



# **Buffalo Sabres**

## **Daily Press Clips**

*November 2, 2017*

## Road from Cup final has been difficult for Sabres' Housley and Coyotes' Tocchet

The Buffalo News

By Mike Harrington

November 1, 2017

Think back five months, to that entertaining Stanley Cup final between the Pittsburgh Penguins and Nashville Predators.

Like any series, there were all kinds of subplots. Nashville fans — both inside and outside Bridgestone Arena — put on a show unlike any seen during the NHL's climactic event. P.K. Subban accused Sidney Crosby of saying he had bad breath. Predators goalie Pekka Rinne couldn't stop a beach ball during the three games in Pittsburgh's PPG Paints Arena.

And assistant coaches Phil Housley of Nashville and Rick Tocchet of Pittsburgh, both longtime former players in the league, were the hottest names on the coaching market. That was the biggest story to folks in Buffalo, where new Sabres General Manager Jason Botterill clearly had interest in both men.

As it turned out, Botterill signed Housley and Tocchet ended up as the new man of the Arizona Coyotes. Both teams have some promising young players with a mix of veteran talent, some of it taking up big chunks of the salary cap.

And both have had dreadfully disappointing results.

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When they meet Thursday night at Gila River Arena in Glendale, Ariz., the Sabres and Coyotes hit the ice in last place in their respective conferences with a combined record of 4-18-3.

Buffalo is 3-7-2 while the Coyotes (1-11-1) tied the NHL record for worst start to a season by going 0-10-1 before Monday's overtime win in Philadelphia. It's probably a good thing for the Sabres that the Coyotes aren't still winless because Arizona would certainly target this game as a great chance for a win. As it is, Arizona is the NHL's last winless team at home (0-4-1).

Is it a relief to Housley to know his team won't have to worry about breaking the Coyotes' season-opening streak?

"In the back of my mind a little bit," the Buffalo coach admitted Wednesday in HarborCenter. "But we can't worry about where they are as a team. We've got our own battles to handle and move forward with. The game really comes down to all about us and what we're going to do."

The Sabres opened 0-4-1 but finished October with a 3-3-1 mark over their last seven games. Housley is keenly focused on his team's glacial progress but admitted Wednesday he took note of all the talk during the Cup final about what might lie ahead in the future for both he and Tocchet.

"You hear and see things, right?" Housley said. "Certainly it was a great honor to be mentioned with Rick and some of the other coaches that were getting circulation but I was focused on winning a Stanley Cup. We had a great run in Nashville and came close. Your effort and all your energy is going into the organization you're trying to win with. Now that I'm with Buffalo, I'm trying to do the same thing."

Tocchet's Coyotes have been hamstrung by terrible goaltending in the wake of an lower-body injury to starter Antti Raanta, who went on injured reserve Monday after playing just 91 minutes over three games. Arizona has allowed an NHL-worst 56 goals in its 13 games, and no one else in the Western Conference had given up as many as 40 entering Wednesday.

Arizona acquired Scott Wedgewood on waivers from New Jersey and he got the win Monday — even though the Coyotes blew a 3-0 lead in the third period and allowed the Flyers to score twice in the final minute to force overtime. Wedgewood then made 35 saves in Tuesday's 5-3 loss in Detroit.

The Coyotes acquired Raanta and center Derek Stepan from the New York Rangers and veteran defenseman Niklas Hjalmarsson from Chicago during the offseason. They have top talent like Oliver Ekman-Larsson and Alex Goligoski on defense and NHL Rookie of the Month Clayton Keller, who has already piled up nine goals and 15 points. But no one else has more than three goals.

"We're in a rut as an organization — not these games, but for five or six years," 28-year-old Arizona GM John Chayka told ESPN.com last week. "You're trying to build up pieces that are going to be game-changers. That's how you win. It's not through mediocre talent or aged-out veterans. We've got a few (game-changers), and we have to wait for them to evolve."

Tocchet, however, was clearly frustrated after a recent 6-2 home thumping at the hands of the Boston Bruins.

"You don't want to babysit players, but it's just got to get harder now, right?" Tocchet said. "I hate doing that stuff, but if that's what it takes we might have to do it. Some coaches in the NHL, they skate the hell out of their guys and they come back the next night and play well, so maybe I've got to do that. I try not to be that guy. I just don't want to be a babysitter out here."

