



Buffalo Sabres

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Rasmus Dahlin learning to absorb big hits, make little plays for Sabres

By Lance Lysowski

The Buffalo News

February 28, 2019

The preseason game was so long ago that Rasmus Dahlin cannot recall the opponent or the result, but the stern message delivered by teammates in the Buffalo Sabres' dressing room has resonated with him ever since.

"I was upset," the 18-year-old rookie defenseman recalled. "I didn't play well and wanted to make the team. They said, 'Hey, you can't do this after every game.' "

Not a practice or game has passed without a teachable moment for Dahlin, the NHL's top overall draft pick last June. During Thursday's practice in Harborcenter, both Jack Eichel and coach Phil Housley pulled him aside to offer advice.

Dahlin's first season has taught him the value of a short memory, the importance of taking care of his body to withstand the grueling North American game and how to balance his fierce competitiveness with the need to make a simple play.

There is still much for him to learn. That fact is powerfully illustrated even on the nights when his transcendent talent tantalizes and awes. Yet, through all the Sabres' struggles — they could be nine points back of the second wild-card when they host Pittsburgh Friday night — Dahlin's progress has not stalled.

"I'm so happy," he beamed following practice Thursday. "I wouldn't have expected this kind of season. So far it's good, but we have to get some wins back and get back on track. There's something positive in the group right now."

Sabres' Carter Hutton suffers injury in practice; Vladimir Sobotka, Marco Scandella day to day

Dahlin's 37 points (eight goals, 29 assists) rank second among all NHL rookies and first among rookie defensemen. That is on pace for the second-most ever by a defenseman before his 19th birthday, trailing only Housley.

Dahlin's seven multi-point games are more than all but two 18-year-old defensemen in NHL history: Housley and Bobby Orr. And his three game-winning goals are the most ever recorded by a rookie defenseman in franchise history.

That production has not come without angst. Dahlin does not hide his frustration after a mistake but has an uncanny ability to not allow a difficult period or shift to linger. Zach Bogosian, who was 18 when he played his first NHL season with the Atlanta Thrashers in 2008, noted how Dahlin handles such situations unlike most young players.

"If you look at a lot of young defensemen, if they have a tough first period it can be tough for a young defenseman to get over that," said Bogosian. "He kind of just lets it go and goes out there and shows what he can do. Hits that refresh button.

"I don't think many people can do that at 18. I can speak for myself, I didn't have it at 18. I'm not sure if Jack [Eichel] can say he had it at 18. Rasmus is a special talent. He's a special person."

Dahlin did not see Philadelphia Flyers winger Ryan Hartman barreling toward him Tuesday night in Wells Fargo Center. The shoulder-to-shoulder hit dropped Dahlin to the ice, and Bogosian quickly went after Hartman for the hit.

Dahlin used his quick, smooth stride and puck handling to dazzle on the ice in the Swedish Hockey League last year. He rarely had to deal with the thunderous checks or open-ice hits he has endured during his first season with the Sabres.

The NHL's 82-game schedule is also more grueling. Dahlin played 47 total games, including six in the playoffs, with Frolunda last year. He has already played 63 in Buffalo, including 12 sets of back-to-back games with exhausting travel.

Dahlin played 24 minutes in each of the Sabres' past two games, losses in Toronto and Philadelphia, despite the latter being Buffalo's seventh game in 12 days.

"That's something he has to manage," Housley said of Dahlin. "We've tried to put him in places to succeed. I think, for me, he's trying to make a difference. His intentions are in the right area. He just has to take what the game gives him. He tries to attack and he's trying to make a difference and you can't do that every shift."

Housley noted that Dahlin is doing a "pretty good" job striking that balance, but there are times where joining the rush backfires.

Dahlin is scoring at a higher rate than he did last season in Sweden and quarterbacked the Sabres' top power play. His play has not dropped significantly at any point this season. He ranks second among qualifying Sabres with a 51.3 percent Corsi — which measures 5-on-5 shot differential — and posted at least 50 percent in all but one month this season.

Rookies typically hit a wall near the season's midpoint, yet Dahlin had one goal among eight points — including a five-game point streak — with a plus-7 rating in January. That production continued in February with three goals among nine points, though he had a minus-11 in 14 games.

"It's a grind right now," Bogosian added. "I think he's handled it really well. It's tough playing back-to-back games in February. That's part of a long season. He has an amazing attitude about it. If something bad happens, it's right out the window for him and he keeps playing his game."

