

# ROCHESTER AMERICANS HOCKEY CLUB

SIX-TIME CALDER CUP CHAMPIONS 1965 | 1966 | 1968 | 1983 | 1987 | 1996

Friday | **March 10, 2023** | 7:05 PM ET | The Blue Cross Arena | AHL Game 899 | AHL TV, The Fan Rochester



# GAME NOTES



## TONIGHT'S GAME OVERVIEW

The Rochester Americans (26-22-4-1) kick-off another three-game weekend tonight as they host the Hartford Wolf Pack (24-22-3-7) for the only time this season at The Blue Cross Arena. The 7:05 p.m. matchup will be carried on The Sports Leader 95.7 FM/950 AM The Fan Rochester as well as AHLTV.

The Amerks, who are playing their first of a dozen games over a 22-day stretch, come into tonight's matchup with a 3-2-2-0 record in their last seven games since Feb. 19. Rochester shows a 4-4-1-1 mark in its last 10 overall and a 2-0-1-0 mark in its previous three home games inside the Flower City. The Amerks are 7-5-1-0 in Friday home contests this season.

## LAST TIME OUT

The Amerks pulled within one goal on two different occasions but ultimately could not overcome a 2-0 deficit as they fell short in a 3-2 decision against the Belleville Senators this past Saturday at CAA Arena.

Forward **Linus Weissbach** (1+1) scored his team-leading and career-high 17th goal of the season while also adding an assist for his ninth multi-point effort of the year. **Michael Mersch** redirected his 13th tally of the campaign while **Brandon Biro**, Brett Murray, and Lawrence Pilut all recorded an assist.

Goaltender **Malcolm Subban** (13-12-1), who earned his fourth start in the last five games, stopped 21 of the 24 shots he faced.

## HEAD-TO-HEAD SERIES SNAPSHOT AGAINST WOLF PACK

The Amerks earned at least one point in all four games last season against Hartford, going 3-0-1-0, including a perfect 2-0-0-0 mark on home ice.

In six of the last 11 meetings, the visiting team has come away with the victory. Additionally, six of the previous nine tilts have been one-goal games

Dating back to the 2017-18 campaign, Rochester has earned wins in six of the last 10 contests against Hartford while also recording at least one point in 11 of the previous 14 exchanges, going 8-3-1-2 over that span.

Both teams have only three regulation losses this season when leading after the first period with Rochester showing a 16-3-1-0 record in that regard whereas Hartford is 14-3-1-1.

## SUBBAN SHOULDERING THE WORKLOAD

After suffering a defeat in his season-debut on Nov. 18, Subban has gone 13-11-1 since over his last 25 starts, including seven straight wins between Dec. 10 to Jan. 14. The seven-game win streak was the longest of his pro career and the third-longest streak among all AHL goaltenders behind Toronto's Joseph Woll and Calgary's Dustin Wolf.

He was the first Amerks goaltender to post seven straight wins since Jonas Johansson won nine consecutive contests during the 2019-20 campaign.

Subban had arguably his best performance of the season during a 75-save weekend in Rochester's two-game sweep over the Charlotte Checkers in mid-December. A night after stopping a regular-season career-high 45 saves, Subban was flawless in a 30-save shutout on Dec. 17, his first in the AHL since April 8, 2017, with the Providence Bruins.

Subban has topped the 30-save mark seven times in his last 21 starts dating back to Dec. 16.

## 2022-23 AMERKS OVERALL SCORING & GOALTENDING LEADERS

SKATER	GP	G	A	PTS	+/-	PIM
Brandon Biro	43	13	27	40	2	12
Lukas Rousek	53	11	28	39	-3	20
Linus Weissbach	51	17	20	37	-8	45
Jiri Kulich	45	16	18	34	-2	10
Michael Mersch	42	13	21	34	-1	18

## GOALTENDER

GOALTENDER	GP	REC	SVS	SV%	GAA
Michael Houser	15	6-5-2	396	.904	3.02
Eric Comrie	3	1-2-0	79	.898	3.03
Malcolm Subban	26	13-12-1	723	.901	3.06
Ukko-Pekka Luukkonen*	9	6-3-0	238	.898	3.07

\*=Currently with Buffalo (NHL)

