



# **Buffalo Sabres**

## **Daily Press Clips**

*March 8, 2018*

## Flames snap 4-game skid with 5-1 win over Sabres

Associated Press

John Wawrow

March 8, 2018

BUFFALO, N.Y. (AP) — Flames rookie goalie David Rittich cared little about missing out on his first career shutout bid with 18 seconds left.

The first 25 shots he stopped mattered more — and Calgary snapping a four-game skid to gain ground in a tightly contested Western Conference playoff race with a 5-1 win over the Buffalo Sabres on Wednesday night.

“How we get the two points, that’s more important right now,” said Rittich, who bounced back after a six-game stretch during which he went 1-4-1 and allowed 24 goals.

“Yeah, it’s big for me right now,” he added. “I had a couple, I’m not sure if it was bad, but the scores were terrible. Yeah, it’s a nice comeback.”

Rittich’s only blemish was allowing Casey Nelson’s goal in the closing moments.

Otherwise, Sam Bennett, Mark Jankowski and Mark Giordano each had a goal and an assist, while Sean Monahan and Dougie Hamilton also scored for Calgary.

Coming off a 4-3 overtime loss at Pittsburgh on Monday, the Flames improved to 1-3-1 in their past five. With 76 points, Calgary jumped into 10th place, a point ahead of idle St. Louis, and within one of Los Angeles and Colorado.

The Flames won at Buffalo for just the second time in 14 trips (2-8-3 and a tie), and first time in regulation since a 3-1 win on March 15, 1996.

The way Calgary dominated a game it outshot Buffalo 41-26 had coach Glen Gulutzan believing the Flames might be heating up just in time to mount a late-season playoff push.

“You need traction,” he said.

“Our team, when they get confident, they can get on a real good run. We’ve done it before,” Gulutzan added. “Every little step is a big step for us.”

The Flames took control in an opening period in which they outshot Buffalo 17-6.

Bennett scored 5:35 in after a Sabres breakdown in front of their own net. Bennett drove to the net to collect a loose puck and snapped it over goalie Chad Johnson, who was flat on his back.

Three minutes later, Bennett set up Jankowski’s goal by driving up the left wing and entering the Sabres zone. He fed a pass into the middle, where Jankowski used Nelson as a screen and snapped a 40-footer that sneaked in under Johnson’s left arm.

Calgary didn’t let up during a three-goal second period.

Giordano and Monahan scored 61 seconds apart to put Calgary up 4-0 with 13:59 left and chase Johnson, who finished with 18 saves.

Hamilton then beat Robin Lehner with a shot inside the right post for a power-play goal with 1:21 left in the period.

Buffalo squandered a chance to win three straight at home for the first time since a 4-0 run in January 2017, and came out inexplicably flat two days after a 5-3 win over Toronto.

“It’s difficult to swallow,” coach Phil Housley said, by saying the Sabres failed to match the Flames intensity.

“We talked about their desperation. You know, they’re saying these are their playoff lives, these next two games on the road,” Housley said. “And I don’t think we respected that.”

Rittich was hardly tested, though his best save came three minutes into second period, when he got his left shoulder up to stop Jason Pominville’s one-timer from the left circle during a Sabres power play.

NOTES: The Sabres called up C Danny O’Regan from AHL Rochester to fill in after Kyle Criscuolo sustained upper-body injury in a 5-3 win against Toronto on Monday. O’Regan was acquired in the trade that sent Evander Kane to San Jose last week. ... Flames LW Johnny Gaudreau had two assists in playing his 300th career game. ... Gaudreau’s 56 assists this season are the most by a Flames player since Alex Tanguay had 59 in 2006-07. ... The Flames once went 0-11 and a tie in 12 straight trips to Buffalo from March 11, 1979, when they were still in Atlanta, to Nov. 10, 1985.

UP NEXT

Flames: Close three-game road trip at Ottawa Senators on Friday.

Sabres: At Ottawa on Thursday.

## **It was first NHL game for Zay Jones, and Sabres were putrid**

The Buffalo News

By John Vogl

March 7, 2018

Zay Jones announced he was going to his first NHL game. Fans warned the Buffalo Bills receiver what he might see.

The Sabres delivered, living down to their putrescent ways.

Apparently not fond of their recent prosperity, the Sabres descended back into the depths of uninspired, unwatchable hockey. Calgary administered a 5-1 beatdown that sent the KeyBank Center crowd to an early exit. The Sabres deserved to get shut out, but Casey Nelson scored with 17.1 seconds left.

"From top to bottom, it was really ugly," Sabres coach Phil Housley said.

The Sabres had won four of six, but they weren't fooling the folks who'd long ago given up on this squad. When Jones tweeted his plans for the night, the replies included:

"Props to you for supporting your fellow local pro teams. Condolences for what you are likely to witness."

"Don't have too many expectations. You'll enjoy it more."

"I'm sorry dude."

"Be prepared for your eyes to bleed."

"Best to be intoxicated before entering there."

"Trust me, hockey is better than what you're about to see."

"Please please PLEASE don't judge the entire sport by what you are most likely about to witness."

"Don't waste your time."

Despite the no-show by the home team – a phrase that has been uttered before – Jones said he had an awesome experience. But what would alternate captain Ryan O'Reilly say to Jones after he witnessed that as his first NHL game?

"I hope he's coming to another one, that's for sure," O'Reilly said. "That wasn't what we wanted. It's disappointing. We have a lot better than that."

Sabres left wing Zemgus Girgensons is a Bills backer. What would he say to Jones?

"He probably should come to another one," Girgensons said. "That's not a great one to see. Maybe he decides to come back for another one."

Judging by the seats that have emptied this season, "Maybe he decides to come back for another one" should replace "Hockey Heaven" as a Sabres catchphrase.

The Wraparound: Flames 5, Sabres 1

"You look at the games like Tampa, Boston and Toronto, they're easy to get up for," Housley said. "Calgary comes in here, which is a desperate team, and we didn't match that desperation. That's top to bottom."

"This is the learning part of this team is measuring your consistency game in and game out. You can say it was an off night. I disagree. We had a little bit too much cheat, not enough compete. We were losing puck battles all around, and that's what's going to happen. That's the result you're going to get."

The Sabres had a pulse-quickenning victory over archrival Toronto on Monday. There was sure to be some letdown. It was a total letdown.

"They outworked us," Girgensons said. "They outplayed us. We just weren't ready, I guess. That's pretty much it. We weren't ready to go."

Inside the Sabres: It comes down to a matter of respect

It was 2-0 after one period as Calgary vaulted to a 17-6 shot advantage. The Flames scored three times in the second period, with Housley giving a mercy hook to starting goaltender Chad Johnson after the fourth goal.

"We got what we deserved," said Johnson, who lost to his former team. "The bigger thing is that it's on home ice. That's more important to me. At the end of the day, I don't care who I'm playing. At the end of the day, I want to have a good effort at home.

"I think we all wanted to have a good effort at home. It didn't happen. That to me is more disappointing."

It was disappointing for nearly everyone in Buffalo who watched, whether it was their first game or their last.

"It's a good lesson for us, though," O'Reilly said. "What worked the day before isn't going to work today. You've got to find a new way to come out and have jump, and we just didn't bring it."

## **Sabres Notebook: O'Regan wants to show talent in wake of trade**

The Buffalo News

By Mike Harrington

March 7, 2018

Danny O'Regan might make his Sabres debut Thursday night in Ottawa and the forward acquired last week from San Jose knows he's not going to slip into the Buffalo lineup unnoticed. Especially after being the lone current player acquired for Evander Kane, Buffalo's top rental at the deadline.

