

ROCHESTER AMERICANS HOCKEY CLUB

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

Wednesday | **January 5, 2022** | 7:05 PM ET | The Blue Cross Arena | Game 268 | AHL TV, The Fan Rochester



GAME NOTES



TONIGHT'S GAME OVERVIEW

The Rochester Americans (17-9-0-0) begin a busy stretch of three games in four nights tonight when they host the Syracuse Crunch (8-10-2-1) at The Blue Cross Arena. The 7:05 p.m. matchup will be the third of 12 meetings between the intrastate rivals this season and will be carried live on The Sports Leader 95.7 FM/950 AM The Fan Rochester as well as AHLTV.

The Amerks boast a 7-3-0-0 record in their last 10 games following a 4-3 win in Hartford Sunday afternoon while Syracuse enters the matchup showing a 3-5-1-1 mark in that same span but have not played since Dec. 15.

HEAD-TO-HEAD SERIES SNAPSHOT

The Amerks have won nine of their last 12 games overall in addition to five straight on home ice. The five-game home-streak is the Rochester's longest since the 2015-16 season. Syracuse, meanwhile, has just three wins in its previous 12 games, going 3-7-1-1 dating back to Nov. 10.

The Amerks have scored a power-play goal in 14 of their last 23 games against Syracuse dating back to last season, going 24-for-83 (28.9%) with the man-advantage over that span.

Rochester has collected at least one point in 23 of the last 35 games against Syracuse dating back to the start of the 2018-19 campaign, going 19-12-3-1.

BALANCING ACT

With five players performing at or near a point-per-game pace, the Amerks have the AHL's top-producing offense and are currently averaging just under four goals per game. With a league-best 101 goals this season, the Amerks are currently the only team to surpass the 100-goal mark so far in 2021-22.

The Amerks own three of the league's top 11 point-getters in veteran forward **Michael Mersch** and rookie forwards **JJ Peterka** and **Jack Quinn**. Mersch enters the week leading the AHL in goals and ranking second in scoring while Peterka has the second-most points among all league rookies.

After making his NHL debut with the Buffalo Sabres last week and appearing in the team's final two games of the 2021 calendar year, Peterka returned to the Amerks lineup this past weekend, notching five points on two goals and three assists. For his efforts, the rookie forward was named the **AHL's Player of the Week** for the period ending Jan. 2, 2022.

Peterka leads all AHL rookies with a team-high 19 assists and ranks second with 25 points in 25 games. He becomes the second Amerks this season to earn the honors, joining goaltender **Ukko-Pekka Luukkonen**.

POWER UP

Now 26 games into the season, Rochester's power-play has gone 25-for-91 with a 27.5% conversion rate that is currently tops in the AHL. The Amerks' 25 goals on the man-advantage are most among all North Division teams and only one off the AHL lead behind only the Springfield Thunderbirds.

The Amerks have scored at least one power-play goal in 16 of their 26 games this season and have registered multiple power-play tallies in six overall, including a season-high four goals in the 7-3 win over Hershey back on Nov. 26.

Rochester scored a power-play in seven straight games between Nov. 17 and Dec. 8, the longest such streak in the AHL this season.

2021-22 AMERKS OVERALL SCORING & GOALTENDING LEADERS

SKATER	GP	G	A	PTS	PIM	+/-
Michael Mersch	26	16	14	30	12	2
JJ Peterka	25	6	19	25	8	2
Jack Quinn	17	11	13	24	10	-2
Sean Malone	23	9	13	22	16	1
Peyton Krebs*	18	4	15	19	16	-9

GOALTENDER	GP	REC	SVS	SV%	GAA
Aaron Dell	4	4-0-0	113	.904	2.94
Michael Houser	9	5-2-0	218	.897	3.20
Ukko-Pekka Luukkonen*	12	6-6-0	308	.888	3.42
Mat Robson	3	2-1-0	76	.826	5.87

* = Currently on recall with Buffalo

2021-22 SYRACUSE OVERALL SCORING & GOALTENDING LEADERS

SKATER	GP	G	A	PTS	PIM	+/-
Gabriel Dumont	21	10	8	18	34	-3
Charles Hudon	20	6	10	16	20	-8
Cole Koepke	17	4	9	13	8	-5
Sean Day	19	2	11	13	19	-3
Jimmy Huntington	21	6	5	11	11	-3

GOALTENDER	GP	REC	SVS	SV%	GAA
Amir Miftakhov	12	3-4-2	255	.907	2.65
Hugo Alnefelt	6	2-3-1	127	.864	3.56
Max Lagace	7	3-3-0	136	.861	3.86

* = Currently on recall with Tampa Bay

2021-22 HEAD-TO-HEAD BREAKDOWN

Syracuse Crunch	Rochester Americans
8-10-2-1	Record 17-9-0-0
3-6-0-1	Home Record 8-3-0-0
5-4-2-0	Road Record 9-6-0-0
3-5-1-1	Last 10 Games 7-3-0-0
4-5-1-0	Record When Scoring First 11-4-0-0
2.90 (22nd)	Goals-For Per Game 3.88 (1st)
3.43 (27th)	Goals-Against Per Game 3.69 (30th)
20.9% (6th)	Power-Play 27.5% (1st)
77.9% (27th)	Penalty Kill 81.3% (18th)
4-2 W vs. TOR	Last Game 4-3 W @ HFD
Jan. 7 vs. HER	Next Game Jan. 7 vs. HFD



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MERSCH LEADING BY EXAMPLE

With an assist Saturday afternoon in Springfield, Mersch became the first Amerk this season and just the second player in the AHL to reach the 30-point mark.

