



# **Buffalo Sabres**

**Daily Press Clips**

*February 19, 2016*

## **Sabres Kane set to return to lineup after 1-game benching**

By John Wawrow

AP

February 19, 2016

BUFFALO, N.Y. (AP) — Sabres forward Evander Kane says he's learned his lesson about sleeping in and missing practice now that he's set to return to the lineup following a one-game benching.

"It was 100 percent my responsibility to make sure I'm at the rink and I'm on time," Kane said following practice Thursday. "I take full responsibility for my actions and I'm accountable for those. I paid the consequences. For me, it's a lesson and it's something I'm not going let happen again."

Kane spoke shortly before coach Dan Bylsma announced the forward would return to the lineup for Buffalo's game at Columbus on Friday after being a healthy scratch in a 2-1 shootout loss at Ottawa on Tuesday.

The punishment came a day after Kane informed Bylsma and general manager Tim Murray that he had slept in and wasn't able to make it to practice.

Kane spent the previous night attending the NBA All-Star game in Toronto, which is about a two-hour drive from Buffalo. Pictures of Kane celebrating following the game surfaced on the player's Instagram account before they were deleted.

Bylsma called Kane's absence a disappointment.

"I have great optimism that it's a lesson learned to be quite frank," Bylsma said. "But it's one that he has to also start to continue to show that he has learned that lesson. So I'm extremely optimistic that's the direction he's headed in."

Kane is playing his first season in Buffalo after being acquired in a multi-player trade with Winnipeg last February.

He's a top-line forward whose 16 goals ranks fourth on the team. He also has eight assists and is averaging 21 minutes of ice-time per game, which is second among Buffalo forwards.

Selected with the fourth pick in the 2009 draft, Kane openly questioned his five-plus season tenure in Winnipeg/Atlanta, and called the trade to Buffalo a fresh start.

On Thursday, Kane said he's looking forward to put behind what happened this week.

"It's not a trend that I want to be a part of," Kane said. "Going forward, I'm going to be focusing on hockey as I always have, and try to be at my best each and every game for the remainder of the season."

With Kane's return, Bylsma said the Sabres intend to demote rookie forward Justin Bailey to their AHL affiliate in Rochester. Bailey had no points in four games over the past week.

## Sabres-Blue Jackets Preview

By Jeff Mezydlo

AP

February 19, 2016

Evander Kane is sorry for another questionable episode in his seven-year career and will return to the ice for the Buffalo Sabres after a one-game suspension.

Kane looks to help the Sabres avoid equaling a season high with a fourth straight road defeat Friday night against the Columbus Blue Jackets, who try to extend their longest point streak of 2015-16.

One off the team lead with 16 goals, Kane was suspended by the club for Tuesday's 2-1 shootout loss at Ottawa because he missed Monday's practice after attending the NBA All-Star Game in Toronto a night earlier. The 24-year-old reportedly made matters worse by posting some of his evening's escapades on social media.

"It was 100 percent my responsibility to make sure I'm at the rink and I'm on time," Kane said following practice Thursday. "I take full responsibility for my actions and I'm accountable for those. I paid the consequences. For me, it's a lesson and it's something I'm not going let happen again."

Kane, who had problems on social media and often clashed with then-coach Claude Noel in Winnipeg, also remains the subject of an alleged December sex offense investigation in Buffalo.

Sabres coach Dan Bylsma said he handled Kane's recent issue the same he would any other player.

"I have great optimism that it's a lesson learned to be quite frank," Bylsma said. "But it's one that he has to also start to continue to show that he has learned that lesson. So I'm extremely optimistic that's the direction he's headed in."

Kane, who has eight goals in 13 games and four in the last four, was missed Tuesday. The Sabres (23-28-7) recorded 39 shots but managed only Matt Moulson's first goal in 45 games after they scored 10 in back-to-back home wins over Montreal and Colorado.

"(Kane is) a big part of this team and he brings a lot to the table on the ice," teammate Brian Gionta said.

Buffalo has earned at least one point in seven of nine but managed one goal apiece during an 0-1-2 road stretch.

