

ROCHESTER AMERICANS HOCKEY CLUB

Friday | **April 2, 2021** | 7:05 PM ET | The Blue Cross Arena | Broadcast: ESPN Rochester, AHLTV, CW Rochester



SYRACUSE CRUNCH

GAME NOTES

ROCHESTER AMERICANS



TONIGHT'S GAME OVERVIEW

The Rochester Americans (6-4-1-1) look to get back on the winning track tonight as they open a three-game North Division series with the intrastate rival Syracuse Crunch at The Blue Cross Arena.

The 7:05 p.m. contest will be the sixth of 12 scheduled meetings between the two teams this season with the Amerks holding a 3-1-1-0 record so far.

The game will be carried live on The Sports Leader 95.7 FM/950 AM ESPN Rochester and AHLTV. The North Division matchup will also be televised locally on tape delay beginning at 10 p.m. on CW Rochester channel 16.

LAST TIME OUT

The Cleveland Monsters scored twice in the opening eight minutes and rode a near-perfect performance from veteran goaltender Brad Thiessen on their way to a 5-1 win over the Amerks Wednesday at The Blue Cross Arena.

The loss snapped Rochester's home point streak at four games (3-0-1-0) and dropped the Amerks to 6-4-1-1 overall on the season.

Veteran forward **Michael Mersch** provided the lone tally for the Amerks, spoiling Thiessen's bid for his first shutout since April 3, 2019 with a power-play goal late in the third period.

Brandon Biro, coming off a three-point effort Friday against Syracuse, notched an assist as did fellow rookie forward **Patrick Polino**, who registered his first pro point on Mersch's third goal of the season.

Rookie goaltender **Ukko-Pekka Luukkonen** made 24 saves while making his ninth start in 12 games for Rochester. The contest was Luukkonen's first appearance since Mar. 10. The Finland native is tied for ninth in the AHL in wins and has made 25 or more saves in six of his last eight appearances dating back to a career-best 43-save performance at Cleveland on Feb. 12.

POWER UP

Now 12 games into the campaign, Rochester's power-play has gone 15-for-51 with a 29.4% conversion rate that is currently tops in the AHL. The Amerks' 15 goals on the man-advantage are most among all North Division teams and only two off the AHL lead behind the Chicago Wolves, who have played in three more games than Rochester.

The Amerks have scored at least one power-play goal in 10 of their first 12 games this season and have registered multiple power-play tallies in two of their last six outings overall.

THE BEST OFFENSE IS A GOOD DEFENSE

Rochester comes into the weekend owning three of the AHL's top scoring rookie defensemen in **Oskari Laaksonen**, **Mattias Samuelsson** and **Ryan Jones**, all of whom have combined for 19 points (3+16) while appearing in all 12 games so far this season.

Laaksonen and Samuelsson are both tied for 10th in the league in assists and 13th in points among all first-year defensemen. Samuelsson has four assists in his last five games, including a two-assist effort against Syracuse on March 6.

Rochester is 1-0-0-0 when all three players record a point in the same game.

2020-21 AMERKS OVERALL SCORING & GOALTENDING LEADERS

SKATER	GP	G	A	PTS	PIM	+/-
J-S Dea	9	4	8	12	2	6
Steven Fogarty	10	5	3	8	10	-1
Remi Elie	11	3	5	8	4	3
Arttu Ruotsalainen	11	3	5	8	2	-4

GOALTENDER	GP	REC	SVS	SV%	GAA
Dustin Tokarski	2	1-1-0	68	.932	2.51
Ukko-Pekka Luukkonen	9	5-3-1	268	.899	3.29
Stefanos Lekkas	1	0-0-1	25	.862	3.84

2020-21 CRUNCH OVERALL SCORING & GOALTENDING LEADERS

SKATER	GP	G	A	PTS	PIM	+/-
Otto Somppi	13	4	6	10	8	5
Alex Barre-Boulet	6	4	4	8	0	8
Boris Katchouk	12	4	4	8	8	7
Ben Thomas	11	1	7	8	6	6

GOALTENDER	GP	REC	SVS	SV%	GAA
Christopher Gibson	2	2-0-0	62	.925	2.51
Spencer Martin	4	2-2-0	113	.911	2.72
Samuel Montembeault	7	3-3-1	178	.899	2.86

HEAD-TO-HEAD BREAKDOWN

Syracuse Crunch

Rochester Americans

7-5-1-0.....	Record	6-4-1-1
3-4-0-0.....	Home Record	3-2-1-0
4-1-1-0.....	Road Record	3-2-0-1
6-4-0-0.....	Last 10 Games	5-3-1-1
5-0-0-0.....	Record When Scoring First	3-1-0-0
3.46 (T-5th).....	Goals-For Per Game	3.25 (13th)
2.92 (T-9th).....	Goals-Against Per Game	3.42 (T-22nd)
15.6% (22nd).....	Power-Play	29.4% (1st)
78.7% (22nd).....	Penalty Kill	78.4% (23rd)
4-3 OTW @ ROC.....	Last Game	5-1 L vs. CLE
Apr. 3 vs. ROC.....	Next Game	Apr. 3 @ SYR



ROCHESTER AMERICANS | MEDIA RELATIONS DEPARTMENT

@AmerksPR | @AmerksHockey

Warren Kosel | Senior Director of Public and Media Relations | 585-286-9928

Ryan Harr | Public and Media Relations Coordinator | 585-286-9940

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YOUTH MOVEMENT

Rochester's roster features 13 incoming rookies ready to make a splash in their first season in the American Hockey League, most of whom are products of the NCAA in forwards **Brandon Biro** (Penn State), **Dawson DiPietro** (Western Michigan), **Dominic Franco** (Army West Point) and **Patrick Polino** (R.P.I.); defensemen **Ryan Jones** (Nebraska-Omaha), **Nick Welsh** (St. Mary's), **Griffin Luce** (Michigan) and **Mattias Samuelsson** (Western Michigan) and goaltender **Stefanos Lekkas** (U. of Vermont).

