

Commentary

Win all they want, Sabres still second fiddle

The Buffalo Sabres may be the best team in the NHL, but in their home city, they're still second behind the beloved Bills.

Is it fair? Not really. The Sabres have injected more excitement into the fans through nine games this season than the Bills have in the past six years. And we still have 73 more to go. Oh, and don't forget the playoffs, assuming Buffalo doesn't pull an el-foldo the likes of which only Boston Red Sox fans can relate to.

Let's face it, Buffalo is now, always has been, and forever will be a football town. The sports fans in Western New York eat, sleep and breathe Buffalo Bills football. And only when things are at their grimmest for the gridiron guys do fans turn their attention elsewhere. You know, like now.

During the fourth quarter of Sunday's shellacking at Ralph Wilson Stadium, the fans who hung around long enough to watch the final seconds tick off the Bills' 28-6 loss to the Patriots started chanting, "Let's go Sabres!"

Yes, Joe Buffalo has a new favorite in the undefeated Sabres, but you know it will only last as long as the current Bills' slump. Once football takes off again and the general manager-coach combo of Marv Levy and

Dick Jauron turn things around at 1 Bills Drive, the Bills will once again be the people's choice.

While the Sabres may be the trumpeted beacon in Western New York, the focal point remains on the Bills. Monday morning, the discussion around every office was not how the Sabres demolished the Boston Bruins Saturday night, 6-2, and were just one game away from setting a new record for wins to open a season. It was about the Bills' collapse in the shadow of Patriots coach Bill Belichick for the seventh game in a row. Glove saves and hip checks just don't mean as much as missed tackles and dropped passes.

Did anyone else notice the Bills and Sabres scored the same number of points against Boston-area teams this past weekend? Too bad the Bills couldn't limit the Patriots to a safety.

Yes, the Sabres are playing great with the league's leading goal scorer Chris Drury, the top point-getter Maxim Afinogenov, superstar goalie Ryan Miller and mastermind coach Lindy Ruff. But the names most tossed around in any sports discussion in Western

New York are J.P. Losman, Willis McGahee, Terrance McGee (and the target on his chest) and Jauron.

This is just like Boston, where fans live and die with the Red Sox. Even when the Patriots won the first Super Bowl in franchise history, the thousands of fans who turned out for the celebration vocalized their love for the "Sawx" by deriding the archnemesis from New York with a "Yankees Suck" chant. While I doubt the fans of Buffalo would celebrate a Stanley Cup victory with a "Squish the Fish" party, the Bills would remain in the forefront.

The Sabres are the younger brother, the second in command, the runner-up, just trying to claim some of the spotlight for themselves. And they're doing it with hard work and a team-first attitude.

But that's the nature of the beast. When you're the second choice, you have to wait for the top dog to screw up.

And if you think the Sabres have it rough, imagine what it's like for the Bisons.



MATT KRUEGER

Sports Reporter

e-mail: mkrueger@beenews.com

Sacred Heart

Rest of soccer regular season cancelled

by PATRICK J. NAGY
Reporter

The 2-foot snowstorm two weeks ago has also affected sports in the Monsignor Martin Association.

At Sacred Heart, the storm cancelled the rest of the Sharks' regular season in varsity (three games) and JV (four games) soccer.

The varsity team played Tuesday against Holy Angels in the MMA large school quarterfinals at Sahlen's Sports Complex, an indoor facility. A Sacred Heart win would place them in the semifinals at 4 p.m. Wednesday against Nichols, also at Sahlen's. The MMA small school finals are at 10 a.m., Sunday, outdoors at Amherst High School.

Sacred Heart Athletics Director Rod Sarkovics said on Monday night the varsity girls soccer team

hadn't practiced in at least a week and played the game on Tuesday "cold."

Sarkovics said Sacred Heart could have played its home soccer games on its home field, UB Rotary, but because many other teams could not play on home fields, a decision was made by Monsignor Martin High School Athletic Association Executive Director Brian Kiszewski and MMA chairs to cancel the rest of the regular season.

