

ROCHESTER AMERICANS HOCKEY CLUB

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

Tuesday | **May 23, 2023** | 7:00 PM | GIANT Center | Eastern Conference Finals, Game 1 | AHL TV, The Fan Rochester | MSG



GAME NOTES



TONIGHT'S GAME OVERVIEW

The two most storied franchises in the American Hockey League renew their rivalry tonight as the Rochester Americans (6-2) and Hershey Bears (6-1) meet in Game 1 of the Eastern Conference Finals tonight at Giant Center. Opening puck-drop in the best-of-seven series is set for 7:00 p.m. and. The matchup will be carried live on The Sports Leader 95.7 FM/950 AM The Fan Rochester, AHL TV and televised live on MSG Network.

SERIES NOTES

Rochester advanced to the Conference finals for the first time in 19 years after completing the three-game series sweep over the Toronto Marlies in Game 3 of the North Division Finals on Wednesday. The Amerks outscored the Marlies 19-11 despite getting outshot in each game.

By closing out top-seeded Toronto, the Amerks won their first playoff series at home since 2004 while also earning their first sweep of an opponent since 2005.

The Amerks finished the series with Toronto going 7-for-11 on the power-play, including 3-for-3 with the man-advantage Game 3. Rochester has scored at least one power-play goal in six straight games and has gone 12-for-29 on the power-play through its first eight games of the postseason, good for a 41.4% success rate that is tops in the league among remaining teams.

After dropping their first two games of the Calder Cup Playoffs, the Amerks haven't lost since. A victory tonight would extend their win streak to seven games, the club's longest in the postseason since 1991 when they won 10 straight before ultimately losing to Springfield in the Calder Cup Finals four games to one.

PLAYOFF LEADERS

With a goal in each of his first six AHL playoff games, **Jiri Kulich** currently leads all first-year AHL players with six goals and is third in rookie postseason scoring with nine points. Kulich, whose 24 goals in the regular season were the second-most by an 18-year-old in league history, also paces all players with four power-play goals and two game-winning goals.

Isak Rosen, a fellow first-round selection of the Buffalo Sabres, is tied for fourth amongst all AHL rookies with eight points (4+4). Three of his four playoff goals have come on the power-play.

Amerks forward **Mason Jobst** currently leads all Rochester skaters and is tied for sixth in the AHL with 11 points (2+9) while goaltender **Malcolm Subban**, who's earned the start in all eight postseason contests, is tied for second amongst all goaltenders with six straight playoff wins.

Lawrence Pilut, who scored the series-clinching goal versus Syracuse, is third in scoring amongst all AHL blueliners with eight points (3+5) in as many playoff contests. With points in six straight games, Pilut carries the longest active point streak by a defenseman into tonight's matchup.

Fellow blueliner **Ethan Prow** is currently riding four-game point streak dating back to Game 4 of the North Division Semifinals against the Crunch. Coming into tonight, Prow, who reached the 40-point mark for the second straight year and third time in his last four AHL seasons, is sixth amongst all defensemen with seven points in eight games.

2022-23 AMERKS PLAYOFF SCORING & GOALTENDING LEADERS

SKATER	GP	G	A	PTS	+/-	PIM
Mason Jobst	8	2	9	11	1	8
Jiri Kulich	6	6	3	9	3	0
Michael Mersch	8	5	4	9	1	2
Lukas Rousek	8	2	7	9	3	0
Isak Rosen	8	4	4	8	1	2
Brett Murray	8	3	5	8	-3	9
Lawrence Pilut	8	3	5	8	8	12
Sean Malone	8	2	5	7	6	4

GOALTENDER	GP	REC	SVS	SV%	GAA
Malcolm Subban	8	6-2	252	.910	3.06

2022-23 BEARS PLAYOFF SCORING & GOALTENDING LEADERS

SKATER	GP	G	A	PTS	+/-	PIM
Aliaksei Protas	7	3	4	7	5	0
Sam Anas	7	2	5	7	4	0
Joe Snively	7	1	6	7	3	4
Garret Pilon	7	2	4	6	3	2
Connor McMichael	7	3	1	4	3	2
Mason Morelli	7	3	1	4	5	4