Dahlin, like most of his young teammates, is still learning how to manage his emotions and burning desire to win. He was a catalyst during the 10-game winning streak and has never endured this sort of tailspin.

The Sabres (29-26-8) have little margin for error with their playoff hopes on life support and only 19 regular-season games remaining. But the continued development of Dahlin has them hopeful for the future.

"You can feel it a little bit more now than you did when we were in 40 games," Dahlin said of the grind. "You just have to battle. It's new for me, but I learn new things every day. It's all good."

Sabres' Carter Hutton suffers injury in practice; Vladimir Sobotka, Marco Scandella day to day

By Lance Lysowski
The Buffalo News
February 28, 2019

Carter Hutton's availability is uncertain for the Buffalo Sabres' game Friday night against the Pittsburgh Penguins after a lower-body injury forced the 33-year-old goalie to leave practice early Thursday.

Hutton, who has started the past four games for the Sabres, "tweaked something" while the team skated in Harborcenter and will be monitored by the team's medical staff leading up to faceoff in KeyBank Center Friday, according to coach Phil Housley.

Additionally, forward Vladimir Sobotka (upper-body) and defenseman Marco Scandella (lower-body) sat out practice with injuries and are day to day.

"We'll evaluate that later today and tomorrow morning but just being cautious with it right now, so we got him off the ice," Housley told reporters when asked if Hutton will play against the Penguins.

Hutton left the ice 15 minutes into practice, leaving the Sabres with only Linus Ullmark until Ryan Vinz, the Beauts' assistant coach, could join them for the final 30 minutes of the on-ice workout.

Hutton stopped 40 of 44 shots in a 5-2 loss in Philadelphia Tuesday night and was pulled in the second period of a 5-3 defeat Monday in Toronto. He has a .910 save percentage and 2.84 goals-against average in 39 games during his first season with the Sabres.

Ullmark, 25, took hold of the job – he started 10 of 15 games from Jan. 12 to Feb. 19 – until a lower-body injury prevented him from playing in a 2-1 shootout loss in Tampa Bay Feb. 21. Hutton proceeded to stop 70 of 73 shots over the Sabres' next two games, including 31 in a 5-2 win over Washington last Saturday.

Ullmark stopped 19 of 21 shots after relieving Hutton in Toronto Monday night. The Sabres can recall Scott Wedgewood from Rochester on an emergency basis in the event Hutton's status remains uncertain before the morning skate Friday.

Wedgewood, 26, has yet to appear in a game for the Sabres this season but has a .913 save percentage in 34 games for Rochester.

Sobotka was on the ice for only seven minutes, 40 seconds Tuesday in Philadelphia after the injury forced him to leave in the second period. He has played in each of the past 56 games after missing three in October, scoring four goals with seven assists in his first season with Buffalo.

Tage Thompson, who was a healthy scratch against the Flyers, will draw into the lineup with Sobotka out and skated on a line with Casey Mittelstadt and Scott Wilson during practice Thursday.

Scandella played only 13 minutes, 59 seconds against the Flyers – his second game since returning from injured reserve. He skated alongside new Sabres defenseman Brandon Montour, an assignment that will now be given to Matt Hunwick, who played for the Penguins last season.

Scandella has four goals among 10 points and a minus-8 rating in 50 games this season.

Sabres' Montour gets his first practice with his new team

By Paul Hamilton

WGR 550

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Buffalo, NY (WGR 550) - Sabres goaltender Carter Hutton left practice on Thursday. He didn't return and Phil Housley said, "Hutton tweaked something in his lower body, so we were being precautionary with it. He'll be evaluated more today and tomorrow morning." Ryan Vinz quickly put the equipment on and finished practice.

Vladimir Sobotka and Marco Scandella also missed practice. Sobotka has an upper-body injury after getting hit in the head during the Flyers game while Scandella has a lower-body injury. He was seen heading into the X-Ray room after the Philadelphia game. Both are day-to-day and neither has been ruled out for Friday.

Brandon Montour participated in his first practice with his new team. The kid spent his first two days with the Sabres basically functioning on no sleep. He had Wednesday off and now he's getting back to normal, "I got a little bit of sleep, the day off was nice. I got a rental car, went to the mall and got a few things for the winter.

"My girlfriend is coming tonight, so she got to my place and picked some extra stuff up for me, so I'm a little bit more prepared."

Phil Housley got to see his new defenseman in a game before a practice. He said, "I just really like his attitude. He's got a smile on his face, he loves coming to the rink, he enjoys playing the game.

