



# **Buffalo Sabres**

## **Daily Press Clips**

*October 9, 2017*

## **Tavares helps Islanders beat Sabres 6-3 in home opener**

Associated Press

By VIN A. CHERWOO

October 8, 2017

NEW YORK (AP) — One day after a disappointing road loss in their season opener, John Tavares and the New York Islanders hit their stride at home

Tavares scored twice — the first coming just 1:50 into the game — to lead the Islanders to a 6-3 victory over the Buffalo Sabres on Saturday night.

“We just got after it at the drop of the puck,” Tavares said. “We had a lot of possession. Obviously a good bounce-back from last night to get that first win, especially at home.”

Casey Cizikas had two goals and an assist, and Josh Bailey and Anthony Beauvillier also scored for the Islanders, who lost 5-0 at Columbus the previous night. Jaroslav Halak stopped 26 shots.

“Just the way we came out tonight, there was no hangover from yesterday,” Cizikas said “We know that was unacceptable. We came out tonight with a purpose. We played outstanding. And Jaro stood on his head when we needed him to.”

Evander Kane scored twice and Jack Eichel had a goal and an assist for the Sabres, who lost their opener in a shootout to Montreal on Thursday night and are still seeking their first win under new coach Phil Housley. Robin Lehner gave up four goals on 16 shots and was pulled early in the second. Chad Johnson finished with 15 saves.

The Islanders were 0 for 3 on the power play and Buffalo was 0 for 4, but each team scored two short-handed goals in a wild second period.

New York scored three times — including twice short-handed — in a 1:47 span that gave them a 4-0 lead seven minutes into the period.

Buffalo went on the power play 4:50 in after the Islanders’ Scott Mayfield was whistled for a double-minor when he got tangled up with Rasmus Ristolainen, who also received a penalty.

Tavares got his second of the night as he intercepted a pass by Nathan Beaulieu near Buffalo’s blue line, skated in on Lehner and backhanded it over the goalie’s glove at 5:13.

Cizikas made it 3-0 just 50 seconds later on a slap shot from the left circle. Shortly after the Sabres’ power play ended, Bailey got a pass from Josh Ho-Sang from behind the goal line and wristed it past Lehner to make it 4-0 and end the goalie’s night.

“We obviously don’t put ourselves in a good position to win a hockey game when you give up that many short-handed goals and (in) the succession we gave them up,” Eichel said. “It’s definitely frustrating and it’s something we need to correct.”

Kane got the Sabres on the scoreboard just past the midpoint of the period. With New York on the man advantage, Eichel stole the puck from Halak behind the net and sent a pass from the left corner in front and Kane put it in before Halak could recover.

Kane scored short-handed again on a wraparound with about 4 1/2 minutes remaining in the middle period to pull the Sabres to 4-2.

“They scored two goals on our power play, a couple of bad bounces,” Halak said. “We did a pretty good job tonight. Everyone was excited in the building — fans and players. We wanted to come out and get a good start and we did.”

Beauvillier scored on a rebound after Johnson made several nice stops to restore the Islanders’ three-goal lead at 5:39 of the third.

Eichel’s first of the season made it a two-goal game again with 3:44 remaining.

Buffalo then pulled Johnson for an extra skater with 2 1/2 minutes to go and nearly scored again with a little over a minute left, but Halak smothered the puck before it trickled over the line. The no-goal call stood after a review.

Cizikas added an empty-netter with 26 seconds left.

Tavares' first-period goal moved him past Bobby Nystrom into sole possession of eighth place on the franchise list with his 236th career goal. His second goal put him one behind Bob Bourne (238) for seventh.

NOTES: Tavares now has 14 goals and 25 points in 24 career games against the Sabres. Jordan Eberle, acquired from Edmonton in the offseason, set up Tavares' first goal with a nice saucer pass and now has six points in 10 games vs. Buffalo. ... Islanders D Nick Leddy appeared in his 500th career game. ... F Jason Chimera played in his 190th consecutive game — 106 with Washington and the last 84 with the Islanders. ... The teams play two more times this season, back here on Dec. 27 and at Buffalo on Feb. 8. ... The Sabres have now given up three short-handed goals in two games. ... Buffalo F Kyle Okposo, who missed the end of last season while dealing with severe post-concussion symptoms that landed him in a hospital, received a strong ovation from the crowd before the game. Okposo, in his second year with the Sabres, had 139 goals and 230 assists in nine seasons with the Islanders.

UP NEXT

Sabres: Host New Jersey on Monday.

Islanders: Host St. Louis on Monday before heading out on a four-game western trip.

## Devil in the details as the Sabres prepare to host New Jersey

The Buffalo News

By Amy Moritz

October 8, 2017

The points of emphasis were simple, but associate coach Davis Payne made sure the words hung throughout KeyBank Center early Sunday afternoon.

Payne was passionately vocal in telling the players to get sharp. Pay attention to details. Reminding them, in somewhat colorful language, that every play counts.

The Buffalo Sabres worked on those details in a hard 30-minute practice. Most of the team stayed out for another 30 minutes. Good habits are developed through repetition. And the Sabres need to develop some better habits.

They worked on generating speed through the neutral zone and a shoot-first mentality. They worked on breaking out of their zone as a five-man unit and becoming crisper on line changes.

Details. Execution.

That's where the Buffalo Sabres feel they have faltered most in their first two games of the season. That's what the team hopes to change Monday afternoon as it hosts the New Jersey Devils at 3 p.m. in KeyBank Center.

The Sabres are looking to move past a 6-3 loss to the New York Islanders. The Saturday night game in Brooklyn was a disaster, with two short-handed goals against and three goals scored in a span of 1:47. From the team perspective, the performance and loss had little to do with implementing a new system. Rather, it had everything to do with playing good hockey.

"Anytime you put a new system in, sure it's going to take some getting use to, but in saying that there's things (Saturday) night that had nothing to do with the system or anything like that," Sabres forward Kyle Okposo said. "It was just our decision-making as a team and our lack of battle and their elevated level of battle. They did a really good job of making decisions through the neutral zone and we just didn't do that."

"It's getting back to the little details," Sabres forward Ryan O'Reilly said. "That's what killed us yesterday. Just little things. Relaxing at certain times of the game. I thought we had a good, intense practice with everyone going. Competing, moving feet, having good sticks, going to right spots."

While getting better as a five-man unit was high on the priority list at Sunday's practice, special teams will continue to be a storyline for the Sabres who desperately need to get better on the power play.

In two games the Sabres have given up three shorthanded goals. They are 1 for 9 on the power play, although Evander Kane did notch two shorthanded goals in the loss to the Islanders. That's all well and good, but the Sabres are in need of better execution, effort, and mentality when they have the man advantage.

That will be key against the Devils, who had a spectacular special teams performance in their season-opening 4-1 win over the Colorado Avalanche on Saturday. New Jersey went 3 for 4 on the power play while holding the Avs to 0 for 6, adding a shorthanded goal for good measure.

"I don't know how many short-handed goals we gave up last year. Maybe two? We've given up three in two games," Okposo said. (For the record, the Sabres surrendered four shorties last season).

"We've just got to make sure we're sharp on the power play and make sure that we come with a mentality that we're going to go out-work them and we're going to go score every time we get on the ice. We can't be second-guessing ourselves. I know it's easy to do. Myself, I've had a couple games where I haven't been up to the standard of play that I want to play at. But you've got to keep going. Those games are behind you and you've got to move forward."

As the Sabres move forward, coach Phil Housley wants to see his team breaking out of their defensive zone and spending time in the offensive zone. More time in the other team's zone means less wasted energy along with more scoring opportunities.

"I think the guys understand what we're trying to do and you can see in the games when we play the right way, we're very effective," Housley said. "But when we take things into our own hands and try to make plays through the neutral zone against a left wing lock forecheck, you're just inviting disaster because you're just turning it over to the other team. They're coming back at us, now we're spending energy defending and we're just getting worn down and trying to get pucks out and that's a victory.

"I don't want to take creativity away from our guys, but we've got to make the right plays," Housley said. "We've got to realize if the numbers are in our favor or not in our favor and we've got to make a smart decision. Put the onus on them playing defense ... establish our forecheck and then eventually when you do that, it's like a football game, right. It's like field position. You create that territory and we need that territory for us early in the game where the gaps will then open up after."

## Sabres Notebook: Nolan gets comfortable with being a First Nations role model

The Buffalo News

By Amy Moritz

October 8, 2017

Last year, Jordan Nolan did something few hockey players do.

He took a political stance on Twitter.

Nolan vocalized his support for the tribal community in North Dakota as they protested the construction of an oil pipeline. The route of the pipeline would pass under the Missouri River at Lake Oahe, with a high potential for damage to the tribe's water supply. The route also would destroy areas of cultural significance, including sacred burial grounds.

It wasn't a particularly comfortable role for Nolan. He prefers to directly work with young hockey players in First Nations communities across Canada, not make political stands.

Still, it was important for him. And it continues to be important for the Buffalo Sabres forward who grew up on Garden River, First Nations, Ontario.

"It's starting to get more comfortable," Nolan said about speaking out on issues impacting First Nations communities. "I think a lot of young Native kids may look up to me and see me as a role model, so it's important for me to stand up for what I believe in and for issues that are important for me. It's about being a good role model and example for our youth.

"I'm not trying to get too political or anything like that. I just wanted to show my support to that community. I think if I speak up a little bit here or there, tweet something or comment on something, I'm just showing my support."

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Jordan Nolan ✓ @Jordan\_Nolan71

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Nolan isn't one to wade into political debates, though there are plenty on both sides of the border. Monday, the United States celebrates Columbus Day, which in recent years has come under fire from those who feel the holiday honors an explorer who is a symbol of genocide for native peoples. Since 1991 a number of municipalities have renamed the holiday Indigenous Peoples Day.

In his native Canada, the nation had a Truth and Reconciliation Committee three years ago to address the abuse and detrimental legacy of the Indian residential school system. The 150th anniversary of Canada this past summer highlighted ongoing issues between the government and First Nation people, including issues of funding for Indigenous schools and living conditions on reserves.

Nolan doesn't say much about those types of issues.

Instead, he works to help make a difference on the reserves himself.

He formed 3 Nolans with his father and former Sabres head coach Ted Nolan and his brother, Brandon. They run hockey schools across Canada to help First Nation youth develop hockey skills. But it's through hockey that they can teach bigger lessons -- like creating a healthy, active lifestyle and becoming a leader in their community.

"My dad didn't have a lot growing up and he somehow found a way to accomplish his goal of playing and coaching in the NHL and I think a lot of these kids just need to see someone that was in a familiar situation as them, from a small reserve, and just realize if you work hard for something, that it can come true," Nolan said. "That's the message that we're trying to tell these kids, that you might not have the most skill or the best surroundings, but if you work hard for something it usually happens for you."

And it can happen for a kid from a small First Nations reserve, who never forgets where he came from or the people still living there.

"We try to stay true to who we are, where we come from," Nolan said. "Even though I was living in L.A. for six years and now am here in Buffalo, we don't forget where we came from. We watch these kids and the challenges they face growing up and I think it's important for them to see us come in there."

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Over the summer, defenseman Will Butcher was looking for his best opportunity in the National Hockey League.

Plenty of teams, including the Buffalo Sabres, were interested in signing him.

Butcher, who won the 2017 Hobey Baker and the NCAA national championship with the Denver Pioneers, chose New Jersey. And he had a heck of a first pro game with the Devils.

Butcher recorded three assists for New Jersey in its 4-1 season-opening win against the Colorado Avalanche – the team that drafted him back in 2013.

Butcher became the first player in franchise history to record three points in his NHL debut and just the fifth defenseman on any team to do so since 1967, the start of the NHL's expansion era.

He registered his first pro point just 4:04 into the game, setting up a power play tally by Adam Henrique.

He then picked up secondary assists on the power play, feeding the puck to Taylor Hall and Kyle Palmieri who in turn set up the goals.

"I just pass the pucks and they do the rest," Butcher said to the media after the game. "On the power play, where those points happened, giving the puck to Hall and Palmieri with time and space, good things are always going to happen."

Butcher was part of a larger youth movement for the Devils which started the season with a strong opening game.

Jesper Bratt, a 19-year old forward from Sweden, also made his NHL debut, scoring a power play goal while setting up a short-handed goal.

"I think the league is getting younger and teams are getting younger and I think that's kind of the vibe," Butcher said. "We want to play fast. We want to play in-your-face type of hockey."

"It was great to see those guys contribute," Devils coach John Hynes told reporters after the game. "In the preseason, we didn't feel as though it was a fluke the way they played. It's nice to see those guys come in and play important roles on our team and handle the responsibilities and be big factors in the game."

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Former Sabres Drew Stafford returns to Buffalo in his first season with the Devils.