The Sabres are 2 for 23 on the power play in seven overall, but went 3 for 7 during a 4-2 home victory over Columbus (23-28-7) on Oct. 12. Moulson had a goal with two assists and Kane recorded an assist in Buffalo's first victory of the season.

Though Columbus coach John Tortorella felt his club allowed an easy overtime goal in Tuesday's 2-1 home loss to Boston, he's been generally pleased during its 4-0-2 stretch.

"I just think we're playing with confidence," he told the team's official website. "We've just got to keep on growing from there."

Columbus has allowed 11 non-shootout goals in the last six games, during which rookie Joonas Korpisalo has a 1.76 goals-against average in starting each. Though veteran Curtis McElhinney has been activated from an ankle injury that's kept him out since Jan. 2, Korpisalo could remain the No. 1 option with Sergei Bobrovsky (lower body) still sidelined.

"With the goaltending situation, we want to win, and we're going to win if we have our best goalie in there," Tortorella said.

All of Alexander Wennberg's eight points at home this season have come in his last 11 at Nationwide Arena.

## **Sabres' Evander Kane ready to get back to the business of hockey**

By John Vogl  
Buffalo News  
February 19, 2016

Evander Kane is forgiven. His job now is to make people forget.

Kane will be out of the doghouse and back on the ice Friday when the Sabres visit the Columbus Blue Jackets. The left winger's benching for missing practice is over after one game, and he insists he received the message sent by the organization.

"It's always good when you can get back on the ice and get back to doing what you love," Kane said Thursday. "I don't think you're going to find a guy in the league that enjoys watching a hockey game when you have the ability to be playing. It's something that obviously you don't want to have happen very often, if at all."

The Sabres, of course, never want it to happen again.

"I have great optimism that it's a lesson learned, to be quite frank," coach Dan Bylsma said in First Niagara Center. "He also has to start to show, continue to show, that he has learned that lesson. I'm extremely optimistic that that's the direction he's heading in."

Just as he did earlier in the week, Kane expressed regret and vowed not to repeat his mistakes. His teammates intend to hold him to that.

"Guys make mistakes," forward Jamie McGinn said. "He's apologized to the guys. It's all in how he takes it from here.

"If he's serious about it and he works hard, which he is right now, and he's very humble and he wants to get better and he wants to be a teammate, we'll move forward from here and welcome him back for sure."

Kane apologized to the group, but his actions will need to match or trump his words.

"We have a really good group of guys in here," Kane said. "It was tough to let those guys down the other day, but I'm going to make sure that I'm the best player I can possibly be for these guys. That will start in Columbus moving forward here.

"It's not a trend I want to be a part of. For me, it was definitely a lesson. I'm going to make sure it is a lesson learned."

Kane ran afoul of teammates in Winnipeg, which led to his trade to Buffalo. He says this situation was different. This one was all his fault. No one else contributed to him not making it back from the NBA All-Star Game in time for Monday's practice.

"It was 100 percent my responsibility to make sure I'm at the rink and I'm on time," the 24-year-old said. "I take full responsibility for my actions, and I'm accountable for those. I paid consequences."

The Sabres paid, too. Buffalo managed just one goal during Tuesday's 2-1 shootout loss in Ottawa. They could have used their hottest scorer.

Kane exited the lineup during his best stretch as a Sabre. The winger has eight goals in his last 13 games, boosting his season totals to 16 goals and 24 points in 47 games.

Kane is expected to slide back into his role on the top line alongside center Ryan O'Reilly and right wing Sam Reinhart. O'Reilly has nine assists in the last eight games, while Reinhart has five goals in seven outings.

Their offensive skills will be needed in Columbus. Buffalo is 2-0-1 in its last three games, but the Blue Jackets are on a 6-1-3 run.

"I'm looking forward to getting back on the ice and helping the team win," Kane said. "Going forward here I'm going to be focusing on hockey, as I always have, and trying to be at my best each and every game for the remainder of the season."

## **Sabres notebook: Bailey returned to Amerks, hopes to come back soon**

By John Vogl  
Buffalo News  
February 19, 2016

Justin Bailey's dream came true. He pulled on a Sabres sweater and played in the NHL.

