



# **Buffalo Sabres**

**Daily Press Clips**

*October 27, 2016*

## **Wild, Sabres on different ends of spectrum heading into clash**

Associated Press

October 27, 2016

BUFFALO, N.Y. -- The Minnesota Wild are basking in the glow of their most dominant and complete victory of the young NHL season, while the Buffalo Sabres are left wondering about the one that got away.

The teams meet at 7 p.m. in Buffalo on Thursday night. On Tuesday, Devan Dubnyk made 27 saves in a 5-0 victory over the Boston Bruins. The Wild (4-2-1) took full advantage of a depleted Bruins roster that was missing its top two goalies.

"It was really good," Boudreau said of Dubnyk, according to the Wild's team website. "He was sharp, he had great movement, followed the puck well, and that's what good goaltending's all about."

Dubnyk is off to a solid start to the year, posting a 3-1-1 record along with a save percentage of .929. Five different players scored for the Wild in the blowout victory, which is looking for more balanced efforts on the score sheet moving forward.

"It's great balance, which you need ... if you can have balanced scoring in this league, then every line becomes a dangerous line," Boudreau said. "And that's what we're striving for."

Defenseman Ryan Suter leads the Wild in points with seven (two goals, five assists) through seven games. The Sabres jumped out to a 3-0 lead over the Philadelphia Flyers in Philadelphia on Tuesday only to see that lead slip away due to penalties and poor play. Buffalo eventually lost 4-3 in a shootout.

"If we want to be a good team, if we want to be a winning team, this is a game where we have to learn a lesson from with how we played, have to learn a lesson with how we're going to play going forward and one we should never let happen again," Sabres head coach Dan Bylsma said.

"I remember blowing a lot of two, three-goal leads on the island three, four years ago," said Sabres newcomer Kyle Okposo, according to the Sabres' team website. Okposo joined the Sabres this season from the New York Islanders. "It's not fun to do that. At the same time, once you kind of figure out everything you need to do to keep those leads it just becomes of habit and you kind of do it automatically. I think we're gonna learn from this and hopefully come out better on the other side."

It remains to be seen if the Sabres will get starting goaltender Robin Lehner back in time to face the Wild. Lehner did not make the trip to Philadelphia due to an illness.

"This is our fourth guy that's gotten ill and it's all kind of been about the same amount of time, about a two-day window," Bylsma said, according to the Sabres' team website. "Robin's just a shade over those two days now. Hopefully he'll start feeling better here today. We'll see going forward in terms of him coming back to the ice."

If Lehner can't go, Anders Nilsson will likely receive his second consecutive start.

## **Sabres look to learn early-season lesson**

By Amy Moritz  
The Buffalo News  
October 26, 2016

The coaching staff took the ice Wednesday afternoon in KeyBank Center, skating a few laps and shooting a few pucks, waiting for the players to emerge from the locker room.

The team meeting wasn't long or intense. But it was an opportunity to address the latest third-period collapse and put an end to the trend before it snowballs out of control.

The Buffalo Sabres have given up third-period leads in two of their last three games, including losing a 3-0 lead to the Flyers in Philadelphia on Tuesday. That game featured a trio of power play goals from the Flyers, two of which came in the final three minutes. The Flyers went on to win the game, 4-3, in a shootout.

Time to turn a clean page, forget the game and move on to Thursday night's meeting with the Minnesota Wild in KeyBank Center, right? Well, not exactly.

"No, I don't ever want to forget this one. I think we can't forget it," Sabres coach Dan Bylsma said to media Wednesday when asked if the latest loss was one to just forget. "I get your point, you want to cut loose and turn the next page but if we want to be a good team, if we want to be a winning team this is a game we have to learn a lesson from with how we played it, have to learn a lesson in how we're going to play going forward and one we should never let happen again."

Unacceptable was the word of the day among the players, who saw Tuesday's collapse in Philadelphia as a result of getting away from the style of game which earned them the lead in the first place.

"We had our meeting and we talked about a lot of things," Sabres captain Brian Gionta said. "We talked about trying to be a team that wants to win and is doing the right things to win. Going into the third with a 3-0 lead we've got to be better. We've got to be better with the puck. We've got to make better decisions and as whole we've got to be much better."

