

ROCHESTER AMERICANS HOCKEY CLUB

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

Friday | **December 15, 2023** | 7:00 PM ET | XL Center | AHL Game 361 | AHL TV, The Fan Rochester



GAME NOTES



TONIGHT'S GAME OVERVIEW

The Rochester Americans (11-7-2-1) continue their week-long trek through the Atlantic Division at XL Center tonight against the Hartford Wolf Pack (15-5-3-0). The 7:00 p.m. matchup will be the first of two scheduled meetings between the two teams this season and the lone get-together in Connecticut. All the action will be carried live on The Sports Leader 95.7 FM/950 AM The Fan Rochester as well as AHLTV.

The Amerks and Wolf Pack split the two-game series in 2022-23 with each club recording a home victory. Prior to the 4-1 setback on Jan. 21 in Hartford, the Amerks had points in five straight contests at the XL Center dating back to the 2017-18 campaign.

HEAD-TO-HEAD RESULTS AGAINST HARTFORD

Dating back to the 2017-18 campaign, Rochester has earned wins in seven of the last 11 contests against Hartford while also recording at least one point in 12 of the previous 15 exchanges, going 9-3-1-2 over that span. The Amerks are also a perfect 4-0-0-0 on home ice in that same stretch.

In six of the last 12 meetings, the visiting team has come away with the victory. Additionally, six of the previous 10 tilts have been one-goal games.

Both teams have only three regulation losses this season when leading after the first period with Rochester showing a 16-3-1-0 record in that regard whereas Hartford is 14-3-1-1.

Brandpn Biro led all skaters with four assists and five points over the two-game season series in 2022-23.

LAST TIME OUT

Damien Giroux's second goal of the night tied the contest at 3-3 and ultimately forced overtime, but the Amerks settled for a single point as they suffered a 4-3 shootout loss to former Amerk **Malcolm Subban** and the Springfield Thunderbirds on Wednesday at MassMutual Center.

Giroux (2+0) produced his first multi-goal outing as an Amerk while **Michael Mersch** added a pair of assists, including the 200th of his AHL career. **Jeremy Davies** opened the scoring as **Joseph Cecconi**, **Mason Jobst** and **Nikita Novikov** all logged an assist in the contest.

Goaltender **Devin Cooley** (4-2-2) made 38 saves in the defeat while also stopping two of three in the shootout.

THE BEST OFFENSE IS A GOOD DEFENSE

The Amerks own two of the league's top scoring defensemen in **Jeremy Davies** and **Kale Clague**, who have combined for five goals and 26 points in Rochester's first 21 games of the season.

Davies, who scored a career-high 11 goals last season, including three game-winning tallies, ranks 12th amongst all AHL blueliners with 52 shots, which tops all Amerks defensemen. He's recorded at least one shot in all but three games this season. Davies, who closed out the month of October on a five-game point streak, has recorded one point in 11 of his first 20 games this season, never going more than three straight games without a point.

Clague, meanwhile, is tied for 13th among all rearguards with 12 assists in 19 games. Clague opened the campaign with three multi-point performances and enters the weekend with assists in four of his last six games.

2023-24 AMERKS OVERALL SCORING & GOALTENDING LEADERS

SKATER	GP	G	A	PTS	+/-	PIM
Jiri Kulich	20	13	6	19	1	8
Isak Rosen	17	8	11	19	4	4
Mason Jobst	17	7	7	14	-6	8
Jeremy Davies	20	4	9	13	-4	18

GOALTENDER	GP	REC	SVS	SV%	GAA
Devon Levi*	2	1-1-0	70	.921	2.94
Dustin Tokarski	8	4-3-1	242	.896	3.83
Devin Cooley	8	4-2-2	255	.892	3.87

*=Currently on recall with Buffalo

2023-24 WOLF PACK OVERALL SCORING & GOALTENDING LEADERS

SKATER	GP	G	A	PTS	+/-	PIM
Jonny Brodzinski*	16	11	14	25	8	4
Alex Belzile	23	8	15	23	-1	12
Mac Hollowell	18	1	21	22	12	22
Riley Nash	20	9	10	19	9	26

GOALTENDER	GP	REC	SVS	SV%	GAA
Louis Domingue	10	8-1-1	266	.924	2.18
Dylan Garand	11	7-2-2	302	.904	2.89

* = Currently on recall with NYR

2023-24 HEAD-TO-HEAD BREAKDOWN

Hartford Wolf Pack	Rochester Americans
15-5-3-0	Record 11-7-2-1
8-2-1-0	Home Record 5-2-2-0
7-3-2-0	Road Record 6-5-0-1
7-2-1-0	Last 10 Games 4-5-0-1
2-3	Overtime Record 4-2
2-0	Shootout Record 2-1
9-1-1-0	Record When Scoring First 6-2-0-1
3.61 (2nd)	Goals-For Per Game 3.52 (5th)
2.70 (T-5th)	Goals-Against Per Game 4.19 (32nd)
24.2% (1st)	Power-Play 21.4% (5th)
85.4% (8th)	Penalty Kill 73.8% (32nd)
Dec. 9 vs LAV (5-1 L)	Last Game Dec. 13 @ SPR (4-3 SOL)
Dec. 17 vs TOR	Next Game Dec. 16 @ WBS
Steve Smith (1st)	Head Coach Seth Appert (4th)



