



# AMERKS DAILY PRESS CLIPS

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Adams: Karmanos a 'critical hire' for Sabres front office  
By Jourdon LaBarber  
Sabres.com

Kevyn Adams first got to know Jason Karmanos at various USA Hockey camps when the two were teenagers. They grew close as teammates with Team USA at the 1994 World Junior Championship.

Their playing careers diverged from that point forward. Adams was a first-round draft pick by Boston in 1993; Karmanos played 16 games in the ECHL before hanging up his skates and turning his attention to front office work, becoming assistant general manager for Carolina in 1998.

Their paths intersected again in 2002, when Karmanos was part of the Carolina front office that acquired Adams in a trade with the Florida Panthers. He recalls the deal as one of the best he's been involved with, a vital move for a team that would win the Stanley Cup four years later.

Adams hopes bringing Karmanos on board as associate general manager will have a similar impact in Buffalo.

"This was a critical hire for us," Adams said during an introductory press conference on Thursday.

"I feel that Jason is someone, for me, that checked all the boxes. He is a person of integrity, high character, has great experience, a track record of success in multiple organizations and certainly someone I've known for many years and trust."

Karmanos followed his 14-year stint in the Carolina front office with a six-year tenure in Pittsburgh, where he was a vice president of hockey operations for the Penguins' Stanley Cup titles in 2016 and 2017. He spent the past three seasons as assistant general manager.

That resume, along with Adams' previous experience with Karmanos, made him an easy candidate when Adams sought to add an experienced figure to the Sabres front office. Conversations on organizational philosophies and the direction of the team sealed the deal.

Karmanos said he had an opportunity with another organization before joining the Sabres, crediting the potential in the Western New York market as a factor in his decision.

"I know that there's been disappointment, can't change what's gone on in the past," he said. "But I look forward to getting a better understanding of what going on currently."

"I think at this point, I'm somebody that's had a lot of experience in all areas of hockey operation. I've been on some bad teams and some great teams. I look forward to bringing that experience and helping the Sabres get to where they want to get to."

Karmanos will serve as general manager of the AHL affiliate Rochester Americans and will oversee the Sabres' scouting, player development and analytic departments. Adams reiterated on Monday that the organization is still seeking to hire more scouts as it rebuilds the front office.

The addition of Karmanos is the first step in that process. Karmanos said he plans to spend the upcoming weeks meeting individuals in the front office and attending Sabres and Amerks games before heading to Texas for the U18 World Championship, a significant scouting event that begins April 26.

"Everything that's going to be happening from today moving forward in our organization, Jason's going to be involved with," Adams said. "We're going to make decisions together. We're going to work hand in hand in every area with other staff members."

Sabres notes: Ukko-Pekka Luukkonen could make NHL debut this weekend

By Bill Hoppe

Buffalo Hockey Beat

Top goalie prospect Ukko-Pekka Luukkonen's highly anticipated NHL debut could take place this weekend, Buffalo Sabres general manager Kevyn Adams said.

The Sabres have become woefully thin in net, losing Linus Ullmark and Carter Hutton to injuries after trading Jonas Johansson.

If Luukkonen hadn't suffered a lower-body injury with the Rochester Americans, the Sabres likely would've recalled him for Thursday's road game against the Washington Capitals. The Finn missed Wednesday's 5-3 loss to the Cleveland Monsters in Rochester.

Adams said the 6-foot-5, 196-pound Luukkonen, 22, skated Thursday and the Sabres could summon him Friday.

The Sabres host the Pittsburgh Penguins on Saturday afternoon and Sunday afternoon.

"So we'll see where we're at tomorrow," Adams said on a Zoom call Thursday. "But there may be a situation if he's where we feel he's ready, and depending on the health of our other goaltenders that we'll know over the next 24-48 hours goes, yeah, (he could play)."

Adams had no update on the lower-body injury Ullmark suffered early in Tuesday's 3-2 shootout loss to the Boston Bruins. He said the Swede needed to be examined. Meanwhile, Hutton has missed the last 13 games recovering from a lower-body injury.

With only two healthy netminders Thursday — Dustin Tokarski, who will start against the Capitals, and Michael Houser — Adams said the Sabres were forced to use an emergency backup as their taxi-squad goalie.

"It's a challenging situation," interim coach Don Granato said of the Sabres' goaltending problems.

NHL teams must carry three goalies this season between the active roster and taxi squad. The Sabres recalled Houser from the taxi squad before Thursday's game.

The Sabres don't have any other goalies in the organization playing on an NHL contract.

Luukkonen, a second-round pick in 2017, 54th overall, has struggled since the Amerks' COVID-19 pause last month, losing four of his six starts.

Overall, Luukkonen has compiled a 7-5-2 record with a 3.60 goals-against average and an .888 save percentage in 14 AHL games this season.

The Sabres briefly recalled him to the taxi squad for several days late last month, his first taste of the NHL.

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Sabres prospect Jack Quinn, the eighth overall pick in 2020, played center for the first time as a pro Wednesday instead of his usual right-wing spot with the Amerks.