Stafford began his NHL career with the Sabres. He was part of the trade in the 2014-15 season that landed him and Tyler Myers with the Winnipeg Jet in exchange for Evander Kane and Zach Bogosian.

Stafford was traded from the Jets to the Boston Bruins last season. In August he signed a one-year, one-way deal for \$800,000 with the Devils.

Zach Bogosian did not practice with the Sabres on Sunday, but coach Phil Housley said the defenseman was getting closer to returning from a lower body injury.

"Zach is doing quite well. He skated again today," Housley said Sunday after the team's practice in KeyBank Center. "He's making really good progress. He'll continue to go on the ice and work on his game and hopefully that will mean he's playing soon."

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The Sabres used some different line combinations during Sunday's practice.

Ryan O'Reilly centered Zemgus Girgensons and Seth Griffith. Jack Eichel was between Evander Kane and Jason Pominville. Kyle Okposo moved to Sam Reinhart's right wing with Benoit Pouliot on the left. Jacob Josefson was between Matt Moulson and Johan Larsson with Jordan Nolan rotating in.

"Everybody has a responsibility, individually, to bring what they can bring to the line," Housley said. "I thought we needed to change it up a little bit. I don't have right now the lines we'll go with (Monday) but certainly there will be changes if we don't feel we're getting proper execution."

## **Sabres come up short in big way, especially on power play**

The Buffalo News

By John Vogl

October 7, 2017

BROOKLYN – The execution was pitiful. The urgency was lacking. The desire to excel was missing.

That was just on the power play.

As short-handed goal after short-handed goal appeared on the scoreboard Saturday, the Sabres put together a lowlight reel on how not to play with the man-advantage.

"Two games, the power play's lost them both," center Jack Eichel said after a 6-3 loss to the New York Islanders.

There was plenty of blame to go around in Barclays Center – Robin Lehner could have covered up mistakes with a save, the blue-liners could have defended the odd-man rushes better and the forwards could have taken a shot in the opening 12:56 of a still-close third period – but the loss that dropped Buffalo to 0-1-1 is on the power play.

The Sabres allowed two short-handed goals in 50 seconds, then gave up another goal just 10 seconds after the power play ended. The onslaught in a span of 1:47 saw the Islanders' lead go from 1-0 to 4-0.

The goals show a lack of execution, effort and desire:

\* Unpressured defenseman Nathan Beaulieu looped near his own blue line and was supposed to drop the puck straight back to Eichel. He missed his mark by about 20 feet, putting the puck right on the stick of John Tavares for a breakaway goal.

"It's just execution," Sabres coach Phil Housley said in Barclays Center. "When we turn the puck over and make mistakes, obviously we don't want to give it to one of the best players in the world."

\* With the Sabres in the offensive zone, New York disrupted a play at the blue line. Casey Cizikas outskated Beaulieu and Victor Antipin to the top of the left circle, where he beat Lehner with a shot that rang in off the post.

"Made some mistakes, I've got to come up with a save," Lehner said. "Tavares gets a breakaway, he beats me. The short after that, Cizikas comes in and lets one rip. I felt like I have him, but he just finds the far corner. You just hear the sound from the post and it goes in.

"Then we're on our heels."

\* The Islanders gained control just as their penalty was ending and dumped the puck down the ice. Josh Ho-Sang hopped out of the box and had a lead to the corner. Antipin looked over his shoulder for help, and all he saw was two Islanders.

The Sabres forwards headed for a change, and defenseman Matt Tennyson was on his way to the bench, too, before an abrupt turn. New York buried the three-on-one, ending Lehner's night with four goals on 16 shots.

"It's just our urgency," left wing Evander Kane said. "We obviously have to clean up the mistakes. If we don't give up those three short-handed goals, it's a different game, right?"

"We have to come with some more urgency, be better individually and as a group. We've got to get this first win out of the way soon."

In the early days of the NHL season, a 4-0 lead isn't insurmountable. Kane scored two short-handed goals of his own before the second period ended, and a goal early in the third would have given the Sabres serious comeback hopes.

Instead, they let the Islanders take control.

"We didn't come out hungry enough in the third period early enough to mount that comeback," Kane said.

Housley didn't like the hunger at the start, either. While the Sabres were relaxing in New York on Friday night, the Islanders were losing, 5-0, in Columbus.

Guess which team scored just 1:50 after puck drop Saturday?

"We were supposed to be the fresh team coming in," Housley said. "We didn't have a pregame skate. We were talking about getting a good start, and I think that's the first thing we've got to address. A team that's played back-to-back and then had to travel, we should have been jumping on them.

"It's not so much what they're doing against us. It's what we're giving up. We've just got to clean that up."

## **Sabres Notebook: Okposo thankful for Isles' concern, talks Tavares; Moulson competes for time**

The Buffalo News

By John Vogl

October 7, 2017

BROOKLYN – Kyle Okposo walked into Islanders' arena to smiles and handshakes. While Sabres fans are certainly glad to see him return to health, the emotions are much stronger in New York.

Okposo spent nine seasons with the Isles before joining Buffalo prior to last year. When word of his concussion-related hospitalization surfaced in April, the well-wishes poured in from Isles General Manager Garth Snow down to the casual New York observer.

"I was really touched by the support I received from the organization here, from all the guys, coaching staff, Garth," Okposo said Saturday in Barclays Center. "It was pretty special to me, and I'm just happy that it's behind me and I can move on and play hockey with no concerns."

Since Okposo is healthy again, New Yorkers can get down to one the Isles' most pressing issues: What's going to happen with captain John Tavares, who will be an unrestricted free agent after the season?

"Haha. Oh, guys," Okposo said with a laugh after a Tavares question.

Okposo has insight into the situation. Aside from being one of Tavares' best friends, he spent the 2015-16 season as a pending UFA. The Isles never made him an offer, and he signed a seven-year, \$42 million deal with Buffalo.

"Johnny's obviously a good friend," Okposo said. "He's going to be a friend of mine for life. I'm not going to grill him too much on that.

"We've just talked and just making sure that he's doing OK with it mentally and giving him a little bit of advice because it's a tough thing when you're going through it. He's doing OK, and he's focused on winning games and being the best player that he can for the Islanders."

Okposo is taking the same approach with Buffalo.

"It's getting this team to the next step," he said. "We had a disappointing season last season, and obviously some shakeups over the summer. I'm excited for the guys that were brought in and the style of play that we're playing. It's a pretty exciting time for us.

"We've got to learn how to win. We've got to learn how to be a good team. That's our main focus."

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New Sabres GM Jason Botterill was determined to increase competition for playing time. One of the guys feeling the effect is another former Islanders forward.

Matt Moulson made his debut Saturday after being the healthy scratch up front Thursday.

"There's always competition, and you've always got to be ready to go," Moulson said. "It's never fun to not play. You want to be out there. You want to win.

"In saying that, you can't sulk on the sidelines and not be ready. It's just putting in work and making sure you're ready to go."

Moulson skated in place of right wing Jordan Nolan. Part of the reason was Moulson's history of success against the Isles. He entered with six goals and eight points in 10 games against his old team.

"This was my home for a while," said Moulson, who played for New York from 2009 to 2013. "I still have a lot of love for them and this organization. It's always fun to play against an old team."

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For some coaches, morning skates are becoming as rare as dressing enforcers. Columbus' John Tortorella, for instance, has done away with the pregame workouts completely.

Buffalo coach Phil Housley is 1 for 2. The Sabres had a morning skate before their season opener but bagged the workout Saturday.

The big reason was New York traffic. It's not easy to get from lower Manhattan to Brooklyn, which is what the Sabres had to do. At least during the early part of the season, Housley will hold morning workouts in other cities.

"I don't mind the morning skates," Housley said. "Obviously, it's early in the season. Once you start moving forward I think they become less and less effective.

"But in a situation like today, just the travel and trying to get to this arena is difficult. Instead of spending a lot of time on the bus, I wanted our guys to get that extra rest."

## **The Wraparound: Islanders 6, Sabres 3**

The Buffalo News

By John Vogl

October 7, 2017

BROOKLYN – The New York Islanders' opener was a debacle, so Sabres coach Phil Housley told his squad to be ready for a hungry team.

The Isles feasted on Buffalo. It was a six-course meal, one the crowd ate up.

The Sabres fell apart Saturday – literally in one instance – in dropping a 6-3 decision in rollicking Barclays Center. The Islanders' 1-0 lead quadrupled in a span of 1:47 as they sent Buffalo goaltender Robin Lehner from the crease to the dressing room.

Officials tried calling Lehner back a short time later when backup Chad Johnson's skate blade fell off, but Buffalo equipment managers Dave Williams and George Babcock worked quickly to keep Johnson in the game.

New York improved to 1-1 after suffering a 5-0 loss in Columbus on Friday. The Sabres fell to 0-1-1.

Short fuse: The teams combined for four short-handed goals in a wild second period. It was the first NHL game with four short-handed goals since Ottawa scored three and Florida had one Nov. 18, 2000.

The Isles scored the first two in 50 seconds to take a 3-0 lead. They added an even-strength goal 57 seconds later.

Instead of folding, the Sabres' penalty-killers went to work. Evander Kane scored back-to-back goals while short-handed. It was the first time Buffalo had multiple short-handed goals since Christian Ehrhoff and Marcus Foligno did it Jan. 25, 2014.

Kane became the first Buffalo player with two shorties in the same game since March 19, 1998, according to Elias Sports Bureau.

The end for Lehner: Lehner stopped 12 of 16 shots in exactly 27 minutes.

He certainly had a disappointing night, but he could have used help. The Islanders took a 2-0 lead when Sabres defenseman Nathan Beaulieu put a pass perfectly onto the stick of New York's John Tavares. Casey Cizikas got behind Victor Antipin and ripped home a far-side shot off the post from the top of the circle to make it 3-0.

The Islanders' even-strength goal came when Joshua Ho-Sang came out of the box to chase down a puck, giving New York three guys around the net to just one for Buffalo.

Short on effort: The Sabres earned their two short-handed goals in the final 9:51 of the second. Isles goalie Jaroslav Halak helped. The Sabre-for-a-game was lazy on both.

Halak handed the puck to Jack Eichel behind the net, allowing the center to feed Kane in front for an empty net to make it 4-1.

Kane was flying on his second goal. After buzzing the zone with Ryan O'Reilly, Kane took a wide shot, chased it behind the net and dumped it home on the opposite side while Halak lollygagged in the crease.

Third-period goals: Anthony Beauvillier dimmed the Sabres' chances, scoring on a rebound with 14:21 left to make it 5-2. Eichel scored his first of the season with 3:44 to play, standing in front for Rasmus Ristolainen's shot and going around Halak with the puck.

The Sabres nearly made it 5-4 with 1:13 to play. Sam Reinhart's point-blank shot went off Halak's glove and bounced on the goal line, but video review determined no goal.

The Isles' Cizikas scored into an empty net with 25.4 seconds to play.

Breakdown: The Islanders took advantage of the Sabres' aggressiveness to take a 1-0 lead with just 1:50 gone.

As defenseman Marco Scandella pinched, the Isles' Jordan Eberle broke up the play and got behind Scandella for a two-on-one. Buffalo defenseman Matt Tennyson hit the ice near puck-carrying Eberle, but it didn't interrupt the cross-ice pass to Tavares. The New York captain easily beat an off-balance Lehner, who flailed at the shot and ended up outside the trapezoid behind the goal line.

This is a call: After Tavares' goal was announced, fans chanted, "Sign your contract." The captain is a pending unrestricted free agent.

Big stops: Lehner sent the Sabres into the first intermission in just a 1-0 hole with some big stops. He had a couple of two-save sequences.

First, he got his pad on Nikolay Kulemin's shot and stopped Thomas Hickey's rebound chance. The better one-two punch came with 1:20 left. Lehner thwarted a driving Brock Nelson and quickly slid left to rob Beauvillier.

Fourth time: The Sabres had previously opened their road schedule against the Islanders three times in franchise history: a 5-2 win Oct. 13, 1979; a 3-2 loss Oct. 6, 2007; and a 7-1 victory Oct. 13, 2008.

Next: The Sabres flew back to Buffalo following the game and will host New Jersey at 3 p.m. Monday in a Columbus Day matinee. The Devils beat Colorado, 4-1, Saturday as defenseman Will Butcher became the first player in New Jersey history to record three points in his NHL debut.

## **Sabres Prospects Report: Quick start for Brandon Hagel with Red Deer**

The Buffalo News

By Amy Moritz

October 3, 2017

It didn't take long for Brandon Hagel to get down to business with his junior team.

After the 19-year-old forward was assigned back to his Red Deer Rebels out of Sabres' training camp, he promptly scored three goals with two assists in his first two games.

That will make an impression.

Hagel, who was drafted by the Sabres in the sixth round in 2016, is in his third and final year of playing in the Western Hockey League, part of the major-junior system in Canada.

