



ROCHESTER AMERICANS

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TONIGHT'S GAME: Laval @ Rochester

Sabres' Zach Redmond overcame stroke, severed artery to play in NHL

Olean Times Herald

By: Bill Hoppe

When Kim Howser spotted her son, Buffalo Sabres newcomer Zach Redmond, stretching on the family's dining room table that day almost five years ago, she said "pure panic" overwhelmed her.

Just weeks earlier, as some Winnipeg Jets extras skated prior to their Feb. 21, 2013 road game against the Carolina Hurricanes, Redmond nearly died in a harrowing accident on the PNC Arena ice.

As Redmond shadowed teammate Antti Miettinen, he fell backwards into the net. Miettinen also lost his balance, and the forward's skate blade went under Redmond's pant leg and sliced through his hockey sock, severing his right femoral artery and vein while also hitting the defenseman's groin, hamstring and quadriceps muscles.

"The minister called us in because he was that close to not making it," Howser told the Times Herald by phone Monday. "The entire family was called to North Carolina."

According to past accounts, the quick actions of teammate Anthony Peluso, assistant coach Perry Pearn and the Jets' medical staff probably saved Redmond, who lost more than half of his blood, Howser said. The femoral artery provides blood to the tissues of the leg.

Redmond, who was recalled by the Sabres on Saturday, underwent three hours of surgery and stayed in intensive care almost a week. He could've lost his leg. He left the hospital with more than 200 stitches holding him together.

So Howser, a retired surgical nurse, wasn't thrilled to see Redmond on the table with a yoga belt that day at home in Traverse City, Mich.

"I know what we tell our patients," she said. "When the stitches come out, you can get back to your normal activity, and here he is stitched up like nobody's business. I was a little shocked."

So Howser gave her son a blunt message.

"I said, 'If you pop those stitches, you don't have to worry, because I'm going to put an end to it,'" she said.

At that point, Redmond's career – he had played eight NHL games – looked iffy at best.

"In my heart, I wondered if he would ever play again at the NHL level," Howser said.

Shortly after that, Howser accompanied Redmond to the physical therapist. Watching him rehab so rigorously – "Another level that you can see he's working to get back to play hockey," she said – convinced her he would play again.

“When I saw what they were doing with him and how determined he was, I thought, ‘Wow, hot damn, he’s going to do it again,’” she said.

Yes, *again*. When Redmond was 15, he nearly lost his career after suffering a stroke.

“I’ve had the pleasure of going through a couple horrific events,” Redmond said following a Rochester Americans game Oct. 13 inside Blue Cross Arena. “Those things change your perspective. You don’t want to go through them, but you’re kind of better off for them. At the end of the day, you learn a little bit about yourself.”

First comeback

Today, Redmond, 29, is a veteran of 130 NHL contests. The Sabres traded winger Nick Deslauriers to the Montreal Canadiens for Redmond on Oct. 4, a swap of players looking for a fresh start.

“I don’t think (the deal) came as a surprise to anyone, and truthfully, I was elated to get a chance with Buffalo, an organization that treats their players so well,” said Redmond, who was summoned from the Amerks after defenseman Nathan Beaulieu suffered an upper-body injury Friday.

Familiarity has helped Redmond acclimate to his fourth organization. He previously played with Beaulieu and Sabres defenseman Zach Bogosian and winger Evander Kane.

“From the first calls that I got, everyone was super welcoming,” Redmond said. “The players, two days in, I felt like I had been here a full year.”

Redmond’s affable personality likely endears him to his teammates. Possibly because he endured so much uncertainty so young, Redmond is reflective, open to talking about how the harrowing incidents have altered his life and career.

“He’s a really high-energy guy, super positive, great to be around,” Kane said.

Everything, Redmond believes, happens for a reason.

“It seems like every time something happens there’s a dark period,” he said. “But it seems to kind of always make sense a little bit later on in life, just as far as maybe what (the) injury put me in a position to be in a different place at the right time. So that’s kind of been my career. I’m happy with how it’s went.”

By the time Redmond turned 15, his skills exceeded the talent levels in Traverse City, so he moved to Detroit to play for Compuware, a midget team.

