



Buffalo Sabres

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O'Reilly hopes Sabres can build quickly, prove they're a better team

The Buffalo News

John Vogl

November 6, 2017

Ryan O'Reilly never saw this start coming for the Sabres.

"I thought we were going to win a lot and be in a much different spot," he said Monday, "but it's harder than it looks."

The alternate captain speaks from experience. He has seen how long it can take to build a team. He's also seen how quickly one can fall apart.

After helping Colorado make the playoffs as a rookie, O'Reilly endured three straight years without the postseason. Finally, in 2013-14, everything clicked. The Avalanche went 52-22-8 to win the Central Division.

They were one-year wonders. They've missed the playoffs for three straight seasons. After Sunday night's trade of Matt Duchene to Ottawa, it will likely be four.

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"You had a good group of core guys, and once it kind of falls apart, it's tough," O'Reilly said. "It takes awhile. It took awhile to kind of grow that.

"Things just changed that next year, and it was tough to get back."

The Sabres, who host Washington on Tuesday night in KeyBank Center, took their big step two seasons ago. While they didn't win a division or make the playoffs like Colorado, they had a 27-point increase to 81 that made people believe they were on the right path.

They slipped to 78 points last season and are pace for only 59 this year. They sit at the bottom of the Eastern Conference.

"We think a couple little changes here and there and we're going to be better, but we all have to demand more out of ourselves," O'Reilly said. "It feels like we are a little fragile right now. When things don't go well, it's tough to climb back.

"We have to climb back, get that excitement back and prove we're a better team than how we're playing."

Eight of the next 12 games are at home, so that might be a boost. Injured defensemen Nathan Beaulieu and Josh Gorges could return to practice this week, while Zach Bogosian has also shown progress.

The team defense could use help. The Sabres are allowing 3.71 goals per game, which ranks 29th out of 31 teams.

The offense is of equal concern. Buffalo is averaging 2.5 goals, which also ranks a lowly 29th. The power-play unit that led the NHL last season is 29th at 12.5 percent.

"We've talked about a lot of things," O'Reilly said. "We address a lot of things when we go through video. We think we know, but it comes down to a lot of this is on us, our top guys, myself included.

"We have to grab the group in here and do it."

While the top guys can always do more, specifically on the power play, they're also the only ones producing. Evander Kane and Jack Eichel have 13 points in the 14 games, while O'Reilly and Jason Pominville have 12.

No one else has more than six.

"Every team has got to find their way, find their groove, find a way to connect," O'Reilly said. "The coaching staff I think has done a great job. We've got a good system in place. Day in, day out, the leadership has to commit to that and do that so everyone else gets on board. We have to stick to that.

"We have to grab everyone and do the right things all the time. I think that should put us in a better spot."

The trade of O'Reilly's former teammate seems to put Buffalo in a worse spot. Duchene is a Canadian Olympian who should bolster Ottawa's offense. The top three teams in each division make the playoffs, and the Senators made Buffalo's road back toward the top of the Atlantic Division tougher.

The teams still have to play each other four times this season.

"Ottawa got a good player," O'Reilly said. "Dutchie is a guy that's tough to play against. He's a really skilled player, so it's a bummer that he's in the division. He's going to make it better.

"He needed a change of scenery. It should be a good fit for him. I just hope he doesn't play too well against us."

Story topics: Ryan O'Reilly

Sabres Notebook: Housley preaches accountability; defense getting healthier

The Buffalo News

By John Vogl

November 6, 2017

Phil Housley says his positivity shouldn't be viewed as lack of accountability. The coach showed that to his struggling team Monday with a detailed meeting and hard practice.

Housley seemed to be lowering expectations Saturday night when he said Buffalo played well in a 5-1 loss to Dallas. On Monday, he showed the 4-8-2 squad what it did wrong.

"I tend to look at things in a different perspective just as a former player and now a coach," Housley said in KeyBank Center. "It's easy to be a master of obvious and really hammer the nail. I try to put the players in a position to succeed.

"We're going to still hold the players accountable – believe me. I think the message today was pretty strong in our meetings of doing the right things, playing the right way. That's where the accountability comes in because I think we have to have more urgency in our game defending when we don't have the puck.

"Until you see it on film, you can see what I'm talking about. That's more about the accountability. I don't think it's a negative message. It's just where we're at right now as a group."

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Given the chance to expand on his comments in Dallas, Housley looked ahead.

"That game's behind us personally, and we're moving forward to the next game," said Housley, whose club hosts Washington on Tuesday. "We have an opponent that's been one of the best teams in the league. We're not going to dwell on it. We're going to work and learn from it, and that's the message I delivered today.

"I thought our practice was really good stressing some of the things we need to get better at."

When the Sabres took the ice, four of their top eight defensemen were still absent. That may not be the case much longer.

Housley said Nathan Beaulieu and Josh Gorges could return to practice this week, and Zach Bogosian has skated on his own the past few days.

"The bottom line is it's good to see the guys are starting to get healthy now," Housley said. "We've been depleted back there. It's given other guys opportunities, but it's good to see we're getting close to healthy."