Adams said the data Quinn, 19, generated during his 52-goal junior season with the Ottawa 67's in 2019-20 indicated "he played as almost as if he was a center."

If the Ontario Hockey League season had been played, Adams said Quinn likely would've been shifted to center during his final junior season.

Adams said the Amerks have a "seriously decimated" lineup right now, so he and coach Seth Appert discussed the move before Wednesday's game. Quinn recorded two assists against the Monsters.

"(We) thought it would be good to give him the opportunity," Adams said. "He was tremendous yesterday."

Sabres notebook: No. 1 pick Jack Quinn slides to center in Rochester  
By Mike Harrington  
Buffalo News

There was quite an interesting sight Wednesday night in Rochester's Blue Cross Arena.

Jack Quinn, the 52-goal winger the Buffalo Sabres selected with their first-round pick in last October's NHL draft, played center in the Rochester Amerks' 5-3 loss to Cleveland. And it wasn't some kooky experiment because the AHL club's roster is paper thin.

Quinn had two assists in the game and finished minus-1. The 19-year-old said it was his first time in the middle since minor hockey.

Luukkonen, the 22-year-old Finn who is the Sabres' top goaltending prospect, could get the call to make his NHL debut this weekend.

"I loved playing center, I thought it was a pretty good first game there for myself," Quinn told reporters afterward. "Obviously there's a lot of spots that need to be better. But I think I can adjust pretty quick, maybe a couple more games and I'll have that stuff figured out. And I think there's also some good things that came with playing center."

Sabres GM Kevyn Adams and owner Terry Pegula attended the game. Adams said Thursday he was pleased with what he saw.

"One of the things we talked about around the draft last year was a lot of Jack Quinn's data and the numbers around him, he played almost as if he was a center," Adams said. "And there was always a thought with his abilities that if the OHL normal season would have happened, he likely would have played center. So we've always thought that's a possibility."

The Amerks play Friday at Cleveland and Quinn is expected to make his debut on Feb. 18 against Utica.

"He was tremendous yesterday, played very well, didn't look out of place. Versatility is a key ingredient to success for players and teams, so if we can have Jack learn and be comfortable at center, you can always shift to wing and he can play either wing."

Quinn played on a line with tryout signees Michael Mersch and Brent Gates. Mersch, 28, was signed to a tryout contract in February and has five goals and six assists in 17 games for Rochester. The Amerks are his fourth AHL team and he has played 394 games in the league. A former fourth-round pick of the Los Angeles Kings, Mersch played 17 games for them in 2016. Gates was signed Tuesday after splitting time this year with two ECHL teams.

"Mike Mersch is such a rock to play with. I thought Jack going to center for the first time to have a guy to lean on like Mersch would be extremely beneficial for him," said Amerks coach Seth Appert. "... We thought he would pair well with those guys and I thought they had a lot of shifts where they looked good together."

"Jack controlled the middle of the ice," Mersch said. "I don't know how often he's played center but it looked natural for him. There's a reason he's a first-round pick."

Quinn has two goals, seven assists and a minus-11 rating in 14 games for Rochester. The AHL was expected to be a big challenge for a 19-year-old who would have otherwise spent this year back in juniors and that's been borne out.

"My game has come a long way but I would say not satisfied with how I've been playing," Quinn said. "I'm a little frustrated with how I've been producing offensively. I'd like to be a lot better for sure. But I think there's also a lot of positives. I think my game has gotten better every game and week by week and I think that's a good thing in itself. And I think offense will come, too."

#### Eichel to be re-examined in May

Adams indicated no decision has been made on surgery for Sabres captain Jack Eichel, who was shut down for the season this week due to a herniated disc in his neck. The GM said he had a video call Tuesday with "multiple doctors" as well as Eichel and his representatives to discuss the situation.

"The course of treatment was to rehab it, and to give it some time to see if the disc could move back to where the doctors were comfortable," Adams said. "And then the hope was that he could jump back in and play. Although there were slight improvements, there still wasn't a comfort from anyone that it was the right time to jump back into the lineup. ... The next steps were to shut Jack down for this season, continue to do his rehab and then we will re-examine him early into May and see where we are."

Adams reiterated that all parties feel Eichel will be 100% healthy at the start of training camp next season. The 2021-22 season is expected to have a start date much closer to normal, sometime in October.

#### Biro shut down

Appert said that Amerks forward Brandon Biro will be out for the season with a lower-body injury. He had two goals and three assists in 15 games for Rochester. The Sabres signed Biro, a former Penn State captain, to a two-year entry-level contract in March, 2020.

#### New power broker for Sabres: Kevyn Adams calls Jason Karmanos a 'critical hire'

By Mike Harrington  
Buffalo News

Kevyn Adams left no doubt Thursday. He's going to be in lockstep with Jason Karmanos and the new associate general manager will have his hands on all areas of the Buffalo Sabres' organization.

