

# ROCHESTER AMERICANS HOCKEY CLUB

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

Wednesday | **March 2, 2022** | 7:05 PM ET | The Blue Cross Arena | Game 786 | AHL TV, The Fan Rochester



# GAME NOTES



## TONIGHT'S GAME OVERVIEW

The Rochester Americans (26-19-3-2) begin the month of March tonight as they welcome back the Syracuse Crunch (21-19-6-1) for an intrastate showdown at The Blue Cross Arena for a 7:05 p.m. The North Division matchup gets underway at 7:05 p.m. and will be carried live on The Sports Leader 95.7FM/950 AM The Fan Rochester as well as AHLTV.

The Amerks have earned at least one point in six of their last 10 games. The Crunch, meanwhile, have a 4-3-3-0 record in their previous 10 outings, which includes a 1-0-0-1 mark in two games versus Rochester in that span.

## HEAD-TO-HEAD SERIES SNAPSHOT

Tonight's meeting is the seventh between the North Division rivals since Jan. 5 and the ninth of 12 overall this season. The Amerks claimed the first two meetings, but the Crunch have responded with points in six straight (5-0-1-0) since, including a 2-1 overtime loss this past Friday night in Syracuse.

Tonight's matchup begins a stretch in which the Amerks and Crunch will face-off three times over the next 12 days between now and March 13, which includes twice in three-day span.

The Amerks have scored a power-play goal in 17 of their last 29 games against Syracuse, going 29-for-101 (28.7%) with the man-advantage over that span. Additionally, Rochester has collected at least one point in 24 of the last 40 games against the Crunch dating back to the 2018-19 campaign.

## VIEW FROM ROCHESTER

The Amerks own four of the league's top point-getters in veteran forward **Michael Mersch** and the rookie trio of **JJ Peterka**, **Brandon Biro** and **Jack Quinn**. Mersch ranks among the AHL's top 20 goal-scorers while Peterka, Biro and Quinn collectively comprise one-third of the AHL's top eight scoring rookies coming into the week.

Mersch, who despite seeing his career-best nine-game point streak halted in the 5-2 loss to Charlotte on Feb. 4, has points in 10 of his last 19 games as he inches closer to the 40-point mark for the fifth time in his career.

After scoring just four times through the first three months of the season, Peterka has notched 23 points (9+14) in 21 games to begin 2022, including goals in back-to-back games on three different occasions over that span.

Despite being out with another long-term injury, Quinn continues to pace all AHL rookies in goals (18) and ranks eighth in points (35) while his team-high six power-play goals are also second-most among all first-year players.

Rochester enters the week with the AHL's seventh-best offense. Averaging just under four goals per game, the Amerks have scored the third-most goals in the AHL with 167.

## POWER-PLAY PROFICIENCY

Rochester's power-play has gone 43-for-179 with a 24.0% conversion rate that is currently second-best in the AHL. The Amerks' 43 goals on the man-advantage are most among all North Division teams and are eight shy of the AHL lead behind Ontario.

The Amerks have scored at least one power-play goal in 26 of their first 50 games this season and have registered multiple power-play tallies in 10 overall, including a season-high four goals in the 7-3 win over Hershey back on Nov. 26.

## 2021-22 AMERKS OVERALL SCORING & GOALTENDING LEADERS

SKATER	GP	G	A	PTS	PIM	+/-
JJ Peterka	44	13	30	43	18	-6
Michael Mersch	46	19	20	39	27	-5
Brandon Biro	40	9	27	36	16	6
Jack Quinn	24	18	17	35	15	-6
Ethan Prow	46	8	24	32	6	-5

## GOALTENDER

	GP	REC	SVS	SV%	GAA
Aaron Dell	11	7-3-1	311	.912	2.71
Michael Houser	11	5-4-0	261	.900	2.98
Ukko-Pekka Luukkonen	18	9-8-1	499	.902	3.08
Mat Robson	10	5-3-2	265	.877	3.78

## 2021-22 CRUNCH OVERALL SCORING & GOALTENDING LEADERS

SKATER	GP	G	A	PTS	PIM	+/-
Gabriel Dumont	47	24	21	45	66	0
Charles Hudon	39	18	12	30	40	-11
Cole Koepeke	41	13	15	28	12	5
Sean Day	44	6	19	25	23	-3
Alex Barré-Boulet	30	3	22	25	18	0

## GOALTENDER

	GP	REC	SVS	SV%	GAA
Hugo Alnefelt	16	8-4-4	357	.890	2.86
Amir Miftakhov	21	6-8-3	441	.895	2.92
Max Lagace	14	6-6-0	260	.870	3.30