During a tournament in Toronto that season, Redmond felt funny. His leg suddenly went numb.

“That was the beginning,” Howser said.

Redmond’s stroke temporarily paralyzed his right side.

“He couldn’t walk or use a pencil,” Howser said.

Redmond spent two and a half weeks in a Toronto hospital. But within a couple months, Howser said, he was back to normal.

“Through occupational therapy and speech therapy and *amazing* doctors and medical care, he recovered fully,” she said.

Still, early on, the prospects of Redmond resuming his burgeoning hockey career looked grim. A radiologist told his parents he couldn’t play again because he suffered a dissection in his brain, a tear along the inside wall of an artery, according to verywell.com.

“I can still feel the sinking feeling of, ‘How are we going to tell him?’” Howser said.

Howser and Redmond’s father, Dick, refused to believe his career was over. They never told him the stunning news.

Following a second opinion, the family learned a wave – Howser called it “an oddity” – caused the stroke. He could play hockey again.

“It was never a thought he wouldn’t play again in his mind,” she said.

So Redmond essentially picked up his career where he left off, joining the junior United States Hockey League’s Sioux Falls Stampede in 2005-06. The Atlanta Thrashers drafted him in the seventh round, 184th overall, in 2008.

Redmond played four years at Ferris State University, where he earned a marketing degree and captained the Bulldogs as a senior.

“The first time was devastating, because I was 15, 16, so determined, my career was just kind of taking off,” Redmond said. “I had just moved away from home that year, had a good year, was super excited for the future and everything. That hiccup was tough, but I was just blessed. Everything came back and (I) made a full recovery.”

Choosing to go on

Late in the 2012-13 season, Redmond traveled to Winnipeg to collect his belongings.

“We had no idea he wouldn’t be coming back home,” Howser said.

Redmond passed a physical examination, so the Jets offered him a conditioning stint with the St. John’s IceCaps, their AHL affiliate. Just 57 days after a blade severed an artery, he played the first of two rehab games.

Just weeks earlier, Redmond had to decide if he should keep playing. Howser said her son has always put hockey first. There wasn’t a Plan B.

“I had to figure out ... what was best for me and my family and if it made sense to go on and how I would recover, because it was a weird leg injury,” Redmond said. “I didn’t know how I’d be on the ice or anything. But again, it kind of worked out to where I was able to get through it, learn from that, grow from that.”

Howser said: “That was life-changing for him. At that time, he just knew that whatever was going to happen would happen.”

Redmond, of course, wasn’t always optimistic.

“Sometimes you just shake your head,” he said. “It’s like, ‘Why is this happening to me?’”

Whenever Redmond’s career picked up steam, he was nearly forced to give it up. But he said it was an “easy choice” to keep plowing forward.

“You can be crippled by what happened and never recover from it, or you can just put it behind you and move forward and do what you can to play the game you love,” he said. “So for me, it wasn’t all that difficult. I wanted to play, I still loved it and I had to make it work.

“It was just kind of what I needed to do. Both times for me, I guess, it was pretty easy for me to get up and get out of bed and get going.

Sabres Notebook: Learning curve for faceoff violations; Redmond happy with Buffalo
Buffalo News

By: John Vogl

Jason Pominville had just been penalized for a faceoff violation, and he quickly started a discussion with the officials. He looked angry.

In reality, the Sabres forward just wanted to know what he did wrong.

The crackdown on faceoff violations continues to be a work in progress for NHL players and officials. Judging by Pominville's comments, the adjustment period could extend for a while.

Officials penalized Pominville in Vegas on Tuesday after he stepped in for previously ejected Jack Eichel. A second violation earns a two-minute penalty, something Pominville knew. What he didn't know was how he violated the draw.

"Obviously, I wasn't happy, but I was just wondering," Pominville said. "What I was saying was I felt the Golden Knights center was over top of me. I'm supposed to set second when we're in the O-zone, so if I set second and his stick ends up being over top of mine, how is it possible that I moved first? That was my point.

"I was just kind of asking questions to really figure out what I did wrong."

The officials, who are learning on the fly just like the players, took Pominville's point under advisement.