"This was a critical hire for us. I feel that Jason is someone that for me checked all the boxes," Adams, the Sabres' general manager, said on a video call to introduce his new right hand man. "He is a person of integrity, high character, has great experience, a track record of success in multiple organizations, and certainly someone that I've known for many years and trust."

How big a hire is it? Until he names a permanent head coach, it's easily the most important one since Adams moved into his role 10 months ago.

"Everything that's going to be happening from today moving forward in our organization, Jason's going to be involved with," Adams said. "We're going to make decisions together. We're going to work hand in hand in every area with other staff members."

Ten months after mass firings in the Buffalo Sabres' hockey operations department, General M...

Karmanos and Adams have a long relationship that dates back to their roles as teammates on the 1994 United States team at the World Junior Championship. Karmanos, who played at Harvard and had a brief pro career in the ECHL, and Adams were reunited in Carolina on the Hurricanes' 2006 Stanley Cup championship team.

A year ago today, in pictures: Coronavirus outbreak and more moments you may remember

Adams was a grinder and locker room leader while Karmanos, the son of the owner, served as executive vice president of hockey operations and assistant general manager. Karmanos served as vice president of hockey and assistant GM in Pittsburgh from 2014-2020, winning Cups in 2016 and 2017.

Asked how he can help Adams spark a culture turnover in Buffalo, Karmanos took a cautious approach.

"I'm a big believer that when you're an outsider to an organization, you're just that," he said. "You might have an opinion, you have an outside perspective. But until you get in and start talking to people that are within the organization and understanding the processes that are in place, your opinion isn't what it needs to be."

Luukkonen, the 22-year-old Finn who is the Sabres' top goaltending prospect, could get the call to make his NHL debut this weekend.

Karmanos, whose role includes that of GM of the Rochester Amerks, said he is reporting to Buffalo Monday to get glimpses of the Sabres' three-game series against the Boston Bruins as well as the Amerks' games against Syracuse and Utica. He will then be heading to Frisco and Plano, Texas, for the World Under-18 Championship April 26-May 6.

"There aren't too many opportunities to see live games these days. That's one and there's a lot of players there," Karmanos said. "And obviously, we are going to have a very good draft pick, and lots of picks in general. I've been involved in the draft very intimately in Pittsburgh for the last four years. So I look forward to working with the staff."

Karmanos, who was dismissed by the Penguins in October, revealed he chose the Sabres over another job opportunity.

"At the end of the day, I was more excited about coming to Buffalo and being part of helping Kevyn, the Pegulas and everybody else in the organization and getting to where we want to get to," he said.

Adams said he and Karmanos were "philosophically aligned."

"There's certainly history and a trust that we have had built over the years," Adams said. "But in saying that, we've never worked in this type of setting together. So it was critical that we talk philosophically about what we believe."

Karmanos said he did not know how many changes/additions he would make to the team's scouting department before the draft is held in July. The Sabres do not currently have a scout in the Western Hockey League and remain thin in overseas scouting as well.

"The basic idea of having depth in your organization is something that has contributed to all three of the Stanley Cup championship teams that I've been a part of," he said. "It's a process that takes time."



## Can new Sabres associate GM Jason Karmanos give Buffalo's beleaguered scouting staff a boost?

By John Vogl

The Athletic

The last time the Sabres overhauled their scouting department, the Pegulas grabbed a flamethrower and burned it to the ground. Jason Karmanos will take a more subtle approach in rebuilding it.

"I need to understand more about the process that's in place, get to know the scouts themselves, understand more about them and what's gone on in the past, then apply that to the experiences I have had," Karmanos, the Sabres' new associate general manager, said Thursday. "I would think there would be tweaks, but it's a to-be-determined thing that's based on the information that I start to gather as I work with (general manager Kevyn Adams) and others."

Details were light during Karmanos' introductory news conference on what's ahead for Buffalo's front office, but he's starting his evaluation immediately. Karmanos, who will serve as GM of the Amerks and oversee the scouting, player development and analytics departments, will arrive in Buffalo on Monday to meet the staff. He'll drive to Rochester for a couple of Amerks games, then jet to Texas to scout the Under-18 World Championship.

"Everything that's going to be happening from today moving forward in our organization, Jason's going to be involved with," Adams said. "We're going to make decisions together. We're going to work hand-in-hand in every area with other staff members."

"That's why it was so critical to find someone like Jason that had the background, had the successful pedigree and (was) someone that I could trust immediately."

Adams and Karmanos, who are both 46, met as teenagers while attending USA Hockey camps. They played together at the 1994 world juniors. While Karmanos was working in the Hurricanes' front office as assistant GM and executive vice president of hockey operations, he traded for Adams in 2002.

"We've always stayed in touch and our families have stayed in touch," Adams said. "Jason is a quality person, high character, high integrity, and I really am a believer that you surround yourself with the highest-quality people you can. That's what I'm getting in Jason."

Unlike many of the Sabres' recent hires, Karmanos arrives with a long resume. He spent 15 seasons in Carolina, winning the Stanley Cup as assistant GM in 2006. Karmanos joined the Penguins in 2014 and worked six seasons as either VP of hockey operations or assistant GM. Pittsburgh won back-to-back Cups in 2016 and '17.

