

ROCHESTER AMERICANS HOCKEY CLUB

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

Sat. | **December 30, 2023** | 7:00 PM ET | Adirondack Bank Arena | AHL Game 461 | AHL TV, The Fan Rochester



GAME NOTES



TONIGHT'S GAME OVERVIEW

The Rochester Americans (13-12-2-1) bring the 2023 calendar year to a close tonight with a North Division showdown against the intrastate rival Utica Comets (10-13-3-0) at the 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 show a 2-7-0-1 mark over their last 10 games and are winless in their previous two contests. Rochester holds the fifth spot in North Division with 29 points.

Utica sits at the bottom of the AHL's North Division standings with a 10-13-3-0 record through 26 games this season.

HEAD-TO-HEAD RESULTS AGAINST UTICA

After winning just twice through the first five games of the season series with the Comets in 2022-23, Rochester finished the campaign with a 7-3-0-0 record in 10 games.

Prior to the last meeting on Nov. 11, a 6-0 win for Utica, Rochester had won seven straight games on the road against the Comets, outscoring them 27-16 during that stretch.

The Amerks boast an even 10-10-1-1 record in Utica over the past five seasons, recording at least one point in 12 of 22 games over that span.

The Amerks have scored at least one power-play goal in 20 of the 37 games (28-for-130) against Utica since **Seth Appert** took over as head coach.

LAST TIME OUT

Linus Weissbach (1+1) and **Tyson Jost** (1+1) both recorded multi-point nights, but the Amerks were unable to get the best of the Hershey Bears in dropping a 4-2 decision to the defending Calder Cup champions in front of a season-high 9,092 crowd Friday at The Blue Cross Arena.

Weissbach factored in on both goals (1+1), which included his fourth of the season to open the scoring for the Amerks. **Lukas Rousek** notched an assist to extend his point streak to five games.

Goaltender **Devin Cooley** made his 11th appearance of the campaign and finished with 30 saves. Over his last six games, Cooley has finished with 30 or more saves on five occasions.

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 29 points this season. Davies' four goals are tied for 20th-most amongst all blueliners.

Davies, who scored a career-high 11 goals last season, including three game-winning tallies, is 12th amongst all defensemen with 66 shots. 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 12 of his first 27 games this season, never going more than three straight games without a point.

Clague, meanwhile, is tied for 18th among all blueliners with 13 assists in 25 games. Clague opened the campaign with three multi-point performances and enters the weekend with assists in five of his last 12 games.

2023-24 AMERKS OVERALL SCORING & GOALTENDING LEADERS

SKATER	GP	G	A	PTS	+/-	PIM
Jiri Kulich [^]	23	16	6	22	0	8
Isak Rosen	24	8	14	22	-2	6
Brandon Biro	19	9	9	18	1	12
Lukas Rousek	23	6	12	18	-1	10

GOALTENDER	GP	REC	SVS	SV%	GAA
Devon Levi*	2	1-1-0	70	.921	2.94
Dustin Tokarski	12	5-6-1	333	.888	3.49
Devin Cooley	11	5-4-2	339	.892	3.72

*=Currently on recall with Buffalo

[^]=Currently on reassignment at WJC

2023-24 COMETS OVERALL SCORING & GOALTENDING LEADERS

SKATER	GP	G	A	PTS	+/-	PIM
Xavier Parent	26	8	13	21	-5	21
Graeme Clarke	26	11	9	20	1	8
Max Willman	18	9	7	16	-5	8
Ryan Schmelzer	26	6	10	16	1	18

GOALTENDER	GP	REC	SVS	SV%	GAA
Isaac Poulter	15	8-4-1	356	.913	2.54
Eric Källgren	10	1-5-2	186	.853	4.21