"I try not to put that pressure on myself but I know because I'm part of the Evander Kane trade – it's not like it was a 1-for-1 deal – I definitely want to show the organization I can play hockey," O'Regan said Wednesday in KeyBank Center. "I'm going to try to do my best, work hard, compete, play fast and create some offense."

O'Regan, 24, was the AHL Rookie of the Year last season after collecting 23 goals and 58 points for the San Jose Barracuda. He scored twice in his three games in Rochester after not registering a goal in 19 games with the Sharks. He was called up from the Amerks on Wednesday and was a healthy scratch for the game against the Calgary Flames. Buffalo coach Phil Housley would only say "could be" when asked if O'Regan's debut might come against the Senators in Canadian Tire Centre.

"I could see him getting some games in the future here," Housley said. "He's just a really good solid prospect for us and he's going to get an opportunity."

The Sabres needed an extra forward after Kyle Criscuolo suffered a shoulder injury Monday against Toronto that will sideline him 4-6 weeks. Evan Rodrigues is still out with what's believed to be rib issues so Seth Griffith returned to the lineup and O'Regan was recalled.

When the trade with the San Jose Sharks went down an hour before the NHL's Feb. 26 trade deadline, O'Regan said the first people he heard from were some family members. The next two to text: Former Boston University linemates, and now current Sabres teammates, Rodrigues and Jack Eichel.

"They're both good friends and I knew they'd make me feel right at home since I got here," O'Regan said. "They've been great so far. ... Jack called right away, too. So I talked to those guys and they were excited. And I was just as excited to be here."

O'Regan admitted the trade took him by surprise given the season he had last year in the AHL.

"I loved playing in San Jose. They're a great organization but I was really excited to start here," he said. "This organization has been just great so far. Rochester was a great week for me to get settled and get used to some of the systems how they want to play around here.

"I thought it was a good team. I liked the way they play. They play hard, play fast. A lot of good guys in the room. It's hard hockey, creating a lot of offense so it's a fun system to be in."

O'Regan played on the same line as Eichel and Rodrigues during BU's run to the 2015 Frozen Four championship game. While he had been teammates with Rodrigues, it was a new experience playing with Eichel, who emerged as the Hobey Baker Award winner and one of the greatest freshmen in NCAA history.

"Jack was consistently just the best player in the country," O'Regan said. "It was kind of unfair. He was supposed to be in high school and he was just dominant playing against guys six years older than him. It was really cool, fun to play with him and just watch him sometimes. You get caught out there watching."

If Eichel comes back from his high ankle sprain later this month, might the band get back together as a trio for a few shifts?

"We've joked around. Me and Evan were talking about it," O'Regan said. "It creeps in but it's not something I'm looking to have happen next week. I've got to earn my spot, stay up here and get myself in the lineup. If that day comes, I think we'll get the chemistry back right away. Until then I just have to take care of business."

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Sabres center Ryan O'Reilly came in at No. 5 on the list of the NHL's most underrated players as part of an annual survey of more than 500 members released Wednesday by the NHL Players Association.

Washington's Nicklas Backstrom led the way with 8.6 percent of the vote, followed by St. Louis' Jaden Schwartz (6.8), Tampa Bay's Nikita Kucherov (6.2), Florida's Aleksander Barkov (6.0) and O'Reilly (2.3).

O'Reilly entered Wednesday with 19 goals, 30 assists and 49 points while playing 65 of the Sabres' 66 games this season. He had 12 points in his last 11 games and a four-game point streak that was tied for his longest of the season.

O'Reilly led the NHL in faceoff wins (1,007) and percentage (60.7) and he's on pace to finish second in victories in the circle all-time. The record is currently held by Carolina's Rod Brind'Amour with 1,268 in 2005-06. The league began tracking faceoffs in 1997.

Two former Sabres captains were listed in the category of "Which current assistant coach should be the next head coach?" Steve Ott, in his first year behind the bench in St. Louis, finished tied for third in the voting at 5.1 percent. Former Sabres coach Lindy Ruff, in his first season with the New York Rangers, was fifth at 4.2 percent. Toronto's D.J. Smith won that category at 8.3 percent.

South Buffalo's Patrick Kane of Chicago got several nods in the poll. He finished third to Sidney Crosby and Connor McDavid for "Most difficult player to play against" and third behind the same pair for "Most difficult forward to play against." He finished fourth behind Crosby, McDavid and Montreal goalie Carey Price as the answer to the question, "If you need to win one game, who is the No. 1 player (any position) you would want on your team?"

Former Sabres goalie Dominik Hasek was named No. 3 goalie all-time, getting 13.6 percent of the vote. Patrick Roy (39.3) and Martin Brodeur (33.2) were 1-2.

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Calgary star Johnny Gaudreau played in his 300th NHL game here Wednesday, and entered it fourth in the NHL with 54 assists and tied for ninth in points with 74. It's already a career-high in assists for Gaudreau, 24, the Boston College product and summer workout partner of Eichel. Gaudreau's career high in points is 78, set two years ago.

"He's a world-class player. He uses his speed, his vision, and his hockey sense is through the chart," said Sabres coach Phil Housley. "He creates things by using his speed and quickness to get away and create separation. And he has a terrific shot. He knows where to put it."

Sabres goalie Chad Johnson played with Gaudreau in Calgary last year and marveled at how the 5-foot-9, 157-pounder can do the same things in games that he does in practices.

"He can take games over. He just has that extra passion," Johnson said. "When he gets the puck and he wants it late in the game, he has that little extra to do things on his own. It's hard to do in this league to have a guy take over, control the puck and make plays when it counts. He's that guy, real clutch when they need him to be in big moments."

Gaudreau entered Wednesday's game second in the NHL in road points with 42 in 34 games (Tampa Bay's Nikita Kucherov was the leader with 45). The figure included a league-high 31 assists.

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The Sabres' 2-1 win Jan. 22 in Calgary was Buffalo's first in the Scotiabank Saddledome since 2003 and a rare victory for a road team in the series. The home side entered Wednesday having won 18 of the last 21 meetings. The Flames, in fact, were seeking their first regulation win ever in KeyBank Center as Buffalo was 11-0-1-1 against them. The lone Calgary win was an overtime triumph in 2013.

## **The Wraparound: Flames 5, Sabres 1**

The Buffalo News

By John Vogl

March 7, 2018

The Calgary Flames had never won in KeyBank Center. They made up for lost time as the Buffalo Sabres embarrassed their logo again.

The Flames trounced the Sabres on Wednesday, picking up a 5-1 victory. The Sabres watched the Flames skate around for good chunks of the game, tossing away the goodwill garnered from Monday's intense victory over Toronto.

Calgary hadn't won in regulation in Buffalo since March 15, 1996, in Memorial Auditorium. The Sabres were 11-0-2 in the previous 13 meetings downtown, part of a run of 17-3-2 in the last 22 home games.

As the Sabres have proved this season, past success means little. The boos reminded them.

The Sabres ended a shutout bid by David Rittich on a goal by Casey Nelson with only 17.1 seconds to play.

Sleepy start: The first period was an ugly one for Buffalo. They were down, 2-0, after 8:35. Calgary rolled up shot advantages of 12-3, 15-5 and finished the period with a 17-6 advantage.

In front: The puck continually found the front of the net in the opening minutes, and Sam Bennett connected with 5:35 gone. After the puck bounced off the back boards, Flames forward Mark Jankowski slipped it through goaltender Chad Johnson to the top of the crease. Bennett was alone to pounce on his 10th goal of the season.

Doubling up: Jankowski added a goal to his assist three minutes later. His shot from the top of the left circle slipped under Johnson's arm for a 2-0 lead.

