



# **Buffalo Sabres**

## **Daily Press Clips**

*November 3, 2018*

## **Eichel's goals are to keep shooting, start scoring**

By Mike Harrington

The Buffalo News

November 2, 2018

Jack Eichel continues to be dominant with the puck most nights for the Buffalo Sabres. His line is driving play, with wingers Jeff Skinner and Jason Pominville sitting 1-2 on the team in goals and Eichel the leader in assists and points.

One thing Eichel would like to start seeing: More of his own shots going into the net.

Eichel had a season-high seven shots on goal and 11 attempts in Thursday's 4-2 loss at Ottawa, but didn't score. He's got only four goals in 13 games and two came in the Oct. 8 win over Vegas. Eichel is on a 25-goal pace and his 10 assists has him on an 88-point pace that would crush his career high.

Both analytics and the eyetest would indicate the goals are going to come too. Maybe as soon as Saturday afternoon's rematch with the Senators in KeyBank Center.

Eichel is scoring on just 7.4 percent of his shots this season, well below his career-low of 9.6 set in 2016-17. But with 54 shots on goal thus far, he's averaging a career-high 4.15 per game. The 54 shots are second in the Eastern Conference to the 56 of Boston's David Pastrnak, and seventh in the NHL.

"I've had a lot of chances," Eichel said after practice Friday in KeyBank Center. "I'm getting to the net right now and earlier in the year I wasn't getting there as much. It's a good sign that's happening but obviously you want them to start going in. That's part of my job. I have to start scoring some goals. It's good to create them but I've got to start putting more in the back of the net for this team."

Perhaps Eichel's best chance Thursday didn't even result in a shot as he drove the net hard in the first period on a 2-on-1 break but got in too deep and couldn't get a shot away against Ottawa goaltender Craig Anderson.

Skinner has marveled at Eichel's skill in the two weeks since rejoining his line, pointing out that wingers have to be ready for any pass that Eichel makes because he can find their stick with only the slightest of openings.

Eichel's skating seems stronger than ever and when he's moving early in games, it seems like that's a trend that sticks for the remainder of the night.

"You start to feel it to the point where every time you touch the puck, you feel like you can make something happen," Eichel said. "It's a mindset I'm trying to have right now. By no means I'm going to score every time I go on the ice but you want to make a positive difference for your team."

"I thought that was probably the best game he's played all year," winger Kyle Okposo said of Eichel. "He controlled the puck every time he was on the ice, controlled the play. He really led the charge in that third period and he was good all night. It was definitely one of his better games and he expects that out of himself."

With Eichel assisting on goals by Pominville and Skinner, the Sabres cut a 3-0 deficit to one goal with a third-period barrage but could not get the equalizer. Buffalo had 23 shots on goal in the period, its most in one frame since collecting 24 at Pittsburgh on Oct. 29, 2015. The Sabres' total of 48 was their most since getting 49 against the Penguins on March 5, 2017.

"You want to mimic that for as many periods as you can over the course of a season," Eichel said. "Realistically, you know you're not playing every game of an 82-season like that but the lesson we have to learn is being ready to play. It's a divisional game where we had an opportunity to impose ourselves on them in their rink where they were coming off a long road trip and we didn't do it."

Eichel said he doesn't feel he's pressing for goals and he certainly has the puck enough that they should come as he's sitting on a 59.1 percent Corsi rating. The Sabres have had 99 more shot attempts than the opponents with Eichel on the ice.

"I would be bothered if I didn't think I was getting chances," he said. "I just have to fine-tune a little bit. You'll get a bounce somewhere, maybe a goal you don't deserve that gets you on a little bit of a stretch. I wouldn't say I'm worried at all. If I wasn't getting chances I'd worry."

## **Sabres Notebook: Pregame ceremony will honor Pominville's 1,000th**

By Mike Harrington

The Buffalo News

November 2, 2018

The Buffalo Sabres will be holding a pregame ceremony Saturday afternoon in KeyBank Center to officially honor winger Jason Pominville for playing his 1,000th career NHL game Thursday night in Ottawa.

