



Buffalo Sabres

Daily Press Clips

November 10, 2017

Sabres' Sam Reinhart unable to get on track offensively

The Buffalo News

By John Vogl

November 9, 2017

Until now, Sam Reinhart has been a prolific player. He had 319 points in 250 junior games. He scored 23 goals as a rookie for the Sabres. He reached 30 assists last year in his second season.

So yes, he admitted Thursday, this start has been tough on him.

Reinhart's celebrations have been few and far between through Buffalo's opening 15 games. He has just two goals and three assists. That's an 11-goal, 27-point pace, far below the numbers expected for a No. 2 overall draft pick.

"I think the opportunities have been there as of late, so maybe try and capitalize on that a little more," Reinhart said after preparing for Friday's visit by the Florida Panthers. "My focus right now is trying to build off the new line and read off each other. If we can do that as soon as possible, that's going to benefit everybody."

Reinhart is centering for left wing Nick Baptiste and right wing Seth Griffith this week, and they had a decent (though unproductive) debut Tuesday against Washington. Reinhart had four shots, tying the season high he set Oct. 14.

He's failed to record a shot in six games while totaling just 22. His shots figured to drop after a move from right winger to center, but the assists have fallen, too. Not much has been happening offensively when his line is on the ice.

"I felt best when I've had the puck on my stick coming through the middle," Reinhart said in KeyBank Center. "I've been happy with the speed I've been able to generate. I think making more plays would be better" than shooting, "and then bearing down in certain instances."

During Reinhart's first two seasons, he was a solid complementary piece. He produced while skating with centers Jack Eichel and Ryan O'Reilly.

Reinhart hasn't yet proved he can anchor his own line. He has just one goal and three points playing five-on-five.

"It's just consistency in his game, getting maybe a little bit dirty down in the net front," coach Phil Housley said. "He's getting there, but just fighting for some loose pucks."

"I think the last three or four games have been really good positionally for him on our breakouts. He's in a really good position coming out of our end, and as a result he's not spending a lot of time down there. He's just got to continue doing what he's doing, and he's going to break through."

The Sabres need it. The 22-year-old is in his third full season, and his continued growth was supposed to help the team move up. Instead, they're just 5-8-2, ahead of only Florida (4-8-2) in the Eastern Conference.

One reason for the drop in Reinhart's statistics and the Sabres' standing is an inept power play. Buffalo was first in the NHL last year. Reinhart was on the top unit and had 17 power-play points, including nine goals.

He has one goal and one assist on the power play this season as the Sabres rank 29th in the league at 11.5 percent. Housley has removed Reinhart from the first unit, opting for Evander Kane to skate with Eichel, O'Reilly, Kyle Okposo and Marco Scandella.

"We're just trying to make some changes," Housley said. "Obviously, our power play isn't where it should be. We've had periods where we had the units that were here last year, and it hasn't been working."

"We're just trying to give it new flavor, give Evander some more time on the power play. In that middle spot, he's a threat to score. He's got an incredible release if we can find him, and he's a guy that will push and go to the net for any high rebounds."

Reinhart practiced on the second unit with Jason Pominville, Benoit Pouliot, Victor Antipin and Nathan Beaulieu, who could return after missing seven games with an upper-body injury.

A personnel switch is nothing new for Reinhart. While the top two lines have settled in with Kane-Eichel-Pominville and Pouliot-O'Reilly-Okposo, the third line has been in flux. Reinhart hasn't connected with varying combinations featuring Baptiste, Griffith, Zemgus Girgensons, Justin Bailey, Jordan Nolan and Pouliot.

Something needs to start working.

"I'm just trying to roll with it, just trying each game to find more and more chemistry as soon as possible," said Reinhart, whose team has a chance to getting rolling against Florida on Friday and Montreal on Saturday. "These two are important for us. We have a lot of back-to-backs coming up the next couple weekends. To get a good start off them would be key for us."

Sabres Notebook: Ristolainen downgraded; Beaulieu on power play; Kane scoring

The Buffalo News

By John Vogl

November 9, 2017

The Sabres are going to be without Rasmus Ristolainen for longer than originally planned.

"It's more of a week to week situation right now," coach Phil Housley said Thursday.

Ristolainen suffered an upper-body injury Nov. 2 in Arizona. He was listed as day to day, but Housley downgraded the defenseman after he missed two games and has yet to practice.