Karmanos interviewed to be GM of the Arizona Coyotes in September. After he didn't land the job, the Penguins expanded his role by naming him GM of their American Hockey League affiliate in Wilkes-Barre/Scranton. They surprisingly fired him in October.

The Michigan native said he was a candidate for a job in a different organization but chose the Sabres.

"I was more excited about coming to Buffalo and being part of helping Kevyn and the Pegulas and everybody else in the organization in getting to where we want to get to," Karmanos said. "The passion for the game and for the Sabres in the market, to me that's a really exciting thing."

Still, Buffalo hasn't been a place to go for job stability. Adams became the third GM in four years last June. Plus, everyone knows the playoff drought is about to reach 10 seasons.

"I know that there's been disappointment," Karmanos said. "Can't change what's gone on in the past, but I look forward to getting a better understanding of what's going on currently."

"Quite frankly, what usually happens when there's a job opportunity like the one I have, things aren't going as planned. So, I'm looking forward to helping get us on the right track."

There's talk around the league that Karmanos' role is rather large for someone who's just an "associate GM." But the breakdown isn't too much different from Jason Botterill's time as front-office boss. Assistant GM Randy Sexton ran the Amerks and oversaw amateur scouting. Fellow assistant GM Steve Greeley handled pro scouting.

Karmanos will supervise all scouting, but that doesn't entail much work these days. It's a nine-person skeleton crew. With the draft coming in three months and most of the scouting world already under contract, the Sabres likely won't get much bigger before the selection show July 23-24.

The Sabres will draft no worse than third if they remain in last place, which is why Karmanos is headed to the Under-18 tournament in two weeks.

"There's obviously scouting reports and watching players, but there's also the building of the draft list," he said. "There aren't too many opportunities to see live games these days. That's one and there's a lot of players there. Obviously, we are going to have a very good draft pick and lots of picks in general."

"I've been involved in the draft very intimately in Pittsburgh for the last four years, so I look forward to working with the staff and am ready to hit the ground running."

Nissan Amerks Alumni Spotlight | Nathan Paetsch  
By Staff Report  
Amerks.com

As part of our 65th anniversary celebration this season, we're honoring the past in the present by reconnecting with those who helped shape the Amerks into one of the most storied franchises in American Hockey League history.

Amerks Multimedia Journalist Suzie Cool recently caught up with former Amerks and Sabres defenseman Nathan Paetsch for this week's Amerks Alumni Spotlight, presented by Nissan.

The recently retired Paetsch discusses life after hockey and reflects on his seven seasons wearing the red, white and blue.

Amerks Come Up Short To Cleveland  
By Staff Report  
Amerks.com

The Rochester Americans (8-7-2-1) opened a two-goal lead in the first period against the Cleveland Monsters (10-5-1-0), but were unable to hold onto the lead as the visitors scored four times in the final frame to come away with a 5-3 victory.

The contest, which was Rochester's sixth straight home defeat, was the fourth of six scheduled meetings between the two teams this season and second of a three-game series. The Amerks, who boast a 30-10-4-4 record against the Monsters since the start of the 2011-12 season, opened the season series by way of a 7-3 victory while Cleveland has taken the last three meetings with the road team emerging victorious each time.

Rookie forward Jack Quinn tallied his first career two-assist game and second multi-point outing of his career while fellow linemate Michael Mersch also recorded a two-point effort with a goal and assist. Quinn has four points (1+4) over his last five games while Mersch extended his point streak to three games (2+2). Captain Steven Fogarty slipped in his team-leading seventh goal of the season in the third period while Ryan Jones scored his second of the slate. Brent Murray and Brent Gates Jr., who signed a professional tryout with Rochester yesterday, both recorded an assist.

First-year goaltender Stefanos Lekkas (0-1-1) made his second appearance with Rochester this season. The rookie netminder stopped 28 of the 32 shots he faced but suffered the loss.

Cleveland extended its win streak to five games, outscoring its opponents 28-9 over that span, while improving to 8-2-0-0 in the last 10 games. Despite returning to the lineup for the first time since Mar. 20, defenseman Dillion Simpson paced the club with a pair of goals to extend his goal-scoring and point streak to three games and four games (4+1), respectively. Ole Bjorgvik-Holm and Tristan Mullin both scored their first American Hockey League goals while Tyler Sikura netted his team-leading eighth tally to complete the scoring.

Netminder Danill Tarasov made his second career professional start and made 20 saves to improve to 2-0-0.

With a 2-1 lead and 1:09 of leftover power-play to begin the third period, Rochester had the hopes of taking its second two-goal cushion of the night. However, just 42 seconds into the frame, Cleveland tied the game as Sikura finished off an odd-man rush with Carson Meyer.

The Monsters successfully killed off the rest of the infraction and then rode the wave of the momentum before scoring a pair of goals to take a 4-2 lead at the 11:21 mark. Much like Bjorgvik-Holm's his first career AHL tally that trickled across the goal-line, Mullin redirected a shot that snuck past the line for his first marker.

