

Friday | **April 22, 2022** | 7:00 PM ET | Adirondack Bank Center | Game 1096 | AHL TV, The Fan Rochester



GAME NOTES



TONIGHT'S GAME OVERVIEW

The Rochester Americans (36-27-6-3) begin their final three-in-three of the 2021-22 regular season tonight with one last visit to Adirondack Bank Center to take on the first-place Utica Comets (41-19-8-1). The intrastate showdown gets underway at 7:00 p.m. and will be carried live on The Sports Leader 95.7FM/950 AM The Fan Rochester as well as AHLTV.

With the only four games remaining, the Amerks come into the weekend needing just eight points to clinch a playoff spot for the second third straight year dating back to 2018. The Comets, who are in their first season as the primary affiliate of the New Jersey Devils, became the first North Division team to punch their ticket to the postseason and recently clinched the Division by way of their 41st win of the season.

HEAD-TO-HEAD SERIES SNAPSHOT

The intrastate rivals have alternated wins throughout the first 10 games of the season series, as each team has recorded five wins coming into tonight. After Utica claimed the first three, Rochester responded with five wins over the last seven games since, including each of the last two.

The Amerks were the first team to hand the Comets their first regulation loss of the season after posting an AHL-best and franchise record 13-game win streak to begin the campaign. It bested the 37-year-old mark set by the 1984-85 Amerks, who won their first 11 games that year to set the standard.

DYNAMIC DUO

Rookie forwards **JJ Peterka** and **Jack Quinn** continue to find the scoresheet on almost a nightly basis as the duo rank first and second on the team in scoring with 63 and 57 points, respectively.

With 11 points to start the final month of the regular season, which includes three multi-goal efforts, Peterka became the first Amerk this season and the lone AHL rookie to reach the 60-point mark.

Quinn, meanwhile, who has recorded 13 points (4+9) in his last 11 games, became just the second Rochester skater and only the fourth AHL rookie to reach the 50-point plateau.

This season marks the first time in nearly 30 years the Amerks have had multiple rookies record more than 50 points in the same season since 1992-93 when the club had five: Todd Simon (93), Scott Thomas (59), Doug MacDonald (58), Jozef Cierny (54) and Mike McLaughlin (54).

Rochester is a perfect 7-0-0-0 this season when both players record multi-point outings in the same contest. The Amerks are 15-1-1-0 when Quinn produces at least two points and show a 13-3-0-0 record when Peterka has more than one point.

POWER-PLAY PROFICIENCY

Rochester's power-play has gone 63-for-263 with a 24.0% conversion rate that is currently third-best in the AHL. The Amerks' 63 goals on the man-advantage are most among all North Division teams and are seven shy of the AHL lead behind Ontario.

The Amerks have scored at least one power-play goal in 39 of their first 72 games this season and have registered multiple power-play tallies in 16 overall, including a season-high four goals in the 7-3 win over Hershey back on Nov. 26 and in the 6-2 victory against Belleville on April 9.

2021-22 AMERKS OVERALL SCORING & GOALTENDING LEADERS

SKATER	GP	G	A	PTS	PIM	+/-
JJ Peterka	66	24	39	63	28	-7
Jack Quinn	41	25	32	57	23	-9
Michael Mersch	61	26	27	53	33	-2
Arttu Ruotsalainen	53	18	32	50	24	-8
Ethan Prow	66	10	36	46	6	-6

GOALTENDER	GP	REC	SVS	SV%	GAA
Michael Houser	11	5-4-0	261	.900	2.98
Aaron Dell	20	12-6-1	569	.907	3.02
Ukko-Pekka Luukkonen	32	14-13-5	938	.899	3.31
Mat Robson	10	5-3-2	265	.877	3.78

2021-22 COMETS OVERALL SCORING & GOALTENDING LEADERS

SKATER	GP	G	A	PTS	PIM	+/-
Chase De Leo	52	18	35	53	18	-2
Fabian Zetterlund*	58	24	28	52	8	5
Alexander Holtz	51	25	25	50	10	-3
A.J. Greer	51	22	28	50	78	14
Reilly Walsh	68	8	32	40	16	10

GOALTENDER	GP	REC	SVS	SV%	GAA
Akira Schmid	37	22-8-5	949	.913	2.54
Nico Daws*	18	12-3-2	480	.918	2.41
Mareks Mitens	17	7-8-2	422	.888	3.31

