

= 1974 ? 75 Buffalo Sabres season =

The 1974 ? 75 Buffalo Sabres season was the Sabres ' fifth season in the National Hockey League ( NHL ) . The Sabres finished in a tie for the best record in the NHL in the 1974 ? 75 regular season after a disappointing 1974 that saw the 1973 ? 74 team fail to return to the NHL playoffs as they had the year before . Buffalo advanced to the Stanley Cup finals for the first time in team history to play against the rough Philadelphia Flyers ( who had been recently nicknamed the " Broad Street Bullies " ) , a series which included the legendary Fog Game ( game three of the series ) . The Sabres lost the series 4 ? 2 .

The season marked the Sabres ' second NHL playoffs appearance . The season was the first under the tenure of Floyd Smith and the team 's first in the newly created Adams Division in the NHL 's Prince of Wales Conference .

Sabres players earned numerous accolades . Don Luce won the Bill Masterton Memorial Trophy . Rick Martin , Rene Robert , Jerry Korab and Luce were all selected to the 1975 NHL All @-@ Star Game . Martin was a first team NHL All @-@ Star Team selection at left wing , while Robert was a second team selection at right wing . The French Connection ( Martin , Robert and Gilbert Perreault ) were all among the league leaders in important scoring statistics .

= = Transactions = =

Goaltender Dave Dryden was lost to the World Hockey Association following the 1973 ? 74 season . During the 25 @-@ round May 1974 NHL Amateur Draft that was held by conference call , the team participated in the first twelve rounds of the draft . Although several of their selections eventually played in the NHL , the Sabres only drafted three players that played for the team that year . The Sabres acquired defenseman Lee Fogolin ( 1st round , 11th overall ) , right winger Danny Gare ( 2nd round , 29th overall ) and defenseman Paul McIntosh ( 4th round , 65th overall ) in the 1974 NHL Amateur Draft . They had acquired left winger Morris Titanic in the 1973 NHL Amateur Draft ( 1st round , 12th overall ) and he was called up from the team 's American Hockey League minor league affiliate , the Hershey Bears during the season . In addition , the Sabres drafted Taro Tsujimoto with the 183rd overall pick .

Prior to the season , the team had lost right winger Ron Busniuk to the Detroit Red Wings in the June 10 , 1974 NHL Intra @-@ League Draft . Buffalo lost right winger Steve Atkinson and center Randy Wyrozub to the Washington Capitals in the June 12 , 1974 NHL Expansion Draft . The team also lost defenseman Paul Terbenche to the Kansas City Scouts in the same draft .

On October 14 , 1974 , The Sabres acquired 1974 All @-@ Star defenseman Jocelyn Guevremont and forward Bryan McSheffrey from the Vancouver Canucks in exchange for left winger Gerry Meehan and defenseman Mike Robitaille . On January 27 , 1975 Buffalo acquired left winger Fred Stanfield from the Minnesota North Stars for right winger Norm Gratton and Buffalo 's 3rd round choice in 1976 NHL Amateur Draft . The veteran Stanfield had finished in the top ten in the league four times in assists before being acquired by the Sabres . The Sabres acquired the NHL rights to goaltender Gerry Desjardins from the New York Islanders for defenseman Garry Lariviere on February 19 , 1975 .

In May , after the season ended , left winger Rick Dudley , who later coached the Sabres for three seasons , signed to play in the WHA . After 11 seasons in the NHL , 1974 ? 75 was the final one for right winger Larry Mickey before his retirement .

= = Regular season = =

October ? December

The Sabres returned after a season of injury and tragedy in which their captain Tim Horton died in an automobile accident . The team also seemed to have mended an apparent preseason feud between Perreault and Martin . On October 10 , 1974 in the season @-@ opening game , Danny Gare set the tone for the new season by scoring a goal 18 seconds into the first game of his career .

Perreault added a hat trick and two assists in the 9 ? 5 victory over the Boston Bruins . After starting the season 3 ? 3 ? 1 , the Sabres had an 18 ? 1 ? 3 hot streak between October 26 and December 8 , 1974 to move to a 21 ? 4 ? 4 record . By the time they reached 7 ? 3 ? 1 following a November 3 victory over the New York Rangers , they had taken over the Adams Division lead . The streak included two unbeaten stretches of at least 10 games . They went 9 ? 0 ? 1 on a streak that extended until November 14 with a win against the Minnesota North Stars . The penultimate win of the streak was the Sabres ' first ever win at the Montreal Forum on November 13 .

