

Saturday | **Nov. 19, 2022** | 7:00 PM ET | Adirondack Bank Center | AHL Game 228 | AHL TV, The Fan Rochester



GAME NOTES



TONIGHT'S GAME OVERVIEW

The Rochester Americans (7-5-1-1) and Utica Comets (4-5-1-1) 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/950AM The Fan Rochester as well as AHLTV.

Tonight represents the last 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 six road) during the 2022-23 season.

HEAD-TO-HEAD SERIES SNAPSHOT AGAINST UTICA

Dating back to the start of the 2021-22 season, the intrastate rivals have alternated wins with each team winning at least once on home ice to split the season series thus far.

In the first meeting of this season, Rochester trailed 3-1 entering the final minute of the second period before erupting for four straight unanswered goals, including two in 22 seconds, to storm back and claim a 5-3 win over the Comets on Nov. 4.

The next night, the Amerks fell behind by a pair of goals three minutes into the third period versus Utica but saw their rally fall short in a 2-1 loss.

Home ice has proven to be beneficial for both teams, especially Rochester, which has won five of its first seven and has recorded at least one point in six matchups. Prior to last night's road victory, Utica entered the weekend winless while playing outside the Adirondack Bank Center this season.

LAST TIME OUT

A late goal in the third period by the Comets proved to be the difference as the Amerks were on the wrong side of a 3-2 score Friday night at The Blue Cross Arena.

The regulation loss was Rochester's first on home ice this season after starting the campaign 5-0-1-0. Overall, the Amerks boast a 7-5-1-1 record through 14 games and have points in six of their last eight.

Forwards **Michael Mersch** and **Sean Malone** both returned to the lineup after missing a combined 16 games due to their respective injuries. The duo each scored for Rochester while Mersch (1+1) along with **Brett Murray** (0+2) both added a multi-point effort. Defenseman **Ethan Prow** rounded out the scoring as he recorded an assist on Mersch's first-period goal. Third-year pro **Matej Pekar** skated in his first game of the campaign

Goaltender **Malcolm Subban** (0-1-0) made 22 saves in his Amerks debut but was tagged with the defeat. The appearance was his first in the AHL since Dec. 1 of last season as a member of the Rockford IceHogs.

POWER-PLAY PROFICIENCY

Coming into tonight, 11 of the Amerks' 46 goals this season have come on the power-play, which are tied for 13th-most among any team in the AHL. By going 11-for-48 while on the man-advantage, Rochester is ranked eighth in the league with a 22.9% conversion rate.

The Amerks' 10 power-play goals at home are tied third-most in the league this season, going for 10-for-29 through their first seven home matchups.

2022-23 AMERKS OVERALL SCORING & GOALTENDING LEADERS

SKATER	GP	G	A	PTS	+/-	PIM
Brandon Biro	12	3	9	12	-2	2
Linus Weissbach	14	6	5	11	-5	20
Lukas Rousek	14	4	7	11	-1	4
Isak Rosen	14	2	7	9	-4	0
Brett Murray	14	5	3	8	1	13

GOALTENDER	GP	REC	SVS	SV%	GAA
Michael Houser	4	1-1-0	84	.913	2.79
Malcolm Subban	1	0-1-0	22	.880	3.06
Ukko-Pekka Luukkonen*	9	6-3-0	238	.898	3.07
Beck Warm^	2	0-0-2	37	.881	3.52

*=Currently on recall with Buffalo

^ = Currently reassigned to Cincinnati (ECHL)

2022-23 COMETS OVERALL SCORING & GOALTENDING LEADERS

SKATER	GP	G	A	PTS	+/-	PIM
Brian Pinho	10	7	3	10	1	2
Andreas Johnsson	7	2	8	10	3	6
Nolan Foote	12	5	3	8	-2	2
Reilly Walsh	12	1	6	7	1	16
Tyce Thompson	8	3	3	6	-3	2

GOALTENDER	GP	REC	SVS	SV%	GAA
Akira Schmid*	4	2-1-1	90	.918	1.97
Nico Daws	6	2-3-0	132	.910	2.34
Isaac Poulter	2	0-1-1	62	.827	6.31

*=Currently on recall with New Jersey

HEAD-TO-HEAD BREAKDOWN

Utica Comets	Rochester Americans
4-6-1-1	Record 7-5-1-1
3-1-1-1	Home Record 5-1-1-0
1-4-0-0	Road Record 2-4-0-1
4-4-1-1	Last 10 Games 4-4-1-1
7-1-1-0	Record When Scoring First 4-1-1-1
2.82 (26th)	Goals-For Per Game 3.29 (12th)
3.27 (19th)	Goals-Against Per Game 3.29 (20th)
18.6% (19th)	Power-Play 22.9% (8th)
75.8% (23rd)	Penalty Kill 74.4% (28th)
3-2 W @ ROC	Last Game 3-2 L vs. UTC
Nov. 23 vs. BEL	Next Game Nov. 23 vs. PRO



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YOUTH MOVEMENT LEADING ROCHESTER

Third-year forward **Brandon Biro** has emerged as the team's early-season leader, picking up where he left off last season with a team-high nine assists and 12 points through his first 12 games. Dating back to last season, the Sherwood Park, Alberta native has totaled 14 points (5+9) over his last 15 games and hasn't gone more than one game without a point over that span.

