



# **Buffalo Sabres**

## **Daily Press Clips**

*February 6, 2018*

## Leadership, accountability still issues with slumping Sabres

AP

John Wawrow

February 5, 2018

BUFFALO, N.Y. (AP) — A lack of player leadership and accountability were among the criticisms which led to the Buffalo Sabres cleaning house in April.

Very little has changed 10 months into the Sabres' new regime of general manager Jason Botterill and coach Phil Housley in overseeing a team that ranks last in the Eastern Conference and 30th overall.

Housley acknowledged Monday that he might have underestimated how daunting a task he faced in addressing leadership concerns and changing the culture of a team now in jeopardy of extending its franchise-worst playoff drought to seven seasons.

"When you only have 14 wins, there's a lot of areas that need to be addressed. One of those is culture, and we've got to continue to find a way to change it," said Housley, who took over after Dan Bylsma was fired following just two seasons. "We all have to change. And that's something I'm continuing to learn throughout the season."

Several players shared similar concerns.

"It's hard when you get kind of stuck in this environment and it becomes not acceptable to lose, but it becomes the norm," assistant captain Kyle Okposo told The Associated Press. "And that's something that has to change. And we've got to change it."

Defenseman Josh Gorges said it's not a question of his teammates' desire to win, but questioned whether enough buy into that objective consistently.

"Collectively, do we have enough guys that say, '82 games this year, did I do things the right way?'" Gorges told The AP. "Obviously, where we are right now, that answer is no."

With a 14-29-9 record, Buffalo's 37 points through 52 games are one better than the Sabres teams which finished last in both the 2013-14 and 2014-15 seasons.

Scoring is an issue, with Buffalo's 117 goals ranking last in the NHL. So is winning at home. At 6-15-3, the Sabres are tied with Arizona for the league's fewest home wins.

Changes are expected to come in the weeks leading up to the NHL trading deadline on Feb. 26, with more to follow in the offseason.

Forward Evander Kane is on the trade block as is goalie Robin Lehner. Both are in the final year of their contracts and not expected to be re-signed. Veteran forward Matt Moulson is already off Buffalo's roster after being loaned to the Los Angeles Kings minor-league affiliate, leaving open the option of the Sabres buying out the remaining year of his contract in June.

Further questions remain regarding the rest of a high-priced — seven players, including Moulson, are making \$5 million or more this year — but under-achieving lineup that opened the season 6-15-4 and is 8-14-5 since.

Buffalo's inconsistencies were evident in the weeks spanning the NHL All-Star weekend. The Sabres entered the break on Jan. 26 by winning three straight on a western-Canadian road swing. They've since lost three straight home games in preparing to host Anaheim on Tuesday.

"You see glimpses of it, you see that we have the pieces," Okposo said. "I think we have to put more work in to be a good team. You've got to buy into playing the right way. We've got to come together as a team."

Center and assistant captain Jack Eichel leads Buffalo with 49 points, but acknowledged he's not fully delivered on his preseason vow to be a team leader off the ice.

“I think it’s all part of maturing,” the third-year player said .

“We have a lot of young guys, myself included, but I think it’s part of growing up and becoming a pro and learning it needs to go on every day,” Eichel added. “And if something’s not there, then obviously you need to step up, say something, do something to change it.”

Forward Sam Reinhart backed the team’s core group of players by calling it capable.

When reminded how the group hasn’t exactly delivered in the standings, Reinhart said: “No. You’re right. I don’t know what you want me to say.”

## **Sabres Notebook: Franchise stuck on 999 home wins**

The Buffalo News

Amy Moritz

February 5, 2018

The Buffalo Sabres have been stuck on 999 all-time regular season wins at home for, well, four games now.

The Sabres last won at home on Jan. 11, a 3-1 win over the Columbus Blue Jackets. They will try for franchise win 1,000 on home ice, again, on Tuesday when they host the Anaheim Ducks in KeyBank Center at 7 p.m.

Granted, the team has just 14 wins overall this year, which by default means not much winning at home or on the road. But the home games have been particularly frustrating, particularly this last stretch. After winning three straight out west, the Sabres returned to Buffalo for a five-game homestand and lost the first three.

"It's been very frustrating," Sabres forward Ryan O'Reilly said. "Usually you come home and get momentum and you find your game at home and transfer it to the road. It's opposite right now. We found it on the road and can't seem to get it going at home. It's difficult and it's frustrating. We want this to be a tough place to play and we're trying but we can't figure it out right now and it's just frustrating."

Frustrating is the word of the season.

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It's also the word used about the offense. At home, the Sabres are averaging just 1.95 goals per game – 47 over 24 games – while giving up an average of 3.16.

