

ROCHESTER AMERICANS HOCKEY CLUB

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

Friday | **January 7, 2022** | 7:05 PM ET | The Blue Cross Arena | Game 468 | AHL TV, The Fan Rochester



GAME NOTES



TONIGHT'S GAME OVERVIEW

The Rochester Americans (17-10-0-0) look to get back on the winning track tonight as they go up against the Hartford Wolf Pack (14-8-2-2) at The Blue Cross Arena. The 7:05 p.m. matchup will be the second of four meetings between the two teams 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 after dropping a 2-1 decision to Syracuse on Wednesday night while Hartford enters the matchup showing a 3-5-0-2 mark in that same span.

HEAD-TO-HEAD SERIES SNAPSHOT

Tonight is just the 29th all-time meeting between Rochester and Hartford as well as the second in five days between the two teams after the Amerks prevailed with a 4-3 win in the previous get-together this past Sunday at XL Center. **Arttu Ruotsalainen** led the way with a three-point night as Rochester picked up its first win of the New Year and third straight over the Wolf Pack dating back to the 2019-20 season. In six of the teams' last seven meetings, the visiting team has come away with the victory.

Dating back to the 2017-18 campaign, Rochester has earned wins in four of the last six contests against Hartford while also recording at least one point in eight of the previous nine exchanges, going 6-2-0-2 over that span.

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 102 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 12 point-getters in veteran forward **Michael Mersch** and rookie forwards **JJ Peterka** and **Jack Quinn**. Mersch enters the weekend 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 26 games. He becomes the second Amerk this season to earn the weekly honors, joining goaltender **Ukko-Pekka Luukkonen**.

POWER UP

Now 27 games into the season, Rochester's power-play has gone 25-for-96 with a 26.0% 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 first 27 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	27	16	13	29	12	2
JJ Peterka	26	6	19	25	8	2
Jack Quinn	18	11	13	24	15	-3
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	10	5-3-0	232	.896	3.08
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 HARTFORD OVERALL SCORING & GOALTENDING LEADERS

SKATER	GP	G	A	PTS	PIM	+/-
Johnny Brodzinski*	23	10	14	24	18	0
Anthony Greco	25	7	15	22	2	-5
Zac Jones*	21	4	13	17	8	-3
Tim Gettinger*	21	8	8	16	16	2
Lauri Pajuniemi	26	7	8	15	12	4

GOALTENDER	GP	REC	SVS	SV%	GAA
Adam Huska	9	2-5-2	236	.915	2.46
Keith Kinkaid*	13	10-1-2	356	.906	2.78
Francois Brassard	2	1-1-0	55	.902	3.00

* = Currently on recall with NYR

2021-22 HEAD-TO-HEAD BREAKDOWN

Hartford Wolf Pack	Rochester Americans
14-8-2-2	Record 17-10-0-0
9-4-0-1	Home Record 8-4-0-0
5-4-2-1	Road Record 9-6-0-0
3-5-0-2	Last 10 Games 7-3-0-0
5-4-0-0	Record When Scoring First 11-4-0-0
3.23 (8th)	Goals-For Per Game 3.78 (1st)
2.96 (13th)	Goals-Against Per Game 3.63 (30th)
19.6% (T-12)	Power-Play 26.0% (1st)
80.7% (21st)	Penalty Kill 80.9% (20th)
4-3 L vs. ROC	Last Game 2-1 L vs. SYR
Jan. 8 @ UTI	Next Game Jan. 8 @ SYR



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MERSCH LEADING BY EXAMPLE

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

Mersch has totaled 16 points (9+7) and four multi-point efforts over his last 13 games dating back to Nov. 24. He's been held scoreless just four times over that span to move into second in the AHL in scoring with 29 points (16+13) 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 seven contests, he has produced 10 points on four goals and six assists as well as three straight multi-point outings dating back to Dec. 15. He's also the lone Amerk to appear in all 27 games this season.

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 27 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.

Having returned to the lineup on Wednesday after 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 11 games dating back to Nov. 27. He also has three multi-point efforts in five games over that span.

AMERKS-WOLF PACK 2021-22 SEASON SERIES BREAKDOWN

ROCHESTER

SKATER	GP	G	A	PTS	PIM	+/-
Arttu Ruotsalainen	1	1	2	3	0	2
JJ Peterka	1	1	1	2	0	2
Ryan Scarfo	1	1	1	2	0	2
Mason Jobst	1	0	2	2	0	1

GOALTENDER

	GP	REC	GA	SV%	GAA
Michael Houser	1	1-0-0	3	.923	3.00

HARTFORD

SKATER	GP	G	A	PTS	PIM	+/-
Mike O'Leary	1	1	1	2	2	1
Lauri Pajuniemi	1	1	0	1	0	1
Alex Whelan	1	1	0	1	0	2
Zach Giuttari	1	0	1	1	0	1

GOALTENDER

	GP	REC	GA	SV%	GAA
Adam Huska	1	0-1-0	4	.846	4.16

2021-22 HEAD-TO-HEAD BREAKDOWN

Date	Result	Score	SF-SA	PP	PK
Jan. 2	W	4-3	26-39	0-1	1-1

SERIES NOTABLES

Rochester hasn't hosted Hartford at The Blue Cross Arena in over two years since Nov. 22 2019, when the Amerks blanked the Wolf Pack, 4-0.

Rochester enters tonight having scored 31 goals in the opening period of play this season, which are tied for third-most in the AHL. Conversely, the Wolf Pack have only scored 19 times in the first 20 minutes of regulation, which are tied for third-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.

Both Rochester (11-4-0-0) and Hartford (5-4-0-0) enter today with winning records this season when scoring the game's first goal. The Amerks have scored 36 goals in the third period, which are most in the AHL this season, while Hartford is second with 33.

Hartford assistant coach Steve Smith served in the same capacity with the Buffalo Sabres for three seasons from 2018-19 to 2020-21.



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