

# ROCHESTER AMERICANS HOCKEY CLUB

Saturday | **May 8, 2021** | 7:00 PM ET | Rocket Mortgage FieldHouse | Broadcast: ESPN Rochester, AHLTV



CLEVELAND MONSTERS

## GAME NOTES

ROCHESTER AMERICANS



### TONIGHT'S GAME OVERVIEW

The Rochester Americans (9-12-2-1) look to kickoff their final road trip of the 2020-21 season with a victory tonight as they close out their season-series with the Cleveland Monsters (15-8-8-1) at the Rocket Mortgage FieldHouse.

The 7:00 p.m. matchup will be the sixth and final meeting between the two teams this season as Rochester shows a 1-4-0-0 record thus far, which includes a 1-1-0-0 mark in Cleveland.

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

### LAST TIME OUT

Fueled by multi-point efforts from forwards **C.J. Smith** (1+1) and **Brett Murray** (1+1) as well as a near-perfect 32-save performance from rookie goaltender **Stefanos Lekkas**, the Amerks snapped a season-long seven-game skid with a 3-1 victory over the Syracuse Crunch last Saturday night at Upstate Medical University Arena.

On the strength of his fourth multi-point outing of the season, Murray has recorded 12 points (6+6) over the last 12 games to retake the team's scoring lead. Smith, meanwhile, has totaled 13 points (4+9) in 12 contests this season, including nine points (2+7) in his last nine appearances. Neither player have gone back-to-back games without a point all season.

Rookie forward **Matej Pekar** completed the scoring as he netted his first professional goal for his fifth point (1+4) in the last six games dating back to a two-assist night on April 17. **Patrick Polino**, **Remi Elie**, **Oskari Laaksonen** and **Michael Mersch**, who skated in his 400th AHL contest, all added an assist in the win, Rochester's first since April 9.

Making his second straight start and seventh appearance of the slate, Lekkas (1-5-1) earned his first-career win in the AHL as he stopped 32 of the 33 shots he faced. In six of his first seven games this season, he has made 20 or more saves in the crease.

### POWER UP

Now 24 games into the season, Rochester's power-play has gone 25-for-92 with a 27.2% conversion rate that is currently second in the AHL. The Amerks' 25 goals on the man-advantage are most among all North Division teams and eight off the AHL lead behind the San Diego Gulls.

The Amerks have scored at least one power-play goal in 16 of their 24 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 on April 23 against Utica.

### LENDING A HAND

Despite having played just 24 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 first weekend of May, the Amerks have seen 13 different players recalled to the big club while five have made their NHL debuts in **Jacob Bryson**, **Brett Murray**, **Arttu Ruotsalainen**, **Samuelsson** and **Luukkonen**. They've combined to skate in 69 NHL games with the Sabres.

### 2020-21 AMERKS OVERALL SCORING & GOALTENDING LEADERS

SKATER	GP	G	A	PTS	PIM	+/-
Brett Murray	23	9	10	19	23	-6
Remi Elie	23	9	9	18	14	0
Michael Mersch	23	8	9	17	18	-2
Oskari Laaksonen	23	2	13	15	4	-5

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	7	1-5-1	183	.863	4.32
Billy Christopoulos	4	0-1-0	37	.725	8.05

### 2020-21 MONSTERS OVERALL SCORING & GOALTENDING LEADERS

SKATER	GP	G	A	PTS	PIM	+/-
Tyler Angle	19	11	9	20	2	7
Tyler Sikura	25	11	9	20	8	-15
Carson Meyer	22	8	11	19	13	2
Liam Foudy	11	3	13	16	0	7

GOALTENDER	GP	REC	SVS	SV%	GAA
Justin Kapelmaster	2	2-0-0	56	.933	1.95
Matiss Kivlenieks	7	6-1-0	201	.926	2.22
Brad Thiessen	11	4-5-2	283	.904	2.73
Daniil Tarasov	4	3-1-0	98	.883	3.23

### HEAD-TO-HEAD BREAKDOWN

Cleveland Monsters

Rochester Americans

15-8-1-1.....	<b>Record</b> .....	9-12-2-1
7-4-0-0.....	<b>Home Record</b> .....	3-7-2-0
8-4-1-1.....	<b>Road Record</b> .....	6-5-0-1
6-3-0-1.....	<b>Last 10 Games</b> .....	2-7-1-0
10-7-0-0.....	<b>Record When Scoring First</b> .....	5-5-1-0
3.64 (3rd).....	<b>Goals-For Per Game</b> .....	3.29 (10th)
2.88 (7th).....	<b>Goals-Against Per Game</b> .....	4.29 (28th)
28.0% (1st).....	<b>Power-Play</b> .....	27.2% (2nd)
85.1% (3rd).....	<b>Penalty Kill</b> .....	72.8% (28th)
3-2 W vs. GR.....	<b>Last Game</b> .....	3-1 W @ SYR
May 11 vs. GR.....	<b>Next Game</b> .....	May 12 @ UTI



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**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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### NEWCOMERS MAKING IMMEDIATE IMPACT

Since joining the Amerks lineup in April, 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**.