"I just love the speed element to his game, he attacks the game really well, he wants to make a difference out there, so it's good to have him in a practice."

This is the first time Montour has been traded. He said, "It's the new faces, a new coaching staff. This was my first time in the new dressing room here, so seeing where things are, trying to feel it out and get into a routine."

Housley coaches a different system than Randy Carlyle did in Anaheim. Housley said Montour will go through a learning curve, "We play a fast game, but it's going to take some time and it's going to take a couple of games to really get acclimated and we haven't had a lot of quality practice time, so it's a day-by-day, game-by-game, practice-by-practice situation."

Rasmus Dahlin is going through things in the NHL that he's never experienced before. The season is getting longer for the 18-year-old and he may be pressing. I've seen a dip in his game and Housley said, "It's tough, the 82 game grind of a schedule with travel and we just finished seven games in 12 nights, that's something that he has to manage.

"I think for me, he's trying to make a difference. His intentions are in the right area, he just has to take what the game gives him. He tries to attack and tries to make a difference, but you can't do that every shift. He's still making good plays, it's just those times of his defensive awareness and just having a sense of danger that something wrong could happen that he has to be more on a high alert."

Thursday's lines:

Skinner Eichel Reinhart

Sheary Rodrigues Okposo

Girgensons Larsson Pominville

Wilson Mittelstadt Thompson

McCabe Ristolainen

Dahlin Bogosian

Hunwick Montour

Nelson

Vogl: Despite recent woes, there are still plenty of reasons to keep tuning into the Sabres this season

By John Vogl

The Athletic

February 28, 2019

The Sabres gave up three goals in two minutes Monday.

Click.

They were in a 2-0 hole after eight minutes Tuesday.

Click.

Buffalo's plummet down the standings has fans reaching for the remote. They've watched this story of woe way too often.

Still, there are 19 games left. Though some folks will undoubtedly throw in the towel, others will keep following to the (likely) bitter end. It's painful, but there are reasons to watch.

Here are 10 of the big ones.

1. Will Phil Housley lose the team?

The coach has already lost a significant segment of the fan base. It would be a fatal sign if the players followed.

Just last week, general manager Jason Botterill praised his coach and expressed steadfast support of Housley's job security. Botterill likes the two-way communication between the players and coaching staff, how they connect on and off the ice in a search to get better.

It's easier to listen when there's an achievable goal like the playoffs. The Sabres have fallen to 11th in the Eastern Conference and are one Florida victory away from 12th. Jack Eichel admitted the team wasn't ready to play "from the first shift" during Tuesday's 5-2 loss to the Flyers.

Housley has been more teacher than motivator during his two seasons, but he'll have to turn up the enthusiasm or the Sabres will continue to come out like zombies. Yes, professional athletes need to be self-motivated, but the players are in a funk after watching their postseason dreams turn into a post-November nightmare. Someone has to push their buttons.

Housley was an excellent assistant coach. Maybe that's what he's supposed to be. The next month is his chance to prove he can be a head coach, a guy who not only shows players what to do but gets them to do it and puts them in position to succeed.

2. What can Brandon Montour do?

The defenseman acquired from Anaheim on Sunday is the shiny new toy. The Sabres expect him to grow into a top-four defenseman who can put up even-strength points and run the power play.

There's no reason to wait. Montour played in all situations against the Flyers, skating up top during the man-advantage and getting penalty-kill time. The right-handed shot was paired with Marco Scandella during his debut, but the Sabres have enough time to move him around. Montour and Rasmus Dahlin are both regarded as risk-takers, but maybe they energize the offense together.

The Sabres have been talking about easing Rasmus Ristolainen's minutes and role since Ted Nolan was the coach. If Montour excels, it might finally happen. It might also make Ristolainen expendable, allowing Buffalo to explore an offseason trade that could bolster a depleted corps of forwards.

3. Will Rochester provide playoff fun?

During the past 12 years, the Sabres organization has won just one playoff series – and no one in Western New York got to enjoy it. The minor-league team was in Portland, Maine, when it advanced to the second round of the AHL playoffs in 2011.

The Sabres haven't won a series since May 2007. The Rochester Americans haven't celebrated since 2005. This could be the year the drought ends.

The Amerks have been atop the North Division for much of the year. GM Randy Sexton has built a veteran team that could truly be a Calder Cup contender. Fans can keep tabs on the Amerks by seeing ...