Second-year forwards **Lukas Rousek** and **Linus Weissbach** remain at a close second with 11 points each, including a team-high six goals from Weissbach. He comes into tonight with four points over his last eight appearances, including goals in three straight games over that span. His six goals are currently five off the league-lead. Like Biro, Rousek hasn't gone more than three games all season without a point.

First-year forwards **Isak Rosen** (2+7) and **Jiri Kulich** (2+6) pace the team's rookies with nine and eight points, respectively, while being tied for 15th and 20th 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. Rosen is tied for sixth among all AHL rookies with seven assists, just three back of the league-leader.

At age 18, Kulich, Buffalo's first-round selection (28th overall) in 2022, is among the youngest players in the AHL. Kulich shows six assists in his first 14 games of the season, tying him for 15th in the league among all first-year players in that category. The Kadan, Czech Republic, native also leads all Rochester skaters with 37 shots on goal.

HOME-COOKING FOR THE AMERKS

The Amerks have earned at least one point in six of seven home games so far this season, boasting a 5-1-1-0 mark within the friendly confines of The Blue Cross Arena. The team's win streak was snapped on Nov. 11 in a 6-5 OT loss to Cleveland before the point streak was halted last night's 3-2 defeat.

Four of the five victories this season in the Flower City have come when the team trailed entering the final 20 minutes of regulation while all five wins have come by way of four or more goals. Rochester has outscored its opposition 13-6 after the start of the third period and has outshot the visitors 57-53.

Before last night's regulation loss to Utica, Rochester entered the weekend as one of three teams that have yet to lose in regulation at home this season, along with Hershey and Hartford in that regard.

SCOUTING THE COMETS

The Comets come into the matchup sitting in seventh place in the AHL's North Division standings with a 4-5-1-1 overall record and are coming off their first road victory of the season with last night's 3-2 win in Rochester.

Newcomer Brian Pinho paces all Utica skaters with seven goals while his 10 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 straight and six of his last seven outings.

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 tied for fifth on the team with six points through 12 games.

AMERKS-COMETS 2022-23 SEASON SERIES BREAKDOWN

ROCHESTER

SKATER	GP	G	A	PTS	PIM	+/-
Brett Murray	3	1	3	4	0	4
Ethan Prow	3	1	3	4	0	3
Anders Bjork	2	1	1	2	0	2
Michael Mersch	1	1	1	2	2	1

GOALTENDER

	GP	REC	GA	SV%	GAA
Michael Houser	1	0-1-0	2	.913	2.06
Ukko-Pekka Luukkonen	1	1-0-0	3	.925	3.00
Malcolm Subban	1	0-1-0	3	.880	3.06

UTICA

SKATER	GP	G	A	PTS	PIM	+/-
Nolan Foote	3	2	1	3	0	-1
Brian Pinho	2	2	1	3	0	0
Reilly Walsh	3	0	1	3	2	-1
Brian Halonen	3	1	1	2	0	1

GOALTENDER

	GP	REC	GA	SV%	GAA
Nico Daws	3	2-1-0	8	.884	2.68

2022-23 GAME-BY-GAME BREAKDOWN

Date	Result	Score	SF-SA	PP	PK
Nov. 4	W	5-3	20-40	1-4	3-4
Nov. 5	L	2-1	23-23	0-1	2-2
Nov. 18	L	3-2	26-25	0-1	3-3

SERIES NOTABLES

So far this season, the Amerks have used 12 different defensemen, which is tied for most in the AHL with Toronto. Seven of the 12 have recorded at least one point while four have scored. **Ethan Prow** is the only defenseman to appear in all 14 games this season and has skated in 84 of the 90 games dating back to the start of the 2021-22 campaign.

Amerks defenseman **Mitch Eliot** played his first two pro seasons with the Comets during the team's affiliation with the Vancouver Canucks. In 53 games with the Comets, he produced four goals and nine points.

Comets forward Tyce Thompson is the younger brother of former Amerks and current Buffalo Sabres forward **Tagge Thompson**.

Ukko-Pekka Luukkonen has stopped 98 of the 108 shots he faced this season after the second period. Prior to his recall Thursday, he was tied for the lead with six wins, while ranking fifth in minutes (527) and saves (238).

Utica returns one of the AHL's top goaltending tandems from last season in Nico Daws and Akira Schmid, both of whom also spent considerable time in New Jersey. Despite currently being on recall with the Devils, Schmid ranks third among all AHL goaltenders with a 1.97 goals-against average.



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