

# ROCHESTER AMERICANS HOCKEY CLUB

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

Friday | **February 4, 2022** | 7:05 PM ET | The Blue Cross Arena | Game 642 | AHL TV, The Fan Rochester



# GAME NOTES



## TONIGHT'S GAME OVERVIEW

The Rochester Americans (22-13-2-1) and Charlotte Checkers (21-16-2-0) clash for the second time in three nights tonight as the Eastern Conference rivals bring their season series to a close in the back-end of a two-game set at The Blue Cross Arena. The 7:05 p.m. contest will be the fourth and final meeting of the season between the two teams 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 17 of their last 25 games dating back to Nov. 19 and are 4-1-2-1 in the last eight games on home ice.

## HEAD-TO-HEAD SERIES SNAPSHOT

Wednesday's 5-1 victory was Rochester's first over Charlotte since Dec. 6, 2019, snapping a five-game skid against the Checkers. The home team has won all three matchups thus far throughout the season series.

Both the Amerks and Checkers come into the matchup with nearly identical records, including at least 21 wins on the season for each team. Charlotte, however, has three more regulation losses than Rochester, which also has a game in hand. In addition, the Amerks also have 12 home wins this season while the Checkers have recorded 11 victories while 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 fourth 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 nine games with his team-leading 39th point on an assist Wednesday. He has points in 10 of his last 11 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 second-best offense. Averaging just under four goals per game, the Amerks have scored the second-most goals in the AHL with 141. Rochester has scored four goals or more in all but one of its 22 wins this season dating back to its 5-3 win over Syracuse on Oct. 22.

## POWER-PLAY PROFICIENCY

Now 38 games into the season, Rochester's power-play has gone 35-for-132 with a 26.5% 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 38 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	38	19	20	39	16	2
Jack Quinn*	24	18	17	35	15	-6
JJ Peterka	32	9	24	33	10	3
Brandon Biro	31	7	20	27	8	10
Oskari Laaksonen	34	3	21	24	20	-5

GOALTENDER	GP	REC	SVS	SV%	GAA
Aaron Dell	6	6-0-0	176	.921	2.47
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	38	15	10	25	6	0
Kole Lind	34	12	12	24	68	0
Cole Schwindt	39	11	13	24	9	15
Logan Hutsko	39	7	17	24	18	3
Aleksi Heponiemi	27	6	17	23	4	-2

GOALTENDER	GP	REC	SVS	SV%	GAA
Joey Daccord	15	8-6-1	370	.918	2.37
Antoine Bibeau	7	3-1-1	134	.893	2.56
Christopher Gibson	9	4-5-0	247	.888	3.48

## 2021-22 HEAD-TO-HEAD BREAKDOWN

Charlotte Checkers	Rochester Americans
21-16-2-0	<b>Record</b> 22-13-2-1
10-8-2-0	<b>Home Record</b> 12-5-2-1
11-8-0-0	<b>Road Record</b> 10-8-0-0
6-4-0-0	<b>Last 10 Games</b> 4-3-2-1
10-7-2-0	<b>Record When Scoring First</b> 15-6-1-0
3.41 (5th)	<b>Goals-For Per Game</b> 3.71 (2nd)
3.00 (T-13th)	<b>Goals-Against Per Game</b> 3.58 (28th)
21.5% (7th)	<b>Power-Play</b> 26.5% (2nd)
82.9% (9th)	<b>Penalty Kill</b> 79.2% (21st)
5-1 L @ ROC	<b>Last Game</b> 5-1 W vs. CLT
Feb. 5 @ SYR	<b>Next Game</b> Feb. 5 vs. TOR



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## QUINN-TESSENTIAL 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

Mersch will become the first Amerk and just the fourth player in the AHL this season to reach the 40-point mark on his very next point. In doing so, he will have reached the mark for the fifth time in his eight-year pro career.

Mersch has totaled 26 points (12+14) and four multi-point efforts over his last 24 games dating back to Nov. 24. He's been held scoreless just five times over that span to move into fourth in the AHL in scoring with 39 points (19+20) 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 nine-game point streak surpassed 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 67 games dating back to last season, including the lone player to appear in all 38 contests in 2021-22.

## AMERKS-CHECKERS 2021-22 SEASON SERIES BREAKDOWN

### ROCHESTER

SKATER	GP	G	A	PTS	PIM	+/-
Brandon Biro	3	2	2	4	0	4
Brett Murray	1	1	1	2	0	2
JJ Peterka	3	1	1	2	0	0
Arttu Ruotsalainen	3	1	1	2	0	-3

### GOALTENDER

	GP	REC	GA	SV%	GAA
Aaron Dell	1	1-0-0	1	.972	1.00
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	+/-
Scott Wilson	3	4	1	5	0	5
Grigori Denisenko	2	2	3	5	0	3
Kole Lind	2	2	3	5	0	7
Chase Priskie	2	1	4	5	0	5

### GOALTENDER

	GP	REC	GA	SV%	GAA
Devan Dubnyk	1	1-0-0	2	.913	2.00
Antoine Bibeau	1	0-0-0	2	.929	2.46
Joey Daccord	2	1-1-0	4	.867	3.37

## 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	W	5-1	33-36	0-1	2-3
Feb. 4					

## DELL-IVERING IN THE CREASE

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

With a win tonight should he get the start, Dell will match his career-best seven-game win streak he posted from March 20 to April 7 during the 2014-15 season with Worcester. In each of his six 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 nine points (1+8) in his last 11 games since the turn of the New Year, leads all Rochester blueliners and is tied for fifth among all AHL defensemen in scoring with 24 points (3+21) in 34 games. He also paces the league with 17 power-play assists as all but four of his 21 assists this season have come on the man-advantage. Equally as impressive, 19 of Laaksonen's 24 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 eighth in scoring among AHL rookie defensemen while his 13 assists are also eighth-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 five points in his last four games, including a two-assist effort last Saturday against Utica, **Ethan Prow** is tied for eighth amongst defensemen in points (23) and tied for seventh with 19 assists. The veteran defenseman has totaled 104 points (31+73) over his last 150 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 114 points (38+76) through the first 38 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 tied for third in rookie scoring with 33 points (9+24) after picking up a two-point effort (1+1) against Charlotte on Wednesday. He also ranks second among all first-year players with a team-high 24 assists. He and Quinn, taken just 26 picks apart from one another by Buffalo in the 2020 NHL Draft, currently make up the 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 22 points (7+15) over his last 20 games dating back to Nov. 27. He also has six multi-point efforts in 16 games over that span. He comes into the weekend tied for sixth in scoring among all first-year skaters with 27 points (7+20) in 31 games, including goals in back-to-back appearances.

## 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 45 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 47-34 through the opening 20 minutes.

Over his last 13 games, Amerks forward **Arttu Ruotsalainen** has tallied 14 points on six goals and eight 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 five 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 32 of 33 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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