* = Currently on recall with New Jersey

2021-22 HEAD-TO-HEAD BREAKDOWN

Utica Comets	Rochester Americans
41-19-8-1.....	Record 36-27-6-3
22-8-4-1.....	Home Record 19-12-3-2
19-11-4-0.....	Road Record 17-15-3-1
3-5-2-0.....	Last 10 Games 6-3-1-0
27-7-8-0.....	Record When Scoring First 24-8-3-1
3.45 (4th).....	Goals-For Per Game 3.36 (8th)
2.81 (6th).....	Goals-Against Per Game 3.61 (29th)
21.4% (5th).....	Power-Play 24.0% (3rd)
81.6% (10th).....	Penalty Kill 80.0% (20th)
4-3 W @ CLE.....	Last Game 3-2 SOW vs. SPR
Apr. 29 @ ROC.....	Next Game Apr. 23 vs. CLE



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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

Coming off his three-goal outing against Cleveland to kick-off the month of April, forward **JJ Peterka** became the third Amerk this season and just the seventh AHL rookie to reach the 20-goal mark.

After scoring just four times through the first three months of the season, Peterka has notched 43 points (20+23) in 43 games to begin 2022, including goals in back-to-back games on five different occasions over that span.

Peterka, who was taken 34th overall in the 2020 NHL Draft by the Sabres, leads all AHL rookies and ranks sixth in the AHL with 208 shots on goal. He's only gone two games all season without recording at least one shot on goal.

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 17 times since Dec. 19 and hasn't gone more than two games without recording a point during that same span. More impressively, the Amerks are 13-3-0-0 this season when Peterka registers a multi-point game, including 6-0-0-0 on home ice.

With a team-high 63 points (24+39) through 66 games, Peterka is the first Amerks rookie to reach the 60-point mark since Thomas Vanek had 68 points (42+26) in 74 games during the 2004-05 season. Peterka also leads the team and is tied for ninth in the AHL with 39 assists.

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

APPERT JOINS ELITE COMPANY

By way of a 6-5 overtime victory over the Cleveland Monsters on March 19, **Seth Appert** became the sixth straight head coach to reach the 30-win mark in his first full season behind the bench.

Should the Amerks win each of their remaining four games this season, Appert will become the first bench boss to lead his team to 40 wins in his first full season at the helm since Hall of Famer Randy Cunneynworth, who in nine seasons went on to become the winningest coach in franchise history.

Appert is 47-42-12 in 101 career games leading the Amerks dating back to the start of the 2020-21 season.

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 11 players currently with 10 or more goals.

Michael Mersch and Quinn, who both returned to the lineup on March 18 against Cleveland, both reached the mark in their first game back, despite Quinn appearing in 20 fewer games than Mersch. Peterka joined the group on April 1 against Cleveland while **Arttu Ruotsalainen** (18), **Sean Malone** (18) and **Brett Murray** (15) are all closing in on the milestone as well.

AMERKS-COMETS 2021-22 SEASON SERIES BREAKDOWN

ROCHESTER

SKATER	GP	G	A	PTS	PIM	+/-
Jack Quinn	6	3	7	10	8	-3
Sean Malone	6	3	6	9	2	-3
Oskari Laaksonen	9	0	8	8	2	0
Michael Mersch	9	4	3	7	13	-1

GOALTENDER

	GP	REC	GA	SV%	GAA
Michael Houser	1	0-0-0	1	.900	1.92
Aaron Dell	1	1-0-0	2	.943	2.00
Mat Robson	3	2-1-0	12	.867	3.94
Ukko-Pekka Luukkonen	6	2-4-0	21	.856	3.91

UTICA

SKATER	GP	G	A	PTS	PIM	+/-
A.J. Greer	9	7	6	13	19	5
Reilly Walsh	10	1	9	10	4	6
Fabian Zetterlund	7	4	4	8	0	0
Ryan Schmelzer	10	4	3	7	2	3

GOALTENDER

	GP	REC	GA	SV%	GAA
Nico Daws	5	3-1-0	11	.913	2.31
Akira Schmid	5	2-2-1	14	.878	3.31
Mareks Mitens	1	0-1-0	7	.750	7.17

2021-22 HEAD-TO-HEAD BREAKDOWN

Date	Result	Score	SF-SA	PP	PK
Oct. 17	L	6-2	27-24	0-5	2-3
Nov. 17	L	3-2	27-12	1-6	3-4
Nov. 20	L	5-3	37-29	1-5	2-4
Nov. 24	W	4-2	23-29	1-3	2-2
Dec. 8	OTW	4-3	28-35	2-2	2-2
Jan. 12	W	7-6	28-29	3-6	2-3
Jan. 29	L	4-2	30-27	0-1	4-6
Feb. 18	L	4-2	28-30	0-6	4-5
Mar. 12	W	3-2	19-35	0-2	4-4
Mar. 30	W	4-3	23-33	2-3	2-3
Apr. 22					
Apr. 29					



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Warren Kosel | Senior Director of Public & Media Relations | 1.585.286.9928

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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** (10+36) and **Oskari Laaksonen** (5+28), who enter the weekend third and tied for 22nd in scoring amongst all blueliners, respectively.

