



Buffalo Sabres

Daily Press Clips

February 22, 2018

Sabres' Kane expects to be dealt before NHL trading deadline

Associated Press

John Wawrow

Feb. 22, 2018

BUFFALO, N.Y. (AP) — Sabres forward Evander Kane doesn't need a fortune teller to understand he's down to his final days in Buffalo when acknowledging he expects to be dealt before the NHL's trading deadline on Monday.

"Yeah, if that's the answer you guys are waiting for," Kane told reporters following practice Wednesday. "I'm not going to get into what's been talked about or what hasn't been talked about, but I think you guys are all pretty smart hockey people."

The only uncertainty for Kane is when the trade will take place and where he'll be headed.

"I think the hardest part is the unknown," Kane said, in preparing to join the Sabres for a two-game road trip starting at Detroit on Thursday. "I'm going to play as hard as I possibly can tomorrow night. And then once the move is made, then we can reflect for that day. But I've got a job to do."

The 26-year-old is expendable for a variety of reasons, starting with his contract which runs out after this season. The Sabres are rebuilding under a new regime, headed by first-year general manager Jason Botterill, and the team has expressed no interest in re-signing Kane, who is expected to command a hefty price tag in free agency this summer.

Kane's 19 goals in 60 games rank second in Buffalo. He's scored 20 or more in each of his previous two years since being acquired by the Sabres in a multi-player trade with Winnipeg in February 2015.

The 26-year-old is in his ninth NHL season after being selected No. 4 by the then-Atlanta Thrashers in the 2009 draft.

Kane and New York Rangers forward Rick Nash are considered the two top players available on the trade market with the NHL playoff races entering the stretch run.

The Sabres are on the outside looking in. They sit last in the East and are all but mathematically assured of extending their longest playoff drought to a seventh season.

Also on the block in Buffalo are goalie Robin Lehner, forward Benoit Pouliot and defenseman Josh Gorges, all of whom are in the final year of their contracts.

Coach Phil Housley is braced for a roster shake up and focused solely on preparing his team to play.

"Number 1 is getting ready for Detroit," Housley said. "That's what we control is to get our players ready. And Jason (Botterill) is going to do the best job he can moving forward here."

Kane's pending departure marks a dramatic setback for a franchise that under former GM Tim Murray pinned its hopes on him being part of its long-term future after finishing last in both 2013-14 and 2014-15 seasons.

Murray dealt defenseman Tyler Myers, forward Drew Stafford, two prospects and a first-round pick in acquiring Kane, defenseman Zach Bogosian and prospect goalie Jason Kasdorf. And it made no difference to Murray that Kane would miss the final two months of the season after having shoulder surgery.

Though Kane has produced on the ice when healthy and been active in working with Buffalo-area charitable groups, he has been questioned for his immaturity off the ice.

Kane has had two legal run-ins, including being arrested for grabbing three women by the hair and neck during an altercation at a Buffalo bar in June 2016. The charges were eventually dismissed on condition Kane stayed out of trouble as part of a plea agreement in which a prosecutor described the player's behavior as "arrogant, boorish and surly, but not criminal."

Earlier in the year, the Sabres suspended Kane for one game for missing practice a day after pictures surfaced on social media of the player celebrating in Toronto after attending the NBA All-Star Game.

Kane has been inconsistent this season. After scoring 15 goals and 18 assists in his first 35 games, he has just four goals and two assists in his past 25.

NOTES: Center Jack Eichel was spotted carrying a stick and walking without a protective boot for the first time since spraining his right ankle in a 4-2 win at Boston on Feb. 10. Housley had no update on Eichel's status. ... G Robin Lehner will start against Detroit after missing one game with a hip injury.

Sabres' Kane flashes the charm as trade rumors swirl

The Buffalo News

John Vogl

February 21, 2018

When Evander Kane turns on the charm, he owns the room. There was no doubt the Buffalo Sabres' dressing room belonged to him Wednesday.

Kane knows he has to make the most of it while he can.

As the minutes ticked toward Monday's NHL trade deadline and the left winger's inevitable departure, his megawatt smile and wit were on full display. Kane is among the most talked-about players in the league at the moment, and it was wondered if he follows the chatter on social media.

"Heavily on it," he said in a droll, sarcastic tone, "every five seconds. Refreshing, refreshing, refreshing, refreshing, refreshing. I love the hockey critics, especially the guys with the fake profiles. Are those the bots now? You know, the robots?"