Later in the frame while the Amerks were on the power-play, and after Lekkas denied a two-on-none shorthanded break-away, Fogarty brought the Amerks within one with 5:14 left regulation. Keeping the puck inside the zone in the right corner, Quinn one-touched a pass to Murray between the faceoff dots before Murray tapped the puck to Fogarty. With Tarasov sliding to his right, Fogarty nearly fanned on the shot but got enough on it to tuck his seventh goal just inside the far post.

Trailing by a goal, Rochester drew its sixth penalty of the contest as there was just under four minutes to go in regulation. The home club was unable to capitalize on the ensuing man-advantage and then pulled Lekkas for an extra-attacker, but Cleveland sealed the win as Simpson scored into the vacant net.

Things started off well for the Amerks as they opened the scoring first for the fourth consecutive contest, needing only 89 seconds after the opening face-off to take a 1-0 lead.

As Quinn gathered the puck off the glove of Tarasov, he shoved it back to the goal crease before Mersch steered it into the cage for his fifth of the season and second in three games.

Later in the period, Rochester kept the Monsters hemmed inside their own zone and doubled its lead as Jones fired a shot from the right point that made its way through traffic and in with 4:09 on the clock before the intermission.

Cleveland cut the lead in half late in the first period before scoring four goals in the final 20 minutes of play to earn the 5-3 victory.

The Amerks and Monsters face-off the third time in a week as the series shifts to Cleveland for another go-around at Rocket Mortgage FieldHouse. The afternoon matinee is slated for a 4:00 p.m. start and will be carried live on The Sports Leader 95.7 FM/950 AM ESPN Rochester and AHLTV.

Sabres name Karmanos associate general manager  
By Chris Rydak  
Sabres.com

The Buffalo Sabres announced today that the team has named Jason Karmanos associate general manager.

In his role, Karmanos will serve as the general manager of the AHL's Rochester Americans and will oversee the Sabres' scouting, player development and analytics departments.

A native of Orchard Lake, Michigan, Karmanos spent the past six seasons with the Pittsburgh Penguins, where he served as the assistant general manager for three seasons. He was the club's vice president of hockey operations prior to that.

In his roles with Pittsburgh, Karmanos spearheaded the revamping of the Penguins' use of hockey analytics to assist management in their decision-making process.

He was also a member of the Carolina Hurricanes' front office from 1998-2013 and served as an assistant general manager for 13 of those seasons.

Karmanos, 46, has been part of three Stanley Cup championships. He won with Carolina in 2006 and with Pittsburgh in 2016 and 2017.

Sabres general manager Kevyn Adams was an alternate captain on the 2005-06 Hurricanes. Adams and Karmanos were also teammates on the United States' 1994 World Junior Championship team.

Before becoming a hockey executive, Karmanos played four seasons at Harvard, where he earned a Bachelor of Arts degree with honors. He played one season for the Raleigh Ice Caps of the ECHL in 1996-97, but an eye injury ended his playing career.

Sabres add to front office, hire Jason Karmanos as associate GM  
By Bill Hoppe  
Buffalo Hockey Beat

After Kevyn Adams took over as Buffalo Sabres general manager last June, he said he wanted to catch his breath and develop an understanding of what he needed for his front office.

Adams, who had never worked in a hockey department, inherited a skeleton staff with no assistant GMs.

On Wednesday, Adams added a major piece, hiring Jason Karmanos as associate GM.

Karmanos, 46, will serve as the Rochester Americans' GM and oversee scouting, player development and analytics.

He spent the last six years with the Pittsburgh Penguins, serving as their vice president of hockey operations for three seasons before being named assistant GM. He was fired in October.

Karmanos won the Stanley Cup with the Penguins in 2016 and 2017 and another championship as the Carolina Hurricanes' assistant GM and executive vice president of hockey operations in 2006.

He held those titles for 13 years with Hurricanes, who were owned by his father, Peter Karmanos.

Jason Karmanos played four seasons at Harvard as a forward and was teammates with Adams on Team USA's entry at the 1994 World Junior Championship.

Steve Greeley and Randy Sexton served as the Sabres' assistant GMs under ex-GM Jason Botterill.

Quinn focused on getting better, helping Amerks, but Sabres clearly in his (near) future  
By Kevin Oklobzija  
Pickin' Splinters

There's really no doubt that Jack Quinn will play in the National Hockey League.

Selected in the first round of the 2020 NHL draft, eighth overall, by the Buffalo Sabres, the slick-skating forward has puck skills, smarts and speed.

But there's a whole lot more to his game than just flash and dash, as the 19-year-old forward showed Wednesday night in the Rochester Americans 5-3 loss to the Cleveland Monsters at Blue Cross Arena at the War Memorial.

For one, he showed he can play center, a position he said he hasn't played since youth hockey. He also demonstrated a willingness to initiate contact often, to bang bodies into the boards and to block shots.

None of it was a surprise to Amerks coach Seth Appert.