The Sabres have already used 10 defensemen this season, which is part of the reason they're 4-8-2. They will still be testing their depth chart Tuesday. Rasmus Ristolainen didn't practice Monday, so he could miss his second straight game.

Here are Housley's updates on Buffalo's banged-up players, none of which skated with the team:

* Ristolainen (upper body) – "Rasmus is still day to day."

* Bogosian (lower body) – "Zach skated. He's moved back to day to day now with his injury. He's making progress. He's been skating now two or three days, which is encouraging."

* Beaulieu (upper body) – "Nate Beaulieu skated. He'll probably join us in practice this week, so that was encouraging."

* Forward Justin Bailey (lower body) – "He's still day to day."

* Gorges (lower body) – "Josh Gorges has made some great strides. He's been skating, and he'll probably join us for practice this week."

* Forward Evan Rodrigues (hand) – "He has been skating, but his situation with his hand, upper-body injury, it's taking a little bit longer."

* Forward Jacob Josefson (foot) – "Joey hasn't skated yet, so his lower-body injury is more of a week-to-week situation still."

Nick Baptiste's time on the sidelines could be over.

The winger joined the Sabres for their trip to Arizona and Dallas, but he didn't play. Baptiste spent all of Monday's practice on a line with center Sam Reinhart and right wing Seth Griffith.

The Sabres recalled Baptiste from Rochester last week. He had three goals and five points in eight games with the Amerks.

"My goal isn't to be a top scorer in the AHL," Baptiste said. "It's to play in the NHL. I'm excited to hopefully get in the lineup."

Monday's workout was Baptiste's first real one with the Sabres. He didn't skate the day Buffalo flew to Arizona, and the Sabres canceled practice after arriving in Dallas. Baptiste only took part in the light morning and pregame skates on game days.

"We wanted to give him a good practice," Housley said. "That was good to see him. I really liked that line and what they brought."

Baptiste took the spot of Zemgus Girgensons, who dropped down to skate with Johan Larsson and Jordan Nolan. Matt Moulson served as the extra forward.

Baptiste brings speed to the roster.

"That's something that I can bring to the table every night, shooting the puck and getting in hard on battles," Baptiste said. "I think I'm the type of guy that can bring a lot of energy to the team no matter where I am and who I'm playing with."

Sabres Prospects: Osmanski takes on a bigger role with Peterborough

The Buffalo News

By Amy Moritz

November 6, 2017

Take a look at Austin Osmanski's career stats, and the first thing you notice is the jump in offensive numbers.

The defenseman has nine points in 18 games this season. That's one better than he had through all 55 games he played last season in the Ontario Hockey League.

But Osmanski is quick to point out that while the offensive numbers are nice, they're a product of his team not just his play.

The East Aurora native's stats have jumped since he was traded to the Peterborough Petes from the Mississauga Steelheads on Oct. 8. That's not much of a surprise. The Petes lead the Eastern Conference while Mississauga is eight in the 10-team conference.

Play for a better team and naturally there will be better opportunities to rack up points.

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"I think our forwards are really good here," Osmanski said. "We've got four lines that score any time. I just get them the puck and let them do their thing. I get points without looking for them, they just happen which is good. I worked a lot over the summer and it's good it's starting to show in Peterborough, but I think I'm playing with some good players, too."

There's been plenty of change in 2017 for Osmanski, who was a seventh-round draft choice of the Buffalo Sabres in 2016. First came the change at the Sabres with a new general manager and head coach and an ensuing new philosophy.

"I'd be lying if I said it didn't affect me," Osmanski said of the leadership change. "I think everyone, whether you're Jack Eichel or a guy like me, it affects you. Luckily for me, I was in Buffalo training every day this summer and could see all the changes happening on a daily basis from development camp to prospect camp to training camp. You could sense the vibes and the way the attitude changed. It's been flipped upside down in a positive way. It's an exciting time for me. I get another chance to make a first impression."

He had another positive change when he was traded to Peterborough early this season.

"I didn't expect it to happen, but the way things were going, some things you have a sense that it's coming," Osmanski said. "It wasn't something that I requested, but it was something I was looking for. That was a crazy day for me. I was in Buffalo at home on an off day and got the call from my agent."

"I went from Buffalo to Mississauga to get my stuff, went to the rink to pack up my gear and I got to Peterborough about 11 o'clock at night. I was up at 6 a.m. the next day to bus to North Bay and play my first game with the team after just meeting them. It was a crazy 24 hours to be honest. Since then, I've settled in well."

He picked up an assist in that first game with the Petes and has felt comfortable ever since. At 19, he's one of the older players on the Petes and has welcomed an expanded role.

"I've accepted a bigger role, which I wanted," Osmanski said. "I'm an older guy now in the league. It's my third year. Peterborough has a young core, I'd say, and I stepped in to be a veteran and lead by example. I'm a big guy. I try to be tough and to make it hard for the other team. My job is to make the other team's best players miserable."

