

# ROCHESTER AMERICANS HOCKEY CLUB

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

Friday | **January 28, 2022** | 7:05 PM ET | The Blue Cross Arena | Game 598 | AHL TV, The Fan Rochester



# GAME NOTES



## TONIGHT'S GAME OVERVIEW

For the second time in as many weeks, the Rochester Americans (20-12-2-1) begin a four-game homestand tonight as they welcome the Syracuse Crunch (15-13-3-1) back for another intrastate showdown at The Blue Cross Arena. Game time is slated for a 7:05 p.m. start and will be carried live on The Sports Leader 95.7 FM/950 AM The Fan Rochester as well as AHLTV.

The Amerks have earned points in 15 of their last 22 games dating back to Nov. 19 and are 4-3-2-1 over their previous 10 matchups. Syracuse enters tonight with 6-3-1-0 mark over its last 10 contests.

## HEAD-TO-HEAD SERIES SNAPSHOT

Tonight's contest is the fourth this month between the North Division rivals and the sixth of 12 overall this season. The Amerks claimed the first two meetings, but Syracuse has responded with straight wins since, including a 3-2 overtime victory in the previous get-together on Jan. 19.

The Amerks have scored a power-play goal in 15 of their last 26 games against Syracuse, going 25-for-94 (26.6%) with the man-advantage over that span. Additionally, Rochester has collected at least one point in 23 of the last 37 games against the Crunch dating back to the 2018-19 campaign.

## AMERKS LEADING THE WAY

The Amerks own two of the league's top eight point-getters in veteran forward **Michael Mersch** and rookie sensation **Jack Quinn**. Both Mersch and Quinn, who is currently on recall with the parent Buffalo Sabres, are tied for second in the league with 18 goals, while the duo ranks seventh and eighth in the AHL in overall scoring, respectively.

Quinn scored his 18th goal of the season early in the second period against Syracuse on Jan. 19, giving him seven goals and 11 points in his first seven games since returning to the lineup on Jan. 5. Quinn paces all AHL rookies in both goals (18) and points (35) while his team-high six power-play goals are also second-most among all first-year players.

Mersch pushed his point streak to six games with his 18th goal of the year this past Saturday in Cleveland. He also has points in seven of his last eight games as he inches closer to the 40-mark for the fifth time in his career.

With five players currently performing at or just below a point-per-game pace, Rochester has the AHL's third-best offense. Averaging just under four goals per game, the Amerks have scored the most goals in the AHL with 132. Rochester has scored four goals or more in each of its 20 wins this season dating back to its 5-3 home-opening win over Syracuse on Oct. 22.

## POWER-PLAY PROFICIENCY

Now 35 games into the season, Rochester's power-play has gone 33-for-129 with a 26.4% conversion rate that is currently second-best in the AHL. The Amerks' 33 goals on the man-advantage are most among all North Division teams and are three shy of the AHL lead behind the Ontario Reign.

The Amerks have scored at least one power-play goal in 21 of their first 35 games this season and have registered multiple power-play tallies in eight 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	35	18	18	36	14	1
Jack Quinn*	24	18	17	35	15	-6
JJ Peterka	29	8	22	30	10	1
Brandon Biro	28	5	18	23	8	8
Oskari Laaksonen	31	3	20	23	18	-6

GOALTENDER	GP	REC	SVS	SV%	GAA
Aaron Dell*	5	5-0-0	141	.910	2.76
Michael Houser*	11	5-4-0	261	.900	2.98
Ukko-Pekka Luukkonen*	12	6-6-0	308	.888	3.42
Mat Robson	7	4-1-2	191	.868	4.25
Charles Williams	2	0-1-1	49	.817	5.62

\* = Currently on recall with Buffalo

## 2021-22 CRUNCH OVERALL SCORING & GOALTENDING LEADERS

SKATER	GP	G	A	PTS	PIM	+/-
Gabriel Dumont	32	15	14	29	48	-3
Charles Hudon	27	12	12	24	26	-10
Cole Koepke*	28	9	11	20	10	2
Sean Day	29	3	16	19	19	-4
Alex Barré-Boulet	15	3	15	18	18	0

\* = Currently on recall with Tampa Bay

GOALTENDER	GP	REC	SVS	SV%	GAA
Amir Miftakhov	13	4-4-2	279	.912	2.50
Hugo Alnefelt	12	6-4-2	251	.881	3.00
Max Lagace	12	5-5-0	220	.866	3.43