"If we knew why we would have fixed it a while ago for sure," Sabres forward Jason Pominville said. "It's been weird the way we've played at home to be honest. It's definitely not acceptable. We've got to be better. We've got to be desperate, we've got to simplify. But yeah we've got to find a way to be a tougher team at home because if you win most of your home games, you give yourself a better chance to be in the postseason. The good teams win at home and they go a little over .500 on the road and they're in the playoffs. We've got to find a way to make this a tougher place to play."

Winning at home does a lot of things when it comes to the bigger picture of a team, the NHL standings and becoming a playoff contender.

But it's also just as important to reward the fan base for its support. And that isn't something taken lightly by a number of guys in the room, including Kyle Okposo.

"It's really frustrating to not win at home," Okposo said. "It's such a passionate fan base and such a passionate city. You saw the way the city rallied around the Bills making the playoffs. You just want to be better for your home fans."

"It's disappointing. I came from a different place with a different type of fan base," said Okposo who played eight seasons with the New York Islanders. "It was a very passionate as well, but here, there's so much pride in their teams and in their sports and that's what's really neat about here. I feel we need to give them more. You'd love to win here because the city deserves a winner."

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How do the Sabres find a way to win?

Well first they have to shoot the puck.

That's been the message from coach Phil Housley and it's one he continues to give, day after day, 52 games into the season.

"The one thing I am seeing is we're not shooting the puck enough," Housley said after the team practiced in HarborCenter late Monday morning. "There's a lot of opportunities that we're trying to make a play and we have to put more pucks to the net and we have to get more players there. We talked about that a lot and what it does is it creates offense. It creates a second opportunity. It changes defenses. Now, they have to react to us and I think we have to continue to pound that message."

The message is about developing a shot-first mentality, one that isn't necessarily about scoring on the shot, but about creating offense through the old, simple game of getting the puck to the net where good things tend to happen.

"I don't think we have it," Housley said of the shot-first mentality. "I think there's time we do. I think we had it on the West Coast swing and I think we're just trying to be too cute. To score goals in this league, it's shots and traffic."

Implementing that message has been more difficult than anticipated, but it's not only about shooting. As Housley pointed out, it's about a lot of things.

"When you only have 14 wins there's a lot of areas that need to be addressed," Housley said. "One of those is culture and we've got to continue to find a way to change it."

\* \* \*

What hasn't changed is the Sabres lineup. All healthy players were present and accounted for at Monday's practice.

Meanwhile, it's possible but not likely that the Sabres will face their former starting goaltender, Ryan Miller, when the Anaheim Ducks come to KeyBank Center Tuesday night.

Ryan O'Reilly centered Evander Kane and Kyle Okposo. Jack Eichel was between Zemgus Girgensons and Sam Reinhart. Evan Rodrigues centered the third line with Scott Wilson and Jason Pominville while the fourth line was Benoit Pouliot, Jacob Josefson and Jordan Nolan with Johan Larsson also skating.

Defensive pairings were Marco Scandella with Rasmus Ristolainen, Nathan Beaulieu and Casey Nelson, Justin Falk with Jake McCabe and Josh Gorges with Victor Antipin.

Miller was making his 13th start of the season for the Ducks Monday night in Toronto. In 17 appearances heading into that game, Miller had a 2.40 goals against average and a .922 save percentage.

## **How growing up with foster siblings impacted Sabres center Ryan O'Reilly**

The Buffalo News

Amy Moritz

February 5, 2018

As a child, Ryan O'Reilly learned that hockey was an inclusive sport.

He had to.

Mom said he had to include everyone when they played. And she meant everyone.

While O'Reilly grew up in the small town of Brucefield, Ont., with his four siblings, his parents, Bonnie and Brian, welcomed foster children into their home. Regardless of their background, they were part of the family and as such were part of hockey around the O'Reilly household.

It's something he appreciates more now, at age 26 and a father himself. He understands the privilege he enjoyed, has grasped the lessons of the extended family his parents created, and embraced the way hockey not only brought all the kids together but helped create a sense of belonging for those who in so many other areas of their lives were on the outside looking in.

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"It was difficult at times," O'Reilly said. "Kids had been kicked out of their own homes or kicked out of schools and there were a lot of difficult kids and my parents always worked with them. For us, it was just like a job. It wasn't until I got a bit older that I realized it was more than that. It was so much more than just a job. It was opening your home and learning to live with these kids that are struggling and no one else can get along with. Hockey was one of those things that brought us closer together. It's amazing how the older I get, the more I appreciate it and understand how important it was."

The experience helped shape O'Reilly and is one of the reasons he's excited and honored to be the Buffalo Sabres ambassador for "Hockey Is For Everyone" – a leaguewide initiative throughout February in which the NHL, players, and teams reach out and support diversity in the sport. The Sabres host their "Hockey Is For Everyone" game Tuesday when they play the Anaheim Ducks at 7 p.m. in KeyBank Center.