^ = Currently reassigned to Cincinnati (ECHL)

## 2022-23 HARTFORD OVERALL SCORING & GOALTENDING LEADERS

SKATER	GP	G	A	PTS	+/-	PIM
Will Cuyille	53	19	13	32	3	48
Tanner Fitz	51	5	27	32	2	24
Turner Elson	56	12	19	31	6	32
Ryan Carpenter	35	15	15	30	3	18
Jonny Brodzinski*	34	12	18	30	9	33

## GOALTENDER

GOALTENDER	GP	REC	SVS	SV%	GAA
Louis Domingue	34	13-12-7	840	.906	2.66
Dylan Garand	26	11-10-3	568	.894	2.91

\* = Currently on recall with NYR

## HEAD-TO-HEAD BREAKDOWN

**Hartford Wolf Pack** vs **Rochester Americans**

24-22-3-7	<b>Overall Record</b>	26-22-4-1
11-11-0-5	<b>Home Record</b>	13-10-2-0
13-11-3-2	<b>Road Record</b>	13-12-2-1
5-4-0-1	<b>Last 10 Games</b>	4-4-2-0
20-6-1-3	<b>Record When Scoring First</b>	16-7-2-1
2.98 (23rd)	<b>Goals-For Per Game</b>	3.26 (10th)
3.11 (18th)	<b>Goals-Against Per Game</b>	3.36 (24th)
15.2% (31st)	<b>Power-Play</b>	20.1% (14th)
80.8% (T-16th)	<b>Penalty Kill</b>	78.9% (24th)
4-0 L vs. SPR	<b>Last Game</b>	3-2 L @ BEL
Mar. 11 @ TOR	<b>Next Game</b>	Mar. 11 @ SYR



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## BIRO PILING UP THE POINTS

Despite missing six games due to injury, third-year forward **Brandon Biro** has blazed his way atop the team's scoring lead following a productive December in which he led the team with 16 points (6+10) in 10 games. He recorded multi-point efforts in seven of his 10 appearances, including six straight between Dec. 9 and Dec. 30 before closing out the month with an assist in the 3-2 win in Toronto.

Biro, who made his NHL debut with the Buffalo Sabres last season, is currently the only Amerks skater this season with 40 points in 43 games after scoring his first pro hat trick last Wednesday. His seven-game point streak to close out the 2022 calendar year was the longest of his career.

Dating back to last season, Biro has totaled 81 points on 25 goals and 56 assists over his last 91 games and hasn't gone more than seven games without a point since Nov. 27, 2021. The Penn State product is currently shows nine points (4+5) over his last six games.

## KULICH NAMED WEEK'S BEST

Amerks rookie forward **Jiri Kulich** was named the **Howies Hockey Tape/AHL Player of the Week** for the period ending Feb. 26, 2023. Kulich tallied six points in three games to help spark the Rochester offense to a three-win, 20-goal weekend.

On Friday Feb. 24, Kulich recorded his first career two-goal game, his first three-point effort and his first game-winning goal, leading the Amerks to an 8-4 win over Laval. On Saturday the 25th, he notched a pair of assists as Rochester rolled to a 7-1 win at Springfield. To close out weekend on Sunday afternoon, Kulich's unassisted breakaway goal helped the Amerks put away a 5-1 victory at Providence.

Buffalo's first-round choice (28th overall) in the 2022 NHL Draft, Kulich has compiled 17 points in his last 16 games and has totaled 16 goals and 18 assists for 34 points in 45 games for Rochester on the season.

The 18-year-old native of Kadan, Czech Republic, also earned a silver medal and was named to the tournament all-star team at the 2023 IIHF World Junior Championship earlier this season.

## PROWESS ON THE BLUELINE

Entering the Jan. 19 game against Laval, **Ethan Prow** was the only Amerks defenseman to appear in every game this season. Overall, he has skated in 118 of the 124 games dating back to the start of the 2021-22 campaign.

In 49 games this season, Prow is tied for 21st in scoring amongst all AHL defensemen with 29 points while his 24 assists are currently tied for 17th-most at his position. This season marks the fourth straight in which the veteran defenseman has reached the 20-assist mark and the fifth consecutive year with 20 or more points, which includes an abbreviated campaign overseas in 2020-21.