Housley has taken a gentler tack with the Sabres.

"It's just the day-to-day process in our practices, our compete and how we prepare," he said. "It's just a game by game situation. We can't look ahead. We have to make little steps for us. We have to win a game tomorrow against an Arizona team that's pretty desperate."

Story topics: Arizona Coyotes/ Buffalo Sabres/ phil housley/ Rick Tocchet

## **Sabres Notebook: Justin Falk expected to make season debut on defense**

The Buffalo News

By Mike Harrington

November 1, 2017

The Sabres figure to have a big addition on defense Thursday night as 6-foot-5 Justin Falk will likely make his season debut in the game against the Arizona Coyotes.

Falk has not played this season due to an undisclosed lower-body injury that flared up during the preseason. Falk played 52 games for the Sabres last season, collecting eight assists while playing the most games in a season for one team in his career. His previous high was 47 with Minnesota in 2011-12.

"I was able to build some confidence over the course of last year and that was probably the first time since my first year in the NHL to be honest that I've played consistently," Falk said Wednesday in HarborCenter. "I've always been a depth guy and I've always supported that role, but it was nice to get a consistent amount of playing time and really be able to build your confidence and your game."

Falk was on the third pair Wednesday with Victor Antipin. Taylor Fedun, who was called up from Rochester on Tuesday, was the extra defenseman. The top two pairs remained the same, with Marco Scandella pairing with Rasmus Ristolainen and Matt Tennyson with Jake McCabe.

Falk said the injury was particularly frustrating because he felt like his preseason games had been going well.

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"Timing wasn't great obviously. I was really getting into rhythm," he said. "I thought the preseason went well. I was moving well, being physical, bringing the elements I needed to bring and I'm looking forward to doing that here shortly."

Falk said the most difficult time was the week the Sabres were away on their West Coast trip and he was left to skate on his own.

"You're part of a brotherhood here and you want to help and contribute," he said. "Then you watch the team go on a long road trip and you're back at the rink here rehabbing by yourself. You miss the camaraderie of it all."

\* \* \*

Justin Bailey sat out practice Wednesday with a lower-body injury so the Sabres brought Nicholas Baptiste up from Rochester as a precaution and said he will travel on the trip, which continues Saturday in Dallas.

"We thought we'd bring an extra forward," said coach Phil Housley. "Bailey has a lower body injury and is day to day so we wanted to keep him off the ice with the possibility of him playing tomorrow. And we wanted to have somebody to come with us."

In eight games with Rochester, Baptiste is tied for the team lead with three goals and is third on the club with five points. He had a pair of goals in the final two minutes of the third period Friday as the Amerks came back to force overtime against Laval in a game they eventually won, 4-3.

Baptiste, 22, had three goals and an assist for the Sabres in 14 games last year, his first taste of the NHL. But he did not make much of an impact during training camp this year and was never really in the competition to make the roster as free-agent signee Seth Griffith earned the call.

The Sabres made no changes to their lines at practice Wednesday. Seth Griffith simply slipped into Bailey's spot with Zemgus Girgensons and Sam Reinhart, and Baptiste could slide into that spot Thursday.

\* \* \*

With the Baptiste move, the Amerks recalled Vaclav Karabacek from Cincinnati of the ECHL, where he had no points in four games. Karabacek, the Sabres' second-round choice in 2014, had three goals and five assists in 23 games for the Amerks last year.

The Amerks have also signed forward Colin Blackwell off his tryout contract for the rest of the season. He has two goals and one assist in eight games, with all three points coming in Rochester's 5-2 win Oct. 25 at Laval. Blackwell played 57 games last year for the San Jose Barracuda, totaling four goals and seven assists.

\* \* \*

With the Bills-Jets game in the Sabres' normal spot on the dial on WGR Radio, the Sabres-Coyotes game will move down to WWKB (1520 AM).

Story topics: Buffalo Sabres/ Justin Bailey/ Justin Falk/ Nicholas Baptiste/ Vaclav Karabacek

## **Bailey uncertain for Thursday; Falk ready to return**

WGR 550

Paul Hamilton

November 1, 2017

Buffalo, NY (WGR 550) - Justin Bailey wasn't able to practice on Wednesday due to a lower body injury. Phil Housley said, "We wanted to keep him off the ice with the possibility of him playing tomorrow."