"I love it, you know? It's just great. Just criticizing my play, what I'm doing, what I'm not. It's awesome, so I refresh, I try to stay up to date."

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Kane actually does follow Canadian hockey journalists Pierre LeBrun and Darren Dreger.

"They send out those friendly reminders that there's going to be some fake profiles out there, right?" Kane said in KeyBank Center. "I think I've seen a few of those."

"Obviously, I'm aware of what's going on. I have social media. Do I spend all day looking at it? Absolutely not. But who knows? I know guys who have found out via social media before anybody else knows."

All he knows for sure is it will be reported by 3 p.m. Monday that he's been traded.

"Yeah, if you guys are waiting for me to say it," he said before heading to Detroit for Thursday's game. "It's been talked about. It's been documented. It's unfortunate, but it's the situation we're in and part of the business."

"I'm not thinking about it right now too much. I'm trying to focus on the games that we have left before that deadline. We'll deal with the move when it happens."

Kane is represented by Newport Sports Management Inc., one of hockey's powerhouse agencies. His representatives are well-informed, but there's still plenty of uncertainty as to where he'll end up.

"Obviously, your agent knows what's being talked about and what's been said," Kane said. "It's a little tougher when it comes to a trade, especially at the deadline because there's so many different things that can happen. It's a little different from free agency per se where you have pretty much all the control."

"I have a feel of what teams might be interested and what teams aren't interested, but I really have no idea. I'm going to find out just like you guys do."

In the meantime, he'll go about his business as usual. After the Sabres visit Detroit, they'll head to Washington for a game Saturday. Kane didn't pack anything more than he'd normally bring for a two-game road trip.

"I've never been traded before in this situation," said Kane, who joined the Sabres in 2015 after undergoing season-ending shoulder surgery. "I'm packing like a regular road trip and looking forward to playing in Detroit with these guys."

"Really, my focus right now is just on Detroit. When the deadline gets closer and closer, I guess we'll see what happens."

Considering it may have been Kane's final time in the home dressing room of KeyBank Center, he was again offered the chance to reflect on Buffalo. He again declined.

"Once the move is made, then we can reflect for that day, but(until) then I've got a job to do," said Kane, who did reflect on the grind of the daily trade spotlight. "I've never been through it before, so I don't think you can really know how you're going to feel throughout the course of a season, but I was definitely prepared for it.

"There's so many things that can happen, but it looks like we know what it is going to happen."

Injury update

Goaltender Robin Lehner (hip) practiced fully in HarborCenter and said he's "100 percent ready" to start Thursday if called upon.

Center Jack Eichel peeked his head into the dressing room for a minute, but Sabres coach Phil Housley had no update on Eichel's high-ankle sprain that occurred Feb. 10.

"We haven't had any updates," Housley said. "We're just going to see how this progresses. It's a tough injury. You never know how you're going to react or come out of it. We're just going to let it settle down. It's still in the situation it was before."

Story topics: Evander Kane/ Jack Eichel/ Robin Lehner

The Sabres are bracing for the NHL Trade Deadline

WGR550

Paul Hamilton

February 21, 2018

Buffalo, NY (WGR 550) - We all know the NHL trade deadline is 3 p.m. on Monday. Of course, the players are well aware of it too. I had a chance to speak with many of the Sabres who are playing on expiring contracts that will make them unrestricted free agents.

Evander Kane thinks he'll be traded for sure, but he's never had the pressure of being a rental. He said, "I've never been through it before, so I don't think you can really know how you're going to feel, but I'm definitely prepared for it mentally headed in, so it looks like we know what's going to happen.

"I think the hardest part is the unknown and I think that's in any job, so it's something you have to deal with as a professional, but you can't let it affect your on-ice performance."

Kane was asked if he's been told that he's going to be moved. Kane said, "I'm not going to get into what has or hasn't been talked about."

For the short time I've known Kane, he usually knows who says what about him. He has a Twitter account that can be active at times. He said, "I'm aware of what's going on and I have social media, but do I spend all day looking at it? Absolutely not, but who knows? I've known guys that have found out via social media before anybody else knows."

Phil Housley was traded many times as a player. He knows what they're feeling in the locker room, "Your first trade is always difficult, but I always felt it was easier getting traded in the summer because you're in the midst of trying to find a place to live, trying to get to your surroundings and get comfortable you know, doctors and schools for your kids, so that's always the difficult part of it."

