

## Sabres rolling again

Written by Dobber

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Yet another example of how statistics correct themselves if given a large enough sample size: The Buffalo Sabres are finally starting to score goals. The team has scored five or more goals four times in their past eight contests and has four wins and 21 goals in their past five games.

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Poolies were already jittery about this team when star forwards Daniel Briere and Chris Drury moved on in the summer, so when the other high-scoring forwards stumbled out of the gate,

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many bailed.

With the latest surge in goal scoring, Buffalo has moved up to seventh in the league in goals for and have five players with more than 20 points and 11 players with at least 14 points. Tim Connolly has 11 points in his past nine games and is the central reason for the resurgence. He has been playing with Jochen Hecht and Jason Pominville, both of whom have stepped up their production of late.

Maxim Afinogenov has been taken off the big line (where he had been playing with Derek Roy and Thomas Vanek) and placed with Paul Gaustad and Ales Kotalik. The move seems to have worked as he has four points in his past three contests after starting the season with 11 in 28 – a far cry from his point-per-game self.

Meanwhile, sophomore winger Drew Stafford has taken Afinogenov's spot and has five points in six games playing with Roy and Vanek. Roy, by the way, has 11 points in his last eight. The stats are starting to correct themselves now, with Afinogenov and Vanek being the only players who still have some ground to make up. I anticipate they will make up most of that ground and make for excellent 'buy low' candidates...

**Injuries, from a fantasy league perspective:** Cory Stillman sustained a minor knee injury Saturday and will be out for this week. He is expected to return after the Christmas break. Andrew Ladd was recalled early from his conditioning stint in the American League as a result. He will get an audition on a line with Eric Staal and Erik Cole... With Toronto's Bryan McCabe on the shelf for a couple of months, now may be the time to take a flyer on Anton Stralman... Ville Peltonen has a broken foot and will be on the shelf for a month or so. It looks as if the Panthers will move Jozef Stumpel up to the top line. Rostislav Olesz also saw increased ice time after Peltonen left. They are two players to watch...

**Farm Report:** Edmonton prospect Rob Schremp has 10 points in his past six games for Springfield of the AHL. This is the first time he has started to dominate that league, which was something many poolies expected to happen last year. This is a positive sign and he may be ready for a call-up in the second half.

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