Rochester Americans: The Amerks need a breather after going to shootouts in three straight games last week, winning two of them and dropping one. Rochester sits three points back of the Toronto Marlies and Laval Rocket for the top spot in the AHL's North Division.

Kyle Criscuolo and C.J. Smith are tied for the team lead in scoring at 10 points. Criscuolo leads the team with four goals while Smith is on a five-game assist streak and ranks third among all AHL rookies with eight assists. Brendan Guhle has eight points (two goals, six assists) in 11 games and closed out the weekend with back-to-back multi-point games.

Rochester plays two games at the Belleville Senators on Nov. 10 and Nov. 11.

WHL

Vojtech Budik (defense, Prince Albert Raiders): Has one goal and four assists through 16 games.

Brandon Hagel (forward, Red Deer Rebels): Saw his eight-game point streak end as Red Deer dropped games this weekend to Regina and Swift Current. Hagel was shutout in both games. For the season, he has 20 points (six goals, 14 assists) in 17 games.

OHL

Cliff Pu (forward, London Knights): Perhaps it's just coincidence, or perhaps there's a bit a relief for Pu after signing his entry level contract with the Buffalo Sabres on Oct. 23. In the first 11 games of the season, Pu had just one goal and five assists. In his five games since signing his pro contract, he has three goals and three assists.

QMJHL

Vasily Glotov (forward, Shawinigan Cataractes): Has eight goals and five assists in 17 games.

NCAA

William Borgen (defense, St. Cloud State): The junior picked up two assists as the Huskies swept Minnesota-Duluth to improve to 7-0-0. Borgen has six assists in seven games.

Christopher Brown (forward, Boston College): Had a goal and an assist in a 3-1 win over Merrimack on Friday, snapping a four-game losing skid for the Eagles. Brown has three goals and two assists.

Jacob Bryson (defense, Providence): The sophomore has five assists for Providence (5-3-0).

Ivan Chukarov (defense, UMass): Played his first game on Saturday after missing the first month of the season with an upper body injury. He enters his junior year at UMass with five career goals and 11 points over 72 games.

Casey Fitzgerald (defense, Boston College): Scored his third goal of the season in a 2-1 win for the Eagles over Merrimack on Saturday. He leads BC (3-5-1) with six points.

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): Had a goal and an assist as the Golden Gophers swept Michigan State. The freshman ranks second on Minnesota in points with nine (three goals, six assists) in nine games.

Brett Murray (forward, Penn State): The sophomore has one assist in nine games for the Nittany Lions. He recorded team-best six shots on goal in a 7-5 win over Mercyhurst on Saturday as Penn State earned a split with the Lakers.

Philip Nyberg (defense, UConn): Returned to the ice Oct. 28 after suffering a lower body injury in the season opener against Maine. He recorded his first point of the season Nov. 3, an assist in a 5-1 win over Vermont.

Judd Peterson (forward, St. Cloud State): The senior picked up his sixth assist of the season as the Huskies swept Minnesota-Duluth. Undefeated, St. Cloud next plays two games at Denver (Nov. 10-11).

Linus Weissbach (forward, Wisconsin): A native of Sweden, the 19-year-old freshman has three goals and two assist through nine games. After missing last weekend's series against St. Lawrence with an upper body injury, he returned to the ice as the Badgers had a loss and a tie to North Dakota.

Maxwell Willman (forward, Brown): Was minus-2 in Brown's 4-3 loss to Dartmouth on Friday and did not play in Saturday's 3-0 loss to Harvard.

Europe

Rasmus Asplund (forward, Farjestad BK): Was named to Sweden's roster for the Karjala Cup which begins on Wednesday. The international tournament, held in Finland, features teams from Sweden, Finland, Czech Republic, Russia, Switzerland and Canada.

Marcus Davidsson (forward, Djurgardens): Has one goal and four assists in 14 games in the Swedish Hockey League. He has three goals and an assist in three games played with the Djurgadens Under-20 team in the SuperElit League.

Oskari Laaksonen (defense, Ilves): Has seven assists and one goal in 22 games in the Under-20 league (Jr. A SM-Liiga).

Ukko-Pekka Luukkonen (goalie, LeKi): In 11 games he has a 3.18 goals against average and a .903 save percentage.

Victor Olofsson (forward, Frolounda HC): Has seven goals and five assists in 16 games in the Swedish Hockey League.

Beaulieu, Gorges close to returning to practice

WGR 550

Brayton Wilson

November 6, 2017

The Buffalo Sabres' banged-up blue line may be getting a couple of players back on the ice for practice later this week.

Sabres head coach Phil Housley gave an injury update on the status of multiple players this afternoon, saying that defensemen Nathan Beaulieu and Josh Gorges are close to returning to the ice for a team practice.

"Nate Beaulieu skated, and he'll probably join us in practice this week. That was encouraging," Housley said. "Josh Gorges has made some great strides. He's been skating, and he'll probably join us for practice this week."

Beaulieu has been sidelined since October 20 when he left the game against the Vancouver Canucks with a lower-body injury. Gorges has been out since October 19 with a lower-body injury of his own.