Josh Gorges has played for San Jose, Montreal and Buffalo so he's been traded twice. Gorges is 33-years-old and could provide some depth on the blue line for a playoff team. He said when thinking about trades, it's all about his family, that's what makes this a nervous time, "Yes, I think it is, but for myself, the biggest thing is you think about your family because everything is up in the air, it's out of my control and I can't do anything about it, but if something does happen, you don't see your wife, you don't see your kids, they're by themselves, it's tough on her, so that's what I think about in this situation.

"Any player would love to be in an opportunity to win the Cup, especially not having that opportunity yet, but a lot of what I do now in my life is based upon my family and what's best for them."

Benoit Pouliot and Jacob Josefson decided they wanted to come to Buffalo and signed one-year deals. Both could be dealt by Monday. Pouliot said he doesn't really let it play on his mind and there are no nerves about it, "No, not really. I don't think about it at all actually. I haven't seen or heard anything.

"I've been in this situation before a lot. When you're young it's a different mindset, you don't really know what to expect, but as you get older, the business part of it, the hockey part of it, you think about it a little bit, but I try not to."

Pouliot came to Buffalo for a reason and he's liked it so far. He does not want to leave, "I would love to stay here, I really like it, the boys are great. It sucks losing obviously and it's got to get fixed, but I really like it here."

Josefson hasn't given much thought to being traded. He said, "I like it here, I just focus on being here. It's nothing I think about and whatever happens, happens."

Ryan O'Reilly likely isn't going to be moved, but he's lived through trade deadlines in Buffalo and Colorado. He said as teammates, they help each other get through the deadline, "When we're having a season like we are, it's frustrating, you don't know what's going to happen. It's a tough thing in the game of hockey, but we just take it one day at a time and focus on the next day.

"It's going to happen, so whatever is going on, we must stick together."

Just like Kane, O'Reilly know what's being said, He said, "You hear rumors that fly around, but it's just something that happens. It's just part of the game."

Robin Lehner practiced with the team on Wednesday and said the last two days on the ice have gone very well and he's ready to play.

The Sabres left for Detroit after practice. They play the Red Wings on Thursday and are in Washington on Saturday.

Sabres' Casey Nelson earning regular duty on blue line

Olean Times Herald

Bill Hoppe

February 22, 2018

BUFFALO – Earlier this season, if you had asked Casey Nelson if he could play 20 minutes a night in the NHL, often against the opposition's top line, the Sabres defenseman would've given you a straightforward answer.

"I'd say there's no chance, there's no way," Nelson said Wednesday inside KeyBank Center.

But in tonight's tilt in Detroit, Nelson, 25, will likely play big minutes on the second defense pair, meaning he'll face some of the Red Wings' best players.

Not long ago, Nelson, a free agent from Minnesota State, seemed to be buried in the minors. As injuries ravaged the Sabres' blue line early on, he stayed in the AHL. When they finally recalled him for the first time, he just sat as a healthy scratch.

But tonight will be Nelson's 17th straight appearance. He has skated at least 19 minutes in seven straight games. When Sabres coach Phil Housley recently demoted No. 1 defenseman Rasmus Ristolainen, he promoted Nelson to play with Marco Scandella.

"I'm probably playing at the highest level I ever have and as comfortable and as confident as I ever have," Nelson said.

In the dreariest of seasons, Nelson has emerged as the Sabres' biggest surprise and a rare bright spot.

How many youngsters in the last several years have exceeded expectations during a recall, forcing the Sabres to keep them? Nelson might be the only one.

Nelson became the 13th defender to play for the Sabres this season when he debuted Jan. 18. Just getting recalled from the Rochester Americans surprised him.

"It was a good surprise, I had no clue," he said. "Just taking the opportunity and really trying to capitalize on it, because you never know if you get another."

Nelson knows opportunities can vanish. After the Sabres signed him almost two years ago, he compiled four assists in seven late-season games.

"Those last seven games my first year ... I couldn't play this level of hockey that I am now," he said.

Nelson made the big club out of training camp last season, but he only played sparingly before the Sabres sent him down.

In the span of a year, Nelson played three NHL games.

But Nelson embraced his time in the minors – he has played 95 games with the Amerks – and adjusted to pro hockey. By November, he was skating beside top prospect Brendan Guhle.

"They were a force, they were breaking down forechecks, they had a good chemistry," Housley said. "That's why he earned his way up here."