"The ref was great," Pominville said. "He was like, 'You might be right. I might be completely wrong as well.' But he said he'll take a look at it and let me know.

"It's frustrating because everyone's unsure and you're kind of hesitant going in there. You don't want to take a penalty, but you want to win the draw."

It's certainly a fine line, as teams continue to discover. Vancouver was penalized Friday when it visited Buffalo.

"I thought it would be little bit quicker than it seems to be happening, but it's not like one team or one guy has got it figured out," Sabres forward Sam Reinhart said. "Hopefully, in this locker room we get it figured out."

The penalties will continue to happen because, as Pominville said, forwards won't just give up on the draw even with a trip to the box hanging over their heads.

"It's in the back of your mind all the time," Pominville said. "You don't want to flinch or be the guy that takes that penalty, but at the same time it's such a big difference if you win the faceoff and get the puck right away. It's the offensive zone, so you want to make sure you keep possession of it.

"If you look back at a couple years ago, guys were probably cheating quite a bit. It was getting to that point where they wanted to make an adjustment, and it's been an adjustment for a lot of guys because it is way different."

Zach Redmond knew a trade was coming. The defenseman just didn't know where he would end up.

As a guy who grew up liking Alexander Mogilny, he was thrilled it was Buffalo.

The Sabres acquired Redmond from Montreal earlier this month in exchange for forward Nicolas Deslauriers. Redmond reported to Rochester after the deal, and the Sabres called him up for the first time Saturday.

He was a healthy scratch against Boston as Taylor Fedun stepped in for injured Nathan Beaulieu. Still, putting on the uniform for pregame warm-ups was a nice first step after the trade.

"I was super happy," the 29-year-old said in TD Garden. "I'm sure some guys aren't as aware when they're getting traded, but I just kind of had a feeling. There were a lot of defensemen up there, and they'd signed a ton in the offseason. There were kind of rumors, and I kind of had a feeling, so it wasn't a complete shock to me."

"To come to a place like Buffalo, it's not too far from home," the Michigan native said. "I grew up kind of following the Sabres, so it was great for me."

Redmond was tied for the Amerks' team lead in points (three) and assists (two) after four games, which earned him the call.

"I enjoyed it down there," said the 6-foot-2, 212-pounder. "It's kind of free-flowing, and they love the D to get up in the offense, which I love to do as well. I think it should be a smooth transition. Just waiting on getting in."

Amerks recall Devante Stephens

Buffalo News

By: Amy Moritz

The Rochester Americans went to the ECHL to get some depth on the blue line. The Amerks called Devante Stephens from the Cincinnati Cyclones.

Stephens made his pro hockey debut on Oct. 14, playing against Kalamazoo for the Cyclones. The 20-year-old had played in two games for Cincinnati.

Before turning pro, Stephens played three seasons with the Kelowna Rockets in the Western Hockey League. He had 57 points (19 goals, 38 assists) in 203 games in the major-junior league. He sets career-highs in goals (13), assists (22), and points (35) last season.

The Amerks have three games in four days this week, playing at Laval on Wednesday then host Laval on Friday before welcoming back Syracuse to Blue Cross Arena on Saturday.

Steve Moses' Winding Road Through Professional Hockey

PHPA.com

By: Spencer Walker

The career of a professional hockey player can be a roller coaster ride with many twists and turns along the way in hopes of making it to the NHL. The journey for **Steven Moses** has been no different. Although he's been playing at the professional level for the past seven years throughout North America and Europe, he's back in the American Hockey League and still yearns to accomplish more.

Moses spent his junior hockey career with the Boston Jr. Bruins of the Eastern Junior Hockey League, scoring 96 points in 97 games. Growing up in Massachusetts, college hockey was very prevalent in the area. Moses spent a lot of his childhood at the rink and made it a goal of his from a young age to one-day play college hockey.

In 2008, Steven Moses made his goal a reality, suiting up for the University of New Hampshire (UNH) where he would study business with a focus on finance. Moses would go on to complete a four-year career at UNH, tallying 98 points in 148 games, and credits his time there for allowing him to put in the work needed to reach the next level.

