



# GAME NOTES



## TONIGHT'S GAME OVERVIEW

The Rochester Americans (31-25-4-3) close out the month of March tonight as they open a weekend home-and-home series with the intrastate rival Utica Comets (31-24-6-3) at the Adirondack Bank Center. The North Division matchup is slated for a 7:00 p.m. start and will be carried live on The Sports Leader 95.7 FM/950 AM The Fan Rochester as well as AHLTV.

The Amerks have earned eight out of a possible 10 points over their last five games and come into the weekend with points in each of their last five home games, going 3-0-1-1 over that span dating back to their 2-0 shutout win over Laval on March 15. Rochester remains just one point behind the Comets for second place in the AHL's North Division standings.

## LAST TIME OUT

The Amerks erased a pair of one-goal deficits on goals from **Brett Murray** and **Jiri Kulich**, but it was the Cleveland Monsters who earned the extra point by way of a 3-2 overtime win Wednesday at The Blue Cross Arena.

**Jiri Kulich** (1+1) and **Lukas Rousek** (0+2), who made his NHL debut Monday night with the Buffalo Sabres, recorded a pair of points. **Brett Murray** (1+0) and **Ethan Prow** (0+1) each had a point as they combined for a goal and an assist, respectively.

Goaltender **Malcolm Subban** (17-13-4) made 23 saves but suffered the overtime loss in his 34th appearance of the season. Over his last six appearances, the Toronto, Ontario, native shows a 3-0-3 record.

## PLAYOFF PICTURE

With eight games remaining in the 2022-23 regular season, Rochester sits tied for third place in the AHL's North Division standings, five points ahead of the Cleveland Monsters, who currently lead the Laval Rocket by one point for the fifth and final playoff spot.

A total of nine points is all the Amerks need to clinch a playoff berth for what would be the team's fourth straight playoff appearance dating back to the 2018 postseason.

Including last year's memorable postseason run which saw Rochester advance to the North Division Finals, the Amerks have qualified for the Calder Cup Playoffs 47 times in the past 66 years.

## SUBBAN SHOULDERING THE WORKLOAD

After suffering a defeat in his season-debut, Subban has gone 17-12-4 since over his last 33 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, his first in the AHL since April 8, 2017, with the Providence Bruins.

It's the first time Subban has had multiple shutouts in a season since earning three during the 2014-15 campaign with Providence. He established a new career-high for wins (17) in last Sunday's win over Cleveland.

## 2022-23 AMERKS OVERALL SCORING & GOALTENDING LEADERS

SKATER	GP	G	A	PTS	+/-	PIM
Lukas Rousek	63	15	36	51	-1	24
Brandon Biro	48	15	35	50	5	12
Brett Murray	63	21	22	43	-1	37
Jiri Kulich	56	22	20	42	-5	16
Linus Weissbach	62	18	22	40	-13	47

## GOALTENDER

GOALTENDER	GP	REC	SVS	SV%	GAA
Michael Houser	18	7-7-2	461	.906	2.83
Malcolm Subban	34	17-13-4	933	.902	2.97
Eric Comrie	3	1-2-0	79	.898	3.03
Ukko-Pekka Luukkonen*	9	6-3-0	238	.898	3.07

\*=Currently with Buffalo (NHL)      ^=Currently reassigned to Cincinnati (ECHL)

## 2022-23 COMETS OVERALL SCORING & GOALTENDING LEADERS

SKATER	GP	G	A	PTS	+/-	PIM
Graeme Clarke	60	21	29	50	2	18
Reilly Walsh	63	6	29	35	-10	38
Joe Gambardella	51	9	23	32	5	4
Nolan Foote*	49	18	12	30	3	25
Brian Halonen	57	17	13	30	2	46

## GOALTENDER

GOALTENDER	GP	REC	SVS	SV%	GAA
Akira Schmid	20	10-6-3	484	.908	2.53
Nico Daws	29	14-12-3	746	.905	2.72
Isaac Poulter	12	6-3-3	316	.883	3.60

