last Sunday's contest against Anaheim.

"He's got such an unbelievable strong, positive attitude towards what it takes to be an NHL player," Sabres coach Ralph Krueger said after practice Wednesday. "I mean, he doesn't want to leave anything to chance. His physical base and his willingness to sacrifice to play within a team game is very high. We've seen it in Rochester now for a year and a half and off and on here in Buffalo.

"He's just another exciting player for the future. Just a step off of being in the top six at the moment, but he's putting a lot of pressure on the top six and that's what we want from Lawrence. Keep putting the pressure on. We have to make sure he doesn't go too long without playing, and that's the beauty of our relationship with Rochester."

Pilut has 22 points (6+16) in 31 games with the Amerks this season. He was named to the AHL All-Star Classic for the second straight year.

The Amerks play at Syracuse on Saturday night, then return home to host Utica on Sunday afternoon.