Tripling up: Calgary opened its 3-0 lead with five minutes gone in the second. It won a faceoff in the Sabres' zone, and defenseman Mark Giordano carried the puck to the center of the blue line. He fired a slap shot that bounced off Sabres right wing Jason Pominville in the high slot and went through Johnson's pads.

Quadrupling up: The Sabres failed to account for the Flames' leading scorers, which was a bad move. Calgary left wing Johnny Gaudreau picked up his 55th assist with a cross-ice pass to Sean Monahan, who buried his 30th goal.

That's it: Johnson went to the bench in favor of Robin Lehner following Monahan's goal with 6:01 gone in the second. The netminder stopped 18 of 22 shots while his teammates stood around.

Quintupling up: Giordano again fired from the point during a Calgary power play, and the puck bounced off a player in front. It went directly to Dougie Hamilton, who made it 5-0 with 1:21 left in the second.

Punch, not snow: Flames scorer/agitator Matthew Tkachuk skated toward Lehner after the goalie covered a puck and attempted to spray Lehner with ice shavings. Lehner quickly thrust his left glove into Tkachuk's jaw, and Sabres forward Jordan Nolan followed with a hit that knocked down Tkachuk.

Lehner earned a two-minute roughing penalty that led to Hamilton's goal.

Intriguing scratch: The Sabres welcomed recent trade-acquisition Danny O'Regan to the team, recalling him from Rochester in the morning. He didn't play, however, as the Sabres reinserted Seth Griffith. O'Regan, acquired as part of the Evander Kane trade to San Jose, took part in the pregame warm-ups.

Defensemen Josh Gorges and Justin Falk also sat.

Counting the house: The Sabres announced 17,773 tickets sold. The crowd included Bills wide receiver Zay Jones, who was attending his first NHL game.

Next: The Sabres boarded their charter after the game and flew to Ottawa, where they'll face the Senators on Thursday night. Buffalo will host the Vegas Golden Knights on Saturday in the expansion team's inaugural visit.

## **Sabres throttled by Calgary 5-1**

The Sabres are dominated from start to finish on home ice

WGR550

PAT MALACARO

MARCH 07, 2018

The Calgary Flames scored two quick goals in the first period and never looked back in their 5-1 win over the Buffalo Sabres on Wednesday night at KeyBank Center.

Here's how the game broke down:

First Period:

16:54 - Chad Johnson had to be big for the Sabres here early, thanks to a defensive zone turnover that nearly turned disastrous. This game is following the mold of Monday's game early.

14:25 - FLAMES GOAL. Another fire drill in the Buffalo zone results in the game's first goal. Sam Bennett is able to find a loose puck as Chad Johnson was not quite in good position in his crease after making the first save. Buffalo now trails by a goal. 1-0 CGY.

11:25 - FLAMES GOAL. This game is going from bad to worse for Buffalo and Johnson in this game. Mark Jankowski is able to sneak a shot through the Sabres' netminder and double the Calgary lead. 2-0 CGY.

6:51 - The Sabres have finally settled down and are moving the puck better than early in the game. Calgary has been swarming, looking for that quick third goal, but have not been able to get it. Shots on goal favor the Flames, 12-3.

2:28 - This is a period that Buffalo is going to want to forget, and fast. I am sure Phil Housley is not pleased with what he is seeing from behind the bench.

End of Period

Goal Summary:

BUF: NONE

CGY: 5:35 - Sam Bennett (10) (Mark Jankowski, Travis Hamonic). 8:35 - Mark Jankowski (12) (Sam Bennett, T.J. Brodie)

Penalty Summary:

BUF: NONE

CGY: NONE

Shots on Goal:

BUF - 6, CGY - 17

Second Period:

17:39 - Buffalo will head to the man advantage for the first time tonight as Dougie Hamilton is called for high sticking. It is the first penalty of the game, period. There haven't really been many instances where an infraction could have been called so far.

15:27 - The power play is done, and the best chance actually came for Calgary. Ryan O'Reilly turned the puck over at the Flames' blue line and Jankowski was off to the races on a breakaway. Credit Johnson with a good pad save to keep the score at a two-goal deficit for Buffalo.

15:00 - FLAMES GOAL. If you are not going to block the shot, get the heck out of the way. I think almost any goaltender will tell you that. Zemgus Girgensons drops to a knee in the slot on Mark Giordano's shot from the point and it hits the Buffalo forward on its way into the net. 3-0 CGY.

13:59 - FLAMES GOAL. In comes Robin Lehner as Calgary scores their fourth goal of the game. There was nothing Chad Johnson could do as Sean Monahan was by himself at the side of the net and slammed home his 30th of the year. 4-0 CGY.

4:52 - Housley is trying different combinations on defense as this game moves along:

Paul Hamilton

✓

@pham1717

Guhle now with Ristolainen, Scandella with Nelson.

8:54 PM - Mar 7, 2018

9

See Paul Hamilton's other Tweets

Twitter Ads info and privacy

1:21 - FLAMES GOAL. Calgary gets a power play goal on their first opportunity of the night. Dougie Hamilton is able to get the score on the man advantage. 5-0 CGY.

End of Period

Goal Summary:

BUF: NONE

CGY: 5:00 - Mark Giordano (12) (Micheal Ferland). 6:01 - Sean Monahan (30) (Johnny Gaudreau, T.J. Brodie). 18:39 - Dougie Hamilton (15) (Mark Giordano, Johnny Gaudreau)

Penalty Summary:

BUF: 15:20 - Nick Baptiste (2 min., roughing). 17:50 - Robin Lehner (2 min., roughing)

CGY: 2:21 - Dougie Hamilton (2 min., high sticking). 6:38 - Mikael Backlund (2 min., delay of game). 15:20 - Curtis Lazar (2 min., roughing). 15:20 - Curtis Lazar (2 min., roughing)

Shots on Goal:

BUF - 11 (17), CGY - 14 (31)

Third Period:

16:49 - Buffalo is finally getting some sustained zone time early in this period, but it is going to be too little, too late.

10:02 - We finally saw Buffalo's frustrations boil over as Jacob Josefson was called for slashing. After the whistle was blown several players got into a minor scrum that was broken up quickly.

5:31 - We are to the point in the night where Calgary is just looking to bleed the minutes and seconds off of the clock and get this game over with. We are coming up on the time where it is OK to say the s word for David Rittich.

3:26 - The s word is shutout. Rittich is very close to notching the shutout for the Flames tonight.

:17.1 - SABRES GOAL. The shutout is gone for David Rittich as Casey Nelson scores for Buffalo. 5-1 CGY.

End of Game

Calgary 5, Buffalo 1

Goal Summary:

BUF: 19:42 - Casey Nelson (2) (Jason Pominville, Scott Wilson)

CGY: NONE

Penalty Summary:

BUF: 9:04 - Jacob Josefson (2 min., slashing)

CGY: NONE

Shots on Goal:

BUF - 9 (26), CGY - 10 (41)

Goalies:

BUF: Chad Johnson - 18 saves; Robin Lehner - 18 saves

CGY: David Rittich - 25 saves

Power Plays:

BUF: 0 for 3 (0%)

CGY: 1 for 2 (50%)

Three Stars:

Sam Bennett - CGY

Johnny Gaudreau - CGY

Mark Jankowski - CGY

What's Next:

The Sabres will get right on a plane and go to Ottawa to face the Senators on Thursday. It will be the third game of four this week for the blue and gold. The puck drops at 7:30 p.m. between the two teams on the flagship home of the Sabres Radio Network - WGR Sports Radio 550. Pre-game coverage with Mike Schopp and the Bulldog begins at 6:30 p.m.