Prior to the 2 p.m. rematch against the Senators, the team will be handing out 12,000 "Pominville: Population 1,000" placards to fans to mark the event. It will also offer 40 percent off Pominville merchandise in the Sabres Store or arena souvenir stands.

The team informally honored Pominville in private prior to the 4-2 defeat Thursday in Canadian Tire Centre. Coach Phil Housley was the ringleader at the urging of owners Terry and Kim Pegula as Pominville's family, including his wife and two children, were brought into the dressing room to be saluted on the occasion.

"Phil gave his pregame speech and said, 'Wait a minute, I forgot something,' " Pominville said Friday. "And then he came back in the room with them."

"It was a great suggestion on Terry and Kim Pegula's part to bring the family in because it was a special night," Housley said. "We wanted to recognize that in the locker room. Obviously we want to win the game but we've got to respect the players on our team when we hit huge milestones."

Pominville said his wife, Kim, kept the team's intentions quiet during the week but he figured there was something in the works.

"'Pommer' knew something was going on because his mom and dad didn't need any tickets for the game," said a smiling Housley. "He was sort of snooping around."

Pominville's third-period goal made him the fourth Sabre to tally while playing his 1,000th NHL game. The others were Gilbert Perreault (1984), Phil Russell (1986) and Brian Gionta (2017).

"It was great to see him score in his 1,000th game," said Jack Eichel, who assisted on the goal. "That's awesome. I was super happy for him. I just wish we could have had a better outcome so he could remember it differently."

\*\*\*

Evan Rodrigues, a healthy scratch the last three games, is expected to return to the lineup for Saturday's rematch against the Senators. Remi Elie, who played Thursday, and Tage Thompson are likely scratches.

Rodrigues, one of seven regulars at forward who have yet to score or have only one goal this season, played at left wing on a line with Vladimir Sobotka and Kyle Okposo. He has four assists in 10 games.

"He's got a big responsibility," Housley said. "He was playing both power play and penalty killing. He's got to be good in the faceoff circle, which he has been. ... He's got all the intangibles of just being hard to play against."

\*\*\*

Defenseman Zach Bogosian sat out practice on a maintenance day and Housley said the team will be making that a regular occurrence when the schedule is heavy like this weekend, with three games in four days.

Bogosian had hip surgery in February and missed the start of this season with a groin injury suffered during the exhibition schedule. His ice time load the last four games has been heavy at 18:59, 20:39, 22:47 and 19:57.

"We're going to have to monitor him and just the schedule dictates that. We've got a lot of games in a short period," Housley said. "I'm just making sure we're cautious."

The Sabres head for New York after Saturday's game and meet the Rangers Sunday night in Madison Square Garden.

## **Eric Cornel, former Sabres second-round pick, finds his way back on the radar**

By Bill Hoppe

The Buffalo News

November 2, 2018

Longtime Sabres beat writer Bill Hoppe of BuffaloHockeyBeat.com will be writing about Sabres prospects, the Rochester Americans and related topics this season.

Sabres prospect Eric Cornel understands he's playing for his future in his third season with the Rochester Americans.

Cornel's entry-level contract expires following the 2018-19 campaign, meaning Buffalo's regime, which did not draft the center, can simply walk away from him.

In his first two AHL seasons, Cornel, 22, struggled at times, never scoring more than nine goals or 18 points.

So Cornel, the 44th overall pick in 2014, has embraced the situation and evolved, Amerks coach Chris Taylor said.

"He's a smart kid, he knows, 'Hey, I got to do something about my career. I got to really focus on what I need to do, or it's going to be too late,'" Taylor said. "He's putting the work in. ... It's going to pay off for him."

On a first-place team featuring three of the AHL's top four scorers and a slew of prospects, Cornel has managed to stand out during the Amerks' torrid 7-2-1 start.

"He's been our unsung hero," said Taylor, whose Amerks host the Hershey Bears on Friday at Blue Cross Arena.

The 6-foot-2, 198-pound Cornel, an 83-point scorer in his final junior season, has seized a checking role, adding skill and speed to the third or fourth line and also killing penalties.