All girls swimming meets at Buffalo State College were cancelled last week, along with this past Monday's meet and will not be made up. The swimming schedule will resume on Thursday at Buffalo State with All-Catholics still slated for Nov. 8 at Erie Community College's Burt Flickinger Center.

The rest of the boys and girls cross country regular season meets were cancelled. All-Catholics were to be held Thursday at Delaware Park but has been moved to St. Francis High School on Sunday because Delaware Park is a mess,

Sarkovics said.

"(I've heard) at the starting line you literally could not run more than 10 feet of the line and had to stop," said Sarkovics. "If you ran around the trees, you would have had to go in the side street to get around them."

Sacred Heart, who finished 3-1 overall with its only loss coming to Nardin, 28-27, will run in the girls varsity race at 1:30 p.m. Sunday. The girls "B" race is at 1 p.m. The boys "B" race will be held at 2 p.m. followed by the varsity race at 2:30 p.m.

If the Sharks win All-Catholics, they would qualify for the New York State Federation race Nov. 17 at Bowdoin State Park in Wappinger Falls (Section D).

The only MMA sport involving Sacred Heart which was not affected by the storm is girls volleyball. Sarkovics said all postponed matches have been rescheduled. The MMA playoffs will be held Nov. 1 (quarterfinals), Nov. 3 (semifinals), and Nov. 6 (finals) at St. Mary's of Lancaster.

e-mail: pnagy@beenews.com

Sectionals, ECICs backed up until Friday

by PATRICK J. NAGY
Reporter

The 2-foot snowstorm two weeks ago has forced Section VI into an extended timeout to start postseason play.

Because most Erie County schools were closed the entire week thanks to the storm, Section VI and the Erie County Interscholastic Conference announced new lineups for the playoffs.

At ECIC's request, Section VI pushed back sectional play until Friday. Boys and girls soccer sectionals were to start this past Monday but first round games don't start until Friday with finals pushed back from Nov. 3-4 to Nov. 6-8 at Amherst High School.

In addition, girls volleyball and field hockey were scheduled to start Wednesday and

Thursday this week but its starting dates were not determined as of this writing. Boys volleyball sectionals will start on schedule beginning Oct. 30. Boys gymnastics sectionals is still going to happen at Williamsville South at 5 p.m., Friday, Nov. 3 but girls gymnastics sectionals, originally at Williamsville East at 2 p.m., Nov. 4, was moved to South.

Other scheduling changes are:

- The ECIC boys golf championships, originally on Oct. 16 at Tan Tara Country Club, has been moved to Springville Country Club at 9 a.m., Monday, Oct. 30.

- The ECIC girls swimming will still be held at Sweet Home but will take place Nov. 2 (diving) and Nov. 3 (swimming) instead of this Thursday through Saturday.

- The ECIC girls tennis singles have been canceled and who will advance to sectionals

has yet to be determined. The ECIC doubles tournament will take place beginning at 2 p.m. Friday at the Village Glen Tennis and Fitness Center with the finals to be held on Saturday. Tennis sectionals have been moved from Oct. 27-28 to Oct. 30-31 at Lakewood YMCA in Jamestown.

- The ECIC cross country meet is still on Saturday but has been moved from Alden High School to East Aurora High School. Sectionals, scheduled for Nov. 3, have been moved from Elma Meadows Golf Course to Long Point State Park in Bemus Point.

In addition, ECIC canceled all league games played after Oct. 12. Any league games played after are considered non-league.

e-mail: pnagy@beenews.com

★ COINS ★ NEEDED

- Silver Dollars
- Gold Coins
- Coin Collections
- Accumulations

**JEWELRY
AND
COIN CENTER**
5652 Main St. (at Mill)
Williamsville 633-4500

**Amherst
PEPSI
Center**

A Town of Amherst
Recreation and Entertainment Center



**Amherst's Premier Ice
and
Recreational Facility**

**College
General Skate**

\$3.00

with Valid College ID

Monday-Friday 11:00-11:50AM

1615 Amherst Manor Dr. • Williamsville • 716-631-7555 • www.amherstpepsicenter.com

Join us for one of our many open skating sessions.