

ROCHESTER AMERICANS HOCKEY CLUB

Wednesday | **May 12, 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 (10-12-2-1) wrap up the road portion of their 2020-21 regular-season schedule tonight while also seeking their third straight win against the Utica Comets (14-10-0-1) at Adirondack Bank Center.

The 7:00 p.m. matchup will be the first of three get-togethers this week and the eighth meeting overall between the two teams this season Rochester earning at least one point in four of the last seven get-togethers thus far.

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

LAST TIME OUT

Jean-Sebastien Dea scored twice in regulation, including the game-tying tally midway through the third period, and netted the only goal in the shootout to lift the Amerks to a 4-3 win over the Cleveland Monsters in the final meeting of the season between the two teams Saturday at the Rocket Mortgage FieldHouse.

Rochester finished with a 2-4-0-0 record against the Monsters in the season series, including a 2-1-0-0 mark in Cleveland. Rochester also holds a record of 31-11-4-4 over Cleveland since the start of the 2011-12 campaign and has earned a point in nine of the last 12 games, which includes all seven meetings last season.

In his first game with Rochester since April 9, Dea (2+0) notched his fourth multi-point effort of the year before adding the shootout-clinching goal. **Patrick Polino** scored his second goal of the season while **Oskari Laaksonen** (0+2) collected his third multi-point effort with a pair of assists. **Brandon Hawkins**, **Brendan Warren** and **Matej Pekar** all added assists to lead the Amerks to their second straight win to open the month of May.

In his third start of the season, rookie goaltender **Billy Christopoulos** (1-1-0) earned his first American Hockey League win as he stopped 38 of 41 shots he faced and made three more in the shootout.

POWER UP

Now 25 games into the season, Rochester's power-play has gone 26-for-94 with a 27.7% conversion rate that is currently tops in the AHL. The Amerks' 26 goals on the man-advantage are most among all North Division teams and seven off the AHL lead behind the San Diego Gulls.

The Amerks have scored at least one power-play goal in 17 of their first 25 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 25 games this season, the Amerks 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 spent time with the Sabres in goaltender **Ukko-Pekka Luukkonen** and defenseman **Mattias Samuelsson**, the Sabres' second-round selection in 2018.

Coming into the final week of the season, the Amerks saw 13 different players recalled to the big club while five made their NHL debuts in **Jacob Bryson**, **Brett Murray**, **Arttu Ruotsalainen**, Samuelsson and Luukkonen. They combined to skate in 73 NHL games with the Sabres this season.

2020-21 AMERKS OVERALL SCORING & GOALTENDING LEADERS

SKATER	GP	G	A	PTS	PIM	+/-
Brett Murray	23	9	10	19	23	-6
Remi Elie	24	9	9	18	14	0
Michael Mersch	24	8	9	17	22	-1
Oskari Laaksonen	24	2	15	17	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	7	1-5-1	183	.863	4.32
Billy Christopoulos	5	1-1-0	75	.815	6.03

2020-21 COMETS OVERALL SCORING & GOALTENDING LEADERS

SKATER	GP	G	A	PTS	PIM	+/-
Lukas Jasek	25	4	19	23	8	-6
Sam Anas	20	3	19	22	2	-8
Jonah Gadjovich	19	15	3	18	17	5
Nolan Stevens	24	6	11	17	6	0

GOALTENDER	GP	REC	SVS	SV%	GAA
Jon Gillies	5	3-1-1	110	.902	2.37
Evan Fitzpatrick	2	1-0-1	20	.833	2.81
Michael DiPietro	3	2-1-0	76	.894	3.03
Joel Hofer	10	4-6-0	272	.898	3.33
Jake Kielly	7	4-2-0	165	.878	3.62

HEAD-TO-HEAD BREAKDOWN

Utica Comets	Rochester Americans
14-10-0-1	Record 10-12-2-1
10-2-0-0	Home Record 3-7-2-0
4-8-0-1	Road Record 7-5-0-1
6-4-0-0	Last 10 Games 3-7-0-0
12-3-0-1	Record When Scoring First 6-5-1-0
3.36 (7th)	Goals-For Per Game 3.32 (9th)
3.40 (22nd)	Goals-Against Per Game 4.24 (28th)
20.9% (T-6th)	Power-Play 27.7% (1st)
79.6% (21st)	Penalty Kill 74.1% (27th)
3-0 W vs. SYR	Last Game 4-3 SOW @ CLE
May 14 @ ROC	Next Game May 14 vs. UTI



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BACK FROM BUFFALO

Earlier this week, the Sabres reassigned forwards **Steven Fogarty**, **Brett Murray** and **C.J. Smith**, defenseman **Mattias Samuelsson** and goaltender **Michael Houser** to Rochester for the team's final four games of the season.