The Sabres could get defensive help Friday when they host the Florida Panthers in KeyBank Center. Josh Gorges has proclaimed himself ready after missing eight games. Nathan Beaulieu practiced with the second power-play unit, a sign he could play after missing seven games with an upper-body injury.

"He's getting really close, him and Josh," Housley said. "They had a really good practice. It's good to see him out there in competitive battles and a more meaningful practice."

With those two close, the Sabres returned defenseman Zach Redmond to Rochester after their workout.

If Beaulieu is ready, it could provide a needed boost to the power play. It ranks 29th at just 11.5 percent.

"It's always nice to get some looks out there," Beaulieu said. "I'm an offensive guy, so you don't want to lose too much of that information while you're sitting out. It's good to get some reps, for sure."

"Things are going on the right path. I feel better."

Justin Falk has played admirably on the top defensive pair in place of Ristolainen. He's expected to stay with Marco Scandella after delivering five hits and three blocked shots Tuesday against Washington.

"I've really liked the attitude that he brings every day," Housley said of Falk, who missed the opening 12 games with an injury. "He brings life and energy to our team, and he's delivered and played physical on the opposing top players right now. He's just got continue to do that."

"It's not just the physicality. He puts himself in harm's way with a couple big blocks against Washington on their power play, which is great to see because it really lifts our bench."

The other defensive pairings Thursday were Jake McCabe-Taylor Fedun, Beaulieu-Antipin and Gorges-Redmond.

* * *

With three goals in three games, Sabres left wing Evander Kane has re-established himself as one of the NHL's top scorers. Kane has nine goals and was in a tie for sixth heading into Thursday's schedule.

"He's just a true competitor," Housley said. "He approaches the game the right way, and he can score goals, too. He's a gritty guy who goes to areas that a lot of people don't go to, and I really like when he brings a physical element to his game."

"He's been really, really consistent this year."

* * *

There is a bright side to the Sabres' power play. It has gone seven games without allowing a short-handed goal. The last came Oct. 20 against Vancouver.

Buffalo is tied with the New York Islanders for most short-handed goals allowed (six).

"We didn't sense danger," Housley said. "We were waiting and hoping a guy was going to keep a puck in, and all of a sudden it's coming back and they get a two-on-one or a breakaway. I think we had to recognize, 'This guy could be in danger. Maybe we should step off and wait and see what happens,' instead of hope that the guy was going to make a play.

"It's just having urgency."

* * *

The Panthers are 0-3-2 in their last five games, dropping to 4-8-2 this season. It's easy to spot their problem.

While Florida ranks sixth overall in scoring at 3.43 goals per game, it is last in goals allowed. The Panthers have given up a whopping 4.14 goals per night.

Sabres' Robin Lehner will pay tribute to fallen K-9 Officer Craig Lehner

The Buffalo News

By John Vogl

November 9, 2017

Robin Lehner saw how much the community mourned the death of Buffalo K-9 Officer Craig Lehner. The Buffalo Sabres goaltender is going to honor the fallen officer and local police.

During the Sabres' Military Appreciation Night on Friday, Robin Lehner will wear a customized warmup jersey with the nameplate of "C. Lehner." The jersey will be No. 43 instead of Lehner's usual No. 40, an homage to Craig Lehner's radio call sign, which was K-9 43.

"It feels like the right thing to do," Robin Lehner told The Buffalo News on Thursday. "There have obviously been quite a few things around here for him, so for me it just makes sense.

"They sacrifice a lot for the communities. It's a dangerous thing they do day to day. They deserve some recognition for their day-to-day work. It's obviously a tough situation for them.

"They should know the city is behind them."

A police dispatcher's emotional 'end of watch' call for fallen police diver

The commemorative jersey for the game against Florida will then be presented to Craig Lehner's relatives.

"It's going to go straight to the family," said Lehner, who wanted to keep No. 43 past the pregame warmups but could not. "I tried to push and see if I could use it for the game, and we tried to talk to the league. It's tough to do that."

Robin Lehner will wear this jersey in warmups tomorrow to honor Craig Lehner, K-9 43. pic.twitter.com/xGPkV8qyAY

— Buffalo Sabres (@BuffaloSabres) November 9, 2017

The goaltender said numerous people have reached out to tell him about Craig Lehner, who drowned Oct. 17 during an underwater training exercise. Robin Lehner appreciates how his namesake dedicated his life to the public. Craig Lehner, 34, served in the Army National Guard for 16 years before joining the police force. He would have turned 35 on Friday.