And Hagel is ready to not only step up his own game but to be a leader.

"I knew I would be a top guy here and I had to buy into the Rebel system as soon as I got back," said Hagel, who is an alternate captain for Red Deer. "I thought I did a good job with that. I stuck to my game and good things will happen if I continue to do that.

"Coming back, being an older guy, I want to show the younger guys the way. I want to be a leader. If I'm playing my best, those guys can look up to me."

Through his first five games, the left-shot left winger has seven points, one game-winning goal, and 13 shots on goal.

The Rebels opened the season with three consecutive wins. That streak ended on their first extended road trip of the season, losing at the Moose Jaw Warriors and Regina Pats this past weekend.

Still, it's a hot start for Hagel, who finished last season with 71 points, scoring 31 goals with 40 assists over 65 games.

Offense has been a strong point for Hagel, while he continues to work on the defensive side of his game.

Brandon Hagel notched three goals in his first two games with Red Deer this year. (Rob Wallator).

"I think my defensive play improved quite a bit," Hagel said. "Last year it wasn't my best asset but I thought coming into this year it was something I had to change and I think I've done a good job at it."

Hagel spent his second summer and preseason with the Sabres, as part of development camp and main training camp. A new coaching staff meant a new opportunity to impress, but he kept the focus simple and the same, sticking to his game and not forcing a favorable impression.

"I just want to be myself and play game my game out there," Hagel said. "I think that's what got me there so I'll continue to do that."

The Sabres staff "definitely gave me some feedback on my camp, but now I have to work on my strengths," Hagel said. "I have to put the work in. You can't change that. I have to do it myself."

Meanwhile, Hagel is focused on his Red Deer team. The Rebels finished third in the WHL Central Division last year, losing in seven games to Lethbridge in the first round of the playoffs. This season, they've sprinted to an early lead in the Central Division and Hagel is animatedly excited when talking about what he loves about this group in Red Deer.

"We have a really close group this year," Hagel said. "There are no cliques. Everyone gets along and that's going to help us out in the long run. Once everyone gets settled in and the season starts going a bit more, I think this group is just so close, it's going to help us out."

WHL

Vojtech Budik (defense, Prince Albert Raiders): A native of the Czech Republic who has played for his national team, Budik will play his third season with the Raiders in the Western Hockey League. Last season he had a goal and 25 assists in 56 games.

## OHL

Cliff Pu (forward, London Knights): Pu returned to the Knights of the Ontario Hockey League after a stint at Buffalo Sabres main training camp. In his first four games, he's registered four assists. He finished last season ranked eighth in the OHL in points with 86 (35 goals, 51 assists) in 63 games.

Austin Osmanski (defense, Mississauga Steelheads): The East Aurora native began his third season with the Steelheads of the OHL, picking up an assist in his first four games. Last year he had two goals and six assists in 55 games.

## QMJHL

Vasily Glotov (forward, Shawinigan Cataractes): He returns to the Quebec Major Junior Hockey League but changes teams, playing for Shawinigan this season. He had two assists through his first five games. Last year, Glotov played for the Cape Breton Screaming Eagles, notching 15 goals and 35 assists through 64 games.

## NCAA

William Borgen (defense, St. Cloud State): Begins his junior season at St. Cloud State. In 70 career games for the Huskies, he has three goals and 23 assists.

Christopher Brown (forward, Boston College): Named one of three captains for Boston College, Brown enters his junior year for the Eagles. He is the returning leading scorer after netting nine goals with 17 assists while his plus-19 rating led the team.

Jacob Bryson (defense, Providence): The Sabres drafted Bryson in the fourth round in 2017 after he put up three goals (two on the power play) with 17 assists in his freshman season at Providence. Bryson returns to the Friars for his sophomore year.

Ivan Chukarov (defense, UMass): He enters his junior year at UMass with five career goals and 11 points over 72 games.

Casey Fitzgerald (defense, Boston College): A captain for Boston College, Fitzgerald was the second-leading defensive scorer for the Eagles last season with five goals and 17 assists in 37 games. He is one point shy of the 50-point mark entering his junior season.

Connor Hurley (forward, Minnesota): After three seasons at Notre Dame, Hurley transferred to the University of Minnesota. He will sit out this season per NCAA transfer rules and have one year of college eligibility left for the 2018-19 season. In 98 career games for the Fighting Irish, Hurley had 48 points (14 goals, 34 assists).

Casey Mittelstadt (forward, Minnesota): The Sabres first-round pick in 2017 begins his freshman season at the University at Minnesota. Mittelstadt will also be a key component of Team USA for the IIHF World Junior Championships, scheduled for Dec. 26-Jan. 5 in Buffalo.

Brett Murray (forward, Penn State): Murray joined Penn State for the second semester last season, picking up an assist in his 12 games. A fourth-round pick in 2016, he begins his sophomore season with the Nittany Lions.

Philip Nyberg (defense, UConn): It was a bit of a topsy-turvy season for Nyberg last year. The Swedish player signed a National Letter of Intent to play for Wisconsin, but failed to meet requirements for foreign students and was ineligible for the first semester. He played 25 games in junior hockey with the Madison Capitols of the USHL, then flipped his commitment to Connecticut and played the second semester for the Huskies. He returns to UConn for his sophomore season after notching six points in his first 16 collegiate games.

Judd Peterson (forward, St. Cloud State): The senior was named one of three captains for St. Cloud State. He scored 11 goals with six assists last year and has 31 goals and 16 assists in his collegiate career.

Linus Weissbach (forward, Wisconsin): A native of Sweden, the 19-year-old enters his freshman season at Wisconsin and already notched his first two collegiate goals as Wisconsin won its season opener, 3-2, over Michigan Tech. Weissbach played junior hockey last year in the United States Hockey League, scoring 19 goals with 28 assists in 49 games for the Tri-City Storm.

Maxwell Willman (forward, Brown): Enters his senior year at Brown coming off his best season of collegiate hockey. As a junior, Willman scored 11 goals with 15 assists in 31 games, including four power play goals.

#### Europe

Rasmus Asplund (forward, Farjestad BK): Drafted by the Sabres in the 2016 second round, Asplund remains in his native Sweden this season playing for Farjestad BK of the Swedish Hockey League. Last season he scored six goals with 13 assists in 39 games for his club team and collected 12 points with two goals in 16 games for Sweden's national U-20 team.

Marcus Davidsson (forward, Djurgardens): The second-round draft pick by the Sabres in 2017 is in his native Sweden this season to play for Djurgardens IF. Last year he played in 45 games in the Swedish Hockey League with five goals and four assists in 45 games.

Oskari Laaksonen (defense, Ilves): A third-round pick in 2017, he remains in his native Finland to play for Ilves in the Under-20 league (Jr. A SM-Liiga). In his first 12 games this season, Laaksonen has a goal and four assists.

Ukko-Pekka Luukkonen (goalie, HPK): A second-round draft pick in 2017, Luukkonen returned to his native Finland, playing for HPK in the same Under-20 league as Laaksonen.

Victor Olofsson (forward, Frolounda HC): Began his season in his native Sweden back with Frolounda HC of the Swedish Hockey League. Through his first four games he has a goal and an assist. Last year in 51 games for Frolunda, he had nine goals and 27 points in 51 games.

## **Exhibit A is shot in the arm for Sabres' offense**

The Buffalo News

By John Vogl

October 6, 2017

The Sabres reached 40 shots just four times in 82 games last season. That's a paltry 4.9 percent.

They're at 100 percent this season.

OK, it's one game, and it could dip to 50 percent Saturday when Buffalo visits the New York Islanders. But Phil Housley promised a more exciting offense, and Exhibit A was encouraging.

"That was a great step in the right direction as far as our shot mentality and our shot mindset goes," Housley said Friday. "We did a lot of good things. We can take a lot away from that game, but it's just one game."

The Sabres outshot Montreal, 45-40, in Thursday's season-opening 3-2 shootout loss. For a team that had the shot advantage in just 24 of 82 games last year, the outing had players feeling confident this season should be different.

"We put a good amount of pucks at the net," said left wing Zemgus Girgensons, who had six shots. "Our offense is coming along."

As important as it was to get shots, even better for Buffalo was who took them and where:

\*The Sabres had 35 shots at even strength, nine on the power play and one short-handed. They relied too much on their power play last season, so creating at five-on-five is a good sign.

\*Of the Sabres' 69 shot attempts, 30 were from below the faceoff dots, according to HockeyStats.ca. The players were able to get close to the Montreal net.

\*Defensemen registered 13 shots after averaging just seven per game last season.

"This is the game we're going to bring," blue-liner Marco Scandella said in KeyBank Center. "In the league nowadays to have success you have to have the D jumping in the rush and being part of the attack. I feel that's what we're building. Phil did a great job in Nashville, and we're trying to implement that system here.

"It's early, right? We're in Game One, and we're just going to get better. I just felt like Game One was a good step for us."

Montreal hasn't been an easy team to test. It tied for 10th last season in fewest shots allowed, giving up 29.6 per game. Buffalo's new offense caught the Canadiens off-guard.

"They were very, very fast," Habs forward Max Pacioretty told NHL.com. "Their D are really fast, and I was very surprised by that. They took over the game and they took control of the game."

As much as there was for the Sabres to like, it was far from perfect. They attempted those 30 shots from in close, but Price saw most of them.

"We had to get bodies in front," Girgensons said. "That's something we need to work on."

The Sabres weren't happy they allowed 40 shots. That shouldn't be a surprise, though. They did that 17 times last year.

"We gave up way too many chances against," Housley said. "That was the result of a couple things, our puck management through the neutral zone and just our coverage coming back into our zone. Those things we can sort out.

"The thing that we can control is getting pucks deep. We talk about the next level where we're getting it in the blue line, but we're not getting it into the corner. As a result, it sort of feeds their transition and we're coming back and spending energy in the wrong areas. Those things we've got to be better at.

"There's a lot of good teams out there that have good transition games. If we can control that, make them spend energy playing defense, I think that's in our favor."

Having success in the first game gives Buffalo confidence it can continue to call the shots.

"I feel like everyone believes in this room, and we just have to make a statement," Scandella said. "It's a good start. It's not the result we wanted, so we have a sour taste in our mouths. We have to go out next game and bring the same effort but clean up a few things, a few areas of our game, and we're going to have success."

## **Sabres Notebook: Keeping puck in OT; Scandella healthy; Moulson in**

The Buffalo News

By John Vogl

October 6, 2017

Three-on-three overtime is in its third season, and it took Phil Housley just one game as an NHL head coach to experience it.

"I think it's great for hockey, obviously," Housley said Friday. "The fans love the open ice. The players love the open ice.

"I don't like it when we don't get a win out of it, but that's continuing to evolve."

The Sabres fell to 0-0-1 with a 3-2 shootout loss to Montreal on Thursday. Buffalo took a methodical approach during overtime and tried to set up plays rather than get in a track meet. It resulted in more puck control.

The puck was in the Montreal zone for 2:25 of overtime, including 1:44 on the Sabres' sticks. It was in the Sabres' zone for 1:41, including 1:15 of possession time for Montreal. The other 55 seconds were spent in the neutral zone.

Buffalo had a 4-3 shot advantage.

"We had some good looks," Housley said in KeyBank Center. "We had some things that almost transpired into some scoring chances. I thought our guys were really smart about maintaining possession and not giving it up.

"We got ourselves into some dead zones where they were able to attack. I think we could have brought it back and just held possession because it's such a big part of three-on-three. But moving forward, we've had some success. We won a game in overtime in preseason. We had some really good looks last night without giving up too much, so I'm pretty happy about it."

Should the Sabres reach overtime again Saturday when they visit the New York Islanders, expect the marquee and fast skaters to partake. Jack Eichel, Evander Kane and Nathan Beaulieu started the extra session, followed by Ryan O'Reilly, Kyle Okposo and Rasmus Ristolainen, and Sam Reinhart, Jason Pominville and Victor Antipin.

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The first good sign for Marco Scandella was playing more than 21 minutes in the Sabres' opener. An even better one was practicing the next morning.

After taking maintenance days throughout training camp, Scandella was back on the ice Friday. It was an encouraging step in his return from offseason hip surgery.

"It's a great sign," the defenseman said. "We waited until I was 100 percent ready to play, so we didn't take any chances. I was very comfortable jumping into the game and battling. I didn't even think about my hip."

Scandella didn't play in any preseason games, but he seems ready to go for the regular season. He should be in the lineup Saturday.

"We just didn't want to have any setbacks, and I felt like the training staff here did a great job with managing the injury," he said. "I came back when I was absolutely ready and when we knew that it wouldn't inhibit me from making plays or making decisions."

The only player missing from practice was Zach Bogosian, though Housley said the defenseman skated on his own. Bogosian is day-to-day with a lower-body injury.