After a November 16 , loss to the Bruins , they started a 9 ? 0 ? 2 streak on November 17 against the Atlanta Flames . In the third game of this streak , which was also against the Flames , they made a comeback from two separate three @-@ goal deficits to tie the game . The other tie during the streak was also a comeback . By the end of the two unbeaten streaks and before the 30 @-@ game mark , the Sabres had the best record in the NHL , the league 's leading scorer in Perreault , three 20 @-@ goal scorers among the French Connection and the leading rookie scorer in the league in Gare . Martin had the second four @-@ goal game of his career in a December 3 5 ? 3 victory against the Washington Capitals on the road . Perreault had three goals and an assist in the December 5 9 ? 2 victory against the Washington Capitals at home . Then , Martin was lost with a recurring thumb injury . Following Martin 's injury , the Sabres eleven @-@ game unbeaten streak came to an end , and the team had two different three @-@ game stretches without a win that started in December .

January ? February

The team posted a season high six @-@ game win streak between January 12 , 1975 ? January 25 , 1975 . The streak culminated in a second win against the Montreal Canadiens on the road . After a February 1 loss to the Philadelphia Flyers , the Sabres went undefeated for the rest of the month . The team had a season @-@ high 12 @-@ game unbeaten streak between February 2 , 1975 ? February 27 , 1975 . During that streak , the team went 7 ? 0 ? 5 . The 4 ? 4 February 16 tie with the St. Louis Blues clinched a playoff spot for the Sabres . The February 18 3 ? 2 victory over the New York Islanders at the Nassau Coliseum was only the second loss of the season for the Islanders at home . The February 20 6 ? 6 tie against the Flyers , in which the Sabres lost several leads , extended the Flyers unbeaten streak against the Sabres to nine . The final game of the streak was a 5 ? 0 shutout victory over the Los Angeles Kings , who had handed the Sabres three of their eleven defeats prior to that point in the season .

March ? April

At the beginning of March , Desjardins quit the Baltimore Blades of the World Hockey Association to join the Sabres . Desjardins was frustrated at not getting paid when attendance was sparse . On March 16 against the Toronto Maple Leafs , Martin dislocated his thumb during a fight . This necessitated that he wear a cast . Desjardins made his first appearance in a March 20 6 ? 3 victory over the New York Rangers . In their last win of the month , the Sabres clinched the division title on March 23 with a 9 ? 4 victory over the California Golden Seals . Rookie defenseman Hajt was injured with a broken bone in his foot during a 5 ? 1 loss to the Chicago Blackhawks on March 26 . The Sabres would lose the next two games for the season 's only three @-@ game losing streak . The Sabres ended the season by winning all three regular season games in April . The Sabres did not clinch the Prince of Wales Conference until winning the final game of the season against the Maple Leafs .

The season was the first of three full seasons coached by Floyd Smith , who had coached one game during the 1971 ? 72 season . Smith had played for the Sabres during their first two seasons . The team played its home games at Buffalo Memorial Auditorium . Two members of the team later coached the Sabres : Dudley and Jim Schoenfeld .

= = = Season standings = = =

= = = Results = = =

The following is a Sabres game log .

= = Player statistics = =

The French Connection members led the Sabres in scoring by finishing 1 @-@ 2 @-@ 3 in both goals and points , although none of them played as many as 75 of the team 's 80 games . Perreault 's eight game @-@ winning goals was fifth highest in the NHL for the season , although he only played 68 games , he finished ninth in the league in scoring with 96 points ( 39 goals and 57 assists ) . Martin also only played 68 games and finished third in goals ( 52 ) and tenth in points ( 95 ) . Martin 's 21 power play goals was second in the league . Robert was seventh in points ( 100 ) , tenth in goals ( 40 ) and tenth in assists ( 60 ) in 74 games . Luce 's 8 shorthanded goals was second and Craig Ramsay had 7 , which was third . Other statistical leaders included Luce who had a 61 plus / minus , which ranked fourth and Peter McNab who led the league in shooting percentage .

Over the course of the season , the team scored a total of 354 goals , which ranked second in the 18 team league and its 49 ? 16 ? 15 record ranked it first in the league . The team used several goaltenders . Although Gary Bromley led the team with 26 wins in the regular season , and Roger Crozier was second with 17 wins , the team was led in the post season by Desjardins who recorded 7 of the team 's 10 post season victories .

The following are the season statistics for the Sabres .

= = = Key = = =

= = = Skaters = = =

^ Note 1 : A bench minor is when the team is penalized for a minor infraction that is not attributed to any individual player .

= = = Goaltenders = = =

= = = = Regular season = = = =

= = = = Playoffs = = = =

= = Playoffs = =

= = = Schedule and results = = =

The following was the team playoff schedule .

= = = Quarter Finals = = =

The Sabres had a bye in the first round of the playoffs and then met the first round victor Chicago Black Hawks in the Quarter @-@ Finals . In the first game of the series , the Sabres were the beneficiaries of an 18 ? 2 penalty minutes differential and won 4 ? 1 . Although the Black Hawks scored in the first minute of game two , the Dudley scored a pair of goals on the way to a 3 ? 1 Sabres victory . In game three , the Black Hawks took a one @-@ goal lead four times and the Sabres tied the score each time , which led to sudden death overtime in which Chicago came out on top . The Sabres scored five times in the third period to post a 6 ? 2 victory in game 4 . The Sabres

won the series 4 ? 1 , with Robert scoring the series clinching goal after getting into fisticuffs with Pit Martin and third man Phil Russell ( who got ejected ) earlier in the clinching game .