## 2021-22 HEAD-TO-HEAD BREAKDOWN

Syracuse Crunch	Rochester Americans
15-13-3-1	<b>Record</b> 20-12-2-1
8-7-0-1	<b>Home Record</b> 10-4-2-1
7-6-3-0	<b>Road Record</b> 10-8-0-0
6-3-1-0	<b>Last 10 Games</b> 4-3-2-1
9-6-2-0	<b>Record When Scoring First</b> 14-5-1-0
2.88 (22nd)	<b>Goals-For Per Game</b> 3.77 (3rd)
3.16 (19th)	<b>Goals-Against Per Game</b> 3.71 (T-29th)
22.2% (T-5th)	<b>Power-Play</b> 26.4% (2nd)
76.4% (28th)	<b>Penalty Kill</b> 80.0% (21st)
3-1 W vs. CLE	<b>Last Game</b> 7-3 L @ CLE
Jan. 29 vs CLT	<b>Next Game</b> Jan. 29 vs. UTI



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## QUINN-TESSANTIAL QUALITIES

Quinn became the first AHL player this season and just the 17th player in Amerks franchise history to score four goals in a game in the 6-5 overtime loss to Belleville on Jan. 15. More impressively, he scored all four goals consecutively, including the game-tying tally with 3.3 seconds remaining in regulation.

He's the first Amerk to have a four-goal game since Rochester native Derek Whitmore single-handedly outscored Hamilton on Nov. 25, 2011 (5-2 W).

With 18 goals through his first 24 games, he's on pace to become the first Amerk to score 20 goals in the fewest number of games since Luke Adam reached the mark in 31 games during the 2013-14 campaign.

He was named the **AHL's Rookie of the Month for October** after leading all first-year players with 10 points (5+5) through the first month of the regular season. In just six games to begin the season, Quinn surpassed his offensive output from his truncated 2020-21 campaign, and became the first AHL player to reach the 10-point mark this season.

Quinn has been held scoreless just four times all season and hasn't gone more than one game without recording a point. He has recorded 11 multi-point performances this year. More impressively, the Amerks are a near-perfect 10-0-1-0 this season when Quinn registers a multi-point game, including 6-0-1-0 on home ice.

On Nov. 12, Quinn became the first AHL rookie since Frank Vatrano in 2015-16 to score eight goals through his first 10 games of the season.

Quinn is one of only three AHL rookies with at least six power-play goals this season, joining San Jose's Scott Reedy and Springfield's Dylan Sikura.

## MERSCH LEADING BY EXAMPLE

With an assist on Jan. 7 against Hartford, Mersch became the first Amerk this season and just the fourth player in the AHL to reach the 30-point mark. He's now reached the mark six times in his eight-year pro career.

Mersch has totaled 23 points (11+12) and four multi-point efforts over his last 21 games dating back to Nov. 24. He's been held scoreless just five times over that span to move into seventh in the AHL in scoring with 36 points (18+18) on the season. 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 current six-game point streak marks his longest since posting a career-best seven-game point streak in 2015.

With 18 goals this season, Mersch has more than 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.

When he reaches the 20-goal mark, he will have done so in the second-fewest number 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 has appeared in all but one of Rochester's 64 games dating back to last season, including the lone player to appear in all 35 contests in 2021-22.

## AMERKS-CRUNCH 2021-22 SEASON SERIES BREAKDOWN

### ROCHESTER

SKATER	GP	G	A	PTS	PIM	+/-
Jack Quinn	5	3	3	6	5	0
Sean Malone	2	2	1	3	8	2
Mark Jankowski	2	1	2	3	2	2
JJ Peterka	3	1	2	3	0	2

### GOALTENDER

	GP	REC	GA	SV%	GAA
Michael Houser	3	1-2-0	6	.917	2.06
Mat Robson	1	0-0-1	3	.893	2.96
Ukko-Pekka Luukkonen	1	1-0-0	3	.875	3.00

### SYRACUSE

SKATER	GP	G	A	PTS	PIM	+/
Alex Barré-Boulet	3	0	5	5	0	3
Gabriel Dumont	5	4	0	4	9	-2
Cole Koepke	4	3	1	4	2	4
Simon Ryfors	5	2	2	4	2	-4

### GOALTENDER

	GP	REC	GA	SV%	GAA
Max Lagace	1	1-0-0	1	.944	1.00
Hugo Alnefelt	3	2-1-0	7	.915	2.33
Amir Miftakhov	1	0-1-0	3	.897	3.07

## 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
Jan. 5	L	2-1	18-16	0-5	2-3
Jan. 8	L	3-1	32-31	1-3	0-2
Jan. 19	OTL	3-2	30-28	0-3	1-1
Jan. 28					
Feb. 19					
Feb. 25					
Mar. 2					
Mar. 11					
Mar. 13					
Mar. 26					



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## THE BEST OFFENSE IS A GOOD DEFENSE

Rochester has one of the top-scoring defenseman in the AHL in **Oskari Laaksonen**, who recorded a career-high four assists in the 7-6 win over Utica back on Jan. 12, including three in the first period and three of which came on the power-play. He finished two assists shy of tying the franchise record for most in a single game.