"He's making progress, which is good to see," Housley said. "We've just got to be careful about it, but it's good to see that he's making progress and has skated two days in a row now."

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The Sabres will make a change to their fourth line. Matt Moulson, who sat Thursday, practiced with Jacob Josefson and Johan Larsson in place of Jordan Nolan.

"He's going to fit right in," Housley said. "We're going to continue to make adjustments if we feel we need to make adjustments and give our guys the best chance to win.

"I think Matt is a true goal scorer. He can bury the puck, and he can bring that against his old team."

Nolan skated 12 minutes against the Canadiens, including 2:24 for a short-handed unit that was 4 for 4. He did it in front of a familiar face. His father, former Sabres coach Ted Nolan, flew in from Poland to watch the debut. Ted Nolan is coach of the Polish national team.

Sabres opener rating up about 50 percent from year ago  
The Buffalo News  
By Alan Pergament  
October 6, 2017

The Buffalo Sabres had one victory Thursday night – in prime time ratings.

The National Hockey League team's 3-2 loss in a shootout to Montreal scored a 10.9 rating on MSG over the three hours, which indicates fans are hopeful at the start of the season. The rating peaked at 14.0 for the overtime and the shootout.

The rating was almost 50 percent higher than the 7.4 rating for last season's opener, a 4-1 loss to Montreal in a game that star Jack Eichel was out with an injury. The Sabres averaged a 6.2 rating for the entire 2016-17 season.

Thursday's rating was in the ballpark of the 10.7 rating for the 3-1 loss in the season opener against Ottawa in Eichel's first season in 2015-16.

As impressive as the rating for the opener is, the Sabres aren't close to the Buffalo Bills as a TV attraction; the last two Bills games had ratings close to 37 on WIVB-TV, the local CBS affiliate.

To put the rating in further perspective, no prime time program on a broadcast network scored as high locally on Thursday.

New England's 19-14 victory over Tampa Bay on Thursday Night Football had a 10.1 rating on Channel 4.

The highest-rated entertainment program was NBC's second episode of the reboot of "Will & Grace" with a 6.8 rating for a half hour on WGRZ-TV (Channel 2). NBC's "Chicago Fire" had a 6.6 rating for its hour on Channel 2 and "Grey's Anatomy" a 6.1 rating for an hour on WKBW-TV (Channel 7).

## **Housley said don't blame the system**

WGR550

PAUL HAMILTON

OCTOBER 08, 2017

Buffalo, NY (WGR 550) - I've been saying since April that it's going to take time for the players to get used to a new coach and a new system. Many of the players realize that, but Phil Housley is not buying it, "I think the guys understand what we're trying to do and you can see it in the games that when we play the right way, we're very effective, but when we take things into our own hands and try to make plays through the neutral zone against a left wing lock forecheck, you're just inviting disaster."

The main question is why is that a disaster? Housley said it causes wasted energy, "You're just turning it over to the other team, they're quick countering, they're coming back at us and now we're spending energy defending and we're getting worn down just trying to get pucks out and that's a victory."

Now don't take that as he doesn't want players like Jack Eichel carrying the puck, Housley said, "I'm not going to take creativity away from our players. They're going to be allowed to make plays, but we've got to make the right plays."

Housley is like all coaches, he changes lines when things don't work. On Sunday he had,

Girgensons - O'Reilly - Griffith

Kane - Eichel - Pominville

Pouliot - Reinhart - Okposo

Larsson - Josefson - Moulson (Nolan)

The defense didn't change. Zach Bogosian is skating on his own, but not with the team.

Getting back to the lines, it occurred to me that in Housley's system, having two of the slower forwards on the team, Ryan O'Reilly and Kyle Okposo together wouldn't be a good idea. Housley disputed that those two are slow, "I wouldn't say they're not our fastest players, I mean they're very, very good players, but sometimes when you make a change, you're just trying to give them a fresh linemate, you know, a new line to maybe spark them in some way. It's just sometimes it doesn't work out, so you try to change something."

Housley said he hasn't decided on his goalie for Monday.

Sunday's practice was short, but to the point. Assistant coach Davis Payne was all over them to treat every part of the play important. It seems like in two games, the team loses focus and lets down on certain plays.

Okposo made no bones about it. He said players, including himself are not putting forth the proper effort, "Anytime you put a new system in, sure it's going to take some getting used to, but there was things in that game last night that had nothing to do with the system, it was just our decision making and our lack of battle."

"It's effort I think, that's on us. We have to come with the mentality that we're going to outwork them. Myself, I've had a couple of games that weren't up to the standard of play that I want to play at."

I asked Okposo if he's still feeling effects from his summer illness. He said, "I'm fine, I'm ready to go, I just didn't play very good games."

Join Brian Koziol and Pat Malacaro Monday at 2 p.m. for the pre-game against the Devils. They'll be joined by Phil Housley, Ryan O'Reilly and Kyle Okposo.

## Sabres comeback falls short, lose 6-3 to Islanders

WGR550

PAT MALACARO

OCTOBER 07, 2017

The Sabres and New York Islanders combined for four shorthanded goals in the second period. Both teams had two, and Buffalo finds themselves trailing 5-3 in the third period.

John Tavares converted on a 2-on-1 opportunity that was created by Jordan Eberle after he picked off an outlet pass by Buffalo. Eberle assisted on the goal, which was the first of the season for New York. The Islanders were shut out last night in Columbus.

The Sabres owned the first power play opportunity of the night, but failed to score. Johnny Boychuk was called for slashing after trying to disrupt Evander Kane's breakaway attempt. Buffalo also benefited from another man advantage when Jason Chimera was called for interference. The veteran knocked down Marco Scandella behind the Buffalo net, resulting in the minor penalty call. Again, the blue and gold failed to capitalize on special teams.

Robin Lehner had to make eight saves in the first period, including one on Anthony Beauvillier that nearly went in. Lehner had to reach out with his glove at the side of the net to keep the Sabres deficit at one. The Sabres collected eleven shots on Jaroslav Halak in the opening period and stopped all of them.

Jake McCabe was called for the first minor penalty on the Sabres after interfering with Beauvillier. However, the blue and gold did not allow a shot on goal during the two minutes to keep the score 1-0 in favor of the Isles. However, it was a shorthanded goal by Tavares that ignited the New York offense which would score three times in 1:43 to widen the gap against the Sabres to 4-0.

Tavares was credited with an unassisted goal after picking off a Sabres' pass and breaking the other way. The Islanders captain was able to split the two Sabres covering on defense and net his second goal of the game. Casey Cizikas scored :50 after to make it 3-0 Islanders. Andrew Ladd was credited with the only assist on the shorthanded marker. New York's third goal of the period came at even strength as Josh Bailey scored his first goal of the season. Chimera and Josh Ho-Sang were given assists on the score.

Kane scored the first goal of the night for the Sabres, and it came on the special teams as well. His first goal of the season came shorthanded after Jack Eichel stole the puck behind the Isles net from Halak. the net minder was not able to get back into position before Kane slammed the puck into the net. He scored just over five minutes later, again shorthanded, to bring Buffalo within a pair, 4-2. Ryan O'Reilly helped create the chance despite missing on his own opportunity. He was credited with the assist on Kane's second goal of the night.

It was the first time in nearly two decades that two teams combined for four shorthanded goals:

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Per @EliasSports, tonight's game is the first NHL game to have both teams combine for 4 shorthanded goals since 11/18/00 (FLA-1 vs. OTT- 3).

9:07 PM - Oct 7, 2017

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Beauvillier extended New York's lead back to three goals with his first goal of the season. The young forward was able to get behind the Sabres' defense and beat Chad Johnson to make it 5-2 Isles. Johnson took over after the fourth New York goal, back in the second period.

It took the Sabres nearly thirteen minutes to get their first shot on goal in the third. Just minutes later Jack Eichel was able to score on a rebound chance and once again bring the deficit to two goals, 5-3, with under four minutes to go in regulation. Cizikas notched his second goal of the game to give the Isles a 6-3 lead with seconds to go in regulation. The goal came against an empty net with the Sabres trying to get within a goal.

Goal Summary

### First Period

BUF: none

NYI: 1:50 - John Tavares (1) (Jordan Eberle)

### Second Period

BUF: 10:09 - Evander Kane (1) SHG (Jack Eichel)

NYI: 5:13 - John Tavares (2) SHG (unassisted). 6:03 - Casey Cizikas (1) SHG (Andrew Ladd). 7:00 - Josh Bailey (1) (Josh Ho-Sang, Jason Chimera)

### Third Period

BUF: 16:16 - Jack Eichel (Rasmus Ristolainen, Evander Kane)

NYI: 5:39 - Anthony Beauvillier (1) (Nick Leddy, Case Cizikas). 19:34 - Casey Cizikas (2) ENG (John Tavares)

### Penalty Summary

#### First Period

BUF: none

NYI: 10:16 - Johnny Boychuk (2 min., slashing). 15:02 - Jason Chimera (2 min., interference)

#### Second Period

BUF: 1:08 - Jake McCabe (2 min., interference). 4:50 - Rasmus Ristolainen (2 min., roughing). 8:20 - Kyle Okposo (2 min., holding). 13:55 - Jack Eichel (2 min., high sticking)

NYI: 4:50 - Scott Mayfield (2 min., roughing). 4:50 - Scott Mayfield (2 min., roughing)

#### Third Period

BUF: none

NYI: none

#### Shots on Goal

BUF - 7 (29) , NYI - 10 (33)

## **From the Locker Room: Sabres-Islanders**

WGR550

PAT MALACARO

OCTOBER 08, 2017

Evander Kane scored two shorthanded goals, and Jack Eichel notched his first goal of the season. However, three goals in less than two minutes turned out to be the difference in the Sabres 5-3 loss to the New York Islanders on Saturday night at Barclays Center. Read the thoughts from the forwards, along with those of Robin Lehner and Phil Housley.

Evander Kane

On getting down 4-0 to the Islanders: "We didn't come out hungry enough in the third period early enough to, you know, mount that comeback. You know, I thought, you know obviously you can't be giving up really three shorthanded goals, you know, at any point of the game, especially within five six minutes."

On the New York shorthanded goals: "I think just our urgency. You know, we gotta know that a team like that has a good penalty kill and they put pressure on you. As a guy who kills penalties, you know, when you put pressure on other teams it creates turnovers and you know especially when teams are doing certain breakouts those turnovers can become grade a scoring chances and we gave those up tonight."

Listen: <http://www.wgr550.com/media/audio-channel/10-07-evander-kane-post-gamemp3>

Jack Eichel

On the power play woes: "We're just letting our foot off the gas...power play's timed out, work the opponent because you have one extra guy on the ice and I think that we're just trying to get too fancy and get away from things that have made us successful as a unit. Some mental lapses and teams are taking advantage of it, and two games the power play's lost us both so, We gotta take a look in the mirror."

On losing both of the first two games of the season: "It's a quick turnaround with a Monday afternoon game and, you know, you play a lot of games in this league. You've got to learn from something like this, but as quickly as you learn from it you gotta put it behind you because New Jersey's a good team and we're going to have our hands full at home, and it's a must win game right now and it's important to get off to a good start in the beginning of the season and put yourself in a good position."

Listen: <http://www.wgr550.com/media/audio-channel/10-07-jack-eichel-post-gamemp3>

Robin Lehner

On falling behind 4-0 to the Islanders: "It's frustrating because I felt good today, and I felt encouraged going into the second period. I made some mistakes, I got to come up with a save and, you know, Tavares has a breakaway, he beats me, then short after that Cizikas comes in and he lets one rip. I felt I had him just finds the far corner and you just...hear the sound from the post and it goes in, then we're on our heels."

Listen: <http://www.wgr550.com/media/audio-channel/10-07-robin-lehner-post-gamemp3>

Phil Housley

On the lack of success of the power play: "You look at the games, our first two power plays in both games have been excellent, you know. We're getting really good looks then we sort of just take our foot off the gas and relax. I think having

more urgency coming back, you know, into our zone, you know, teams are gonna still forecheck they're gonna flush you behind the net and I just think we just let up a little bit there."

On what the team can learn from the loss: "We were supposed to be the fresh team, you know, coming in. We didn't have a pregame skate we're talking about having a good start, and I think that's the first thing that we got to address...a team that's playing back-to-back and then had to travel. We should have been jumping on them."

Listen: <http://www.wgr550.com/media/audio-channel/10-07-phil-housley-post-gamemp3>

## **Pominville enjoyed his emotional return**

WGR550

PAUL HAMILTON

OCTOBER 06, 2017

New York, NY (WGR 550) - Jason Pominville had quite a return to Buffalo. Pominville got both the Sabre goals on Thursday in his first game since being reacquired from Minnesota.

On opening night, each player gets introduced and Pominville said that was emotional as he came down the hallway, "It was, it was pretty special, my parents were here, my wife's parents, my kids, so I knew they were there which made it pretty cool. I got a great reception too, so it was nice to see."