Nick Baptiste was called up, but couldn't get to Buffalo in time for practice. Housley wouldn't say if Baptiste will play even if Bailey is healthy.

Coaches usually split the season into segments. Housley said he started with a five game segment going 0-4-1.

Arizona will be the last game of this seven game segment. Buffalo is 3-2-1 which is a point percentage of .583. Housley said, "Now we do seven game segments to try to set it up like a playoff series and I think it's good motivation for our guys."

Justin Falk will be back to play his first game of the season on Thursday. Falk was being physical during the preseason games, so the injury came at a bad time, but healed fast, "I would say it was slightly quicker than I thought. It was a finicky one, I've had it before and fortunately, I hit a turning point and started to get better every day."

The injury started and then lingered through multiple preseason games, so it needed to be taken care of.

Falk got into 52 games with the Sabres last season. He said it was his best NHL opportunity, "I was able to build some confidence. That was probably the first time where I played consistently. I've always been a depth guy and been good at supporting that role, so it was nice to get a consistent amount of playing time to build your confidence in your game."

Wednesday's lines:

Kane - Eichel - Pominville

Pouliot - O'Reilly - Okposo

Girgensons - Reinhart - Griffith

Moulson - Larsson - Nolan

Scandella - Ristolainen

McCabe - Tennyson

Falk - Antipin (Fedun)

## **Sabres call up Baptiste from Rochester**

WGR 550

Brayton Wilson

November 1, 2017

The Buffalo Sabres have made another call up on Wednesday morning, bringing up Nick Baptiste from the Rochester Americans.

This is Baptiste's first call up of the 2017-18 season.

The 22-year old got off to a slower start in Rochester this season, but has picked things up lately with three goals and two assists in the last three games.

Baptiste led the Amerks last season in goal scoring with 25 goals in 59 games. In 14 games with the Sabres last season, Baptiste netted three goals and added an assist to the scoresheet.

Baptiste was not on the ice for the Sabres on Wednesday for practice, but it is believed that he was called up for Justin Bailey. Bailey was also not on the ice for the morning's practice.

The Sabres will head out to Arizona later in the day, before taking on the Coyotes on Thursday at 10 p.m. You can hear the game on ESPN 1520 with the Buffalo Bills playing on WGR Sports Radio 550. Pre-game coverage with Brian Koziol starts at 9 p.m.

## **Jack Eichel line producing most of Sabres' offense**

Olean Times Herald

Bill Hoppe

November 2, 2017

BUFFALO – In their first weeks as Sabres linemates, Jack Eichel, Evander Kane and Jason Pominville have quickly morphed into one of the NHL's most lethal trios.

Each player has a team-leading 12 points. Kane and Pominville both have a team-high six goals, while Eichel, whose eight assists tops the Sabres, has four goals.

“They have a big impact on our team,” Sabres coach Phil Housley said Wednesday.

You think? The 3-7-2 Sabres, who open a two-game road trip tonight against the hapless Arizona Coyotes, have scored 29 goals as a team. Only seven other players have scored a goal, and just one, center Ryan O'Reilly, has more than two.

Housley desperately needs more secondary scoring. Eichel, Kane and Pominville have accounted for 55 percent of the Sabres' goals.

“When they're going, our team's going,” Housley said inside HarborCenter. “I'd like to find a little more support in that area, especially from the rest of the lines. But I think it's just they're feeding off each other, they make plays, they're creating scoring chances, and right now, they have good chemistry.”

Eichel spent much of his first two seasons centering Kane. Pominville joined them this season, showcasing immediate chemistry while scoring two goals opening night.

Why have they worked so well together?

“Just reading off each other,” Pominville said. “We have different styles, but we're able to jell well together. Jack's a great skater, sees the play really well, can handle the puck and make plays. I like to shoot, Kane likes to shoot. Kane's a big boy, protects the puck well. I think we mesh well together.”

While Housley has periodically broken up the No. 1 line, he always puts the slick forwards back together.

In Saturday afternoon's 3-2 loss to the San Jose Sharks, Eichel and Kane assisted on Pominville's 191st goal with the Sabres, which briefly put them up 2-1.

“We've been able to find a way to produce pretty consistently, which is good,” Eichel said.