2023-24 HEAD-TO-HEAD BREAKDOWN

Utica Comets	Rochester Americans
10-13-3-0..... Record	13-12-2-1
5-7-1-0..... Home Record	5-6-2-0
5-6-2-0..... Road Record	8-6-0-1
4-6-0-0..... Last 10 Games	2-7-0-1
1-3..... Overtime Record	6-2
0-0..... Shootout Record	2-1
8-4-1-0..... Record When Scoring First	6-3-0-1
2.92 (22nd)..... Goals-For Per Game	3.14 (10th)
3.19 (18th)..... Goals-Against Per Game	3.96 (31st)
11.9% (32nd)..... Power-Play	22.5% (6th)
87.2 (1st)..... Penalty Kill	74.3% (32nd)
Dec. 29 vs PRO (5-2 L)..... Last Game	Dec. 29 vs HER (4-2 L)
Jan. 5 vs LAV..... Next Game	Jan. 5 vs CLE
Kevin Dineen (3rd)..... 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 with three more goals over the team's recent three-game road trip earlier this month, temporarily taking over the league's goal-scoring lead with 16 goals in just 23 games. Kulich, who also leads the AHL with four overtime game-winning tallies, remains on pace to become the first AHL player to reach the 20-goal mark in the fewest number of games to begin the season since Frank Vatrano scored 20 goals in just 18 games to begin the 2015-16 campaign.

Kulich, whose 24 goals last season were the second-most ever by an 18-year-old in league history, was named team captain of Czechia's national junior team for the 2024 World Junior Championship. On Wednesday Kulich had a hat trick and has five points (3+2) through his first two games.

With nine points over his last 11 games, which includes a career-best four point (2+2) effort in Cleveland on Nov. 18, Rosen shares the team-lead with Kulich in scoring with 22 points having recently returned from his first recall with the Sabres earlier this month. The Swedish forward is third amongst all Amerks in goals (8) and has matched his totaled from last season in game-winning tallies through just 20 games.

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

The duo has combined for 127 points (62+65) in 173 regular season games. Rochester boasts an impressive 21-3-2-1 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.

BRYSON BACK IN ROCHESTER

Rochester's blueline received another significant boost last week following the reassignment of defenseman **Jacob Bryson** to the Amerks. Bryson, a former fourth-round selection (99th overall) of the Sabres in the 2017 NHL Draft, began his professional career with Rochester.

Bryson appeared in three games with the Sabres this season as one of eight defensemen on Buffalo's roster.

The London, Ontario, native made his Amerks season debut last Wednesday against Cleveland, and has totaled 31 points (4+27) in 71 career American Hockey League games with the Amerks over parts of three seasons. He's also recorded 28 points (3+25) over 173 career NHL games for Buffalo.

In 121 collegiate games during a three-year career at Providence College, he totaled 73 points on 11 goals and 62 assists. In his final season with the Friars, he earned Hockey East Second Team All-Star honors after recording 28 points (4+24) in 42 games and serving as a team captain.

As a senior, Bryson set career-highs in both assists (24) and points (28), both of which topped the club's defensemen, and ranked second and third overall, respectively. He also recorded an assist in all three NCAA Tournament games to help lead his team to a Frozen Four appearance and was the recipient of Hockey East's Len Ceglarski Sportsmanship Award for the second straight year in 2019.



APPERT CLOSING IN ON CENTURY MARK

Amerks head coach **Seth Appert** is a mere three wins away from 100 as Rochester's bench boss. He will become just the seventh head coach all-time to reach 100 career wins, an impressive list that includes the likes of Amerks Hall of Famers Randy Cunneynworth, John Van Boxmeer, Joe Crozier, Mike Keenan, Chris Taylor and Brian McCutcheon.

On Dec. 16 against Wilkes-Barre/Scranton, Appert also became the seventh head coach in the 68-year history of the franchise to be behind Rochester's bench for 200 games.

Since the 2020-21 season, Appert has guided the Amerks to a 97-83-17-8 record as well as two straight playoff appearances, which included a trip to the Eastern Conference Finals in 2023. It was the team's deepest playoff run in nearly 20 years and their first to the Conference Finals since the 2004 Calder Cup Playoffs.

WORKING OVERTIME

The 3-2 overtime win in Syracuse on Dec. 23 was the fifth game over the last 14 for Rochester that went beyond regulation, which includes two shootout decisions this month. Overall, the Amerks have gone to extra time on 11 different occasions this season, including 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 11 games decided beyond regulation this season. Dating back to last season, 19 of Rochester's previous 41 regular-season games have required overtime to determine a winner.