"When you look back at it, it was all on us," Gionta said. "The things we did, turnovers which lead to penalties which lead to a good power play by them and momentum starts to take over. They get that first power play goal, there's still plenty of time. We can run out the clock and there's about three minutes or so with a two-goal lead. That's got to be our game."

While the bulk of the Sabres roster has been together for an entire season, there still is a learning curve. This time, it's the classic challenge of learning how to play with a lead. The Sabres have plenty of experience being the team down, desperate to find some goals and willing to take chances. Learning how to be on the receiving end of that fast and loose game will be a key component to any future success.

"We have to realize holding a lead is going to be tougher," Sabres forward Ryan O'Reilly said. "We've been in those situations where we're down a couple goals and you play loose. You go. You take risks. If we then lose aggressiveness it gives them more time and they're going to start getting the bounces because they're playing looser. There's a certain mentality where we're still playing aggressive but supportive as well. That's what we've lacked. Know they're going to come, we have to support each other more, we have to break out together and then when the play's not there, let's not force it. It's a learning process and we have to learn it quick."

The basic lesson from the last game? Keep it simple and play for the full 60 minutes.

"We're playing a no-nonsense type of hockey, simple hockey," Josh Gorges said. "Trying to put the opposition in positions to make mistakes and force them into tough situations and capitalize on our opportunities. Problem is we get away from that. We start to think we're a team that's going to go out there and make plays and be a little bit more fancy and that's when we get ourselves into trouble and when we start making mistakes."

"We're not happy with our game last game by any means," Gorges said. "It's not acceptable. But we can't hit the panic button now and start freaking out. We just have to make sure we correct the things we can correct, make sure we're focused on the job we need to do and when we come to play you've got to realize you've got to play for 60 minutes. And I hate to say that because it's a cliché but the proof is in the pudding (Tuesday) night."

## **Sabres Notebook: Moulson hot on the power play**

By Amy Moritz  
The Buffalo News  
October 26, 2016

There are more smiles around Matt Moulson's locker these days. Not a ton. Not as long as the team losses are piling up. But the forward has been able to breathe a little easier the first month of the season as his four power play goals ranked first in the NHL on Wednesday.

That's four goals in five games for Moulson who scored just eight goals in 81 games last year.

He credits his power play production to his unit, which includes Kyle Okposo, Sam Reinhart, Rasmus Ristolainen and Ryan O'Reilly.

"I don't think those chances come without the guys that we have on there," Moulson said. "We seem to work well as a unit, kind of in sync and supporting each other and creating opportunities. I've just been the beneficiary of a couple nice plays."

Sabres coach Dan Bylsma said he's seen where Moulson can be good for the team and the power play in his early-season production.

"He's in and around the net, in the middle of the ice, good screen net-front but quick on the puck, quick on the shot," Bylsma said. "Every one of his goals has been because of him doing that for our power play."

The good start is a confidence boost for Moulson and helps point him in the direction of his goal.

"You definitely want to get off to a good start," Moulson said. "I want to win a Stanley Cup. That's what I want to do and I know I can help this team if I'm playing the way I need to play and the way I know I can play. I think that's where the work comes in, just making sure you're able to help this team win. That's all I want to do is win The Cup and any way I can help this team and right now it's hopefully scoring goals."

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Goaltender Robin Lehner missed practice on Wednesday. It was uncertain if he would be available for Thursday's game against the Minnesota Wild in KeyBank Center.

"This is our fourth guy that's gotten ill and it's all kind of been about the same amount of time frame – about a two-day window that it's happened," Bylsma said. "So Robin's just a shade over those two days now and hopefully he'll start feeling better today. We'll see going forward in terms of him coming back to the ice."

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Thursday's game will be the Sabres annual participation in Hockey Fights Cancer, a league-wide program to raise money and awareness for cancer research.

The Hockey Fights Cancer Package is available for \$99 and includes two 300 Level II tickets and a Hockey Fights Cancer t-shirt. Additional t-shirts are available for \$20.

Fans can buy autographed Hockey Fights Cancer hats for \$20. Donated by New Era Cap Company, all proceeds will go to Roswell Park Cancer Institute. Also available will be raffle tickets to win Sabres experiences and autographed items.