Eichel, however, is adamant the line can be better. He seemed surprised Tuesday when a reporter suggested the line was “ticking,” replying, “You think we've been ticking?”

“We've had some chances, I think we need to capitalize better on them, myself included,” he said. “I'd like to see us be more consistent on a shift-to-shift basis of getting that sustained pressure in the offensive zone, continuing to successfully make our plays that we're trying to make.”

“It takes time. You don't build chemistry overnight. You don't build it over a course of a week. It takes a little bit to figure out somebody's ins and outs of what they're thinking on the ice. We're just still trying to do that now.”

Kane said: “There's been a lot of opportunities we've had that we haven't capitalized on.”

Housley's decision to put Pominville, 34, beside Eichel and Kane during the preseason was a bit surprising. When the Sabres brought back Pominville during the summer, it seemed like he would be slotted into a second- or third-line role.

But Pominville has performed strongly from the get-go, looking like a player still in his prime.

“He's got good finishing ability, for sure,” Eichel said. “I think I already knew that before I got here being a fan of hockey, watching it, playing against him a couple times the last few years.”



Almost a month later, Eichel still seems shocked Pominville connected on his hard saucer pass opening night.

“The angle at which it was coming down onto him, for him to one-time it like he did and get good wood on it, get it up off the ice, it’s an impressive shot,” he said.

But to Eichel, Pominville’s success at an age when most players are graying or retired is no fluke.

“He takes good care of himself,” he said. “He’s dialed in with the way he takes care of his body. He does a lot of things, it reminds me of (former Sabres captain Brian Gionta), with the way that Gio would prepare each game and for each practice. (Pominville’s) definitely a pro. I think it’s a lot of similarities, and it’s a compliment to the two of them, the longevity of their careers, the continued success they’ve had.

“You have to credit something, look no further than themselves. Pommer’s the same way. He attacks every day, every game the same way.”

## **Sabres recall Nick Baptiste for injured Justin Bailey**

Olean Times Herald

Bill Hoppe

November 1, 2017

**BUFFALO** – With winger Justin Bailey day-to-day with a lower-body injury, the Sabres recalled Nick Baptiste this morning so they have an extra forward.

Bailey, who missed today's practice inside HarborCenter, could play Thursday in Arizona, Sabres coach Phil Housley said.

"We want to keep him off the ice," Housley said before the Sabres departed for their two-game road trip.

Baptiste, 22, has three goals and five points in eight games with the Rochester Americans this season. He started his third pro season slowly after failing to earn an NHL spot in training camp. He finally got going last week, compiling three goals and five points in a two-game stretch.

The former third-round pick scored three goals and four points in his first 14 NHL games last season. He didn't practice today.

In other news, defenseman Justin Falk, sidelined all season with a lower-body injury, should make his season debut Thursday. Falk practiced beside Victor Antipin today.

## **Sabres recall F Baptiste**

The Sports Xchange

November 1, 2017

The Buffalo Sabres recalled forward Nicholas Baptiste from the Rochester Americans of the American Hockey League on Wednesday.

Baptiste, 22, joins the Sabres for his first recall of the season after recording four points (three goals, one assist) in 14 games for Buffalo in his first NHL season in 2016-17.

Through eight games with Rochester, the 6-foot-1, 205-pound Baptiste is tied for the team lead with three goals and tied for third with five points.

The native of Ottawa, Ontario, owns 74 points (41 goals, 33 assists) in 129 AHL games

## **DUNLEAVY: Thoughts on the first month of the season**

Sabres.com

Dan Dunleavy

November 1, 2017

The easy way out is to be negative, to say, "Here we go again." The way to a playoff spot in any league is not via any "easy way." The day the Buffalo Sabres clinch an NHL playoff berth again, you will likely hear yourself saying, "Waiting for this day was not easy."

The Sabres have played a lot of hockey to open this season. As of Sunday, the group under watch of head coach Phil Housley had played a league-high 12 games in the month of October. The vaunted trip through California (and now Vegas as well) was part of the busy season start.

With the upcoming trip to Arizona and Dallas this week, it certainly feels as if we have been on more than a few flights and bus rides already.

Through that busy start the coaching staff, general manager, and the players themselves have been taking stock of who or what they are, and on more than a couple of occasions, admittedly have not liked what they have seen.

