

Saturday | **April 8, 2023** | 7:00 PM ET | Adirondack Bank Center | AHL Game 1104 | AHL TV, The Fan Rochester



GAME NOTES



TONIGHT'S GAME OVERVIEW

The playoff-bound Rochester Americans (33-25-5-3) are back in action tonight when they conclude their season-series with the Utica Comets (33-25-6-4) at Adirondack Bank Center. Game time 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 18 out of a possible 24 points over their last 12 games and look to improve on their season-long nine-game point streak, which dates back to March 21. It marks Rochester's longest point streak since the club posted a 12-game point streak from Nov. 13 to Dec. 6 during the 2019-20 campaign.

LAST TIME OUT

The Amerks saw the Syracuse Crunch erase a two-goal deficit in the third period before **Jiri Kulich** delivered the game-winner in the final minute of overtime for a 3-2 win Friday at Upstate Medical University Arena.

Forwards **Kohen Olischefski** and **Filip Cederqvist** both scored in the first and second periods, respectively. Kulich sealed the victory in the final minute of overtime. **Sean Malone**, **Lukas Rousek**, **Ethan Prow**, **Linus Weissbach**, **Joseph Cecconi** and **Matej Pekar** all recorded an assist.

Goaltender **Malcolm Subban** (19-13-5) made 42 saves in his 37th appearance of the season. Over his last eight appearances, the Toronto, Ontario, native shows a 5-0-4 record along with one shutout.

AMERKS CLINCH FOURTH STRAIGHT PLAYOFF BERTH

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

The Amerks officially punched their ticket to the postseason by way of a 3-2 overtime win over Syracuse last night coupled with Cleveland's come-from-behind regulation win against Laval. It marks 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

Subban, whose started three straight and five of the last six games, boasts a 19-13-5 record with a pair of shutouts this season. He won seven straight between Dec. 10 to Jan. 14, marking the longest win streak 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, who is 5-0-4 over his last nine starts, 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.

It's the first time Subban has had multiple shutouts in a season since earning three during the 2014-15 campaign with Providence. His career-high 19 wins are tied for 12th-most among all netminders coming into the weekend.

2022-23 AMERKS OVERALL SCORING & GOALTENDING LEADERS

SKATER	GP	G	A	PTS	+/-	PIM
Lukas Rousek	67	15	40	55	-2	24
Brandon Biro	49	16	35	51	4	12
Brett Murray	67	21	25	46	0	37
Jiri Kulich	59	23	25	45	-7	16
Linus Wiessbach	66	19	23	42	-12	49

GOALTENDER	GP	REC	SVS	SV%	GAA
Michael Houser	19	8-7-2	491	.906	2.83
Malcolm Subban	37	19-13-5	1,030	.905	2.91
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	64	24	31	55	5	18
Reilly Walsh	67	8	30	38	-9	38
Joe Gambardella	55	10	25	35	5	4
Nolan Foote	52	20	14	34	4	27
Ryan Schmelzer	64	5	27	32	-2	35

GOALTENDER	GP	REC	SVS	SV%	GAA
Akira Schmid	22	11-6-4	536	.905	2.60
Nico Daws	30	15-13-3	788	.906	2.68
Isaac Poulter^	12	6-3-3	316	.883	3.60

*=Currently on recall with New Jersey

^=Currently reassigned to Adirondack (ECHL)

HEAD-TO-HEAD BREAKDOWN

Utica Comets	Rochester Americans
33-25-6-4	Overall Record 34-25-6-3
17-9-3-4	Home Record 18-11-4-1
16-16-3-0	Road Record 16-14-2-2
4-4-0-2	Last 10 Games 6-1-2-2
22-7-3-3	Record When Scoring First 20-9-2-2
2.99 (21st)	Goals-For Per Game 3.24 (T-8th)
3.03 (T-11th)	Goals-Against Per Game 3.24 (21st)
15.8% (32nd)	Power-Play 21.1% (10th)
77.4% (26th)	Penalty Kill 81.7% (14th)
5-0 W vs TOR	Last Game 3-2 OTW @ SYR
Apr. 12 vs. SYR	Next Game Apr. 14 vs. BEL



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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 (40) and points (55) in 67 games while his 15 goals are sixth-most.

Rousek, a sixth-round selection of the Buffalo Sabres in 2019, made his NHL debut on March 27 against Montreal, scoring a goal and adding an assist while logging 9:03 of time in the 4-3 shootout loss.

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 44 points (11+33) over his previous 52 games, including 16 points (4+12) in his last 14 appearances.

