

Friday | **March 11, 2022** | 7:05 PM ET | The Blue Cross Arena | Game 837 | AHL TV, The Fan Rochester



GAME NOTES



TONIGHT'S GAME OVERVIEW

The Rochester Americans (27-22-3-2) look to snap a four-game home winless skid tonight as they set out on yet another three-in-three weekend against the Syracuse Crunch (23-21-6-1) at The Blue Cross Arena. The North Division matchup gets underway at 7:05 p.m. 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 at least one point in seven of their last 14 games. The Crunch have a 5-3-2-0 record in their previous 10 outings while showing a record of 11-11-5-0 through their first 27 road games this season.

HEAD-TO-HEAD SERIES SNAPSHOT

Tonight's meeting is the eighth between the North Division rivals since Jan. 5 and the 10th of 12 overall this season. The Amerks claimed the first two meetings, but the Crunch have responded with points in seven straight (6-0-1-0) since, including a 6-3 win in the most recent get-together on Mar 2.

Tonight's matchup also begins a stretch in which the Amerks and Crunch will face-off twice over the next three days, including again Sunday. It's also the final game in Rochester this season between the intrastate rivals.

The Amerks have scored a power-play goal in 17 of their last 30 games against Syracuse, going 29-for-104 (27.9%) with the man-advantage over that span. Additionally, Rochester has collected at least one point in 24 of the last 41 games against the Crunch dating back to the 2018-19 campaign.

VIEW FROM ROCHESTER

Rochester remains in the thick of what is shaping up to be a very tight race to the finish among its fellow North Division opponents. The Amerks have played the most games (54) in the Division among any other team with some having as many as six games in hand on Rochester entering this weekend. Syracuse currently has three games in hand on Rochester.

The Amerks presently sit in fifth place with 22 games remaining and the top five teams in the North Division are guaranteed to clinch a playoff spot.

After scoring just four times through the first three months of the season, **JJ Peterka** has notched 26 points (9+17) in 25 games to begin 2022, including goals in back-to-back games on three different occasions over that span.

Having returned to the lineup this past Friday after missing the previous 17 games, **Jack Quinn** is second among all AHL rookies in goals (19) and seventh in points (38) while his team-high seven power-play goals are also tied for second-most among all rookies.

Rochester has the AHL's ninth-best offense. Averaging under four goals per game, the club have scored the fourth-most goals in the AHL with 180 and rank second in the North Division behind only the Utica Comets.

POWER-PLAY PROFICIENCY

Rochester's power-play has gone 46-for-198 with a 23.2% conversion rate that is currently third-best in the AHL. The Amerks' 46 goals on the man-advantage are most among all North Division teams and are 10 shy of the AHL lead behind Ontario.

The Amerks have scored at least one power-play goal in 28 of their first 54 games this season and have registered multiple power-play tallies in 11 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	48	13	33	46	22	-10
Michael Mersch	46	19	20	39	27	-5
Jack Quinn	26	19	19	38	17	-8
Brandon Biro	40	9	27	36	16	6
Ethan Prow	50	9	25	34	6	-6

GOALTENDER	GP	REC	SVS	SV%	GAA
Aaron Dell	14	8-4-1	377	.906	2.93
Michael Houser	11	5-4-0	261	.900	2.98
Ukko-Pekka Luukkonen	20	9-10-1	547	.894	3.36
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	51	24	22	46	72	-5
Charles Hudon	42	20	12	32	42	-14
Cole Koepke	45	15	17	32	12	6
Alex Barré-Boulet	34	7	25	32	22	0
Sean Day	48	6	26	32	23	-1

GOALTENDER	GP	REC	SVS	SV%	GAA
Amir Miftakhov	21	6-8-3	441	.895	2.92
Hugo Alnefelt	19	9-5-4	404	.882	3.06
Max Lagace	16	7-7-0	293	.869	3.24

2021-22 HEAD-TO-HEAD BREAKDOWN

Syracuse Crunch	Rochester Americans
23-21-6-1.....	Record27-22-3-2
12-10-1-1.....	Home Record13-10-2-1
11-11-5-0.....	Road Record14-12-1-1
5-3-2-0.....	Last 10 Games3-7-0-0
16-8-4-0.....	Record When Scoring First17-6-1-0
2.98 (20th).....	Goals-For Per Game3.33 (9th)
3.27 (24th).....	Goals-Against Per Game3.67 (29th)
19.8% (T-12th).....	Power-Play23.2% (3rd)
75.3% (29th).....	Penalty Kill81.4% (14th)
3-2 OTW @ UTI.....	Last Game7-2 L vs. LAV
Mar. 12 vs. TOR.....	Next GameMar. 12 @ UTI



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@AMERKSPR | @AMERKSHOCKEY

Warren Kosel | Senior Director of Public & Media Relations | 1.585.286.9928
Ryan Harr | Public & Media Relations Coordinator | 1.585.286.9940

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PETERKA FLOURISHING IN SECOND HALF

With his primary assist back on Feb. 19 against Syracuse, forward **JJ Peterka** took over the team's scoring lead while also becoming the first Amerks 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 13 assists for 20 points in the last 21 games.