Elsewhere on the injury front, defenseman Rasmus Ristolainen was absent once again with an upper-body injury. He is day-to-day after missing out on Saturday night's game against the Dallas Stars. Defenseman Zach Bogosian is skating once again, and has skated for the past two or three days to test his lower-body injury. Housley said after practice that he's making progress, but remains day-to-day.

Up front, Justin Bailey also remains out of action, day-to-day with a lower-body injury. Evan Rodrigues also remains out day-to-day with his hand injury, but he has been on the ice skating for some time now.

One other injury note as center Jacob Josefson has yet to skate with his lower-body injury, and Housley is still considering him week-to-week.

Here is how lines looked at Monday's practice at HarborCenter:

Forwards:

Kane - Eichel - Pominville

Pouliot - O'Reilly - Okposo

Baptiste - Reinhart - Griffith

Girgensons - Larsson - Nolan

Defense:

Scandella - Falk

McCabe - Fedun

Antipin - Tennyson

Matt Moulson was working in as an extra at forward and on defense.

As for Nick Baptiste, he got his first chance to work in on a regular line since he was called up last Wednesday. He skated on a line with Sam Reinhart and Seth Griffith, and is looking to bring his speed and tenacity that he's capable of bringing on a consistent basis.

"I try to play 200-feet, regardless of where I am," Baptiste said following practice in front of his makeshift locker stall. "Playing in Rochester, I'm going to play significantly more minutes to start off with. I might not play that 20 minutes a night when I'm called up here, so I have to be prepared to do the little things right. The most important thing for me when I get called up is to be trusted in my own end. If I can do those things, I think I'll be successful in terms of getting in the lineup and staying in the lineup."

"He's been doing really well at going to the net hard," Housley said of Baptiste. "He's been scoring goals and that's what we need more of. I just liked the pace that he brought today. I can only judge what I see with my own eyes and watching him on film, but I really like where he's scoring his goals. It's right around the paint, and that's where we need to be."

With Moulson working as the extra skater this morning, it seems like Baptiste is going to make his season debut on Tuesday against the Washington Capitals. However, Housley is not set yet on saying if he will play on Tuesday.

"It's a game-time decision right now, we're just trying to get a feel," Housley said. "He's been with our club, and we wanted to get him a good practice. It was his first solid practice he's had because we've been playing games and he came in late. It was good to see him, and I really liked that line and what they brought today."

"I'm excited to hopefully get in the lineup tomorrow night, and just work as hard as I can, be physical and help this team win," Baptiste said.

The Sabres will return to the ice Tuesday morning for the morning skate before taking on the Capitals at KeyBank Center at 7 p.m. Pre-game coverage starts at 6 p.m. with Schopp and the Bulldog from (716) Food and Sport.

Phil Housley complimentary, critical of Sabres in opening month

Olean Times Herald

Bill Hoppe

November 7, 2017

BUFFALO – Instead of tearing into the Sabres following Saturday’s embarrassing 5-1 loss in Dallas, to the shock of some observers, coach Phil Housley praised his struggling team.

“When I evaluate the game, I think we played well,” Housley told reporters. “The score tells you differently and there’s probably going to be a lot of people that disagree with me. But I think we got the start that we wanted.”

The start we wanted? The Stars pounced on the Sabres, opening up a 2-0 lead barely seven minutes into the contest and a 4-0 advantage by the 13-minute mark.

Housley also acknowledged “bad bounces” and touched on some deficiencies in the Sabres’ 10th loss in 14 outings.

Naturally, his quote raised some eyebrows. How can a coach whose team just got shellacked by four goals say his players performed well? Housley didn’t want to elaborate when he was pressed on that Monday inside KeyBank Center.

“That game’s behind us,” he said after the Sabres prepared for tonight’s home tilt against the Washington Capitals.

But Housley’s words in Dallas illustrate his early approach to discussing the Sabres publicly. No, the rookie coach isn’t exactly Pollyanna. He has been critical at times during a rough opening month and will often talk about problems in depth.

Still, he clearly tries to inject some positivity, especially in bad times. He has even talked glowingly of some players who appear to be struggling.

Of course, away from the media, Housley deals with the Sabres much differently. The Hall of Fame defenseman can be loud during practices, expecting his team to execute drills with pace and purpose. In the dressing room and one-on-one, players have said Housley is honest and direct.

“He’s played the game,” Sabres winger Jason Pominville said. “Negativity usually’s not good for anyone. But at the same time, when the doors are closed, he’s able to hold us accountable for things that we do or don’t do well. He has the fine line of knowing when it’s time to do it, how to do it.”

Housley said he tends to “look at things in a different perspective.”

“Just as a former player and now a coach, it’s easier to be a master of the obvious and really hammer the nail,” Housley said. “I like to put them in a position to succeed. ... We’re still going to hold the players accountable, believe me. I think the message today was pretty strong in our meetings of doing the right things, playing the right way.”

Sabres winger Kyle Okposo said Housley probably experienced every situation during his 21-year playing career.