He hopes to do it again soon.

The Sabres sent Bailey back to Rochester on Thursday after a four-game stint with the big club. Tim Murray was waiting for the Williamsville native at the conclusion of practice, and the general manager delivered the bad news. He also had words of encouragement for Bailey, telling the right winger he liked what he saw and that he'll be back at some point.

"It's been a pretty cool week for sure," Bailey said in First Niagara Center. "It was one of my dreams to play games in the NHL. To get the opportunity to do that has been special."

The Sabres' continuing return to health coupled with Evander Kane's reappearance from a one-game benching left Bailey without a lineup spot for Friday's game in Columbus. The 20-year-old skated in four games with the Sabres, taking 15 shots with no points while averaging 11:51 of ice time.

"I thought I created a good amount of chances," Bailey said. "I struggled a bit in the D-zone, but when I got in the offensive zone and got the puck on my stick, I thought I was able to use my size, my speed to my advantage, create a couple chances for other guys.

"There's a lot of things I saw when I came up here that I definitely need to work on. I think it's a good experience being able to see what needs work and what doesn't."

Bailey headed back to the Amerks with a plan to improve his puck work along the boards.

"Defensively, he showed a good stick, showed a good angle numerous times," coach Dan Bylsma said. "That coming out of D-zone puck play was where he ran into some issues where he can be better, and it resulted in playing defense too much in those circumstances."

Bailey's best game was his debut. He took seven shots in Philadelphia on Feb. 11 and nearly scored multiple times.

"The Philadelphia game will be used as what he can do, what he can bring," Bylsma said. "Speed-wise, physicality, offensive zone, around the net, he showed his best in that game."

Bailey's favorite game, however, was his home debut last Friday against Montreal.

"It's all been pretty special, but the first home game I had was obviously one of the most special hockey games for me," he said. "It wasn't my best game, but just being able to see all my family and friends and all that afterward, especially all the support from people around the city and people I played with, it's been pretty cool.

"You never know which day is your last day, so I just kind of reflected every day and was obviously very thankful to still be here."

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Forward Dan Catenacci practiced for the first time since suffering a concussion during the Philadelphia game. He felt fine after the workout but was awaiting the result of medical tests.

"Most of the injury was in my neck," Catenacci said. "I haven't had too many headache symptoms."

The 22-year-old was playing in just his third game when he was hit by Flyers defenseman Radko Gudas, who received a five-minute charging major but no supplemental discipline.

"I know I'm a young player, but at the same time I know to keep my head up in the neutral zone," Catenacci said. "I really have no comment on the hit. I'm just happy to be healthy and happy to be skating again."

Forwards Ryan O'Reilly (illness) and Zemgus Girgensons (maintenance) missed practice but are expected in the lineup against the Blue Jackets.

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Bylsma is feeling the weight of his team's struggles in shootouts and on the power play. Buffalo is 1-5 in the breakaway challenge.

"They're a miserable source of frustration," the coach said.

The Sabres are just 2 for 23 on the power play during the last seven games.

"There is some frustration creeping in with the power play in both units," Bylsma said. "Components you need to have in your power play to be successful aren't there. Our breakout, our entry and our recovery hasn't been very good."

## **Sabres' Kane returns vs. Blue Jackets**

By Michael LoRe

NHL.com

February 19, 2016

### **SABRES (23-28-7) at BLUE JACKETS (23-28-7)**

**TV:** 7 p.m. ET; BELL TV, MSG-B, FS-D, NHL.TV

**Season series:** Rasmus Ristolainen and Ryan O'Reilly each had a goal and an assist and rookie Jack Eichel scored his first NHL goal to help the Buffalo Sabres to a 4-2 win against the Columbus Blue Jackets on Oct. 12 at First Niagara Center. Brandon Saad and Scott Hartnell scored for Columbus.