More impressively, Peterka, who was taken 34th overall in the 2020 NHL Draft by the Sabres, has netted 26 points (9+17) in 25 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 eight 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 46 points (13+33) through 48 games, Peterka is the first Amerks rookie to reach the 45-point mark since Justin Bailey had 45 points (20+25) in 70 games during the 2015-16 season. Peterka also leads the team and is tied for sixth in the AHL with 33 assists.

Coming into the weekend, 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 has scored more than half of his 14 goals since the start of 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.

RACE TO 20

After the cancellation of the remainder of the 2019-20 season and a truncated 2020-21 campaign failed to produce a 20-goal scorer for just the fourth time in franchise history, the Amerks could potentially have several by season's end with eight players currently with 10 or more goals.

Michael Mersch and Quinn will both reach the mark on their next goal, despite Quinn appearing in 20 fewer games than Mersch. Murray remains on pace with a career-high 14 goals through his first 30 games of the season while Peterka and **Arttu Ruotsalainen** are right on his heels with 13 and 12, respectively, coming into the weekend.

AMERKS-CRUNCH 2021-22 SEASON SERIES BREAKDOWN

ROCHESTER

SKATER	GP	G	A	PTS	PIM	+/-
JJ Peterka	7	1	6	7	2	-1
Jack Quinn	5	3	3	6	5	0
Ryan MacInnis	5	3	1	4	12	0
Oskari Laaksonen	8	2	2	4	2	-2

GOALTENDER

	GP	REC	GA	SV%	GAA
Mat Robson	2	1-0-1	4	.926	1.99
Michael Houser	3	1-2-0	6	.917	2.06
Ukko-Pekka Luukkonen	3	2-1-0	9	.915	3.13
Aaron Dell	1	0-1-0	5	.833	5.03

SYRACUSE

SKATER	GP	G	A	PTS	PIM	+/
Alex Barré-Boulet	7	3	7	10	2	5
Gabriel Dumont	9	5	3	8	11	-2
Cole Koepke	7	4	4	8	4	9
Simon Ryfors	9	2	3	5	6	-2

GOALTENDER

	GP	REC	GA	SV%	GAA
Max Lagace	1	1-0-0	1	.944	1.00
Hugo Alnefelt	5	3-1-1	12	.907	2.38
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	L	6-3	24-33	0-3	4-5
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** (9+25) and **Oskari Laaksonen** (4+22), who enter the weekend fourth and 22nd 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 25 assists, which are just three more than Laaksonen. His nine goals trail only Belleville's Michael Del Zotto and Grand Rapids' Ryan Murphy for most by a defenseman this season. With an assist on Wednesday night versus Laval, Prow has recorded 16 points (5+11) over his last 20 games. Additionally he has totaled 115 points (36+79) over his last 166 AHL contests dating back to the 2018-19 campaign.

Laaksonen, who boasts 11 points (2+9) in his last 26 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 17th in scoring among AHL rookie defensemen while his 13 assists are 15th-most.

FANTASTIC FOUR

The Amerks currently own four of the AHL's top scoring rookies in **JJ Peterka**, **Jack Quinn**, **Brandon Biro** and **Linus Weissbach**, all of whom have combined for 149 points (51+98) through Rochester's first 54 games this season.

Quinn, the Buffalo Sabres' eighth overall pick in 2020, ranks second among all first-year players in goals (19) and is seventh in points (38) despite only appearing in 26 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.

With his first goal in 13 games last Friday against Belleville, Weissbach has notched eight points (1+7) in his last 11 games. He finished the month of February with 11 points (1+10) in 13 contests, including a season-high three-assist effort on Feb. 27 at Toronto to bring the month to a close.

Peterka's explosive start to the second half of the season has him second among all rookies in points (46), third in assists (33) and 14th in goals (13).

With Peterka already at 46 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 2006-07 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 one of only five AHL teams to have scored at least 54 goals in all three periods this season. Additionally, the Amerks have scored the fifth-most first and third-period goals among any other team and have outscored the opposition 54-52 through the opening 20 minutes.

The Amerks have scored four or more goals in all but five of their 27 wins this season, two of which have come on home ice. Additionally, 12 of Rochester's 14 road victories have come with three or more goals despite being outscored 108-92 through their first 28 road games.

SEASON NOTABLES

Of the 14 different defensemen the Amerks have used this season, 13 have notched at least one point while 10 have recorded at least one goal. Additionally, of the 24 different forwards to appear in one game for Rochester, 19 have scored a goal and 21 have produced a point.

Over his last 29 games since the turn of the New Year, Amerks forward **Arttu Ruotsalainen** has tallied 30 points on 12 goals and 18 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 nine games over that same span, including four over his current season-long five-game point streak highlighted by three consecutive two-goal games for the first time in his AHL career.

Rochester is one of just four teams to have three different rookies (Quinn, Peterka, Weissbach) reach the 10-goal mark, joining the Charlotte Checkers, Springfield Thunderbirds and Toronto Marlies.

The Amerks are also one of five teams in the AHL to have at least eight different players in double digits in goals, which includes Charlotte, Providence, Springfield and Utica.



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