

ROCHESTER AMERICANS HOCKEY CLUB

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

Sunday | **April 7, 2024** | 3:00 PM ET | Total Mortgage Arena | AHL Game 1061 | AHL TV, The Fan Rochester



GAME NOTES



TODAY'S GAME OVERVIEW

The Rochester Americans (35-22-6-3) make their lone visit to the southern Connecticut today with a chance to clinch a playoff spot as they look for their sixth straight win against the Bridgeport Islanders (24-36-6-1) a Total Mortgage Arena. The afternoon matinee is slated for a 3 p.m. start and will be carried live on 95.7 FM/950 AM The Fan Rochester as well as AHLTV.

The Amerks, who have points in 24 of their last 32 games dating back to Jan. 17, currently sit in third-place in AHL's North Division standings with just six games remaining in the season. Rochester is just one point back of the second-place Monsters and trail Syracuse by three entering today.

Bridgeport, which has alternated wins and losses over its last five games, has already been eliminated from playoff contention.

SEASON SERIES SNAPSHOT

Tonight is only the 22nd all-time meeting between the two teams and the first since opening night in Rochester.

The Amerks have earned points in 12 of the last 13 meetings dating back to the 2017-18 campaign and boast a 6-0-3-0 mark in the previous nine home contests at The Blue Cross Arena.

In 15 of the last 17 meetings, the winning team has scored three or more goals, which includes at least one power-play tally in 12 contests over that same span.

10 of the previous 17 games between the two clubs have been decided beyond regulation, which includes six of the last seven.

LAST TIME OUT

In dramatic fashion, **Michael Mersch** found the back of the net 46 seconds into overtime to cap off another Rochester rally, as the Amerks erased a third-period deficit before going on to top the Providence Bruins by a 3-2 final Saturday night at Amica Mutual Pavilion.

Eight Amerks found the scoresheet on the night, with Mersch (1+1) being the lone player to register multiple points. **Linus Weissbach** got the scoring started for the Amerks, while **Anton Wahlberg** netted his first AHL goal midway through the third period to force overtime. **Calle Själén**, **Justin Richards**, **Isak Rosén**, and **Nikita Novikov** all logged assists.

Goaltender **Devon Levi** (13-5-3) picked up his 13th win in a Rochester jersey with a 33-save performance. The Sabres' prospect was tested immediately in the game, making multiple high-quality stops. Levi has also won six straight and seven of his last eight AHL starts

PLAYOFF PICUTRE

Coming into today, Rochester's magic number to clinch a playoff berth sits at three, meaning the Amerks could potentially punch their ticket to the postseason by way of a win this afternoon in Bridgeport combined with a Utica loss of any kind to Toronto.

The Amerks have qualified for the playoffs in each of the last four years, including all three seasons under head coach **Seth Appert**.

Rochester's run to the Eastern Conference Final last season was the team's deepest playoff run in 23 years.

2023-24 AMERKS OVERALL SCORING & GOALTENDING LEADERS

SKATER	GP	G	A	PTS	+/-	PIM
Mason Jobst	58	19	26	45	-10	41
Isak Rosen	61	16	25	41	-2	12
Jiri Kulich	51	21	17	38	-2	22
Brandon Biro	53	14	24	38	3	24

GOALTENDER	GP	REC	SVS	SV%	GAA
Devon Levi	21	13-5-3	665	.929	2.42
Dustin Tokarski	23	10-9-3	601	.890	3.31
Michael Houser	7	3-1-1	121	.871	3.39

2023-24 ISLANDERS OVERALL SCORING & GOALTENDING LEADERS

SKATER	GP	G	A	PTS	+/-	PIM
Ruslan Iskhakov	66	17	30	47	-16	30
Otto Koivula	47	9	21	30	-13	52
Brian Pinho	67	6	24	30	-29	6
Dennis Cholowski	63	6	21	27	-22	6

GOALTENDER	GP	REC	SVS	SV%	GAA
Ken Appleby	21	10-10-0	485	.903	2.80
Jakub Skarek	34	7-21-5	853	.890	3.15