"I have a couple guys that talked to me and I had a couple guys hit me up on social media and told me a little bit about him," Robin Lehner said. "I've got some paperwork and read about the whole thing, him being in the military. Obviously, he was a cop and well-liked.

"It just feels like the right thing to do."

Ristolainen now out week-to-week

Two injured defensemen are almost ready to return to the lineup

PAUL HAMILTON

NOVEMBER 09, 2017

Buffalo, NY (WGR 550) - As Phil Housley does on a regular basis, he changed course when it comes to injuries. Housley said Rasmus Ristolainen is now out week-to-week with an upper-body injury.

On Wednesday, Nate Beaulieu didn't sound too hopeful about his injury, but on Thursday, he did practice on the power play.

Housley feels Beaulieu and Josh Gorges are very close to returning.

Thursday's lines:

Kane - Eichel - Pominville

Pouliot - O'Reilly - Okposo (Moulson)

Baptiste - Reinhart - Griffith

Girgensons - Larsson - Nolan (Bailey)

Scandella - Falk

McCabe - Fedun

Gorges - Redmond

Beaulieu - Antipin

Kane said his early success is tied into health

Evander Kane is not worried about all the trade talk surrounding him

PAUL HAMILTON

NOVEMBER 09, 2017

Buffalo, NY (WGR 550) - Evander Kane has played in the NHL for nine years, but has never been able to play all 82 games. In 2011-12, Kane played 74 games for Winnipeg. The year before, he got in 73 with Atlanta.

There was one season he played all his team's games which was the strike shortened season in 2012-13. That was 48 games.

In his two seasons with Buffalo, Kane has played 65 and 70 games, but has been extremely productive. In 150 games as a Sabre Kane averages 31 goals every 82 games.

This season, he has nine goals in 15 games which ranks him sixth in the NHL. He also leads the NHL with three shorthanded goals.

Kane said he hasn't changed anything in his off-season training program to prevent injuries. He feels it's just been freakish stuff, "It's the first time in four years I've played the first 15 games, that's why. I've been hurt with freak injuries, a torn MCL or broken ribs or another torn MCL, so I've just been healthy enough to play."

"If you look at the injuries, it's not like I've had these chronic injuries like a groin or a bad back, they were freak accidents where I go 40 miles per hour into the boards and break four ribs or my own player runs into me and I have a torn MCL, so they're just freak accidents."

Kane has played 511 NHL games and has averaged 27 goals over 82 games. To celebrate his 500 game milestone, Kane tweeted the \$3,200 bottle of cognac given to him by Jack Eichel, Zach Bogosian and Sam Reinhart.

[View image on Twitter](#)

[View image on Twitter](#)

Evander Kane ✓@evanderkane_9

Some pretty great teammates I have. Thanks for the 500 game gift boys! @Jack_Eichel11 @BogosianZach and Reino #XIII
12:47 PM - Nov 9, 2017

49 49 Replies 176 176 Retweets 1,757 1,757 likes

[Twitter Ads info and privacy](#)

That also brings up the next topic which is Kane with his teammates. Tim Murray would say that he told Kane that he had to be a better teammate, but I don't think guys would go out and buy that kind of gift if they didn't like him.

His new head coach, Phil Housley, has been very impressed with Kane this season, "I think he's led by example, he plays the game the right way and I just like the way that he approaches the game."

"He's been one of our most consistent guys up front and it's a credit to him."

Kane has also liked what Housley has brought to the team, "Yes, Phil's an honest guy, he wants to win and right now, we're building towards doing that consistently and I think it's been a work in progress, but I think we all see as a group in here the potential and we're on the cusp of breaking through that barrier."

In my mind, except for some untimely penalties, I've never had a problem with Kane's on-ice game. The thing that's dogged him is his off-ice activities. Kane is now 26 and he said that's all behind him, "There have been a lot of things that have gone on off the ice over the past couple of years that last year, I put behind me and I wanted to prove that I'm an elite player in this league and you can't just do it for one year, you've got to continue to do it year after year and I just wanted to have a good start."

Kane is also holding himself accountable after games. After each loss, he's by his locker waiting to see if anybody wants to talk and usually will stay until the media is done.

Kane will become an unrestricted free agent on July 1. If Jason Botterill is not interested in re-signing him, there's a good chance he'll get traded before the trade deadline. Kane said he's not looking to leave, but it also doesn't weigh on him, "No I really don't think about that. For some reason it doesn't bother me at all. Whether you believe me or not, it just doesn't."

