

Wednesday | **March 15, 2023** | 7:05 PM ET | The Blue Cross Arena | AHL Game 934 | AHL TV, The Fan Rochester



GAME NOTES



TONIGHT'S GAME OVERVIEW

The push to the postseason continues tonight as the Rochester Americans (27-24-4-1) close out their season-series with the Laval Rocket (24-24-7-3) at The Blue Cross Arena. The North Division matchup will be carried on The Sports Leader 95.7 FM/950 AM The Fan Rochester as well as AHLTV.

Separated by just one point in the AHL's North Division standings, Rochester and Laval have alternated wins through the first seven matchups with the home team emerging victorious on five occasions, including an 8-4 Amerks triumph in the Rocket's last visit on Feb. 24. Rochester, however, has two games in hand on the Rocket coming into the week.

LAST TIME OUT

The Amerks pulled within one goal on two separate occasions but were unable to find the equalizer each time in a 6-3 loss to the North Division-leading Toronto Marlies this past Sunday at The Blue Cross Arena.

Forward **Lukas Rousek** (1+1) notched his third straight multi-point game of the weekend while **Isak Rosen** and **Linus Weissbach** both scored in the third period.

Jeremy Davies, Brandon Biro, Lawrence Pilut, Mason Jobst, and Michael Mersch all chipped in an assist.

Goaltender **Michael Houser** (6-6-2) made 14 saves in his 16th appearance of the season.

HEAD-TO-HEAD SERIES SNAPSHOT AGAINST ROCKET

After the Amerks claimed the first three meetings in 2021-22, the Rocket have responded with points in nine of the previous 12 meetings between the two teams, posting a 8-3-1-0 record over that span.

Rochester shows a 3-3-1-0 mark through the first seven games of the season series, winning twice at home and once on the road. **Brandon Biro** leads all Amerks with eight points (4+4) in seven games opposite the Rocket.

Rochester boasts a 20-10-1-0 record all-time against the Rocket, which includes a near-perfect 10-3-0-0 mark at home dating back to the start of the 2017-18 campaign.

SUBBAN SHOULDERING THE WORKLOAD

After suffering a defeat in his season-debut on Nov. 18, Subban has gone 14-12-1 since over his last 27 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 eight times in his last 23 starts dating back to Dec. 16. His 14 wins are tied for 16th-most amongst all netminders.

2022-23 AMERKS OVERALL SCORING & GOALTENDING LEADERS

SKATER	GP	G	A	PTS	+/-	PIM
Brandon Biro	46	14	34	48	3	12
Lukas Rousek	56	14	32	46	-2	20
Linus Weissbach	54	18	20	38	-10	45
Michael Mersch	45	13	23	36	-4	25
Jiri Kulich	48	17	18	35	-5	12

GOALTENDER

GP	REC	SVS	SV%	GAA	
Eric Comrie	3	1-2-0	79	.898	3.03
Ukko-Pekka Luukkonen*	9	6-3-0	238	.898	3.07
Michael Houser	16	6-6-2	410	.899	3.09
Malcolm Subban	28	14-13-1	784	.900	3.13

*=Currently with Buffalo (NHL)

2022-23 ROCKET OVERALL SCORING & GOALTENDING LEADERS

SKATER	GP	G	A	PTS	+/-	PIM
Anthony Richard*	49	24	31	55	3	40
Peter Abbandonato	52	11	30	41	5	8
Joël Teasdale	45	20	13	33	-5	21
Brandon Gignac	44	11	19	30	4	14
Jesse Ylönien*	36	9	20	29	-1	16

GOALTENDER

Kevin Poulin	26	10-12-3	636	.888	3.19
Cayden Primeau	29	12-10-6	855	.902	3.28
Joseph Vrbetic^	4	2-1-0	74	.871	4.05
Philippe Desrosiers	2	0-1-1	46	.836	4.70

*=Currently on recall with Montreal (NHL)

^ = Currently reassigned to Trois-Rivieres (ECHL)

HEAD-TO-HEAD BREAKDOWN

Laval Rocket **Rochester Americans**

24-24-7-3 **Overall Record** 27-24-4-1

14-6-5-3 **Home Record** 14-11-2-0

10-18-2-0 **Road Record** 13-13-2-1

4-4-1-1 **Last 10 Games** 4-4-2-0

16-6-3-1 **Record When Scoring First** 16-8-2-1

3.53 (4th) **Goals-For Per Game** 3.32 (8th)

3.64 (30th) **Goals-Against Per Game** 3.43 (26th)

22.1% (7th) **Power-Play** 21.0% (12th)

74.4% (31st) **Penalty Kill** 79.0% (24th)

5-2 L @ SPR **Last Game** 6-3 L vs. TOR

Mar. 17 vs. UTC **Next Game** Mar. 17 @ WBS



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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, has totaled nine points (1+8) over his current four-game point-streak, which began with a career-high five-point effort last Friday against Hartford. With a team-high 48 points in 46 games, he remains one of only two Amerks this season to reach the 40-point mark, joining **Lukas Rousek**.

In 109 career games with the Amerks, Biro has totaled 94 points on 28 goals and 66 assists, never going more than seven games without a point over the last three years. He shows 17 points (5+12) over his last nine 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 19 games and has totaled 17 goals and 18 assists for 35 points in 48 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 120 of the 126 games dating back to the start of the 2021-22 campaign.