The seventh-year pro has posted 17 points (3+14) in his last 24 outings dating back to Dec. 28 and comes into tonight with one goal and nine assists over his last 14 games.

He's second among all Amerks defensemen with at least five multi-point outings, including a two-goal effort in the 4-3 win at Syracuse back on Jan. 7, and has never gone more than five games all season without a point.

## AMERKS-WOLF PACK 2022-23 SEASON SERIES BREAKDOWN

### ROCHESTER

SKATER	GP	G	A	PTS	PIM	+/-
Sean Malone	1	1	0	1	0	-1
Michael Mersch	1	0	1	1	0	-1
Isak Rosen	1	0	1	1	0	-1
Matt Bartkowski	1	0	0	0	0	0

### GOALTENDER

	GP	REC	GA	SV%	GAA
Michael Houser	1	0-1-0	3	.906	3.18

### HARTFORD

SKATER	GP	G	A	PTS	PIM	+/-
Cristiano DiGiacinto	1	1	0	1	0	1
Turner Elson	1	1	0	1	0	0
Zach Giuttari	1	1	0	1	0	1
Lauri Pajuniemi	1	1	0	1	0	0

### GOALTENDER

	GP	REC	GA	SV%	GAA
Dylan Garand	1	1-0-0	1	.958	1.00

## 2022-23 GAME-BY-GAME BREAKDOWN

Date	Result	Score	SF-SA	PP	PK
Jan. 21	L	4-1	24-33	1-3	2-3

## SERIES NOTABLES

Hartford forward C.J. Smith began his AHL career with Rochester as he appeared in 184 games from 2017-21. Smith produced 61 goals and 81 assists for 142 points while also appearing in 14 games with Buffalo. He recorded his first NHL goal on Feb 5, 2019, becoming the first Iowan to score in the NHL. Smith, who was an AHL All-Star in 2017-18, won the Calder Cup last spring with the Chicago Wolves.

Both teams enter tonight having scored 50 or more goals in the second period this season (Rochester-57) (Hartford-54). Additionally, each team has allowed over 40 goals in the opening 20 minutes of play (Rochester - 44) (Hartford - 43).

Tonight's roster features a combined five skaters from the state of New York in Harford's (Bobby Trivigno - Setauket, NY, Adam Clendening - Niagara Falls, NY) and Rochester's (**Carson Gicewicz** - Orchard Park, NY, **Sean Malone** - Buffalo, NY and **Joseph Cecconi** - Youngstown, NY).

Tonight is the final regular season game between the two teams this season. Following tonight's contest, Rochester will play three more games against Atlantic Division, including a pair of meetings with the Hershey Bears, and just one more in the Flower City.

Should **Austin Strand** make his Amerks debut this weekend, he would become the 39th overall player to appear in one game with the Amerks in 2022-23 and the 15th defenseman. He would also be the 19th different player to don the red, white and blue colors for the first time in their career.



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## EARNING THEIR STARS AND STRIPES

With nine points (4+5) over his last seven games, **Linus Weissbach** is three points back from the team-lead with 37 points (17+20) through 51 games. By scoring his team-leading 17th goal of the season last week against Belleville, he surpassed his previous career-high of 16 from last season and has already set a new personal-best of four game-winning goals.

**Brett Murray**, one of six Amerks with at least 32 points on the season, has also a new career-high in goals (16) from the 2021-22 season. The fourth-year pro comes into tonight with 24 points (11+13) in his last 38 games and has recorded at least one shot in all but five games during that span dating back to Nov. 23.

With four points (2+2) over his last eight games, **Sean Malone** reached the 20-point mark in back-to-back campaigns for the first time in his career. Through 34 contests in his fifth season with the Amerks, Malone has 11 goals and 12 assists.

Amerks captain **Michael Mersch** shows 25 points (12+13) over his last 28 games dating back to Dec. 17. More impressively, with 34 points in 42 games, he's well on his way of reaching the 40-point mark for the sixth time in his nine-year pro career. The Calder Cup winner is also a five-time 20-goal scorer, reaching the mark four times in his first five seasons and again last season when he scored a career-high 26 goals.