Jack Quinn, Buffalo's eighth overall pick in the 2020 NHL Draft, rounds out Rochester's rookie class this season. The highly touted 19-year-old is coming off an explosive 52-goal season for the Ottawa 67's in 2019-20, during which he became just the eighth player since 2000-01 to reach the 50-goal mark in his NHL Draft Year. He finished the season second in the Ontario Hockey League in goals and tied for fifth with 15 power-play tallies while also adding 37 assists.

Quinn made his professional debut with Rochester back on Feb. 18 against Utica, recording an assist on the game-tying third-period goal before scoring the shootout-clinching goal on a dazzling effort in the second round. During the most recent matchup with the Comets on Mar. 10, Quinn scored his first pro goal, a power-play marker, to open the scoring for Rochester. Quinn is the third eighth overall pick of the Sabres in the last five years to spend time in Rochester, joining **Alexander Nylander** (2016) and **Casey Mittelstadt** (2017), and the second to make his pro debut with the Amerks following Nylander, who spent parts of three seasons in Rochester.

STAND AND DEAL-IVER

After leading the Amerks in points (39) and holding a share of the team-lead in goals (15) during the 2019-20 season, his first in Rochester, forward **Jean-Sebastien Dea** is again the team's top point-getter this season. By posting a season-high three points on a goal and two assists on March 6 against Syracuse, the Laval, Quebec, native became the first Amerks skater this season to reach double digits in points with 12 (4+8) through nine games.

Currently on recall with the Buffalo Sabres, Dea, who has notched at least one point in seven of his first nine games this season, has already recorded four multi-point games after posting six in 57 contests last season. He also paces all Rochester skaters with an on-ice rating of plus-six.

FINN-ISHING TOUCH

In his first season in North America, forward **Arttu Ruotsalainen** has posted eight points through his first 11 games on three goals and five assists. The Oulu, Finland, native began the slate by recording a point in each of his first four games and comes into the weekend with four points over his last five games, including goals in back-to-back games for the first time this season.

Back with the Amerks following a brief three-day stint on the Sabres taxi squad, **Ukko-Pekka Luukkonen**, who's started nine of Rochester's first 12 games this season, is tied for ninth among all goaltenders with five wins.

SCOUTING THE CRUNCH

Coming off a 4-3 overtime win over the Amerks last Friday, Syracuse returns to Rochester having won four straight and six of its last seven to move within one game of the Amerks in the AHL's North Division standings. The Crunch have also won four straight on the road dating back to March 3, outscoring the opposition 17-9, including 8-1 in the first period over that span.

AMERKS-CRUNCH 2020-21 SEASON SERIES BREAKDOWN

ROCHESTER

SKATER	GP	G	A	PTS	PIM	+/-
J-S Dea	4	1	6	7	0	4
Remi Elie	5	2	3	5	0	3
Oskari Laaksonen	5	1	4	5	2	2

GOALTENDER

	GP	REC	GA	SV%	GAA
Dustin Tokarski	1	1-0-0	2	.949	2.00
Ukko-Pekka Luukkonen	3	2-1-0	9	.883	3.01
Stefanos Lekkas	1	0-0-1	4	.862	3.84

SYRACUSE

SKATER	GP	G	A	PTS	PIM	+/-
Boris Katchouk	5	2	3	5	4	6
Taylor Raddysh	5	1	3	4	2	3
Otto Somppi	4	0	4	4	6	2

GOALTENDER

	GP	REC	GA	SV%	GAA
Spencer Martin	3	1-2-0	10	.892	3.38
Samuel Montembeault	2	1-0-1	7	.863	3.38

2020-21 SEASON SERIES GAME-BY-GAME BREAKDOWN

Date	Result	Score	SF-SA	PP	PK
Feb. 10	OTW	4-3	26-23	2-3	1-1
Feb. 20	W	3-2	32-39	0-3	3-4
Mar. 1	L	4-3	34-25	2-6	2-2
Mar. 6	W	4-2	27-29	2-5	6-8
Mar. 26	OTL	4-3	25-29	1-3	2-2
Apr. 2					
Apr. 3					
Apr. 7					
Apr. 21					
Apr. 24					
May 1					
May 15					

SERIES NOTABLES

The Amerks have scored a power-play goal in nine of their last 13 games against Syracuse dating back to last season, going 14-for-51 (27.5%) with the man-advantage over that span.

Amerks defenseman **Dylan Blujus** spent time with the Crunch after being drafted by the Tampa Bay Lightning in 2012. He played his first three seasons with the Syracuse from 2014-2017, recording 49 points (11+38) in 151 games.

The Amerks are 15-8-2-1 in their last 26 contests against Syracuse.

Syracuse head coach Benoit Groulx spent two seasons behind the Amerks bench from 2008-10, leading the team to a postseason berth in 2010.



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@AmerksPR | @AmerksHockey

Warren Kosel | Senior Director of Public and Media Relations | 585-286-9928

Ryan Harr | Public and Media Relations Coordinator | 585-286-9940