4. Which prospects, if any, will make a late-season splash?

Defenseman Lawrence Pilut impressed during his time with Buffalo. He skated in 25 games and made a compelling argument to remain in the lineup. It was so compelling that it allowed the Sabres to trade prospect Brendan Guhle for Montour.

As for the rest of the call-ups, it's been the annual disappearing act. They have two goals and no assists in 21 games.

Name	Games	Goals	Assists
C.J. Smith	11	2	0
Matt Tennyson	4	0	0
Scott Wilson	3	0	0
Brendan Guhle	2	0	0
Danny O'Regan	1	0	0

Of the prospects in Rochester, left wing Victor Olofsson is most deserving of a look. The rookie from Sweden leads the Amerks with 47 points in 53 games and is pacing the forwards with 21 goals.

And then there's the most debated name in the ranks, Alex Nylander. The No. 8 overall pick from 2016, who missed time this month with an injury, has done little to warrant a look. He has eight goals and 25 points in 45 games. He's been particularly quiet since the middle of December. In those 19 games, he has one goal and four assists.

On one hand, the Sabres don't want to reward someone who hasn't earned it. On the other, it's Nylander's third year in the organization, and the club still doesn't know what it has in the forward. He turns 21 years old this weekend. Buffalo might want to get a glimpse of him heading into the offseason.

5. How many points will Rasmus Dahlin get?

The rookie is on the verge of putting legendary Bobby Orr in his rearview mirror. Orr had 13 goals and 38 points before turning 19. Dahlin has eight goals and 37 points. He likely won't catch Housley for the under-19 marks (17 goals and 57 points), but no one else in NHL history has either.

Dahlin is already tied for fourth among rookie defensemen in the Sabres' annals, and he has a chance to finish second.

If Dahlin reaches 50 points, he will become one of just 16 rookie blue-liners in NHL history to reach the mark. Seven of them – Ray Bourque, Chris Chelios, Housley, Brian Leetch, Nicklas Lidstrom, Larry Murphy and Denis Potvin – went on to have Hall of Fame careers.

6. Will Jeff Skinner score 40?

The lamp-lighting left winger has 36 goals, one shy of his career high. The last Buffalo player to reach 40 was Thomas Vanek in 2008-09, something he also did in 2006-07.

The only other Sabres player to score 40 in the last 20 years was Miroslav Satan, who reached the milestone in 1998-99.

7. Will Jack Eichel reach 90 points?

With 69 points in 60 games, the Sabres center is on pace for 91. The last Buffalo player to reach 90 was Daniel Briere (95 in 2006-07).

That's hardly a common occurrence for the Sabres, who have had just nine different players reach the milestone. Before Briere, it hadn't happened since 1996.

8. Can the Sabres win two in a row?

The Ottawa Senators are a terrible team, owners of the worst record in the NHL. Since Dec. 17, they are a miserable 7-20-1. Yet in that time, they've won two games in a row three times.

The Sabres haven't done it since Dec. 13. They've had 10 opportunities to win back-to-backs and they've fallen short each time.

It's reached the ridiculous stage and they're running out of chances.

9. Will the Sabres give up a third- or fourth-round pick for Conor Sheary?

There were two conditions attached to the June trade that brought Sheary and Matt Hunwick to Buffalo. The Sabres have to give the Penguins a third-round pick if they trade Hunwick before the NHL Draft or if Sheary records 20 goals or 40 points. The left winger has nine goals and 26 points, putting him on pace for 12 and 34.

If Sheary fails to hit the markers and Hunwick stays in Buffalo, then Pittsburgh gets just a fourth-round selection from the Sabres.

10. Where will they finish?

The Sabres are 20th overall. They still have to play Pittsburgh (twice), Toronto (twice), Colorado, Dallas, Carolina, St. Louis, Montreal, the Islanders, Columbus and Nashville. That means 12 of their 19 games are against teams holding a playoff spot or right on the cusp.

Vancouver is in 25th place with 63 points, just three fewer than the Sabres. If Buffalo's slide continues, it could easily move down the standings and up the draft board.

At least we made it to the end of February before talking about the draft.

Sabres' Brandon Montour already comfortable in Buffalo

By Bill Hoppe
Olean Times Herald
February 28, 2019

BUFFALO – Since Brandon Montour spent three and a half seasons in California playing for the Anaheim Ducks and their AHL affiliate in San Diego, the Sabres newcomer wasn't exactly prepared for the harsh northeastern winter.

So on Wednesday, his first day in Buffalo, the defenseman spent part of his day off at a local mall purchasing some items to help him endure the elements.