2023-24 HEAD-TO-HEAD BREAKDOWN

Bridgeport Islanders	Rochester Americans
24-36-6-1	Record 35-22-6-3
13-15-4-1	Home Record 16-11-3-2
11-21-2-0	Road Record 19-11-3-1
4-6-0-0	Last 10 Games 8-1-0-1
8-6	Overtime Record 10-6
3-1	Shootout Record 3-3
18-5-3-0	Record When Scoring First 22-6-4-1
13.3% (32nd)	Power-Play 18.6% (17th)
86.3 (T-7th)	Penalty Kill 78.7% (27th)
2.21 (32nd)	Goals-For Per Game 3.18 (10th)
3.03 (T-17th)	Goals-Against Per Game 3.37 (T-26th)
Apr. 6 vs WBS (6-3 L)	Last Game .. Apr. 6 @ PRO (3-2 OTW)
Apr. 12 @ WBS	Next GameApr. 12 vs BEL
Rick Kowalsky (1st)	Head CoachSeth Appert (4th)



ROCHESTER AMERICANS | MEDIA RELATIONS DEPARTMENT

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RACE TO 20

After seeing three players reach the 20-goal mark last season, the Amerks could potentially have the same or more by the season's end.

With goals in four of his last nine games, **Jiri Kulich** reached the 20-goal mark for the second straight season last Wednesday in Syracuse. Kulich, whose 21 goals lead all Rochester skaters, became the first Amerks player to score 20 or more goals in back-to-back seasons since Cole Schneider and Justin Bailey each did so in 2015-16 and 2016-17.

Mason Jobst, the team's leading point-getter with a career-high 45 points in 58 games this season, needs just one more goal to reach the mark for the first time in his pro career. He, too, has goals in three of his last nine games and last week he had a season-long six-game point streak (2+6) end.

Linus Weisbach (16) is also making a strong push for his second straight 20-goal season as he comes into today with goals in four straight and six over his last six contests. **Isak Rosén** is also within reach after scoring his career-high 16th goal of the season reaching the mark in 10 fewer games.

NEW YEAR, NEW NEUCHEV

After producing just five points in his first 23 games, rookie forward **Viktor Neuchev** has unsurprisingly emerged as Rochester's top scoring rookie through the final month of the regular season.

Dating back to Dec. 29 and the turn of the New Year, Neuchev has erupted for 23 points on nine goals and 14 assists over his previous 29 games.

Neuchev has recorded at least one point in 14 games over that span, including a season-long six-game point streak from Dec. 29 to Jan. 20 which saw him score three goals and record eight points.

Buffalo's third-round selection (74th overall) in 2022, Neuchev's most impressive performance of the season came back on Jan. 27, finding the back of the net for the third time in four games with the game-winning goal while also adding two assists in the 7-4 win over Laval. Since Jan. 5, Neuchev has recorded six multi-point games, which includes a pair of three-point efforts.

Of Neuchev's 11 goals this season, eight have been scored on home ice and three have come against Laval. Neuchev, who had a 40-goal season while playing for Russia's junior league during the 2021-22 campaign, currently leads all Amerks rookies with 28 points (11+17) and 76 shots in 51 games.



WORKING OVERTIME

The 3-2 overtime win against Providence last night was the seventh game over the last 20 for Rochester that went beyond regulation, with three of the four producing a 2-1 score. Overall, the Amerks have gone to extra time on 22 different occasions, tied for the most by any team this season (Cleveland), including each of the first three games of the campaign.

10 of the previous 17 games between the two clubs have been decided beyond regulation, which includes six of the last seven dating back to the 2018-19 season. The two clubs opened the 2023-24 campaign with a 4-3 contest decided in overtime as Bridgeport earned the win back on Oct. 13.

Four of **Jiri Kulich's** team-high five game-winning goals this season have come by way of overtime while **Isak Rosén**, **Brandon Biro**, **Zach Metsa**, and **Michael Mersch** have each the clinching goal during the extra frame.

Dating back to the start of the 2021-22 season, of **Jeremy Davies'** five game-winning goals, four have come in overtime while all five have come on the road.

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

Dating back to Jan. 20 of last season, 32 of Rochester's previous 103 regular-season games have required overtime to determine a winner. Of the Amerks 51 wins during that span, 18 have come came following the end of regulation.

The Amerks show a 10-6 record in overtime this season and are 3-3 in the shootout.

Rochester tied an AHL record with 29 overtime games in 2017-18, showing a 9-11 record in overtime and 3-6 in the shootout.

LEANING ON LEVI

Devon Levi has earned the start in 19 of the last 28 games since being reassigned to Rochester on Jan. 20, including five straight to open February. Back with the Amerks following his last recall to Buffalo, he enters the weekend having won six straight and seven of his last eight starts.

Levi, who boasts an 13-5-3 record in 21 appearances with the Amerks, totaled 130 saves on 136 shots he faced over a three-game win streak in February, boasting an impressive 1.95 goals-against average and a .956 save percentage over that span.