"You never really think that you'll have a chance to put the jersey on again and it never really crossed my mind, but to finally play a game and to go out the tunnel was nice."

Pominville opened the scoring after a great play to cause a turnover by Seth Griffith. The winger said, "I was fired up for sure. I think both of them I was pretty fired up."

Pominville has played with many talented players including Chris Drury, Danny Briere and Zach Parise. In my mind, Jack Eichel is by far the most talented player he's ever played with in the NHL. Pominville said he had to train himself to be ready for anything from Eichel, "You do and I told him earlier that at first I had a tough time adjusting to the way he passes because a lot of times he uses the toe of his stick and when you think he's shooting, he then curls his wrists and uses the toe of his stick."

"Sometimes you don't think it's coming even though you know he saw you because you think he's going to shoot and then he just flicks it with the toe of his stick and you've got to be ready for it."

I remember Brian Gionta telling me that as he got older, he had to do more off-ice training to stay in shape and ready to play. Pominville is 34, but he hasn't experienced that, "I've been fortunate with injuries, so I haven't had to change much since I've been a kid. Maybe I don't emphasize on heavy lifting, but as far as workouts, I've been fortunate, I've been able to do everything that I've always done."

Last season with the Wild, Pominville's role changed. He was rarely on the power play on played on the third or fourth line. Pominville felt he adjusted better last season. He said two years ago he had a very bad season. Despite having his role diminished, he's not upset at the Wild, "No, I don't have any hard feelings, I think I'm just more excited to be here."

Zach Bogosian didn't practice on Friday and didn't fly with the team to New York. Phil Housley didn't think he'd wind up in Brooklyn, but he added, "You never know."

Nothing changed from Thursday's game except for the Josefson line. Matt Moulson took Jordan Nolan's spot on right wing. Johan Larsson remained on the left.

**Ten years gone**  
WGR550  
MIKE SCHOPP  
OCTOBER 06, 2017

I don't quite understand why this night is so memorable for me.

The Sabres opened the 2007-08 season on October 5, hosting the New York Islanders. It was their first game since the 2007 season ended right here, Daniel Alfredsson beating Ryan Miller with an overtime wrist shot while most of America was switched over to the Preakness. The teams shook hands, the 06-07 Sabres waved to the crowd one last time, and that was it.

Chris Drury and Daniel Briere left that July for the money, and we knew the Sabres' unlikely and incredible leap to the top of the NHL probably was over. But as the '07-08 season started, I fought against those expectations.

Ryan Miller and Jason Pominville and, yes, Derek Roy were still here. I'm sure I went on and on about how in 2006-07 Thomas Vanek led the league in plus-minus; now I have no use for plus-minus and Vanek is on his seventh team. (That's seven teams in less than four seasons for Vanek, by the way. That's quite a feat.)

My wife and I had been at all the 2006 and 2007 home playoff games. Like thousands of other fans, we got on board with season tickets as the Sabres simultaneously slashed prices and became good and exciting. Nice timing. For us and for many who were plugged into the Sabres in those years, some of the memories will last a lifetime.

Here, October 5, 2007, was the beginning of the next chapter. I remember the Sabres raising the President's Trophy banner before the game, and how strange that felt. The celebration of a great achievement that you weren't allowed to take pride in. Players wouldn't all have had the same emotions so maybe I'm reflecting mine from that moment onto theirs, but in my mind I see defenseman Henrik Tallinder standing on the blue line as the banner went up with his lips pursed and his mouth crooked, evoking sadness. I imagined him thinking, Can we please just start the game? The Islanders were an easy mark for the 2006-07 Sabres, even in the first round of the playoffs, but this was a new season and on this night the Islanders roared back from a deficit to win, 6-4.

During one of the intermissions some friends joined us in the concourse, where there was a TV showing a Yankees-Indians playoff game. It was the night those bugs, called midges, attacked Yankees pitcher Joba Chamberlain. I remember sending a text message to Martin Biron, who the Sabres traded to Philadelphia late in '06-'07. He was in Edmonton where the Flyers and Oilers would play the next night. I remember telling Biron how this Sabres game felt different -- no Briere, no Drury, no Biron -- and he responded that he was with Briere, watching the game, feeling the same.

Thursday night was this night's 10-year anniversary. The Sabres opened their season. No new banners were raised. There was, as it happens, a Yankees-Indians playoff game -- and there was Jason Pominville, back for a second tour.

Thursday night's game was young when Pominville flung a backhand past Carey Price to open the season's scoring. It was a great moment, reminiscent of when a young Pominville poured in goals for the last great Sabres team. A team that was dramatically altered when it took the ice October 5, 2007, and has never been the same since.

Jack Eichel, an elementary schooler when the Sabres last won a playoff round, signed a contract extension with the team Tuesday that will pay him \$80 million. Ten years ago the Sabres were fractured by their unwillingness to pay up, and the injuries still haven't fully healed. They can get around alright but the limp is still evident.

The Sabres are on their fifth coach in six seasons. It's another new attempt to not only make the playoffs but actually win there. They start the 2017-18 season as an underdog to make it again. A ray of hope can stem, I suppose, from that the last time they got great they were an underdog too.

## **Struggling Sabres want details in game**

Olean Times Herald

Bill Hoppe

October 9, 2017

BUFFALO – Fresh off a dreadful road loss, the 0-2 Sabres started Sunday’s practice, well, pretty poorly. About 10 minutes into the session, associate coach Davis Payne finally had enough of their shoddy execution.

Payne yelled, “Let’s get (expletive) sharp!” A few seconds later, Payne let loose again on the KeyBank Center ice, saying, “Let’s get it (expletive) going!”

“It’s getting back to the little details,” Sabres center Ryan O’Reilly said of Sunday’s theme. “That’s what killed us (Saturday).”

The Sabres, so good for parts of Thursday’s 3-2 shootout loss, looked awful for chunks of Saturday’s 6-3 loss to the New York Islanders.

“We were ready, I think we were prepared,” coach Phil Housley said after the Sabres got ready for this afternoon’s home tilt against the New Jersey Devils. “I think we just didn’t execute the game plan. A lot of times it really wasn’t the things they did, it’s what we gave them.”

The Sabres, of course, are just two games into the Housley era. Getting used to a new coach takes time. It could be months before they consistently execute his system.

“It’s going to take some getting used to,” Sabres winger Kyle Okposo said. “But in saying that, there was things (Saturday) that had nothing to do with the system or anything like that. It was just our decision making as a team and our lack of battle.”

Some suspect decisions cost them dearly Saturday. On John Tavares’ short-handed goal, Sabres defenseman Nathan Beaulieu committed a huge gaffe, blindly passing the puck back into his zone through the middle of the ice.

“When we take things into our own hands and try to make plays through the neutral zone against a left wing lock forecheck, you’re just inviting disaster, because you’re just turning it over to the other team,” said Housley, who also doesn’t want to stifle his team’s creativity.

Incredibly, the Sabres have allowed three short-handed goals through two games. On Saturday, they allowed two in a 50-second stretch on one power play.

“Maybe a little too lackadaisical,” O’Reilly said of the short-handed goals. “We’re trying so much to score, (we’re) not playing the right way and protect.”

He added: “That took away all the momentum last game, when power plays should be something you thrive off.”

Okposo said the short-handed goals come from poor “effort.”

“That’s on us as a power play, and I don’t know how many (short-handed) goals we gave up last year, two?” he asked.

Actually, the Sabres allowed four all of last season.

O’Reilly, as he often does, accepted blame for his team’s problems on the power play – “I got to get back and have communication,” he said – and everything else.

Some of the Sabres’ top scorers have struggled early. So far, O’Reilly, Okposo and Sam Reinhart have combined for just one point, an O’Reilly assist. Reinhart was a minus-5 on Saturday.

“It starts with myself and a few other guys,” O’Reilly said. “Definitely I wasn’t good enough. I didn’t play a complete game, and I could be better. We had a good talk (Sunday) morning, good review of last game. We’re throwing it out.

“It’s still early in the season. There’s no need to panic. I think to a man, everyone knows we need to do things a little differently.”

Okposo said: “I haven’t been up to the standard of play that I want to play at.”

O’Reilly, an NHL All-Star two years ago, said he can’t put a finger on his struggles.

“I don’t have a true answer for it, because I’m trying different things to sort this out,” he said. “It is an issue for myself. I’m really disappointed in the way I’ve been playing.”

That’s one reason why Housley mixed up his lines Sunday, putting O’Reilly on the third combination between Zemgus Girgensons and Seth Griffith. Reinhart, meanwhile, took O’Reilly’s spot between Okposo and Benoit Pouliot.

“We needed to change it up a little bit,” said Housley, who wasn’t sure if he would use the lines today.

xxx

Sabres winger Jordan Nolan, who played Thursday, will likely be scratched again this afternoon in favor of veteran Matt Moulson, who played Saturday.

Meanwhile, Housley said he hasn’t decided on a starting goalie for today. He pulled Robin Lehner after the Islanders’ fourth goal.

Notes: Housley said injured Sabres defenseman Zach Bogosian (lower body) has been skating and progressing. Bogosian, however, is likely out today. ... New Jersey center Nico Hischier, the first overall pick in June, made his NHL debut in Saturday’s 4-1 win against Colorado. ... Former Sabres winger Drew Stafford, who signed a one-year contract with New Jersey, is questionable for today (lower body).

## **Sabres' Jason Pominville still producing offense at 34**

Olean Times Herald

Bill Hoppe

October 7, 2017

BUFFALO – At first glance, it appears Sabres winger Jason Pominville has been declining since hitting the prestigious 30-goal mark four years ago.

Statistical drops are usually inevitable as players progress into their 30s, and Pominville, 34, has experienced one, failing to reach 20 goals or 60 points the last three seasons.

In his first eight NHL seasons of 70 or more games, Pominville averaged 26 goals and 64 points. In the last two campaigns, he averaged 12 goals and 42 points.

These days, after more than four years with the Minnesota Wild, Pominville is a first-liner again, skating beside slick center Jack Eichel and Evander Kane. Pominville scored twice in Thursday's season-opening loss, thrilling the crowd in his first game with the Sabres since April 2, 2013.

It was a vintage Pominville performance, and it begged the question: How much does the former NHL All-Star have left?

The answer might be a lot.

The Sabres brought back Pominville on June 30 for a slew of reasons. The former captain is often lauded for his accountability and professionalism. As a key component for two Eastern Conference finalist teams, he understands winning in Buffalo.

"It's important to try to bring some of that culture back," Sabres winger Kyle Okposo said earlier this week. "He knows what it's like to win."

Having Pominville, a 13-year veteran, is invaluable for a young team like the Sabres, who play a road tilt tonight against the New York Islanders.

"He has a great effect on our young players, just the way he carries himself, tremendous respect," Sabres coach Phil Housley said Friday inside KeyBank Center.

But Housley and Sabres general manager Jason Botterill knew Pominville could still produce offensively.

Pominville said his 11-goal, 36-point season in 2015-16 was "a bad year."

"That was my worst year since I've been in the league," he said. "I wasn't playing well, never seemed to get confidence and things just weren't going my way."

Very quietly, Pominville rebounded last season, compiling 13 goals and 47 points in 78 games. The numbers, however, might look a little underwhelming unless you understand his role on a stacked Wild team that earned 106 points.

"I had a pretty good year, to be honest with you," Pominville said. "I played a limited role, didn't really play any power play, was basically (on the) third and fourth line. My production five-on-five was pretty high for the production I had."

Pominville averaged a career-low 14 minutes, 14 seconds of ice time an outing. He was even a healthy scratch.

Still, Pominville produced all 13 goals and 40 of his points at even strength, a number that would've led the Sabres.

Now, what could he do over a full season playing a few more minutes on a top line and skating on the power play? Does he, say, have another 25-goal year in him?

"He's one of those sneaky guys who's quicker than everyone expects him to be," said Sabres defenseman Marco Scandella, who arrived from Minnesota in the same trade. "Maybe it's an age thing where people think he's not that fast. But for some reason he gets to spots quicker than most guys, and he puts himself in a position to score all the time."

Pominville, who turns 35 on Nov. 30, said he doesn't feel his age.

"I've always taken care of myself and always taken pride in listening to my body and getting myself ready in the summer," he said.

This summer was special for Pominville, who played his first eight seasons in Buffalo and said he never thought about returning.

"When I got the call this summer, I was pretty happy, and finally to play a game and go out the tunnel was nice," he said.

Pominville's wife, children, parents and in-laws all attended Thursday's 3-2 shootout loss to the Canadiens, a game he said "was pretty special."

While Pominville's usually mild-mannered on the ice, he let loose after scoring Thursday.

"Both of them I was pretty fired up," he said. "It was nice to get that out of the way early."

