

ROCHESTER AMERICANS HOCKEY CLUB

Saturday | **May 1, 2021** | 7:00 PM ET | Upstate Medical University Arena | Broadcast: ESPN Rochester, AHLTV



SYRACUSE CRUNCH

GAME NOTES

ROCHESTER AMERICANS



TONIGHT'S GAME OVERVIEW

The Rochester Americans (8-12-2-1) look to snap out of a season-long seven-game slide tonight as they take on the rival Syracuse Crunch (15-8-2-0) for a North Division showdown at Upstate Medical University Arena.

The 7:00 p.m. matchup will be the 11th of 12 scheduled meetings between the two teams this season and final trip of the campaign to downtown Syracuse.

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

LAST TIME OUT

The Amerks struggled to generate any offensive firepower in a 7-1 loss to the intrastate rival Utica Comets (12-7-0-1) Friday at the Adirondack Bank Center.

The matchup was the seventh meeting between the two teams this season with the Amerks earning at least one point in four of the last seven games. Rochester has collected at least one point in 23 of the last 34 games against Utica dating back to the start of the 2017-18 campaign, going 17-11-2-4.

Forward **Brett Murray** (1+0) provided the Amerks lone tally of the night, which marked his eighth point over the last 10 games. Rookie **Matej Pekar** (0+1) has found his groove over the last five games, adding his fourth assist in that span.

Since coming to the Amerks on loan from the Vegas Golden Knights just last week, defenseman **Nick DeSimone** (0+1) found himself on the scoresheet once again with his third assist in Rochester and eighth of the season overall.

Rookie goaltender **Stefanos Lekkas** (0-5-1) got the loss while making 33 saves in his sixth appearance for Rochester. His 33 saves marked an AHL career-best.

POWER UP

Now 23 games into the season, Rochester's power-play has gone 24-for-89 with a 27.0% conversion rate that is currently third in the AHL. The Amerks' 24 goals on the man-advantage are most among all North Division teams and only six off the AHL lead behind the San Diego Gulls.

The Amerks have scored at least one power-play goal in 15 of their 23 games this season and have registered multiple power-play tallies in four overall, including a season-high three against Syracuse on April 3 and, most recently, last Friday night against Utica.

LENDING A HAND

Despite having played just 23 games this season, the Amerks have had 35 different players appear in at least one game, highlighted by rookie forward **Jack Quinn**, Buffalo's eighth overall pick in the 2020 NHL Draft. A total of 11 different rookies have suited up for Rochester, two of which are currently with the Sabres in goaltender **Ukko-Pekka Luukkonen** and defenseman **Mattias Samuelsson**, the Sabres' second-round selection in 2018.

Coming into the final month of the regular season, the Amerks have seen 13 different players recalled to the big club while four have made their NHL debuts in Bryson, **Arttu Ruotsalainen**, Samuelsson and Luukkonen. They've combined for 13 points (5+8) in 49 NHL games with the Sabres.

2020-21 AMERKS OVERALL SCORING & GOALTENDING LEADERS

SKATER	GP	G	A	PTS	PIM	+/-
Remi Elie	22	9	8	17	14	-1
Brett Murray	22	8	9	17	23	-7
Michael Mersch	22	8	8	16	16	-3
Oskari Laaksonen	22	2	12	14	4	-4

GOALTENDER	GP	REC	SVS	SV%	GAA
Dustin Tokarski	2	1-1-0	68	.932	2.51
Ukko-Pekka Luukkonen	14	7-5-2	389	.888	3.60
Stefanos Lekkas	6	0-5-1	151	.844	4.90
Billy Christopoulos	4	0-1-0	37	.725	8.05

2020-21 CRUNCH OVERALL SCORING & GOALTENDING LEADERS

SKATER	GP	G	A	PTS	PIM	+/-
Boris Katchouk	24	11	18	29	18	19
Taylor Raddysh	21	9	15	24	4	7
Otto Somppi	25	10	13	23	16	15
Antoine Morand	33	5	9	14	25	-11

GOALTENDER	GP	REC	SVS	SV%	GAA
Christopher Gibson	2	2-0-0	62	.925	2.51
Spencer Martin	11	5-4-1	281	.909	2.77
Samuel Montembeault	13	8-4-1	325	.898	2.86

HEAD-TO-HEAD BREAKDOWN

Syracuse Crunch Rochester Americans

15-8-2-0.....	Record	8-12-2-1
8-5-0-0.....	Home Record	3-7-2-0
7-3-2-0.....	Road Record	5-5-0-1
7-2-1-0.....	Last 10 Games	2-7-1-0
10-3-0-0.....	Record When Scoring First	4-5-1-0
3.84 (2nd).....	Goals-For Per Game	3.30 (10th)
2.88 (9th).....	Goals-Against Per Game	4.43 (28th)
19.3% (14th).....	Power-Play	27.0% (3rd)
79.4 (20th).....	Penalty Kill	72.0% (28th)
2-1 OTL at UTI.....	Last Game	7-1 L @ UTI
May 2 vs. UTI.....	Next Game	May 3 vs. UTI



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NEWCOMERS MAKING IMMEDIATE IMPACT

Since joining the Amerks lineup over the last few weeks, defenseman **Nick DeSimone** and forwards **Brendan Warren**, **Brent Gates, Jr.** and **Brandon Hawkins** have made an immediate impact on the scoresheet as can be said for rookie **Dominic Franco**.