O'Reilly said that his foster siblings would range in age from grades 6-12 and the family fostered four or five children at a time.

"We were always taking in kids," O'Reilly said. "We always opened our home and always included everyone. Everyone's together. Everyone's a family. It's a special thing to have that. I never really knew how important it was until I got older to see how lucky I was to have the family I have and the health and the privileges that we had and to open our home and share that with people was so cool. I hope I can give my kids that one day, to be able to experience that and get along with everyone that comes from different backgrounds and struggling in certain areas of their life."

While O'Reilly has lived the experience of bringing outsiders into the fold, there are some lessons that can only be reinforced from within.

Just ask Jordan Nolan.

Along with former Sabre Cody McCormick, Nolan recently visited the Seneca Nation Cattaraugus Community Center to meet with some young players and visit their rink. Both Nolan and McCormick grew up in First Nations communities in

Canada. Both have been active in First Nations and Native American communities, particularly working with children and young adults.

Sometimes the positive message of health, wellness, and all the intangibles that go along with hockey are easier to believe when they come from someone who looks like you and has a similar life experience.

"I think it's important for the kids to know that me and Cody made it to the NHL without having much," Nolan said. "We go in and talk about eating healthy and kind of living the right way. It's really just for them to see someone that looks like them that made it to the NHL and came from similar background. Kids can see someone they know, someone they're familiar with, someone to talk with. They can realize whatever they want to do is possible.

"On a lot of First Nations communities, our kids don't leave too often. They don't really see too many big cities, but to have someone come and visit the community that they might see on TV, that's also from a small community, is actually important to them. It probably hit home a little more seeing myself and Cody rather than some of these other guys. They may be bigger hockey stars, but just the fact that I'm from a small First Nations community, it hits home a little more for them."

The Sabres have several activities planned for Tuesday's game to celebrate "Hockey Is For Everyone." The team is partnering with the You Can Play Project which advocates for the inclusion, acceptance and respect of LGBTQ athletes in sports. Players will use pride tape on their sticks during warmups while the Sabres will sell pride T-shirts and hats.

O'Reilly and Zach Bogosian will host groups that align with the event's philosophy including Hasek's Heroes, Buffalo Sabres Thunder Special Hockey Team, SABAH, Seneca Nation Cattaraugus Community Center, Buffalo Beauts, Buffalo Niagara Deaf Events, Gay and Lesbian Youth Services, Pride Center of WNY, Buffalo Sabres Warriors Stand Up and Sled Hockey Teams and The Summit Center.

Amy Heider Julius will perform the national anthem in American Sign Language.

KeyBank Center will also be unveiling sensory kits at guest service stations that will be available the rest of the season. Life is Washable Inc. provided the Friendly Access Sensory Safety Kits to support individuals of all ages with sensory needs including autism, neurological impairment, PTSD and dementia.

## **The Sabres are back to practice trying to figure out their own arena**

WGR

Paul Hamilton

February 5, 2018

Buffalo, NY (WGR 550) - The Sabres know the situation they're in and they know it's from their own doing. Buffalo is 6-17 in one goal games this year and that number would be a lot higher if you took out empty net goals. Jack Eichel is frustrated by it, he said, "It's part of it. You want to get to the next level and the team that we want to become has to find a way to win those games."

St. Louis scored late on Saturday and went home with a 1-0 win. Eichel said, "That's a mature, veteran team that's been together and been doing it for a while and that's why they're good."

"We need to find a way to start doing that."

The players on this team are frustrated. They have said many times that they all say the right things, but nothing changes, so why is that? Why can't the players on this team follow through with what they say? Eichel said, "The accountability, that's important and for us, you need to get to that point that if you're going to get up and say something, you need to back up your actions and you need to back up your words with actions and not feel bad calling somebody out, it's all part of maturing, it all part of growing up and becoming a pro and learning that it needs to go on every day and if something's not there, then you need to step up and say something and do something to change it."

Phil Housley came into a situation where it would be impossible to know how bad things were in the room. You have to be around your team to know how they react both on and off the ice. Housley said, "When you only have 14 wins, there are a lot of things that need to be addressed and one of those is culture and we have to continue to find a way to change it."

In my mind, Jason Botterill has to make massive changes if he's going to clean up the locker room. Too many of these players have failed under multiple coaches. Housley said, "That has to be evaluated on a day-to-day basis and certainly after the year, but I think the players in there, they mean well, they want to do well, but we all have to change and it's something that I've continued to learn throughout the season because I haven't been here a full season."

Housley was asked that after 52 games, shouldn't the players have it by now? The head coach said, "Yes, I think they should, but we continue to pound the message."

Robin Lehner only gave up one goal to the Blues, but still lost the game. He said, "I hate the situation, I hate what we have to go through because it's our own fault and I hate that we disappoint our fans, rightfully so, but all we can do is work and ignore you guys and stick together as a team."