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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 5-6-1 in his first 12 starts, 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 weekend, the 34-year-old Tokarski is one win away from tying Nick Damore for 12th all-time in career wins (211). He also ranks 18th all-time in games played (411) and will tie Yann Danis for eighth all-time with his next shutout.

A JOLT OF JOST

Rochester's forward group was bolstered on Friday with yesterday's addition of forward **Tyson Jost**, a former first-round selection (10th overall) of the Colorado Avalanche in the 2016 NHL Draft.

The St. Albert, Alberta, native made his Amerks debut last night against Hershey, recording two points in what was his first AHL appearance since Feb. 9, 2019.

Jost has totaled nine points (6+3) in 14 career American Hockey League games with the Amerks, San Antonio Rampage and Colorado Eagles over parts of three seasons. He's also recorded 138 points (56+82) over 442 career NHL games with Buffalo Sabres, Minnesota Wild and Colorado Avalanche.

Jost spent one season with the University of North Dakota in 2016-17, amassing 35 points (16+19) in 33 games. He finished the campaign second on the club in both assists and points while ranking third in goals.

Before joining North Dakota, Jost totaled 149 points (97+65) in 97 career contests with the Penticton Vees (BCHL) from 2013-2016. During his final season, Jost was named Hockey Canada's Canadian Junior Hockey League (CJHL) National Player of the Year, as well as the CJHL's MVP and Top Forward. Additionally, he was also named the BCHL MVP as he amassed 42 goals and 104 points in 48 games, leading the BCHL in assists (62).

Internationally, Jost led Canada at the 2016 Under-18 World Championship in Grand Forks, where he set a new Canadian scoring record with 15 points in seven games. He led the tournament in scoring and was named the Top Forward while also earning a gold medal with Canada at the 2015 World Junior 'A' Challenge.

AMERKS-UTICA 2023-24 SEASON SERIES BREAKDOWN

ROCHESTER

SKATER	GP	G	A	PTS	PIM	+/-
Mason Jobst	2	2	1	3	0	1
Kale Clague	3	0	3	3	2	1
Jiri Kulich	4	2	0	3	2	-5
Ethan Prow	4	1	1	2	0	-1

GOALTENDER

	GP	REC	GA	SV%	GAA
Dustin Tokarski	2	1-0-1	7	.870	3.50
Michael Houser	1	1-0-0	4	.778	4.01
Devin Cooley	1	0-1-0	6	.850	6.00

UTICA

SKATER	GP	G	A	PTS	PIM	+/-
Kyle Criscuolo	4	2	5	7	0	2
Simon Nemec	4	2	4	6	0	3
Daniil Misyul	4	2	3	5	7	4
Xavier Parent	4	1	4	5	5	0

GOALTENDER

	GP	REC	GA	SV%	GAA
Isaac Poultter	3	2-1-0	7	.921	2.35
Erik Källgren	1	0-0-0	5	.821	5.08

2023-24 SERIES BREAKDOWN VS. UTICA

Date	Result	Score	SF-SA	PP	PK
Oct. 28	W	5-4	28-18	1-3	0-1
Nov. 3	OTL	4-3	32-20	0-4	1-1
Nov. 10	W	4-3	34-34	0-2	4-4
Nov. 11	L	6-0	23-40	0-2	4-5

SERIES NOTABLES

Amerks defenseman **Riley Stillman** faces his younger brother, Chase, for the fifth time in their pro careers. Chase in his rookie season after being selected in the first round (29th overall) by the New Jersey devils in 2021.

Their father, Cory Stillman, appeared in 1,025 games at the NHL level, totaling 727 points (278+449) and won a pair of Stanley Cup Championships.

Bud Stefanski, their grandfather, tallied 425 points in the AHL, won the 1984 Calder Cup and was named playoff MVP.

Comets forward Kyle Criscuolo is in his first season with the New Jersey Devils organization. In parts of two seasons with Rochester, he posted 54 points (21+33) in 94 games from 2017-19 while also skating in six playoff contests. He made his NHL debut with the Buffalo Sabres in 2017-18.

Comets forward Ryan Fitzgerald is the older brother of former Rochester defenseman Casey Fitzgerald, a 2016 third-round pick of the Buffalo Sabres who played parts of four seasons with the Amerks from 2018-22.



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