“When things aren’t going well, sometimes to keep beating that horse is not the way to go,” Okposo said. “You got to be a bit complimentary – not showering guys with compliments, because we don’t deserve it right now – (because) keeping the guys positive and keeping everybody upbeat is, I think, important.”

Pominville said players like that Housley has their backs.

“We have his back and we’re all working toward the same goal, same direction,” he said. “I think he understands ... being upbeat is the way to do it, and he’s an upbeat guy, he’s an honest guy.

“If you do good things, he’ll tell us. If you do bad things, he’ll tell us. That’s what players definitely appreciate.”

Even with 4-8-2 record – only the Arizona Coyotes have fewer wins – Housley and his staff have created a different atmosphere this season, Okposo said.

“We’re trying to really do things the right way,” he said. “We got a long way to go in that regard. We have to make sure that our games are all in sync and we’re all doing everything that the coaches want us to. If we don’t, then our whole game gets thrown off.”

Housley and Sabres general manager Jason Botterill seem intent on fostering a greater sense of team. At the end of each practice, Housley huddles the Sabres up, says a few words and has them put a hand in and shout something in unison.

The huge photos of each player that adorned the wall above every locker for years have been removed. So far, only a group picture from a team outing and a photo celebrating the Sabres’ first win Oct. 15 in Anaheim have been hung.

Sabres' Nick Baptiste likely to make season debut Tuesday

Olean Times Herald

Bill Hoppe

November 6, 2017

BUFFALO – After failing to earn a significant look during NHL training camp, Sabres prospect Nick Baptiste started his AHL season slowly, going pointless in his first five outings.

Finally, Baptiste, who potted 25 goals in 59 AHL contests last season, scored in his sixth game. The winger followed up by scoring twice in the final 2:25 of the Rochester Americans' 4-3 come-from-behind overtime win against the Laval Rocket on Oct. 27.

“(I) simplified my game a little bit, just got to playing well defensively and using my speed and being physical,” Baptiste said this afternoon inside KeyBank Center. “I knew the offense would come eventually. It certainly did in those two games.”

Those games caught the Sabres' attention, and they recalled Baptiste last week before their two-game road trip. Still, they scratched the third-year pro for both contests.

Baptiste should make his NHL season debut in Tuesday's home tilt against Washington. The former third-round pick practiced at right wing beside center Sam Reinhart and Seth Griffith this morning inside HarborCenter.

Officially, Sabres coach Phil Housley said Baptiste's status will be decided before the game. Matt Moulson, however, practiced as the extra forward today.

Baptiste played 14 games with the Sabres last season, recording three goals and four points. He's a natural scorer with the Amerks. In the big league, though, he must adjust.

“I try to play 200 feet wherever I am,” Baptiste said. “Obviously, if I'm in Rochester, I'm going to play significantly more minutes to start off with. Here, I might not play that 20 minutes a night when I get up here. I got to be prepared to do the little things right.”

Baptiste did the little things against Laval, scoring his goals in close.

“I was able to get out there and use my skill set, get to the net,” he said. “They weren't pretty goals. ... I got to get to the net and use my body to be effective.”

Housley said: “He's been doing really well going to the net hard, he's been scoring goals. That's what we need more of. I just like the pace he brought today.”

In injury news, Housley said defensemen Nathan Beaulieu (upper body) and Josh Gorges (lower body) have been skating and could start practicing later this week.

Other injury updates from Housley:

– Defenseman Zach Bogosian, out all season with a lower-body injury, has skated the past two or three days and is day-to-day.

– Minute-munching defenseman Rasmus Ristolainen is day-to-day with an upper-body injury.

– Winger Justin Bailey is day-to-day with a lower-body injury.

– Forward Evan Rodrigues, out all season with a hand injury, has been skating and is day-to-day.

– Center Jacob Josefson is still week-to-week with a lower-body injury.

Mittelstadt off to impressive start in freshman season at Minnesota

Sabres.com

Kris Baker

November 6, 2017

Freshman sensation Casey Mittelstadt (2017, first round) showed off his puck hounding skills Friday, stripping a defender and setting up a goal as the University of Minnesota opened a Big Ten Hockey set with a 3-1 victory over Michigan State.

Kris Baker @SabresProspects

Casey Mittelstadt was a hound on this play, working over the Spartans D for the steal and an assist in the Gophers' 3-1 win.

#Sabres

9:23 PM - Nov 3, 2017

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Mittelstadt continued to make an impact Saturday, forcing a defenseman into a turnover and getting the puck in the slot for a quick wrist-shot goal as the Gophers earned the sweep of the Spartans with a 4-0 win.

Kris Baker @SabresProspects

Casey forces turnover.

Casey gets puck in slot.

Casey shoots.

Casey scores.#Sabres

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Mittelstadt, who has gotten on the score sheet in eight of the nine games he has appeared in, has worked his way to nine points (3+6), 26 shots on goal and a plus-8 rating in the young season.

OHL

Cliff Pu (2016, third round) forced overtime Friday by scoring a goal with 2:15 left in regulation as London fell to Saginaw 6-5.