Mersch has totaled 17 points (9+8) and four multi-point efforts over his last 12 games dating back to Nov. 24. He's been held scoreless just twice over that span to move into second in the AHL in scoring with 30 points (16+14) on the season, trailing only Chicago's Andrew Poturalski for most in the league. The Amerks captain began that stretch with a five-game goal-scoring streak, the longest of his career and the longest in the AHL this season, while his five-game point marked his longest since posting a career-best seven-game point streak back in 2015.

With a league-leading 16 goals this season, Mersch has doubled his output from the previous season in three fewer games and is on pace to reach the 20-goal mark for the fifth time in eight years and the first time since the 2018-19 season as a member of the Texas Stars.

He's also on pace to reach the 20-goal mark in the fewest amount of games since 2015-16 when he scored 20 in 35 games with the Ontario Reign. He finished that season with 24 goals in only 52 appearances while also appearing in 17 games with the Los Angeles Kings.

Mersch is well on his way to become the first Amerk to score 20 goals in the fastest amount of games since **Luke Adam** reached the mark in 31 games during the 2013-14 season.

Over Mersch's last six contests, he has produced 11 points on four goals and seven assists as well as three straight multi-point outings dating back to Dec. 15.

FANTASTIC FOUR

The Amerks currently own four of the AHL's top scoring rookies in **JJ Peterka**, **Jack Quinn**, **Peyton Krebs** and **Brandon Biro**, all of whom have combined for 83 points (25+58) through the first 26 games this season.

Peterka has moved to within three points of the AHL rookie scoring lead following his five-point weekend which garnered him Player of the Week honors. He leads all first-year players with a team-high 19 assists while his 25 points are second-most. He and Quinn, taken just 26 picks apart from one another by the Buffalo Sabres in the 2020 NHL Draft, currently make up one of only four rookie duos across the entire AHL to rank inside the top four on their respective team in scoring.

Despite missing the last nine games, Quinn, Buffalo's eighth overall pick in 2020, is tied for second among all AHL rookies in goals (11) and sits one point behind Peterka for third. Named the AHL Rookie of the Month for October, he is one of only seven AHL rookies this season to reach the 20-point mark and he, Peterka, Mersch and **Sean Malone** remain the only Amerks to accomplish the feat.

Currently on recall with Buffalo, Krebs has amassed 19 points on four goals and 15 assists in 18 games, tying for eighth among all AHL rookie skaters.

Biro, meanwhile, has 10 points (4+6) over his last 10 games dating back to Nov. 27. He also has three multi-point efforts in five games over that span.

AMERKS-CRUNCH 2021-22 SEASON SERIES BREAKDOWN

ROCHESTER

SKATER	GP	G	A	PTS	PIM	+/-
Jack Quinn	2	2	3	5	0	2
Sean Malone	2	2	1	3	8	2
Mark Jankowski	2	1	2	3	2	2
JJ Peterka	2	1	2	3	0	2

GOALTENDER

	GP	REC	GA	SV%	GAA
Michael Houser	1	1-0-0	2	.920	2.02
Ukko-Pekka Luukkonen	1	1-0-0	3	.875	3.00

SYRACUSE

SKATER	GP	G	A	PTS	PIM	+/-
Simon Ryfors	2	2	0	2	0	-3
Charles Hudon	2	0	2	2	10	-4
Gabriel Dumont	2	1	0	1	7	-3
Jaydon Dureau	1	1	0	1	0	-1

GOALTENDER

	GP	REC	GA	SV%	GAA
Amir Miftakhov	1	0-1-0	3	.897	3.07
Hugo Alnefelt	1	0-1-0	4	.810	4.04

2021-22 HEAD-TO-HEAD BREAKDOWN

Date	Result	Score	SF-SA	PP	PK
Oct. 22	W	5-3	22-24	0-3	5-6
Nov. 27	W	4-2	30-25	3-5	2-5

SERIES NOTABLES

Through 26 games so far this season, the Amerks have used 13 different defensemen. Of the 13, 10 have notched at least one point while eight have recorded one goal. Last week alone, four have made their Rochester debuts (Cairns, Drake, Ghafari and Ege) and two produced their first AHL points (Drake and Ghafari).

Rochester enters tonight having scored 31 goals in the opening period of play this season, which are most in the AHL. On the other hand, the Crunch have only scored 17 times in the first 20 minutes of regulation, which are fewest in the Eastern Conference.

Goaltender **Aaron Dell** has backstopped the Amerks to four straight wins through his first four starts with Rochester. Until now, the netminder has never began a season with a win in each of his first four starts at either the NHL or AHL level. He's is on pace to match his career-best seven-game win streak he posted from March 20 to April 7, 2015 with Worcester. In each of his four appearances this season, he has made 30 or more saves, three of which he finished with 30.

Crunch defenseman Ryan Jones spent the 2020-21 campaign with the Amerks, recording seven points (1+6) while being the lone skater to appear in all 29 games last season. Additionally, forward Remi Elie was also with Rochester from 2018-2021, tallying 55 points (31+24) in 99 career games.



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