Opinion

Sabres get sliced

By REX NAYLOR AND EMILY MARQUIS

The Buffalo Sabres have been a franchise known for nothing but mediocrity in the NHL. The words "foot in the crease" still send shivers down the Buffalo faithful's spines.

The Sabres have not made the NHL playoffs in 14 seasons, the longest drought in the league. The only other American sports team to have a longer drought is the New York Jets, with 15 seasons. But on Dec. 15, everything changed in Buffalo, New York.

Kevyn Adams was fired from his position as the general manager of the team, and Jarmo Kekaäläaäinen took over. At the time, the Sabres were 14-14-4, perpetuating the same mediocrity the Sabres have become known for.

As of March 24, the Sabres' record is 44-20-8, and they sit second in the Eastern Conference with 96 points and 10 games to play behind the Carolina Hurricanes with 96 points as well.

Thirty-one wins, seven losses and four overtime losses since the change. The Buffalo Sabres aren't the "hottest" team in the league. They are by far the best in the Eastern Conference and are a wagon heading into the playoffs.

The Sabres have found themselves a core with veteran winger Alex Tuch and defensemen Bowen Byram and Owen Power. Well-rounded young guns Jack Quinn, Zack Benson and Josh Doan. Then, of course, superstar center Tage Thompson and captain defenseman Rasmus Dahlin.

Of course, you can't mention the Sabres without Quinnipiac men's ice hockey alum Zach Metsa '23, who has found his footing in the defensive core of the Sabres but has since been sent down to their AHL affiliate, the Rochester Americans.

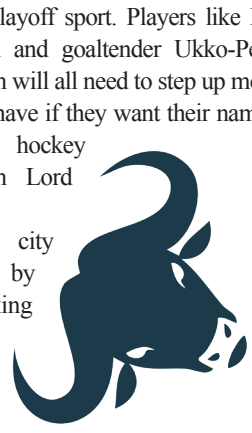
Head coach Lindy Ruff heads the Sabres team as the franchise's all-time leader in wins. He returned to Buffalo last season and has played a large part in turning the franchise around.

The Sabres vs. Lightning matchup on March 8 tells someone all they need to know about this team.

In a game with 15 goals and 108 PIM (penalties in minutes), the Sabres were victorious despite being down 7-4 in the third period, coming back to win 8-7 in regulation.

With the Lightning going after Thompson and Dahlin for the most part, enforcers Sam Carrick, Michael Kesselring and Beck Malenstyn stepped up, displaying a fight the Sabres organization hasn't seen in years.

The tide has certainly shifted in Buffalo as the Sabres seem to be poised for a playoff run in the toughest playoff sport. Players like Dahlin, Thompson and goaltender Ukko-Pekka Luukkonen will all need to step up more than they have if they want their names etched in hockey history on Lord Stanley.



In a city plagued by heartbreaking loss after heartbreaking loss at the hands of the Bills, the city of Buffalo has another pride, and they won't let them down.

The Buffalo Sabres are overall just a subpar hockey team.

In any other season, that sentence would hardly astound fans. As far as takes go, its as cold as the NHL ice at the KeyBank Center.

However, with the Sabres bagging 98 points and the top-seed in the Eastern Conference, upstate New York may have a bone to pick with a statement like: "The Sabres will be first-round exits."

Don't believe me? Fine. But the fact of the matter is the Sabres are not nearly as impressive as you think. Statistically, they aren't entirely impressive.

Speed and youth remain Buffalo's calling card even as the team's record improved, relying on takeaways and quick offensive bursts to facilitate offense. It's an offensive strategy that flounders as playoff games become grittier, and goals are harder to come by. Buffalo has the third least goals scored off rebound shots in the league. Teams like the 2018 Toronto Maple Leafs and 2019 Tampa Bay Lightning faced this problem of scoring too many "pretty" goals before getting bullied into submission by teams that were unafraid to take away that open lane.