**Sabres team scope:** Left wing Evander Kane returns to the lineup after being benched for one game, coach Dan Bylsma said. Kane, who has 24 points (16 goals) in 47 games, did not play in the 2-1 shootout loss to the Ottawa Senators on Tuesday because he missed practice Monday after breaking a team rule. "I have great optimism it's a lesson learned to be quite frank," Bylsma told the Sabres website. "But it's one he has to also start to show and continue to show that he has learned that lesson. So I'm extremely optimistic that that's the direction he's headed in." Centers Zemgus Girgensons (maintenance) and O'Reilly (illness) did not practice Thursday. Bylsma expects each to play Friday. Center Daniel Catenacci returned to the ice for the first time since sustaining an upper-body injury Feb. 11 against the Philadelphia Flyers. Catenacci, who is currently on injured reserve, filled in for O'Reilly on the top line and on the power play Thursday.

**Blue Jackets team scope:** Rookie goalie Joonas Korpisalo is expected to make his 11th straight start Friday, according to the Columbus Dispatch. It will be the longest string of consecutive starts by a Columbus goalie since Sergei Bobrovsky made 11 straight at the end of the 2014-15 season. "Joonas feels it (right now)," coach John Tortorella told the newspaper. "He's just playing. He's been impressive every night he's out there, and it's really helped our team, as far as playing off him and having confidence in our goalie." Korpisalo is 6-1-3 with a 2.13 goals-against average and .935 save percentage in the Blue Jackets' past 10 games (6-1-3). The Blue Jackets are 4-0-2 in their past six following a 2-1 overtime loss to the Boston Bruins on Tuesday. "I don't know why we didn't play like this from the start (of the season)," right wing Cam Atkinson told the Columbus Dispatch. "But it's nice to finally generate the mentality that we want as a group. We've started to play the way we're capable of playing."

## **Sabres goalie Chad Johnson knows his time in Buffalo could be ending**

By Bill Hoppe  
Olean Times Herald  
February 19, 2016

BUFFALO – Sabres goalie Chad Johnson learned years ago he needed to embrace the nomadic lifestyle that often accompanies a career as a backup.

So at each of his five NHL stops, Johnson, 29, has tried to make the best of what can be a difficult situation by exploring his new city, meeting its people and finding the best local eateries.

"That's the only way you can really deal with getting traded all the time, moving around," Johnson said Thursday inside the First Niagara Center. "I'll look back and I'll be able to go to these different cities and know all the best restaurants, know all these people and have connections everywhere."

Johnson, a Calgary native the Sabres acquired almost a year ago, has grown to love what Buffalo offers.

"It's an American city, but it has that real diehard Canadian feeling to me," he said. "They love the Bills, they love the Sabres. I love being in cities like that where they embrace sports and food. I love that aspect of it. You can't go wrong."

The comfort Johnson feels from the city and his team has helped bolster his game. In his sixth season, he has quietly been the Sabres' backbone at times, earning 13 of their 23 wins entering tonight's road contest against the Columbus Blue Jackets.

The trust Johnson has built with his teammates is special.

"You build it through performance on the ice and things you do away from the rink and how you are as a person," he said. "I've tried to be a good teammate."

But the likable Johnson's stay here, like his other stops, might be a short one. As an unrestricted free agent following the season, he's a prime candidate to be dealt before the Feb. 29 trade deadline.

"I want to be here and be here long term, be a part of this," he said. "But I understand it's a business and it has to work for both sides. It's been good. I've enjoyed it here."

He said his uncertain future is both "exciting" and "nerve-racking."

"It's hard not to think about it, to try to get it out of your mind," Johnson said. "It's your life. It's your livelihood. It's hard not to (worry), but you just try to focus on what you can control, and that's performing."

Johnson has demonstrated a cool demeanor all season, compiling a 2.50 goals-against average, a .916 save percentage and one shutout in a career-high 32 games. He has performed superbly since Nov. 1, posting some terrific numbers – 10-8-3, 2.25 and .928 – in 23 appearances.

Still, the Sabres have options younger than Johnson, who coach Dan Bylsma called a "stalwart."

Robin Lehner, who was injured more than three months, appears to be entrenched as the starting goalie. Then there's Linus Ullmark, a rookie Bylsma often called on as Lehner, 24, recovered from a high ankle sprain.