The centerman notched an assist the next night in the Knights' 4-1 win at Owen Sound. Pu has picked up the pace with points in four of his last five games, giving him 12 (4+8) through 16 contests.

Austin Osmanski (2016, seventh round) recorded one assist last week as Peterborough won once of their three games. Osmanski has nine points (1+8) in 18 games, eclipsing the eight points he recorded in 55 games a season ago.

WHL

In Wednesday action, Brandon Hagel (2016, sixth round) tipped home his sixth goal of the year as Red Deer fell to Seattle 4-2.

Kris Baker @SabresProspects

Tip drill: Red Deer lost to Seattle 4-2, but Brandon Hagel extended his career-long point streak to eight games with his sixth goal #Sabres

8:00 AM - Nov 2, 2017

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Hagel saw his career-best eight-game point streak snapped on Friday as Red Deer lost at Regina 4-3, and was again blanked Saturday in a 4-2 loss at Swift Current. In 17 games, Hagel has amassed six goals, 20 points, and 48 shots on goal for a Rebels squad currently tied for second place in the Central Division.

Prince Albert defenseman Vojtech Budik (2016, fifth round) picked up an assist Friday as Prince Albert got past Swift Current 5-1.

Budik, whose one-helper effort was sandwiched between a pair of losses to Moose Jaw, has five points (1+4) and 39 shots on goal in 16 games.

QMJHL

Shawinigan forward Vasily Glotov (2016, seventh round) was unable to suit up in Friday's 4-3 win over Drummondville, but returned to action Saturday with one shot on goal as the Cataractes defeated Saint John 3-2 in overtime.

Glotov has eight goals and 13 points in 17 appearances.

NCAA

Christopher Brown (2014, sixth round) secured an empty-net goal plus one assist Friday as Boston College upended Merrimack 3-1.

Brown, who was unable to point Saturday as the Eagles completed the home-and-home sweep with a 2-1 win, has three goals and five points in nine games.

After being held without a point in Friday's win over Merrimack, Boston College defenseman Casey Fitzgerald (2016, third round) scored with a slap shot that rebounded off the end-boards and banked off the goaltender in Saturday's 2-1 victory.

Through nine games, Fitzgerald leads the Eagles with six points (3+3) and 31 shots on goal.

Connecticut defenseman Philip Nyberg (2016, fifth round) notched an assist and a sparkling plus-4 rating as the Huskies defeated Vermont 5-1 on Friday, and produced three shots on goal the next night in a 4-2 loss to the Catamounts.

Nyberg has one point (0+1) and a team-best plus-5 rating through four games.

Jacob Bryson (2017, fourth round) tied for the team lead with five shots on goal Friday as Providence fell to Boston University 2-0.

Bryson, who earlier in the week was named an assistant captain, has five assists and 21 shots on goal in eight games with the Friars.

Linus Weissbach (2017, seventh round) returned to action Friday after missing last weekend's games with an injury, producing two shots on goal as Wisconsin dropped a 3-2 decision to North Dakota.

Weissbach, who was again blanked on Saturday as the teams completed the non-conference set with a 2-2 tie, has three goals and five points in his first nine collegiate contests.

Junior defenseman William Borgen (2015, fourth round) picked up an assist Friday as St. Cloud State opened the weekend with a 5-3 win over Minnesota Duluth.

Borgen added another helper the next night as the Huskies swept the Bulldogs with a 5-0 victory. Borgen has six assists and a plus-5 rating through seven games.

St. Cloud State forward Judd Peterson (2012, seventh round) assisted on an empty-net goal in Friday's win over Minnesota Duluth, and submitted one shot on goal in Saturday's shutout victory.

Peterson has six assists through seven games while still seeking his first goal of the year.

Maxwell Willman (2014, fifth round) posted one shot on goal in Brown's 4-3 loss to Dartmouth, but was unable to dress the next night in a 3-0 loss at Harvard.

Willman has picked up a pair of assists through three appearances for the Bears.

Brett Murray (2016, fourth round) contributed one shot on goal in Penn State's 7-4 loss to Mercyhurst, and rebounded with a six-shot effort Saturday as the Nittany Lions earned the weekend split with a 7-5 triumph over their in-state opponent.

Murray has one assist in nine games this season, and is still looking for his first goal since joining the Penn State program last January (21 games).

Third-year defenseman Ivan Chukarov (2015, seventh round) made season debut Saturday, recording two shots on goal and a minus-1 rating as Massachusetts was shutout by New Hampshire 3-0.

Europe

Rasmus Asplund (2016, second round) was unable to point over the weekend as Farjestad BK split a series with Djurgarden IF, losing 3-1 on Friday before earning a 2-1 victory the next day.

Asplund has collected nine points (3+6) in 17 games while averaging 17:12 of work per outing.

Victor Olofsson (2014, seventh round) struck a one-timer for a power-play goal Saturday and added a pair of assists as Frolunda HC was handed a 5-4 defeat by HV 71.