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DYNAMIC DUO: THE SEQUEL

Jiri Kulich and **Isak Rosen** both return for their second seasons in Rochester after putting up one of the most impressive and productive seasons as teenagers in the history of the AHL during the 2022-23 campaign.

Kulich continued his torrid start to the season to begin the month against Belleville, scoring his team-leading 12 and 13th goals in just his 18th game. Kulich, whose 24 goals last season were the second-most ever by an 18-year-old in league history, is currently tied for third in the AHL in goals. The forward, who hasn't gone more than three games without a goal this season, joined Luke Adam (2013-14) and Jack Quinn (2021-22) as the only other Amerks skaters to score nine goals through their first 11 games.

With six points over his last four games, which includes a career-best four point (2+2) effort in Cleveland on Nov. 18, Rosen is tied with Kulich for the team lead in scoring with 19 points as he recently returned from his first recall with the Sabres earlier this past week.

Back on Nov. 25, Kulich and Rosen both made their NHL debuts with the Buffalo Sabres against New Jersey Devils at Prudential Center

The duo has combined for 121 points (59+62) in 163 regular season games. Rochester boasts an impressive 20-3-2-1 record when they each record at least one point in the same game as well as a near-perfect 8-1-0-0 mark when they both score in the same game.

LEVI'S WEEKEND IN ROCHESTER

Earlier this month, the Buffalo Sabres assigned rookie goaltender **Devin Levi** to the Amerks before promptly recalling him on Dec. 5. Levi, 21, is the only goaltender drafted in 2020 or later to appear in an NHL game this season. He owns 5-4-1 with an .898 save percentage in nine appearances

Levi made his AHL debut in Rochester's 3-2 shootout win on Dec. 1, making 40 saves while also becoming the fourth different goaltender to man the pipes for Rochester this season, joining **Michael Houser**, **Devin Cooley** and **Dustin Tokarski**. Rochester has used four or more netminders in each of the last three years since the 2020-21 campaign.

Levi won the Mike Richter Award, given annually to the top goaltender in men's college hockey, for the second straight year following the 2022-23 season. Levi is the only two-time winner in the award's history, which was introduced in 2014 and named in honor of former Wisconsin goaltender and Stanley Cup champion Mike Richter.

He led the nation again with a .933 save percentage, one year after he set the second-best mark in NCAA history with a .952 save percentage. He tied for third in the nation in both shutouts (6) and saves (1,183). Levi's 16-career shutouts are a Northeastern University school record.

The Quebec native finished his two seasons at Northeastern with a 38-22-6 record. His resume includes a Beanpot title, a Hockey East regular-season championship and an NCAA tournament appearance. Levi was also named Hockey East Player of the Year for the second consecutive season in 2022-23 and was one of 10 finalists for the Hobey Baker Award.

Internationally, he helped Canada win a silver medal at the World Junior Championship in 2021 while earning tournament MVP honors and later added a gold medal at the 2023 World Championship. He was also on the Canadian roster at the Beijing Olympics in 2022.



SCORING IN BUNCHES

The Amerks come into the weekend with the AHL's fifth-best offense, averaging 3.52 goals per game through their first 21 games of the season. Their 74 goals are tied for 10th-most in the AHL.

Rochester has put up at least four goals in 10 of its first 21 games, including six outings with five goals or more.

The Amerks are a perfect 6-0-0-0 this season when scoring five goals in a game. Rochester is tied for fourth in the AHL with 26 first-period tallies this season.

WORKING OVERTIME

Wednesday's shootout loss in Springfield was the fourth time in Rochester's last seven games that went beyond regulation. It was the Amerks second shootout of the month. Overall, the Amerks have gone to extra time nine different times this season, which includes each of the first three games of the campaign.

Never before in the near 68-year history of the franchise have the Amerks opened a season with three consecutive overtime contests.

Rochester is the only team in the league with nine games decided beyond regulation this season. Dating back to last season, 17 of Rochester's previous 34 regular-season games have required overtime to determine a winner.



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A (JOB)ST WELL DONE

Mason Jobst is making the most with the Amerks as the fifth-year pro is in the process of duplicating his career year from 2022-23.

Through 17 games this season, the Speedway, Indiana, native has already scored half as many goals (7) from his career-high 38-point campaign last season when he notched 14 goals and 24 assists in 61 games.