Nelson likes earning everything. He has always flown under the radar and paid his dues. He believes any adversity has made him stronger.

He went undrafted and struggled as a 21-year-old college freshman in 2013-14. But he kept developing, and by 2015, NHL teams wanted to sign him badly.

"There should be bumps in the road," Nelson said. "Success usually doesn't come easy, there's sacrifices you have to make. It's like a road I've had almost on every level here."

“First year, kind of in the trenches and just digging myself and getting better. I think it helps in the end. Each level, you got to have some hard times. To have the ups, you got to have the downs.”

With defensemen Zach Bogosian (hip) and Jake McCabe (shoulder) out for the season, Nelson should stay up the rest of the season.

How has Nelson, a puck-mover with offensive upside, carved out a spot?

“He’s done a terrific job, pretty consistent in his game,” Housley said. “I ... like his stick detail, I like his gap, I like his first pass out of the zone and his angle to get out of the play.”

“One of the things that really intrigues me about him is his ability to get shots through to the net, find a lane.”

Amerks coach Chris Taylor said they left Nelson off the power play earlier this season so he could focus on his defense.

“Once we started doing that, he was doing ... a lot of great things on the penalty kill, and then all of a sudden, his offense came from playing good defense,” he said. “He found his confidence.”

Seeing Nelson receive regular NHL duty has been special for Taylor.

“That’s what I strive for as a coach,” he said. “I want guys to be up in the NHL, that’s where they want to be.”

Sabres Jake McCabe wanted to address shoulder problem later

Olean Times Herald

Bill Hoppe

February 21, 2018

BUFFALO – After undergoing thumb surgery earlier this month, Sabres defenseman Jake McCabe planned on returning when he healed.

But with the Sabres far out of the playoff race, general manager Jason Botterill decided McCabe, 24, should undergo surgery to fix a shoulder injury that has been bothering him.

The Sabres announced the decision Tuesday. Four to six months of recovery time accompanies the surgery.

“Speaking with him yesterday, he really wanted to come back and try to fight through this with the team, just shows the character on his part,” Sabres coach Phil Housley said this afternoon inside KeyBank Center. “I think just a decision by Jason to have the surgery right now, moving forward, to get ahead of it so he’s ready for training camp.”

Housley said the shoulder has bothered McCabe “off and on.”

“He’s played through some pain,” he said.

Did the injury hurt McCabe’s play?

“It didn’t affect his play at all,” Housley said. “I’m sure going into a battle, the way he likes it hit guys, I’m sure it might’ve been sore at times.”

In other news, Sabres goalie Robin Lehner, who missed Monday afternoon’s 3-2 loss to Washington, practiced today inside HarborCenter and is “ready to go,” Housley said. Lehner has been battling a hip injury.

The Sabres play Thursday in Detroit.

Housley also said there’s no update on center Jack Eichel, who’s out indefinitely after suffering a high right ankle sprain Feb. 10.

5 players the Buffalo Sabres could trade before deadline

WKBW

Matt Bove

February 21, 2018

BUFFALO, N.Y. (WKBW) - Chances are it's going to be a busy few days for Buffalo Sabres general manager Jason Botterill. With the NHL trade deadline lurking, the Sabres are a team expected to be very active. But who could be dealt and what should fans expect in return?

Five players the Sabres could move before 3 p.m. on Monday, February 26:

Evander Kane

ADVERTISING

60 games, 19G, 20A, 39 points

Age: 26

Contract status: UFA after season

Current contract: \$5.25M

At long last, the Evander Kane trade rumors may finally come to an end. Barring a massive surprise, Kane will likely be dealt before the clock hits three o'clock on Monday.

Kane, 26, started the year on an absolute tear but has since cooled down at a startling rate. Since December 22, [25 games] Kane has only six points [4G, 2A]. In the Sabres' first 35 games Kane had 33 points.

While his recent struggles haven't increased his market value, he's still going to be a hot commodity for a team that feels like they have a realistic shot at winning the Stanley Cup. The question then becomes -- what is Kane worth?

Last month TSN's Darren Dreger reported that the Sabres wanted four assets in exchange for Kane:

- First-round pick
- High-end prospect
- NHL player
- Conditional draft pick

Unless a team is really desperate or falls in love with Kane, I don't think the Sabres will get nearly that much. That said, it can't hurt for Botterill to ask and see if someone bites. Getting all four of the aforementioned pieces would be a grand slam. Getting three would be a solo shot.