In 51 games this season, Prow, who recorded his first three-point outing of the season last Friday against Hartford, is tied for 18th in scoring amongst all AHL defensemen with 32 points while his 26 assists are currently tied for 16th-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 20 points (4+16) in his last 26 outings dating back to Dec. 28 and comes into tonight with two goals and 11 assists over his last 16 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-ROCKET 2022-23 SEASON SERIES BREAKDOWN

ROCHESTER

SKATER	GP	G	A	PTS	PIM	+/-
Brandon Biro	7	4	4	8	2	-1
Jiri Kulich	7	4	3	7	0	4
Lukas Rousek	7	1	6	7	0	1
Michael Mersch	5	4	1	5	2	1

GOALTENDER

	GP	REC	GA	SV%	GAA
Michael Houser	3	1-0-1	7	.920	3.11
Malcolm Subban	4	2-2-0	16	.870	4.07
Ukko-Pekka Luukkonen	1	0-1-0	6	.760	7.62

LAVAL

SKATER	GP	G	A	PTS	PIM	+/-
Anthony Richard	7	4	6	10	0	-1
Peter Abbandonato	7	2	6	8	2	0
Lucas Condotta	7	4	3	7	6	0
Brandon Gignac	5	2	5	7	0	4

GOALTENDER

	GP	REC	GA	SV%	GAA
Kevin Poulin	4	1-3-0	12	.876	3.37
Cayden Primeau	4	3-0-0	13	.879	3.77

2022-23 GAME-BY-GAME BREAKDOWN

Date	Result	Score	SF-SA	PP	PK
Oct. 28	L	8-1	32-35	0-3	1-3
Oct. 29	W	5-1	31-32	0-2	3-3
Jan. 11	W	3-1	17-42	0-1	2-2
Jan. 18	L	5-2	34-23	0-3	4-5
Feb. 24	W	8-4	34-24	1-2	1-1
Mar. 1	L	7-5	34-35	1-4	1-1
Mar. 3	OTL	4-3	24-46	0-0	4-5

SERIES NOTABLES

With **Austin Strand** making his Amerks debut Friday against Hartford, he became the 38th 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.

Rocket goaltender Cayden Primeau who is currently in his fourth season with Laval, is the nephew of former Amerk **Wayne Primeau**, a member of the 1996 Calder Cup-winning team.

Laval's goaltending duo of Kevin Poulin and Cayden Primeau have a combined 11-9-1 record in 22 career games against Rochester **Michael Houser** (1-0-1) and **Malcolm Subban** (2-2-0) have faced Laval three and four times, respectively, during the regular season. Houser appeared in two games during last year's playoff run.



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EARNING THEIR STARS AND STRIPES

With 10 points (5+5) over his last 10 games, **Linus Weissbach** is 10 points back from the team-lead with 38 points (18+20) through 54 games. By scoring his team-leading 18th goal and 38th point of the season this past Sunday against Toronto, he established career-highs in both categories, surpassing the marks he set during his rookie campaign in 2021-22.

Brett Murray, one of seven Amerks with at least 32 points on the season, has captured a new career-high in goals (17) from the 2021-22 season. The fourth-year pro comes into tonight with eight points (3+5) in his last 12 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 12 games, **Sean Malone** reached the 20-point mark in back-to-back campaigns for the first time in his career. Through 37 contests in his fifth season with the Amerks, Malone has 11 goals and 13 assists.

Amerks captain **Michael Mersch** shows 27 points (12+15) over his last 31 games dating back to Dec. 17. More impressively, with 36 points in 45 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 50 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 12 games, Davies has collected four goals and seven assists for 11 points.

Rookie **Isak Rosen** has posted 14 points (7+7) in 21 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 10 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 ROCKET

Laval comes into the matchup sitting in fifth place in the AHL's North Division standings with a 24-24-7-3 overall record and have a 4-4-1-1 mark in its last 10 contests. The Rocket are one point behind the Amerks but Rochester has two games in hand coming into tonight.

Two of the Rocket's top five point-getters are currently on recall with the Montreal Canadiens in Anthony Richard and Jesse Ylönén. Richard paces the club in both assists (31) and points (55), both of which are career-highs, while his 24 goals equals his personal-best in 49 games. Ylönén has totaled three goals and seven assists for 10 points in 26 contests with Montreal.

Cayden Primeau (12-10-6) and Kevin Poulin (10-12-3) have split the goaltending duties for a majority of the season as they show a combined 22-22-9 record. Primeau, who is in his fourth season with Laval, has appeared in 16 of last 18 games since Jan. 25. In 111 career games with the Rocket, the former NCAA Goaltender of the Year boasts a 56-37-9 record. Poulin, meanwhile, is 113-103-26 in 248 AHL appearances over nine seasons.

A JOBST WELL DONE

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 45 games this season, the Speedway, Indiana, native has already established career-highs in all offensive categories, including goals (12), assists (15) and points (27).

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 nine goals and 14 points over his previous 19 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 five goals and seven points over his previous seven games, a stretch highlighted by a career-best three-game goal-scoring streak.

Jobst has totaled 40 points (16+24) over 71 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 11th-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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