But once the "easy way" of being negative about a lack of results is pushed aside, and you peel back deeper into the process of playing the game the right way, Coach Housley and his players have seen moments where they can take many positives out of a night at the rink, win or lose. What they do with those positives is up to the players themselves as a group, as one tight-knit unit.

Here is the reality of this situation.

Losing should never, ever be acceptable.

A culture of losing being a means to an end undoubtedly crept into the minds of some of the teams younger players. They may not admit it, but former Sabre Marcus Foligno sure did during an interview in Minnesota where he is battling back from a facial fracture and trying to find his way to better consistent play as a member of the Wild.

The taste of losing should be so nasty in the mouths of the core players on this Sabres team that they should be willing to do whatever it takes, every single night, to lead and to avoid that stench at all costs.

Now those are just words. On any given night, you can play a game the right way and not get a bounce or two, a bad call can go against you, and you lose the game.

But what Housley and his staff are aiming for is a look in the eyes of every player they choose to dress on game day. I am going to guess it's the look I saw in defenceman Marco Scandella's eyes when he skated towards me for a pregame interview from the bench in Boston on Oct. 21.

Buffalo had just lost a tough game at home to Vancouver the night before. I stood on the bench at TD Bank Garden in Boston where the interview would take place and watched as Scandella skate towards me for our pre-arranged two-question chat. Marco's eyes were as wide as Sabretooth's drum.

The newcomer defenseman skated with purpose to the bench and I asked my first question.

"After the loss to Vancouver there were a lot of honest words shared amongst teammates who were not happy. All of that said, what's the prevailing mindset among the group today about how you have to start this game in Boston?" I asked.

You at home never saw the answer to the question or any of that interview on our pregame show because Scandella was so fired up, the language that slipped into his answer was not made for younger fans who may have been watching that evening (although we loved - and you would have loved - the raw emotion in his answer).

I had a chuckle afterwards, knowing we could not use the interview and also knowing every Sabres fan back home would have said "Right on mister! Bring THAT attitude tonight and to every game!"

But it was at that moment that I knew this team had the people in place, like Scandella, to help the core find its way to making losing never acceptable again in Buffalo.

And if you recall on that Saturday night in Boston, things were not looking good again for Buffalo. They were down 3-0 and 4-1 in the second. But from that point in the game on, instead of taking the easy way and accepting another "not very good effort or result," the Sabres kept coming.

Buffalo held Boston off the scoresheet in the third and the rally was on. Three straight goals to send the game to OT, where Ryan O'Reilly ended it with a lovely bit of work out from behind the net.

O'Reilly's overtime game-winner

00:49 • October 21st, 2017

The easy way out was not accepted on that night. It was not a pretty win, but it was a gutsy come-from-behind win against a team that was ripe for the picking.

The fire Marco Scandella brought into that pregame interview we could not air was exactly what the Sabres needed to have filter through the team that night.

It's an energy this team needs to find out how to bring game in and game out, and it does, I really do think that this group is capable of being in the postseason tournament mix at season's end.

It will not be easy given the start the team is off to. But who said this should ever be easy?

Oh and by the way, Marco apologized many times for his slip during our pregame interview. I told both him and Ryan O'Reilly after the win no worries, and I am pretty sure if that's the secret to success, you can swear on every pre game interview from here to the playoffs!

## **Despite production, Eichel line sees a higher ceiling for itself**

Sabres.com

Jourdon LaBarber

November 1, 2017

If you were to evaluate the top lines in the NHL from a productivity standpoint, it's hard to argue that the trio of Evander Kane, Jack Eichel and Jason Pominville has been among the League's best this season.

The three were together to start training camp in September, and while they haven't played together exclusively, they've been Buffalo's most consistent line in terms of both productivity and ice time. The trio also happens to be in a three-way tie for the Sabres lead with 12 points each.

But they stack up well when looked at through a broader scope as well. According to [corsica.hockey](http://corsica.hockey), the line has been on the ice for six goals at 5-on-5 strength this season. That mark ties them for 11th in the NHL with a handful of lines, including two they'll see on their upcoming road trip: Arizona's trio of Max Domi, Derek Stepan and Clayton Keller and Dallas' line of Jamie Benn, Tyler Seguin and Alexander Radulov.