After Montour returned to his snow-covered rental car, he tweeted a photo of a brush and the clean windshield with the words, "Oh boy! Have to start getting back in the swing of things!"

"It was nice to see," Montour said of the snow.

Montour, who's from Brantford, Ont., said his girlfriend also grabbed some items from his place in California and was bringing them to Buffalo on Thursday.

"I'm a little more prepared after today," Montour said Thursday inside KeyBank Center, where he will make his home debut tonight against the Pittsburgh Penguins.

The affable Montour, 24, has experienced a whirlwind few days after the Sabres acquired him Sunday, a day before the trade deadline.

Montour left the Ducks in Vancouver, flew across Canada and met the Sabres in Toronto shortly before Monday's 5-3 loss to the Maple Leafs, a game he sat out. He made his Sabres debut in Tuesday's 5-2 defeat in Philadelphia, skating 18 minutes, 11 seconds against the Flyers.

Montour finally practiced with the Sabres on Thursday.

Despite all the chaos that accompanies a trade, Montour joked the toughest part has been getting used to the roller blade attachments many Sabres use to wheel from the dressing room in KeyBank Center over to Harborcenter.

So far, he feels he has transitioned smoothly to his new team.

"It's my first time going through one of these things," Montour said of the trade. "Just the ... new faces, a new coaching staff, seeing what it's all about. This is my first time in the dressing room here so seeing what it's all about and kind of feeling it out, get a routine and being ready for the rest of the year."

Sabres coach Phil Housley said: "I just really like his attitude. He's got a smile on his face, he loves coming to the rink, he enjoys playing the game. I just love the speed element to his game. (He's) very tenacious, he attacks the game really well."

There are, of course, friends Montour will miss. Montour said former Sabres goalie Ryan Miller, who's in his second season with the Ducks, talked to him shortly after the deal.

"It's tough, because I've had the relationship with Ryan, he's a great guy and he's an older guy who expects a lot and knows what it's all about," Montour said. "He was here for a number of years and said if I have any questions or anything for him to make it easier in my adjustment, he's there for me."

Seeing Montour leave was probably tough for some of his ex-teammates. As a right-handed, puck-moving defenseman, Montour seemed like a building block for the Ducks, who have hit rock bottom this season.

"It's one of those things where I think there were mixed emotions, just because those guys might have thought me leaving was maybe not the right thing," Montour said. "But it happens."

There was a belief adding Montour could ignite the Sabres, who have struggled for almost three months following their 10-game winning streak. Instead, they've fallen further out of the playoff race.

The 11th-place Sabres trail the Penguins by eight points for the Eastern Conference's second wild card spot.

Still, Montour said he feels "a lot of buzz" around the Sabres.

"You can see how much talent this group has," Montour said. "I played one game, had a practice today and you could see the excitement. The guys are very outgoing and have a positive attitude. That's huge for me to come in here and kind of build off what they're doing here."

After playing beside Marco Scandella on Tuesday, Montour practiced with Matt Hunwick on Thursday. Scandella is day-to-day with a lower-body injury, Housley said.

"Tremendous skater," Hunwick said of Montour. "I think there's certain plays where you can be a little bit more aggressive because his skating is so good."

Sabres goalie Carter Hutton leaves practice, status uncertain for Friday

By Bill Hoppe

Olean Times Herald

February 28, 2019

BUFFALO – About halfway through this morning’s practice, Sabres goalie Carter Hutton left the ice and returned to KeyBank Center.

So Ryan Vinz, the team’s emergency goalie and a Harborcenter employee, quickly changed into his gear and finished the session.

Hutton “tweaked something in his lower body,” Sabres coach Phil Housley said. He could be unavailable for Friday’s home game against the Pittsburgh Penguins.

“We’ll evaluate that later today and tomorrow morning,” Housley said. “Just being cautious with it right now, so we got him off the ice.”

Hutton has started four straight games. In the last two contests, he’s 0-1-0 with a 4.90 goals-against average and an .875 save percentage.

Two other Sabres regulars – defenseman Marco Scandella (lower body) and forward Vladimir Sobotka (upper body) – also missed the session.

Housley said both are day-to-day.

With Scandella out, defenseman Matt Hunwick, a healthy scratch last game, practiced beside newcomer Brandon Montour.

On and off the ice, Montour continues adjustment to Buffalo

By Jourdon LaBarber

Sabres.com

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Brandon Montour knew little about what to expect upon being traded for the first time in his career, but he had a good source of information to lean on.

