

Sat. | **Mar. 11, 2023** | 7:00 PM ET | Upstate Medical University Arena | AHL Game 917 | AHL TV, The Fan Rochester



GAME NOTES



TONIGHT'S GAME OVERVIEW

The Rochester Americans (27-22-4-1) continue their three-game weekend as they travel to face the Syracuse Crunch (27-20-5-3) tonight. All the action from Upstate Medical University Arena 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 second of a dozen games over a 22-day stretch, come into tonight's matchup with a 4-2-2-0 record in their last eight games since Feb. 19. Rochester shows a 5-3-2-0 mark in its last 10 overall and a 2-2-1-0 mark in its previous five road games away from the Flower City. The Amerks are 9-8-1-1 in Saturday contests this season.

LAST TIME OUT

The Amerks erupted for four power-play goals and relied on a career-best five-point performance from **Brandon Biro** (1+4) to open the weekend with an 8-4 win over the Hartford Wolf Pack Friday at The Blue Cross Arena.

Along with a five-point effort from Biro, **Ethan Prow** contributed four points (1+3), all of which came on the power-play, while **Lukas Rousek** (2+1) and **Isak Rosen** recorded three points each. **Jeremy Davies** (1+0), **Jiri Kulich** (1+0) and **Mason Jobst** (1+0) rounded out the scoring while **Austin Strand**, **Sean Malone**, **Lawrence Pilut**, **Michael Mersch** and **Matt Bartkowski** each collected an assist.

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

HEAD-TO-HEAD SERIES SNAPSHOT AGAINST CRUNCH

The Amerks have claimed five of the first eight meetings against the Crunch this season, including two get-togethers in Syracuse. The Amerks have outscored the Crunch 13-11 despite being outshot 146-121 inside Upstate Medical University Arena in Syracuse.

Rochester has scored a power-play goal in 23 of its last 41 games against Syracuse, going 35-for-141 (24.8%) with the man-advantage over that span.

Both the Amerks (26) and Crunch (27) have won at least 25 times against one another over the last five years, which includes each team winning at least 15 games on the road.

SUBBAN SHOULDERING THE WORKLOAD

After suffering a defeat in his season-debut on Nov. 18, Subban has gone 14-11-1 since over his last 26 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 22 starts dating back to Dec. 16. His 14 wins are tied for 15th-most amongst all netminders.

2022-23 AMERKS OVERALL SCORING & GOALTENDING LEADERS

SKATER	GP	G	A	PTS	+/-	PIM
Brandon Biro	44	14	31	45	3	12
Lukas Rousek	54	13	29	42	-2	20
Linus Weissbach	52	17	20	37	-7	45
Jiri Kulich	46	17	18	35	-1	12
Michael Mersch	43	13	22	35	-2	18

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	27	14-12-1	749	.900	3.09
Ukko-Pekka Luukkonen*	9	6-3-0	238	.898	3.07

*=Currently with Buffalo (NHL)

2022-23 SYRACUSE OVERALL SCORING & GOALTENDING LEADERS

SKATER	GP	G	A	PTS	+/-	PIM
Alex Barré-Boulet	52	19	47	66	21	54
Darren Raddysh*	50	13	38	51	19	40
Simon Ryfors	55	20	24	44	5	26
Gage Goncalves	54	9	28	37	10	32
Trevor Carrick	43	9	21	30	18	22

GOALTENDER

	GP	REC	SVS	SV%	GAA
Hugo Alnefelt	25	14-9-1	618	.913	2.54
Max Lagace	30	12-9-6	743	.888	3.40
Jack LaFontaine^	4	1-2-0	79	.919	2.43

*=Currently with Tampa Bay (NHL)

^ = Currently reassigned to Orlando (ECHL)

HEAD-TO-HEAD BREAKDOWN

Syracuse Crunch **Rochester Americans**

27-20-5-3.....	Overall Record	27-22-4-1
13-9-5-1.....	Home Record	14-10-2-0
14-11-0-2.....	Road Record	13-12-2-1
6-3-1-0.....	Last 10 Games	5-3-2-0
18-7-1-1.....	Record When Scoring First	16-7-2-1
3.45 (7th).....	Goals-For Per Game	3.33 (10th)
3.18 (21st).....	Goals-Against Per Game	3.35 (24th)
21.4% (15th).....	Power-Play	19.5% (14th)
81.6% (15th).....	Penalty Kill	78.9% (24th)
2-1 OTL vs. LAV.....	Last Game	8-4 W vs. HFD
Mar. 15 @ PRO.....	Next Game	Mar. 12 vs. TOR



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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, logged a career-high five point effort last night, giving him a team-high 45 points in 44 games. He remains one of only two Amerks this season to reach the 40-point mark and his seven-game point streak to close out the 2022 calendar year was the longest of his career.

In 107 career games with the Amerks, Biro has totaled 91 points on 28 goals and 63 assists, never going more than seven games without a point over the last three years. He shows 14 points (5+9) over his last seven 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 18 points (10+8) in his last 17 games and has totaled 17 goals and 18 assists for 35 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 119 of the 125 games dating back to the start of the 2021-22 campaign.