"That's allowed me to sort of play a bigger role, get more ice time, stay in the lineup," Cornel said. "It's exciting to be able to play a role like that you know has an impact on the team."

Taylor's praise is meaningful to Cornel.

"He's a guy as players we really respect," Cornel said. "We know that he's been through it just like us. I didn't even know that what I was doing was being noticed that much."

Taylor said Cornel's play has forced him to award him an increasing amount of playing time, a difficult task with three strong scoring lines.

"He earned his ice time, he keeps earning more and more," Taylor said. "It's hard not to play him. He competes, not just on the ice, but off the ice. ..."

"From where he came from three years ago to now, it's remarkable to me."

If Cornel keeps performing well, he could earn a promotion to the Sabres someday.

That would certainly make the Sabres' 2014 draft look a lot better. Other than winger Sam Reinhart, none of their other picks has played even one game for the team.

But that class still possesses some promise.

Cornel, one of three second-rounders, is back on the radar. Meanwhile, rookie winger Victor Olofsson, a seventh-round pick, 181st overall, is the AHL's leading scorer and was the league's Player of the Month for October.

While the Sabres picked Cornel high, his modest output early in his AHL career lowered expectations. With so many other Sabres prospects earning attention, some pressure has been taken off Cornel, who believes developing out of the spotlight can be beneficial.

"A year like this year, where I may not be expected to put up the points, that's kind of almost a good thing, because you might surprise people a little bit and the pressure's not there," said Cornel, who has compiled two goals and three points through 10 games.

Taylor has known Cornel since the Sabres drafted him and clearly respects the initiative the youngster has taken to change.

"He's evolved into a guy that he's very reliable on both sides of the puck, he brings great energy," Taylor said. "He's a guy that can get in on the forecheck, disrupt it. He's a bigger guy than he looks. ... He's got good speed, and he's built up his strength so he can knock guys off pucks now and get over pucks.

"I think he's developed into a player that can play (on the) third and fourth line and can give a lot of energy and score that timely goal you need. Those guys are ... very valuable to your hockey team. People underestimate those type of players, they don't give them enough credit, but I do. Eric is such a valuable piece to our team."

Olofsson's honor

Taylor said he thinks of Olofsson's honor as an award all the Amerks can share. The Swede, 23, has scored five goals and 15 points in his first 10 AHL appearances.

"I've been very impressed," Taylor said of Olofsson's play. "The first couple games it took him a little bit to get adjusted, but after that, he figured it out.

"I look at this as a great award for him and also as a team award. He can't do it alone. That's a reflection of the power play, because he's on it, it's a reflection of his linemates (and) how well our team is doing to get those type of awards."

## **The Sabres know they can't win with just four guys scoring**

By PAUL HAMILTON

WGR 550

NOVEMBER 2, 2018

Buffalo, NY (WGR 550) - Recently the Sabres have only gotten offense from four of their forwards. Jeff Skinner has seven goals and six assists for 13 points in nine games, Jack Eichel has eight assists and nine points in six games, Jason Pominville has five goals and five assists for 10 points in six games and Kyle Okposo has three goals and four points in five games.

Eichel has been contributing offensively, but not with goals. The captain has only one goal in 10 games.

It was thought that Jason Botterill made enough changes to get some contributions from his bottom six, but he has 10 forwards that he's getting absolutely nothing from. Here's what those ten have produced,

Patrick Berglund has one goal and one assist in 12 games.

Vladimir Sobotka has one goal and no assists in 10 games.

Johan Larsson has no goals and one assist in seven games

Sam Reinhart has one goal in 13 games

Zemgus Girgensons hasn't scored in any of his 13 games.

Casey Mittelstadt has one goal and two assists in 13 games.

Conor Sheary has three goals, but none in his last eight.

Evan Rodrigues hasn't scored in 10 games.

Tage Thompson has no goals and one assist in nine games.

Remi Elie has no points in his four games played.

The only way this team can keep pace is if some of these guys start getting on the board. "You look at two of the goals we scored last night, they're right in front of the net," Housley said. "I think that's one thing that they can learn that hey, it might not be pretty, it might be just going to the net, it might hit you, it might go off your shin pad, you might get a second opportunity and once we made a decision and we played the right way, we've had to address it before so we're going to focus on it here and that's one way they can start contributing in the goal area.

