

Sat. | **November 5, 2022** | 7:00 PM ET | Adirondack Bank Center | AHL Game 143 | AHL TV, The Fan Rochester



GAME NOTES



TONIGHT'S GAME OVERVIEW

The Rochester Americans (6-3-0-0) and Utica Comets (2-4-0-1) square off for the second straight day as the home-and-home series shifts back to Utica tonight for a rematch at Adirondack Bank Center. Game time is slated for a 7:00 p.m. start and will be carried on The Sports Leader 95.7 FM/950 AM The Fan Rochester as well as AHLTV.

Tonight represents the 10th of 15 straight contests against North Division opponents to open the season for the Amerks. Its Rochester's longest stretch of the season against divisional foes. Rochester and Utica will play more six times (three home and three 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 in Utica since Rochester eliminated the Comets 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

Trailing 3-1 entering the final minute of the second period, the Amerks erupted for four straight unanswered goals, including two in 22 seconds, to storm back and claim a 5-3 win over the Comets Friday at Blue Cross Arena. Rochester has now won three straight and have outscored the opposition 17-6 in that span, accounting for nearly half of the Amerks' 33 goals.

The win also improved Rochester to 5-0-0-0 on home ice, the team's best start at home since 2006-07, and moved the Amerks to within two points of first place in the American Hockey League's North Division standings.

Forwards **Anders Bjork** (1+1) and **Brandon Biro** (0+2) both notched a multi-point effort as did defenseman **Ethan Prow** (1+1) in the win. **Lukas Rousek**, **Linus Weissbach** and **Mason Jobst** all scored one goal apiece.

Matt Bartkowski, **Riley Sheahan**, **Jiri Kulich** and **Brett Murray** all logged an assist while goaltender **Ukko-Pekka Luukkonen** improved to 5-3-0 as he matched a season-high 37 saves. Luukkonen boasts a 11-5-5 record in his last 21 starts dating back to the 2021-22 campaign.

POWER-PLAY PROFICIENCY

Nine of the Amerks 33 goals this season have come on the power-play, which are tied for sixth-most among any team in the AHL. By going 9-for-37 while on the man-advantage, Rochester is ninth in the league with a 24.3% conversion rate.

The Amerks' eight power-play goals at home are the most in the league this season, going for 8-for-25 through their first five home matchups.

2022-23 AMERKS OVERALL SCORING & GOALTENDING LEADERS

SKATER	GP	G	A	PTS	+/-	PIM
Brandon Biro	9	3	8	11	-2	2
Linus Weissbach	9	6	4	10	-1	18
Lukas Rousek	9	3	6	9	-1	2
Jiri Kulich	9	2	6	8	-0	2
Isak Rosen	9	2	5	7	-3	0

GOALTENDER	GP	REC	SVS	SV%	GAA
Michael Houser	2	1-0-0	39	.929	2.48
Ukko-Pekka Luukkonen	8	5-3-0	204	.887	3.34

2022-23 COMETS OVERALL SCORING & GOALTENDING LEADERS

SKATER	GP	G	A	PTS	+/-	PIM
Brian Pinho	8	5	2	7	0	2
Andreas Johnsson*	4	1	5	6	4	4
Nolan Foote	8	3	2	5	0	2
Tyce Thompson	6	2	3	5	-2	2
Jack Dugan	8	1	4	5	-1	0

GOALTENDER	GP	REC	SVS	SV%	GAA
Nico Daws	4	0-3-0	86	.896	2.81
Akira Schmid	4	2-1-1	90	.918	1.97

*Currently on recall with New Jersey

HEAD-TO-HEAD BREAKDOWN

Utica Comets	Rochester Americans
2-4-0-1	Record 6-3-0-0
2-1-0-1	Home Record 5-0-0-0
0-3-0-0	Road Record 1-3-0-0
2-4-0-1	Last 10 Games 6-3-0-0
3-1-0-1	Record When Scoring First 3-1-0-0
2.71 (T-27th)	Goals-For Per Game 3.67 (T-11th)
2.86 (6th)	Goals-Against Per Game 3.44 (T-20th)
18.5% (23rd)	Power-Play 24.3% (9th)
69.6% (31st)	Penalty Kill 71.0% (29th)
5-3 L vs. ROC	Last Game 5-3 W vs. UTC
Nov. 11 vs. LAV	Next Game Nov. 9 @ SYR



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YOUTH MOVEMENT LEADING ROCHESTER

With two assists last night, Biro has taken over the team's scoring lead with 11 points (3+8) while also extending his point streak to four straight games. Dating back to last season, the third-year pro has totaled 13 points (5+8) over his last 12 games and hasn't gone more than one game without a point over that span.

Weissbach, Buffalo's seventh-round selection (192nd overall) in the 2017 NHL Draft, remains at a close second with 10 points through his first nine games, including as team-high six goals. He comes into tonight with a goal in each of his last three appearances and shows five goals over a six-game span dating back to a three-point effort against Syracuse on Oct. 21. His six goals tie him for third in the AHL, trailing only Toronto's Joey Anderson and Springfield's Nathan Todd.

Jiri Kulich (2+6) and **Isak Rosen** (2+5) pace the team's rookies with eight and seven points, respectively, while being tied for seventh and 12th 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. Kulich, who extended his point streak to four straight games with an assist last night, shows six assists in his first eight games of the young season, tying him for fifth in the league among all first-year players 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 eight games with Utica, Dugan is tied for third on the team with four assists and third in scoring with five points.

SCOUTING THE COMETS

The Comets come into the matchup sitting in sixth place in the AHL's North Division standings with a 2-4-0-1 overall record.

Newcomer Brian Pinho paces all Utica skaters with five goals while his seven points also lead the team. 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 four of his last five 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 17th with a .918 SV%.

AMERKS-COMETS 2022-23 SEASON SERIES BREAKDOWN

ROCHESTER

SKATER	GP	G	A	PTS	PIM	+/-
Anders Bjork	1	1	1	2	0	3
Ethan Prow	1	1	1	2	0	3
Brandon Biro	1	0	2	2	0	1
Mason Jobst	1	1	0	1	0	1

GOALTENDER	GP	REC	GA	SV%	GAA
Ukko-Pekka Luukkonen	7	3-4-0	12	.856	3.91

UTICA

SKATER	GP	G	A	PTS	PIM	+/-
Nolan Foote	1	1	0	1	0	-2
Brian Halonen	1	1	0	1	0	1
Brian Pinho	1	1	0	1	0	-2
Samuel Laberge	1	0	1	1	2	0

GOALTENDER	GP	REC	GA	SV%	GAA
Nico Daws	1	0-1-0	5	.750	5.08

2022-23 GAME-BY-GAME BREAKDOWN

Date	Result	Score	SF-SA	PP	PK
Nov. 4	W	5-3	20-40	1-4	3-4

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 12 different defensemen, which is tied for most in the AHL with Toronto.

The Amerks are off to their first 5-0-0-0 start on home ice since the 2006-07 campaign when Rochester won its first nine straight home games to begin the season. All five wins have come by way of four or more goals. Rochester is one of two teams (Charlotte) with five or more home wins and have outscored the opposition 24-13.



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