"We've seen it a lot but it hasn't always shown up in games," Appert said. "Games are hard in the American League, especially at his age. But we see it in practice, how competitive he is, how physically engaged he is, how much he cares about winning puck battles."

The shot block in the waning seconds of the first period — on a slapper by Thomas Schemitch — eliminated a dangerous scoring chance on a Cleveland power play.

"Blocking shots is an important element for all players," Appert said. "If you want to be a winning hockey team, if you want to build a winning culture within your organization, your best players, your most talented players, need to be good defensively and block shots. He had one big one last week in Utica and there was another big one tonight."

Quinn, who in 14 games has produced 2 goals, 6 assists and 8 points, enjoyed his pro debut in the middle.

"I loved playing center," Quinn said. "Obviously there's a lot of spots I need to be better but I think I can adjust quick."

One of those areas is not being quite so gung-ho, understanding that there's a trick to conserving a bit of energy when it's possible.

"Guys are big and strong and you can't just outmuscle them; they can put you on your back so you have to play defense for a bit," Quinn said. "I think when I'm fresh early in the shift I'm super competitive so I can win my battles but later in the shift it gets a lot more difficult so I need to learn to be more patient."

Quinn's creativity and poise with the puck have been evident since his AHL debut on Feb. 18. On Wednesday he made a sweet backhand pass to set up Michael Mersch for a goal 79 seconds into the first period.

"He controlled the middle of the ice," Mersch said. "I would say I had to play to his level."



Because of injuries to Andrew Oglevie (unknown) and Brandon Biro (season-ending lower body), the coaching staff didn't have many choices to fill in at center. They opted to use Quinn.

"Mike Mersch is such a rock to play with so I thought Jack, going to center for the first time, to have a guy like that to lean on would be extremely beneficial," Appert said. "All in all, with a lot of responsibility thrown at a 19-year-old, I thought he had a really strong game."

So when will Quinn get his chance to play in Buffalo? That's up to Sabres general manager Kevyn Adams, Appert said.

"Jack hasn't once brought that up, asked about it, had even a conversation about it with me," Appert said. "His focus is completely on trying to become a really improved player in Rochester. Trying to grow his game, trying to take adversity and use that to fuel growth in his game so he can become a dominant player here for us before he makes that jump."

"He's certainly motivated by where he wants to be, but he's kept his mind where his feet are and that's been impressive."

Ryan Jones and Steven Fogarty also scored goals for the Amerks, who have won just twice in the past nine games (2-4-2-1) and finish the stretch of three straight against the Monsters with a 4 p.m. game Saturday at Cleveland.

Considering the Amerks were embarrassed 9-2 by the Monsters at the War Memorial on Saturday, they rebounded with a vastly better effort. And that's despite playing without goalie Ukko-Pekka Luukkonen, (minor lower body injury, Appert said), as well as the host of other players on recall.

They started the game with just 10 forwards (and eight defensemen), and then were down to nine forwards when rookie Matej Pekar was ejected with two minutes left in the first period. He fought Brent Gallant, who has piled up more than 1,600 penalty minutes in a 12-year pro career, before the puck was dropped.

Once the Monsters tied the game, they took total control, and eventually the lead, when Ole Bjorgvik-Holm's nothing wrister from the left-wing boards somehow slithered through Lekkas at 6:35. When Tristan Mullin's shot through a screen found the net at 11:21, Cleveland led 4-2 and had no difficulty protecting the lead.

Around The AHL: How Seth Appert steers the Amerks through difficult a night  
By Patrick Williams  
Eliteprospects.com

One by one, the goals piled up on the Rochester Americans last weekend.

While the game, a 9-2 home loss, ended, the pain would continue long after for head coach Seth Appert, his leadership group, and the Rochester dressing room. Already down 3-2 after the first period, Rochester went on to surrender six unanswered goals as the game devolved into a rout. Appert elected to pull starter Ukko-Pekka Luukkonen after 27 shots and five goals allowed. A night earlier, Luukkonen had pulled out a 4-2 come-from-behind road win with 34 saves.

So how does Appert, who brought more than 20 years of Division 1 and USNTDP coaching experience with him to Rochester last summer as one of the brightest coaching prospects in the game, manage a bad loss?

To start with, he holds on any rash statements. Next, he gives his players some space. No barking. No bag skates. After all, his Amerks have had a trying season. They went 16 days between games in March because of assorted league COVID-19 protocols. Along with injuries in Rochester, the Amerks have seen their roster battered by player movement to and from the parent Buffalo Sabres, who have endured their own onslaught of problems this season. Appert himself has been pulled away from Rochester on two different occasions to fill in on the Buffalo coaching staff. And with an 8-6-2-1 record, the Amerks have held their own this season, given their circumstances.

Appert frequently makes it clear that he likes and respects his team. Admires their resilience. Notes their individual and collective effort. Understands their challenges. "Well, first of all, I let [the players] have the room on Saturday night, because there's nothing for me to say at that point," Appert explained after practice Monday. "I think it's important for those guys to have the message come from within.