A ceremonial puck drop will take place before the game and Roswell Park volunteers will be in the concourse to help fans fill out "I'm fighting for \_\_\_\_" towels to be held up during the second period.

An online auction at [auctions.NHL.com](http://auctions.NHL.com) will feature Sabres items and special warmup jerseys. The auction runs through 9 p.m. on Nov. 6 and benefits Roswell Park Cancer Institute.

Over the past five years, the Buffalo Sabres' Hockey Fights Cancer fund has donated \$25,000 to Flashes of Hope, a non-profit organization dedicated to finding a cure for children's cancer. The organization will be set up from 5 to 6:30 p.m. near the elevators on the street level while members of Carly's Club will join other cancer patients from Roswell park in suits donated by the Sabres organization and players Brian Gionta, Ryan O'Reilly and Zach Bogosian. After the game, pediatric cancer patients will have the opportunity to meet with Sabres players in the team's locker room.

## **JW: The 3-2-1**

By Jeremy White

WGR 550

October 26, 2016

In an effort to raise awareness for the NHL's desperate need to move to a 3-2-1 point system, I've opted to start a featured column with the same name. Three quick takes today on the Sabres OT disaster, Dmitri Kulikov's presence, and NBCSN's latest rivalry night.

3 points - SABRES OT

Last year it was mildly frustrating to watch the Sabres get dominated in overtime. This year it's flat out inexcusable. The NHL's 3-2-1 point system makes it so the 5 minute overtime and shootout are worth just as much as the 60 minutes that come before it. With that in mind, I want my team to be the best at it. At this point I'd be happy if it appeared the Sabres were interested in scoring during an overtime.

Dan Bylsma's OT plan is dead on arrival. Why start with two defensemen? Bylsma rolls the Sabres out there with one forward and two D often, just in case they lose the draw. Immediately they're planning or a potential failure. If they lose the draw, they have two D out against... SURPRISE... two forwards from the opposing team. The Sabres then proceed to play overtime like a penalty kill. They're passive. They wait and attempt to block shots. If they win the face off, they waste any sort of jump they might get off it by waiting for Josh Gorges to go to the bench. Overtime starts, and we're wasting time playing defense and fearful of what might go wrong.

In overtime, you have nothing to lose. No really though... nothing. They don't take your point away. Last night the Sabres had a 5 minute period to earn BACK the point that they squandered in the third period in Philadelphia. That whole mess could have essentially been wiped out by just getting an overtime goal. What do they do? In two games this year the Sabres have been hemmed in their own end while possessing the puck. This is incredible in it's own right. With so much room, other teams are actually pinning them in.

Last night was a new low. In the rare occurrence that the Sabres would gain... THE BLUE LINE... with the puck, they'd quickly give it back up. I understand the concept of maintaining possession, and why one might use the goaltender to do so. That said, when you have the puck in the offensive zone, something this team struggles to get accomplished in the overtime, maybe mix in a shot on net? The Sabres were consistently out chanced last season in overtime (This is where I'd like to include a graph but those were on war-on-ice.com and that site isn't up anymore). Two games in they appear as lost as ever.

Ennis plays it back to the goaltender.

Okposo plays it back to the goaltender (with 35 seconds left).

Kulikov skates it out of the zone and then tries to bring it back in as the Sabres go offside.

The Flyers fans that were left in the building, booed. Given a five minute period to win a hockey game, the Sabres don't appear to be all that interested in it. Who didn't think they were playing for a shootout, which they've been equally terrible at?

Hey Sabres, you're going the wrong way.

Here's your new overtime plan. Play your fastest players at all times. Be relentless in pressuring the puck and attempting to get it away from your opponent. You might recognize this as what all the other teams do to you.

These points matter, and for overtime to be such a mystery in year two, is not cool.

There is a silver lining. Well, two.

1. 4 of 8 on a road trip without Eichel and Kane is kinda good.
2. Caring this much is a sign that we're back. This season is real. Let's hope it stays that way.