GOALTENDER	GP	REC	SVS	SV%	GAA
Hunter Shepard	7	6-1	168	.933	1.71

SERIES SCHEDULE - EASTERN CONFERENCE "SERIES T" BEST-OF-SEVEN

Date	Result	Score	SF-SA	PP	PK
Game 1 - May 23					
Game 2 - May 25					
Game 3 - May 27					
*Game 4 - May 29					
*Game 5 - May 31					
*Game 6 - June 2					
*Game 7 - June 5					
*if necessary					

AMERKS CALDER CUP CHAMPIONSHIPS

- 1995-96 vs. Portland
- 1986-87 vs. Sherbrooke
- 1982-83 vs. Maine
- 1967-68 vs. Quebec
- 1965-66 vs. Cleveland
- 1964-65 vs. Hershey



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HEAD-TO-HEAD SERIES SNAPSHOT

Tonight's series-opener is the just the third meeting overall this season between the league's two oldest teams, who previously met twice over a six-day span back in March with the home team emerging victorious each time. The Bears, however, claimed three out of a possible four points after falling in overtime in their only visit of the season to Rochester on March 24.

Tonight marks the 499th all-time meeting (including playoffs and regular season) between Rochester and Hershey. The Amerks are 94-217-53 lifetime against Hershey during the regular season.

In 34 postseason contests between the two teams, Rochester shows a 24-10 record and boast a 6-1 mark in seven all-time playoff series. The longtime rivals have not met in the playoffs since the Amerks finished off the Bears in a four-game sweep during the 2000 Conference Finals.

Rochester is 5-2 in Game 1 against the Bears and have won three straight dating back to 1987. The Amerks show a 9-6 mark in Hershey, which includes a pair of overtime defeats, compared to a 15-4 record at home all-time against the Bears.

Tonight is just the second time Hershey has hosted Rochester to begin a series, with the only other coming during the 1994 Division Finals, the Bears' lone lone series win against the Amerks.

The Bears (11) and Amerks (six) have combined for 17 Calder Cup championships in their respective histories. Hershey's 11 Calder Cups are the most by any team in league history. The Bears, who are making their 70th playoff appearance, have won three AHL titles in the modern era, including back-to-back championships in 2009 and 2010.

Hershey shows a 3-1 mark on home ice during the 2023 Calder Cup Playoffs while Rochester is 3-0.

In his first season as Hershey's head coach Todd Nelson spent the 2000-01 season with the Amerks as a defenseman, recording 26 points (6+20) in 74 games before adding two assists in four playoff appearances. A three-time Calder Cup winner, Nelson owns the distinction of being just the third person in AHL history to win a Calder Cup as a player (1994, Portland), assistant coach (2008, Chicago) and head coach (2017, Grand Rapids).

SHARING THE WEALTH

The Amerks finished the regular season with three different 20-goal scorers for the second straight year.

Jiri Kulich (24) and **Brett Murray** (23) each cracked the mark, both doing so back on March 26 versus Cleveland, while **Linus Weissbach** also reached his first 20-goal campaign in last Friday's 7-4 loss to Belleville.

With Kulich, Murray and Weissbach all successfully reaching the 20-goal mark this season, 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.