Prow, who reached the 40-point mark for the second time in his AHL career, is also fourth with 36 assists, which are eight more than Laaksonen. His 10 goals are tied for seventh-most by a defenseman this season and only three off the league lead. Following his two-assist effort on Tuesday versus Springfield, Prow has recorded 28 points (6+28) over his last 36 games. Additionally, he has totaled 127 points (37+90) over his last 181 AHL contests dating back to the 2018-19 campaign.

Laaksonen, who shows seven points (1+6) over his last 16 games coming into tonight, ranks fourth among defensemen with 22 power-play assists, as all but six of his 28 assists this season have come on the man-advantage. Equally as impressive, 26 of his 33 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.

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 195 points (74+121) through Rochester's first 72 games this season.

Peterka's torrid start to the second half of the year has him leading all rookies in points (63), second in assists (39) and fourth in goals (24) in 66 games this season.

Quinn, the Buffalo Sabres' eighth overall pick in 2020, is second among all first-year players with 25 goals and ranks third in points (57) despite only appearing in 41 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 three points (1+2) in four games since in his return to the lineup last Wednesday, Biro is tied for 15th in scoring amongst all rookies with 39 points (10+29) in 44 games.

Weissbach has notched 16 points (6+10) in his last 29 games. He finished 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 and Quinn are the first pair of Amerks rookies taken from the same Draft class (2020) to record 50 or more points in the same season since Scott Thomas and Doug MacDonald (1989) did so in 1992-93.

MALONE MAKING UP FOR LOST TIME

After an injury-riddled season has limited him to just 35 games, **Sean Malone** has certainly made up for lost time in the back half of the season with the Amerks.

In just the short amount of time he's been in the lineup, Malone has already shattered his offensive total from the 2019-20 season with Rochester. The fifth-year forward has recorded 18 goals and 35 points, both career-highs, while his 17 assists are just one away from equaling his best.

More impressively, he surpassed the 30-point mark in 30 fewer games from 2019-20 and remains on pace to score 20 goals for the first time in his pro career.

He entered last Friday riding a career-long 11-game point streak dating back to Dec. 18 -- the longest of any Amerk this season -- totaling nine goals and five assists for 14 points over that span. Malone is the first Amerk to produce a point in 11 straight games since Milan Bartovic tallied an 11-game point streak (10+5) from Dec. 27 to Feb. 6 during the 2003-04 campaign.

Back on April 9 at Belleville, Malone appeared in his 200th game as an Amerk and reached the century mark for points with his third-period goal this past Tuesday. He is the 59th forward in team history to skate in 200 or more games in his career. In 204 career games, Malone has registered 46 goals and 54 assists for 100 points since the start of the 2017-18 season.

WORKING OVERTIME

The 3-2 shootout win this past Tuesday against Springfield was Rochester's 19th game this season -- and 12th since Feb. 11 -- that went beyond regulation for the Amerks.

The Amerks are 7-6 in overtime but show an even 3-3 mark in shootouts.

Only three more teams have played more overtime games than the Amerks.

Rochester tied an AHL record with 29 overtime games in 2017-18.

OTHER AMERKS NOTABLES

Of the 16 different defensemen the Amerks have used this season, 15 have notched at least one point while 11 have recorded at least one goal. Additionally, of the 26 different forwards to appear in one game for Rochester, 19 have scored a goal and 22 have produced a point.

Over his last 47 games since the turn of the New Year, Amerks forward **Arttu Ruotsalainen** has tallied 48 points on 18 goals and 30 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 13 games over that same span, an impressive run highlighted by three consecutive two-goal games for the first time in his AHL career. He's recorded at least one point in 18 of his last 23 outings since Feb. 27.

He was named the AHL's Player of the Month for March has scored 10 goals and added 16 assists for 26 points in 22 games since the start of March.

Rochester is only team AHL this season with four players who have 50 or more points. Additionally, the Amerks are the only team to have four different rookies with at least 10 goals, 20 assists and 30 points in Biro, Peterka, Quinn and Weissbach.



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