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2 points - Dmitri Kulikov

Last year we talked about the Lehner trade as Tim Murray's defining move. Maybe it'll be Dmitri Kulikov. Kulikov is off to a less-than-stellar start with the Sabres, saddling them with a costly penalty last night. The numbers say Pysyk is a better player. We were sold the idea that Kulikov would help balance out the defense and could be a partner for Rasmus Ristolainen. Yet we're seeing all the pairings other than that one. Tim Murray looks to have left this team lacking on the blue line, and if Kulikov fails to prove to be an upgrade over Pysyk, it's on Murray. Kulikov is on a one year deal while Pysyk would have been property of the Sabres for many many years as a restricted free agent. It looked like an odd trade that day... and it's looking like a bad trade two weeks in. Time will tell, but it might be the one we talk about more than the Lehner deal.

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1 point - Rangers - Bruins part Derrrrrr

Tonight it's Rivalry Night on NBCSN and you're getting Rangers-Bruins. In an alternate universe where the NHL markets its game and stars properly, they're showing Connor McDavid v. Alex Ovechkin. Oilers-Caps is... NOT on. Do better, hockey.

## **Sabres need to learn from Tuesday's loss**

By Brayton Wilson

WGR 550

October 26, 2016

The Buffalo Sabres got back to practice on Wednesday at the KeyBank Center after losing a three-goal lead in Philadelphia on Tuesday in a 4-3 shootout loss to the Flyers.

Buffalo got three second-period goals to chase Flyers goalie Michal Neuvirth from the net. The Sabres controlled the pace of play leading up to the second intermission. But in the final 20-minutes of play, poor puck management, and untimely penalties would cost the Sabres.

"I think our second period was really good," Sabres forward Marcus Foligno said after practice. "Three goals in the second, two of them on the powerplay. That's a good period for us. The losses we've given up this year have come from bad puck management. Silly plays where we should just be getting [the puck] deep and wearing teams down. We're losing leads because of that."

Philadelphia would score on all three powerplay chances in the third, two in the final 3:20 of the game, and would go on to beat the Sabres in the shootout. While the Sabres have dropped to 1-2-2 on the season, now is not the time to panic.

"We're not happy with our last game by any means. It's not acceptable," Sabres defenseman Josh Gorges said. "We can't hit the panic button right now and start freaking out. We just have to correct the things we can correct, make sure we're focused on the job we need to do, and when it comes time to play we have to play for 60 minutes. I hate to say that because it's a cliché, but the proof is in the pudding last night."

"We know it's not the start that we wanted," Sabres forward Ryan O'Reilly said. "We want to be in a much different position, but there's [more games to come]. It's not about looking at the big picture, it's about looking at the next game. We need to have a start. Our start in Philly was not what we wanted. We were riding on Anders [Nilsson] too much. We have to get back to winning the blue lines quick and right away."

The Sabres hit the ice Wednesday looking to make adjustments to the mistakes made in the third period the night before. Sabres head coach Dan Bylsma is hoping his team learns from this game, while not forgetting what they did do wrong in order to avoid these mistakes from happening again.

"I don't want to ever forget about this one. I think we can't forget it," Bylsma said. "If we want to be a good team, if we want to be a winning team, this is a game where we have to learn a lesson with how we played it. We have to learn a lesson with how we're going to play moving forward, and one we should never let happen again."

"You have to learn from it," Sabres captain Brian Gionta said. "You have to go in and realize the mistakes that we made. But at the same time, you can't really dwell on it because coming into tomorrow night, you don't want it to snowball into something more negative. We need to cut it off at that, learn from the mistakes, and come out tomorrow ready to play as a group."

The lines and defensive pairings remained the same at practice as they did in Tuesday's game. They look like this:

Moulson - O'Reilly - Okposo  
Girgensons - Reinhart - Ennis  
Foligno - Larsson - Gionta  
Deslauriers - Grant - Fasching

Gorges - Ristolainen  
Kulikov - Bogosian  
McCabe - Franson  
Nelson

Sabres goalie Robin Lehner did not practice once again on Wednesday with an illness. Bylsma said following practice that he hopes that Lehner will get better within the coming days, but gave no update on his status for Thursday night.

Pre-Game coverage of the Sabres and Wild on WGR gets underway at 6 p.m. on Thursday with Mike Schopp and the Bulldog. Faceoff is scheduled for 7 p.m.