Kane said emphatically. "I'm pretty comfortable and I'm really happy with where I'm at here in Buffalo. I love the guys in the room and love what we're trying to build here."

Sabres return Redmond to Rochester

Buffalo getting healthier on defense

PAUL HAMILTON

NOVEMBER 09, 2017

Buffalo, NY (WGR 550) - It's looking good that the Sabres will get Nate Beaulieu, Josh Gorges or both back for the game Friday against Florida.

Zach Redmond has been returned to Rochester.

Redmond has played three games in Buffalo notching no points and seven games with the Amerks picking up five points.

Phil Housley announced today that Rasmus Ristolainen is now week-to-week.

Buffalo Sabres team up with Camp Good Days

WKBW

Nov 9, 2017

BUFFALO, N.Y. (WKBW) -

It's beginning to look a lot like Christmas, courtesy of the Buffalo Sabres and the incredible kids at Camp Good Days.

The group spent Thursday preparing for the holidays, painting hundreds of ornaments that will be sold during the holiday season. It's part of an important fundraiser to benefit Camp Good Days.

The painting party was held inside the Lexus Club at Key Bank Centre in Buffalo, and included some famous Sabres' faces like Evander Kane, Chad Johnson, Seth Griffith, Matt Tennyson and Taylor Fedun.

But it wasn't all work, after the ornaments were beautifully decorated, the campers enjoyed an ice cream buffet with dozens of toppings to choose from.

Camp Good Days, which was founded back in 1979, hosts camps for children with cancer, but that is only the beginning.

Much of the money raised here in western new york, like through the ornament sales, support year-round events for children with cancer and children who have, or have lost, a parent or sibling with cancer.

If you'd like to buy one of these famous ornaments, or a kazoo, it only takes a \$1 donation. Just visit the Camp Good Days table at the Walden Galleria as the holiday season kicks into high gear.

If you're interested in volunteering with Camp Good Days, call 716-206-0709 or [click here](#).

Sabres' Evander Kane becoming star as free agency approaches

Olean Times Herald

By Bill Hoppe

Nov. 10, 2017

BUFFALO – Right now, Sabres winger Evander Kane is happy, healthy and one of the NHL's most dynamic players.

He has already compiled nine goals and 15 points in the opening 15 games. Going back to last year, he has scored 37 times in his last 73 appearances, the league's fourth-highest total in that span. His 30 even-strength goals rank second in that time.

This season, Kane, center Jack Eichel and Jason Pominville have quickly become a lethal trio, showcasing supreme chemistry together. Kane's first 40-goal campaign – he's on pace for 49 – seems possible, even likely.

Kane, who scored twice Tuesday, said the reason for his early success is simple.

"First time in four years I've played the first 15 games, that's why," he said Thursday after the Sabres prepared for tonight's home tilt against the Florida Panthers. "I've been hurt every start of the season for the last four years."

Nine seasons into an enigmatic career, Kane, 26, looks like the star many envisioned he would become when the Atlanta Thrashers drafted him fourth overall in 2009.

But how much longer will Kane be with the Sabres? He's in the final season of the six-year, \$31.5 million contract he signed with the Winnipeg Jets.

Given his recent exploits, Kane will likely earn a hefty raise – perhaps upwards of \$7 million a season – as an unrestricted free agent. To fit Kane under their 2017-18 salary cap, the Sabres need to unload a huge contract.

So it's believed the struggling Sabres will try to trade Kane at some point. Since the Colorado Avalanche dealt center Matt Duchene to the Ottawa Senators in a blockbuster three-way deal Sunday, Kane could be the best player available.

What does Kane make of his uncertain future?

"I don't really think about that," he said inside KeyBank Center. "For some reason, it doesn't bother me at all, whether you believe me or not, it just doesn't. I'm under contract, so I'm pretty comfortable right now and I'm really happy with where I'm at here in Buffalo and love the guys in the room and love what we're trying to build here."

Kane believes it's too early to talk about staying in Buffalo on a long-term deal.

Barely a year ago, Kane possessed little trade value. In 2015-16, the Sabres benched him after he partied in Toronto and overslept practice. Kane was arrested in June 2016 following an incident at a local bar. Trespassing and harassment charges were later dropped.

On the ice, he mustered 20 goals in his first season with the Sabres.

Kane, however, has stayed out of trouble since then and quickly earned the respect of new Sabres coach Phil Housley, who believes the power forward leads by example.