Kris Baker @SabresProspects

This looks a tad familiar. Victor Olofsson pounds a one-timer on the PP Saturday for his seventh goal of the year. #Sabres
2:30 PM - Nov 4, 2017

2 2 Replies 4 4 Retweets 22 22 likes

[Twitter Ads info and privacy](#)

Prior to the three-point outburst, Olofsson produced one assist in Tuesday's 3-2 Champions Hockey League victory over Liberec. He continued SHL action Thursday, recording three shots on goal in 17:50 of work in a 2-1 loss to Skelleftea.

Through 16 Swedish Hockey League contests, Olofsson has scored seven goals on 37 shots as part of his 12 total points.

Marcus Davidsson (2017, second round) broke through the zone with speed Friday and set up his brother Jonathan (CLS) for the game-winning goal as Djurgarden IF got past Farjestad BK 3-1.

3 Nov

Kris Baker @SabresProspects

Replying to @SabresProspects

I'm confident that Sabres fans will appreciate the speed Davidsson used to gain the zone and get the primary helper. I'll post later on

Kris Baker @SabresProspects

Marcus Davidsson wheels up ice over three lines and sets up his brother for the GWG as Djurgården defeats Färjestad 3-1.

#Sabres pic.twitter.com/AQvWvxH6V7

4:31 PM - Nov 3, 2017

5 5 Replies 3 3 Retweets 12 12 likes

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The teams met again Saturday, with Davidsson skating for a season-high 13:36 as his club was dealt a 2-1 loss.

After going without a point in his first five Swedish Hockey League games, Davidsson has collected five (1+4) in his last nine.

Ukko-Pekka Luukkonen (2017, second round) allowed six goals on 34 shots Saturday as LeKi was bounced by Hermes 6-2.

Luukkonen has started 11 of 15 games for the third-place squad, posting a 6-5 record with a 3.18 goals-against average and a .903 save percentage.

Oskari Laaksonen (2017, third round) skated for a team-high 24:50 Wednesday as Ilves U20 was doubled by the Blues 4-2.

Laaksonen again logged the highest workload with 25:26 of ice Saturday, including nine shot attempts, in a 3-2 loss to KooKoo.

Laaksonen has skated in 22 games, collecting eight points (1+7) and a minus-8 rating.

For more on all the youngsters in the Sabres pipeline, check out Kris Baker's website, SabresProspects.com. You can also follow him on Twitter (@SabresProspects) for in-game updates throughout the week on any Buffalo prospects that are in action.

Full practice for Baptiste sets up potential debut vs. Washington

Sabres.com

Jourdon LaBarber

November 6, 2017

Since being recalled to Buffalo for the first time this season last Wednesday, the opportunities for Nicholas Baptiste to make an impression on the Sabres' coaching staff have been limited. Having not played in either of the two games on their recent road trip, the only chances he had to get on the ice with the team came in morning skates.

Following his first full practice with the team on Monday morning, it appears an opportunity may be on the horizon. Phil Housley said that Baptiste will be a game-time decision against Washington on Tuesday, but his inclusion on a line with Sam Reinhart and Seth Griffith was a positive sign.

"It's a game-time decision right now," Housley said. "We're just trying to get a feel. We wanted to get him a good practice."

Sabres Now (11/6/17)

01:49 • November 6th, 2017

After an admittedly slow start to his season in Rochester, Baptiste's recall was preceded by back-to-back multi-point efforts against the Laval Rocket, the latter of which saw him net a pair of goals in the final two minutes of an eventual overtime win.

The manner in which he scored those goals likely contributed to his recall. The first was scored with a tip at the net front, the next on a rebound.

"They weren't pretty goals, but those are a lot of the things I've got to do is get to the net and use my body to be effective," Baptiste said.

Establishing their net-front presence has been an area of focus for Housley and the Sabres throughout the young season, one they worked on again in practice on Monday.

"I just like the pace that he brought today," Housley said. "I can only judge what I see with my own eye, watching him on film. I really like where he's scoring his goals, it's right around the paint and that's where we need to be."

Phil Housley (11/6/17)

05:34 • November 6th, 2017

Baptiste broke out as a sophomore in Rochester last season with 41 points (25+16) in 59 games. At the start of this season, he said, he was too focused on matching that production. Once he simplified his game and worried about playing hard and playing fast, the results came.

If he does play against the Capitals on Tuesday, he'll look to bring that same 200-foot mentality.

"At that level, I think I can produce pretty well," he said. "But my goal isn't to be a top scorer in the AHL, it's to be a player in the NHL. I'm excited to hopefully get into the lineup tomorrow night and work as hard as I can, be physical and help this team win."

Injury updates

The Sabres took another hit to their defense when Rasmus Ristolainen was forced to miss the team's game in Dallas on Saturday due to an upper-body injury. Ristolainen was absent from practice on Monday and remains day-to-day, but there was some good news on the injury front.

Housley announced that Nathan Beaulieu (upper body) and Josh Gorges (lower body) have both been skating and are on track to return to practice this week, while the status of Zach Bogosian (lower body) has improved from week-to-week to day-to-day.