## **Sabres already need to make up ground in standings**

By Bill Hoppe  
Olean Times Herald  
October 27, 2016

BUFFALO – To locate the Sabres' current standing, look in a familiar place. Find the Atlantic Division and scan down, all the way to the bottom. There, in eighth place, you'll spot the 1-2-2 club.

The Sabres are one of four NHL teams with just a single win and four points. Only one team, the Arizona Coyotes, has fewer points.

Yes, it's early. The Sabres have 77 games left, starting with tonight's home tilt against the Minnesota Wild. Still, the top three teams in the division – Montreal, Tampa Bay and Detroit – have already reached double-digits points, albeit with the benefit of an extra game or two.

With so much parity around the league, climbing into a playoff spot after a slow start can be arduous. "We need to pick up some wins," Sabres winger Marcus Foligno said Wednesday following practice inside KeyBank Center. "You don't want teams to get into the 20-point mark while you're still looking for the 10<sup>th</sup> point. You don't want that much separation to happen, especially in the first weeks."

The Sabres are recovering from a brutal early-season loss, Tuesday's 4-3 shootout setback in Philadelphia, a game in which they imploded late, blowing a 3-0 third-period lead.

"You don't want to have anything that snowball early and gets worse," Foligno said. "I think the way we respond against Minnesota is going to be the showing of the character on this team."

How rare is it for the Sabres to blow a three-goal, third-period lead? They hadn't dropped a game like that since March 15, 2004, according to local stat researcher Mike Haim. The Sabres lost 6-5 in overtime to Toronto after starting the third period up 5-2.

The Sabres completely melted down Tuesday, allowing three power-play goals. They had a 3-1 lead before the Flyers scored with 2:56 left and again 65 seconds later.

"At no point in the season can you give points away, because it's hard to get them back, it's hard to make climbs through the standings," Sabres defenseman Josh Gorges said. The Sabres, losers of three straight games, also lost 4-3 in overtime last Tuesday in Calgary after blowing a 3-2 third-period lead.

"That's a challenge for this group," Sabres coach Dan Bylsma said. "We had two third-period leads in games on the road, and we have to learn how to close those games out. We have to learn how to win hockey games together as a group. It's disappointing."

The loss seemed to be gnawing at Bylsma on Wednesday. Bylsma, normally a lively presence, was more subdued than usual. He believes his team "can't forget" about the game.

"If we want to be a good team, if we want to be a winning team, this is a game we have to learn a lesson from," he said.

Sabres center Ryan O'Reilly said: "We want to be a team that competes every night and is maturing and growing toward something. The way we're playing is not that. We have a lot of maturing to do and do it quick."

So what happened Tuesday? How did the game tilt so dramatically?

"We're playing a no-nonsense type of hockey, simple hockey, trying to put the opposition in position to make mistakes and force them into tough situations and capitalize on opportunities," Gorges said. "The problem is, we get away from that, we start to think we're a team that's going to be a little bit fancy, and that's when we start to get ourselves in trouble, make mistakes."

To O'Reilly, opponents haven't earned those late victories.

"You look at those last games, we've given it to them," he said. "It's not like they've been doing anything miraculous. We're giving them the puck. ... We're making it easy on them."

On the bright side, other than a 4-1 opening-night loss to Montreal, the Sabres' only home game this season, they have three one-goal losses.

They're close. They also throttled Edmonton 6-2 on Oct. 16, the Oilers' only loss this season. With three games in the next four days, they have a chance to make up some ground.

"We've shown times and signs of what we're capable of and what we can do, and it's a matter of us as a group, collectively, putting it together consistently," Gorges said. "We're not going to push the panic button and start freaking out and who we are and what our identity is. We just have to stick to it."

## **Sabres goalie Robin Lehner still out with flu**

By Bill Hoppe  
Olean Times Herald  
October 27, 2016

BUFFALO – Sabres goalie Robin Lehner, who missed Tuesday's 4-3 overtime loss in Philadelphia, is still sidelined by the flu.

Lehner, the fourth player to become ill recently, stayed home today, his third straight day off the ice. The other Sabres have recovered in about two days, coach Dan Bylsma said.

While Bylsma didn't rule Lehner out of Thursday's home tilt against the Minnesota Wild, it appears unlikely he will play.

