

ROCHESTER AMERICANS HOCKEY CLUB

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

Tuesday | **March 21, 2023** | 7:05 PM ET | The Blue Cross Arena | AHL Game 438 | AHL TV, The Fan Rochester



GAME NOTES



TONIGHT'S GAME OVERVIEW

The Rochester Americans (28-25-4-2) open another busy stretch of four games in six nights tonight when they host the intrastate rival Syracuse Crunch (29-22-5-3) at The Blue Cross Arena. Game time is slated for a 7:05 p.m. start and will be carried live on The Fan Rochester as well as AHLTV. The North Division matchup will also be televised locally on CW Rochester.

With 13 games remaining in the 2022-23 regular season, Rochester sits in fourth place in the American Hockey League's North Division standings, just one point ahead of the Belleville Senators, who currently occupy the fifth and final playoff spot. The Amerks trail the third-place Crunch by four points coming into the week.

LAST TIME OUT

The Amerks opened the scoring early in Saturday's contest at Giant Center but could not generate any other offense in a 2-1 loss to the Hershey Bears in a tight-knit defensive matchup between the AHL's two oldest teams.

Despite the loss, Rochester has earned a point in eight of its last 13 games.

Forward **Michel Mersch** scored his 14th goal of the season in the first period from **Mason Jobst** and **Brett Murray**. The trio combined for two goals and six assists over the weekend.

Goaltender **Michael Houser** (6-7-2) stopped 30 of the 32 shots he faced, including 14 in the final 20 minutes of regulation.

HEAD-TO-HEAD SERIES SNAPSHOT AGAINST CRUNCH

The Amerks have claimed five of the first nine meetings against the Crunch this season and have at least one point in three of the four get-togethers in Rochester. The Amerks have outscored the Crunch 29-28 despite being outshot 283-269 thus far in the nine games of the head-to-head series.

Dating back to the 2019-20 season, Rochester has scored a power-play goal in 25 of its last 41 games against Syracuse, going 37-for-149 (24.8%) with the man-advantage over that span.

Both the Amerks (26) and Crunch (28) have won at least 26 times against one another over the last five years, which includes each team winning 16 games on the road.

SUBBAN SHOULDERING THE WORKLOAD

After suffering a defeat in his season-debut, Subban has gone 15-12-2 since over his last 29 starts, including seven straight wins between Dec. 10 to Jan. 14. The seven-game win streak was the longest of his pro career.

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, then his first in the AHL since April 8, 2017, with the Providence Bruins.

It's the first time Subban has posted multiple shutouts in a season since earning three during the 2014-15 campaign with the Providence Bruins. He's also within one win of matching his previous career-high of 16.

2022-23 AMERKS OVERALL SCORING & GOALTENDING LEADERS

SKATER	GP	G	A	PTS	+/-	PIM
Brandon Biro	48	15	35	50	5	12
Lukas Rousek	59	15	33	48	-2	22
Linus Weissbach	57	18	21	39	-10	47
Michael Mersch	48	14	24	38	-3	27
Brett Murray	58	17	20	37	-2	37

GOALTENDER	GP	REC	SVS	SV%	GAA
Michael Houser	17	6-7-2	440	.902	3.03
Eric Comrie	3	1-2-0	79	.898	3.03
Malcolm Subban	30	15-13-2	844	.903	3.05
Ukko-Pekka Luukkonen*	9	6-3-0	238	.898	3.07

*=Currently with Buffalo (NHL)

^=Currently reassigned to Cincinnati (ECHL)

2022-23 CRUNCH OVERALL SCORING & GOALTENDING LEADERS

SKATER	GP	G	A	PTS	+/-	PIM
Alex Barré-Boulet	56	19	50	69	23	56
Darren Raddysh*	50	13	38	51	19	40
Simon Ryfors	59	20	26	46	6	26
Gage Goncalves	58	9	30	39	11	32
Trevor Carrick	47	13	23	36	7	26

GOALTENDER	GP	REC	SVS	SV%	GAA
Hugo Alnefelt	27	15-9-1	654	.912	2.53
Max Lagace	33	13-11-6	818	.888	3.44
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

29-22-5-3 **Overall Record** 28-25-4-2

15-9-5-1 **Home Record** 15-11-2-0

14-13-0-2 **Road Record** 13-14-2-2

5-4-0-1 **Last 10 Games** 3-5-1-1

18-8-1-1 **Record When Scoring First** 17-9-2-2

3.46 (5th) **Goals-For Per Game** 3.27 (9th)

3.25 (21st) **Goals-Against Per Game** 3.37 (23rd)

18.6% (18th) **Power-Play** 20.0% (14th)

80.7% (17th) **Penalty Kill** 79.6% (22nd)

4-3 OTW vs. SYR **Last Game** 2-1 L @ HER

Mar. 24 @ UTC **Next Game** Mar. 24 vs. HER



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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, totaled 11 points (2+9) over a recent five-game point-streak, which began with a career-high five-point effort on March 10 against Hartford.

By factoring in on both goals on last Wednesday against Laval, he reached the 50-point mark for the first time in his pro career and currently leads with 50 points in 48 games.

He shows 19 points (6+13) over his last 11 games, which includes his first career hat trick in the 7-5 loss at Laval to open the month of March.

He's recorded at least one shot in all but eight games so far this season.