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 (23) and **Brett Murray** (21) have already cracked the mark, both doing so back on March 26 versus Cleveland, while **Linus Weissbach** is closing on his first 20-goal campaign with a career-high 19 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 132 of the 138 games dating back to the start of the 2021-22 campaign.

In 63 games this season, Prow, who recorded his first three-point outing of the season on March 10 against Hartford, is tied for 18th in scoring amongst all AHL defensemen with 38 points while his 32 assists are currently 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 26 points (4+22) in his last 38 outings dating back to Dec. 28 and comes into tonight with two goals and 17 assists over his last 28 games.

AMERKS-COMETES 2022-23 SEASON SERIES BREAKDOWN

ROCHESTER

SKATER	GP	G	A	PTS	PIM	+/-
Brett Murray	9	2	7	9	5	2
Lukas Rousek	8	3	3	6	4	1
Mason Jobst	9	2	4	6	2	0

GOALTENDER

	GP	REC	GA	SV%	GAA
Michael Houser	5	3-2-0	10	.919	1.96
Ukko-Pekka Luukkonen	1	1-0-0	3	.925	3.00
Malcolm Subban	3	2-1-0	9	.925	2.98

UTICA

SKATER	GP	G	A	PTS	PIM	+/-
Nolan Foote	7	4	3	7	2	-1
Brian Pinho	9	1	5	6	2	0
Graeme Clarke	8	3	2	5	0	0

GOALTENDER

	GP	REC	GA	SV%	GAA
Nico Daws	7	3-3-1	17	.907	2.43
Akira Schmid	2	0-0-2	8	.857	3.79

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
Mar. 31	SOW	4-3	31-33	0-1	0-0
Apr. 1	W	4-2	26-30	1-3	4-4

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.

The Amerks have won the last four meetings between the two teams, including back-to-back shootout wins to close out the month of March.

Rochester has scored at least one power-play goal in five of the first nine games of the season series, including three straight.



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EARNING THEIR STARS AND STRIPES

With 14 points (6+8) over his last 22 games, **Linus Weissbach** is 13 points back from the team-lead with 42 points (19+23) through 66 games. By scoring his 19th goal and 41st point of the season on Wednesday against Syracuse, he established career-highs in both categories, surpassing the marks he set during his rookie campaign in 2021-22.

Brett Murray, who's inching closer to his first 50-point campaign, has captured career-highs in all offensive categories from last season, including goals (21), assists (25) and points (46). The fourth-year pro comes into tonight with 20 points (7+13) in his last 24 games and has recorded at least one shot in all but five games during that span dating back to Nov. 23.

With 10 points (5+5) over his last 24 games, **Sean Malone** reached the 20-point mark in back-to-back campaigns for the first time in his career. Through 49 contests in his fifth season with the Amerks, Malone has 14 goals and 15 assists.

Amerks captain **Michael Mersch** shows 31 points (15+16) over his last 43 games dating back to Dec. 17. More impressively, with 41 points in 57 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 62 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 24 games, Davies has collected five goals and seven assists for 12 points.

Rookie **Isak Rosen** has posted 18 points (9+9) in 33 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 12 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

The Comets are currently in fourth place in the North Division, one point back of Rochester and two behind Syracuse.

The Comets host the Amerks fueled by leading point-getter Graeme Clark as he tops all Utica skaters with 24 goals and 55 points, both of which are career-highs from last season. Third-year defenseman Reilly Walsh is one back from the team-lead with 30 assists, while appearing in all but one game for the Comets this season.

Nico Daws (15-13-3) and Akira Schmid (11-6-4) 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 showed 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, upped his win total from last season after winning four of his last six outings.

Utica can clinch a playoff berth tonight with a point against the Amerks or by way of Laval loss of any kind against Syracuse.

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 57 games this season, the Speedway, Indiana, native has already established career-highs in all offensive categories, including goals (14), assists (21) and points (35).

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 Amerks this season to eclipse the mark.

Since the turn of the New Year, Jobst has amassed 11 goals and 22 points over his previous 31 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 seven goals and 15 points over his previous 19 games, a stretch highlighted by a career-best three-game goal-scoring streak.

Jobst has totaled 48 points (18+30) over 83 career games with the Amerks dating back to last season.

WORKING OVERTIME

Last night's overtime win against Syracuse was the eighth time in the last 11 games -- and the 20th overall -- that went beyond regulation.

The Amerks are 7-6 in overtime this season and show a 4-3 mark in shootouts.

Rochester (.563) is one of 17 teams in the AHL this season with a .500 or better winning percentage in overtime games. UPDATE

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 sixth amongst all AHL rookies with 23 goals while his 45 points are also tied for sixth-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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