Backup Anders Nilsson subbed admirably for Lehner against the Flyers, stopping 38 shots in his first appearance this season. The Sabres, however, imploded late, blowing a 3-0 third-period lead.

"I thought he played a very good game, solid game, was very strong in the net," Bylsma said following practice inside KeyBank Center. "He's one guy I'm disappointed for at the end of the game, because he had played a whale of game for us and one we should've gotten a win for him."

The Sabres' third straight loss, a game they led 3-1 in the waning minutes, was clearly still gnawing at Bylsma today.

Bylsma, whose team is just 1-2-2, just doesn't want to simply cast the game aside.

"I don't want to ever forget it," he said. "We can't forget it. ... If we want to be a good team, if we want to be a winning team, this is a game we have to learn a lesson from."

## **SABRES' KULIKOV COULD BE FACING SUSPENSION FOR HIGH, HARD HIT ON FLYERS' VORACEK**

By Jared Clinton  
The Hockey News  
October 26, 2016

Dmitry Kulikov has a history with the NHL's Department of Player Safety, and they may be reacquainting themselves after the Sabres defenseman plowed through Flyers winger Jakub Voracek.

Buffalo Sabres defenseman Dmitry Kulikov, 25, has already had to miss one game this season due to injury, and he could find himself watching more action from the sidelines in the coming days thanks to a suspension.

In Tuesday's game against the Flyers, Kulikov saw an opportunity to crunch Philadelphia winger Jakub Voracek and took it, but the Sabres blueliner may have crossed the line. After a turnover inside the Sabres' zone, Voracek was able to corral the puck before throwing a quick backhand pass to Travis Konecny.

Voracek continued on after making his pass, but by the time he could swing his head around to see any oncoming defenders, he was caught by Kulikov, resulting in a huge open-ice collision. The hit jarred Voracek's helmet loose and immediately drew a crowd. Take a look:

That sure looks like it could be worthy of supplemental discipline, especially on the reverse angle. Kulikov's back skate appeared to come up off the ice as he went in for the hit on Voracek and the contact seemed to be primarily with Voracek's head. The referees working the contest judged the play to be outside the lines of fair play, too, slapping Kulikov with a minor penalty for charging.

If the NHL's Department of Player Safety does judge Kulikov's hit to be worthy of supplemental discipline, it won't be the first time they've spoken with the Russian rearguard. In February 2015, he was suspended four games for a low-bridge hit on Dallas Stars sniper Tyler Seguin.

Thankfully for the Flyers, Voracek was able to remain in the game after Kulikov's hit, and he even got the last laugh. Philadelphia picked up a shootout victory over Buffalo, and it was Voracek who netted the winner.

## **Gameday preview: Wild at Buffalo**

By Michael Russo

StarTribune

October 26, 2016

Preview: The Wild, tied with a league-high 24 goals, completes its four-game road trip (1-1-1) after winning in Boston 5-0 on Tuesday. The Wild is 7-2-2 in its past 11 against the Sabres, outscoring them 37-23. It is 7-2 all-time in Buffalo.

Players to watch: C Joel Eriksson Ek is the first Wild teenager and fourth Wild rookie to have three assists in a game, and second Wild rookie to be plus-3 in a game. LW Mikael Granlund is the only Wild forward without a goal. Former Sabres captain Jason Pominville has six points in six games against his former team. New Sabres winger and former Gopher Kyle Okposo has eight points in 12 games against Minnesota. Former Wild Matt Moulson leads the Sabres with four goals.

Numbers: Sixteen Wild players have scored at least one goal, three more than any other NHL team. ... The Wild's first-period goal and shot differential is -2 and -22. Its second-period goal and shot differential is a league-best plus-9 and plus-22. ... The Wild has the NHL's second-best penalty kill (20-for-21, 95.2 percent).

Injuries: Wild D Jared Spurgeon (upper body) and C Erik Haula (foot) skated during Wednesday's optional practice. Bruce Boudreau indicated they would miss their fourth game in a row. Sabres C Jack Eichel (ankle) and LW Evander Kane (ribs) are out. G Robin Lehner (ill) is questionable.