In 50 games this season, Prow, who's coming off his first career four-point outing last night, is tied for 14th in scoring amongst all AHL defensemen with 33 points while his 27 assists are currently tied for 12th-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 21 points (4+17) in his last 25 outings dating back to Dec. 28 and comes into tonight with two goals and 12 assists over his last 15 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-CRUNCH 2022-23 SEASON SERIES BREAKDOWN

ROCHESTER

SKATER	GP	G	A	PTS	PIM	+/-
Brandon Biro	8	1	6	7	0	-2
Ethan Prow	8	3	3	6	0	5
Linus Weissbach	6	3	3	6	6	1
Lukas Rousek	8	1	4	5	2	0

GOALTENDER

	GP	REC	GA	SV%	GAA
Ukko-Pekka Luukkonen	4	3-1-0	11	.904	2.76
Malcolm Subban	3	2-1-0	8	.923	2.74
Michael Houser	1	0-0-1	3	.897	2.85

SYRACUSE

SKATER	GP	G	A	PTS	PIM	+/
Darren Raddysch	8	2	7	9	4	6
Felix Robert	7	3	3	6	6	2
Daniel Walcott	8	3	3	6	14	3
Gemel Smith	5	2	4	6	23	0

GOALTENDER

	GP	REC	GA	SV%	GAA
Hugo Alnefelt	2	1-1-0	2	.951	1.22
Jack LaFontaine	1	0-1-0	1	.923	1.55
Max Lagace	7	2-3-0	22	.873	3.87

2022-23 GAME-BY-GAME BREAKDOWN

Date	Result	Score	SF-SA	PP	PK
Oct. 21	W	4-3	32-20	1-4	3-4
Oct. 22	L	6-2	34-34	1-4	2-3
Nov. 2	W	7-2	21-26	1-5	3-3
Nov. 9	W	3-1	28-35	0-4	3-3
Dec. 7	L	5-1	24-28	0-5	1-1
Jan. 7	W	4-3	29-44	1-6	4-5
Feb. 11	W	4-1	30-33	1-4	2-2
Feb. 19	L	3-2	31-29	0-3	3-4

SERIES NOTABLES

Rochester assistant coach **Michael Peca** spent the majority of the 1994-95 season with the Crunch, where he produced 34 points on 10 goals and 24 assists in just 35 games. It marked Peca's one of two brief stops in his AHL career, the other being a nine-game stint with the Hamilton Canucks.

With **Austin Strand** making his Amerks debut last night, he became the 39th overall player to appear in one game with the Amerks in 2022-23 and the 15th defenseman. He was also be the 19th different player to don the red, white and blue colors for the first time in their career.

Both Rochester (16-3-1-0) and Syracuse (15-3-0-0) enter tonight's matchup with winning records when leading after the first period. On the other hand, both clubs have 11 regulation losses when trailing after 40 minutes of play (ROC, 5-11-1-0) (SYR, 2-11-3-2).



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EARNING THEIR STARS AND STRIPES

With nine points (4+5) over his last eight games, **Linus Weissbach** is eight points back from the team-lead with 37 points (17+20) through 52 games. By scoring his team-leading 17th goal of the season last week against Belleville, he surpassed his previous career-high of 16 as a rookie and has already set a new personal-best of four game-winning goals.

Brett Murray, one of seven 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 six points (2+4) in his last 10 games and has recorded at least one shot in all but five games during that span dating back to Nov. 23.

With five points (2+3) over his last nine games, **Sean Malone** reached the 20-point mark in back-to-back campaigns for the first time in his career. Through 35 contests in his fifth season with the Amerks, Malone has 11 goals and 13 assists.

Amerks captain **Michael Mersch** shows 26 points (12+14) over his last 29 games dating back to Dec. 17. More impressively, with 35 points in 43 games, he's well on his way of reaching the 40-point mark for the sixth time in his nine-year pro career. The former 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 48 games, defenseman **Jeremy Davies** established a career-high with 10 goals, reaching the mark for the first time in his pro career while also becoming the first Amerks defenseman this season to do so. Over his last 10 games, Davies has collected four goals and six assists for 10 points.

Rookie **Isak Rosen** has posted 13 points (6+7) in 19 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, four of his nine 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 CRUNCH

Syracuse comes into the matchup sitting in third place in the AHL's North Division standings with a 27-20-5-7 overall record and have a 6-3-1-0 mark in its last 10 contests.

Alex Barré-Boulet (19+47) and Darren Raddysh (13+38) currently lead all Crunch skaters with 66 and 51 points, respectively. The duo are third and tied for 13th in the AHL in scoring, respectively. Despite currently being on recall with the parent Tampa Bay Lightning, Raddysh ranks second among all defensemen in points (51) and fourth in goals (13) in 50 games.

Goaltenders Hugo Alnefelt (14-9-1) and Max Lagace (12-9-6) have handled the majority of the duties in the crease this season for the Crunch. Alnefelt, who is one of four rookie netminders to record three shutouts, is third amongst all first-year goaltenders with his 2.54 goals-against average. Lagace, meanwhile, has appeared in 30 games for the second straight season and sixth time in his nine year AHL career. The Quebec native shows a 4-0-1 mark over his last five starts dating back to Feb. 18.

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 43 games this season, the Speedway, Indiana, native has already established career-highs in all offensive categories, including goals (11), assists (14) and points (25).

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 eight goals and 11 points over his previous 17 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 four goals and five points over his previous five games, a stretch highlighted by a career-best three-game goal-scoring streak.

Jobst has totaled 38 points (15+23) over 69 career games with the Amerks dating back to last season.

WORKING OVERTIME

The 4-3 overtime loss last Friday against Laval was Rochester's 12th game this season -- and just the 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.

CLOSING OUT FEBRUARY ON A HIGH NOTE

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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