\*=Currently on recall with New Jersey

## HEAD-TO-HEAD BREAKDOWN

Utica Comets	Rochester Americans
31-24-6-3	<b>Overall Record</b> ..... 31-25-5-3
15-9-3-3	<b>Home Record</b> ..... 17-11-3-1
16-15-3-0	<b>Road Record</b> ..... 14-14-2-2
5-4-0-1	<b>Last 10 Games</b> ..... 4-3-1-2
21-7-3-2	<b>Record When Scoring First</b> ..... 18-9-2-2
2.94 (T-26th)	<b>Goals-For Per Game</b> ..... 3.23 (9th)
3.03 (T-14th)	<b>Goals-Against Per Game</b> ..... 3.28 (22nd)
16.3% (31st)	<b>Power-Play</b> ..... 20.9% (12th)
77.6% (27th)	<b>Penalty Kill</b> ..... 80.9% (17th)
1-0 SOL @ ROC	<b>Last Game</b> ..... 3-2 OTL vs. CLE
Apr. 1 @ ROC	<b>Next Game</b> ..... Apr. 1 vs. UTC



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# ROCHESTER AMERICANS HOCKEY CLUB

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

Friday | **March 31, 2023** | 7:05 PM ET | Adirondack Bank Center | AHL Game 1041 | AHL TV, The Fan Rochester



# GAME NOTES



## ROUSEK OFF AND RUNNING

After an injury limited him to just 19 regular-season games during his rookie campaign, forward **Lukas Rousek** has taken his first full season by storm.

A 2023 AHL All-Star selection, Rousek currently leads the Amerks in assists (36) and points (51) in 63 games while his 15 goals are tied for fourth-most.

Rousek, a sixth-round selection of the Buffalo Sabres in 2019, made his NHL debut on Monday, scoring a goal and adding an assist while logging 9:03 of time.

He scored his first NHL goal on his first shot on his first shift, the first Sabres player to do so since **Ethan Prow**.

He's the 27th player in Sabres franchise history to score a goal in their NHL debut with Buffalo and the 186th overall to record the first goal of their career as a member of the Sabres.

Rousek also added an assist later in the game, and by doing so, became the first Sabres skater to record a goal an assist in their NHL debut with Buffalo since former Amerk Maxim Afinogenov on Nov. 10, 1999 vs. Boston.

Coming into tonight, Rousek shows 40 points (11+29) over his previous 48 games, including 12 points (4+8) in his last 10.

## SHARING THE WEALTH

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

**Jiri Kulich** (22) and **Brett Murray** (21) have already cracked the mark, both doing so in Sunday's win over Cleveland, while **Linus Weissbach** is within reach with a career-high 18 goals.

With Kulich and Murray becoming the first players this season to reach the 20-goal mark, the Amerks have now had at least one player from all but two seasons (excluding the COVID-19 shortened 2019-20 and 2020-21 seasons) in the 67-year history of the franchise score 20 or more goals dating back to Bronco Horvath's team-leading 37 tallies during the Amerks' inaugural 1956-57 campaign.

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 128 of the 134 games dating back to the start of the 2021-22 campaign.

In 59 games this season, Prow, who recorded his first three-point outing of the season on March 10 against Hartford, is 18th in scoring amongst all AHL defensemen with 36 points while his 30 assists are currently tied for 15th-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.

The seventh-year pro has posted 24 points (4+20) in his last 34 outings dating back to Dec. 28 and comes into tonight with two goals and 15 assists over his last 24 games.

## AMERKS-MONSTERS 2022-23 SEASON SERIES BREAKDOWN

### ROCHESTER

SKATER	GP	G	A	PTS	PIM	+/-
Brett Murray	7	2	4	6	5	1
Brandon Biro	4	1	5	6	0	1
Ethan Prow	7	1	4	5	0	-2

### GOALTENDER

	GP	REC	GA	SV%	GAA
Michael Houser	4	2-2-0	7	.922	1.73
Ukko-Pekka Luukkonen	1	1-0-0	3	.925	3.00
Malcolm Subban	2	1-1-0	7	.875	3.46

### UTICA

SKATER	GP	G	A	PTS	PIM	+/-
Nolan Foote	6	3	2	5	0	-1
Brian Pinho	6	3	2	5	4	-1
Reilly Walsh	7	0	5	5	2	-1

### GOALTENDER

	GP	REC	GA	SV%	GAA
Nico Daws	6	3-2-1	13	.917	2.15
Akira Schmid	1	0-0-1	5	.808	4.87

## 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
Nov. 19	W	3-2	24-28	1-4	2-3
Dec. 9	L	5-2	28-20	1-5	0-1
Dec. 28	OTW	5-4	26-31	1-2	2-2
Mar. 25	SOW	1-0	36-21	0-2	2-2

## 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 the 19th different player to don the red, white and blue colors for the first time in their career.

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.

Of Rochester's final eight games, they will face the Comets three more times, with one final get-together slated for next Saturday back in Utica.

Comets forward Tyce Thompson is the younger brother of former Amerk and current Buffalo Sabres forward Tage Thompson.