"I was a small kid growing up in my teens, it took me a little bit of time to develop physically and put a little weight on so it was nice to go to college. It was a little less hockey, which I think is a negative thing. You only play 35-40 games but it gives you a chance to train hard in the gym and learn how to put some weight and muscle on. So in that sense I was really able to mature physically while I was at school."

Following his senior season at UNH, Moses signed a try out agreement with the New York Rangers and was assigned to their American Hockey League affiliate, the Connecticut Whale, where he gained valuable professional experience.

"Connecticut was a great learning experience. I was young and still in school. I was getting work sent to me by my professors so it was a really cool time. Obviously playing your first pro game, scoring your first pro goal are things that you remember. I think it really prepared me for the following season, my first full year of pro."

However, with an NHL lockout looming the following season, Moses had his eyes set on Europe. Knowing that the AHL would be log jammed with NHL quality players Moses signed a 1-year contract with Jokerit of the Finnish Liiga. He enjoyed a successful first professional season, scoring 22 goals and adding 16 assists in 55 games, finishing second in team scoring.

"I signed a one-year contract with Jokerit when I first went over there and it ended up being the best thing that happened to me," said Moses. "I always had intentions of coming back to North America and it was always my goal. The first year was really good and I was playing well and felt like I needed some more time there so I signed an extension to stay with Jokerit. I loved the city and the organization so I was happy to stay there."

After signing a 2-year extension, Moses appeared in 42 games in 2013-14 notching 12 goals and 11 assists. The following season he was faced with a unique situation.

Prior to the 2014-15 season, Jokerit announced that it would be joining Russia's Kontinental Hockey League (KHL). Teams changing leagues is rare in professional sports and Moses became one of the few players to experience what it was like to be on a team that changed leagues.

"It was complicated, players had multi-year contracts which were all essentially void. I had signed a multi-year contract after my first year, the second year of which was void because the team was joining the KHL. I ended up signing a new one-year contract to play with Jokerit in the KHL."

The move to the KHL provided a challenging transition for Moses. "Of course the KHL is a more competitive league. It's a big difference from playing in the Finnish league to the KHL. Travel is a lot different, the logistics of the league is more similar to the NHL, flying to every game and staying in hotels for long road trips. That was an adjustment for everyone. It was fun being part of that team that joined the KHL because we had a great team and had a lot of success."

In his first KHL season, Moses scored 36 goals, setting a single season KHL goal scoring record. He also added 21 assists to tally 57 points in 60 games, the best year of his career to date.

His on-ice success did not go unnoticed by NHL scouts. Following a career year, Moses earned the opportunity to return to North America for a chance to fulfill his childhood dream of playing in the NHL. Although he had several offers, Moses had specific criteria for how he would select his new home.

"The quickest way I sorted through the offers was giving priority to teams that were willing to give me a 1-way deal. There were a number of teams that were willing to do that." Moses was not interested in a rebuild, instead electing to sign with the Nashville Predators. "Nashville was really the only playoff team in that group. They went to the playoffs and lost to Chicago in 6 or 7 games the year before. They made the case they didn't want to make many changes, they wanted to bring me in and that's about it."

Heading into his first season with an NHL contract, Moses hoped to have an impressive showing at training camp. "Training camp didn't go as planned. No hard feelings, that's just the way it goes in sports." Moses was assigned to the Milwaukee Admirals of the AHL where he recorded 7 points in 16 games. However, Moses' time in the AHL was short lived. Having originally turned down significantly more money to sign with the Predators, Moses made a financial decision to return to the KHL.

While in North America, Moses' KHL rights were bought from Jokerit by powerhouse St. Petersburg. When Moses returned to the KHL, he found himself playing alongside former NHL stars **Ilya Kovalchuk** and **Pavel Datsyuk**. Playing with two future Hall of Famers was a special moment in Moses' hockey career which gave him the opportunity to watch and learn from some of the best.

“The was great, it was really an honor to play with just not those two but we had a tremendous team, some of the best Russian players in the world are playing in St. Petersburg which is evident by their success this season and our success last year.”