"This group has [gone] through a lot, and they just keep responding. And we didn't respond the way we needed to within that game on Saturday. But I had zero worries how they were going to come to practice [Monday]."

Appert also could lean on plain-spoken captain Steven Fogarty, who himself had just landed back with the Amerks after being assigned by Buffalo before the game. And he did.

"You're not going to win every game," Fogarty said after the game, "but you can't give up. You've got to have some pride. I think the way the score was run up there is just a bad looking to use fatigue as an excuse — or even as an explanation — well, Fogarty quickly shutdown that idea.

"A lot of us are used to playing three games on a weekend," Fogarty reasoned. "So, you really can't use it as an excuse. And you know, if you are tired, you've got to just simplify your game and find ways to win your shifts, win your battles."

When Sunday rolled around, Appert still held off on bringing his leadership group together. After all, he figured, this has been a different season, and players could use the off day for themselves and their loved ones.

Frankly, Appert also needed some space for himself.

"[The delay was to] allow me to get past the emotion of a bad loss, because your initial response is always, 'Hey, this is unacceptable.' And it's more like work, work, work, and hard work is always the answer. But there has to be intelligence with how you go about it."

But a conversation still needed to be held. So come Sunday night, some 24 hours after the loss, Appert brought those leaders together. He also carries a particular approach to such conversations. The floor belongs to the players – and Appert has his reasons for that.

"After games like that," Appert outlined, "it's really important that I am seeing things as clearly and as similarly as the guys in the locker room. So I think it's really important not to tell them how I'm going to respond, but to have a good conversation about 'Are we seeing things the same way right now? Will this message resonate, so to speak?'"

"I always first start with, 'What are you guys thinking? What are you feeling? What was the vibe of the team? What went wrong in your mind? How do you feel about it today?'"

"Because I think sometimes if you start with how I feel, that can dictate their answer. I don't want them to answer the way I'm answering. I want information from them. They're my sounding board. They're an extension of me in the room. When you have the best captains, they're an extension of me in the room by being their own person.

"So, that's where the conversation starts, getting their thoughts, getting their feedback, getting their inputs, kind of telling them after that, 'This is what I'm thinking from a message standpoint, from a meeting standpoint, and from a practice standpoint. Does that make sense to you?'"

"[It is] making sure that we're on the same page. So that whatever my response is, I know that those guys are with me, which allows the team to respond properly."

## Slumping Amerks fall apart in 3rd against Cleveland

By Staff Report  
Rochester First

The Rochester Americans (8-7-2-1) opened a two-goal lead in the first period against the Cleveland Monsters (10-5-1-0), but were unable to hold onto the lead as the visitors scored four times in the final frame to come away with a 5-3 victory.

The contest, which was Rochester's sixth straight home defeat, was the fourth of six scheduled meetings between the two teams this season and second of a three-game series. The Amerks, who boast a 30-10-4-4 record against the Monsters since the start of the 2011-12 season, opened the season series by way of a 7-3 victory while Cleveland has taken the last three meetings with the road team emerging victorious each time.

Rookie forward Jack Quinn tallied his first career two-assist game and second multi-point outing of his career while fellow linemate Michael Mersch also recorded a two-point effort with a goal and assist. Quinn has four points (1+4) over his last five games while Mersch extended his point streak to three games (2+2). Captain Steven Fogarty slipped in his team-leading seventh goal of the season in the third period while Ryan Jones scored his second of the slate. Brent Murray and Brent Gates Jr., who signed a professional tryout with Rochester yesterday, both recorded an assist.

First-year goaltender Stefanos Lekkas (0-1-1) made his second appearance with Rochester this season. The rookie netminder stopped 28 of the 32 shots he faced but suffered the loss.

Cleveland extended its win streak to five games, outscoring its opponents 28-9 over that span, while improving to 8-2-0-0 in the last 10 games. Despite returning to the lineup for the first time since Mar. 20, defenseman Dillion Simpson paced the club with a pair of goals to extend his goal-scoring and point streak to three games and four games (4+1), respectively. Ole Bjorgvik-Holm and Tristan Mullin both scored their first American Hockey League goals while Tyler Sikura netted his team-leading eighth tally to complete the scoring.

Netminder Danill Tarasov made his second career professional start and made 20 saves to improve to 2-0-0.

With a 2-1 lead and 1:09 of leftover power-play to begin the third period, Rochester had the hopes of taking its second two-goal cushion of the night. However, just 42 seconds into the frame, Cleveland tied the game as Sikura finished off an odd-man rush with Carson Meyer.

The Monsters successfully killed off the rest of the infraction and then rode the wave of the momentum before scoring a pair of goals to take a 4-2 lead at the 11:21 mark. Much like Bjorgvik-Holm's his first career AHL tally that trickled across the goal-line, Mullin redirected a shot that snuck past the line for his first marker.

