

ROCHESTER AMERICANS HOCKEY CLUB

Friday | **April 9, 2021** | 7:00 PM ET | Adirondack Bank Center | Broadcast: ESPN Rochester, AHLTV



UTICA COMETS

GAME NOTES

ROCHESTER AMERICANS



TONIGHT'S GAME OVERVIEW

The Rochester Americans (7-5-2-1) face-off against the Utica Comets (6-2-0-1) for the first time in nearly a month tonight in a North Division showdown at the Adirondack Bank Center.

The 7:00 p.m. contest will be the fifth of 14 scheduled meetings between the two teams this season with the Amerks holding a 2-2-0-1 record thus far, including Rochester earning at least a point in three of the last four games.

The North Division matchup will be carried live on The Sports Leader 95.7 FM/950 AM ESPN Rochester and AHLTV.

LAST TIME OUT

The Amerks erased a one-goal deficit to force overtime, but it was the Syracuse Crunch who scored 1:37 into the extra frame to win the third straight meeting between the intrastate rivals Wednesday at The Blue Cross Arena.

Despite the overtime loss, Rochester has recorded points in six of the first eight games this season against the Crunch by going 4-2-2-0, including a 1-1-2-0 mark at home.

Forwards **Dalton Smith** and **Remi Elie** each tallied their first and fourth goals of the season, respectively, while rookie defenseman **Mattias Samuelsson** netted his second to send the game into the extra stanza. **Dominic Franco** found the scoresheet for the second time in as many games as he, **Brandon Biro**, **Casey Fitzgerald** and **Patrick Polino** all recorded an assist.

Rookie goaltender **Ukko-Pekka Luukkonen** (6-4-2) made his fourth consecutive start in the crease for Rochester and ninth in the last 10 games, but was dealt with the overtime loss despite making 17 saves. The Finland native is tied for eighth in the AHL in wins and has made 25 or more saves in seven of his last 11 appearances dating back to a career-best 43-save performance at Cleveland on Feb. 12.

POWER UP

Now 15 games into the campaign, Rochester's power-play has gone 19-for-61 with a 30.6% conversion rate that is currently tops in the AHL. The Amerks' 19 goals on the man-advantage are most among all North Division teams and only one off the AHL lead behind only the San Diego Gulls and Chicago Wolves, who have played in 12 and three more games than Rochester, respectively, coming into the weekend.

The Amerks have scored at least one power-play goal in 12 of their first 15 games this season and have registered multiple power-play tallies in three of their last nine outings overall, including three this past Saturday alone.

FINN-ISHING TOUCH

After leaving Finland in January as Liiga's top point-getter, forward **Arttu Ruotsalainen** has taken his first season in North America by storm with a team-leading 13 points (5+8) through his first 13 games. The Oulu, Finland, native began the slate by recording a point in each of his first four games and now shows nine points (4+5) over his last seven outings, including goals in back-to-back games twice over that span.

Earlier this week, Ruotsalainen, who has collected all eight of assists this season on the power-play to rank fourth in the AHL in that category, was reassigned from Rochester to the Buffalo Sabres' taxi squad. He becomes the 12th different Amerks player this season to earn a recall to the big club.

2020-21 AMERKS OVERALL SCORING & GOALTENDING LEADERS

SKATER	GP	G	A	PTS	PIM	+/-
Arttu Ruotsalainen	13	5	8	13	2	-2
J-S Dea	10	4	8	12	2	6
Brett Murray	14	6	5	11	2	0
Remi Elie	14	4	5	9	6	2

GOALTENDER	GP	REC	SVS	SV%	GAA
Dustin Tokarski	2	1-1-0	68	.932	2.51
Ukko-Pekka Luukkonen	12	6-4-2	333	.888	3.48
Billy Christopoulos	1	0-0-0	2	.667	11.08

2020-21 COMETS OVERALL SCORING & GOALTENDING LEADERS

SKATER	GP	G	A	PTS	PIM	+/-
Jonah Gadjovich	9	8	1	9	7	4
Kole Lind	8	5	3	8	8	-3
Lukas Jasek	9	1	7	8	2	0
Sam Anas	5	0	7	7	0	-2

GOALTENDER	GP	REC	SVS	SV%	GAA
Jon Gillies	5	3-1-1	110	.902	2.37
Jake Kielly	4	3-1-0	114	.884	3.60