"When it turns it's going to feel great and it's going to feel real good for the fans when this turns around and I really hope that it's going to happen for this organization. With or without me, with or without whoever, change is probably going to happen, but this organization and this team deserves better."

Monday's lines:

Kane - O'Reilly - Okposo

Girgensons - Eichel - Reinhart

Wilson - Rodrigues - Pominville

Pouliot - Josefson - Nolan

Scandella - Ristolainen

Falk - McCabe

Beaulieu - Nelson

Gorges - Antipin

The Sabres play the Ducks on Tuesday. Anaheim plays in Toronto on Monday.

## **Sabres' Jason Pominville struggling to produce offense**

Olean Times Herald

Bill Hoppe

February 6, 2018

BUFFALO – For a few weeks earlier this season, Sabres winger Jason Pominville seemed to be defying age. The likable veteran, 35, roared out of the gate, scoring two goals opening night. He followed up with another two-score outing days later.

By the 12-game mark, Pominville had compiled six goals and 12 points. The production increase made sense.

On a loaded Minnesota Wild team a year ago, Pominville scored all 13 of his goals and 40 of his 47 points at even strength. He produced offense in a third- or fourth-line role playing fewer minutes than he ever had.

So it wasn't crazy to think Pominville could post strong offensive numbers this season in a first- or second-line role while playing on the power play.

In October, the seven-time 20-goal scorer thought he might enjoy one of his better years.

“Got off to a really good start,” Pominville said Monday inside KeyBank Center.

Pominville, however, has struggled since then, scoring just three goals in the last 40 contests. He has a nine-game goal and point drought entering tonight's home tilt against the Anaheim Ducks.

“I feel fine,” said Pominville, who was reacquired in June.

Not surprisingly, Pominville's role has changed and his ice time has dropped. Instead of playing beside top center Jack Eichel, he has moved to the third line. In Thursday's 4-2 loss to Florida, Pominville played a season-low eight minutes, 55 seconds.

What has happened? Is age catching up to the Sabres' oldest player? Perhaps.

The NHL has morphed into a young man's league. These days, 31 or 32 is considered old. Pominville has already defied the odds by thriving into his mid-30s.

“His minutes have dipped down a little bit, so his opportunity isn't as much as he's used to when he was playing up there,” Sabres coach Phil Housley said. “We're looking for balance from all our lines. I think one of the things he's trying to do better is get to the net. I think he's got to continue to do that.”

“When he's got opportunities to shoot pucks, he's got to shoot pucks. When you find yourself in these situations, the bottom line is just trying to work yourself out of it.”

Pominville, of course, is hardly alone in his offensive struggles. The Sabres have scored the fewest goals overall (117) and five-on-five (71). Last season, the Wild scored the most five-on-five goals in the league.

So Pominville has gone from one extreme to the other.

“Everyone on the team had pretty much career years,” Pominville said. “You're not going to see that that often.”

In good times and bad, Pominville said he doesn't think about his offense.

“I've always been that way,” he said. “Even when I was putting up 70 or 80 points (in a season), I didn't really think about the offensive part that much. I always knew if I did the right things, it would come – and I still think that way. I still believe if you put the effort in, have good habits, do the right things, it usually will come.”

Pominville, whose two-way play has usually been his hallmark, believes the reliability he has showcased in other facets – on and off the ice – has remained strong.

“The offense, I want to produce, I know I can ... but I don’t want to neglect the other parts that I do, whether it’s in the room or on the bench or in practice,” he said. “Games and stuff like that, I don’t want to push that aside and start cheating for offense. When it’s going to come, it’s going to come.”

Housley said: “He has a lot of pride as a player. He wants to contribute offensively.”

Pominville, who has scored nine goals and 20 points in 52 games this season, practiced at right wing beside center Evan Rodrigues and Scott Wilson on Monday, a third line that would be most teams’ fourth trio.

“There’s a lot of young guys that are here, guys that are signed for long term ... so I’m fine playing wherever they put me,” Pominville said. “I won’t say a word, I’ll just go out there, whenever my name’s called I’ll go out there and do my best in any position I’m in. Whatever ice time I get, I’ll keep doing my thing.”

## **Sabres must possess shot mentality**

Olean Times Herald

Bill Hoppe

February 5, 2018

BUFFALO – It's actually one of the few notable categories the Sabres don't rank last or near the bottom of the NHL. Through 52 games they're 21st in shots, averaging 30.9.

Of course, that hasn't translated into much. They've won only 14 games and have scored the fewest goals overall (117) and five-on-five (71).

If the Sabres, fresh off Saturday's 1-0 loss to St. Louis, want to start scoring, they must pump more pucks on net.