Matthew Bové

✓

@Matt_Bove

Evander Kane: "I'm going to play as hard as I can until I'm moved and when that happens we'll worry about it," #Sabres @WKBW

5:58 PM - Feb 19, 2018

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See Matthew Bové's other Tweets

Twitter Ads info and privacy

Realistically, I'm expecting the Sabres will get either an upper-tier prospect (former first/second round pick) or a late first round pick in the upcoming draft for Kane. If they get both Sabres fans should be very happy. Kane is certainly a good player but with an expiring deal, the Sabres need to make a move. If Kane is on the roster on February 27, Botterill will have dropped the ball.

Robin Lehner

44 games played, 12 wins, 22 losses, 2.95 GAA, .910 Sv%

Age: 26

Contract status: RFA after season

Current contract: \$4M

Robin Lehner receives a ton of criticism despite keeping the Sabres in a lot of games his team has no business in. Keep in mind the Sabres have the fewest goals in the NHL and likely the worst defensive unit in the league.

Does he deserve some of the blame? Absolutely. But the 2017-2018 Sabres aren't in the basement of the NHL because of goaltending. That said, with his future uncertain and Linus Ullmark developing nicely in the AHL, the Sabres should explore their options when it comes to a deal involving Lehner.

Unlike Kane, who can sign anywhere in the offseason, the Sabres will have a chance to bring back Lehner if they so chose, making him an interesting player to watch at the upcoming deadline. If Botterill can find a team that needs a goaltender, he should look to see if he can add a draft pick or a prospect in exchange for Lehner.

Lehner won't fetch a first-round pick like he did when the Sabres traded for him in 2015. But he's also good enough to get a respectable return, perhaps a second or a third-round pick. If Botterill sees the team giving the keys to Ullmark next season, he should make a deal to send Lehner wherever he can get the most in return.

Benoit Pouliot

56 games played, 11 goals, 4 assists, 15 points

Age: 31

Contract status: UFA after season

Current contract: \$1.15M

Pouliot was starting to look like a pleasant surprise until he rapidly started cooling off as the season moved along. When signed by the Sabres, Pouliot was a low-risk signing with upside, providing some depth and speed to the bottom six. Turns out, he was asked to do more than we originally thought because of injuries and a lack of production from players that were expected to have bigger roles heading into the season.

Like so many of his teammates, consistency has been Pouliot's biggest problem all season. With an expiring contract at the end of the season, there is no reason for the Sabres to hold onto him. If a team is looking for an extra-forward during a playoff push and willing to give up a fourth-round pick, Botterill should send Pouliot on his way.

Josh Gorges

26 games played, 0 goals, 2 assists, 2 points

Age: 33

Contract status: UFA after season

Current Contract: \$3.9M

Remember when the Sabres traded Mike Weber to the Washington Capitals for a third-round pick two years ago? They could do something similar with Josh Gorges this season, shipping him to a team looking to add a seventh defenseman and some insurance on the blue line.

Matthew Bové



@Matt_Bove

Love what Josh Gorges had to say about the #Sabres recent bad luck @WKBW

12:31 PM - Feb 7, 2018

6

See Matthew Bové's other Tweets

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While with the Sabres, Gorges has made his fair share of mistakes and had plenty of underwhelming games. But like so many others on the team, he has been asked to do way too much. His \$3.9M cap hit is certainly not favorable but at this point in the season, the Sabres would gladly retain a portion of his contract if it meant adding another third/fourth-round draft pick to their arsenal.

Sam Reinhart

60 games played, 13 goals, 17 assists, 30 points

Age: 22

Contract status: RFA after season

Current contract: \$894K

We'll start with this -- I don't expect Reinhart will be traded, nor do I think he should be. That said, if Botterill is sent an offer he can't refuse then he should pull the trigger. Yes, that's a bit of waffling and for that I'm sorry...but not really.

Matthew Bové



@Matt_Bove

Okposo: 15 points in 15 games

Reinhart: 16 points in 13 games

O'Reilly: 12 points in 10 games

After slow starts all three are trending in the right direction #Sabres @WKBW <https://www.wkbw.com/sports/sabres/5-observations-sabres-storm-past-lightning-5-3> ...