"We obviously need more balance throughout our lineup because we're not going to be able to rely on one line for 82 games."

Mittelstadt knows he needs to produce, but he also feels that he gets better every game. The centermen said, "I don't know if I'd use the word pressure, I've always been really hard on myself, I expect a lot out of myself, but at the same time I think it's good at drawing the line where it doesn't help me to keep dragging on myself, so I think it's nice to get away from the rink and have roommates that help you get away from the game.

"It gets frustrating, but for me I love to play with the puck and make plays and it usually comes for me, so it's been tough, but we'll get going here."

Tage Thompson practiced on defense with Remi Elie. I can't stress this enough how it's a complete and utter waste of time for those two young players. It was another day missed that Thompson and Elie could get better at practice. They would've been better served in the weight room or watching video.



I asked if there comes a point where Thompson would be better served in Rochester. Housley said, "We continue to develop his game whether it's after practice or video, that's one way to develop."

"I understand that playing is most important and he's going to get an opportunity here, he's not going to get an opportunity tomorrow, but he'll get an opportunity at some point in the near future."

Housley said Zach Bogosian missed Friday's practice as a maintenance day. The head coach expects the defenseman to play on Saturday.

It also sounds like the Evan Rodrigues will be back in the lineup for Remi Elie.

## **Sabres' Jason Pominville still thriving at 1,000-game mark**

By Bill Hoppe  
Olean Times Herald  
November 2, 2018

BUFFALO – Shortly before winger Jason Pominville started his milestone 1,000th NHL game Thursday, coach Phil Housley finished addressing the Sabres and briefly left the dressing room.

"Phil did his pregame speech and he's like, 'Wait, I forgot something,'" Pominville said Friday inside KeyBank Center.

When Housley returned, he brought Pominville's wife, Kim, and two children, Jayden and Kaylee Rose, with him.

"When I saw them in the room, I almost had tears in my eyes," said Pominville, who scored his 283rd NHL goal in the Sabres' 3-2 road loss to the Ottawa Senators.

Housley said Sabres owner Terry Pegula and president Kim Pegula suggested he bring Pominville's family in the dressing room.

"It was really important that his family was there," said Housley, whose Sabres host the Senators this afternoon. "Our team rallied around it before the game."

Everyone involved kept the pregame surprise a secret. Pominville, however, found out about some other special plans his wife had for the night.

Pominville, who's from Montreal, said his friends told him they planned to attend the game, yet no one asked him for tickets.

"I talked to my wife, I'm like, 'What's going on? No one's asked for tickets,'" a laughing Pominville said. "So she starts laughing and I just kept asking more and more questions. She had to give in."

In all, Kim gathered 20 or so family members and friends, including Pominville's parents.

Others, including former teammates, reached out with text messages.

"That was very, very touching," said Pominville, who will be honored by the Sabres before this afternoon's game.

To Sabres captain Jack Eichel, Pominville "deserves every bit" of the congratulations he has received.

"He's so just so well-respected around the league, around the community," Eichel said.

He added: "He's just such a professional. I'm so happy he's played 1,000 games and had as much success as he's had."

These days, four weeks before he turns 36, an age when most NHL players are retired, Pominville is a first-liner and one of the Sabres' top offensive threats.

Incredibly, Pominville hit the prestigious mark enjoying one of his hottest runs ever. His third-period goal Thursday extended his point streak to six games, giving him five goals and 10 points during the stretch.

Right now, Pominville looks like someone enjoying his prime. The former NHL All-Star has six goals and 11 points through 13 games, a 38-goal, 69-pace over a full season.

Of course, Pominville has lasted 14 seasons because very few NHL players are like him.

"One thousand games is a hell of an accomplishment," Sabres winger Kyle Okposo said. "He takes care of himself in a way not many guys do. I've only seen a couple guys in my career take care of themselves like he does. So it's just a testament to him. One thousand games is just a definite pause and reflect time in your career."

Okposo said Pominville possesses the same mindset every day.