"We're not shooting the puck enough," Sabres coach Phil Housley said this afternoon, repeating something he has said all season. "There's a lot of opportunities we're trying to make a play and we have to put more pucks to the net and we have to put more players there.

"We talked about that a lot, and what it does is creates offense, it creates a second opportunity, it changes defenses. Now, they have to react to us. I think we have to continue to pound that message."

Housley said the Sabres must possess a mindset they're going to shoot when they cross the blue line.

"It's a very simple game, but I don't think we have it," he said inside KeyBank Center. "I think there's times we do. I thought we had it on the west coast swing. I think we're just trying to be too fine and too cute. To score goals in this league, it's shots and traffic, it creates. ...

"You watch the highlights, it's puck going to the net and traffic, and the guys who haven't scored a lot of goals recently, we got to have more guys going there because you're going to find a way, it's going to hit you, you're going to get a rebound.

"Yeah, that's a tough place to play, but guys that go there get rewarded."

In other news, Justin Falk skated among the top six defensemen today inside HarborCenter, meaning he could return for Tuesday's home tilt against Anaheim after sitting out Saturday. Defenseman Victor Antipin would likely be scratched.

Update: Former Sabres goalie Ryan Miller will start for Anaheim tonight in Toronto, meaning he likely won't play Tuesday in Buffalo.

Miller, now the Ducks' backup, has been subbing for injured starter John Gibson, who is close to returning from a lower-body injury.

"Every time I have a chance to see him it's fun," said winger Jason Pominville said, one four Sabres who played with Miller. "He's definitely a guy I got along with really well, I spent a lot of years with him. He's a good friend, so every time we can catch up and play against each other is always interesting."

## Leadership & accountability still concerns in Sabres' locker room

WKBW

Matt Bove

February 5, 2018

BUFFALO, N.Y. (WKBW) - 14 wins in 52 games was not the plan heading into the 2017-2018 season. After an offseason filled with change and optimism the Buffalo Sabres are in the basement of the NHL for the fourth straight season.

Matthew Bové

✓

@Matt\_Bove

Sam Reinhart says he likes the group of leaders in the #Sabres locker room, despite having only 14 wins in 52 games this season @WKBW

1:10 PM - Feb 5, 2018

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See Matthew Bové's other Tweets

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At practice on Monday players were visibly frustrated on the ice, slamming sticks into the boards and hanging their heads when shots were missed and passes were botched. After the nearly hour-long session was over two buzzwords from previous years were once again uttered -- accountability and leadership.

"Yeah, the accountability is important," Jack Eichel told reporters. "We need to get to the point where if you're going to step up and say something you need to backup your actions and back up your words with actions and obviously not feel bad calling somebody out or stepping up and saying something and not feeling uncomfortable. It's all part of it and I think it's all part of maturing. I think we have a lot of young guys, myself included, but I think it's a part of growing up and becoming a pro and learning that it needs to go on every day and if something is not there then obviously you need to step up and say something and do something to change it."

Sabres head coach Phil Housley was also asked about accountability 15 minutes later and said he believes his team should be farther ahead at this point in the season.

Matthew Bové

✓

@Matt\_Bove

You have to respect the brutal honesty from Robin Lehner. The #Sabres have a lot of problems but for the majority of the season he's been solid, especially these last four games @WKBW

12:49 PM - Feb 5, 2018

216

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"I think that the players in there, they mean well, they want to do well," Housley added. "We all have to change and it's something that I'm continuing to learn throughout the season because I haven't been here a full season."

## **With Sabres searching for goals, Housley calls for shot mentality**

Sabres.com

Jourdon LaBarber

February 5, 2018

For one reason or another, wins at home have been hard to come by for the Buffalo Sabres this season. They've lost three straight games to open their five-game homestand after being shut out by the St. Louis Blues on Saturday, scoring a combined three goals in the process.

The fact that they have faltered at home after seemingly establishing their game during a three-game road trip in Western Canada, Ryan O'Reilly admits, is a bit backwards. Teams typically establish themselves at home and try to have it carry over to the road; the Sabres have done the opposite.

In reality, their loss to St. Louis wasn't all that different than their wins in Calgary, Edmonton and Vancouver. They showed a commitment to defense and limited opportunities against one of the best teams in the NHL, and for nearly 55 minutes the two teams remained tied without a goal.

The difference between their current home stretch and the success they had north of the border has been their lack of goal production, and Phil Housley believes he knows the root of the problem.

"The one thing I am seeing is we're not shooting the puck enough," the Sabres coach said. "There's a lot of opportunities that we're trying to make a play and we have to put more pucks to the net and we have to get more players there. We talked about that a lot.

"What it does is it creates offense, it creates a second opportunity. It changes defenses. And now they have to react to us. I think we need to continue to pound that message."