10:23 PM - Feb 13, 2018

5 Observations: Sabres storm past Lightning 5-3

With seven minutes left in the third period, fans at KeyBank Center started singing the Bills shout song. It was their way of thanking the Buffalo Sabres for a rare win on home ice as they knocked...

wkbw.com

57

16 people are talking about this

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As noted last week, Reinhart has been one of the Sabres best players since the calendar turned to 2018 and has finally started putting the puck in the net. His stock is higher than it would have been in December, but I'd imagine it's not anything drastic. Reinhart is still young and can likely be signed to a bridge deal worth \$3/4M per season in the summer. While this season has not gone according to plan for Reinhart, it hasn't really gone well for anyone on the roster.

To give up on Reinhart this soon seems short-sighted. He's certainly underperformed for a second-overall pick, there is no denying that. But there is a lot of value in a player who can score 40-50 points a season.

Sabres focused on Detroit, not trade deadline

WIVB

Nick Filipowski

February 21, 2018

BUFFALO, N.Y. (WIVB) – After holding their last practice at HARBORCENTER before a road trip to Detroit and Washington, inside the locker room, with bags packed and plenty of questions about who will still be wearing a Sabres sweater by 3 p.m. on Monday, there isn't a lot of focus on the upcoming NHL trade deadline.

"Monday is a long way away right now," Sam Reinhart said. "We have three important games coming up that we progress as a team and an organization."

"It's been talked about and documented. It's unfortunate but it's the situation we're in," added winger Evander Kane. "I'm not thinking about it too much. I'm focusing on the games we have left before the deadline and we'll deal with the move when it happens."

But, the rumors are inescapable, especially in the digital age with social media.

"Every five seconds refreshing, refreshing, refreshing and refreshing," Kane joked when asked how much he pays attention to what's on Twitter. "I love the hockey critics especially the guys with the fake profiles – what are they called? Bots now? I love it. It's just great. Just criticizing my play what I'm doing. It's awesome. I refresh. I try to stay up to date."

But even for the 26-year-old, who has more than 217,000 followers and follows just 90 on Twitter, he knows there's a cautionary tale to believing everything that's tweeted out in 280 characters or less.

"I think Pierre LeBrun and (Darren Dreger), they sent those friendly reminders that there are going to be some fake profiles out there," added Kane. "I think I've seen a few and I'm like 'oh, I guess I'll find out on social media.' Obviously, I'm aware of what's going on."

Nick Filipowski

@NEWS4_NICK

Evander Kane had some fun after practice with social media and how much he pays attention to the rumors that are out there
@news4buffalo #Sabres #NHLTradeDeadline #TradeDeadline

2:18 PM - Feb 21, 2018

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<https://platform.twitter.com/widgets.js>

"Do I spend all day looking at it? Absolutely not. I know guys that have found out via social media before anybody else knows. We'll see what happens. I'll focus on Detroit and Washington coming up here and I'm looking forward to the road trip with the boys here."

Gorges reflects on season, career with Sabres

WIVB

Nick Filipowski

February 21, 2018

BUFFALO, N.Y. (WIVB) – When Josh Gorges joined Brian Gionta in Buffalo, the goal was to provide stability, leadership and help guide the franchise back to respectability.

His first year with the Blue & Gold, the team finished last in the Atlantic and drafted Jack Eichel with the No. 2 overall pick.

A year later, the Sabres reached 35 wins, but still missed playoffs. It was the same the year after, which by most estimation, included a step back as a team.

This year with renewed hope with Jason Botterill as general manager and Phil Housley as head coach, the Sabres are once again at the bottom of the standings and contending for the top pick in the draft — a far cry from expectations when the season started in October.

“I think the situation we’re in as a group and where we stand, there is probably too much time to think about what has happened up to this point,” Gorges said.

Even with a revamped blueline that’s struggled throughout the year, the 33-year-old has been a healthy scratch routinely and suited up for only 26 games.

Playing out the final year of his contract, the defenseman knows his time in the Queen City could be coming to a close with the trade deadline fast approaching.

“Whether it be this year or in year’s past. When I first got here, we had a goal in mind to take a step forward and help this franchise reach the playoffs,” he said. “It’s disappointing to sit here and think we haven’t been able to achieve that and it feels like you’ve failed. That’s not easy to swallow.”

Nick Filipowski

@NEWS4_NICK

Ahead of the #NHLTradeDeadline I asked Josh Gorges about what's transpired over the last few years.