## 2021-22 HEAD-TO-HEAD BREAKDOWN

Syracuse Crunch	Rochester Americans
21-19-6-1.....	<b>Record</b> .....26-19-3-2
12-8-1-1.....	<b>Home Record</b> ..... 13-8-2-1
9-11-5-0.....	<b>Road Record</b> ..... 13-11-1-1
4-3-3-0.....	<b>Last 10 Games</b> ..... 4-4-1-1
15-8-4-0.....	<b>Record When Scoring First</b> .....17-6-1-0
2.89 (22nd).....	<b>Goals-For Per Game</b> .....3.34 (7th)
3.17 (23rd).....	<b>Goals-Against Per Game</b> ..... 3.54 (29th)
20.1% (12th).....	<b>Power-Play</b> ..... 24.0% (2nd)
75.0% (29th).....	<b>Penalty Kill</b> .....81.3% (13th)
4-3 OTL @ WBS.....	<b>Last Game</b> ..... 5-3 W @ TOR
Mar. 4 vs. UTI.....	<b>Next Game</b> ..... Mar. 4 @ BEL



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## PETERKA PLAYING TO PERFECTION

With his primary assist on Feb. 19 against Syracuse, forward **JJ Peterka** took over the team's scoring lead while also becoming the first Amerk this season and 14th player in the league to reach the 40-point mark.

Since **Jack Quinn** suffered a lower-body injury with the Buffalo Sabres on Jan. 20, Peterka has helped carried the load for the Amerks offense as he has produced seven goals and 10 assists for 17 points in the last 17 games.

More impressively, Peterka, who was taken 34th overall in the 2020 NHL Draft by the Sabres, has netted 23 points (9+14) in 21 games to start the New Year. The 20-year-old has also registered seven multi-point games over that stretch which also featured three, three-point outings.

Peterka made his highly anticipated NHL debut on Dec. 28 as Buffalo hosted New Jersey before visiting the New York Islanders the very next day. Following his return to the Amerks, he totaled five points on two goals and three assists in two games before being honored as the **AHL's Rookie of the Month of the Week** for the period ending Jan. 2, 2022.

Peterka has been held scoreless just seven times since Dec. 19 and hasn't gone more than one game without recording a point during that same span. More impressively, the Amerks are a near-perfect 10-2-0-0 this season when Peterka registers a multi-point game, including 5-0-0-0 on home ice.

With a team-high 43 points (13+30) through 44 games, Peterka is the first Amerks rookie to reach the 40-point mark since Rasmus Asplund posted 41 points on 10 goals and 31 assists in 75 games during the 2018-19 season. Peterka also leads the team and is tied for eighth in the AHL with 30 assists.

Coming into the week, he's one of only five AHL rookies currently leading his respective team in scoring.

## A PRODUCTIVE FEBRUARY FOR MURRAY

After being held scoreless in four games in January, **Brett Murray** responded with his best offensive showing of the season in February, leading the Amerks with 12 points on seven goals and five assists while appearing in all 13 games during the month.

Murray scored more than half of his 13 goals in February. He opened the month with four goals in his first five games, including a season-best three straight games from Feb. 5 to Feb. 9.

He also began and ended the month with multi-point efforts, highlighted by a career-best four-point effort (1+3) in the 5-3 win at Toronto on Feb. 27.

## DELL-IVERING IN THE CREASE

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

With a win against Wilkes-Barre/Scranton on Feb. 9, Dell matched his career-best 7-1-0 mark when he posted one from March 20 to April 10 during the 2014-15 season with Worcester. In nine of his 11 appearances this season, he has made 25 or more saves while also averaging 30 shots-against. He posted a season-high 36 saves last Saturday against Toronto.

## AMERKS-CRUNCH 2021-22 SEASON SERIES BREAKDOWN

### ROCHESTER

SKATER	GP	G	A	PTS	PIM	+/-
Jack Quinn	5	3	3	6	5	0
JJ Peterka	6	1	5	6	2	-1
Ryan MacInnis	5	3	1	4	12	0
Oskari Laaksonen	6	2	2	4	2	0

### GOALTENDER

	GP	REC	GA	SV%	GAA
Ukko-Pekka Luukkonen	2	2-0-0	4	.949	1.95
Mat Robson	2	1-0-1	4	.926	1.99
Michael Houser	3	1-2-0	6	.917	2.06
Aaron Dell	1	0-1-0	5	.833	5.03

### SYRACUSE

SKATER	GP	G	A	PTS	PIM	+/
Gabriel Dumont	8	5	3	8	11	0
Alex Barré-Boulet	6	0	6	6	0	3
Cole Koepke	6	3	2	5	4	5
Simon Ryfors	8	2	3	5	4	-2

