

2022-23 Season Review – Buffalo Sabres

Standings

Buffalo Sabres							League	
Season	W	L	T	Pts	GF	GA	Rank	PlyOff
2021-22	32	39	11	75	229	287	24	No
2022-23	42	33	7	91	293	297	19	No
Change	+10	-6	-4	+16	+64	-10	+5	

Team Record by Game Type

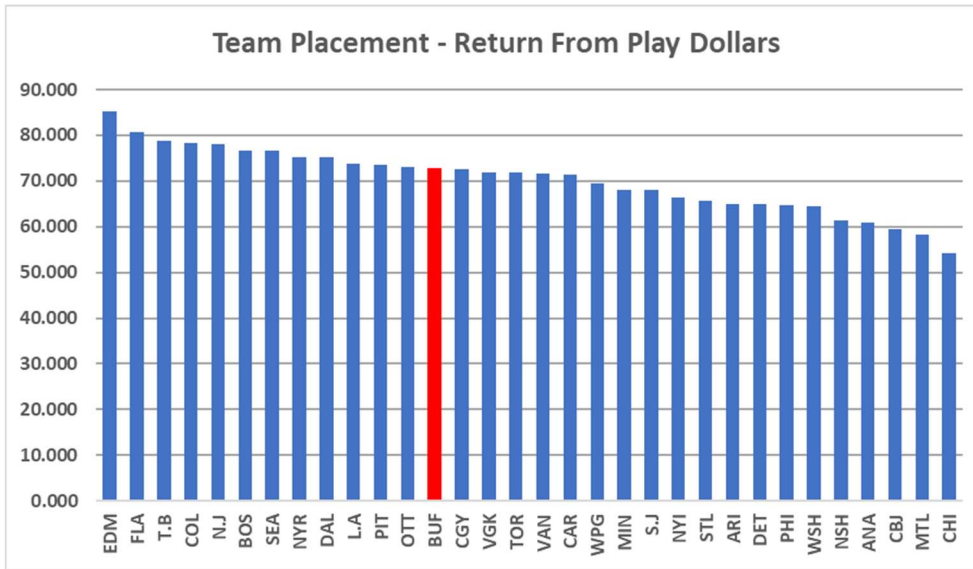
Game Type	GP	Record	Point %
Best 10-Game Streak	10	8 - 1 - 1	0.850
OT/SO	19	12 - 0 - 7	0.816
Fire-wagon Hockey (More than 8 goals in a game)	26	17 - 7 - 2	0.692
Conceding Exactly 3 Goals	24	16 - 7 - 1	0.688
Vs. Non-Playoff Team	39	24 - 11 - 4	0.667
Away Games	41	25 - 13 - 3	0.646
All Games	82	42 - 33 - 7	0.555
Scoring Exactly 3 Goals	17	7 - 7 - 3	0.500
Defensive Battles (fewer than 4 goals in a game)	3	1 - 1 - 1	0.500
Blowouts (More than 4-goal margin)	8	4 - 4 - 0	0.500
2-Goal Margin	17	8 - 9 - 0	0.471
Home Games	41	17 - 20 - 4	0.463
Vs. Playoff Team	43	18 - 22 - 3	0.453
1-Goal Margin (Excluding overtime games)	12	5 - 7 - 0	0.417
Worst 10-Game Streak	10	2 - 8 - 0	0.200

Talent Distribution

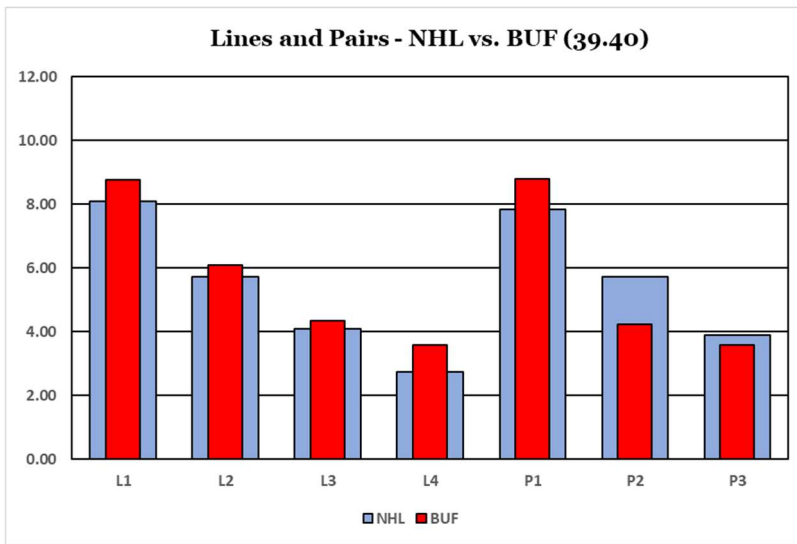
Count by Category			PR% by Age Group			PR% by Draft Status		
PR Category	Fwd	Def	Age Group	NHL PR%	Team PR%	Draft Status	NHL PR%	Team PR%
PR-Elite	0	1	18 to 23	18%	41%	Drafted by Current Team	48%	52%
PR-Star	3	0	24 to 28	45%	47%	Drafted by Other Team	41%	43%
PR-First5	2	1	29 to 33	29%	8%	Undrafted	10%	5%
PR-Regular	5	3	34+	8%	4%			
PR-Fringe	2	1						
PR-CallUp	6	5						

