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RULE: Examining That Summer Four-Player Buffalo-Wild Trade at the Bye Week



By [Heather Rule](#) - January 16, 2018

Now that the Minnesota Wild have reached the league-mandated bye week with more than half the season's games complete, let's take a closer look at that four-player trade from last summer involving Jason Pominville, Marco Scandella, Tyler Ennis and Marcus Foligno.

With the expansion draft adding the new Vegas Golden Knights team to the NHL fold, moves were made all over the place as teams tried to protect certain players. Last June 30 – just before free agency – the Wild traded Pominville and Scandella to the Buffalo Sabres in exchange for forwards Ennis and Foligno plus a third-round pick in the 2018 draft.

It was a homecoming for Pominville, who previously played parts of nine seasons in Buffalo and was a captain before the Wild acquired him in a trade in April 2013. Pominville scored 76 goals and 130 assists for the Wild in 327 games. His best year with the Wild was his first full season with them in 2013-14, when he put up 30 goals and 30 assists.

He finished last season with 13 goals and 34 assists.

The 35-year-old winger and 2001 second-round Buffalo draft pick has nine goals and 11 assists in 44 games with the Sabres this season. The Wild arguably missed Pominville the most when Zach Parise was out for the first half of this season.

Scandella, a blue-liner, was packaged in the trade too. The 2008 second-round Wild draft pick has one goal and 12 assists in 44 games this season, already matching his point total from the 71 games he played last year.

He's only four assists away from his career-high of 16.

He played his first seven seasons in a Wild uniform, scoring 89 points in 373 contests. He had hip surgery in the offseason and has turned into a consistent defensive presence for the Sabres. He's a shot blocker and can fire a blistering shot from the point.

Pominville and Scandella got to play in this year's Winter Classic, something the Wild can only dream about – though that's another can of worms for another article.

As for what the Wild got in return, it's taken a little longer to see what Ennis and Foligno bring to the team. Ennis' play has picked up significantly in recent weeks, even if it hasn't translated into oodles of points. He's gone the last six games without a point and 15 games without a goal.

For the season, Ennis has six goals and six assists.

One of Ennis' goals did come against his former team, in a 5-4 victory on Nov. 22 in Buffalo. The 2008 first-round pick of the Sabres played eight seasons in Buffalo before the trade. He's dealt with injury issues the past couple seasons, but was a 20-plus goal scorer in 2013-14 and 2014-15.

Though he's had a healthy season so far with the Wild, the offense has been slow to get back to that quick pace.

Foligno's NHL career started in Buffalo as a fourth-round draft pick in 2009, then six seasons with the Sabres before the trade. His point and goal totals have modestly climbed with each season. Last

year, the 6-foot-3, 232-pound winger put up a career-high 13 goals and tied his career-high 23 points.

However, the offensive production hasn't exactly shown thrown with Foligno this season. He has three goals and 10 assists this season. He's gone his last 33 games without a goal, last scoring on Nov. 2 against Montreal. He registered just his second multi-point game on Saturday in the 4-1 victory over Winnipeg, with a pair of assists.

He's made his presence felt in other ways, sometimes with mistakes or careless penalties. He's definitely brought the tough-guy mojo, leading the team with 120 hits and 49 penalty minutes. He missed a game with a facial fracture after getting into a scrap in Chicago back in October.

Simply comparing points between these four players, it's not an overwhelming difference:

Wild points in the trade: 9 goals, 16 assists for 25 points

- Ennis: 6-6-12
- Foligno: 3-10-13

Buffalo points in the trade: 10 goals, 23 assists for 33 points

- Pominville: 9-11-20
- Scandella: 1-12-13

It all depends on how you look at the value of players beyond just the numbers. Has Pominville found his home again, giving him more confidence to play better hockey and score more goals? Was giving up Scandella's defense and blistering shot from the point worth it for the Wild, and is the physical presence of Foligno enough to make up for that somehow? Will Ennis find some sort of offensive spark to get back to a season resembling what he's been capable of in the past?

Maybe the trade isn't exactly a bust yet. This could be one of those moves that shows its true colors as more time passes.

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