

Friday | **November 4, 2022** | 7:05 PM ET | Blue Cross Arena | AHL Game 129 | AHL TV, The Fan Rochester



GAME NOTES



TONIGHT'S GAME OVERVIEW

The Rochester Americans (5-3-0-0) begin a home-and-home series against the intrastate rival Utica Comets (2-3-1-0) tonight at The Blue Cross Arena. Game time is slated for a 7:05 p.m. start and will be carried live on 95.7 FM/950 AM The Fan Rochester as well as AHLTV.

Tonight's matchup is the first of back-to-back meetings between the two teams and the ninth of 15 straight contests against North Division opponents to open the season. Its Rochester's longest stretch of the season against divisional foes. Rochester and Utica will play a total of eight times (four home and four road) during the 2022-23 season.

HEAD-TO-HEAD SERIES SNAPSHOT AGAINST UTICA

The intrastate rivals alternated wins during the 12-game series last season with each team showing a 6-5-1-0 mark. Rochester showed a 4-2-0-0 record at home against Utica and a 2-3-1-0 record on the road.

The Amerks were the first team to hand the Comets their first regulation loss of the season in 2021-22 after Utica posted an AHL-best and franchise-record 13-game win streak to begin the campaign.

Jack Quinn led the Amerks with 14 points (4+10) in eight games against Utica last season while **Sean Malone** paced all Rochester skaters with five goals in 11 games opposite the Comets.

Tonight's exchange is the first between the two clubs since Rochester eliminated Utica in Game 5 in the North Division Semifinals this past spring. With the win, Rochester remains unbeaten in a playoff series against a Utica-based club dating back to the 1990 postseason.

LAST TIME OUT

Seven different goal-scorers coupled with a stellar 24-save effort from goaltender **Ukko-Pekka Luukkonen** powered the Amerks to a dominating 7-2 victory over the Syracuse Crunch Wednesday at The Blue Cross Arena.

With the win, it marks Rochester's fourth straight on home ice and seventh in last eight dating back to the end of the 2021-22 campaign. With a 5-3-0-0 overall record this season and 10 points, the club is tied for the top spot in the North Division.

Forwards **Brandon Biro** (1+1), **Linus Weissbach** (1+1), **Lukas Rousek** (0+2) joined **Oskari Laaksonen** (0+2) as the team's multi-point-getters on the night while **Matt Bartkowski**, **Brendan Warren** and **Mason Jobst** each scored their first goals of the season. **Jiri Kulich** and **Brett Murray** rounded out the scoring for Rochester.

Luukkonen, who made his seventh start in eight games, made 24 saves to improve to 4-3-0 with the victory. Dating back to the 2021-22 slate, Luukkonen boasts a 10-5-5 record in his last 20 starts.

POWER-PLAY PROFICIENCY

Eight of the Amerks 28 goals this season have come on the power-play, which are tied for seventh-most among any team in the AHL. By going 8-for-33 while on the man-advantage, Rochester is ninth in the league with a 24.2% conversion rate.

The Amerks' seven power-play goals at home are tied for most in the league this season, going for 7-for-21 through their first four home matchups.

2022-23 AMERKS OVERALL SCORING & GOALTENDING LEADERS

SKATER	GP	G	A	PTS	+/-	PIM
Linus Weissbach	8	5	4	9	0	16
Brandon Biro	8	3	6	9	-3	2
Lukas Rousek	8	2	6	8	0	0
Jiri Kulich	8	2	5	7	-1	2
Isak Rosen	8	2	5	7	-2	0
GOALTENDER	GP	REC	SVS	SV%	GAA	
Michael Houser	2	1-0-0	39	.929	2.48	
Ukko-Pekka Luukkonen	7	4-3-0	167	.879	3.39	

2022-23 COMETS OVERALL SCORING & GOALTENDING LEADERS

SKATER	GP	G	A	PTS	+/-	PIM
Brian Pinho	7	4	2	6	2	2
Andreas Johnsson*	4	1	5	6	4	4
Jack Dugan	7	1	4	5	1	0
Tyce Thompson	5	2	2	4	1	0
Nolan Foote	7	2	2	4	2	2
GOALTENDER	GP	REC	SVS	SV%	GAA	
Nico Daws	3	0-2-0	71	.934	1.94	
Akira Schmid	4	2-1-1	90	.918	1.97	

*Currently on recall with New Jersey

HEAD-TO-HEAD BREAKDOWN

Utica Comets	Rochester Americans
2-3-0-1	Record 5-3-0-0
2-1-0-1	Home Record 4-0-0-0
0-2-0-0	Road Record 1-3-0-0
2-3-0-1	Last 10 Games 5-3-0-0
3-0-0-1	Record When Scoring First 3-1-0-0
2.67 (T-27th)	Goals-For Per Game 3.50 (T-11th)
2.50 (6th)	Goals-Against Per Game 3.50 (T-20th)
17.4% (23rd)	Power-Play 24.2% (9th)
68.4% (31st)	Penalty Kill 70.4% (29th)
4-3 SOL vs. PRO	Last Game 7-2 W @ SYR
Nov. 11 vs. LAV	Next Game Nov. 9 @ SYR



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YOUTH MOVEMENT LEADING ROCHESTER

With nine points each through the first eight games, **Linus Weissbach** (5+4) and **Brandon Biro** (3+6) are tied for the team scoring lead. Neither have gone more than two games without recording a point.