Despite having been thrust into the lineup without a full team practice under his belt, DeSimone made the most of his Amerks debut last Saturday with a team-high two assists against the Crunch. Prior to being acquired by the Golden Knights, the fifth-year pro appeared in 14 games with the San Jose Barracuda (AHL) to begin the season, recording five assists during that time.

Last night's loss in Utica was just the second time in six games that Gates, Jr. failed to record a point since joining the Amerks back on April 14. After recording an assist in his Amerks debut, the second-year pro notched a point in three straight games, including a multi-point effort against Syracuse.

Playing on the opposite wing from one another, Warren and Hawkins each have three points through their first four games with Rochester. Both scored in their Amerks debuts against Syracuse on April 21.

The month of April proved to be a productive one for Franco, who after recording just one point through his first seven games, totaled seven points (4+3) in 11 games while being held scoreless just three times during the month. He comes into the weekend with two goals over his last three games.

LET'S GO STREAKING

Coming off his game-tying goal Saturday, veteran forward **Michael Mersch** has tallied nine points (5+4) over his last eight outings, including a season-high four-point effort last Friday with a pair of goals and two assists. It was Mersch's best single-game performance since a career-high five-point effort (3+2) back on March 27, 2015, the very same year he would lead the Manchester Monarchs to the Calder Cup.

Despite seeing his season-long four-game point streak halted last night, **Remi Elie** remains the Amerks' top goal-scorer with nine and is tied for the team lead with 17 points in 22 games. With nine goals on the season already, including four in his last five, Elie has tied his career-high from 2016-17 in 31 fewer games and needs just one more goal to record his first 10-goal season.

C.J. Smith, who has been shuffled between the Sabres and Amerks for much of the season, has totaled 11 points (3+8) in 11 games this season, including seven points (1+6) in his last eight appearances.

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 32 points (6+26) with just one game all season being missed between the three blueliners.

Among all AHL rookie defensemen, Laaksonen and Samuelsson rank third and tied for 13th in assists while also sitting in fifth and 13th in points, respectively. Samuelsson has four points (2+2) in his last five games, while Laaksonen has eight points (2+6) over his last 11 outings, including back-to-back multi-point efforts over that span for the first time all season.

SCOUTING THE CRUNCH

The Crunch come into the matchup with a 7-2-1-0 record in their last 10 games, and since the start of March, have gone 13-4-1-0 while outscoring their opponents 74-50 over that span.

AMERKS-CRUNCH 2020-21 SEASON SERIES BREAKDOWN

ROCHESTER

SKATER	GP	G	A	PTS	PIM	+/-
Brett Murray	9	5	4	9	2	-1
Remi Elie	10	5	3	8	6	3
Arttu Ruotsalainen	5	3	5	8	2	0

GOALTENDER

	GP	REC	GA	SV%	GAA
Dustin Tokarski	1	1-0-0	2	.949	2.00
Ukko-Pekka Luukkonen	6	3-2-1	21	.864	3.55
Stefanos Lekkas	3	0-2-1	12	.860	4.36
Billy Christopoulos	2	0-0-0	4	.500	11.86

SYRACUSE

SKATER	GP	G	A	PTS	PIM	+/-
Boris Katchouk	10	6	10	16	8	9
Taylor Raddysh	9	5	6	11	2	3
Otto Somppi	10	3	7	10	6	5

GOALTENDER

	GP	REC	GA	SV%	GAA
Samuel Montembeault	6	5-0-1	18	.874	3.00
Spencer Martin	5	1-3-0	18	.856	4.47

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	L	6-2	27-29	1-4	3-5
Apr. 3	W	5-3	27-30	3-4	1-1
Apr. 7	OTL	4-3	28-21	0-3	3-4
Apr. 21	L	7-6	20-33	0-2	3-4
Apr. 24	L	5-3	22-30	0-2	1-2
May 1					
May 15					

SERIES NOTABLES

The Amerks have scored a power-play goal in 11 of their last 18 games against Syracuse dating back to last season, going 18-for-66 (27.3%) 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.

Rochester has recorded points in six of the first 10 games this season and have posted a 16-11-3-1 record in its last 31 contests against Syracuse.



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