## **Sabres make Johnson look bad in front of his old team with a horrible effort**

The former Flame got pulled after giving up four goals.

WGR550

PAUL HAMILTON

MARCH 07, 2018

Buffalo, NY (WGR 550) - Chad Johnson came into this game 6-2-0 since winning in Calgary on Jan. 22. He's earned starts that he wasn't going to get and had beaten some very good teams in Anaheim, Tampa Bay, Boston and Toronto. Johnson didn't want to take that much of the credit, "You start winning games and I can't say enough about the way the guys are playing in front of me, from the Calgary game on, (the game in Calgary) if you take the time to watch the games before that, the Jersey game, Vegas, Pittsburgh, you know all those games how they played out is completely different."

Different is right. Until this game, Johnson has been able to see shots because the defense is getting to the battle early and the battle isn't going on in front of him as shots are coming.

That all went out the window in the first 20 minutes as the Sabres weren't moving their feet and did a lot of standing around. This game looked like a Sabre game in October and November.

Johnson made a great sweeping save with his stick on Mark Jankowski, but Johan Larsson and Jason Pominville didn't react until a wide open Sam Bennett had scored the goal.

Just three minutes later, Jankowski came down the slot and beat the former Flame on the glove side on a shot that he'd want back. I give him a pass on that one, because it's been a long while since Johnson has had one like that.

Johnson had to be very sharp for the rest of the period as he had Michael Frolik in alone down the slot not once, but twice and he made the save. Johnson saw 17 shots come his way while the rookie at the other end, David Rittich had a really easy time with six saves.

The Sabres had three pretty good chances that shot high or wide and Jordan Nolan had a great chance where he didn't even shoot.

The second period wasn't much different as Buffalo got an early power play only to have Ryan O'Reilly coughed the puck up to Jankowski. Johnson looked real good stopping the breakaway.

After that, it really went sideways and none of it was Johnson's fault. Mark Giordano's shot went in off of Zemgus Girgensons who went down to block it and only got a partial piece.

I was just thinking it's 3-0 and Johnny Gaudreau and Sean Monahan haven't even been a part of it. That ended 1:01 later when Gaudreau found a wide open Monahan for a one-timer and his 30th goal.

Johnson left playing just 26:01 making 18 saves on 22 shots. I would blame him for one of the four goals and even that one, he hasn't given a goal like that up in a long time. Johnson was great in a 2-1 overtime victory over his old team in Calgary and I'm sure he's very upset about being pulled this time against his hometown team. Just as he thanked his teammate for his winning streak, he can thank them for this one too.

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

Chad Johnson, Ryan O'Reilly, Casey Nelson and Phil Housley address the media after the 5-1 loss to Calgary  
WGR550  
MARCH 07, 2018

On Wednesday night the Calgary Flames poured it on as visitors to KeyBank Center in Buffalo, NY. Shooting early and scoring often, the Flames crushed the Sabres by a final score of 5-1.

Calgary forwards Sam Bennett, Johnny Gaudreau and Mark Jankowski all registered two points, while defensemen T.J. Brodie and Mark Giordano each added to the barrage with a pair of points, as well.

Buffalo starting goaltender Chad Johnson allowed four goals on 22 shots before being pulled in favor of Robin Lehner six minutes into the second period. The blue and gold were able to spoil the shutout with 17.1 seconds left in regulation on the back of Casey Nelson's second goal of the year.

Go inside the locker room to hear from Chad Johnson, Ryan O'Reilly, Casey Nelson and Phil Housley following the loss.

Chad Johnson:

On the game: "[Calgary] got some bounces that just found their way through. It wasn't a very good game. Everyone could see it. I didn't have a good game and I have to rebound from this. We have to move on."

Calgary was hungrier: "They wanted it more than us and we got exactly what we deserved."

AUDIO: <http://www.wgr550.com/media/audio-channel/03-07-chad-johnson-post-game>

Ryan O'Reilly:

Attacked right off the bat: "It wasn't good right from the start. It's a lesson for us, though. What may have worked the day before may not work anymore."

Mental game: "We got caught thinking too much. We weren't playing loose, the way we had been that brought us some success. We have to get back to that, otherwise teams will continue to skate all around us."

AUDIO: <http://www.wgr550.com/media/audio-channel/03-07-ryan-oreilly-post-game>

Casey Nelson:

Lack of execution: "We were fumbling the puck and failed to communicate from the get-go. We were standing still a ton, not keeping our feet moving all the time."

Emotional letdown after a huge win over Toronto: "It's hard on you, but we've got more games ahead to get things right."

AUDIO: <http://www.wgr550.com/media/audio-channel/03-07-casey-nelson-post-game>

Phil Housley:

Bystanders: "That's a good phrase for it: standing around watching. From top to bottom, it was really ugly. You think we're going in the right direction and I understand we had an emotional win over Toronto, but it just shows with a desperate team [like Calgary] can do to us just days later."

Jekyll and Hyde: "For us it's about measuring consistency on a game-to-game basis. It's easy to say tonight was just an 'off night', but I disagree. Too many guys were playing lax and opted to 'cheat-to-compete' rather than giving it their all."

AUDIO: <http://www.wgr550.com/media/audio-channel/03-07-phil-housley-post-game>

3-7 Sabres-Flames Post-Game Show with Brian Koziol

## **Sabres fall behind early, lose to Flames**

Olean Times Herald

Bill Hoppe

March 8, 2018

BUFFALO – Eight hours before the Calgary Flames throttled his team 5-1, coach Phil Housley talked about the Sabres' need to match their opponent's desperation.

The Flames came into town reeling, losers of four straight games and seven of the last nine. Without injured No. 1 goalie Mike Smith, they've fallen out of a playoff spot.

"They're three points out of a playoff spot, they're talking about this as their season, these next two games against us and Ottawa," Housley said Wednesday morning.

The Flames left Buffalo with a dominating victory that could buoy a run to the postseason.

Incredibly, the Flames had never won a game in regulation at KeyBank Center, which opened in 1996. Their last 60-minute win in Buffalo before Wednesday came March 15, 1996, at Memorial Auditorium.

The Sabres, like so many other times, imploded early, falling behind 2-0 8:35 into the game. By the 6:01 mark of the second period, after the Flames scored twice in a span of 1:01, Housley yanked goalie Chad Johnson.

"Standing around and watching," a dismayed Housley said following the game. "I talked about their desperation. They got the start they wanted and we didn't have a pushback. From top to bottom, it was really ugly. It's disappointing, because you think we're going in the right direction."

When the period ended with a 5-0 deficit and Robin Lehner in net, many fans in the crowd of 17,773 booed the Sabres off the ice, a regular occurrence this season.

Watching it all in a blue Jack Eichel Sabres jersey was Buffalo Bills wide receiver Zay Jones, who attended his first hockey.

"I hope he's coming to another one, that's for sure," Sabres center Ryan O'Reilly said.

Blowouts are nothing new to the 30th-place Sabres. They've endured them all season. But slowly, they seemed to be turning a corner in recent weeks.

Monday's emotional 5-3 home win against the Toronto Maple Leafs gave the Sabres three victories in four games and four in the last six. They also beat the Atlantic Division's best teams last week.

"It's disappointing, because you think we're going in the right direction," Housley said. "I understand we had an emotional win against Toronto, but that's just where we're at as a team right now, the consistency to get up for a team that's desperate."

"You look at the games like Tampa, Boston and Toronto, they're easy to get up for, and Calgary comes in here, which is a desperate team, and we didn't match that desperation."