After three seasons with St Petersburg, Moses made the decision to return to North America, signing an American Hockey League contract with the Rochester Americans, the AHL affiliate of the Buffalo Sabres. Although Moses enjoyed his time in the KHL, he was not satisfied with his first stint in North American professional hockey, and felt as though the time was right to give it another shot.

“I wasn’t fully satisfied with the amount of time I gave it last time when I signed with Nashville. I just thought if there was ever going to be another chance I wanted to put my best foot forward and give it another shot and be satisfied with that before I turn the page and continue to play in Europe at some point.”

With the NHL electing to skip the upcoming Winter Olympics, it was not a deciding factor in his decision to return home from Russia, but admits it did have an impact on the type of contract he was willing to sign. Players on NHL 2-way contracts are not eligible to play in the Olympics, however, players on AHL contracts are eligible. “A big part of my reason for signing a one-way American League deal was to leave myself available for the Olympics. I didn’t want to play in the minors on a two-way contract and eliminate any chances of playing in the Olympics.”

Moses spent much of last season battling injuries and illness. Going into the 2017-18 season, he is looking to regain his love for the game, but also hasn’t forgotten the importance of team success.

“When you’re on a team you want to win, whether that’s winning the championship or winning every game you play. Last year it was a really challenging year for me personally, the first of my career where I was out more than half the year with an injury. I was struggling with that mentally of not being able to play the game that you love. I really just wanted to get back to enjoying the game. I think that is something that gets overlooked. I sort of lost the passion for the game last season, so I really just want to focus on enjoying the game and playing hockey, and let the chips fall where they may after that.”

Colin Blackwell Has Two Goals, Assist As Americans Get Past Rocket

The Canadian Press

By: Staff Report

Colin Blackwell had two goals and an assist to lead the Rochester Americans over the Laval Rocket 5-2 on Wednesday night in American Hockey League action.

Nicholas Baptiste scored once and added two helpers for the Americans (3-3-0). Casey Nelson and Sahir Gill also chipped in while Linus Ullmark stopped 37 shots.

Chris Terry and Nick Deslauriers replied for Laval (4-3-1). Zachary Fucale made 22 saves in defeat.

Rochester was scoreless on five power plays and the Rocket went 1 for 6.

Amerks Blast Laval In First-Ever Meeting

C&C WorldWide

By: Staff Report

The Rochester Americans won their first game ever against the Laval Rocket, 5-2, on Wednesday night in the first game of a home-and-home series.

The first period ended in a 2-2 tie as former Buffalo Sabre Nick Deslauriers put the Rocket with an unassisted tally.

Colin Blackwell scored his first goal as an Amerk to tie the contest less than two minutes later.

Laval regained the lead a 1:24 later, but Sahir Gill also netted his first goal for Rochester midway through the stanza to knot the count once more.

Despite being outshot 14-6 during the second period and taking three minor penalties, the Amerks escaped the frame with the 3-2 lead, but it did not take long for Rochester to double its cushion to a pair of goals early in the final stanza.

Nick Baptiste tallied his first goal of the season, which proved to be the game-winner, 7:08 into the second stanza.

Blackwell added his second goal in the third period as Baptiste picked up his second assist of the night on the marker.

With Blackwell's 3-point (2+1) performance, it established a career-high in both goals and points while the two-goal effort was his first multi-point game since Jan. 12, 2016 as a member of the Rockford IceHogs.

Defenseman Casey Nelson closed out the scoring with his first goal of the season at the 16:19 mark.

Linus Ullmark recorded 37 saves in gaining the win.

The two teams square off against one another on Friday at 7:05 pm at the Blue Cross Arena.

***NOTES** — Former Amerks defenseman Mike Milbury was the color commentator with announcer Mike Emrick on the NBCSN Wednesday night telecast of the Buffalo Sabres game in Columbus against the Blue Jackets. They mentioned the Amerks many times throughout the telecast, including the final 5-2 score in favor of Rochester. They also mentioned that Don Cherry was a former Amerks coach as well as Columbus coach John Tortorella being a former Amerks coach as well. They briefly talked about how rough the AHL was back then with Milbury fighting a Syracuse player in the hallway.