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Return From Play



Lines and Pairs



L1	Tage Thompson	Alex Tuch	Jeff Skinner
L2	Dylan Cozens	Casey Mittelstadt	Victor Olofsson
L3	Kyle Okposo	Jack Quinn	Zemgus Girgensons
L4	Peyton Krebs	JJ Peterka	Tyson Jost
P1		Rasmus Dahlin	Owen Power
P2		Henri Jokiharju	Mattias Samuelsson
P3		Ilya Lyubushkin	Jacob Bryson

2022-23 Season Review – Buffalo Sabres

Team Leaders – Stapled To The Bench Categories

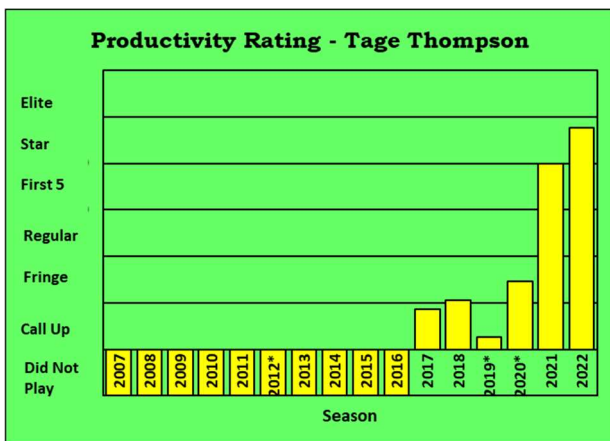
Category	Name	Rating
Most Productive	Rasmus Dahlin	PR-Elite
Most Valuable	Rasmus Dahlin	VR-Star
Best Center	Tage Thompson	# 1-Center
Most Disruptive	Alex Tuch	DX-A
Best Power Player	Tage Thompson	PX-A
Best Penalty Killer	Mattias Samuelsson	KX-D

Team Leaders – On-Ice Situations

BUF - Team Leaders in Various On-Ice Situations		
Most Time 5v5	Most Time Power Play	Most Time Penalty Kill
Owen Power	Rasmus Dahlin	Mattias Samuelsson
Rasmus Dahlin	Tage Thompson	Ilya Lyubushkin
Henri Jokiharju	Jeff Skinner	Zengus Girgensons
Jeff Skinner	Alex Tuch	Henri Jokiharju
Tage Thompson	Dylan Cozens	Dylan Cozens
Most Time 3v3	Most Used Off. Zone FO	Most Used Def. Zone FO
Rasmus Dahlin	Tage Thompson	Zengus Girgensons
Alex Tuch	Jeff Skinner	Kyle Okposo
Owen Power	Alex Tuch	Ilya Lyubushkin
Tage Thompson	Owen Power	Mattias Samuelsson
Casey Mittelstadt	Rasmus Dahlin	Henri Jokiharju

Team Essay – Tage Thompson

It would be safe to say that Tage Thompson exploded onto the scene in the 2021-22 season. For visual confirmation, consider his Career Productivity Rating Chart below.



2022-23 Season Review – Buffalo Sabres

In his first four seasons (2017-18 through 2020-21) he played 145 games and scored 18 goals, a pace of 10 goals per season. In his last two seasons (2021-22 and 2022-23) he played 156 games and scored 85 goals, a 45-goal pace. Exploded and then some.

I think it is a pretty safe bet that going into the 2021-22 season nobody would have, or could have, predicted Thompson’s upcoming success. NBC Sports predicted a breakout year in 2021-22 for Henri Jokiharju, who did not, in fact, break out: his four Buffalo seasons have almost identical PR-Scores and he is the poster child for rating consistency.

Given that he had a huge year and followed it up with a huger year, let’s have a little fun and see where this might go. To look forward, I’ll reach backward. What have similar players done?

Part of the answer depends on what you mean by “similar”. I started off with “fairly similar”: players who were forwards, who had a PR-Score between 7.0 and 9.0 in one season, and who had a PR-Score between 8.5 and 10.5 in the next season, and the next season was before 2022-23 (so that they could have a “next” season). The PR-Score ranges are 1.0 PR-Point around Thompson’s PR-Scores in his last two seasons. There were 111 players who met these criteria, and the results were:

111 Players Similar to Thompson					
Total	Improved	Held	Slightly Declined	Notably Declined	Didn't Play
111	4	41	49	17	0

To improve, they had to have a PR-Score of 10.5 in their next season, to hold the PR-Score had to be between 8.5 and 10.5, a slight decline meant their PR-Score was between 6.5 and 8.5, and a notable decline meant their PR-Score was below 6.5.

I’m not surprised at how few players improved: PR-Scores over 10.5 are in the PR-Elite category, and that would put you in the top twenty players in the league. I was a little surprised about the number of declines, 66 total. Some slight declines could be caused by a player having an off-season, most would be caused by injuries. And injuries happen a lot.

There is about a 40% chance that Thompson’s 2023-24 season will be as good as, or better than, his 2022-23 season, a 45% chance that his next season will be slightly worse, and a 15% chance that next season will be notably worse. I’m not particularly a fan of the Sabres, I don’t know Tage Thompson from a hole in the ground, but I do hope he’s in that 40% group.

Team Paragraph – Identifying Talent in the Draft

Buffalo draft selections combined for the highest total PR-Score in the league, so you could say the Buffalo drafters found the most talent of any team. The list of draftees includes Sam Reinhart (FLA), J.T. Compher (COL), Brandon Hagel (T.B) and Jack Eichel (VGK). The calculation was based on players the team drafted, rather than players that they retained.