How does that change?

"It's about preparation and being a good pro," Housley said. "The learning curve of this team is measuring your consistence, game in, game out. You can say it was an off night, I don't agree. We had a little too much cheat, not enough compete, losing puck battles all around."

The 18-save outing ended Johnson's three-game winning streak. Very quietly, since beating the Flames on Jan. 22 in Calgary, Johnson had been one of the NHL's hottest goalies.

On Tuesday, Johnson, who played for the Flames last season, credited his teammates' improved play for much of his success. A day later, they often hung him out to dry, allowing the Flames to pepper 17 shots on him in the first period.

Johnson didn't care much he lost to his old team.

“The bigger thing is that it’s on home ice,” he said. “That’s more important to me. At the end of the day, I don’t care who I’m playing. At the end of the day, I want to have a good effort at home. I think we all wanted to have a good effort at home. It didn’t happen. That to me is more disappointing.”

The Sabres couldn’t exploit Flames rookie goalie David Rittich, who was 17.1 seconds away from recording his first NHL shutout. The Czech had allowed 24 goals in his last six outings, including seven last week in an ugly loss to the Vegas Golden Knights.

Right before defenseman Casey Nelson scored the Sabres’ only goal, some fans in the 300 level starting chanting, “We want Dahlin,” as in defenseman Rasmus Dahlin, the presumptive No. 1 pick in the 2018 NHL Draft.

The Sabres play a road tilt tonight against the Ottawa Senators.

## **Sabres notes: Seth Griffith moves in, Danny O'Regan scratched**

Olean Times Herald

Bill Hoppe

March 8, 2018

**BUFFALO** – In the AHL, Seth Griffith morphs into a different player. Over the past three seasons, the Sabres winger has been one of the league's most lethal scorers, compiling 47 goals and 155 points in 131 outings.

During Griffith's early-season NHL run, he mustered only two goals and three points in 18 games. Then, not surprisingly, he went on a tear with the Rochester Americans, scoring 13 goals and 34 points in 36 contests.

"Some (AHL) games I can handle the puck the entire game it feels like," Griffith said prior to Wednesday's 5-1 loss to the Calgary Flames. "But my goal is to do stuff like that up here."

Griffith, 25, said three months in the AHL boosted his confidence. He impressed the Sabres enough they recalled him again last week. He played two games, his first NHL appearances since late November, before getting scratched for Monday's 5-3 win against Toronto.

Griffith, a restricted free agent following the season, returned Wednesday inside KeyBank Center, skating at left wing beside center Benoit Pouliot and Nick Baptiste.

How can Griffith keep earning NHL action?

"When you get back up here, you worry about making a mistake and going back down," he said. "I think ... you just got to focus on your game and be confident with the puck, especially now, everybody seems a lot looser now playing (than earlier in the season)."

"It seems like guys are playing better, so I think you just got to have the mentality to know what your skill set is and just go out there and do it."

Not surprisingly, Sabres coach Phil Housley said he wants Griffith to produce more offense.

"Just using his speed, quickness, trying to create offensively, cutbacks and trying to create his own space," he said. "I think he did a really good job in the games that he's played."

xxx

Nine days after the Sabres acquired Danny O'Regan from the San Jose Sharks, they recalled the forward from the Amerks on Wednesday morning.

So, O'Regan played against the Flames, right? Well, not exactly.

The Sabres also have a road game tonight against the Ottawa Senators, so O'Regan, the only player they received in the Evander Kane trade, could debut soon.

"I could see him getting some games in the future here," Housley said. "I think he's just a really good, solid prospect for us right now, and he's going to get an opportunity."

Whenever O'Regan, the AHL's top rookie last season, makes his Buffalo debut, he understands he has something to prove.

"I try not to put that pressure on myself, but being a part of the Evander Kane trade – it's not like it was a one-for-one deal, but I want to show the organization I can play hockey sometimes," O'Regan said.

O'Regan, who will wear No. 65, skated in the pregame warm-up.

xxx

In a poll of players conducted by the NHLPA, Sabres center Ryan O'Reilly was named the league's fifth-most underrated player, earning 2.3 percent of the vote.

Washington's Nicklas Backstrom (8.6), St. Louis' Jaden Schwartz, Tampa Bay's Nikita Kucherov (6.2) and Florida's Aleksander Barkov (6.0) finished ahead of O'Reilly.

xxx

Housley on slick Flames winger Johnny Gaudreau, who began Wednesday with 20 goals and 74 points in 67 games:

"He's a world-class player. He uses his speed, whether it's on the rush, his vision, his hockey sense is through the charts. He creates things by using his speed and his quickness to get away, he creates separation. He has a terrific shot, he knows where to put it."

xxx

The Sabres also scratched defensemen Justin Falk and Josh Gorges (both healthy) and centers Kyle Criscuolo and Evan Rodrigues (both upper body).

## **5 Observations: Flames knock off Sabres 5-1**

WKBW

Matt Bove

Mar 7, 2018

BUFFALO, N.Y. (WKBW) - It took less than nine minutes for the Calgary Flames to score their first and second goals of the night. Turns out, that would be all they needed, squashing the Buffalo Sabres 5-1. Casey Nelson scored the Sabres lone goal with just 17 seconds left.

Five observations from Wednesday's loss:

Not his night

You could make the argument that Chad Johnson has been one of the Sabres best players since the last time the Flames and Sabres met. That wasn't the case on Wednesday, as he allowed four goals before the halfway point of the second period. After the Flames made it 4-0 Johnson was pulled and Robin Lehner came in for relief.

Of the four he allowed, you'd have to figure Johnson would like at least two of them back [second and third goals]. Despite his struggles, it's hard to put all the blame on Johnson when you consider how terribly the Sabres were outshot in the first 25 minutes of the game. Even with the loss on Wednesday, Johnson has won five of his last seven starts.

Slow start, slower finish

As stated above, it took the Flames less than six minutes to score their first goal. They scored their second of the evening exactly three minutes later. From the start, you could tell the Sabres were flat and their opponent was anything but.

At the end of the first period, Calgary had nearly three times as many shots as Buffalo, finishing with a 17-6 advantage. In the second period, the Sabres closed the shot gap, but not by much, and still had 14 fewer shots than their opponent. Aside from their attempts with the man advantage the Sabres didn't generate any true scoring chances and showed why they have the second fewest goals in the NHL.

Not enough pressure

You can count on one hand how many times Flames goaltender David Rittich was truly tested. It's hard to comprehend how little pressure the Sabres generated when only two days earlier they took advantage of bounces in their favor generated off getting pucks to the net. Poor Rittich was just 17 seconds away from his first career shutout.

Up and down

It's hard to say that anyone played well for the Sabres on Wednesday but I once again thought that Brendan Guhle and Casey Nelson held their own. Both were on the ice for two goals against but neither deserves a ton of blame for the goals that were scored.

That said, don't be surprised if this is the last time we see Guhle with the Sabres this year. The Amerks are back in action on Friday and with only 14 games left on the schedule for the Sabres, Jason Botterill will likely want him getting big-time minutes in Rochester as they prepare for the playoffs. Barring an injury or huge drop off in production, Guhle should make the Sabres out of training camp next season.

Could it have been any worse?

Probably, but Wednesday is right up there with the Sabres worst efforts of the year. They applied almost no pressure and spent most of the game at their own end of the ice. From start to finish the Sabres were flat and their opponent took advantage of it.

**u-g-L-y**

By Josh Reed, News 4 Sports Director

WIVB

March 7, 2018

BUFFALO, N.Y.(WIVB)- It started bad and things only got worse. The Calgary Flames hammered the Sabres 5-1 on Wednesday night.