Their six goals have come in 86.08 minutes of shared ice time. For comparison, Philadelphia's line of Claude Giroux, Sean Couturier and Jakub Voracek leads the NHL with 12 even-strength goals in 144.05. In fact, eight of the 10 lines that rank ahead of Kane, Eichel and Pominville have skated 115-plus minutes together.

Sabres Now (11/1/17)

01:48 • November 1st, 2017

So given the fact that the numbers suggest the line has been among the NHL's elite, it was interesting to hear Eichel say Tuesday that there's another level of consistency they've yet to reach. Kane agreed with his assessment when asked on Wednesday.

"I think we've got some chances, I just think we need to capitalize better on them, myself included," Eichel said. "I'd like to see us be more consistent on a shift-to-shift basis of getting that sustained pressure in the offensive zone, continuing to successfully make our plays that we're trying to make."

"It just takes time. You don't build chemistry overnight, you don't build it over the course of there week. It just takes time to figure out somebody's ins and outs of what they're thinking on the ice. I think we're trying to still do that now, and practice is a good time to get used to each other."

Eichel and Kane have skated together on lines at several points throughout the past two seasons, and their mutual skating ability has always made them a threat to outrace defenders on the rush. But this season, Eichel said, they've begun to understand each other's tendencies more than ever before.

The duo showed that chemistry on their first shift of the game against San Jose on Saturday. Eichel skated hard down the left wing side into the offensive zone, and then stopped hard to create a passing lane across the ice. He found Kane wide open, but the shot was saved.

Kane agreed with the prospect of his and Eichel's chemistry being at an all-time high.

"For sure," Kane said. "I think kind of ever since training camp, we pretty much have been together most of [the season]. Just getting to know each other better helps build chemistry and we're good friends off the ice."

In the past when Kane and Eichel skated together, the line was often completed with Sam Reinhart on the right wing. With Reinhart playing mostly at center this season, Phil Housley used Pominville in that spot to open camp and saw Eichel feed him for a goal in their first preseason game.

Eichel said he knew Pominville had finishing ability just from watching him in the past and facing him over the last two seasons. He told him, "Just try to get me the puck and get open, I'll try and find you back." So far, the recipe has worked.

"I know that he's going to bury the chances that I give him," Eichel said. "He's done that consistently this year. You've got to credit the guy, he can score. If the puck's near him and he's letting it go, if he's in tight there, he's got great hands around the net, he picks his spots well and he's got a really quick release."

Pominville said early in camp that handling passes from Eichel would take some getting used to. Eichel called back to their first regular-season connection, in the opener against Montreal, to exemplify just how well Pominville has done in that regard:

Pominville's second tally

00:56 • October 5th, 2017

"It's a saucer pass, a pretty hard one too," Eichel said. "The angle on which it was coming down to him, for him to one-time it the way he did and get good wood on it and get it off the ice, it was an impressive shot. You can go on with a lot of the goals he had this year."

Upon being traded to the Sabres during the offseason, Pominville said he felt he had more to give than what was asked from him in Minnesota last season. He received an opportunity to prove that, and he's run with it - he has six goals in 12 games after scoring 12 in 78 last season, and his average ice time is up more than two full minutes.

No line is set in stone, of course. But given the productivity Kane, Eichel and Pominville have already displayed on the ice together, it's fun to think about what they could be when they are happy with their game.

"I'd just like to see it more shift after shift and be able to control the game a little bit better," Eichel said. "I think we can still try and get better at that, where we have more creativity, a little bit more holding onto the puck, finding each other, waiting for people to get open."

"... It doesn't necessarily have to be a goal or an assist. Just try to impact the team every time you're on the ice. If you have an opportunity to do that, then it usually bodes well for the team."

One more note on Pominville

Eichel was asked if Pominville seems his age (34), to which he offered a comparison to former Sabres captain Brian Gionta. Gionta was well-known for his rigorous pregame routine during his years in Buffalo.

"He does a lot of things that remind me a lot of Gio, the way Gio would prepare each day for each practice," Eichel said. "He's definitely a pro. I think there's a lot of similarities, and that's a compliment to the two of them."

Baptiste recalled

HOUSLEY: After Practice

03:38 • November 1st, 2017

With Justin Bailey absent from practice and day-to-day with a lower-body injury, the Sabres recalled Nicholas Baptiste from Rochester on Wednesday morning. Baptiste is tied for the team lead with three goals in eight games with the Amerks this season.