Three games into his stint with the Amerks after being loaned to Rochester from the Vegas Golden Knights, defenseman DeSimone has made the most of his time with the club. In three games with the Amerks, the fifth-year pro has notched three assists, including a pair in his debut against Syracuse on April 24.

Last Saturday's 3-1 win in Syracuse was just the third time in seven games that Gates, Jr. failed to record a point since joining the Amerks on April 14. After recording an assist in his debut, he notched a point in three straight games from April 21-24, including a multi-point effort against the Crunch on the 21.

Playing on the opposite wing from one another, Warren and Hawkins each have three points through their first five 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 first weekend of May with two goals over his last four games and three points (2+1) over his last five games overall.

### LET'S GO STREAKING

With a primary assist in last Saturday's win at Syracuse, veteran forward **Michael Mersch** has tallied 10 points (5+5) over his last nine outings, including a season-high four-point effort on April 23 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 Friday, **Remi Elie** remains one of the Amerks top goal-scorers with nine and is second on the team in overall scoring behind only **Brett Murray** with 18 points (9+9) in 23 games. With nine goals on the season already, including four in his last six, 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.

### 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 33 points (6+27) 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 for 15th in assists while also sitting in fifth and 15th in points, respectively. Samuelsson has four points (2+2) in his last five games, while Laaksonen has nine points (2+7) over his last 13 outings, including back-to-back multi-point efforts over that span for the first time all season.

### SCOUTING THE MONSTERS

Cleveland comes into the matchup after a pair of 3-2 wins over the Grand Rapids Griffins and Texas Stars, respectively. The Monsters are also 6-3-0-1 in their last 10 games and presently riding a five-game home win streak, during which they have outscored the opposition 24-13.

### AMERKS-MONSTERS 2020-21 SEASON SERIES BREAKDOWN

#### ROCHESTER

SKATER	GP	G	A	PTS	PIM	+/-
Mattias Samuelsson	5	2	2	4	8	-1
Remi Elie	5	2	1	3	4	-3
Michael Mersch	5	2	1	3	6	-3

#### GOALTENDER

	GP	REC	GA	SV%	GAA
Stefanos Lekkas	2	0-2-0	9	.830	4.58
Ukko-Pekka Luukkonen	3	1-2-0	12	.881	4.72
Billy Christopoulos	1	0-0-0	4	.556	9.09

#### CLEVELAND

SKATER	GP	G	A	PTS	PIM	+/-
Thomas Schemitsch	5	2	6	8	0	0
Jake Christiansen	5	2	5	7	2	0
Liam Foudy	3	1	6	7	0	4

#### GOALTENDER

	GP	REC	GA	SV%	GAA
Matiss Kivlenieks	2	2-0-0	5	.889	2.50
Daniil Tarasov	1	1-0-0	3	.850	3.00
Brad Thiessen	2	1-1-0	7	.877	3.54

### 2020-21 SEASON SERIES GAME-BY-GAME BREAKDOWN

Date	Result	Score	SF-SA	PP	PK
Feb 12	W	7-3	34-46	2-3	5-6
Mar. 31	L	5-1	24-29	1-6	2-3
Apr. 10	L	9-2	14-36	0-2	5-9
Apr. 14	L	5-3	20-33	1-6	3-4
Apr. 17	L	6-3	31-22	0-1	1-2

### SERIES NOTABLES

Amerks forward **Andrew Oglevie** scored his first career hat trick back on Nov. 30, 2019 against Cleveland, single-handedly outscoring the Monsters to lead the Amerks to a 3-2 win.

Rochester holds a record of 30-11-4-4 over Cleveland since the start of the 2011-12 campaign and has earned a point in eight of the last 12 games, which includes all seven meetings last season.

Last season in the head-to-head series, all seven games were decided by one goal, including five that went beyond regulation.

Monsters forward and assistant captain Nathan Gerbe spent five seasons in the Buffalo Sabres organization from 2008-13 and was named the AHL's Rookie of the Year in 2008-09 after leading all first-year players with 56 points (30+26) in 57 games for the Portland Pirates. In 108 career games with the Monsters, Gerbe has recorded 85 points 26 goals and 59 assists since joining Cleveland for the 2017-18 season.



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