Laaksonen, who boasts eight points (1+7) in his last eight games since the turn of the New Year, leads all Rochester blueliners and is tied for fourth among all AHL defensemen in scoring with 23 points (3+20) in 31 games. He also paces the league with 17 power-play assists as all but three of his 20 assists this season have come on the man-advantage. Equally as impressive, 19 of Laaksonen's 23 points have come on the power-play.

Prior to earning his first recall of the season to the Sabres, rookie defenseman **Mattias Samuelsson** recorded two assists in the overtime loss to Belleville on Jan. 15, giving him 15 points (2+13) in 20 games. He produced multi-point efforts in back-to-back outings for the first time in his pro career on Dec. 8 and Dec. 10. Samuelsson ranks seventh in scoring among all AHL rookie defensemen while his 13 assists are sixth-most.

With his Sabres season debut at Ottawa on Jan. 18, he became the 13th different player to appear in a game for both Buffalo and Rochester.

After producing his first three-point outing since the 2019-20 season on Jan. 15 against Belleville, **Ethan Prow** is tied for 12th amongst defensemen in points (19) and 13th in assists (15). The veteran defenseman has totaled exactly 100 points (31+69) over his last 147 American Hockey League games dating back to the 2018-19 campaign.

## FANTASTIC FOUR

The Amerks currently own four of the AHL's top scoring rookies in **Jack Quinn**, **JJ Peterka**, **Peyton Krebs** and **Brandon Biro**, all of whom have combined for 107 points (35+72) through the first 35 games this season.

Coming off his first four-goal game on Jan. 15, Quinn, Buffalo's eighth overall pick in 2020, is back atop the AHL rookie scoring lead, pacing all first-year players in both goals (18) and points (35) in 24 games. Quinn became the 101st AHL player this season to make his NHL debut when he took the ice against the Tampa Bay Lightning on Jan. 11. He finished with team-highs in shots (3) and shot attempts (6) while earning 16:30 of total ice time. He then returned to the Sabres a day after scoring his team-leading 18th goal for Rochester and was rewarded with his first two NHL points, including a goal against Vezina Trophy winner and Stanley Cup champion Braden Holtby in the Sabres' 5-4 loss to the Dallas Stars on Jan 20.

Peterka is fourth in rookie scoring with 30 points (8+22) after picking up his eighth multi-point game last Saturday in Cleveland. He is second among all first-year players with a team-high 22 assists. He and Quinn, taken just 26 picks apart from one another by Buffalo in the 2020 NHL Draft, currently make up one of only three rookie duos across the entire AHL to rank inside the top three on their respective team in scoring.

Biro has been one of the team's most consistent point-getters as of late with 18 points (5+13) over his last 17 games dating back to Nov. 27. He also has five multi-point efforts in 13 games over that span, which includes a season-high three-point (1+2) performance on Jan. 12 against Utica. He comes into the weekend showing one goal and seven assists over his last six games.

## MOVIN' ON UP

Players that have appeared in at least one game this season for both Rochester and Buffalo:

### FORWARDS (7)

Mark Jankowski  
Ryan MacInnis  
Brett Murray  
Arttu Ruotsalainen  
Peyton Krebs  
Jack Quinn\*  
JJ Peterka\*

### DEFENSEMEN (3)

Casey Fitzgerald\*  
Ethan Prow\*  
Mattias Samuelsson

### GOALTENDERS (3)

Aaron Dell  
Michael Houser  
Ukko-Pekka Luukkonen

\* = Made NHL debut

## SERIES NOTABLES

Of the 14 different defensemen the Amerks have used this season, 13 have notched at least one point while eight have recorded at least one goal. Additionally, of the 20 different forwards to appear in one game for Rochester, 18 have scored a goal and 19 have produced a point.

Rochester enters tonight as the only team in the AHL to have scored at least 40 goals in all three periods this season. Additionally, the Amerks have scored the most first- and third-period goals among any other team and have outscored the opposition 43-32 through the opening 20 minutes.

Over his last 10 games, Amerks forward **Arttu Ruotsalainen** has tallied 12 points on five goals and seven assists, a stretch which began with a three-point effort versus Hartford on Jan. 15. Ruotsalainen has also turned in a multi-point effort in four games over that same span and had a career-best eight shots against Utica on Jan. 12. The Finnish forward has recorded at least one shot in 30 straight games with Rochester dating back to the start of the 2020-21 campaign.

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.

Syracuse forward Remi Elie was with Rochester from 2018-2021, tallying 55 points (31+24) in 99 career games.

Crunch defenseman Jason Garrison played his first two pro seasons with the Amerks from 2008-2010, playing under current Syracuse head coach Benoit Groulx.

Benoit Groulx was the Amerks head coach for two seasons (2008-2010), leading the team to a berth in the 2010 Calder Cup Playoffs.



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