"He's just a true competitor," Housley said of what he's learned about Kane. "He really approaches the game the right way. He can score goals, too. He's a gritty guy that goes into the areas a lot of people don't go to. I really like what he brings, the physical element to his game."

He added: "He's been one of our most consistent guys up front."

Kane has also been focused on becoming one of the NHL's best talents.

"A lot of things have gone on – on and off the ice – over the past couple years that last year I wanted to put behind me and wanted to prove I'm an elite player in this league," Kane said. "You can't just do it for one year, you got to do it year after year. I just wanted to have a good start. Hopefully, I have some good luck on the injury side."

Those injuries stymied Kane over the years. Last season, he went down opening night – “I go 40 mph into the boards, break four ribs,” he said – and struggled after returning too early. When he finally scored his first goal in his 13th game, he quickly morphed into one of the league’s best forwards, scoring 28 times in his final 58 contests.

Under Housley, he has reached a new level.

“Phil’s an honest guy,” Kane said. “He wants to win. Right now, we’re building toward doing that consistently, and I think it’s been a work in progress so far. I think we all see as a group in here and as a coaching staff potential, and we’re kind of on the cusp of breaking through that barrier.”

Sabres want Jack Eichel to shoot more

Olean Times Herald

By Bill Hoppe

Nov. 9, 2017

BUFFALO – Early in Tuesday’s 3-1 win, slick Sabres center Jack Eichel found himself with an odd two-on-one partner, fourth-liner Jordan Nolan.

Nolan, a two-time Stanley Cup champion, possesses some notable assets. Soft hands, however, aren’t among them. Nolan has scored 20 times in his 305-game career.

So Eichel shot the puck, right? Well, not exactly.

Instead of unleashing his lethal shot against the Washington Capitals, Eichel held the puck too long and eventually botched the odd-man rush.

After the game, Eichel, lamented his lost opportunities.

“I need to learn how to shoot the puck,” said Eichel, who had four shots in the tilt despite passing up other chances.

Eichel has said he possesses a pass-first mentality, so shooting can be a challenge for him, Sabres coach Phil Housley said.

“A lot of those two-on-ones he’s always looking to pass,” Housley said this afternoon inside KeyBank Center. “With his release and his shot, he should be looking to shoot more. Obviously, he can make plays through traffic. We’re not going to try to handcuff him or take anything away from his creativity.

“We realize with his shot and his release, it’s very deadly. He’s got to focus in. When he’s got some time to deliver it, he’s got to deliver it.”

Eichel has delivered 46 shots this season, 3.1 a game. He had a season-high seven in Saturday’s 5-1 loss in Dallas.

Still, Eichel hasn’t scored since Oct. 21, a six-game stretch.

Is Housley concerned Eichel’s frustrated?

“Not at all,” he said. “I think in frustration he’s trying to make the plays and we’re not finishing the plays.”

In other news, Housley said ace Sabres defenseman Rasmus Ristolainen, out the last two games with an upper-body injury, is week-to-week.

Meanwhile, defensemen Nathan Beaulieu (upper body) and Josh Gorges (lower body) practiced again today inside HarborCenter and are “close,” Housley said.

The Sabres host Florida on Friday.

Update: The Sabres have sent defenseman Zach Redmond back to the Rochester Americans.

Kane proving himself as one of NHL's most consistent goal scorers

Sabres.com

by Jourdon LaBarber

November 9th, 2017

With nine goals already in 15 games this season, it's easy to say that Evander Kane is in the midst of the most productive stretch of his career. He's on pace to shatter the career-high 30 goals he scored at age 20 back in 2011-12, and he's three goals ahead of any other Sabre this season.

Any evaluation of Kane's current run, however, should start on Dec. 3, 2016. That's when he scored his first goal of last season, after cracked ribs forced him to miss all of October and then lingering discomfort kept his name off the score sheet for all of November.

Since scoring in the third period of that game against Boston, Kane has been among the NHL's most consistent goal scorers. His 37 goals in that span tie him for fourth in the NHL, six behind Nikita Kucherov's league-leading mark of 43. His 30 goals at even strength ranks second to Auston Matthews.

The key to the carry over, he said, is simple.

"It's the first time in four years I've played the first 15 games," Kane said.