Pominville and Eichel already showcase chemistry together. Eichel found his linemate low in the left circle from the far wall for the second goal Thursday.

Getting used to Eichel's adroit passing took some time.

"He uses the toe of his stick really well, so it's weird," Pominville said.

It often looks like Eichel's going to shoot the puck.

"Then he just flicks it with the toe of his stick, and you got to be ready for it," Pominville said.

## **Sabres must build upon fast start**

Olean Times Herald

Bill Hoppe

October 6, 2017

BUFFALO – For months, the talk surrounding the Sabres has been the fast, exciting brand of hockey they want to showcase under new coach Phil Housley.

Sure enough, after a slow start in Thursday's season opener, they started blitzing the Canadiens, pumping 45 shots on goal in their exciting 3-2 shootout loss.

Yes, it's just one game. Still, it was opening night. Not even a period into Housley era, his impact was noticeable.

"We did a lot of good things," Housley said this afternoon inside KeyBank Center. "We can take a lot away from that game, but it's just one game. You look at the 45 shots, it's a great step in the right direction, but we also gave up 40. We gave up too many chances against.

"That was the result of a couple things, our puck management through the neutral zone, just our coverage coming back into our zone. Those things we can sort out, those things we can control."

Housley has been preaching a shot mentality, and while the Sabres clearly embraced one, he wants to create more traffic for the second and third opportunities. He also wants to get pucks deeper in the opponent's zone.

"We're getting it in the blue line, but we're not getting it into the corner, and as a result, it feeds their transition, and then we're coming back and we're spending energy in the wrong area," Housley said.

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Veteran Sabres winger Matt Moulson, a healthy scratch Thursday, will play in Saturday's road tilt against the New York Islanders, Housley said. Moulson practiced on the right wing beside center Jacob Josefson and Johan Larsson on the fourth line today.

Moulson will replace newcomer Jordan Nolan, who mostly skated as an extra.

"Matt is a true goal scorer," Housley said. "He can bury the puck."

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Sabres defenseman Marco Scandella, who sat out all six preseason games to rest his hip, played more than 21 minutes Thursday and practiced Friday.

"We didn't take any chances," he said. "I was very comfortable jumping into a game and battling. I didn't even think about my hip."

Scandella underwent hip surgery in May.

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Housley said defenseman Zach Bogosian (lower body) has skated the last two days and is still day-to-day. He likely won't play Saturday.

## Tavares, Cizikas spark Islanders to rout of Sabres

Sports Xchange

Jerry Beach

October 7, 2017

NEW YORK -- Whether it was intentional or not, the cover and inside contents of the New York Islanders' game program for Saturday night's home opener acknowledged the trio of issues that loom over the club as it enters its third season at Barclays Center.

If cover subject John Tavares plays like he did Saturday, perhaps everything will work out for the Islanders.

Tavares scored the first two goals Saturday for the Islanders, who rode a second-period flurry to a 6-3 win over the Buffalo Sabres.

Tavares' exploits helped quiet what threatened to turn into an early-season crisis for the Islanders, who were routed 5-0 in their season opener Friday night by the Columbus Blue Jackets.

"We were just disappointed with the way the game went last night," Tavares said. "We just wanted to rebound and make sure we had no excuses after the game. But certainly, we know we've got the talent to win a lot of games."

The big question is where the Islanders' talent -- especially Tavares -- will play in the coming years.

Tavares, the superstar center and captain who is in the last year of his contract, appears content to play the season out as the franchise tries to finally find a long-term home. The Islanders moved to Barclays Center prior to the 2015-16 season, but both the team and the arena can opt out of a 25-year lease in January.

The first two inside pages of the program feature letters from Jon Ledecky, the Islanders' co-owner, and Brett Yormark, who is the CEO of Brooklyn Sports & Entertainment, which operates Barclays Center as well as Long Island's refurbished Nassau Coliseum, which housed the Islanders from 1972 through 2015.

Last month, Ledecky and fellow owner Scott Malkin bid to build an arena at Belmont Park on Long Island. Yormark said he hopes the Islanders can return to Nassau Coliseum on a temporary or permanent basis, even though the NHL has said the facility is no longer suitable for the franchise.

The crowd of 15,234 -- about 500 shy of capacity -- had to be soothed by the symbolism of Tavares opening the scoring just 1:50 into the first period. His next goal was the first of three in a span of 1:47 early in the second.

Tavares scored the Islanders' first goal at Barclays in October 2015 and tallied in overtime of Game 6 of the Eastern Conference quarterfinals against the Florida Panthers in April 2016 to send the team into the second round for the first time since 1993.

"It's always appropriate, right?" Islanders head coach Doug Weight said of Tavares' opening goals. "It was a frustrating game (Friday) night and we didn't respond well and John was a part of it. We got down two and for whatever reason -- you're going to get some bad breaks, but we just started turning the puck over and getting a little individual.

"It was good (Saturday)," Weight said. "(Tavares) kind of grass-rooted it."

The Islanders' first two goals in the second were short-handed. Casey Cizikas scored 50 seconds after Tavares before Josh Bailey's goal chased Robin Lehner exactly seven minutes into the period.

Evander Kane scored a pair of short-handed goals later in the second for the Sabres.

"It was a pretty weird game, wasn't it, with all the short-handed goals?" Buffalo head coach Phil Housley said.

The Islanders' Anthony Beauvillier and Buffalo's Jack Eichel traded goals in the third before Cizikas' empty-netter capped the scoring with 24.5 seconds left for New York, which avoided a second straight 0-2-0 start.

The Islanders had the worst record in the league at the end of Thanksgiving weekend last season before surging into playoff contention and missing the postseason by one point.

"I've been on teams that have started poorly and confidence-wise, it buries you," said Islanders center Jordan Eberle, who played the first seven seasons of his career with the Edmonton Oilers before being traded to New York on June 22. "I know it's only game two, but it was definitely a pivotal game."

The Sabres (0-1-1), who fell to the Montreal Canadiens in 3-2 shootout loss Thursday, are winless through two games for the fourth time in five seasons.

"We were supposed to be the fresh team coming in," Housley said. "I think that's the first thing we've got to address. A team that's played back-to-back and then had to travel, we should have been jumping on them."

Jaroslav Halak made 26 saves for the Islanders. Lehner recorded 12 saves before Chad Johnson stopped 15 shots in relief for the Sabres.

NOTES: The Islanders improved to 27-12-1-4 (wins-losses-ties-overtime losses) in home openers. ... The Sabres played their first road game against the Islanders for the fourth time (1979-80, 2007-08 and 2008-09). ... The Islanders scratched RW Cal Clutterbuck (lower body), D Ryan Pullock and D Dennis Seidenberg. ... The Sabres scratched D Zach Bogosian (lower body), D Josh Gorges and C Jordan Nolan

## **Shorthanded goals the story in Sabres 6-3 loss to the Islanders**

WKBW

Jenna Callari

Oct 7, 2017

Buffalo, N.Y. (WKBW) - Sabres goaltender Robin Lehner gave up four goals in just a little over one period of play and it didn't get prettier from there.

The Sabres fell to the NY Islanders 6-3 Saturday night to drop them to 0-1-1 on the season.

The Islanders struck just 1:47 into the game. They added two shorthanded goals less than a minute apart in the 2nd period to take a 3-0 lead. Less than a minute later, they added another to make it 4-0.

Goaltender Chad Johnson took over in the 2nd period and allowed another goal later in the game. The 6th and final Islanders goal was an empty-netter.

Evander Kane scored two shorthanded goals of his own in the loss while Jack Eichel scored his first goal of the season.

The Sabres will return to action on Monday when they host New Jersey. Game time is set for 3pm in a Columbus Day matinee.

## **Sabres aiming to get in win column vs. Devils**

WABC

October 08, 2017

BUFFALO, N.Y. -- After what appeared to be a promising start under new coach Phil Housley, the Buffalo Sabres already have their backs against the wall.

That's what a 6-3 loss to the New York Islanders on Saturday night -- where the Sabres allowed two short-handed goals -- will do.

The Sabres (0-1-1) will look to get back on track in a matinee game at home against the New Jersey Devils (3 p.m. ET) on Monday.

"You play a lot of games in this league," Sabres center Jack Eichel said, according to the team's website. "You've got to learn from something like this, but as quickly as you learn from it you've got to put it behind you because New Jersey's a good team and we're going to have our hands full at home. It's a must-win game right now."

The Sabres were expected to have some growing pains after finishing near the bottom of the league in each of the past four seasons. Buffalo is working on an up-tempo approach on offense while breaking in three new defenders (Victor Antipin, Nathan Beaulieu and Marco Scandella) on the back end.

"It's getting back to the little details. That's what killed us yesterday," Sabres center Ryan O'Reilly said, according to the team's website. "Just little things, not relaxing at certain times of the game. I thought we had a good, intense practice with everyone just going. Competing, moving our feet, having good sticks, being physical, going to the right spots. It's something we've got to carry over into tomorrow."

One bright spot from the loss to the Islanders was a two-goal performance from Evander Kane, who is looking to pick up where he left off last season. Kane was one of Buffalo's few bright spots in 2016-17 with 28 goals in 70 games.

The Devils (1-0-0) got off to a good start in their season opener on Saturday, a 4-1 win over the Colorado Avalanche. Rookie defenseman Will Butcher became the first player in Devils franchise history to record three points in his NHL debut with three assists.

New Jersey is expecting big things from Butcher, last year's Hobey Baker winner.

"During the recruiting process with him we had a need for a guy who can make those decisions and be able to run a power play," said Devils coach John Hynes, according to the team's website. "He has gotten better and better in his decision-making and the way he uses time and space in playing at this level. It was nice to see him have the night he had in his first NHL game."

Goalie Cory Schneider made 40 saves for in the win for New Jersey, which got goals from Adam Henrique, Jimmy Hayes, Jesper Bratt and John Moore.

The Devils, like the Sabres, are hoping for improvement after making some big changes in their lineup this offseason. New Jersey added forwards Marcus Johansson and Drew Stafford and have first overall pick Nico Hischier looking to make an impact.

## Devils at Sabres preview

NHL.com

by Joe Yerdon

October 8th, 2017

DEVILS (1-0-0) at SABRES (0-1-1)

3 p.m. ET; MSG-B, MSG, NHL.TV

### The Game

Buffalo Sabres centers Sam Reinhart and Ryan O'Reilly will likely switch lines when they face the New Jersey Devils. Reinhart skated between Benoit Pouliot and Kyle Okposo on Sunday, and O'Reilly played between Zemgus Girgensons and Seth Griffith. Neither Reinhart nor Okposo has a point in Buffalo's first two games.

The Sabres need depth scoring. They've gotten all of their offense from the top line of Evander Kane, Jack Eichel and Jason Pominville. Kane scored twice and Eichel had one in a 6-3 loss at the New York Islanders on Saturday, and Pominville had two goals against the Montreal Canadiens in a 3-2 shootout loss on Thursday.

Devils coach John Hynes said Sunday he could go with 11 forwards and seven defensemen, according to northjersey.com. Forwards Drew Stafford (lower body) and Kyle Palmieri (lower body) left with injuries during a 4-1 victory against the Colorado Avalanche on Saturday. Neither practiced Sunday but will make the trip to Buffalo.

### Players to watch

Devils defenseman Will Butcher had three assists against the Avalanche, the team that originally drafted him, in his NHL debut.

Kane's scored two shorthanded goals in the second period against the Islanders. He leads the Sabres with four points (two goals, two assists) and is plus-3.

### They said it

"We want to continue what we've done, I think, in presesason and then [Saturday] night in the way that we've played. It's nice that you go through the preseason we have quite a few road games, too. We want to have a strong focus level and be able to get right back to our game and play how we want to play and play to our advantage." -- Hynes

"I think we've got to execute better; a little more bite in our game, better puck decisions. Nobody said it's going to be easy. You're not just going to put a new system in place and get new guys in place and just expect to go out there and win; that everybody's just going to hand it to you." -- Sabres right wing Kyle Okposo

### Devils projected lineup

Taylor Hall -- Pavel Zacha -- Jesper Bratt

Marcus Johansson -- Nico Hischier -- Jimmy Hayes

Brian Gibbons -- Adam Henrique -- Stefan Noesen

Miles Wood -- Blake Coleman

Andy Greene -- Damon Severson

Mirco Mueller -- Steven Santini

John Moore -- Will Butcher

Ben Lovejoy

Cory Schneider

Keith Kinkaid

Scratched: Dalton Prout

Injured: Drew Stafford (lower body), Kyle Palmieri (lower body)

Sabres projected lineup

Evander Kane -- Jack Eichel -- Jason Pominville

Benoit Pouliot -- Sam Reinhart -- Kyle Okposo

Zemgus Girgensons -- Ryan O'Reilly -- Seth Griffith

Johan Larsson -- Jacob Josefson -- Matt Moulson

Nathan Beaulieu -- Rasmus Ristolainen

Jake McCabe -- Victor Antipin

Marco Scandella -- Matt Tennyson

Chad Johnson

Robin Lehner

Scratched: Jordan Nolan, Josh Gorges

Injured: Justin Falk (undisclosed), Zach Bogosian (lower body)

Status report

Hynes said he'll decide on the availability of Stafford and Palmieri on Monday morning. ... Bogosian has yet to play after being injured in a preseason game on Sept. 29.

