

ROCHESTER AMERICANS HOCKEY CLUB

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

Sun. | **April 21, 2024** | 3:00 PM ET | Adirondack Bank Center | AHL Game 1152 | AHL TV, The Fan Rochester



GAME NOTES



TODAY'S GAME OVERVIEW

The playoff-bound Rochester Americans (38-23-6-3) close out their 68th regular season in the American Hockey League this afternoon with a chance of clinching their first North Division title in almost 20 years against the intrastate rival Utica Comets (32-28-5-6) at Adirondack Bank Center. The 3:00 p.m. matinee will be carried live on The Sports Leader 95.7 FM/950 AM The Fan Rochester as well as AHLTV.

A win of any kind today and a Cleveland loss or win beyond regulation would secure the Amerks, who are 12-2-0-1 in their last 15 games and have points in 27 of their last 36 dating back to Jan. 17, the top seed in the North Division. Rochester hasn't won a division title since 2004-05, the same year they captured the Macgregor Kilpatrick Trophy as regular season champions.

SEASON SERIES SNAPSHOT

Rochester has won 10 of the previous 11 games on the road against the Comets, the only exception being a 6-0 loss back on Nov. 11. The Amerks maintain a 7-3-1-0 record through the first 11 games of the season-series and today is the fourth Sunday matinee of season between the two clubs.

The Amerks boast a 13-10-1-1 record in Utica over the past five seasons while also showing an almost identical 14-11-1-1 mark in the Flower City.

The Amerks have scored at least one power-play goal in 24 of the 44 games (34-for-145) against Utica since **Seth Appert** took over as head coach.

Rochester is playing its third game of the week after playing on Wednesday and Friday night while Utica is appearing in its third straight contest.

PLAYOFF TICKET PUNCHED

By virtue of Utica's overtime loss to Providence last Friday night, the Amerks punched their ticket to the postseason for the 49th time in the 68-year history of the franchise.

The Amerks have qualified for the playoffs in each of the last five years (dating back to the 2017-18 campaign), 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.

OSTLUND ARRIVES FOR PLAYOFF RUN

The Buffalo Sabres reassigned forward **Noah Östlund** to the Amerks earlier this week, marking his second straight spring with the team.

He had 23 points (12+11) in 38 games this season with the Växjö Lakers of the Swedish Hockey League. He also won a silver medal at the IIHF World Junior Championship, where he had 10 points (3+7) in seven games.

Östlund made his AHL debut in Friday's overtime loss against Cleveland, recording two shots while skating on a line with fellow first-round picks **Jiri Kulich** and **Isak Rosén**.

With the recent addition of Östlund, the Amerks now have four former first-round draft picks in the lineup, which also includes rookie defenseman **Ryan Johnson**, who was Buffalo's 31st overall selection back in 2019.

2023-24 AMERKS OVERALL SCORING & GOALTENDING LEADERS

SKATER	GP	G	A	PTS	+/-	PIM
Mason Jobst	63	22	28	50	-9	47
Isak Rosen	66	18	30	48	3	12
Jiri Kulich	56	27	18	45	1	26
Brandon Biro	58	16	27	43	2	28

GOALTENDER	GP	REC	SVS	SV%	GAA
Devon Levi	25	15-6-4	772	.927	2.44
Dustin Tokarski	24	11-9-3	634	.890	3.32
Michael Houser	7	3-1-1	121	.871	3.39

2023-24 COMETS OVERALL SCORING & GOALTENDING LEADERS

SKATER	GP	G	A	PTS	+/-	PIM
Ryan Schmelzer	71	18	34	52	14	36
Graeme Clarke	66	24	24	48	9	28
Xavier Parent	70	15	30	45	-11	56
Kyle Criscuolo	62	16	25	41	2	23

GOALTENDER	GP	REC	SVS	SV%	GAA
Isaac Poulter*	28	17-8-1	687	.911	2.55
Akira Schmid	23	9-8-5	581	.894	3.06
Eric Källgren	16	4-6-3	326	.872	3.62

2023-24 HEAD-TO-HEAD BREAKDOWN

Utica Comets	Rochester Americans
32-28-5-6	Record 38-23-7-3
15-14-1-5	Home Record 18-12-4-2
17-14-4-1	Road Record 20-11-3-1
5-3-1-1	Last 10 Games 8-1-1-0
2-5	Overtime Record 10-7
2-6	Shootout Record 4-3
21-10-1-4	Record When Scoring First 25-6-4-1
15.7% (31st)	Power-Play 18.1% (18th)
83.9 (T-7th)	Penalty Kill 79.0% (T-26th)
3.08 (T-15th)	Goals-For Per Game 3.25 (T-6th)
3.14 (21st)	Goals-Against Per Game 3.34 (T-23rd)
Apr. 20 @ SYR (5-2 W)	Last Game Apr. 19 vs CLE (3-2 OTL)
Kevin Dineen (3rd)	Head Coach Seth Appert (4th)