"Whether we're losing, we're winning, whether last year was tough, game 54, he's still in there in the gym doing his routine," Okposo said.

Taking care of himself and his body has always been a point of pride for Pominville.

"I think what you do away from the rink goes a long way and reflects on what you do," Pominville said. "As you get older, you probably have to pay more attention to what you do off the ice. I used to do it when I was younger and now it's kind of still in me."

So is Pominville's scoring prowess. He has been piling up points beside Eichel and Jeff Skinner, a trio that has provided most of the Sabres' offense over the last week or two.

"The biggest thing is we get in there and we forecheck and we work and we battle," Pominville said. "I think the league is so tight ... you have to compete, you have to battle, and I think our line has been able to do that on a pretty consistent basis and we've defended well. If you defend well, you'll have the puck more."

Pominville has been terrific around the net, getting rewarded with goals. He scored there again Thursday.

"We've found a bit of chemistry here," Eichel said. "I know when he gets it, he's looking to move it to me and get to the net. I know if I get him the puck around the net, he's pretty automatic."

## **Sabres' Tage Thompson to sit again; Evan Rodrigues to return**

By Bill Hoppe  
Olean Times Herald  
November 2, 2018

BUFFALO – Through 13 games this season, Sabres winger Tage Thompson has made eight appearances, sitting out the other five as a healthy scratch.

While Thompson, 20, possesses notable talent – look at the nifty preseason goal he scored after toe-dragging – he hasn't done much so far with the Sabres, registering just one assist.

Sabres coach Phil Housley said Thompson will also sit out Saturday afternoon's home tilt against the Ottawa Senators.

So wouldn't Thompson, the 26th overall pick by the St. Louis Blues in 2016, benefit from a stint with the Rochester Americans?

"We continue to develop his game, whether it's after practice or video, that's one way to develop," Housley said this afternoon inside KeyBank Center. "I understand playing is the most important, he's going to get an opportunity ... at some point in the near future."

Housley wants the 6-foot-6 Thompson to start getting to the net regularly.

"He should own that lane going to the net," Housley said. "It's not only you get in the offensive zone and there's some cycling and there's different people getting around the net. But when it's your chance or your opportunity to get to the net as a low forward, you got to find a way to spin off people, you got to have a direct line to the net."

"I think Tage is really good at that. He's a big body that can make it tough on the goaltender."

Thompson practiced today as a defenseman beside Remi Elie, another winger who will likely be scratched Saturday.

Winger Evan Rodrigues, a healthy scratch the last three games, will likely return against the Senators. Rodrigues practiced today at left wing beside Vladimir Sobotka and Kyle Okposo.

Rodrigues hasn't played since the birth of his daughter Sunday.

"I thought he was playing really good hockey," Housley said. "Obviously, he has the birth of his child and give him some time to regroup. But I think when he's at his best, he's skating and he's making plays."

"He's got a big responsibility. He was playing both power play and penalty killing. He's got to be good in the faceoff circle, which he has been. It gives us another right-hand shot. ... He's got all the intangibles of just being hard to play against."

Housley said defenseman Zach Bogosian sat out today's practice for maintenance. Bogosian, who has battled injuries and recently made his season debut, has averaged about 20 minutes over the last three games

"We're just going to have to monitor him and just the schedule dictates that, we got a lot of games in a short period," Housley said. "I'm just making sure we're cautious thing. This could be an ongoing thing, but he'll be ready to go tomorrow."

## **Rodrigues appears set for return to lineup**

By Jourdon LaBarber

Sabres.com

November 2, 2018

Evan Rodrigues was credited with centering the Sabres' most consistent line early this season, when he spent the first seven games skating alongside Zemgus Girgensons and Jason Pominville. Phil Housley broke the trio up in Los Angeles in an effort to balance the lineup.

Pominville has since become a part of Buffalo's most productive line, scoring points in six straight games alongside Jeff Skinner and Jack Eichel. Girgensons has found a home on a checking line playing with Patrik Berglund and Johan Larsson.