Housley did not rule Bailey out for the team's game in Arizona on Thursday.

Lines at practice

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  
26 Matt Moulson - 22 Johan Larsson - 17 Jordan Nolan

6 Marco Scandella - 55 Rasmus Ristolainen  
19 Jake McCabe - 5 Matt Tennyson  
41 Justin Falk - 93 Victor Antipin (27 Taylor Fedun)

40 Robin Lehner  
31 Chad Johnson



## Sharpen Up: November 1, 2017

Sabres.com

Chris Ryndak

November 1, 2017

Buffalo will take advantage of one more practice day before heading out to Arizona later today. The Sabres have not had a game since Saturday so they should be well rested heading into tomorrow night's tilt against the Coyotes.

Here's what you need to know.

The Sabres are looking to use these practice days to fine-tune their habits, improve communication, and do things the right way. Sabres coach Phil Housley is drawing on the recent success of Sean McDermott's Buffalo Bills, who are 5-2 halfway through the NFL season.

Sabres Now (10/31/17)

02:02 • October 31st, 2017

"What is the one thing that they've talked about [with] the Buffalo Bills?" Housley said. "It's their defense, right? That's what's changing things for them, it's creating turnovers and that's the point I'm getting at.

"We have to take pride in that area. The games that we lose, the other team has more zone time ... We have to take pride when we don't have the puck. The harder we work in that area, it'll just seem like we have the puck more."

Jourdon has more on that in yesterday's Ice Level Practice Report...

Phil Housley (10/31/17)

08:24 • October 31st, 2017

Housley thought the Sabres did "everything but win" against the Sharks on Saturday. The two teams seemed evenly matched until the Sharks finally found a way to win late in the third period, with Logan Couture capitalizing on a mistake by the Sabres in their own zone with a top-shelf goal.

Coincidentally, it's in this area that another comparison could be drawn to the team in Orchard Park. The Bills have simply found ways to win tight games as of late, be it Tre'Davious White's fumble recovery against Tampa Bay or LaSean McCoy's clock-eating drive against the Raiders.

Jason Pominville said he's talked to teammates about his time with the Minnesota Wild last season, when the team won a franchise-best 12 games in a row, and described it in a similar light.

"It's not because we were playing well, but we found ways to win no matter what," Pominville said. "Some nights we weren't at our best, we would get a bounce and find a way to win. Right now, when things aren't going our way, it seems to go the opposite. A breakdown happens and they end up scoring."

Pominville said that the confidence the Wild had during that streak stemmed from the team's practice habits.

"Everyone who's been on good teams will tell you that usually practice habits translate to games," he said. "We had good habits. We were finding ways to win, no matter what. It's weird the way it happens. You're down, you find a way to get back. You get a bounce or your goalie makes a save. A lot of things happen that you find ways to win games.

"But if you had asked our coaches after the streak, they even told us that there were some games that we should've lost and we found ways to win."

Yesterday's practice group

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 - 95 Justin Bailey  
26 Matt Moulson - 22 Johan Larsson - 17 Jordan Nolan (25 Seth Griffith)

6 Marco Scandella - 55 Rasmus Ristolainen  
19 Jake McCabe - 5 Matt Tennyson  
41 Justin Falk - 93 Victor Antipin (27 Taylor Fedun)

40 Robin Lehner  
31 Chad Johnson

Falk practiced with the team for the first time this regular season. He will travel with the team and could play tomorrow night.

November Flex Passes now available

A limited number of Sabres Flex Pass subscriptions are on sale for the month of November.

Flex Pass is a ticket option that gives you access to Sabres home games (excluding blackout dates) for \$89 per month.

Purchasers of Flex Pass will receive a notification 24 hours before puck drop to claim a seat. If interested, go into the Sabres Flex Pass section of the My One Buffalo mobile app and follow the on-screen instructions to get your barcode. Scan your mobile barcode at entry to KeyBank Center and enjoy the game.

Your Flex Pass includes access to Sabres home games at KeyBank Center for the month purchased during the 2017-18 season excluding the following blackout dates (Remaining games: Nov. 24 against Edmonton, Dec. 1 against Pittsburgh, and March 17 against Chicago). Please note that the pass is not available for April so it does not include the April 4 game against Ottawa, and also does not include tickets to the 2018 Bridgestone NHL Winter Classic on Jan. 1.

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