Sabres Now (11/9/17)

01:58 • November 9th, 2017

The ironic part is, Kane's never considered himself to be injury-prone. He describes his past ailments as "freak accidents," be it the crash into the boards that cracked his ribs on opening night last season or the awkward plays that left him with a pair of torn MCLs in seasons prior.

Kane said last season that, as good as he felt on his way to a 28-goal campaign, it wasn't the first time he had felt that good on the ice. He'd done it in stretches before, it's just that injuries had always seemed to get in the way of putting things together for a full season.

While there is a lot of season left to play, his health thus far has translated to results. At his current pace, he'd score 49 goals in 82 games.

"I want to prove that I'm an elite player in this league," he said. "You can't just do it for one year, you've got to continue to do it year after year."

Being on the ice consistently has helped, but so has being on the ice with the same center. Kane has played this season almost exclusively on a line with Jack Eichel, and both players have said that their chemistry is at an all-time high.

Chemistry is particularly important with a pair of players like Eichel and Kane, both of whom have unique tendencies that come along with their offensive ability. Kane literally shoots more than any player in the league; his 304 shots since Dec. 3 of last season ranks atop the NHL.

Eichel, meanwhile, can make feeds that few other players in the NHL can. His passes can be so deceptive, in fact, that being on the other end of them can take some getting used to.

"He does such a good job of faking other guys out, sometimes he fakes his own linemates out," Kane said. "He fakes me out. I'm like, 'Oh, I thought you were going to pass that so I went to that hole,' then he hangs onto it or he toe drags a guy. So I think it's just the timing. That's probably the biggest thing we're trying to work on. I think the more we play, the more we're going to trust each other on the ice."

Their most recent connection, against Washington on Tuesday night, came on a designed faceoff play. Eichel was never supposed to "win" the draw, at least by traditional standards. Rather, the puck was supposed to go straight back, with Eichel racing around his opponent in the faceoff circle to retrieve it.

On this occasion, the puck went deeper than expected, but Eichel made a play along the end boards nonetheless to steal possession and make a quick feed to Kane in front of the net.

Kane finishes Eichel's nice pass

00:47 • November 7th, 2017

"We had one earlier in the year that I didn't execute. He executed, but I didn't finish it off," Kane explained. "I was kind of surprised it was so clean. But that one he kind of just stuck with it, obviously he lifted the guy's stick, made a nice play out to me and I was able to finish it."

Kane is due to become an unrestricted free agent on July 1, but he insists he hasn't allowed his contract status to get into his head. Whether you believe him or not, he says, the fact of the matter is that he's happy in Buffalo and the rest of it simply doesn't bother him.

He's certainly made a strong impression on Phil Housley, who said that Kane's been a leader by example since the start of training camp.

"I think he's just a true competitor," Housley said. "He approaches the game the right way, and he can score goals too. He's a gritty guy who goes to areas that a lot of people don't go to and I really like when he brings a physical element to his game. He's been really, really consistent this year."

But for as much as Kane wants to prove himself as an elite player in the NHL, there's one other achievement that has eluded him thus far in his career: a postseason berth. Kane said last season that he's always thought of himself as a playoff player, he just hasn't had the opportunity to prove it.

There's no question that, in that regard, the start to the Sabres' season hasn't gone as planned. But Kane said Thursday that under Housley, and with wins in two of their last three games, he feels the team is trending in the right direction.

"Phil's an honest guy. He wants to win," Kane said. "Right now, we're building towards doing that consistently. I think it's been a work in progress so far but I think we all see - as a group in here and as a coaching staff - the potential. We're kind of on the cusp of breaking through that barrier."

A change on the power play

Following a 0-for-4 night against Washington, the Sabres' power play is now 1-for-25 in their last eight games. Housley has continued to tinker with his units accordingly, which on Thursday included moving Kane to the top unit along with Eichel, Kyle Okposo, Ryan O'Reilly and Marco Scandella.

"Our power play isn't where it should be," Housley said. "We've had periods where we've had units that were here last year, and it just isn't working. We're just trying to give it some new flavor, give Evander some more time on the power play. I think in that middle spot, he's a threat to score."

Update on Rasmus Ristolainen

Housley said that defenseman Rasmus Ristolainen, previously referred to as day-to-day with an upper-body injury, is now considered week-to-week. Ristolainen has missed the last two games after sustaining his injury in Arizona on Nov. 2.

The Sabres do have some reinforcements coming on defense. Both Josh Gorges and Nathan Beaulieu skated with the team for the third straight day on Thursday, and Housley said that both players are close to making a return to the lineup.