Sabres Now (2/5/18)

01:41 • February 5th, 2018

Buffalo's practice on Monday was partially dedicated to that end, with a heavy emphasis on battles in front of the net. The Sabres rank last in the NHL with 71 goals at 5-on-5, which Housley believes is the product of a lack of second-chance opportunities.

Creating those second chances not only requires getting bodies to the front of the net, but also a shot mentality.

"We cross that blue line, are we thinking shot and putting pucks to the net? It's a very simple game, but I don't think we have it," Housley said. "I think there's times we do. I thought we had it on the west coast swing. I think we're just trying to be too fine and too cute.

"You watch the highlights, it's puck going to the net and traffic. ... We've got to have more guys going there because you're going to find a way, it's going to hit you, you're going to get a rebound. Yeah, that's a tough place to play, but guys that go there get rewarded."

For players experiencing personal scoring droughts, those "dirty" goals are often the ones that turns things around.

"When you're struggling, you've just got to go back to volume and just try and throw everything to the net, get pucks, get bodies there and hope you get one off a shin pad or whatever," Kyle Okposo said. "Just get a break.

"You've got work for your break and then after that happens usually the chances start to come."

Tuesday is Hockey is for Everyone Night

The Sabres will host Hockey is for Everyone Night at KeyBank Center during their game against the Anaheim Ducks on Tuesday.

February is the NHL's annual Hockey is for Everyone month, which promotes the inclusion of players, coaches and fans of every race, religion, gender, sexual orientation, and those with disabilities.

O'Reilly is serving as Buffalo's team ambassador for the initiative. He spoke following practice on Monday about how being part of a family that fostered children - his parents, Brian and Bonnie, said they took in 47 kids over a 20-year span - formed his views on diversity.

Ep. 8: Ryan O'Reilly: All-Star  
04:39 • March 1st, 2016

"It was always, 'include everyone,'" O'Reilly said. "Everyone's together, everyone's a family, and it's a special thing to have that. I never really knew how important that was until I got older, and you see how lucky I was to have the family I have and the health and the privileges we had. To be able to share that with people was so cool.

"I hope I can give my kids that one day, to be able to experience that, to be able to get along with everyone who comes from different backgrounds or are struggling in certain areas of their life. It's something that's very important and I'm very thankful for."

More information on Hockey is for Everyone night can be found [here](#).

#### Lines at practice

9 Evander Kane - 90 Ryan O'Reilly - 21 Kyle Okposo  
28 Zemgus Girgensons - 15 Jack Eichel - 23 Sam Reinhart  
20 Scott Wilson - 71 Evan Rodrigues - 29 Jason Pominville  
67 Benoit Pouliot - 10 Jacob Josefson - 17 Jordan Nolan  
22 Johan Larsson

6 Marco Scandella - 55 Rasmus Ristolainen  
41 Justin Falk - 19 Jake McCabe  
82 Nathan Beaulieu - 8 Casey Nelson  
4 Josh Gorges - 93 Victor Antipin

40 Robin Lehner  
31 Chad Johnson

## **Bryson nets multi-goal game for Providence**

Sabres.com

Kris Baker

February 5, 2018

Providence College defenseman Jacob Bryson (2017, fourth round) produced the first two-goal game of his collegiate career Saturday in the Friars 4-3 loss at Vermont.

The sophomore got Providence on the board just 3:28 into the opening frame when he intercepted a pass inside the blue line and waltzed in to bury a wrist shot on the blocker side to make it a 1-0 game.

Later in the second period, Bryson gained the zone and stickhandled to the middle of the ice before unloading a quick shot for his second tally of the night to briefly give the Friars a 3-2 lead.

Kris Baker

@SabresProspects

Providence D Jacob Bryson scores twice Saturday, goals #2 and 3 on the year, in the Friars' loss at UVM. That has to be Bryson's first two-goal game in a while. Didn't get one last year as a freshman. Didn't do it in Omaha (USHL). He's more of an assist machine. #Sabres

9:40 AM - Feb 4, 2018

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A puck-moving defender who keys the power play, Bryson produced 20 points last season as a freshman, including 17 helpers which ranked third in assists among all Hockey East rookie rearguards.

This season, Bryson has appeared in all 30 of the Friars' games while wearing an "A" on his jersey, fetching three goals while co-leading the team with 18 assists. Half of Bryson's assists have come with the man advantage. He is averaging just over two shots on goal per game with 62 total.

OHL

After notching one assist in Friday's 7-1 victory over Oshawa, Kingston forward Cliff Pu (2016, third round) showed his deft hand-to-eye coordination Saturday as he batted a pass out of mid-air for his 22nd goal of the season as the Fronts got past Niagara 5-3.

