

ROCHESTER AMERICANS HOCKEY CLUB

SIX-TIME CALDER CUP CHAMPIONS 1965 | 1966 | 1968 | 1983 | 1987 | 1996

Sunday | **October 17, 2021** | 3:00 PM ET | Adirondack Bank Center | Game 28 | AHL TV, ESPN Rochester



GAME NOTES



TODAY'S GAME OVERVIEW

The Rochester Americans open their 66th season in the American Hockey League this afternoon in a North Division showdown against the Utica Comets at the Adirondack Bank Center. Game time is slated for 3:00 p.m.

The Amerks and the new-look Comets, who enter their first season as the primary affiliate of the New Jersey Devils, will meet a total of 12 times during the 2021-22 regular season, with today's matchup representing the first of six in Utica.

Following today's season-opener, the teams are idle until the Comets, led by AHL veteran coach Kevin Dineen, make their first trip to the Flower City on Nov. 17 as part of a four-game homestand for the Amerks.

HEAD-TO-HEAD RESULTS AGAINST UTICA

After earning points in four of the first six games of the season series with the Comets in 2020-21, Rochester finished the campaign with a 4-6-0-1 record in 11 games.

The Amerks scored at least one power-play goal in 18 of their 29 games last season and had multiple power-play tallies in four, including a season-high three against Syracuse on April 3 and on April 23 against Utica.

Rochester and Utica ranked first and third in the North Division with a 25.0% and 19.4% success rate on the power-play, respectively. They were also inside the top 10 on the man-advantage across the entire American Hockey League.

Rochester has collected at least one point in 24 of the last 36 games against Utica dating back to the start of the 2017-18 campaign, going 18-14-2-4 over that span. In the last 36 games, the Comets have outscored the Amerks 113-105 while Rochester has outshot Utica 1,235 to 1,206.

OPENING THE SEASON

Today's season-opener in Utica marks the first time in a decade Rochester is scheduled to open the season on the road since a 5-2 loss at Hamilton to begin the 2011-12 campaign.

The Amerks enter the new season with a 33-25-7 all-time record in season-opening games and have outscored the opposition 242-222 dating back to when the puck first dropped on Rochester's inaugural season in 1956.

MERSCH TO LEAD AMERKS LEADERSHIP GROUP

Veteran forward **Michael Mersch** was named team captain earlier this week, overseeing an Amerks leadership group that also includes four alternate captains in forward **Sean Malone** and defensemen **Brandon Davidson**, **Ethan Prow** and **Jimmy Schuld**.

Mersch signed a two-year AHL deal with Rochester after finishing second on the team in points (19) and third in goals (8) in 28 games during the 2020-21 season. He closed out the month of April with a team-high nine points (5+4) in 11 games, which included a season-high two goals and two assists on April 23 against Utica.

The eight-year pro has appeared in 405 career AHL games between the Amerks, Texas Stars, Ontario Reign and Manchester Monarchs, totaling 264 points (130+134). Additionally, Mersch, a four-time 20-goal scorer in the AHL who won a Calder Cup with Manchester in 2015, has skated in 17 career NHL contests with the Los Angeles Kings.

2020-21 AMERKS OVERALL SCORING & GOALTENDING LEADERS

SKATER	GP	G	A	PTS	PIM	+/-
Brett Murray	27	9	11	20	23	-7
Remi Elie	28	10	9	19	18	-1
Michael Mersch	28	8	11	19	24	1
Oskari Laaksonen	28	2	15	17	6	-6

GOALTENDER

	GP	REC	SVS	SV%	GAA
Dustin Tokarski	2	1-1-0	68	.932	2.51
Michael Houser	4	1-3-0	110	.924	2.33
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 UTICA OVERALL SCORING & GOALTENDING LEADERS

SKATER	GP	G	A	PTS	PIM	+/-
Sam Anas	23	4	19	23	2	-7
Lukas Jasek	28	4	19	23	8	-5
Jonah Gadjovich	19	15	3	18	17	5
Nolan Stevens	27	6	12	18	8	-1

GOALTENDER

	GP	REC	SVS	SV%	GAA
Evan Fitzpatrick	3	2-0-0	53	.930	1.65
Jon Gillies	5	3-1-1	110	.902	2.37
Michael DiPietro	4	3-1-0	109	.916	2.52
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
0-0-0-0	Record 0-0-0-0
0-0-0-0	Home Record 0-0-0-0
0-0-0-0	Road Record 0-0-0-0
0-0-0-0	Last 10 Games 0-0-0-0
0-0-0-0	Record When Scoring First 0-0-0-0
0.00	Goals-For Per Game 0.00
0.00	Goals-Against Per Game 0.00
00.0%	Power-Play 00.0%
00.0%	Penalty Kill 00.0%
N/A	Last Game N/A
Oct. 22 vs. PRO	Next Game Oct. 22 vs. SYR



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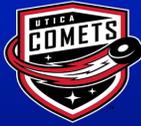
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APPERT YEAR TWO

Seth Appert enters his second season as head coach of the Amerks in 2021-22 after being named to the position on August 18, 2020.

