

# ROCHESTER AMERICANS HOCKEY CLUB

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

Wednesday | **February 2, 2022** | 7:05 PM ET | The Blue Cross Arena | Game 625 | AHL TV, The Fan Rochester



# GAME NOTES



## TONIGHT'S GAME OVERVIEW

The Rochester Americans (21-13-2-1) open the month of February tonight with the first of back-to-back meetings against the defending Calder Cup champion Charlotte Checkers (21-15-2-0) 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 16 of their last 24 games dating back to Nov. 19 and are 3-1-2-1 in the last seven games on home ice. Charlotte, meanwhile, enters tonight with 7-3-0-0 mark over its last 10 contests.

## HEAD-TO-HEAD SERIES SNAPSHOT

After earning a 4-0 shutout win over the Checkers in Charlotte's last visit to Rochester back on Dec. 6, 2019, the Amerks have gone 0-5-0-0 in the last five meetings since, including a pair of losses earlier this season during which they were outscored 15-3.

Both the Amerks and Checkers come into the matchup with nearly identical records, including 21 wins on the season for each team. Charlotte, however, has two more regulation losses. The Amerks also have the same number of home wins (11) this season as do the Checkers when they're on the road.

## AMERKS LEADING THE WAY

The Amerks own two of the league's top 10 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, rank among the AHL's top five goal-scorers and are tied for sixth and 10th in overall scoring with 39 and 35 points, respectively.

Quinn scored his 18th goal of the season early in the second period against Syracuse back 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 goals (18) and ranks second in 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 a career-best eight games with his team-leading 19th goal this past Saturday. He also has points in nine of his last 10 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-most productive offense. Averaging just under four goals per game, the Amerks have scored the most goals in the AHL with 136. Rochester has scored four goals or more in all but one of its 21 wins this season dating back to its 5-3 win over Syracuse on Oct. 22.

## POWER-PLAY PROFICIENCY

Now 37 games into the season, Rochester's power-play has gone 35-for-131 with a 26.7% conversion rate that is currently second-best in the AHL. The Amerks' 35 goals on the man-advantage are most among all North Division teams and are four shy of the AHL lead behind the Ontario Reign.

The Amerks have scored at least one power-play goal in 22 of their first 37 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	37	19	19	38	14	0
Jack Quinn*	24	18	17	35	15	-6
JJ Peterka	31	8	23	31	10	1
Brandon Biro	30	6	19	25	8	8
Oskari Laaksonen	33	3	20	23	20	-7

  

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	9	5-2-2	239	.879	3.75

\* = Currently on recall with Buffalo

## 2021-22 CHECKERS OVERALL SCORING & GOALTENDING LEADERS

SKATER	GP	G	A	PTS	PIM	+/-
Scott Wilson	37	14	10	24	6	0
Kole Lind*	34	12	12	24	68	0
Cole Schwindt	38	11	13	24	9	18
Logan Hutsko	38	7	17	24	16	3
Aleksi Heponiemi	26	6	16	22	16	-1

  

GOALTENDER	GP	REC	SVS	SV%	GAA
Joey Daccord	14	8-5-1	368	.925	2.18
Antoine Bibeau	6	3-1-1	108	.885	2.57
Christopher Gibson	9	4-5-0	247	.888	3.48

\* = Currently on recall with Seattle

## 2021-22 HEAD-TO-HEAD BREAKDOWN

Charlotte Checkers	Rochester Americans
21-15-2-0	..... <b>Record</b> .....21-13-2-1
10-8-2-0	..... <b>Home Record</b> ..... 11-5-2-1
11-7-0-0	..... <b>Road Record</b> ..... 10-8-0-0
7-3-0-0	..... <b>Last 10 Games</b> ..... 4-3-2-1
10-7-2-0	..... <b>Record When Scoring First</b> .....14-6-1-0
3.47 (4th)	..... <b>Goals-For Per Game</b> .....3.68 (3rd)
2.95 (11th)	..... <b>Goals-Against Per Game</b> ..... 3.65 (29th)
21.2% (8th)	..... <b>Power-Play</b> ..... 26.7% (2nd)
82.8% (T-9th)	..... <b>Penalty Kill</b> ..... 79.5% (21st)
6-1 W @ SYR	..... <b>Last Game</b> .....4-2 L vs. UTI
Feb. 4 @ ROC	..... <b>Next Game</b> .....Feb. 4 vs. CLT



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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.