"When I first got here, we had a goal in mind to take a step forward ...it feels like you've failed. That's not easy to swallow."
#Sabres @news4buffalo

2:25 PM - Feb 21, 2018

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As Wilson grows comfortable in Buffalo, points are beginning to follow

Sabres.com

Jourdon LaBarber

February 21, 2018

Scott Wilson admits that it took him some time to settle in this season. With the whirlwind he went through, who can blame him?

Wilson played for three teams in the first two months of the season. He was traded from Pittsburgh, which he had helped win a Stanley Cup last spring, to Detroit after just three regular-season games. He only lasted 17 games with the Red Wings before being acquired by Buffalo on Dec. 4.

Nearly three months later - and on the eve of his return to Detroit - Wilson seems to have found his comfort zone. The forward has three goals and two assists in his last six games and 10 points (5+5) overall since joining the Sabres.

He had been held without a point in 20 games prior to his trade to Buffalo.

"I think finally being able to play a little bit with a team for longer than a couple weeks has really gone a long way," Wilson said. "I'm starting to really learn the systems. At the same time, when you're just working hard out there, trying to do the right things, you get some bounces."

Sabres Now (2/21/18)

01:32 • February 21st, 2018

Indeed, simplicity has been a key to Wilson's recent success. Earlier in the season, he explained, he was almost working too hard to create scoring opportunities as opposed to doing things right and letting the chances create themselves.

He finally scored his first goal in Winnipeg on Jan. 5, and then added a second while playing on a line with Ryan O'Reilly and Sam Reinhart in Calgary on Jan. 22. Those helped him get his confidence back.

"Kind of at the beginning, I almost wanted it too badly," he said. "Just finding open shots, being patient and shooting a lot more, you create a lot of stuff from just shooting the puck. I've been getting points from doing that so I'm going to continue to do that."

There's no question that Wilson has had more opportunity in Buffalo than he had in Detroit - he's averaging 12:15 of ice time with the Sabres as opposed to 7:28 with the Red Wings - but he's also taken matters into his own hands by shooting the puck when he's had the opportunity.

Wilson has put at least one shot on goal in all but two of his 19 games since the beginning of January. He's taken three or more shots six times in that span, including two five-shot performances.

The points he's accumulated have been products of that mentality. Four of his last five goals have come on quick shots, taken on rebounds around the net or coming in as the third man on the rush.

Wilson buries loose puck

00:46 • February 10th, 2018

Against Washington on Monday, Wilson took a shot from high slot that turned into a deflection goal for Kyle Okposo:

Okposo's tip-in finds twine

00:50 • February 19th, 2018

"He has a great shot mentality when he keeps the game simple and he's not afraid to go to the hard areas," Sabres coach Phil Housley said. "... That's the way goals are going to be scored from now until the end of the year. It's getting pucks, shooting them, and getting guys in front of the goalie, creating traffic."

Wilson will have a chance to put his skillset on display against his former team when he returns to Little Caesars Arena on Thursday, although he doesn't expect to have an extra chip on his shoulder.

"I don't think so," he said. "It will be cool to see the guys. Even though I was only there for a few weeks, in the hockey world you get to know guys pretty quick."

The same, it seems, can be said for his time in Buffalo.

McCabe to miss remainder of season

Jake McCabe is scheduled to undergo surgery on an injured shoulder and will miss the remainder of the season, the Sabres announced Tuesday. The estimated recovery time for the procedure is four to six months.

McCabe had missed seven games since the team hosted Anaheim on Feb. 8 after undergoing surgery on his thumb, a procedure for which recovery was estimated to take three to four weeks. Housley said McCabe had been dealing with his shoulder injury off and on, but it had not affected his play.

"It's interesting, speaking with him yesterday, he really wanted to come back and try to fight through this with the team," Housley said. "It just shows the character on his part. I think it was just a decision by [general manager] Jason [Botterill] to have the surgery right now to get ahead of it so he's ready to go next training camp."

McCabe is the second Sabres defenseman to have his season end due to injury. He joins Zach Bogosian, who underwent season-ending hip surgery in January.

The Amerks are coming to KeyBank Center

Brendan Guhle, Linus Ullmark and the Rochester Americans will continue their push for the postseason against the Syracuse Crunch at KeyBank Center on Wednesday night. The Amerks have collected at least a point in 36 of their last 45 games and currently sit in third place in the North Division.

Going to the game? Find the latest on Buffalo's AHL affiliate in our weekly Amerks update.