### GOALTENDER

	GP	REC	GA	SV%	GAA
Max Lagace	1	1-0-0	1	.944	1.00
Hugo Alnefelt	4	2-1-1	9	.914	2.22
Amir Miftakhov	3	1-2-0	8	.901	2.69

## 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	L	2-1	26-22	1-1	1-1
Feb. 19	L	6-3	30-31	3-5	3-4
Feb. 25	OTW	2-1	23-55	0-1	2-2
Mar. 2					
Mar. 11					
Mar. 13					
Mar. 26					



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## THE BEST OFFENSE IS A GOOD DEFENSE

Rochester has two of the league's top point-producing defensemen in **Ethan Prow** (8+24) and **Oskari Laaksonen** (4+22), who enter the week fifth and 12th in scoring amongst all blueliners, respectively.

Prow, who reached the 30-point mark for the third straight year in the AHL, is also tied for sixth with 24 assists, which are just two more than Laaksonen. After scoring twice in three games this past weekend, including the overtime game-winner last Friday in Syracuse, Prow has recorded 14 points (4+10) over his last 16 games and has totaled 113 points (35+78) over his last 162 AHL contests dating back to the 2018-19 campaign.

Laaksonen, who boasts 11 points (2+9) in his last 22 games since the turn of the New Year, also ranks second among defensemen with 18 power-play assists, trailing only Ontario's Jordan Spence in that category, as all but four of his 22 assists this season have come on the man-advantage. Equally as impressive, 21 of his 26 points have come on the power-play.

His best performance of the season came back on Jan. 12 when he recorded a career-high four assists in the 7-6 win over Utica, 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.

Prior to earning his second recall of the season to the Buffalo Sabres, rookie defenseman **Mattias Samuelsson** recorded two assists in the overtime loss to Belleville on Jan. 15, giving him 15 points (2+13) in 22 games. Samuelsson is tied for 13th in scoring among AHL rookie defensemen while his 13 assists are 10th-most.

## FANTASTIC FOUR

The Amerks currently own four of the AHL's top scoring rookies in **JJ Peterka**, **Brandon Biro**, **Jack Quinn** and **Linus Weissbach**, all of whom have combined for 141 points (49+92) through Rochester's first 50 games this season.

Back from his second recall of the season to Buffalo, Quinn, the Sabres' eighth overall pick in 2020, continues to pace all first-year players in goals (18) while ranking eighth 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.

Despite having gone 11 games without a goal, Weissbach has notched seven assists in his last seven games. He finished the month of February with 11 points (1+10) in 13 games, including a season-high three-assist effort at Toronto this past Sunday to bring the month to a close.

With Peterka already at 43 points and both Biro and Quinn closing in on the mark, the Amerks are guaranteed to have multiple rookies finish the regular season with 40 or more points for the first time since the 2005-06 season.

## MOVIN' ON UP

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

### FORWARDS (8)

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

### DEFENSEMEN (3)

Casey Fitzgerald\*  
Ethan Prow\*  
Mattias Samuelsson

### GOALTENDERS (3)

Aaron Dell  
Michael Houser  
Ukko-Pekka Luukkonen

\* = Made NHL debut

## WINNING BY NUMBERS

Rochester enters tonight as the only AHL team to have scored at least 53 goals in all three periods this season. Additionally, the Amerks have scored the third-most first and third-period goals among any other team and have outscored the opposition 53-46 through the opening 20 minutes.

The Amerks have scored four or more goals in all but four of their 26 wins this season, two of which have come on home ice. Additionally, 11 of Rochester's 13 road victories have come with three or more goals despite being outscored 100-84 through their first 26 road games.

## SERIES NOTABLES

Of the 14 different defensemen the Amerks have used this season, 13 have notched at least one point while nine have recorded at least one goal. Additionally, of the 23 different forwards to appear in one game for Rochester, 19 have scored a goal and 21 have produced a point.

Over his last 25 games since the turn of the New Year, Amerks forward **Arttu Ruotsalainen** has tallied 22 points on eight goals and 14 assists, a stretch which began with a three-point effort versus Hartford on Jan. 2. Ruotsalainen has also turned in a multi-point effort in six 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 41 of 43 games with Rochester dating back to the start of the 2020-21 campaign.

In 21 of the last 26 meetings between the two teams dating back to the 2016-17 season, the team that scored first has gone on to come away with the victory. Additionally, in 17 of the last 18 meetings, the winning team has scored at least four goals dating back to the 2017-18 season.

The Amerks are in the middle of a stretch in which they're facing off against North Division opponents in 17 consecutive games.



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