Despite again being out of the lineup for an extended period of time for the second time this season, Quinn is one of only two AHL rookies with at least six power-play goals this season, joining San Jose's Scott Reedy.

## 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 25 points (12+13) and four multi-point efforts over his last 23 games dating back to Nov. 24. He's been held scoreless just five times over that span to move into sixth in the AHL in scoring with 38 points (19+19) 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 eight-game point streak surpasses his his previous career-best mark of seven he set during the 2014-15 season.

With 19 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 66 games dating back to last season, including the lone player to appear in all 37 contests in 2021-22.

## AMERKS-CHECKERS 2021-22 SEASON SERIES BREAKDOWN

### ROCHESTER

SKATER	GP	G	A	PTS	PIM	+/-
Brandon Biro	2	1	1	2	0	2
Mattias Samuelsson	2	1	0	1	0	-8
Ryan Scarfo	2	1	0	1	0	-2
Mason Jobst	2	1	0	1	0	-5

### GOALTENDER

	GP	REC	GA	SV%	GAA
Michael Houser	2	0-1-0	4	.905	3.06
Mat Robson	1	0-1-0	10	.600	15.01

### CHARLOTTE

SKATER	GP	G	A	PTS	PIM	+/-
Grigori Denisenko	2	2	3	5	0	3
Kole Lind	2	2	3	5	0	7
Chase Priskie	2	1	4	5	0	5
Scott Wilson	2	3	1	4	0	5

### GOALTENDER

	GP	REC	GA	SV%	GAA
Joey Daccord	1	1-0-0	1	.960	1.00
Devan Dubnyk	1	1-0-0	2	.913	2.00

## 2021-22 HEAD-TO-HEAD BREAKDOWN

Date	Result	Score	SF-SA	PP	PK
Dec. 14	L	11-1	33-25	0-1	3-3
Dec. 15	L	4-2	23-35	1-4	3-4
Feb. 2					
Feb. 4					

## DELL-IVERING IN THE CREASE

Goaltender **Aaron Dell** has backstopped the Amerks to five straight wins through his first five starts with Rochester. Until now, the netminder has never began a season with a win in each of his first five starts at either the NHL or AHL level.

He's 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 five appearances this season, he has made 25 or more saves while also averaging 30 shots-against.



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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 10 games since the turn of the New Year, leads all Rochester blueliners and is tied for sixth among all AHL defensemen in scoring with 23 points (3+20) in 33 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.

Back with the Amerks following an eight-game stint with Buffalo, 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 is tied for seventh in scoring among AHL rookie defensemen while his 13 assists are also seventh-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.

With four points in his last three games, including a two-assist effort Saturday against Utica, **Ethan Prow** is ninth amongst defensemen in points (22) and tied for eighth with 18 assists. The veteran defenseman has totaled 103 points (31+72) over his last 149 American Hockey League contests 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 110 points (36+74) through the first 37 games this season.

Despite being sidelined again for the second time this season, Quinn, Buffalo's eighth overall pick in 2020, continues to pace all first-year players in goals (18) while ranking second in 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 18th goal of the season 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 fifth in rookie scoring with 31 points (8+23) after picking up an assist last Saturday against Utica. He is tied for second among all first-year players with a team-high 23 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 20 points (6+14) over his last 19 games dating back to Nov. 27. He also has five multi-point efforts in 15 games over that span, which includes a season-high three-point (1+2) night on Jan. 12 against Utica. He comes into the week tied for ninth in scoring among all first-year skaters in the AHL.

## 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 44 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 44-34 through the opening 20 minutes.

Over his last 12 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 31 of 32 games with Rochester dating back to the start of the 2020-21 campaign.

Charlotte forward Scott Wilson spent parts of two seasons with the Amerks. In 54 career games from 2018-20, Wilson, a two-time Stanley Cup-winner with the Pittsburgh Penguins, produced 14 goals and 15 assists for 29 points.

Charlotte assistant coach Dan Bylsma had a brief two-game stint with the Amerks during the 1992-93 season, recording one assist. Bylsma, who won both a Stanley Cup and was named the 2010-11 Jack Adams Award winner as the NHL Coach of the Year with the Pittsburgh Penguins, also served as head coach of the Buffalo Sabres from 2015-17.

Checkers captain Zac Dalpe scored 16 goals as part of a 28-point campaign with the Amerks in 2014-15, his only season in Rochester. He also appeared in 21 games for the Buffalo Sabres that season, recording three points (1+2).



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