Ullmark, who's back in the AHL, often showcased the talents of a No. 1 NHL goalie during his 19-game run. But Ullmark, 22, has only played 30 games in North America. It's possible the Sabres will want the Swede to play a full season with the Rochester Americans next year.

If that happens, the Sabres will likely need a veteran backup like Johnson for a year.

"You try not to focus on different scenarios, but you have to prepare yourself for those situations," Johnson said.

Johnson has played well enough a team could offer him a two-year contract, something he earned from the New York Islanders in 2014 following a superb campaign in which he was perhaps the league's best backup with the Boston Bruins.

"I was proving that I could be a guy that plays his backup role and could be one of the best, if not the best, backup," Johnson said.

Proving his 2013-14 season wasn't an aberration has become a big source of motivation for Johnson, whose numbers dipped greatly – 2.10 to 3.08 and .925 to .889 – before the Isles traded him.

"It's been great for me to ... kind of prove why I had success in Boston and what I did there wasn't a fluke and years past as well," Johnson said. "So (this season) was definitely ... another statement season."

Perhaps it will help Johnson find a new place where he has an opportunity to be a No. 1 goalie.

"I've always felt like I can be (one)," he said.

## Sabres' Evander Kane set to return after benching

By Bill Hoppe  
Olean Times Herald  
February 19, 2016

BUFFALO – As expected, Sabres winger Evander Kane, who earned a one-game benching for oversleeping and missing practice after partying in Toronto, will return for Friday's road game against the Columbus Blue Jackets.

"I'm going to make sure that this doesn't happen again (and) I'm not in the same situation because it's not a trend I want to be a part of," Kane said this afternoon following practice. "For me, it's definitely a lesson. I want to make sure it's a lesson learned."

After scoring a goal in the Sabres' 4-1 home win against Colorado on Sunday afternoon, Kane flew to Toronto for the NBA All-Star Game. He posted video of the game and the surroundings on Snapchat and also of himself and some friends drinking and partying in what appeared to be nightclub.

Hours later, he phoned the Sabres and told them he wouldn't be attending practice Monday. Before sitting out Tuesday's 2-1 shootout loss in Ottawa, Kane apologized to the organization and his teammates.

His teammates, Kane said, have been understanding.

"We have a really good group of guys in here, and, as I said, it was tough to let those guys down the other day," he said. "I'm going to make sure I'm the best player possible for these guys."

Sabres coach Dan Bylsma said he's "extremely optimistic" Kane has learned a lesson.

"But it's one he has to also start to show, to continue to show that he has learned that lesson," he said.

In other news, center Ryan O'Reilly (ill) and winger Zemgus Girgensons (maintenance) missed today's session inside the First Niagara Center. Both are expected to play Friday.

With Kane back, the Sabres plan to send down rookie winger Justin Bailey today, Bylsma said.

**Update:** The Sabres have officially sent Bailey back to the Rochester Americans.

Meanwhile, winger Dan Catenacci, out since Philadelphia's Radko Gudas hit him in the head last Thursday, practiced today.

The rookie wanted to downplay the hit, which Gudas wasn't reprimanded for.

"I think I'm over it," Catenacci said. "I think the team's over it. The biggest thing is me coming back playing and being 100 percent. Today I felt really good."

Catenacci wouldn't comment on the hit, which likely left him concussed.

"I know I'm a young player, but at the same time, I know to keep my head up in the neutral zone," he said.

Bailey's first four NHL games impressed Bylsma, who cited his size, speed and skating ability. The Williamsville native had seven shots in his debut a week ago.

"The Philadelphia game will be used as what he can do, what he can do speed-wise, physicality, offensive zone, around the net," Bylsma said. "I think he showed his best in that game."

## **Sabres' Kane is glad it's about hockey again**

By Paul Hamilton

WGR 550

February 19, 2016

Buffalo, NY (WGR 550) -- Evander Kane practiced on Thursday and will play on Friday after missing one game. Kane missed practice on Monday and Dan Bylsma sat him out in Ottawa.