In his first campaign behind the Amerks bench, he guided the team to an 11-15-2-1 record over a condensed 29-game season in 2020-21. Despite the shortened season, however, player development was still very much a priority for Appert and his staff as evidenced by more than a dozen players earning recalls to the parent Buffalo Sabres, including Appert himself at one point. Excluding **Andrew Oglevie** and **Casey Fitzgerald**, who were recalled to the team's taxi squad but never saw any game action, nine made their Sabres debuts and five made their National Hockey League debuts.

Rochester also had five different goaltenders dress during the 2020-21 season, the most since the club used seven in 2014-15. All three goaltenders to play with both Rochester and Buffalo earned a win with each club, with both **Ukko-Pekka Luukkonen** and **Michael Houser** picking up their first NHL victories, respectively.

PECA RETURNS TO SABRES ORGANIZATION

Michael Peca enters his first season as an assistant coach with the Amerks after being named to the position on August 3, 2021.

As a player, Peca's professional playing career spanned 14 seasons and 864 games in the National Hockey League with the Vancouver Canucks, Buffalo Sabres, New York Islanders, Edmonton Oilers, Toronto Maple Leafs and Columbus Blue Jackets. A four-time 20-goal scorer, he recorded 465 points (176+289) and added 34 points (15+19) in 97 playoff contests while twice guiding his team to the Stanley Cup Final, including in 1999 as captain of the Sabres.

The Toronto, Ontario, native is also a two-time winner of the Frank J. Selke Trophy, given annually "to the forward who best excels in the defensive aspects of the game." He was first awarded the honor following the 1996-97 season, becoming the first Sabres forward since Craig Ramsay in 1984-85 to win the award. He was the recipient again just five years later in 2001-02 as a member of the Islanders.

YOUTH MOVEMENT

Earlier this week, the Buffalo Sabres assigned rookie forward **JJ Peterka** to begin the season in Rochester. The 19-year-old winger tallied three goals and one assist during five preseason games with the Sabres before being loaned to the Amerks.

The addition of Peterka, who posted 20 points (9+11) in 30 games with Munich of the DEL, gives the Amerks Buffalo's top two picks in the 2020 NHL Draft to begin the season with the other being **Jack Quinn**.

Quinn, Buffalo's eighth overall pick in 2020, had nine points (2+7) in 15 games with Rochester last season. The highly touted 20-year-old is coming off an explosive 52-goal season for the Ottawa 67's in 2019-20, during which he became just the eighth player since 2000-01 to reach the 50-goal mark in his NHL Draft Year. He finished the season second in the Ontario Hockey League in goals and tied for fifth with 15 power-play tallies while also adding 37 assists. Quinn is the third eighth overall pick of the Sabres in the last five years to spend time in Rochester, joining **Alexander Nylander** (2016) and **Casey Mittelstadt** (2017), and the second to make his pro debut with the Amerks following Nylander.

AMERKS-COMETES 2020-21 SEASON SERIES BREAKDOWN

ROCHESTER

SKATER	GP	G	A	PTS	PIM	+/-
Michael Mersch	10	4	6	10	10	5
Brett Murray	11	3	5	8	21	0
Remi Elie	10	2	4	6	8	-3

GOALTENDER

	GP	REC	GA	SV%	GAA
Michael Houser	3	1-2-0	4	.957	1.36
Dustin Tokarski	1	0-1-0	3	.912	3.02
Ukko-Pekka Luukkonen	5	3-1-1	16	.913	3.11

UTICA

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

GOALTENDER

	GP	REC	GA	SV%	GAA
Evan Fitzpatrick	1	1-0-0	0	1.000	0.00
Michael DiPietro	2	2-0-0	2	.964	1.00
Jon Gillies	4	2-1-1	10	.903	2.46

2020-21 HEAD-TO-HEAD 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	L	1-0	33-27	0-6	3-3
May 16	W	2-1	23-29	0-4	2-2

SERIES NOTABLES

Today's contest features four players selected in the 2020 NHL Draft which includes Utica's **Alexander Holtz** (1st round, 7th overall) and **Niko Daws** (3rd round, 84th overall) and Rochester's **Jack Quinn** (1st round, 8th overall) and **JJ Peterka** (2nd round, 34th overall).

Comets forward Brian Flynn spent two seasons with the Amerks, recording 33 points (16+17) in 50 games from 2011 to 2013.

Utica forward Patrick McGrath spent last season in Rochester while Tye Thompson is the brother of former Amerk **Tag Thompson**.



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