Stat pack

All four of the Devils goals against the Avalanche came on special teams (three on the power play, one shorthanded). ... The Sabres have allowed three shorthanded goals in their first two games, including two during the same second-period power play against the Islanders

## **Sabres' leaders hope better practices can lead to better execution**

Sabres.com

by Chris Ryndak

October 8th, 2017

During a stoppage of a drill early on in practice at KeyBank Center on Sunday, Buffalo Sabres associate coach Davis Payne hollered some choice words - including some expletives - at the players to hammer home a simple message.

It's about execution.

It's a point that head coach Phil Housley brought up in his postgame comments Saturday night after Buffalo's 6-3 loss to the New York Islanders in Brooklyn. After practice on Sunday, he reiterated the importance of forming good practice habits.

"It's just our attention to detail, No. 1. We went to New York and I think we understood where they were at as a team after losing 5-0. We knew they were going to come out strong," Housley said. "In saying that, I think we were ready. I think we were prepared. I think we just didn't execute the game plan. A lot of the times, it really wasn't the things that they did; it's really what we gave them. New York played a simple game."

For the players, the messages relayed by the coaching staff - and particularly in how Payne delivered his on Sunday - are being taken seriously.

"He means what he's saying and it's honest," forward Jason Pominville, a veteran of 907 NHL games, said. "Nothing about it is fake or pretend so I think it sends an even stronger message."

"It's getting back to the little details. That's what killed us yesterday," alternate captain Ryan O'Reilly said. "Just little things - not relaxing at certain times of the game. I thought we had a good, intense practice with everyone just going. Competing, moving our feet, having good sticks, being physical, going to the right spots. It's something we've got to carry over into tomorrow."

Buffalo fell behind early and then surrendered a pair of shorthanded goals in the second period to go down 3-0. The Islanders held a four-goal lead when Evander Kane potted two shorthanded goals of his own, but the Sabres were outscored 2-1 in the third and saw their record fall to 0-1-1.

"In the last game, we kind of got back to old habits, which isn't good," O'Reilly said. "We had a good talk this morning, a good review of last game. We're throwing it out. It's still early in the season and there's no need to panic. To a man, everyone knows we need to do things a little differently. And that's all right. We're not worried in here, it's just preparing for tomorrow's game."

The Buffalo's top power-play unit has now given up three shorthanded goals this season. It speaks to some of the issues that they're looking to correct with each and every drill in practice.

"We've just got to make sure we're sharp on the power play," alternate captain Kyle Okposo said. "We've got to make sure we come with a mentality that we're going to go outwork them and we're going to go score every time we get on the ice. We can't be second guessing ourselves."

"... There were things in that game last night that had nothing to do with the system or anything like that. It was just our decision making as a team, and our lack of battle and their elevated battle. I thought they did a really good job at making decisions through the neutral zone and we just didn't do that."

Buffalo hosts New Jersey tomorrow afternoon. It's a 3 p.m. faceoff from KeyBank Center, which starts with a Kids Day Party in the Plaza presented by Perry's Ice Cream at 1 p.m. The GMC Game Night pregame show kicks off at 2:30 p.m. on MSG if you aren't able to make it to the rink.

The Sabres hope they can continue to build on the foundation that the coaching staff is laying down for them. Housley wants to coach an up-tempo and aggressive team, but he's also looking for that proper execution each and every shift.

"I'm not going to take any creativity away from our players. They're going to be allowed to make plays, but we've got to make the right plays," he said. "We've got to realize numbers -if they're in our favor or if they're not in our favor - where we've got to make a smart decision."

## Sunday's practice

9 Evander Kane - 15 Jack Eichel - 29 Jason Pominville  
28 Zemgus Girgensons - 90 Ryan O'Reilly - 25 Seth Griffith  
67 Benoit Pouliot - 23 Sam Reinhart - 21 Kyle Okposo  
22 Johan Larsson - 10 Jacob Josefson - 26 Matt Moulson - 17 Jordan Nolan

82 Nathan Beaulieu - 55 Rasmus Ristolainen  
19 Jake McCabe - 93 Victor Antipin  
6 Marco Scandella - 5 Matt Tennyson  
4 Josh Gorges

40 Robin Lehner  
31 Chad Johnson

A new look at practice saw Ryan O'Reilly and Sam Reinhart trade their set of wings.

"I just thought we needed to change it up a little bit. Right now, I don't have the lines - what we're going to go with tomorrow," Housley said. "Certainly there are going to be changes if we don't feel we're getting the proper execution."

Zach Bogosian skated on his own before practice and it's unlikely that he'll be available for Monday's game due to a lower-body injury. He's making good progress according to Housley and is still considered day-to-day.

As far as a starting goaltender for the game against the Devils, Housley has yet to name one. Lehner started last night and was pulled 7 minutes into the second period after giving up the goal that made it 4-0. He made 12 saves on 16 shots.

Johnson stopped 15 of 16 shots in 31:01 of action.

"I thought Robin made some big saves early, especially at the end of the first period, it could've been 3-0," Housley said. "It wasn't so much what he did wrong. It was more about what our team was doing at the time and then we needed to make a change."

## Shorthanded goals plague Sabres in loss to Islanders

Sabres.com

by Jourdon LaBarber

October 8th, 2017

BROOKLYN - So often last season, the power play was the deciding factor when the Buffalo Sabres were able to win games. They finished with the top-ranked unit in the NHL, and seemed to be picking up where they left off through two chances in their opener on Thursday.

Since then, time with the extra man has virtually been a disadvantage for the Sabres. After giving up a shorthanded goal in their opener against Montreal, the Sabres gave up two more in a 6-3 loss to the New York Islanders on Saturday.

"I think that we're just letting our foot off the gas," Sabres forward Jack Eichel said. "The power play is a time to outwork the opponent because you have one extra guy on the ice and I think that we're just trying to get a little too fancy and get away from the things that made unsuccessful as a unit."

Sabres defeated by Islanders, 6-3

04:41 • October 7th, 2017

Trailing 1-0 in the second period, the Sabres gained the extra man after a roughing call against Scott Mayfield. Rather than serve as a springboard for the Sabres to tie the game, the ensuing power play led to three Islanders goals in a span of 1:47.

John Tavares scored the first shorthanded goal, which was his second goal of the game, after intercepting a Nathan Beaulieu pass in the Buffalo zone. Fifty seconds later, Casey Cizikas raced past Victor Antipin and scored to make it 3-1.

Josh Bailey scored 57 seconds after that, the end result of a 3-on-1 scoring opportunity while the Sabres attempted a change following the conclusion of their man advantage.

"A team like the Islanders, they have a good penalty kill and they put pressure on you," Sabres forward Evander Kane said. "As a guy who kills penalties, you put pressure on other teams to create turnovers, and especially when teams are doing certain breakouts, those turnovers can lead to scoring chances. We gave those up tonight."

Bailey's goal marked the end of the night for Robin Lehner, who finished with 12 saves on 16 shots in 27:00. Chad Johnson allowed one goal on 16 shots in relief.

"It's frustrating because I felt good today," Lehner said. "I felt encouraged going into the second period and I made some mistakes. I've got to come up with a save, Tavares got a breakaway and he beats me and then short after that Cizikas comes in and lets one rip. I feel like I have one but it finds the far corner ... then we're on our heels."

Robin Lehner Postgame (10/7/17)

03:24 • October 7th, 2017

Oddly enough, the Sabres responded with two shorthanded goals of their own before the second period concluded, both off the stick of Kane. The first came when Eichel stole the puck from Jaroslav Halak behind the net and fed Kane in the slot; the second came on a wrap-around after a Ryan O'Reilly shot had rung the crossbar.

But Buffalo's comeback effort didn't pick up in the third until it was too late. Eichel scored his first goal of the season on a rebound, but not until Anthony Beauvillier had extended the New York lead 5:39 into the period.

A potential goal for Sam Reinhart that would have made it 5-4 late was waived off when it was ruled the puck never crossed the line, and Cizikas scored his second goal of the night into an empty net shortly after.

Jack Eichel Postgame (10/7/17)

02:13 • October 7th, 2017

The Sabres are now 0-1-1, with aspects of their game they know they need to address. Housley thought his team should have had the jump on New York given the fact that they were fresh and the Islanders had traveled the night before, and they'll need to clean up execution coming out of the zone as well.

The silver lining, of course, is that the season is still young. The Sabres will get another chance at home against New Jersey on Monday.

"You play a lot of games in this league," Eichel said. "You've got to learn from something like this, but as quickly as you learn from it you've got to put it behind you because New Jersey's a good team and were going to have our hands full at home. It's a must-win game right now."

Up next

The Sabres return home to host the New Jersey Devils at 3 p.m. on Monday. It will be a Kids Day at KeyBank Center, with fans in attendance receiving a 2017-18 magnet schedule.

Coverage on Monday begins at 2:30 p.m. with GMC Gamenight on MSG-B, or you can listen live on WGR 550.

## **Moulson to make season debut in Brooklyn**

Sabres.com

by Jourdon LaBarber

October 7th, 2017

BROOKLYN - For everything their fourth line brought for the Sabres against Montreal on Thursday night, one thing Phil Housley would like to see more from his team is secondary scoring. They'll look to get that on Saturday by adding Matt Moulson into the mix against the New York Islanders.

Moulson will make his season debut against his former team on a line with Johan Larsson and Jacob Josefson, replacing Jordan Nolan in the lineup. That trio created momentum on the forecheck on multiple occasions in the season opener on Thursday.

"They had a couple of good shifts, not only in the first but in the third period that sort of started our momentum," Housley said. "They've got to continue to do that. They're workhorses, they're smart players, they get some opportunities but we'd like to see some more goals.

"I think Matt is a true goal scorer. He can bury the puck and hopefully he can bring that."

BUF at NYI Preview (10/7/17)

01:53 • October 7th, 2017

The Islanders are coming off of a 5-0 loss in their season opener in Columbus on Friday night. They were outshot 37-29 in that game, and goalie Thomas Greiss was chased in favor of Jaroslav Halak in the third period. With that in mind, the Sabres are bracing for a team looking to rebound in its home opener.

"We understand where our opponent is right now," Housley said. "Any time you go on the road and you have an effort like that, teams are going to respond. I think our guys are ready for that. Not to take anything away from the New York Islanders and their home game and their home opener, but we're on a mission as well. We're trying to look for our first win."

Prior to the loss in Columbus, the Islanders went 6-0-2 in the preseason and beat the Sabres in Buffalo with both teams virtually icing their full lineups on Sept. 29. To avoid the same fate, Housley said the Sabres will have to focus on getting pucks behind their opponents in the neutral zone.

"Through the preseason, they were pretty stingy," Housley said. "In their lock system and they're 1-1-3, we're going to have to be smart. There's not a lot of things that are going to be available in the middle. We're going to have to get pucks behind and it's going to have to be a simple game for us tonight."

Robin Lehner will start in net for the Sabres after making 38 saves in their shootout loss to Montreal. Halak will get the nod for the Islanders

Coverage begins with the GMC Pregame Show on MSG-B at 6:30 p.m., or you can listen live on WGR 550. The puck drops at 7 p.m.

### Projected lineup

9 Evander Kane - 15 Jack Eichel - 29 Jason Pominville  
67 Benoit Pouliot - 90 Ryan O'Reilly - 21 Kyle Okposo  
28 Zemgus Girgensons - 23 Sam Reinhart - 25 Seth Griffith  
22 Johan Larsson - 10 Jacob Josefson - 26 Matt Moulson

82 Nathan Beaulieu - 55 Rasmus Ristolainen  
6 Marco Scandella - 5 Matt Tennyson  
19 Jake McCabe - 93 Victor Antipin

40 Robin Lehner  
31 Chad Johnson

## Sharpen Up: October 7, 2017

Sabres.com

by Chris Ryndak

October 7th, 2017

Game 2 is tonight in Brooklyn. The New York Islanders will play host to the Sabres at Barclays Center with faceoff set for 7 p.m.

Sabres.com should be your first stop for all of the big news and notes coming your way as you get ready for the game. Then tune in to the GMC pregame show at 6:30 on MSG where Duffer and Andrew Peters (filling in for Marty) will prep you for Dan and Rayzor's call.

Here's what you need to know.

### Lineup news

Matt Moulson will be in the lineup tonight, likely skating on a line with Jacob Josefson and Johan Larsson. Moulson did not dress in Thursday night's opening night shootout loss to Montreal. He has eight points (6+2) in 10 career games against the Islanders.