Through 47 games, defenseman **Jeremy Davies** established a career-high with nine goals, including three game-winning goals, two of which have come in overtime. Over his last nine games, the Quebec native has collected three goals and six assists for nine points.

Rookie **Isak Rosen** has posted 10 points (5+5) in 18 games since Jan. 21. In the 7-1 victory over Springfield, Rosen, the Sabres' first-round selection (14th overall) in the 2021 NHL Draft, notched his first-career three-point game as well as his first-ever two-goal outing. Overall, three of his eight goals on the season have come while on the power play. Rosen is one of only two rookies this season to reach the 20-point mark.

**Mitch Eliot** tied his previous career-high in goals (3) at Providence on Feb. 26, reaching the mark in 24 fewer games than the 2021-22 campaign.

## SCOUTING THE WOLF PACK

The Wolf Pack come into the matchup sitting in seventh place in the AHL's Atlantic Division standings with a 24-22-3-7 overall record and have a 5-4-0-1 mark in their last 10 contests.

Hartford makes its lone trip to Rochester fueled by forwards Will Cuyllé and Tanner Fritz, both of whom have posted 32 points in 53 and 51 games, respectively. Cuyllé, a New York Ranger's second-round selection (60th overall) in 2020, leads all Wolf Pack skaters with 19 goals while Fritz tops the team with 27 assists. Cuyllé is tied for sixth amongst the AHL's first-year skaters in goals while Fritz is tied for 34th in forwards.

Hartford has used the goaltending duo of Louis Domingue (13-12-7) and Dylan Garand (11-10-3). Garand's three shutouts are tied for most in the AHL amongst all first-year netminders while his 11 wins are 11th.

Domingue, who's with his seventh different AHL club, has matched his career-high of 13 wins and two shutouts in 34 appearances this season.

## JOBST HAVING A CAREER YEAR

**Mason Jobst** has made the most of his second opportunity with the Amerks as the fourth-year pro is in the process of assembling a career-year.

Through 42 games this season, the Speedway, Indiana, native has already established career-highs in all offensive categories, including goals (10), assists (14) and points (24).

With an assist in the 5-4 overtime win in Belleville on Feb. 4, Jobst reached the 20-point mark for the first time in his pro career, becoming then the ninth different Amerk to eclipse the mark.

Since the turn of the New Year, Jobst has amassed seven goals and 10 points over his previous 16 games, including his first career hat trick in the 7-5 loss to the first-place Toronto Marlies back on Jan. 14. He comes into tonight with three goals and four points over his previous games with the three-game goal-scoring streak marking the longest of his career.

Jobst has totaled 37 points (14+23) over 68 career games with the Amerks dating back to last season.

## WORKING OVERTIME

The 4-3 overtime loss last Wednesday night against Laval was Rochester's 12th game this season -- and just fourth in 2023 -- that went beyond regulation for the Amerks.

The Amerks are 6-4 in overtime and show an even 1-1 mark in shootouts.

Rochester has played in the 12th-fewest overtime games in the AHL this season.

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

## DEPTH LEADS AMERKS TO PRODUCTIVE WEEKEND

The Amerks had arguably their best weekend of the season to close out the month of February, winning three straight games in as many days while outscoring the opposition 20-6 to begin a stretch of six games over a nine-day span.

After opening the weekend with an 8-4 win over Laval on Friday, Rochester scored seven straight unanswered goals, including three on the power-play, on their way to a dominating 7-1 win over Springfield on Saturday. The Amerks then put the finishing touches on the 20-goal weekend by scoring four first-period goals and never looking back on their way to a decisive 5-1 win at Providence on Sunday.

Of the 23 different skaters to appear in at least one game last weekend, 18 had one point or more, 15 tallied at least one assist and 12 scored one or more goal. Five skaters registered a multi-assist game while three posted a multi-goal game.

Forwards **Jiri Kulich** (3+3), **Lukas Rousek** (1+5), **Brandon Biro** (1+4), **Linus Weissbach** (3+2), **Anders Bjork** (0+4) all paced the club last weekend.

Goaltenders **Malcolm Subban** (2-0-0) and **Michael Houser** (1-0-0) manned the pipes for Rochester, combining for a .943 save percentage and a 2.00 goals against average in the three games.



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