ROCHESTER AMERICANS | MEDIA RELATIONS DEPARTMENT

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SHARING THE WEALTH

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

Jiri Kulich, who has six goals over his last five games, reached the 20-goal mark for the second straight season on March 27 in Syracuse. Kulich, whose 27 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 50 points in 63 games this season, reached the mark for the first time in his pro career on April 7. He comes into the final day of the season with points in five of his last seven games, including goals in three straight over that span.

Linus Weissbach (16) is also making a strong push for his second straight 20-goal season as he comes into today with six goals in his last seven contests. **Isak Rosén** is also within reach after scoring his career-high 18th 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 34 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 were scored on home ice and three came 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 87 shots in 56 games.



WORKING OVERTIME

The 3-2 overtime loss on Friday night against Cleveland on April 19 was the ninth game over the last 25 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 24 different occasions, the most by any team this season, including each of the first three games of the campaign.

Two of the first 11 meetings between the Amerks and Comets were decided beyond regulation. Both games featured the visitors earning the extra point back on Nov. 3 and Dec. 30, respectively.

Four of **Jiri Kulich's** 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, 34 of Rochester's previous 107 regular-season games have required overtime to determine a winner. Of the Amerks 53 wins during that span, 19 have come following the end of regulation.

The Amerks show a 10-7 record in overtime this season and are 4-3 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 23 of the last 33 games since being reassigned to Rochester on Jan. 20, including five straight to open February. He has won eight of his last 10 starts and 10 of 12 dating back to the start of March.

Levi, who boasts a 15-6-4 record in 25 appearances with the Amerks, held the opposition to three or fewer goals in each game over his recent six-game win streak. He totaled 188 saves on 201 shots while boasting an impressive 2.17 goals-against average and a .935 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 is tied for fourth among all rookie netminders with a .927 save percentage, has held the opposition to three or fewer goals in all but four of his 25 appearances. He's 15-2-4 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.

He appeared in his 500th pro game against Hartford on March 20. 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 35 points (15+20) over his last 38 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 50-point mark for the first time in his career with another first-period goal last Saturday against Belleville, his third in as many games.

Jobst has totaled 101 points (40+61) in 150 career games as an Amerk and has amassed 126 points (51+75) over 224 career American Hockey League games with Rochester, San Jose, Bridgeport, and Binghamton.



AMERKS-COMETES 2023-24 SEASON SERIES BREAKDOWN

ROCHESTER

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

GOALTENDER

	GP	REC	GA	SV%	GAA
Devon Levi	2	2-0-0	4	.946	2.00
Michael Houser	2	2-0-0	5	.868	2.50
Dustin Tokarski	5	3-0-1	11	.903	2.56
Devin Cooley	3	0-3-0	15	.844	5.40

UTICA

SKATER	GP	G	A	PTS	PIM	+/-
Kyle Crisculo	11	4	9	13	2	4
Graeme Clarke	11	3	6	9	0	4
Xavier Parent	11	3	6	9	11	-2

GOALTENDER

	GP	REC	GA	SV%	GAA
Akira Schmid	1	0-0-1	2	.938	1.85
Isaac Poulter	6	3-3-0	13	.921	2.44
Erik Källgren	4	1-2-0	13	.862	3.68

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
Dec. 30	SOW	3-2	33-30	0-4	5-6
Jan. 19	W	2-1	29-25	1-2	2-2
Jan. 26	L	4-0	32-28	0-3	1-1
Feb. 14	W	6-2	25-39	2-5	2-2
Feb. 18	L	7-3	33-33	0-3	3-4
Mar. 10	W	3-2	23-35	1-1	2-2
Mar. 24	W	4-1	24-20	2-4	2-3

SERIES NOTABLES

Both Rochester (20-5-1-2) and Utica (18-3-1-2) come into the matchup sporting winning records when leading after the first period. The Comets are 21-1-1-3 this season when carrying a lead into the second period while the Amerks remain a near-perfect 25-0-1-1 in that regard.

Rochester enters the final day of the regular season with two players with at least 20 goals and 40 or more points. Should **Isak Rosén** score two or more tallies today, it would be the third straight season the Amerks have had three skaters reach the mark dating back to the 2021-22 season.

Comets forward Kyle Crisculo 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.



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