Last Saturday's win in Utica gave the Amerks their seventh straight 30-win season dating back to the 2015-16 campaign (excluding the abbreviated 2020-21 season). It also was the third straight game the Amerks went to a shootout, marking the first time since November 2017 the team appeared in three consecutive games which ended in a shootout.



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## EARNING THEIR STARS AND STRIPES

With 12 points (5+7) over his last 18 games, **Linus Weissbach** is 10 points back from the team-lead with 40 points (18+22) through 62 games. By scoring his 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 six Amerks with at least 40 points on the campaign, has captured career-highs in all offensive categories from last season, including goals (21), assists (22) and points (43). The fourth-year pro comes into tonight with 17 points (7+10) in his last 20 games and has recorded at least one shot in all but five games during that span dating back to Nov. 23.

With seven points (4+3) over his last 20 games, **Sean Malone** reached the 20-point mark in back-to-back campaigns for the first time in his career. Through 45 contests in his fifth season with the Amerks, Malone has 13 goals and 13 assists.

Amerks captain **Michael Mersch** shows 31 points (14+17) over his last 39 games dating back to Dec. 17. More impressively, with 40 points in 53 games, he reached 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 58 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 20 games, Davies has collected five goals and seven assists for 12 points.

Rookie **Isak Rosen** has posted 17 points (8+9) in 29 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 11 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 COMETS

Utica comes into tonight sitting in second place in the AHL's North Division standings with a 31-24-6-3 overall record and have a 5-4-0-1 mark in its last 10 contests. The Comets are currently one point ahead of both Syracuse and Rochester in the North Division.

The Comets host Rochester fueled by leading point-getter Graeme Clark as he tops all Utica skaters with 21 goals and 50 points, both of which are career-highs from last season. Third-year defenseman Reilly Walsh shares the team-lead with 29 assists, which includes four in the last six games, while appearing in all but one game for the Comets this season.

Nico Daws (14-12-3) and Akira Schmid (10-6-3) have shared the goaltending duties for a majority of the season for Utica. Schmid recently returned from a recall with the New Jersey Devils, where he shows an 8-5-2 record in 17 games. Prior to his recall, Schmid posted double-digits in wins for the second consecutive season. Daws, meanwhile, matched his win total from last season after winning three of his last four outings following a winless streak that saw him go 0-6-1 from Jan. 13 to Feb. 20.

## A JOB 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 53 games this season, the Speedway, Indiana, native has already established career-highs in all offensive categories, including goals (13), assists (19) and points (32).

With an assist in the 2-1 loss in Hershey on March 18, Jobst reached the 30-point plateau 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 18 points over his previous 27 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 12 points over his previous 15 games, a stretch highlighted by a career-best three-game goal-scoring streak.

Jobst has totaled 45 points (17+28) over 79 career games with the Amerks dating back to last season.

## WORKING OVERTIME

Wednesday's overtime loss to Cleveland was the fifth time in the last seven games -- and the 17th overall -- that went beyond regulation.

The Amerks are 6-5 in overtime this season and show an even 3-3 mark in shootouts.

Rochester (.563) is one of 15 teams in the AHL this season with a .500 or better winning percentage in overtime games.

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

## KEEPING IT KULICH

Ever since returning from an impressive showing at the 2023 IIHF World Junior Championship in January, **Jiri Kulich** has not only emerged as one of the team's most consistent point-getters, but as the top prospect in the Buffalo Sabres pipeline.

The third of Buffalo's three first-round picks in last year's NHL Draft, Kulich currently leads the Amerks and is tied for seventh amongst all AHL rookies with 22 goals while his 42 points are tied for ninth-most.

With Kulich becoming the first player this season to score 20 goals, it marks the first time the Amerks had a rookie 20-goal scorer in back-to-back seasons (**Jiri Kulich** in 2022-23, **Jack Quinn** and **JJ Peterka** in 2021-22) since **Drew Stafford** in 2006-07 and **Clarke MacArthur** in 2005-06.

Kulich, the youngest regular player in the AHL, is only the fourth player in league history to score more than 20 goals during his 18-year-old season (turning 19 after Jan. 1) and first since Robert Dome of Syracuse recorded 21 in 1997-98. Kulich also becomes just the second Amerks player in franchise history to reach the mark as an 18-year-old since **Jozef Cierny** scored 27 during his only season in Rochester in 1992-93.

He was named the AHL's Player of the Week for period ending Feb. 26 after totaling six points while leading Rochester to its first three-win weekend.



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