For more on that and how the Sabres are looking to build on Thursday's game, check out Dan's Sabres Now Report:

### Sabres Now (10/6/17)

02:16 • October 6th, 2017

The Islanders are coming off a 5-0 loss in Columbus last night. They're really looking forward to moving on from that one.

Zach Bogosian was not expected to make the trip with the club. He missed the opener with a lower-body injury and has not been practicing.

That means Matt Tennyson will get another game in, on a pair with Marco Scandella. In yesterday's Ice Level Practice Report, Jourdon took a look at what made them an effective duo last game.

Here's a quick excerpt:

### Phil Housley After Practice

07:19 • October 6th, 2017

"I thought they played extremely well," coach Phil Housley said. "Marco missing all of camp, not playing a preseason game, and stepping right into the action did a tremendous job. He's calming influence back there for sure.

"Matt, he improved throughout the camp. He understands our concepts and the way we want to play. Seeing him join the rush and his timing was really well, and defensively he had a good stick, good position."

Scandella has been held out exhibition play as the Sabres worked him back cautiously from offseason hip surgery. Their patience paid off; Scandella logged 21:11 of ice time - the third highest mark on the team - and tallied three shot attempts and four hits in his debut on Thursday.

Scandella and Tennyson worked as a pair in practice during the week leading up to the opener, and it showed in their communication. In addition to typical responsibilities like communicating the breakout, Housley's system demands defensemen to read off of each other when joining the rush.

From the Game Notes (a.k.a. why you should be following @SabresPR)

This is first of three meetings between the Sabres and Islanders this season.

Last meeting: New York defeated Buffalo 4-2 in Buffalo on April 2

Next meeting: Wednesday, Dec. 27 in New York

The Sabres are 4-5-1 in their last 10 games vs. the Islanders; 6-4-0 on the road.

This is the 166th game all-time between Buffalo and New York; Buffalo has an 80-62-23 series record.

The Sabres are 36-35-11 on the road against the Islanders all-time.

Fourteen of the last 20 games between these teams have been decided by a single goal.

Tonight marks the 47th road-opener in Buffalo Sabres franchise history.

Buffalo is 19-26-1 all-time in road-openers.

The Sabres have previously opened their road schedule against the Islanders three times in franchise history: Oct. 13, 1979 (5-2 win), Oct. 6, 2007 (3-2 loss) and Oct. 13, 2008 (7-1 win)

And we'd be doing you all a disservice if we didn't highlight this NYI-BUF connection:

Jaroslav Halak was a member of the Sabres for six days during the 2013-14 season. He was acquired from the St. Louis Blues on Feb. 28 before being dealt to the Washington Capitals on March 5, and did not appear in a game during his brief stint in Buffalo.

Big win for the Amerks

Justin Bailey scored twice in a 3-1 home win over Syracuse on opening night. Linus Ullmark made 28 saves.

We'll have more on Tuesday in our weekly Amerks Update. For now, check out Amerks.com's recap, which has full postgame interviews with Bailey, Ullmark, Nathan Paetsch and coach Chris Taylor.

New Beyond Blue and Gold!

Learn more about what makes Jake McCabe tick in our first episode of Beyond Blue and Gold presented by New Era of the new season. It'll also air during tonight's broadcast.

BBG: McCabe - Becoming Somebody

06:01 • October 6th, 2017

Another Party in the Plaza on Monday

Don't miss a special Kids Day Party in the Plaza on Monday in Alumni Plaza from 1 to 3 p.m. prior to the team's game against the New Jersey Devils presented by Perry's Ice Cream.

The Kids Day Party will feature airbrush tattoos, balloon animals, a fan photo area and music from DJ Milk. Kids will also be able to participate in the inflatable "Hockey Shot" from NHL Network. Perry's Ice Cream and Yancey's Fancy will have samples throughout the event.

Sabretooth and other local mascots will be making an appearance and will be available for autographs and pictures. All outdoor events are weather permitting.

Fans can take advantage of the Kids Day Ticket Offer for this game that allows fans to buy up to four \$15 kids tickets with the purchase of an adult 300 Level II ticket.

Tickets can be purchased here, in person at the KeyBank Center Box Office or by phone at 1-888-223-6000.

Bobblehead Fan Vote

Those are the details. [Click here](#) to submit your suggestion.

Some alumni (or at least their families) are already starting their own campaigns:

## Scandella, Tennyson quick to develop chemistry

Sabres.com

by Jourdon LaBarber

October 6th, 2017 [Share](#)

Marco Scandella and Matt Tennyson came to Buffalo under vastly different circumstances. Scandella was acquired via trade with the expectation that he'd log top minutes on defense; Tennyson was an under-the-radar signing on July 1 who played his way onto the roster in training camp.

In their first game as a defensive pair on Thursday, however, both looked very much at home in Phil Housley's system.

"I thought they played extremely well," Housley said. "Marco missing all of camp, not playing a preseason game, and stepping right into the action did a tremendous job. He's calming influence back there for sure.

"Matt, he improved throughout the camp. He understands our concepts and the way we want to play. Seeing him join the rush and his timing was really well, and defensively he had a good stick, good position."

Sabres Now (10/6/17)

02:16 • October 6th, 2017

Scandella has been held out exhibition play as the Sabres worked him back cautiously from offseason hip surgery. Their patience paid off; Scandella logged 21:11 of ice time - the third highest mark on the team - and tallied three shot attempts and four hits in his debut on Thursday.

"It's a great sign," Scandella said. "We waited until I was 100 percent ready to play so we didn't take any chances. I was very comfortable jumping in the game and battling. I didn't even think about my hip."

Scandella and Tennyson worked as a pair in practice during the week leading up to the opener, and it showed in their communication. In addition to typical responsibilities like communicating the breakout, Housley's system demands defensemen to read off of each other when joining the rush.

Housley has commended Tennyson's timing in this area throughout camp, and it showed in plays like this rush that nearly produced a scoring chance in the third period:

"It's just making sure that one of us is back," Tennyson said. "When the forwards start going up the ice, you kind of yell. One of us will go, one of us stays back and make sure we've got that covered."

"This is the game we're going to bring," Scandella added. "In the league nowadays to have success you have to have the D jumping in the rush and being part of the attack. I feel like that's what we're building."

On the forecheck, meanwhile, the Sabres were able to hem Montreal in their own zone for large portions by using their defensemen to pinch down the wall and cutoff breakout attempts. Scandella and Tennyson provided a great example in the second period:

Scandella pinches down on the left wall and rims the puck around behind the end boards. Tennyson is there to cut the puck off on the other side, while Zemgus Girgensons takes his place defensively. The plays led to a scoring chance for Scandella down low.

"I think when the D can get up and seal the wall there, it really disrupts their breakouts and makes it harder for the other team to breakout if both D can get up and close the gap on those forwards," Tennyson said. "I think we're a really mobile group on the back end so if we continue to do that hopefully we can continue to hem teams in their own zone."

Zach Bogosian remains day-to-day and is not expected to travel for the team's game in Brooklyn on Saturday, but his eventual return figures to impact the composition of the Sabres defensive lineup. Until then, the pair of Scandella and Tennyson seems off to a promising start.

Sabres seeking improvement at net-front and in neutral zone

Phil Housley After Practice

07:19 • October 6th, 2017

The Sabres certainly answered Housley's call for a shot mentality on Thursday, generating 45 shots and 69 shot attempts against Montreal goalie Carey Price. The trouble, Housley said, was that Price saw the puck too often.

As the Sabres continue to work on their game, Housley said developing a net-front presence will be an area of focus.

"We addressed that today, we're working on some options," he said. "Moving forward, we can't get away from what we did in the game yesterday. We've got to continue to shoot, but now we've got to get a second and third opportunity off that shot."

Defensively, for as many shots as the Sabres were able to generate, they also gave up 40 against. Housley said he'll look for better decisions in the neutral zone as a means to limiting their opponent's opportunities moving forward.

"The things that we can control is getting pucks deep," Housley said. "We talk about the next level where we're getting it in the blue line, but we are not getting into the corner. As a result, it feeds their transition and we're coming back and we're spending energy in the wrong area. Those things, we've got to be better at."

Off to Brooklyn

The Sabres will play their first road game of the season against the New York Islanders at Barclays Center on Saturday night. Coverage on MSG-B begins at 6:30 p.m. with the GMC Pregame Show, or you can listen live on WGR 550. The puck drops at 7 p.m.

## Sharpen Up: October 6, 2017

Sabres.com

by Chris Ryndak

October 6th, 2017

Jason Pominville made a big impact in first game as a Sabre since 2013, scoring twice, but it wasn't enough as Buffalo fell to Montreal in a 3-2 shootout loss on Thursday in Phil Housley's head coaching debut.

Buffalo is now 0-0-1 to start the season, and they'll hit the ice for practice later this morning as they prepare for tomorrow night's road game against the Islanders.

Here's what you need to know.

About last night

"It was a pretty special night," Pominville said in our game recap. "It would have been nice to hit the net there in the shootout and find a way to win the game, but I thought overall the effort was definitely there. We did a lot of good things. If we play this way on a consistent basis we'll give ourselves a good chance to win a lot of games."

MTL @ BUF

06:02 • October 5th, 2017

Pominville opened the scoring on the power play 8:30 into the game, and after Montreal tied it late in the first, Buffalo regained the lead 22 seconds into the second on Pominville's second goal.

Pominville notches early PPG

01:00 • October 5th, 2017

Pominville's second tally

00:56 • October 5th, 2017

However...

Phillip Danault scored a shorthanded goal with 11:59 remaining in the third to erase a 2-1 lead for Buffalo. The Sabres had looked dangerous on four prior power plays and had scored on one; they seemed primed to extend their lead when Andrew Shaw was sent to the box for interference.

Instead, missed execution led to the Sabres being stuck in their own zone and Danault squeezed a wraparound attempt between the post and the skate of goalie Robin Lehner.

"We sort of took the foot off the gas there," Sabres coach Phil Housley said. "We could've made it a two-goal game and really got some momentum back."

Lehner Postgame (10/05/17)

02:39 • October 5th, 2017

"It's a fast play," Lehner said. "I get there with my skate and it goes up on me and hits my pad and it goes in. It happens in a split second and it's frustrating, but it's a lucky goal."

Phil Housley Postgame (10/05/17)

03:55 • October 5th, 2017

Overall, though, Housley felt encouraged by the way the team executed his system. When they controlled the pace of play in the second and third periods, they did it with a dominant forecheck that saw defensemen pinching down the boards to extend plays.

The players echoed those positive feelings.

Eichel Postgame (10/05/17)

03:34 • October 5th, 2017

"That's the game we want play," Sabres forward Jack Eichel said. "Take it to the other team, put a lot of pressure on them. It's something we've been working on with our F3, reloading over the top, our D going down the walls, keeping plays alive, making it hard for them to break the puck out. I think when we had sustained pressure in zone we were doing that."

Other notes from @SabresPR

Buffalo had a franchise-record 10 players in the opening night lineup who weren't on the team's roster during the previous season. According to the Elias Sports Bureau, it's the most new players an NHL team has had in its lineup since the 2011-12 Florida Panthers (11).

Pominville's first goal gave him 457 career points as a member of the Sabres, breaking a tie with Miroslav Satan for 11th-most points in franchise history. He now trails Thomas Vanek by 39 points for 10th on the franchise list.

Follow

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Pominville now trails Thomas Vanek by 39 points for 10th in team history.

<https://twitter.com/SabresPR/status/916106632987373569> ...

9:03 PM - Oct 5, 2017

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With Pominville's goals, the Sabres have now had a newly acquired player score in five of their last seven season-opening games.

Evander Kane's assist on Pominville's second goal gave him eight points (2+6) in his last eight games against Montreal. Kane also finished the night with 11 shots on goal, tying his career high (3x) and logging the most shots by a Sabre since his last 11-shot game on March 5, 2017 at Pittsburgh.

Beyond Blue and Gold is back

Check out the trailer for the first new episode of Beyond Blue and Gold, which will air during tomorrow night's broadcast. We'll have the full episode here on Sabres.com later today.

BBG Teaser: Jake McCabe

00:33 • October 5th, 2017

The Instigators will have an exclusive clip this morning as well.

Our next home game...

...is on Monday at KeyBank Center. It'll be a 3 p.m. faceoff against the New Jersey Devils, but come down to Alumni Plaza for a Kids Day Party in the Plaza presented by Perry's Ice Cream starting at 1 p.m.

The Kids Day Party will feature airbrush tattoos, balloon animals, a fan photo area and music from DJ Milk. Kids will also be able to participate in the inflatable "Hockey Shot" from NHL Network. Perry's Ice Cream and Yancey's Fancy will have samples throughout the event.

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