Ryan Miller, now a veteran netminder on the Anaheim Ducks, was one of the first people to speak to Montour after the defenseman learned he would be joining Miller's former team in Buffalo.

"He's obviously been on that side too," Montour said. "It's tough, because I've had the relationship with Ryan, he's a great guy and he's an older guys who expects a lot and knows what it's all about.

"He was here for a number of years and said if I have any questions or anything for him to make it easier in my adjustment, he's there for me."

Whether or not that conversation included a briefing about the pleasures of lake effect snow is unclear.

Trading the California sunshine for a scene from *The Day After Tomorrow* is one of several adjustments for Montour, whose hometown of Brantford, Ont. is just a 90-mile drive up the QEW from Buffalo. He spent a day off on Wednesday grabbing a rental car and visiting the mall for winter apparel.

Then there's the on-ice learning curve, which Montour had little time to prepare for ahead of his team debut in Philadelphia on Tuesday. He met the Sabres about two hours before their game in Toronto on Monday, skated as a part of a small group the next morning and later had a brief pregame video session.

With that, he was off.

"It's one of those things where it's just a hockey game," Montour said. "A little different, but I thought as the game went on it got a little better."

Montour said he felt OK in his debut, admitting to a couple of "boneheaded" plays that come with the learning curve of playing on a new team while also showcasing the skating and passing ability that should make him an asset on the Buffalo back end moving forward.

There were give-and-go plays through the neutral zone:

There were chances in the offensive zone:

And there were quick passes in transition, including this play under pressure that led to a goal for Casey Mittelstadt:

"Hockey is hockey, but like I said, coming into new systems, it's one of those things where I'll adjust as I go here," Montour said. "But my mindset as I go here is to carry on with what these guys are doing right now, bringing my strengths to the team and helping out as best as I can.

"What I've got here is they're building for something special, and I'm excited to be a part of that."

Off the ice, Montour is expecting to be a vocal presence for a young team given his playoff experience in Anaheim. He played 21 playoff games in two seasons on a roster filled with veterans who have been regulars in the postseason throughout their NHL careers.

"I want to be a vocal guy and feel like I can be a leader - obviously, we have a bunch of young guys - and share my experience that I've had with older guys in Anaheim," he said. "We've had a lot of veteran players over the years and I think I can carry that into this dressing room."

Sabres coach Phil Housley spoke highly of Montour's demeanor following his first practice with the team on Thursday.

"I just really like his attitude," Housley said. "He's got a smile on his face, he loves coming to the rink, he enjoys playing the game. I just love the speed element of his game. Very tenacious, he attacks the game really well, he wants to make a difference out there, so it was good to have him in a practice and just to get acclimated to the city and his teammates. He's been a breath of fresh air."

The Sabres lost in Montour's debut, 5-2. They'll look to rebound in his first home game against the Pittsburgh Penguins on Friday, needing to go on a run if they're to erase an eight-point deficit in the standings over the final month of the season.

"The experiences that I've had in the past, there are ups and downs," Montour said. "It's not going to be straight to the top, so you're going to have those adjustments and days you'd like to have back. For me, you lose a game, you've got to wash it. "You've got to come back the next day and start all over."

"I think that's a big thing. It's a long season. At this point, we're eight points back, so a little bit of a hill to climb but there's an opportunity to do some big things in the next [19 games]. Take each game, game-by-game and we'll see what we can do."

Thursday's practice

Vladimir Sobotka (upper body) and Marco Scandella (lower body) both missed practice and are considered day-to-day. Carter Hutton was on the ice to start practice but left early after tweaking a lower-body injury.

Housley said Hutton's status is undecided for Friday's game against Pittsburgh.

"We'll evaluate that later today and tomorrow morning, but just being cautious with it right now so we got him off the ice," he said.

Here's how the Sabres lined up:

53 Jeff Skinner - 9 Jack Eichel - 23 Sam Reinhart
43 Conor Sheary - 71 Evan Rodrigues - 21 Kyle Okposo
20 Scott Wilson - 37 Casey Mittelstadt - 72 Tage Thompson
28 Zemgus Girgensons - 22 Johan Larsson - 29 Jason Pominville

19 Jake McCabe - 55 Rasmus Ristolainen
26 Rasmus Dahlin - 4 Zach Bogosian
48 Mat Hunwick - 62 Brandon Montour
8 Casey Nelson

40 Carter Hutton
35 Linus Ullmark