Weissbach, Buffalo's seventh-round selection (192nd overall) in the 2017 NHL Draft, has notched three multi-point efforts so far this season, which is tied with Biro. The Swedish forward has produced at least one shot in six of the first eight games and is second among all Rochester forwards with 18 shots on the campaign.

Biro also has at least one shot in six of the first eight games. He is tied for fifth overall amongst all Amerks forwards. Last season, Biro finished his second pro season notching 41 points (12+29) while also making his NHL debut with the Sabres at Montreal on Feb. 23.

Isak Rosen (2+5) and **Jiri Kulich** (2+5) pace the team's rookies with seven points each while being tied for eighth in the AHL scoring race amongst all first-year skaters.

Rosen, the Sabres' first-round selection in 2021 (14th overall), spent the 2021-22 season with Leksands in Sweden, where he made his debut in the Swedish Hockey League. He led all 17-year-olds with the Leksands U20 as he posted 35 points (21+14) in 38 games.

At age 18, Kulich, Buffalo's first-round selection (28th overall) in 2022, is among the youngest players in the AHL. He shows five assists in his first seven games of the young season, tying him for sixth in the league among AHL rookies in that category.

HOMEcoming FOR UTICA'S DUGAN

Among the newest additions to Utica's roster this season is third-year forward and Rochester native **Jack Dugan**. The former McQuaid Jesuit standout is in his first year with the Comets after spending the previous two with the Henderson Silver Knights (AHL).

A fifth-round selection of the Vegas Golden Knights in the 2017 NHL Draft, Dugan led the NCAA in scoring with 52 points (10+42) in 34 games and was a Hobey Baker Award finalist in 2019-20 at Providence College. He was also named to the Hockey East All-Rookie Team after recording 39 points in 41 games as a freshman.

Through seven games with Utica, Dugan ranks second on the team with four assists and third in scoring with five points.

SCOUTING THE COMETS

The Comets come into the matchup winless on the road this season and sit in fifth place in the AHL's North Division standings with a 2-3-0-1 overall record.

Newcomer Brian Pinho paces all Utica skaters with four goals while his six points are equal to that of Andreas Johnsson for the team lead. Pinho, who spent the last four seasons with Hershey, has recorded a point in all but one game so far this season, including a goal in three of his last four outings.

Utica returns the AHL's top goaltending tandem from last season in Nico Daws and Akira Schmid, both of whom spent time considerable time in New Jersey. The duo enters play tonight ranked among the top seven goaltenders in goals-against average while Daws is 10th with a .934 SV%.

AMERKS-COMETS 2021-22 SEASON SERIES BREAKDOWN

ROCHESTER

SKATER	GP	G	A	PTS	PIM	+/-
Jack Quinn	8	4	10	14	8	-1
Sean Malone	8	5	6	11	2	-2
JJ Peterka	14	4	5	9	2	1
Michael Mersch	11	4	4	8	15	-1

GOALTENDER

	GP	REC	GA	SV%	GAA
Aaron Dell	2	1-0-0	3	.949	1.67
Michael Houser	1	0-0-0	1	.900	1.92
Ukko-Pekka Luukkonen	7	3-4-0	12	.856	3.91

UTICA

SKATER	GP	G	A	PTS	PIM	+/-
A.J. Greer	11	7	8	15	43	1
Reilly Walsh	11	2	10	12	4	7
Ryan Schmelzer	12	5	3	8	2	1
Fabian Zetterlund	7	4	4	8	0	0

GOALTENDER

	GP	REC	GA	SV%	GAA
Nico Daws	7	4-2-0	17	.898	2.81
Akira Schmid	6	2-2-1	18	.869	3.63

2021-22 HOME GAME-BY-GAME BREAKDOWN

Date	Result	Score	SF-SA	PP	PK
Nov. 20	L	5-3	37-29	1-5	2-4
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
Mar. 30	W	4-3	23-33	2-3	2-3
Apr. 29	W	8-1	35-29	1-3	2-2

SERIES NOTABLES

Amerks defenseman **Mitch Eliot** spent his first two professional seasons with the Comets, recording 14 points on three goals and 11 assists in 77 games from 2019-21.

Comets defenseman Dylan Blujus, who re-joined the Utica for his second stint prior to the beginning of the season, spent the 2020-21 campaign with Rochester. After being held off the scoresheet for his first 20 games that year, he tallied both of his points during the season-finale against the Comets as he scored a goal and an assist.

So far this season, the Amerks have used 11 different defensemen, which is second-most in the AHL only behind Toronto's 12.

The Amerks are off to their first 4-0-0-0 start on home ice since the 2006-07 campaign when Rochester won its first nine straight home games to begin the season. All four wins have come by way of four or more goals. The only team with a better home record this season is Charlotte, which has gone 4-0-0-0 and have outscored the opposition 15-10.



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