Jobst reached the 30-point plateau for the first time in his pro career last season, being one of 10 different Amerks to eclipse the mark. He also was one of 10 to score double figures in goals as he finished with a person-best 14 in 61 games.

Since the turn of the New Year, Jobst has amassed 18 goals and 39 points over his previous 54 games, which includes two hat tricks, both of which have come on home ice. He comes into tonight with eight goals and 12 assists over his previous 25 contests and has only been held with a point in back-to-back appearances just two over that span.

Jobst has totaled 65 points (25+40) in 104 career games with the Amerks dating back to the 2021-22 season.

TOKARSKI AMONG ELITE COMPANY

Veteran goaltender **Dustin Tokarski**, who missed the first eight games of the season due to an injury he sustained in training camp, made his season debut back on Nov. 3 against Utica.

In doing so, the two-time Calder Cup winner and AHL All-Star became just the 18th goaltender in league history to play in 400 career games, a list that also includes former Amerks Bobby Perreault (512), Michael Leighton (507), Drew MacIntyre (440) and Ed Chadwick (417).

Tokarski, who's in his second stint with the Amerks and 10th different AHL franchise, went 1-1-0 during a brief two-game stint with Rochester as part of the COVID-shortened 2020-21 campaign. He went 12-20-7 in 42 appearances with the Buffalo Sabres from 2021-23.

Currently in his 15th season, he joins Marcel Paille and Michael Leighton as the only goaltenders all-time to play at least 15 seasons in the AHL.

Tokarski, who's 4-3-1 in his first eight starts, recently surpassed the 10,000-save mark for his AHL career following a 31-save effort against Utica on Nov. 10. He also reached the 12,000-save mark for his pro career the week prior when he made his season debut against the Comets.

Entering this week, the 34-year-old Tokarski is two wins away from tying Nick Damore for 12th all-time in career wins (208). He also ranks 18th all-time in games played (407) and will tie Yann Danis for eighth all-time with his next shutout.

In addition to being a two-time Calder Cup winner (2012, 2019), Tokarski won a Memorial Cup with Spokane in 2008 followed by a gold medal with Canada at the 2009 World Junior Championship.

Tokarski has reached the 20-win mark five times over his 15-year pro career, including a career-best 32 wins in 2011-12 when he backstopped the Norfolk Admirals to a professional hockey record of 28 straight wins while leading the club to its and only Calder Cup.

AMERKS-WOLF PACK 2022-23 SEASON SERIES

ROCHESTER

SKATER	GP	G	A	PTS	PIM	+/-
Brandon Biro	2	1	4	5	0	0
Isak Rosen	2	1	3	4	0	0
Lukas Rousek	2	2	1	3	0	0
Ethan Prow	2	1	2	3	0	0

GOALTENDER

	GP	REC	GA	SV%	GAA
Michael Houser	1	0-1-0	3	.906	3.18
Malcolm Subban	1	1-0-0	4	.867	4.02

HARTFORD

SKATER	GP	G	A	PTS	PIM	+/-
Lauri Pajuniemi	2	2	0	2	0	0
Anton Blidh	1	1	1	2	0	0
Cristiano DiGiacinto	2	1	1	2	0	2
Zac Jones	2	0	2	2	0	3

GOALTENDER

	GP	REC	GA	SV%	GAA
Louis Domingue	1	0-0-0	1	.909	3.00
Dylan Garand	2	1-1-0	8	.852	4.80

2022-23 SERIES BREAKDOWN VS. HARTFORD

Date	Result	Score	SF-SA	PP	PK
Jan. 21	L	4-1	24-33	1-3	1-3
Feb. 25	W	8-4	41-30	4-7	3-4

SERIES NOTABLES

Rochester forward **Justin Richards** began his AHL career in Hartford. In 87 games with the Wolf Pack, Richards combined for 10 goals, 15 assists and 25 points from 2020-22.

Amerks netminder **Dustin Tokarski** spent part of the 2018-19 season with the Wolf Pack. The veteran goaltender, who went to win his second Calder Cup later that year with Charlotte, posted a 10-6-2 record and one shutout in 21 appearances prior to being traded to the Checkers.

Hartford forward Matej Pekar is in his first season with the Wolf Pack after appearing in 86 career games with Rochester from 2020-22. The former Buffalo Sabres' fourth selection (94th overall) in the 2018 NHL Draft recorded four goals and 12 assists over three seasons with the Amerks.

Defenseman Zach Berzolla returns to Hartford for his second stint after seeing four games with Rochester last season. The Howell, New Jersey, native scored once with the Amerks, the game-winning goal, at Syracuse on Nov. 9.

In the last meeting between the two teams back on Mar. 10, the Wolf Pack opened the scoring just 6:18 into the contest before the Amerks responded with six straight to earn an 8-4 victory. A total of 13 different players finished with at least one point highlighted by **Brandon Biro's** career-best five-point (1+4) outing.



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