The Flames jumped out to a 2-0 lead against a very sluggish looking Sabres squad. Buffalo was out shot 17-6 in the opening period.

The 2nd period didn't produce any better results for the blue and gold. Calgary pumped two more pucks past goalie Chad Johnson before he was benched for Robin Lehner. Calgary's Dougie Hamilton capped off the Flames scoring with a power play goal.

Buffalo's only goal of the game came off the stick of Casey Nelson.

This was Calgary's first victory at KeyBank Center.

The Sabres next game is in Ottawa on Thursday.

## Flames gain in wild card with win against Sabres

Rittich makes 25 saves; Jankowski has goal, assist for Calgary

by Joe Yerdon

NHL.com

March 7th, 2018

BUFFALO -- David Rittich made 25 saves, and the Calgary Flames gained in the wild-card race in the Western Conference with a 5-1 win against the Buffalo Sabres at KeyBank Center on Wednesday.

Mark Giordano, Mark Jankowski, and Sam Bennett each had a goal and an assist for the Flames (33-25-10), who ended a four-game losing streak (0-3-1). Calgary is one point behind the Los Angeles Kings for the second wild card into the Stanley Cup Playoffs from the West.

"It was big for our team to get off to a good start early... and to not let up," Jankowski said. "I think if we had got a couple we could've laid back a little bit and maybe gave them a chance to get back in the game and we didn't do that. We stayed on them and pressed hard throughout the whole game."

[WATCH: All Flames vs. Sabres highlights]

Casey Nelson scored for the Sabres (21-35-11), who have lost two of three games.

"It's about preparation and being a good pro," Buffalo coach Phil Housley said. "The learning curve of this team is measuring your consistency, game in, game out. You can say it was an off night, I don't agree. We had a little too much cheat, not enough compete, [and] losing puck battles all around."

Bennett gave Calgary a 1-0 lead at 5:35 of the first period when he got to the puck in front after Jankowski's pass went off Sabres goalie Chad Johnson's skate.

Jankowski made it 2-0 at 8:35 with a wrist shot from the top of the left circle.

Jankowski buries nice wrister

00:53 • March 7th, 2018

"I thought they [Bennett-Jankowski-Garnet Hathaway line] had great jump in the first," Flames coach Glen Gulutzan said. "I thought they did a really good job. You know, our bottom lines have played, if you look at the last three, four games, have played real hard, and it was good tonight that they got us going on the score sheet."

Giordano scored five minutes into the second period to make it 3-0 when his slap shot deflected off Sabres forward Jason Pominville and between Johnson's pads.

Sean Monahan scored at 6:01 to make it 4-0 on a one-timer off a pass from Johnny Gaudreau. Robin Lehner replaced Johnson, who made 18 saves, following the goal. Lehner made 18 saves.

Dougie Hamilton made it 5-0 at 18:39 with a power-play goal when he got to the puck after Giordano's shot was blocked in front.

Hamilton nets one-timer for PPG

00:47 • March 7th, 2018

"We had to keep working and not get cute with the puck," Hamilton said. "We just had to keep working and make sure we were playing for each other and making the right plays and we did a good job of that."

Nelson scored with 18 seconds left in the third period to make it 5-1.

"I don't really care about the shutout. How we get the two points, that's more important right now," Rittich said. "So, we need every single point, every game, and we got two today. It's great for us."

#### Goal of the game

Monahan's goal at 6:01 of the second period.

#### Monahan's 30th of the season

00:51 • March 7th, 2018

#### Save of the game

Rittich's save on Sam Reinhart at 15:54 of the second period.

#### Rittich's pair of saves in close

00:17 • March 7th, 2018

#### Highlight of the game

Bennett's goal at 5:35 of the first period.

#### Bennett pounces on puck in front

00:54 • March 7th, 2018

#### They said it

"We all know, and we've talked about this before, our team, when they get confident they can get on a real good run. We've done it before. We did it last year, we've done it this year. Every little step is a big step for us." -- Flames coach Glen Gulutzan

"It's difficult to swallow. I mean, I thought we had good preparation. I thought we had good preparation, we talked about their desperation. You know, they're saying these are their playoff lives, these next two games on the road, and I don't think we respected that." -- Sabres coach Phil Housley

#### Need to know

It was Calgary's first win in Buffalo since Dec. 14, 2013, and first regulation win since March 15, 1996. ... Pominville has seven points (two goals, five assists) in his past seven games. ... Gaudreau played in his 300th NHL game.

#### What's next

Flames: At the Ottawa Senators on Friday (7:30 p.m. ET; TSN5, RDS, SNW, NHL.TV)

Sabres: At the Ottawa Senators on Thursday (7:30 p.m. ET; RDS2, TSN5, MSG-B, NHL.TV)

## **Sabres unable to match Flames' desperation in 5-1 loss**

by Jourdon LaBarber

Sabres.com

March 8, 2018

Phil Housley emphasized the importance of his team showing up on time against a Calgary Flames team that came to Buffalo on Wednesday fighting for its playoff life. But when game time came, he said, it was clear from the start that the Sabres were unprepared to match their opponent's intensity.

The Flames scored twice in the first nine minutes and five times in the first two periods of an eventual 5-1 loss for the Sabres at KeyBank Center. The Sabres entered the night with seven wins in their last 13 games, including an emotional win over Toronto at home on Monday.

"That's just where we're at as a team right now, the consistency to get up for a team that's desperate," Housley said. "You look at games against Tampa, Boston, Toronto - they're easy to get up for. And Calgary comes in here, which is a desperate team, and we didn't match that desperation. That's top to bottom."

Sabres fall to Flames, 5-1

08:57 • March 7th, 2018

The Sabres were outshot 17-6 in the first period and fell behind 2-0 on a pair of exchanges between Sam Bennett and Mark Jankowski. Bennett opened the scoring 5:35 into the contest on a Jankowski feed from behind the goal line, while Jankowski caught a pass from Bennett and scored from the slot three minutes later.

Chad Johnson, who entered the game with a 6-2-0 record since winning in Calgary on Jan. 22, was chased after Mark Giordano (on a slap shot from the point) and Sean Monahan (on a one-time feed from Johnny Gaudreau) scored goals 1:01 apart in the second period.

Johnson allowed four goals on 22 shots in 24:01, but Housley defended his goaltender after the game. Bennett's goal was the result of lapsed coverage, Jankowski's came on a shot alone from the slot and Giordano's deflected in off Zemgus Girgensons.

"It was just that kind of night for me," Johnson said. "It happens, and you move on."

Robin Lehner stopped 18 of 19 shots in relief. Lehner managed to bring life to the building when he shoved Matthew Tkachuk to the ice late in the second period, but he was assessed a roughing penalty for the maneuver and Dougie Hamilton scored on the ensuing power play.

On the other end, the Sabres were unable to challenge an inexperienced goaltender in Calgary's David Rittich, who began the night with just 17 NHL games under his belt. Rittich held a shutout until Casey Nelson scored the second goal of his young career with 17.1 seconds remaining.

Nelson tallies late in 3rd

00:42 • March 7th, 2018

"We passed up a lot of opportunities, and it started right away," Housley said. "You could just see that we weren't ready. You get opportunities to get pucks to the net, things that we've done the past four games, and that's just where we're at."

In total, the Sabres were outshot 41-26.

Housley said the loss was especially difficult to swallow because the Sabres had appeared to have turned a corner as of late. The lack of consistency, he said, stems from a lack of individual preparation.

"This is the learning part of this team, is measuring your consistency game in and game out," he said. "You can say it was an off night, I disagree. We had a little too much cheat, not enough compete, losing puck battles all around and that's what's going to happen. That's the result we're going to get."