Later in the frame while the Amerks were on the power-play, and after Lekkas denied a two-on-none shorthanded break-away, Fogarty brought the Amerks within one with 5:14 left regulation. Keeping the puck inside the zone in the right corner, Quinn one-touched a pass to Murray between the faceoff dots before Murray tapped the puck to Fogarty. With Tarasov sliding to his right, Fogarty nearly fanned on the shot but got enough on it to tuck his seventh goal just inside the far post.

Trailing by a goal, Rochester drew its sixth penalty of the contest as there was just under four minutes to go in regulation. The home club was unable to capitalize on the ensuing man-advantage and then pulled Lekkas for an extra-attacker, but Cleveland sealed the win as Simpson scored into the vacant net.

Things started off well for the Amerks as they opened the scoring first for the fourth consecutive contest, needing only 89 seconds after the opening face-off to take a 1-0 lead.

As Quinn gathered the puck off the glove of Tarasov, he shoved it back to the goal crease before Mersch steered it into the cage for his fifth of the season and second in three games.

Later in the period, Rochester kept the Monsters hemmed inside their own zone and doubled its lead as Jones fired a shot from the right point that made its way through traffic and in with 4:09 on the clock before the intermission.

Cleveland cut the lead in half late in the first period before scoring four goals in the final 20 minutes of play to earn the 5-3 victory.

The Amerks and Monsters face-off the third time in a week as the series shifts to Cleveland for another go-around at Rocket Mortgage FieldHouse. The afternoon matinee is slated for a 4:00 p.m. start.

Amerks Sign Three To Professional Tryouts  
By Staff Report  
Amerks.com

The Rochester Americans announced today that the team has signed forwards Brent Gates and Brendan Warren and goaltender Stefanos Lekkas to Professional Tryouts (PTO).

Gates, 23, joins the Amerks after splitting the 2020-21 season with the Indy Fuel and Tulsa Oilers (ECHL), recording 21 points on eight goals and 13 assists in 35 games. The 6-foot-2, 196-pound forward has also notched an assist in two games with the San Diego Gulls (AHL) this season.

During the 2019-20 campaign between the Gulls and Oilers, Gates combined for 14 goals and 11 assists for 25 points in 45 contests. Gates ranked second among all Tulsa rookies in goals (10) while finishing second in both assists (10) and points (20) in 25 games before the season was cut short due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

The second-year pro has appeared in 28 career AHL games with the Gulls, totaling eight points (5+3) while also adding 41 points (18+23) over 60 contests with Tulsa.

Prior to turning pro, the Grand Rapids, Mich., native completed a four-year collegiate career at the University of Minnesota (Big-10), where he registered 85 points (42+43) in 148 games with the Gophers from 2015-2019. As team captain during his senior season, Gates finished third on the team with 18 assists and 31 points, both career-highs. In addition to being a three-time member of the All Big-10 Academic team, he helped Minnesota win two-straight Big-Ten regular-season champions in 2016 and 2017.

Gates was originally drafted in third-round (80th overall) by the Anaheim Ducks in the 2015 NHL Draft.

Warren, 23, comes to Rochester after starting the 2020-21 campaign with the Jacksonville Icemen (ECHL), recording 21 points (8+13) in 39 games. The 6-foot-1, 191-pound forward ranks fourth among all Icemen skaters with 13 assists and 21 points while being fifth on the club in goals (8).

As a rookie with Jacksonville last season, Warren represented the Icemen at the 2020 ECHL All-Star Classic. He finished tied for team-lead in goals (14) among all first-year skaters and second in points (28) and fourth in assists (14) in 47 games.

Prior to turning pro, the Carleton, Mich., native completed a four-year collegiate career at the University of Michigan (NCAA), where he registered 45 points (18+27) in 149 games with the Wolverines from 2015-2019. As a Freshman, Warren helped the maize and blue claim the Big-10 Conference Championship while skating in all 38 games and registering 17 points (5+12).

Warren was originally drafted in third-round (81st overall) by the Arizona Coyotes in the 2015 NHL Draft.

Lekkas, 25, returns for his second stint with the Amerks after making 25 saves in his AHL debut against Syracuse on March 26. He began the 2020-21 season with the Fort Wayne Komets (ECHL), posting a 7-2-2 record with a 2.15 goals-against average and a .914 save percentage in 11 games. The 6-foot, 200-pound netminder currently leads all ECHL rookie goaltenders in goals-against average while ranking third in wins and fourth in save percentage.

Prior to turning pro, the Elburn, Illinois, native completed a four-year collegiate career at the University of Vermont (H-East), where he finished with a 45-69-20 career record and made 3,913 saves, the most in Hockey East history and fifth-most in NCAA history. As a junior, he appeared in all 34 games while posting a 2.27 goals-against average and a .930 save percentage en route to earning Hockey East Second All-Star Team honors.

He left Vermont after 134 games with the Catamounts, the second-most in program history by a goaltender, ranking first in save percentage (.918), third in goals-against average (2.61) and fourth in wins (45) and shutouts (7).

Prior to joining Vermont, Lekkas played three seasons with the Sioux Falls Stampede of the United States Hockey League, backstopping the team its second Clark Cup championship in 2015 after leading league with nine postseason wins.