HEAD-TO-HEAD BREAKDOWN

Utica Comets	Rochester Americans
6-2-0-1	Record 7-5-2-1
3-0-0-0	Home Record 3-3-2-0
3-2-0-1	Road Record 4-2-0-1
6-2-0-1	Last 10 Games 3-4-2-1
6-1-0-1	Record When Scoring First 3-1-1-0
3.78 (2nd)	Goals-For Per Game 3.27 (10th)
3.22 (15th)	Goals-Against Per Game 3.60 (23rd)
22.7% (6th)	Power-Play 30.6% (1st)
79.1% (18th)	Penalty Kill 77.0% (23rd)
3-2 SOW vs. ROC	Last Game 5-3 W @ SYR
Apr. 10 @ SYR	Next Game Apr. 10 vs. CLE



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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).

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 DEAF-LIVER

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 among the team's top point-getters this season. By posting a season-high three points on a goal and two assists on March 6 against Syracuse, he became the first Amerks skater this season to reach double digits in points with 12 (4+8) through 10 games.

Back from a recall with the Sabres, Dea, who has notched at least one point in seven of his first 10 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.

THE BEST OFFENSE IS A GOOD DEFENSE

Rochester comes into the week owning three of the AHL's top scoring rookie defensemen in **Oskari Laaksonen**, **Mattias Samuelsson** and **Ryan Jones**, all of whom have combined for 22 points (4+18) with just one game all season being missed between the three blueliners.

Among all AHL rookie defensemen, Laaksonen and Samuelsson are tied for third and 12th in assists and 11th and 13th in points, respectively. Samuelsson has five points (1+4) in his last eight games, while Laaksonen has three points (1+2) over his last four outings, including his first AHL goal.

SCOUTING THE COMETS

Utica returns to the ice tonight following a 30-day layoff due to COVID-19 protocols with its most recent contest coming in the form of a 3-2 shootout win over Rochester back on Mar. 10. Prior to the pause, the Comets won four of their last six games. The Comets, who boast a 4-1-1-0 record since suffering a 6-1 loss on Feb. 6, have scored 34 goals this season while only playing in nine games.

AMERKS-COMETS 2020-21 SEASON SERIES BREAKDOWN

ROCHESTER

SKATER	GP	G	A	PTS	PIM	+/-
Steven Fogarty	5	3	2	5	8	0
Arttu Ruotsalainen	5	2	2	4	0	1
Michael Mersch	4	1	3	4	2	2

GOALTENDER

	GP	REC	GA	SV%	GAA
Dustin Tokarski	1	0-1-0	3	.912	3.02
Ukko-Pekka Luukkonen	4	2-1-1	14	.905	3.37

UTICA

SKATER	GP	G	A	PTS	PIM	+/-
Jonah Gadajovich	5	6	1	7	2	4
Lukas Jasek	5	1	4	5	2	-2
Kole Lind	5	2	2	4	6	-1

GOALTENDER

	GP	REC	GA	SV%	GAA
Jake Kielly	1	1-0-0	2	.941	1.85
Jon Gillies	4	2-1-1	10	.903	2.46

2020-21 SEASON SERIES GAME-BY-GAME BREAKDOWN

Date	Result	Score	SF-SA	PP	PK
Feb. 5	L	3-2	29-34	1-5	5-6
Feb. 18	SOW	4-3	27-38	2-4	1-4
Feb. 26	L	7-2	26-39	1-7	2-3
Mar. 3	W	4-2	23-33	0-2	7-8
Mar. 10	SOL	3-2	34-38	1-4	4-4
Mar. 13 (PPD)					
Mar. 19 (PPD)					
Mar. 24 (PPD)					
Mar. 28 (PPD)					
Apr. 9					
Apr. 23					
Apr. 30					

SERIES NOTABLES

Amerks defenseman **Dylan Blujus** spent the past three seasons with the Comets, recording 33 points (9+24) in 123 games. Utica assistant coach Daniel Tkaczuk had a brief seven-game stint with the Amerks in 2009-10.

Rochester has collected at least one point in 22 of the last 31 games against Utica dating back to the start of the 2017-18 campaign, going 16-9-2-4 over that span.

The Amerks and Comets come into the matchup ranked first and second in the North Division with a 30.6% and 22.7% success rate on the power-play, respectively. They're also inside the top six on the man-advantage in the entire American Hockey League.



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