Kris Baker

@SabresProspects

Kingston's Cliff Pu bats a pass out of mid-air for the goal as part of his four-point night in a win over Niagara. Pu has 22 goals/63 points at the 50-game mark, including 18 points (6+12) in 14 games since being dealt to the Fronts. #Sabres

9:23 AM - Feb 4, 2018

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Pu, who also added three assists in the victory for his third four-point game of the season, has points in four-straight contests to boost his season total to 63 (22+41) in 50 appearances split between Kingston and London.

Peterborough defenseman Austin Osmanski (2016, seventh round) produced seven shots on goal last week, including a season-high five Saturday versus Oshawa as the Petes lost three more games to extend their winless skid to nine. Osmanski has one goal, 14 points, and a minus-11 rating in 48 games.

## WHL

Red Deer winger Brandon Hagel (2016, sixth round) found the score sheet in three of the week's four games, highlighted by the game-winning goal in Friday's 3-1 win at Moose Jaw. The marker was Hagel's first in 10 games since his return from a six-week injury absence.

Kris Baker

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Brandon Hagel's eighth goal of the year and first since 11/25 proved to be the game-winner last night in Red Deer's 3-1 win at Moose Jaw. Hagel 1+5 in 10 games since missing six weeks with upper-body injury. #Sabres

3:33 PM - Feb 3, 2018

10

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Hagel, who also produced a pair of assists including one on the overtime winner in Tuesday's 4-3 victory over Prince Albert, has 30 points (8+22) in 38 games this season for the struggling Rebels.

Prince Albert defenseman Vojtech Budik (2016, fifth round) earned one assist Tuesday to extend his career-long point streak to seven games as Prince Albert fell to Red Deer 4-3 in overtime.

Budik saw his streak come to an end Friday in the Raiders' 5-3 win over Saskatoon, and he was again kept off the score sheet the next night in a 5-4 loss at Regina.

Despite the two-game cool down, Budik has amassed 21 points in his last 20 contests. For the season, the Czech stay-at-home has eight goals and 26 points in 45 games.

## QMJHL

Vasily Glotov (2016, seventh round) went without a point in losses to Drummondville and Victoriaville, but got back on track Sunday with the game-winning goal plus an assist to guide Shawinigan to a 3-2 victory over Rimouski.

Kris Baker

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LE BUUUUUUT: Vasily Glotov scores the game-winner with 3:00 left in regulation to give Shawinigan the 3-2 win over Rimouski. Goal #25 on the year for the kid, t-12th among QMJHL scorers.

10:59 AM - Feb 5, 2018

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Glotov has played in 46 games for the Cataractes, pouring in a team-leading 25 goals along with 10 assists.

## NCAA

Following a weekend off, a rested Casey Mittelstadt (2017, first round) will look to build on his current three-game point streak when Minnesota begins a Big Ten Hockey set at Wisconsin on Friday. Mittelstadt has 22 point points (8+14) through his first 26 collegiate contests.

William Borgen (2015, fourth round) struck a one-timer for a power-play goal Friday as St. Cloud State completed the sweep of Omaha with a 6-2 triumph.

Kris Baker

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Will Borgen works the PP point, calls for it and connects on a one-timer for his second goal and 12th point of the year as SCSU takes down Omaha. Next stop for Borgen - PyeongChang. #USA #Sabres

10:40 AM - Feb 4, 2018

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Borgen, who logged a plus-2 rating in Friday's 5-2 win over the Mavericks, completes his pre-Olympic schedule with two goals, 12 points, and a plus-10 rating in 26 games.

Borgen's teammate at St. Cloud State, senior forward Judd Peterson (2012, seventh round), notched his fourth goal of the year Friday and added an assist as the Huskies ran past Omaha 5-2.

Peterson was unable to produce the next night as St. Cloud State closed out the Mavericks 6-2. Peterson has 14 points (4+10) with eight games left on the NCHC schedule.

In Big Ten Hockey action, freshman standout Linus Weissbach (2017, seventh round) notched a pair of helpers Friday as Wisconsin dropped a 5-3 decision at Michigan.

Weissbach remained productive Saturday, picking up another helper to extend his point streak to three games in the Badgers' 4-3 win over the Wolverines.

Weissbach has played in 28 of Wisconsin's 31 games, scoring eight goals and 22 points. He has been sharp on the power play with 10 points (3+7) coming with the man-advantage.

In Hockey East action, third-year forward Christopher Brown (2014, sixth round) was held without a point Friday as Boston College fell to Connecticut 5-2. In 27 games, Brown has collected six goals and 15 points for an Eagles team clinging to first place in the Hockey East standings.

Boston College defenseman Casey Fitzgerald (2016, third round) was blanked in the loss to Connecticut, leaving the defender with 14 points (4+10) in 26 appearances.

Ivan Chukarov (2015, seventh round) contributed two shots on goal over the weekend as Massachusetts extended their winless skid to six games with losses to Boston University and New Hampshire.