= = = Semi Finals = = =

The Sabres won the first game with an overtime goal by Gare . In game two , Robert was sidelined with the flu and Dudley was inactive due to a sprained knee , but the checking line of Luce , Ramsay and Gare each scored a goal as the Sabres took a 2 ? 0 lead with a 4 ? 2 victory . In the game , Henri Richard surpassed his brother Maurice Richard with his 127th Stanley Cup playoff point . Following their strong 7 ? 0 game three performance , the Canadiens handily won game four at home by an 8 ? 2 margin . The game was marked by a bench clearing incident when Doug Risebrough and Gare squared off . Bill Hajt got ejected as third man in and Larry Robinson who took on Hajt was also ejected . The Sabres surrendered an early 3 ? 1 lead , but won in overtime of game five on Robert goal . The Sabres scored three goals in the first period of game six on their way to a series @-@ clinching 4 ? 3 victory . They led 3 ? 1 after one period and added one in the second before withstanding a third period two @-@ goal rally by Montreal .

= = = Stanley Cup Finals = = =

The Flyers came into the series with their own good luck pre- game singer in the form of Kate Smith who sang " God Bless America " before home games at The Spectrum . The Flyers had a 43 ? 3 ? 1 record following her pregame performances in lieu of the traditional " Star Spangled Banner " . In addition , the Sabres had never won a game against the Flyers in Philadelphia in their short five @-@ year franchise history , had never beaten Flyer starting goalie Bernie Parent , and entered the series on a 13 @-@ game streak against the Flyers without a win .

Although the Sabres held the Flyers to two shots in the first period of game one , eight in the second , and were the beneficiaries of a 1 : 04 two @-@ man advantage at one point , the game remained scoreless until the third period when the Flyers connected four times in a 4 ? 1 victory . In game two , the Sabres were held to 19 shots on goal with none coming after Bobby Clarke scored at the 6 : 43 mark of the third period .

Due to unusual heat in Buffalo in May 1975 , portions of game three , which is known as " The Fog Game " , were played in heavy fog . The game was stopped 12 times due to the conditions . Buffalo goalie Desjardins gave up three first period goals , and Crozier started the second period . After having surrendered goals on his first two shots faced and three of his first six , Desjardins removed himself from the game . The Sabres recovered from the three @-@ goal deficit on two goals 17 seconds apart by Gare and Martin . After a goal by Luce netted the score , Reggie Leach gave the flyers the lead again . Bill Hajt scored his first career playoff goal to tie the score . Robert scored the game winner in overtime with a goal that Flyer goalie Bernie Parent did not see until it was too late . The game was the longest NHL overtime game in over four years . Players , officials , and the puck were invisible to many spectators . During a face @-@ off and through the fog , Sabres center Jim Lorentz spotted a bat flying across the rink , raised his stick , and killed it . Many superstitious Buffalo fans considered this to be an " Evil Omen , " pertaining to the result of the series . It was the only time that any player killed an animal during an NHL game . This was one of three playoff appearances for Crozier . Desjardins surrendered a goal on the third Flyer shot in game four , but he stayed in the game for a 4 ? 2 victory . In game four , the unseasonable temperature only caused the play to be stopped twice ( with 8 : 08 and 4 : 44 remaining ) as five pairs of arena employees skated around the ice with bed sheets to clear the haze .

By game five of the Finals Dave Schultz had claimed both the single @-@ season regular season penalty minutes record and the post @-@ season record . However , he contributed his first two goals of the playoffs in a 5 ? 2 win to help the Flyers take a 3 ? 2 lead in the series . It was Schultz ' first two @-@ goal performance of the season and his first goal since March 9 . In the sixth game Conn Smythe Trophy MVP Bernie Parent shut out the Sabres 2 ? 0 to clinch the series four games to two . Crozier held the Flyers scoreless for the first two periods of the final game .

= = Awards and records = =

Prince of Wales Trophy

Bill Masterton Memorial Trophy : Don Luce

Rick Martin , 1975 NHL All @-@ Star Game , NHL All @-@ Star Team , Left Wing ( 1st team )

Rene Robert , 1975 NHL All @-@ Star Game , NHL All @-@ Star Team , Right Wing ( 2nd team )

Don Luce 1975 NHL All @-@ Star Game

Jerry Korab 1975 NHL All @-@ Star Game

Peter McNab NHL shooting percentage leader ( 24 @.@ 4 % )

Club Record , Most Goals For , ( 354 )