The puck drops at 7:05 p.m.

Wednesday's practice

Phil Housley (2/21/18)

05:54 • February 21st, 2018

Robin Lehner was a full participant in practice and will be ready to play on Thursday, Housley said. The goaltender was scratched on Monday to rest a nagging lower-body, but skated Tuesday while the rest of the team stayed off the ice.

Here's how the full lineup looked at practice:

9 Evander Kane - 90 Ryan O'Reilly - 23 Sam Reinhart
28 Zengus Girgensons - 71 Evan Rodrigues - 21 Kyle Okposo
20 Scott Wilson - 22 Johan Larsson - 29 Jason Pominville
67 Benoit Pouliot - 10 Jacob Josefson - 13 Nicholas Baptiste (17 Jordan Nolan)

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

40 Robin Lehner
31 Chad Johnson

Sharpen Up: February 21, 2018

Sabres.com

Jourdon LaBarber

February 21, 2018

Buffalo will be back on the ice for a full practice today as they get set for a road trip to Detroit and Washington that starts tomorrow night.

Meanwhile, the Amerks are in town for their annual game at KeyBank Center. They'll face the Syracuse Crunch tonight at 7:05 p.m. Tickets are on sale now.

Here's what you need to know.

McCabe to undergo season-ending surgery

Jake McCabe is scheduled to undergo surgery to repair an injured shoulder.

"Jake has been progressing well in his recovery from his previous injury, but we decided that this was a good opportunity to take care of a problem that he has been dealing with for a while," Sabres General Manager Jason Botterill said. "Jake will have time to fully recover before the beginning of the 2018-19 season."

The procedure has an estimated recovery time of four to six months. As a result, McCabe will remain on injured reserve for the duration of the season.

Yesterday's practice

Sabres Now (2/20/18)

01:42 • February 20th, 2018

Robin Lehner skated on his own yesterday as the rest of the team opted for a meeting as they regrouped from Monday's loss to Washington.

Lehner was scratched from the game with a lower-body injury. From the Ice Level Practice Report:

Lehner said he expects to be a full participant in practice on Wednesday and should be ready to return in Detroit.

The next week figures to be an anxious period for a number of players, and Lehner is no exception. The goaltender is set to become a restricted free agent this offseason, and given Buffalo's place in the standings, his name has naturally been circulated in trade rumors.

The NHL's trade deadline is next Monday, Feb. 26, at 3 p.m.

"You follow it a little bit, obviously," Lehner said. "It's nothing I think constantly about. In the end, we play in a pretty great league. Either I stay here or go somewhere else. It's what it is."

The Sabres have seen comeback attempts fall short in back-to-back losses, in each case lamenting the fact that they were unable to replicate their third-period efforts for a full 60 minutes. The Sabres outshot their opponents a combined 35-11 in the last 20 minutes of those games.

"I think it's just more aggressive," alternate captain Ryan O'Reilly said. "I'm not saying we're taking risks, but we just seem to be a little more clear and just kind of go, just kind of trust our forecheck and trust certain things like that that seem to get us the puck back.

"I think we do a solid job of defending and we're not giving up a ton and we keep it to the outside, but it's that offensive part that needs to be there a lot more."

Stick with us for full coverage of practice.

Amerks in Buffalo tonight

If you want to watch some live hockey tonight, stop by KeyBank Center as the Rochester Americans play host to Syracuse tonight. Tickets are on sale now.

Check out our weekly Amerks Update for everything that's happening down on the farm. Here's a snippet:

The Amerks took four out of a possible six points over the weekend, which began with a 12-3 rout of the Wilkes-Barre/Scranton Penguins on Friday night. Rochester has collected at least one point in 36 of its last 45 games dating back to Nov. 1, including 14 of its last 18 games since the turn of the New Year.

Scoring leaders

1. C.J. Smith: 14G - 25A - 39 PTS (Out 3-5 weeks with a lower-body injury)
2. Seth Griffith: 11G - 21A - 32 PTS
- Zach Redmond: 10G - 22A - 32 PTS
4. Kyle Criscuolo: 15G - 16A - 31 PTS
5. Sahir Gill: 14G - 16A - 30 PTS
- Kevin Porter: 13G - 17A - 30 PTS

Goaltending leaders

Linus Ullmark: 18-9-4; 2 SO; 2.43 GAA; .924 SV%
Adam Wilcox: 8-4-2; 2.60 GAA; .911 SV%