2022-23 AMERKS REGULAR SEASON LEADERS

SKATER	GP	G	A	PTS	+/-	PIM
Lukas Rousek	70	16	40	56	-1	24
Brandon Biro	49	16	35	51	4	12
Brett Murray	71	23	26	49	-1	46
Linus Wiessbach	69	20	27	47	-10	63
Jiri Kulich	62	24	22	46	-7	18

GOALTENDER

	GP	REC	SVS	SV%	GAA
Michael Houser	21	9-8-2	541	.906	2.80
Malcolm Subban	39	20-14-5	1,072	.903	2.94
Eric Comrie	3	1-2-0	79	.898	3.03
Ukko-Pekka Luukkonen	9	6-3-0	238	.898	3.07

2022-23 BEARS REGULAR SEASON LEADERS

SKATER	GP	G	A	PTS	+/-	PIM
Mike Sgarbossa	60	21	37	58	19	38
Mike Vecchione	68	23	32	55	16	25
Ethen Frank	57	30	19	49	14	20
Mason Morelli	72	12	29	41	19	72
Connor McMichael	57	16	23	39	0	12

GOALTENDER

	GP	REC	SVS	SV%	GAA
Hunter Shepard	33	20-8-5	765	.916	2.18
Zach Fucale	38	21-11-4	854	.902	2.54

2022-23 HEAD-TO-HEAD REGULAR SEASON BREAKDOWN

Hershey Bears	Rochester Americans
44-19-5-4.....	Record 36-27-6-3
23-9-2-2.....	Home Record 18-13-4-1
21-10-3-2.....	Road Record 18-14-2-2
6-3-0-1.....	Last 10 Games 6-2-2-0
34-7-3-4.....	Record When Scoring First 21-10-2-2
3.01 (21st).....	Goals-For Per Game 3.28 (8th)
2.56 (2nd).....	Goals-Against Per Game 3.24 (22nd)
18.5% (18th).....	Power-Play 20.6% (13th)
81.9% (T-11th).....	Penalty Kill 81.9% (T-11th)
6-4 W vs. LV.....	Last Game 4-1 W @ CLE



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EARNING THEIR STARS AND STRIPES

With 19 points (7+12) over his last 26 games, **Linus Weissbach** finished nine points back of the team-lead with 47 points (20+27) in 69 games. By scoring his 19th goal and 41st point of the season on April 5 against Syracuse, he established career-highs in both categories, surpassing the marks he set during his rookie campaign in 2021-22.

Brett Murray, who was just one point away from his first 50-point campaign, captured career-highs in all offensive categories from last season, including goals (23), assists (26) and points (49). The fourth-year pro ended the season with 23 points (9+14) in his last 28 games and recorded at least one shot in all but five games during that span dating back to Nov. 23.

With 12 points (5+7) over the last 27 games, **Sean Malone** reached the 30-point mark in back-to-back campaigns for the first time in his career. In 53 contests in his fifth season with the Amerks, Malone finished with 14 goals and 17 assists.

Amerks captain **Michael Mersch** showed 35 points (16+19) over the last 47 games dating back to Dec. 17. More impressively, with 45 points in 61 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.

In 66 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 the last 28 games, Davies collected five goals and seven assists for 12 points.

Rookie **Isak Rosen** posted 22 points (11+11) in 37 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 14 goals on the season came while on the power-play. Rosen was 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.

BEARS PLAYOFF PICTURE

With a 44-19-5-4 record in the regular season, the Bears secured their spot in the Calder Cup Playoffs for the 70th time in franchise history. The 11-time Calder Cup champions have qualified for the postseason 14 times in 16 tries since becoming the top affiliate of the Washington Capitals in 2005.

Hershey hosts Rochester fueled by Aliaksei Protas, Sam Anas and Joe Snively, all of whom have posted seven points in seven games this spring. Protas is one of three Bears with three goals while Snively and Anas top all Hershey skaters with six and five assists, respectively.

After sharing the goaltending duties during the regular season with Zach Fucale, Hunter Shepard (6-1-0) has been the mainstay in the crease for Hershey in the postseason. He ranks second among all AHL netminders with a 1.71 goals-against average and fourth with a .933 save percentage.

After suffering a 2-1 setback to the Charlotte Checkers in Game 3 of the Atlantic Division Semifinals, Hershey has responded by winning four straight to reach the Conference Finals.