In 111 career games with the Amerks, Biro has totaled 96 points on 29 goals and 67 assists, never going more than seven games without a point over the last three years.

SHARING THE WEALTH

After producing three 20-goal scorers last season, the Amerks could potentially have five or more by the season's end.

Linus Weissbach and **Jiri Kulich** share the team lead with 18 goals each while **Brett Murray** remains at a close second with 17, all career-highs.

Brandon Biro and **Lukas Rousek**, the team's top two point-getters this season, come into the week with 15 goals.

The last time Rochester had at least five different 20-goal scorers in the same season was during the 2018-19 campaign when the team had six.

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 123 of the 129 games dating back to the start of the 2021-22 campaign.

In 54 games this season, Prow, who recorded his first three-point outing of the season on March 10 against Hartford, is tied for 23rd in scoring amongst all AHL defensemen with 32 points while his 26 assists are currently tied for 22nd-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 29 outings dating back to Dec. 28 and comes into tonight with two goals and 11 assists over his last 19 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	9	1	8	9	0	-3
Lukas Rousek	9	1	6	7	2	-1
Ethan Prow	9	3	3	6	2	4

GOALTENDER

	GP	REC	GA	SV%	GAA
Ukko-Pekka Luukkonen	4	3-1-0	11	.904	2.76
Michael Houser	1	0-0-1	3	.897	2.85
Malcolm Subban	4	2-2-0	12	.916	3.10

SYRACUSE

SKATER	GP	G	A	PTS	PIM	+/
Darren Raddysh	8	2	7	9	4	6
Simon Ryfors	9	1	7	8	2	3
Trevor Carrick	8	3	5	8	10	1

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	8	3-3-0	24	.885	3.59

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	OTL	3-2	31-29	0-3	3-4
Mar. 11	L	4-2	35-39	2-7	6-6

SERIES NOTABLES

With **Austin Strand** making his Amerks debut against Hartford on March 10, 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.

Both Rochester (17-3-1-1) and Syracuse (15-4-0-0) enter tonight's matchup with winning records when leading after the first period. On the other hand, both clubs have over 15 regulation losses when trailing after 40 minutes of play (ROC, 5-19-1-0) (SYR, 3-16-5-1).

Tonight is Rochester's only Tuesday home game of the season. The Amerks earned a 3-2 shootout win in their only Tuesday contest last season on Apr. 19 against Springfield. Prior to the victory over the Thunderbirds, the club had not hosted or won a Tuesday game in the Flower City in over a decade since claiming a 3-1 win over the Hamilton Bulldogs on Oct. 23, 2012.



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EARNING THEIR STARS AND STRIPES

With 11 points (5+6) over his last 13 games, **Linus Weissbach** is 11 points back from the team-lead with 39 points (18+21) through 57 games. By scoring his team-leading 18th goal and 38th point of the season back on March 12 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 five Amerks with at least 37 points on the campaign, has captured a new career-high in all offensive categories from last season, including goals (17), assists (20) and points (37). The fourth-year pro comes into tonight with 10 points (3+7) in his last 15 games and has recorded at least one shot in all but five games during that span dating back to Nov. 23.

With six points (3+3) over his last 15 games, **Sean Malone** reached the 20-point mark in back-to-back campaigns for the first time in his career. Through 40 contests in his fifth season with the Amerks, Malone has 12 goals and 13 assists.

Amerks captain **Michael Mersch** shows 29 points (13+16) over his last 34 games dating back to Dec. 17. More impressively, with 38 points in 48 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 53 games, defenseman **Jeremy Davies** established a career-high with 11 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 15 games, Davies has collected five goals and seven assists for 12 points.

Rookie **Isak Rosen** has posted 15 points (7+8) in 24 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 30-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 29-22-5-3 overall record and have a 5-4-1-0 mark in its last 10 contests. The Crunch are two points behind the Utica Comets for the second spot in the Division but Syracuse has two games in hand.

Alex Barré-Boulet (19+50) and Darren Raddysh (13+38) currently lead all Crunch skaters with 69 and 51 points, respectively. The duo are second and tied for 21st 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 tied for fourth in goals (13) in 50 games.

Goaltenders Hugo Alnefelt (15-9-1) and Max Lagace (13-11-6) 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 a 2.53 goals-against average. Lagace, meanwhile, has appeared in 33 games for the second straight season and sixth time in his nine-year AHL career. The Quebec native shows a 5-2-1 mark over his last eight starts dating back to Feb. 18.

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 48 games this season, the Speedway, Indiana, native has already established career-highs in all offensive categories, including goals (13), assists (17) and points (30).

With an assist in the 2-1 loss in Hershey on March 18, Jobst reached the 30-point mark for the first time in his pro career, becoming the ninth different Amerk this season to eclipse the mark.

Since the turn of the New Year, Jobst has amassed 10 goals and 16 points over his previous 22 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 six goals and 10 points over his previous 10 games, a stretch highlighted by a career-best three-game goal-scoring streak.

Jobst has totaled 43 points (17+26) over 74 career games with the Amerks dating back to last season.

WORKING OVERTIME

The 5-4 shootout loss this past Friday against Wilkes-Barre/Scranton was Rochester's 13th game this season -- and just the fifth in 2023 -- that went beyond regulation for the Amerks.

The Amerks are 6-4 in overtime and show an even 1-2 mark in shootouts.

Rochester has played in the 13th-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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