Kane said he's been welcomed back by his teammates and is just glad to get back to hockey, "It's always good when you can get back on the ice and get back to doing what you love."

It was difficult to sit and watch the team play without him, but he knows it was his own fault, "Whether you're sitting there and watching it or not playing regardless, I missed practice, I wasn't at practice the day before and those are the consequences I had to deal with and now I'm looking forward and getting back on the ice to try to help the team win."

"We have a really good group of guys in here and it was tough to let those guys down the other day, but I'm going to make sure I'm the best player I can possibly be for these guys and that will start in Columbus."

Kane missed practice on December 27 when he was under investigation for a sexual assault case. He said his days of missing practice are over, "I'm going to make sure that this doesn't happen again and I'm not in the same situation again because it's not a trend that I want to be a part of, so for me it was definitely a lesson, I want to make sure it's a lesson learned and moving forward I'm going to be focused on hockey as I always have and try to be at my best for every game the rest of the season."

His coach has said he believes Kane and is satisfied this is all behind him. Bylsma said, "I have great optimism that this is a lesson learned to be quite frank, but it's one that he also start to show that he has learned that lesson, so I'm extremely optimistic that's the direction he's headed in."

Kane had trouble in Winnipeg, but that was in the locker room with teammates. He said, "This situation was different, it was 100 percent my responsibility to make sure I'm at the rink and I'm on time and I take full responsibility for my actions and I'm accountable for those and I paid the consequences."

Ryan O'Reilly is sick and missed practice while Zemgus Girgensons had a maintenance day. Bylsma expects both to play Friday.

Dan Catenacci practiced for the first time after taking some concussion related tests Thursday morning.

That made Thursday's lines:

McGinn Catenacci Reinhart  
Kane Eichel Bailey  
Foligno Larsson Gionta  
Deslauriers Legwand Moulson

The team sent down Justin Bailey after practice. They had to wait on Catenacci until his testing came back. He did not go to Columbus.

Catenacci got hammered with a clear head shot from the Flyers Radko Gudas. The rookie took the high road when discussing the hit, "It sucks to be out that long and miss time, especially since I just got up to the NHL, but at the same time it's not real under my control and I really haven't thought about it that much. I just focused on getting healthy and I'm happy to be back playing on the ice."

"I think everyone is pretty upset with the hit, but I think I'm over it and I think the team's over it. I know I'm a young player, but at the same time, I know I have to keep my head up in the neutral zone. In the play I was engaged with a player and you guys saw what happened after that, so I really have no comment on the hit."

Bylsma didn't say who would be in net Friday, but did say the plan he laid out was Robin Lehner would play nine games this month and Chad Johnson would play four.

## **Sabres hope to bust power play, shootout slumps soon**

By Chris Ryndak

Sabres.com

February 19, 2016

While the Buffalo Sabres have picked up five points in their last three games, there are still areas of frustration in their game that they'd like to iron out.

One is the power play, which is 2-for-its-last-23 and 3-for-26 in the month of February. Buffalo hasn't scored in its past 13 chances – a span of four games.

"There is some frustration creeping in with the power play and both units. We're talking about multiple games now," Sabres coach Dan Bylsma said after practice Thursday at First Niagara Center. "Really, it comes down to components of your power play that you need to be successful aren't there."

Bylsma cited the team's entries and timing as two aspects they've been focused on improving. On the flip side, the penalty kill has been very good, going 19-for-21 over the last seven games.

What else has been frustrating the team? Shootouts.

This month, three of the Sabres' eight games have gone to overtime and two of them have reached the shootout. That includes Tuesday night's 2-1 loss at Ottawa, in which the Senators scored on both of their opportunities while the Sabres didn't convert at all.

Buffalo's shootout woes this season have been well-documented. Their shootout record is 1-5 and Sabres shooters are only 2-for-19 on their attempts.

"They're miserable – a source of frustration right now," Bylsma said. "You look at our record in the shootout and our number of one-goal games [27 with a record of 10-10-7]. Then you add to that the shootout-times we have been able to come up with the extra point. It's a big source of frustration."