AMERKS-BEARS 2022-23 REGULAR SEASON HEAD-TO-HEAD

ROCHESTER

SKATER	GP	G	A	PTS	PIM	+/-
Brett Murray	2	2	1	3	0	1
Mason Jobst	2	0	3	3	0	1
Joseph Cecconi	2	1	0	1	0	0
Michael Mersch	2	1	0	1	0	0
Tyson Kozak	1	0	1	1	4	1

GOALTENDER

	GP	REC	GA	SV%	GAA
Michael Houser	1	0-1-0	2	.938	2.03
Malcolm Subban	1	1-0-0	3	.889	2.78

HERSHEY

SKATER	GP	G	A	PTS	PIM	+/-
Connor McMichael	2	2	0	2	0	2
Ethan Frank	2	1	1	2	2	1
Mike Sgarbossa	2	0	2	2	0	1
Joe Snively	2	0	2	2	0	1
Sam Anas	2	1	0	1	0	2

GOALTENDER

	GP	REC	GA	SV%	GAA
Hunter Shepard	1	1-0-0	1	.957	1.00
Zach Fucale	1	0-0-1	3	.906	2.77

2022-23 REGULAR SEASON GAME-BY-GAME BREAKDOWN

Date	Result	Score	SF-SA	PP	PK
Mar. 18	L	2-1	23-32	0-4	2-2
Mar. 24	OTW	4-3	33-27	1-3	2-2

HERSHEY BEARS
Est. 1938
11x CALDER CUP CHAMPIONS
23 ALUMNI IN THE AHL HALL of FAME

ROCHESTER AMERICANS
Est. 1956
6x CALDER CUP CHAMPIONS
18 ALUMNI IN THE AHL HALL of FAME



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MAKING UP FOR LOST TIME

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

A 2023 AHL All-Star selection, Rousek led the Amerks in assists (40) and points (56) in 70 games while his 16 goals were tied for fifth-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 assist in their NHL debut with Buffalo since former Amerk Maxim Afinogenov on Nov. 10, 1999 vs. Boston.

Rousek, who rejoined Amerks last Saturday following his third recall of the season to Buffalo, finished with 45 points (12+33) over his final 55 games, including 17 points (5+12) in his last 17 appearances.

KEEPING IT KULICH

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

The third of Buffalo's three first-round picks in last year's NHL Draft, Kulich led the Amerks and finished tied for sixth amongst all AHL rookies with 24 goals while his 46 points are tied for 11th-most.

With Kulich becoming the first player this season to score 20 goals, it marked 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 this season, was 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 became 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.



EASTERN CONFERENCE FINALS: GAME ONE

HERSHEY, PA - 7PM | AHLTV | THE FAN ROCHESTER | MSG NETWORK

PLAYOFFS BY THE NUMBERS

ALL-TIME PLAYOFF NOTES (Coming into tonight's game)

Playoff Appearances: 47

89 Series:	48 wins	41 losses
435 Games Played:	223 wins	212 losses
215 Home Games:	131 wins	84 losses
220 Away Games:	94 wins	126 losses
77 Overtime Games:	34 wins	43 losses
36 Home Overtime Games:	20 wins	16 losses
41 Away Overtime Games:	14 wins	27 losses

GOAL-SCORING

1,454 Goals-For	1,385 Goals-Against
Home: 798 Goals-For	658 Goals-Against
Away: 656 Goals-For	727 Goals-Against

AMERKS ALL-TIME PLAYOFF SCORING LEADERS

POINTS

1	JODY GAGE	79
2	DOMENIC PITTIS	70
3	DAN FRAWLEY	46

GOALS

1	JODY GAGE	36
2	JIM PAPPIN	21
3	RAY SHEPPARD	20

ASSISTS

1	DOMENIC PITTIS	54
2	JODY GAGE	43
3	JIM WIEMER	34

GAMES PLAYED

1	JODY GAGE	81
2	DAN FRAWLEY	80
3	RANDY CUNNEYWORTH	67

GOALIE WINS

1	BOBBY PERREAULT	25
2	DARCY WAKALUK	21
	JACQUES CLOUTIER	21
4	STEVE SHIELDS	15



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