Houser, who signed his first NHL contract with the Sabres on March 19, earned the start in Buffalo's final four games of the season, finishing with a 2-2-0 record, a 3.46 goals-against average, .901 save percentage and 127 saves. He picked up his first NHL win in his NHL debut on May 3 as he made 34 saves and then added 45 more stops the following night in Buffalo's 4-3 shootout victory over the New York Islanders.

Murray returns to the Flower City after making his NHL debut on May 6 against the Pittsburgh Penguins. Murray skated in two games with the big club, recording one shot on net while averaging 10:30 of ice time.

In his first 12 games with Buffalo, Samuelsson notched his first two points (0+2) in the NHL after making his debut on April 18 against the Penguins. Samuelsson registered 10 shots in nearly 18 minutes of ice time per game.

Despite being shuffled between Buffalo and Rochester, Smith has totaled 13 points (4+9) in 12 contests this season with the Amerks, including nine points (2+7) in his last nine appearances.

In his first season with the organization, Fogarty, the Amerks team captain, collected three points (1+2) in nine games with Buffalo while also producing 10 points (7+3) in 12 contests with Rochester.

MERSCH, ELIE HEATING UP DOWN FINAL STRETCH

With an assist in Rochester's 3-1 win at Syracuse on May 1, 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 on April 30, **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 35 points (6+29) this season.

Among all AHL rookie defensemen, Laaksonen and Samuelsson are third and tied for 15th in assists while also sitting in fourth and 15th in points, respectively. Samuelsson has four points (2+2) in his last five games, while Laaksonen has 11 points (2+9) over his last 14 outings, including three multi-point efforts over that span.

SCOUTING THE COMETS

The Comets come into the matchup winners of four of their last seven games dating back to a 2-1 shootout victory over the Syracuse Crunch on April 28. Utica has posted a 10-2-0-0 record on home ice this season while showing an 8-2-0-0 in the last 10 contests.

AMERKS-COMETS 2020-21 SEASON SERIES BREAKDOWN

ROCHESTER

SKATER	GP	G	A	PTS	PIM	+/-
Michael Mersch	7	4	5	9	8	3
Brett Murray	8	3	4	7	21	0
Remi Elie	7	2	4	6	4	-1

GOALTENDER

	GP	REC	GA	SV%	GAA
Dustin Tokarski	1	0-1-0	3	.912	3.02
Ukko-Pekka Luukkonen	5	3-1-1	16	.913	3.11
Billy Christopoulos	1	0-1-0	6	.824	6.25
Stefanos Lekkas	1	0-1-0	7	.825	7.02

UTICA

SKATER	GP	G	A	PTS	PIM	+/-
Jonah Gadjovich	8	8	3	11	12	7
Sam Anas	5	2	6	8	0	-1
Lukas Jasek	8	2	5	7	8	-4

GOALTENDER

	GP	REC	GA	SV%	GAA
Michael DiPietro	1	1-0-0	1	.952	1.00
Jon Gillies	4	2-1-1	10	.903	2.46
Jake Kielly	3	2-1-0	10	.885	3.27

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
Apr. 9	W	4-2	25-36	1-5	4-5
Apr. 23	L	7-5	29-35	3-5	3-6
Apr. 30	L	7-1	21-40	0-4	5-7
May 12					
May 14					
May 16					

SERIES NOTABLES

Rochester has collected at least one point in 23 of the last 33 games against Utica dating back to the start of the 2017-18 campaign, going 17-10-2-4.

The Amerks and Comets come into the matchup ranked first and second in the North Division with a 27.2% and 20.9% success rate on the power-play, respectively. They're also inside the top six on the man-advantage in the entire American Hockey League.

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.



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