"The bottom line is it's good to see that guys are starting to get healthy now," Housley said. "We've been depleted back there. It's given other guys opportunities, but it's good to see that we're getting close to healthy."

At forward, both Justin Bailey (lower body) and Evan Rodrigues (hand) have been skating and are considered day-to-day. Jacob Josefson, out since Oct. 17 with a lower-body injury, has not resumed skating at this point.

Staying positive

Following a 5-1 loss in Dallas Saturday, Housley said he liked the way his team had played for much of the game in spite of the final score. He explained Monday how he's tried to balance positivity with accountability, the latter of which was evident in an intense, competitive practice.

"I tend to look at things from a different perspective, as a former player and now coach. It's easy to be master of obvious and really hammer the nail. I like to try to put them in a position to succeed. We're going to still hold the payers accountable, believe me, and I think the message today was pretty strong in our meetings.

"I think we need to have more urgency in our game defending when we don't have the puck ... That's more about accountability. I don't think it's a negative message, it's just more of where we're at as a group."

Lines at practice

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

6 Marco Scandella - 41 Justin Falk
19 Jake McCabe - 27 Taylor Fedun
93 Victor Antipin - 5 Matt Tennyson

40 Robin Lehner
31 Chad Johnson

PP1: O'Reilly-Eichel-Reinhart-Okposo-Scandella
PP2: Pouliot-Pominville-Kane-Antipin-Fedun

Sharpen Up: November 6, 2017

Sabres.com

Chris Ryndak

November 6, 2017

The Sabres are back in town after a two-game road trip against Western Conference opponents last weekend. They defeated the Arizona Coyotes on Thursday, but went down early on Saturday in a 5-1 loss to the Dallas Stars.

They host Washington tomorrow at KeyBank Center. That game will be on NBCSN at 7 p.m.

Here's what you need to know.

About Saturday night

Sabres fall to the Stars, 5-1

04:05 • November 5th, 2017

From a style of play standpoint, the Sabres opened Saturday's game the way they wanted. However, three goals in the first 10:27 chased Robin Lehner from the net and Dallas added a fourth a few minutes later. And that was basically it.

From Lexus Postgame Report by Jourdon, who was on the scene:

The Sabres controlled the play for the first three minutes of the game until a goal for Remi Elie snowballed into a 4-0 deficit by period's end. The Sabres outshot the Stars the rest of the way, but were only able to bury one of their chances in an eventual 5-1 loss.

Phil Housley Postgame (11/04/17)

02:42 • November 4th, 2017

"When I evaluate the game, I think we played well," Sabres coach Phil Housley said. "The score tells you differently, and there's probably going to be a lot of people that disagree with me. But I think we got the start we wanted. There were some bad bounces that occurred."

Robin Lehner Postgame (11/04/17)

02:03 • November 5th, 2017

Lehner, who was coming off of a performance in Arizona in which he made several big saves to keep the Sabres in the game early, admitted to making a mistake on Remi Elie's opening goal. The rebound that led to Radek Faksa's goal, he said, came after the puck jumped over his stick.

"I have to be better," he said. "It's a game of mistakes, I made a mistake there, and together with a bounce and a good goal there it's 3-0. It's unfortunate."

Chad Johnson made 13 saves on 15 shots in relief. With the Stars on the power play, Tyler Seguin beat Johnson with a one-time shot from the left faceoff circle to extend their lead to 4-0 with 7:09 remaining in the first period.

"I just thought we needed to change the goalie, maybe change the momentum," Housley said. "It's unfortunate. If I asked him if he'd want those three back, he probably would. It's one of those things. He played really well in Arizona, tonight it wasn't the case."

Ryan O'Reilly Postgame (11/04/17)

01:23 • November 5th, 2017

"You could see right away, we were physical and then [we have] a couple bad bounces," Ryan O'Reilly, who scored Buffalo's lone goal, said. "They happen. You still could make better plays in those situations, but a couple bad bounces took the wind out of our sails. It was tough."

Jack Eichel Postgame (11/04/17)

02:13 • November 5th, 2017

"We did a lot of good things," Jack Eichel said. "We had some chances. It just seems like we have those little mental lapses and it always ends up in our net. Playing a team like that, with a lot of skill up front, they come at you in bunches and they're fast. They made us pay."

Injury update

The list of injured Sabres is pretty long and Rasmus Ristolainen's name was added to it before Saturday's game. He did not play due to an upper-body injury. Ristolainen was the league leader in average time on ice per game at 27:09.

When the Sabres return to practice this morning at HarborCenter, we'll hopefully get updates on these players as well:

Evan Rodrigues (hand; injured reserve)
Zach Bogosian (lower body; injured reserve)
Jacob Josefson (lower body; injured reserve)
Josh Gorges (lower body; injured reserve)
Nathan Beaulieu (upper body; injured reserve)
Justin Bailey (lower body)

On tap today

Stay tuned for practice coverage from HarborCenter. Jourdon and Duffer will have the reports for you later here on Sabres.com.

We'll also have Kris Baker's Sabres Prospects Report for you