Johnson was the one player who arguably had the most reason to want a win over Calgary, his former team. But it wasn't the opponent, he said, that made for the most disappointing aspect of the night.

"You want to beat that team," he said. "I know where they're at and we know where they're at. But it doesn't matter. Probably the bigger thing is that it's on home ice. That's more important to me. I don't care who I'm playing at the end of the day. I wanted to have a good effort at home. I think we all wanted to."

Up next

The Sabres will conclude their back-to-back set on the road against the Ottawa Senators on Thursday. Coverage on MSG-B begins at 7 p.m. with the GMC Game Night Pregame Show, or you can listen live on WGR 550. Puck drop is scheduled for 7:30.

The team returns home on Saturday afternoon to host the Vegas Golden Knights for the first time at KeyBank Center. Kids Day ticket packages are available [here](#). Puck drop is scheduled for 1 p.m.

## **In his own words: Johnson on the benefits of sports psychology**

by Chad Johnson

Sabres.com

March 7th, 2018

At BlueCross BlueShield, to "Live Fearless" is to embrace a spirit or mindset that allows you to be bold and embrace life without worry. For Chad Johnson, it's taking the necessary steps to ensure he has a mental edge when he's between the pipes.

For as long as I can remember, I've had the same two words attached to my play: calm and collected.

I've heard my teammates and coaches describe me that way in the NHL, but it goes all the way back to when I started playing goalie when I was six years old. I don't know how to describe it - there are times in net when I don't feel like I'm that composed, but then I'll watch video and see that I looked calmer than I felt.

It's just how my body handles the situation, which is something I've tried to embrace. But that hasn't stopped me from trying to improve the mental aspect of my game. For the past five years, I've benefitted from my work with a sports psychologist.

When I made the decision to see a psychologist, I was at a point in my life where I felt that there was more I had to give. I was doing everything I could to improve physically. I was working out off the ice, doing goalie drills, making sure I was sharp from a technical standpoint. But I knew there was another side to the game.

I think, as an athlete, you're very protective of your mental state and your confidence. I don't think a lot of guys want to seek help because they think it's a weakness. Five years ago, I got to a place where I matured and saw it as an advantage. I wanted that extra edge, anything to put me over the top.

I put my mental pride to the side, gained some confidence, and made my decision.

The goalie coach I was working with at the time hooked me up with Dr. Saul Miller, a psychiatrist based in Vancouver. He gave me the foundation for my approach to games. What's helped me the most has to do with breathing and visualization, and it usually begins the night before. I'll lay in bed and visualize situations - how I want to play them, where I want to be, the confidence I want to feel.

It continues the next day. We'll watch video and run a penalty kill before the game, and I'll work to visualize myself in situations against certain players. Here's a recent example: On the power play, James van Riemsdyk likes to be beside the net and does a between-the-legs, short-side, top-shelf type of shot. Seeing myself in a situation like that before it happens it how I get my mind ready.

The same goes for a shooter who gets a lot of breakaways, like Michael Grabner - I'll visualize the release on his shot. Even now, I always look for whatever edge I can find. I'm currently working with a vision coach, for example, performing tracking drills and things of that nature.

At the end of the day, so much of our game is mental. Even if you do come off as calm and collected, never be afraid to set your mental pride aside and gain that extra edge.

Learn how to Live Fearless in your community.

## **O'Regan eager for chance with Sabres**

by Jourdon LaBarber

Sabres.com

March 7th, 2018

The first texts that Danny O'Regan received upon being acquired by the Buffalo Sabres came from his family. The next two came from Jack Eichel and Evan Rodrigues.

O'Regan, acquired from San Jose along with a pair of draft picks in exchange for Evander Kane on Feb. 26, was recalled by the Sabres from Rochester on Wednesday morning. While he won't be in the lineup for the team's home game against Calgary, Phil Housley said it likely won't be long before he gets his shot.

The forward appeared in 19 NHL games for San Jose this season, his second as a pro. Although he enjoyed his time with the Sharks organization, he admitted that the presence of Eichel and Rodrigues - his former linemates at Boston University - made Buffalo an exciting proposition.

"Yeah, it definitely added to it," O'Regan said. "I knew they're both good friends and they'd make me feel right at home when I got here, and they've been great so far."

O'Regan scored a pair of goals in three games for Rochester after the trade, giving him a total of 27 points (9+18) in 34 AHL games this season. He was named the league's Rookie of the Year last season after scoring 58 points (23+35) in 63 games for the San Jose Barracuda.

In the past two seasons combined, he scored four assists in 24 games with the Sharks.

"I think last year was good for me," he said. "... I was up and down a bit. I kind of got a taste of what it's like to be in the NHL. That definitely helped, because I wanted to just keep improving my game. I knew I was that one inch, that one step away from being an NHL player. So, I've just been trying to focus on those little things."

Rodrigues, who played as O'Regan's linemate for three seasons in college, described him as a player with a high hockey IQ who has a knack for getting open around the net. O'Regan added speed to that list of qualities.

"I try to play fast," he said. "I think I hurt myself when I'm not playing fast and then I start overthinking things. I think that creeps into a lot of guys' games. The one thing I've been trying to do is just play fast, let your legs do the work."

"I've been playing hockey a long time, a lot of things come pretty natural to me, so as long as I play fast and hard hopefully good things will come."

As for a potential reunion for his line with Eichel and Rodrigues, O'Regan admitted it's been joked about. Before he can think seriously about it, though, he has one more step to take.

"It creeps in [the mind], obviously, but it's not something I'm looking to have happen next week," he said. "I've just got to earn my spot, stay up here, get myself in the lineup. If that day comes, I think we'll get the chemistry back right away but until then I've just got to take care of business."

## **Johnson gets the nod as Sabres host Flames**

Griffith to play; O'Regan recalled from Rochester

by Jourdon LaBarber

Sabres.com

March 7, 2018

Last time the Buffalo Sabres played the Calgary Flames, on Jan. 22, they earned a 2-1 victory to begin a stretch of three-straight wins in Western Canada. That game set the tone for how they would play on the road from that point on, the beginning of a stretch in which they've gone 6-0-2 away from home.

With the rematch set to take place in Buffalo on Wednesday, the Sabres are now looking to bring that same consistency to KeyBank Center. They enter the night having won their last two games at home, against the second-and third-place teams in the Atlantic Division in Boston and Toronto.

Overall, the Sabres have seven wins in their last 13 games (7-5-1).

"It's belief, it's confidence," Sabres coach Phil Housley said. "You look at early on, there were a lot of one-goal games, we didn't come on the right side of them, and that can have an effect on a team over a long period because you lose confidence, you lose trust. We've built that."

What the Sabres have done well as of late, according to forward Scott Wilson, is similar to what got them on the right path in Calgary back in January. Against Toronto on Monday, the Sabres started strong and scored the first two goals, kept opposing shots to the outside as much as possible and got in front of the opposing goaltender.

"I think at this point we're just trying to find our identity and play that way every night," Wilson said. "Sometimes you get away from it, but I think the last week or two we've really found ourselves and just competed every night which has been the biggest difference."

Chad Johnson, a member of the Flames last season and a Calgary native, made 32 saves to earn the win in the first matchup between the two teams. Including that game, he's 6-0-2 in his last nine appearances with a .933 save percentage and a 2.05 goals-against average. He'll get his second-straight start following a 38-save performance on Monday.