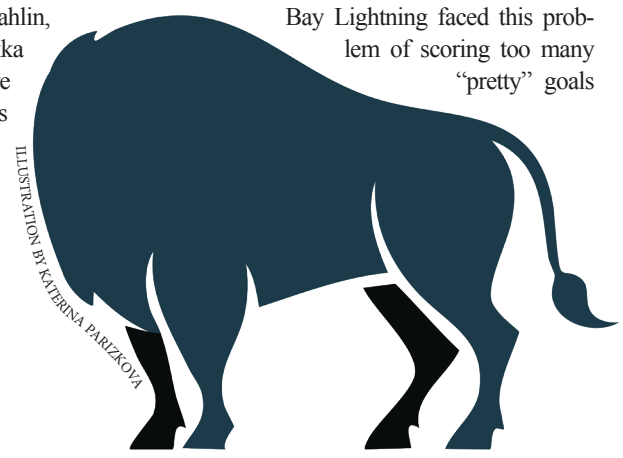


ILLUSTRATION BY KATERINA PARIZKOVA

Buffalo is in the bottom half in the league in blocked shots, and on average checks less than their opponents. On their own, these stats are not a concern. Physicality isn't everything in hockey. But pair that with offensive stats that aren't immensely impressive — Buffalo is 17th in puck possession, and its goal differential against expected is fifth in the league — and the Sabres appear to be shooting out of their league.

Now if their newfound success is legitimate, the playoff run will need to be pinned on the talents of two men. Goaltending pair Alex Lyon and Ukko-Pekka Luukkonen have carried the Sabres to this position at the top of the Atlantic. According to ESPN, the Sabres player of the game has been a goaltender 17 times since Dec. 9, 2025, just before the Sabres first major win streak began.

However, Lyon and Luukkonen's experience doesn't bode well for playoffs. As members of the Sabres in 2026, they have split time since the Olympic Break ended. Historically, that system causes problems in the playoffs, as picking one goaltender when both are playing well can lead to situations like the 2023 Boston Bruins, who broke their traditional one game off, one game on style to both Jeremy Swayman and Linus Ullmark's detriment. So on picking the starter alone, Ruff may be in trouble.

Furthermore, neither goaltender has the playoff experience to justify getting the starting nod. Luukkonen, who is a career Sabre, has no experience playing playoff hockey in the NHL. The last time he has played in a postseason series, it was in junior hockey with the Ontario Hockey League's Sudbury Wolves. There he had a 3.27 goals against average and 0.906 save percentage in eight games.

Lyon at least has success in the American Hockey League postseason, but in the NHL, his experience is limited. Against that 2023 Bruins team, in four games played he had a 3.63 goals against average and a 0.888 save percentage.

Look, I'm not saying don't be optimistic. Playoff hockey means anything can happen. But if I was a fan of the Sabres, I wouldn't be planning the Stanley Cup parade just yet.

Bobcat Buzz

Non-federal work study opportunities limit students

By AMANDA DRONZEK
Copy Editor

I don't get federal work study. Before you decide that I'm a privileged piece of shit, shut up and listen.

My family didn't have anything growing up. We owned a business that went under when I was eight years old and my parents drained everything from our savings and searched couch cushions for coins to keep up with bills.

After a decade, we made it to the other side. My parents have great jobs and money isn't giving them high blood pressure anymore. But affording college was always going to be an issue because we had nothing stored away in the bank.

Then we got sort of lucky. My grandma passed away two weeks before I came to Quinnipiac. Honestly, shoutout Grammy D. I miss you every day, but you put a fat check in my savings account so I could go to school debt-free.

It still sucks that I don't qualify for federal work study jobs. I understand students make more in a non-federal work study position because there's no pay cap, but how much more would I really get? I'd still be working around 10-15 hours a week.

Non-federal work study jobs at Quinnipiac claim they're constantly hiring, but I've never heard back from anyone after submitting an application. How do I get ghosted by the campus career department for a proofreading gig? Isn't that literally what I do as a copy editor? Why can't I just work at the freaking gym? I'm there every day.

And before you ask, yes, I've applied to probably 100 local part-time jobs in the area. And yes, it is possible to be rejected from CVS, Walgreens, The Paper Store, Gap and Old Navy in the same week.

I'm not a pompous asshole. I don't think I deserve things because I'm me. I think I deserve federal work study opportunities because my family isn't rolling in dollar bills. We were in debt until 2023.

The paycheck doesn't equate to the situation, and I hate that it does on paper. We're comfortable, but anything could happen.

My dad might need a kidney transplant tomorrow instead of 10 years from now. Oh, right, I forgot to mention I live in a household that will be paying for dialysis one day. I've heard that's pretty cheap.

I wish the university provided normal, mindless jobs to non-federal applicants like they do for federal work study students. But hey, we live in America. As long as you can manage to cough up the cash, you pay the piper.