His career-high 52 saves in the Amerks overtime win at Toronto on Feb. 19 were the most by an Amerks goaltender since **Ukko-Pekka Luukkonen** had 54 in a 2-1 win at Syracuse on Feb. 25, 2022.

Levi, who ranks fourth among all rookie netminders with a .929 save percentage, has held the opposition to three or fewer goals in all but three of his 21 appearance. He's 13-2-3 this season in those games.

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.

The only two-time winner in the award's history, Levi led the nation again with a .933 save percentage, and tied for third in both shutouts (6) and saves (1,183).



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TOKARSKI ON THE MOVE

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.

Last Wednesday, he earned his second straight start and appeared in his 500th pro game. He has played in 80 NHL contests and 420 AHL games.

Tokarski, who's 10-9-3 in his first 23 appearances, 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 tonight, the 34-year-old Tokarski is only three wins away from tying Red Almas for 11th all-time in career wins (218). He's also 18 games away from tying Drew MacIntyre for 13rd all-time (440) and will tie Yann Danis for eighth all-time on his next shutout.

JOBST HAVING A CAREER YEAR

Forward **Mason Jobst** enters the contest with 30 points (12+18) over his last 34 games, the most by an Amerk since the turn of the new year. Jobst, who hasn't gone more than two games without a point over that span, recorded a career-best three-assist outing on Feb. 16 against Wilkes-Barre/Scranton and followed that up by scoring goals in three straight games, including his career-high 16th goal of the season against Belleville on Feb. 23.

Since then, the fifth-year forward has already surpassed his goal total in 18 fewer games this season and successfully reached the 40-point mark for the first time in his career with another three-assist effort back on March 13 in Syracuse to take over the team's scoring lead.

Jobst has totaled 96 points (37+59) in 148 career games as an Amerk and has amassed 121 points (48+73) over 218 career American Hockey League games with Rochester, San Jose, Bridgeport, and Binghamton.



AMERKS-ISLANDERS 2023-24 SEASON SERIES BREAKDOWN

ROCHESTER

SKATER	GP	G	A	PTS	PIM	+/-
Linus Weissbach	1	1	1	2	0	2
Brandon Biro	1	1	0	1	2	0
Isak Rosén	1	1	0	1	0	0
Ryan Johnson	1	0	1	1	0	1

GOALTENDER

GOALTENDER	GP	REC	GA	SV%	GAA
Devin Cooley	1	0-0-1	4	.905	3.98

BRIDGEPORT

SKATER	GP	G	A	PTS	PIM	+/-
Brian Pinho	1	0	4	4	0	2
Ruslan Iskhakov	1	2	1	3	0	2
Dennis Cholowski	1	1	2	3	0	2
Arnaud Durandeu	1	1	0	3	0	0

GOALTENDER

GOALTENDER	GP	REC	GA	SV%	GAA
Jakub Skarek	1	1-0-0	3	.889	2.98

2023-24 SERIES BREAKDOWN VS. BRIDGEPORT

Date	Result	Score	SF-SA	PP	PK
Oct. 13	OTL	4-3	27-42	0-2	1-2

SERIES NOTABLES

Last Saturday's overtime win at Cleveland was yet another milestone for **Seth Appert**, who became just the fourth head coach in the 68-year history of the franchise to man the Rochester bench for 241 career games. He joined an impressive list that includes the likes of Amerks Hall of Famers Randy Cunneynworth, John Van Boxmeer, and Joe Crozier.

Additionally, with the win, Appert, who has guided the Amerks to a 118-93-21-10 record and two straight playoff appearances, surpassed Mike Keenan and Chris Taylor for fifth all-time in coaching victories. He's one of just seven head coaches all-time to win 100 games with the Amerks.

The Amerks enter today one win and two points away from matching last season's total, which finished tied for second in the North Division standings.

Cole Bardreau, a Fairport native, who is currently in his fifth season in Bridgeport. In 465 career games between Bridgeport and the Lehigh Valley Phantoms, the veteran forward has recorded 92 goals and 104 assists for 196 points. Additionally, he's tallied three assists in 24 career playoff appearances while also skating in 11 games with the New York Islanders.

Amerks forward **Mason Jobst** spent parts of his first two pro seasons in Bridgeport, where he had 15 points in 52 career games.

Islanders head coach Rick Kowalsky is a former Buffalo Sabres draft pick (227th overall in 1992).



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