## **Sabres hope to learn from late loss in Philly**

By Jourdon LaBarber

Buffalo Sabres

October 26, 2016

When he joined the organization as a free agent in the summer, Kyle Okposo spoke about how his experience over the past few seasons with the New York Islanders had mirrored the one he was about to venture into with the Sabres. The Islanders have made the postseason for two-straight years now, but it was only three seasons ago that they were a young, talented team still learning how to win games.

Needless to say, there were losses like the ones the Sabres had on Tuesday in Philadelphia. They led the Flyers 3-0 entering the third period and 3-1 with less than four minutes remaining, but lost 4-3 in a shootout due to a combination of late-game turnovers and subsequent penalties.

"Oh yeah," Okposo said following practice at KeyBank Center on Wednesday. "I remember blowing a lot of two, three-goal leads on the Island three, four years ago. It's not fun to do that. At the same time, once you kind of figure out everything you need to do to keep those leads it just becomes of habit and you kind of do it automatically. I think we're gonna learn from this and hopefully come out better on the other side."

Taking a look back at the Islanders' schedule from three seasons ago, those games he's talking about aren't hard to find. Coming off a playoff berth in the lockout-shortened season the year prior, the Islanders lost seven one-goal games in October of the 2013-14 season. They blew a 2-0 lead in the third period and lost in a shootout to Columbus in their second game of that season and blew a one-goal lead with 3:01 remaining in regulation to Marcus Foligno and the Sabres 10 days later, a game they also lost in a shootout. Both were similar to what the Sabres went through Tuesday.

"I think, after a game like last night, we're a group that's still learning from that win," Okposo said. "We need to learn from that game, come in and talk about it and then put it in the rearview mirror. Make sure that we don't repeat the same mistakes that we did last game but at the same time, there are 82 of these things. If you start dwelling on a game and start dwelling on some of your mistakes, that's when you lose five in a row."

You put those games behind you, but you don't forget the feeling of losing them. Jake McCabe called the loss to Philadelphia "embarrassing" and "a brutal experience." Ryan O'Reilly called it "unacceptable." The Sabres felt the Flyers came out tired in the first two periods after playing in Montreal the night before, but allowed them to come back in the third with turnovers in the neutral zone that led directly to penalties.

The lesson, Okposo said, is that you can never count a team out and never lose attention to details. If the Sabres learn that moving forward, perhaps there was a silver lining from the loss in Philadelphia after all.

"I don't ever want to forget this one," Sabres coach Dan Bylsma said. "I think we can't forget it ... If we want to be a good team, if we want to be a winning team, this is a game we have to learn a lesson from with how we played and we have to learn a lesson with how we're going to play going forward, and one we should never let happen again."

Lehner still under the weather

Robin Lehner did not make the trip to Philadelphia and missed practice again on Wednesday due to illness. Bylsma did not say whether Lehner or Anders Nilsson would start in net on Thursday against the Minnesota Wild.

"This is our fourth guy that's gotten ill and it's all kind of been about the same amount of time, about a two-day window," Bylsma said. "Robin's just a shade over those two days now. Hopefully he'll start feeling better here today. We'll see going forward in terms of him coming back to the ice."

## Wednesday's practice

26 Matt Moulson - 90 Ryan O'Reilly - 21 Kyle Okposo  
63 Tyler Ennis - 23 Sam Reinhart - 28 Zemgus Girgensons  
82 Marcus Foligno - 22 Johan Larsson - 12 Brian Gionta  
52 Hudson Fasching - 27 Derek Grant - 44 Nicolas Deslauriers

4 Josh Gorges - 55 Rasmus Ristolainen  
77 Dmitry Kulikov - 47 Zach Bogosian  
29 Jake McCabe - 6 Cody Franson  
34 Casey Nelson

31 Anders Nilsson  
35 Linus Ullmark

## Up next

The Sabres return to action at home against Wild on Thursday night. It will be Hockey Fights Cancer night at KeyBank Center, which will begin with special lavender jerseys worn in warmups to be auctioned following the game and a ceremonial faceoff. Lauren Hall has more on what is always a special night.

The puck drops Thursday at 7 p.m. Join our crew for Tops Sabres Gamenight on MSG-B at 6:30 p.m. or listen live on WGR 550.