Calgary sits three points back from Los Angeles for the second wild card berth in the Western Conference. Johnny Gaudreau leads the team with 74 points (24+25), followed by linemate Sean Monahan with 58 (29+29). The Flames are currently without All-Star goaltender Mike Smith, out since Feb. 13 with a lower-body injury.

"They're a rush team," Housley said. "Obviously, you've got to manage the puck and be smart about it. They're trying to get out behind you all the time and trying to stretch the ice. ... They're talking about this as their season, these next two games against us and Ottawa, so we're going to have to match that desperation."

The Sabres recalled Danny O'Regan from Rochester on Wednesday morning with Kyle Criscuolo and Evan Rodrigues both out due to injuries, but will not dress him against the Flames. Benoit Pouliot will slide over to center to fill in for Criscuolo, while Seth Griffith will enter the lineup at wing.

Criscuolo was acquired along with a pair of draft picks in exchange for Evander Kane on Feb. 26. Housley left the door open for him to enter the lineup when the Sabres play in Ottawa on Thursday.

Video: Pregame: HOUSLEY

"He just stepped into our organization," Housley said. "We're going to give to Griffith another shot in the lineup. We're going to move Benny to the middle just for tonight. I could see him getting some games in the future here. I think he's just a really good, solid prospect for us right now, and he's going to get an opportunity."

Coverage on MSG-B begins at 7 p.m. with the GMC Game Night Pregame Show, or you can listen live on WGR 550. Puck drop is scheduled for 7:30.

Projected lineup

28 Zemgus Girgensons - 90 Ryan O'Reilly - 23 Sam Reinhart  
17 Jordan Nolan - 10 Jacob Josefson - 21 Kyle Okposo  
20 Scott Wilson - 22 Johan Larsson - 29 Jason Pominville  
25 Seth Griffith - 67 Benoit Pouliot - 13 Nicholas Baptiste

6 Marco Scandella - 55 Rasmus Ristolainen  
45 Brendan Guhle - 8 Casey Nelson  
82 Nathan Beaulieu - 93 Victor Antipin

31 Chad Johnson  
40 Robin Lehner

## Sharpen Up: March 7, 2018

by Chris Ryndak

Sabres.com

March 7th, 2018

The Sabres take on the Calgary Flames tonight and it looks like they'll have a new face in the lineup. Buffalo recalled forward Danny O'Regan this morning from the Rochester Americans. If that name sounds familiar, it's because he was the player acquired at the Trade Deadline last week.

We'll see at the morning skate where he may slot in.

Here's what you need to know.

More on O'Regan

O'Regan (5'10", 185 lbs., 1/30/1994) has scored twice in three games with the Amerks since being acquired by the Sabres from the San Jose Sharks on trade deadline day. Prior to the trade, he had appeared in a career-high 19 NHL games with the Sharks in his second professional season, tallying four assists.

A native of Berlin, Germany, O'Regan has totaled five points (1+4) through 22 NHL games in two seasons with San Jose, adding 85 points (32+53) in 97 career AHL games.

The lone goal of his NHL career so far came on April 8...against Calgary.

Yesterday's practice

Chad Johnson was named the starter for tonight's game. We also have some injury news.

Sabres Now (3/6/18)

01:59 • March 6th, 2018

From the Ice Level Practice Report...

It seems like the injury bug has focused its attention on the centers of the Buffalo Sabres.

Kyle Crisuolo will miss four to six weeks after sustaining an upper-body injury in Monday's tilt with the Toronto Maple Leafs, the Sabres announced Tuesday. Crisuolo had been recalled on Sunday to fill in at center for Evan Rodrigues, who has been labeled as week-to-week with an upper-body injury.

Crisuolo was playing his first shift of the second period on Monday when he went to deliver a hit on Maple Leafs forward Matt Martin along the boards. He skated directly to the bench after the collision and went to the dressing room.

"In the little time that he did play in the game I thought he played a really solid game and brought his speed," Sabres coach Phil Housley said. "He's one of those guys that goes to the tough area. He took that hit. It's unfortunate for him, it's unfortunate for us moving forward."

Phil Housley (3/6/18)

04:41 • March 6th, 2018

Johnson stopped 32 of 33 shots in a win over the Flames on Jan. 22. That began a stretch of nine appearances in which he's gone 6-2-0 with a .933 save percentage and a 2.05 goals-against average, including a 38-save performance in the win over Toronto on Monday.

"I think we're playing a lot better, boxing out guys in front of our net," Housley said. "I think he's seeing more pucks. But let's make no mistake, Chad has really given us some keys saves at key moments of the games. He's really stepped up his game.

"You can see it in the results of the last games he's played. But I really like his demeanor in the net. He looks very comfortable. He doesn't chase anything. He's letting pucks hit him, he's square to the puck."

#### Reinhart's uptick in production

We took a closer look at what's been going right for Sam Reinhart lately. Read the full feature here, but here's a taste:

#### Reinhart's redirection PPG

00:43 • March 5th, 2018

Now and then, Sam Reinhart is asked what he thinks about when he's out on the ice. The ideal answer, he said, is actually to have no answer at all.

"If I can tell you, that's probably not a good thing in my game," Reinhart said. "I'm just going out and playing and reading and reacting. The game's so fast that that's the way you've got to play. That's the way I play best."

It's that type of simplicity, combined with renewed confidence, that's helped Reinhart establish one of the most productive stretches of his young career since the beginning of January. He's scored 23 points (9+14) in 22 games dating back to Jan. 18th, tied for 15th in the NHL during that span.

#### Reinhart sweeps home a rebound

00:54 • February 8th, 2018

Reinhart only scored 11 points in 38 games prior to his goal at the Winter Classic on Jan. 1. He said after a three-point night against the New York Islanders on Feb. 8 that nothing had changed preparation-wise, but admitted on Monday that he's been thinking less during games as of late.

With 16 games remaining, Reinhart can still surpass the career-high 47 points he scored last season if he maintains his point-per-game pace, a mark that would have seemed unlikely just two months ago. His goal is to continue learning from his current run, beginning when the Sabres host Calgary on Wednesday.

"Of course I'm going to," he said. "That's something we're trying to do here. Everyone's trying to do that. We have another chance tomorrow against a team that's fighting for a playoff spot and in a position that we want to put ourselves in as soon as possible."

#### Tonight's matchup

From the Game Notes...

After going 3-0-1 in their last four meetings, the Sabres have points in four straight games against the Flames for the first time since they went 7-0-2 against Calgary from Feb. 18, 1997 to Nov. 23, 2001.

The home team has won 18 of the last 21 games between these teams, dating back to the 1999-00 season. The Flames' last win in Buffalo was on Dec. 14, 2013.

With points in their last 13 home games against Calgary (11-0-2), the Sabres have broken their series-record for most consecutive home games against the Flames with a point, originally set from March 11, 1979 to Nov. 10, 1985 (11-0-1). The Sabres are 17-3-2 in their last 22 home games against the Flames, with the last regulation home loss coming on March 15, 1996.

Sam Reinhart has totaled 23 points (9+14) in his last 22 games.

Rasmus Ristolainen has 24 points (6+18) in his last 29 games dating back to Dec. 29, including six points (1+5) in his last six games. Ristolainen's 24 points during that span ranked sixth among NHL defensemen entering play Tuesday.

Ryan O'Reilly has recorded 12 points (3+9) in his last 11 games. His four-game point streak (1+4) is tied as his longest streak of the season.

Chad Johnson is 6-2-0 in his last nine appearances with a .933 save percentage and a 2.05 goals-against average in those contests.

Bogo's Kan Jam event is Saturday

Bogo's Kan Jam Event Promo  
01:41 • December 31st, 2017

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2:42 PM - Mar 6, 2018