Rodrigues, though, has been a healthy scratch for the last three contests. He left the team prior to their game in Columbus last Saturday to be with his wife while she gave birth to their first son and has been waiting his turn to get back in the lineup since.

If practice on Friday is any indication, that chance could come when the Sabres host the Ottawa Senators on Saturday afternoon. Rodrigues skated on a line with Vladimir Sobotka and Kyle Okposo, and Housley said he'd like to see the forward pick up where he left off.

"I just think the way he played before he got out, I thought he was playing really good hockey," Housley said. "He had the birth of his child and we gave him some time to regroup, but I think when he's at his best, he's skating and he's making plays.

"... He's got all the intangibles, being tough to play against. I like to see him go to the net hard. When he does that, he creates offense for us and he makes it difficult for the goalie. He's just got to get back to where he was before he got out of the lineup."

Rodrigues will look to help jump start an offense looking for more even-strength production outside of its top line. Though he went without a goal in his first 10 games, he felt he was putting himself in position to contribute.

"Just continue to play with speed, continue to play with pace, and focus on winning my one-on-one battles and I think things will come naturally," he said.

The Sabres provided a template for success during the third period of their loss in Ottawa on Thursday, when they outshot the Senators 23-7 and came within a goal of erasing a 3-0 deficit. Both goals came on tips in front of the net, which Housley said should be a lesson for the forwards.

"I think you look at where we're scoring our goals, you look at two of the goals we scored last night. They're right in front of the net," Housley said. "I think that's one thing they can learn. It might not be pretty, it might just be going to the net. It might hit you, it might go off a shin pad, you might get a second opportunity.

"But I think we didn't do a very good job against Calgary in that area and, for the most part, I think in the first period [in Ottawa] we didn't go a good job getting to the net. Once we made a decision, we played the right way."

Thompson continuing to develop

Tage Thompson won't play on Saturday, but Housley said another chance is coming in the near future for the 20-year-old forward. He's been in and out of the lineup so far this season and was a healthy scratch in Ottawa.

Housley said the team has decided to continue his development in Buffalo instead of sending him to Rochester with the purpose of getting him more game action soon.

"We continue to develop his game, whether it's after practice or video, that's one way to develop," Housley said. "I understand playing is the most important. He's going to get an opportunity here. He's not going to get an opportunity tomorrow, but he'll get an opportunity at some point in the near future."

When he does return, Housley said he'd like to see Thompson use his 6-foot-6 frame at the net-front.

"I think he should own that lane going to the net. It's not only, you get into the offensive zone and there's some cycling and there's different people getting around the net, but when it's your chance, your opportunity to get to the net as the low forward, you've got to find a way.

"You've got to spin off people, you've got to have a direct line to the net, and I think Tage is really good at that. He's a big body that can make it tough on the goaltender."

#### Sabres to honor Pominville Saturday

The Sabres will recognize Jason Pominville for playing his 1,000th game prior to their game at KeyBank Center on Saturday. Pominville achieved the milestone with his family in attendance in Ottawa on Thursday, becoming the 328th player to accomplish the feat and the 11th to do it in a Sabres uniform.

The first 12,000 fans in attendance on Saturday will receive a commemorative "Welcome to Pominville" sign. A pregame ceremony will be held prior to the 2 p.m. puck drop.

#### Friday's practice

Zach Bogosian took a maintenance day after skating 19:35 in Ottawa, but the defenseman is expected to be in the lineup on Saturday. Here's how the Sabres lined up in his absence:

53 Jeff Skinner - 9 Jack Eichel - 29 Jason Pominville  
43 Conor Sheary - 37 Casey Mittelstadt - 23 Sam Reinhart  
71 Evan Rodrigues - 17 Vladimir Sobotka - 21 Kyle Okposo  
10 Patrik Berglund - 22 Johan Larsson - 28 Zemgus Girgensons

19 Jake McCabe - 55 Rasmus Ristolainen  
6 Marco Scandella - 26 Rasmus Dahlin  
82 Nathan Beaulieu - 8 Casey Nelson  
81 Remi Elie - 72 Tage Thompson\*

40 Carter Hutton  
35 Linus Ullmark

\*Extra forwards skating on defense