Chukarov missed the first nine dates on the schedule with an injury, but has recorded five assists and 22 shots on goal in 20 games since returning.

Penn State sophomore forward Brett Murray (2016, fourth round) remained out of action last week as the Nittany Lions played to a loss and a tie with Notre Dame.

Murray, who has played in just one of Penn State's last dozen games since Dec. 2, has captured five points (1+4) in 17 contests.

Philip Nyberg (2016, fifth round) registered four shots on goal Friday as Connecticut defeated Boston College 5-3, and did not play in Saturday's 6-4 loss at Brown. Through 17 outings, Nyberg has picked up two goals and three points while leading Huskies defenders with a plus-6 rating.

Europe

Rasmus Asplund (2016, second round) drew the primary assist on the overtime winner Saturday as Farjestad BK skated past Frolunda HC 5-4, giving the crafty two-way centerman 27 points (7+20) through 41 appearances.

Frolunda HC winger Victor Olofsson (2014, seventh round) earned an assist in Saturday's 5-4 overtime loss to Farjestad BK.

Olofsson, who began the week without points as his club split a home-and-home set with Djurgarden IF, remains tied for the league lead with 22 goals as part of his 35-point total through 42 contests.

Djurgarden IF centerman Marcus Davidsson (2017, second round) missed the week's three games with an unspecified injury. Through 30 games, Davidsson has amassed six goals, 14 points, and a shiny plus-13 rating.

In Finland, LeKi goaltender Ukko-Pekka Luukkonen (2017, second round) allowed four goals on 29 shots Saturday in a 4-1 loss to Jokipojat. Luukkonen has won 11 starts while posting a 2.87 goals-against average and a .910 save percentage.

Ilves defenseman Oskari Laaksonen (2017, third round) saw limited work last week as his club won two Liiga tilts in three tries.

The 18-year-old Laaksonen has now appeared in 11 top-league contests, notching one assist while averaging 9:35 of work per outing.

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.

## Sharpen Up: February 5, 2018

Sabres.com

Chris Ryndak

February 5, 2018

We'll have full practice coverage for you here on Sabres.com today as Buffalo returns to the ice. They're in the midst of a five-game homestand that continues tomorrow night against the Anaheim Ducks. We'll be Hockey Is For Everyone Night. Stay tuned for more details on that.

Here's what you need to know.

Buffalo is coming off a 1-0 loss to the St. Louis Blues on Saturday. Robin Lehner stopped 32 of 33 shots (.970), improving to 120-for-123 (.976) in his last four games.

Sabres blanked by Blues, 1-0

03:31 • February 3rd, 2018

From the Lexus Postgame Report...

With two goalies playing at the top of their games and two teams knotted in a scoreless tie, it became evident as the third period drew closer to its end that the winner between the Buffalo Sabres and the St. Louis Blues at KeyBank Center on Saturday night could come down to one decisive bounce.

Actually, it came down to three. Carl Gunnarsson roofed a shot through traffic past Robin Lehner to put the Blues on the board with 5:41 remaining, while Sam Reinhart and Rasmus Ristolainen each came inches from tying the game in the final minute of a 1-0 loss for the Sabres.

Robin Lehner Postgame (2/3/18)

02:32 • February 3rd, 2018

It was a more complete effort than their loss to Florida on Thursday, but simply competing against one of the NHL's top teams was of little consolation for Jack Eichel and the other players who spoke afterward.

Jack Eichel Postgame (2/3/18)

02:33 • February 3rd, 2018

"As a group, we can't be satisfied with playing well against a good hockey team," Eichel said. "Those are games where you need to find a way to get a goal, come up big. Someone's got to step up there. Myself, I got to step up and get something there."

Sam Reinhart Postgame (2/3/18)

01:44 • February 3rd, 2018

"The first 10 minutes of the third, I don't think I've ever seen a span like that out of a goaltender," Reinhart said.

Lehner's pad save stones Schenn

00:21 • February 3rd, 2018

Lehner improved to 120-for-123 (.976) on save opportunities in his last four games, a stretch that includes back-to-back shutouts in Edmonton and Vancouver last week.

Phil Housley Postgame (2/3/18)

03:06 • February 3rd, 2018

"I really liked the way he played tonight," coach Phil Housley said. "He made some key saves for us at critical times of the game. He's just got to continue to play that way and gain some confidence from this game even though we didn't get the result we wanted. I thought it was a good step in the right direction."

Coming up today

[View image on Twitter](#)

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Buffalo Sabres



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Today's the day.

Join us for the @Unyts Blood Drive at @KeyBankCtr <http://unyts.org/teamunyts>

9:39 AM - Feb 5, 2018

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Kris Baker's Sabres Prospects Report will be ready to go later this morning.

We'll also have full coverage of today's practice at HarborCenter for you.