

# ROCHESTER AMERICANS HOCKEY CLUB

Friday | **May 14, 2021** | 7:05 PM ET | The Blue Cross Arena | Broadcast: ESPN Rochester, AHLTV, CW Rochester



UTICA COMETS

## GAME NOTES

ROCHESTER AMERICANS



### TONIGHT'S GAME OVERVIEW

The Rochester Americans (10-13-2-1) kickoff their final homestand of the 2020-21 campaign with a rematch against the intrastate rival Utica Comets (15-10-0-1) tonight at The Blue Cross Arena.

The 7:05 p.m. matchup will be the second of three get-togethers this week and the ninth meeting overall between the two teams this season Rochester earning at least one point in four of the last eight get-togethers thus far.

The game will be carried live on The Sports Leader 95.7 FM/950 AM ESPN Rochester and AHLTV. The North Division matchup will also be tape-delayed on CW Rochester beginning at 10 p.m..

### LAST TIME OUT

Despite a 3-1 loss to the Comets on Wednesday, 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 over that span.

Rookie forward **Brendan Warren** (1+0) notched the Amerks lone tally of the night, while fellow rookie forward **Dominic Franco** (0+1) added the primary assist and defenseman **Nick DeSimone** (0+1) earned the secondary helper.

Captain **Steven Fogarty** and first-year defenseman **Mattias Samuelsson** both returned to the Amerks lineup after being reassigned from the parent Buffalo Sabres earlier in the week. Forwards **C.J. Smith** and **Brett Murray** also found their way back in the lineup after an 11-day stay with the Sabres.

Goaltender **Michael Houser** (0-1-0), fresh off a four-game stint with the Sabres, got the loss as he made 34 saves on 37 shots he faced in his Amerks debut. Houser became the fifth different netminder to appear in a game this season for Rochester (**Ukko-Pekka Luukkonen**, **Dustin Tokarski**, **Stefanos Lekkas**, and **Billy Christopoulos**). The five different goaltenders are the most the Amerks have used in a season since the club used seven during the 2014-15 campaign.

### POWER UP

Now 26 games into the season, Rochester's power-play has gone 26-for-96 with a 27.1% 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 remain 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 26 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 26 games this season, the Amerks have had 36 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 weekend 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	24	9	10	19	23	-7
Remi Elie	25	9	9	18	14	-2
Michael Mersch	25	8	9	17	24	-1
Oskari Laaksonen	25	2	15	17	4	-6

GOALTENDER	GP	REC	SVS	SV%	GAA
Michael Houser	1	0-1-0	34	.944	2.04
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	26	4	19	23	8	-6
Sam Anas	21	3	19	22	2	-8
Jonah Gadjovich	19	15	3	18	17	5
Nolan Stevens	25	6	12	18	6	0

GOALTENDER	GP	REC	SVS	SV%	GAA
Jon Gillies	5	3-1-1	110	.902	2.37
Michael DiPietro	4	3-1-0	109	.916	2.52
Evan Fitzpatrick	2	1-0-1	20	.833	2.81
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
15-10-0-1.....	<b>Record</b> .....10-13-2-1
11-2-0-0.....	<b>Home Record</b> ..... 3-7-2-0
4-8-0-1.....	<b>Road Record</b> .....7-6-0-1
6-4-0-0.....	<b>Last 10 Games</b> ..... 2-8-0-0
13-3-0-1.....	<b>Record When Scoring First</b> .....6-5-1-0
3.35 (6th).....	<b>Goals-For Per Game</b> ..... 3.23 (12th)
3.31 (T-17th).....	<b>Goals-Against Per Game</b> .....4.19 (28th)
20.2% (7th).....	<b>Power-Play</b> ..... 27.1% (T-1st)
80.0% (20th).....	<b>Penalty Kill</b> .....75.0% (27th)
3-1 W vs. ROC.....	<b>Last Game</b> ..... 3-1 L @ UTI
May 16 @ ROC.....	<b>Next Game</b> ..... May 15 vs. SYR



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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 13 contests this season with the Amerks, including nine points (2+7) in his last 10 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 11 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 25 games. With nine goals on the season already, including four in his last eight, 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 six games, while Laaksonen has 11 points (2+9) over his last 15 outings, including three multi-point efforts over that span.

### SCOUTING THE COMETS

The Comets come into the matchup winners in five of their last eight games dating back to a 2-1 overtime victory over the Syracuse Crunch on April 28. Utica is also one of the best teams on home ice this season, boasting a 11-2-0-0 record, including an 8-2-0-0 mark in its last 10 contests.

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

#### ROCHESTER

SKATER	GP	G	A	PTS	PIM	+/-
Michael Mersch	8	4	5	9	10	3
Brett Murray	9	3	4	7	21	-1
Remi Elie	8	2	4	6	4	-3

#### GOALTENDER

	GP	REC	GA	SV%	GAA
Michael Houser	1	0-1-0	2	.944	2.04
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	6	2	6	8	0	-1
Lukas Jasek	9	2	5	7	8	-4

#### GOALTENDER

	GP	REC	GA	SV%	GAA
Michael DiPietro	2	2-0-0	2	.964	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	L	3-1	34-37	0-2	4-4
May 14					
May 16					

### SERIES NOTABLES

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.

The Amerks and Comets come into the matchup ranked first and second in the North Division with a 27.1% and 20.2% 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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