Buffalo's only shootout goals this season have come from Matt Moulson and Tyler Ennis.

The Sabres could avoid shootouts completely if they were to capitalize during the five-minute 3-on-3 overtime period that precedes it.

The team's best chance in overtime on Tuesday came on a Jack Eichel breakaway with 18 seconds remaining.

"It became a little bit more of a stationary and defensive game and protecting the middle of the ice. It didn't have that free-flow up and down the ice. We got our one look and didn't capitalize on it," Bylsma said.

They also had a good chance to begin the extra period. Defenseman Rasmus Ristolainen started overtime on Thursday in Ottawa with Eichel and Josh Gorges. Eichel won the opening draw and Ristolainen rushed up the ice, putting a wrist shot on net eight seconds in.

"Every time I play, I want to score," Ristolainen said Thursday.

He said that as a defenseman, he's looking for the opposition to make a mistake so he can jump up ice and capitalize on it. As a group, they'll be looking to maintain possession to try and generate better scoring opportunities.

"I think we can play more offense. We just need the puck and try to hold it, don't throw it away – try to keep it and make plays," Ristolainen said.

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## PRACTICE UPDATE

Ryan O'Reilly and Zemgus Girgensons missed practice while Daniel Catenacci returned to the ice with his teammates for the first time since sustaining an upper-body injury on Feb. 11 in Philadelphia. Catenacci filled in for O'Reilly on the top line and on the power play.

O'Reilly has been battling an illness while Girgensons was given a maintenance day. Bylsma expects both to be ready for Friday's game in Columbus.

Catenacci said Thursday he took a test at the hospital in the morning and felt good after practice. According to Bylsma, the team will wait to make sure Catenacci is 100-percent healthy before deciding on his status. Catenacci is currently on injured reserve.

He sustained the injury on a hit from Radko Gudas late in the third period of the game against the Flyers. Gudas received a five-minute charging major on the play but faced no hearing or supplemental discipline from the NHL.

"I really have no comment on the hit," Catenacci said. "I'm just happy to be healthy and happy to be skating again."

Evander Kane will return to the lineup after serving a team-issued suspension Tuesday night. Kane had overslept and missed practice the day before.

"I have great optimism that it's a lesson learned to be quite frank," Bylsma said. "But it's one he has to also start to show and continue to show that he has learned that lesson. So I'm extremely optimistic that that's the direct he's headed in."

Kane apologized to his teammates while in Ottawa and reiterated his dedication to them after practice on Thursday.

"I'm going to make sure this doesn't happen again and I'm not in the same situation again because it's not a trend that I want to be a part of," he said. "It was definitely a lesson."

"...We have a really good group of guys in here and it was tough to let those guys down the other day. I'm going to make sure I'm the best player I possibly can be for these guys. That will start in Columbus moving forward here."

And because it looks like Kane, O'Reilly and Girgensons will all play against the Blue Jackets, the Sabres reassigned rookie Justin Bailey to Rochester of the American Hockey League.

Bylsma said that he liked the way Bailey used his size to be a physical presence around the net and pointed to Bailey's game against the Flyers as the best example of how he can be an effective player in the NHL.

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## LINE COMBINATIONS & DEFENSIVE PAIRINGS

9 Evander Kane – 43 Daniel Catenacci – 23 Sam Reinhart

88 Jamie McGinn – 15 Jack Eichel – 56 Justin Bailey

82 Marcus Foligno – 22 Johan Larsson – 12 Brian Gionta

44 Nicolas Deslauriers – 17 David Legwand – 26 Matt Moulson

4 Josh Gorges – 55 Rasmus Ristolainen

29 Jake McCabe – 47 Zach Bogosian

3 Mark Pysyk – 46 Cody Franson

6 Mike Weber – 25 Carlo Colaiacovo

40 Robin Lehner  
31 Chad Johnson

**Power Play**

*First Unit*

Catenacci-Eichel-Reinhart-McGinn-Ristolainen

*Second Unit*

Kane-Moulson-Gionta-Bogosian-Pysyk