

# ROCHESTER AMERICANS HOCKEY CLUB

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

Sat. | **May 4, 2024** | 7 PM ET | Upstate Medical Univ. Arena | North Division Semifinals, Game 4 | AHL TV, The Fan Rochester



# GAME NOTES



## TONIGHT'S GAME OVERVIEW

The Rochester Americans (1-2) look to extend the North Division Semifinals another week as they meet the Syracuse Crunch (2-1) in a must-win Game 4 at Upstate Medical University Arena. 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.

Trailing the best-of-five series 2-1, Rochester looks to stave off elimination after Syracuse claimed each of the last two contests in overtime.

## SERIES NOTES

The Amerks, who have qualified for the postseason in each of the last three years under head coach **Seth Appert**, came up short in Game 3 on Thursday after Syracuse forward **Waltteri Merela** converted on a breakaway midway through the second overtime to give the Crunch a 2-1 win and series lead.

Rookie goaltender **Devon Levi** was sensational, turning aside 60 of 62 shots he faced, including several game-saving stops. Levi became the first Amerks goaltender to make 21 or more saves in a single period during a Calder Cup Playoff game since **Tyler Plante** stopped all 23 shots he faced on April 21, 2010 against Abbotsford.

Dating back to last year's second-round series, three of the last four playoff games between the intrastate rivals have gone beyond regulation while all four have been one-goal decisions.

The Amerks, who finished the 2023-24 regular season with a 13-2-1 record over their final 17 games, have won four of the last six postseason contests against Syracuse dating back to last season.

## AMERKS DRAW SYRACUSE TO BEGIN POSTSEASON

After more than 326 all-time meetings during regular-season play, the second-round series against the Crunch marks only the sixth meeting in the postseason between the two teams and the second in as many years after Rochester completed a reverse sweep last spring.

Prior to that, the Amerks claimed three of the previous four playoff series dating back to 1996.

Rochester is 162-145-19 all-time against Syracuse, which included a 5-5-2-0 mark this season versus the Crunch. Five of the 12 matchups between the two teams were decided beyond regulation and eight of 12 were won by the visiting team.

The Crunch are in the Calder Cup Playoffs for the 18th time since joining the American Hockey League prior to the 1994-95 season.

## PLAYOFFS OVER THE YEARS

The Amerks, who need two more wins to advance to the North Division Finals the third consecutive season, are 32-42 all-time when facing elimination, which includes a 4-1 record last spring. Rochester trailed Syracuse 0-2 in the opening round of the 2023 Calder Cup Playoffs before winning three straight to complete the reverse sweep.

Rochester has been a part of 90 playoff series over the years, in which it has compiled a 225-218 record in 443 games during that time.

## 2023-24 AMERKS PLAYOFF SCORING & GOALTENDING LEADERS

SKATER	GP	G	A	PTS	+/-	PIM
Isak Rosén	3	2	0	2	-3	0
Mason Jobst	3	1	1	2	-1	6
Ethan Prow	3	0	2	2	-2	2
Lukas Rousek	3	0	2	2	0	0
Michael Mersch	3	1	0	1	1	0

GOALTENDER	GP	REC	SVS	SV%	GAA
Devon Levi	3	1-2	125	.940	2.17

## 2023-24 CRUNCH PLAYOFF SCORING & GOALTENDING LEADERS

SKATER	GP	G	A	PTS	+/-	PIM
Declan Carlile	3	0	3	3	3	0
Philippe Myers	3	0	3	3	3	0
Jordy Bellerive	3	2	0	2	2	0
Alex Barré-Boulet	3	1	1	2	1	0
Gabriel Fortier	3	1	1	2	1	0

GOALTENDER	GP	REC	SVS	SV%	GAA
Brandon Halverson	3	2-1	80	.920	1.93

## SERIES SCHEDULE - NORTH DIVISION SEMIFINALS

Date	Result	Score	SF-SA	PP	PK
Game 1 - Apr 26	W	3-2	26-37	1-1	2-2
Game 2 - Apr 28	OTL	4-3	27-34	1-1	2-2
Game 3 - May 2	2OTL	2-1	34-62	0-2	6-6
Game 4 - May 4					
Game 5 - May 10*					

\*If necessary



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## HEAD-TO-HEAD SERIES SNAPSHOT

With tonight's playoff Game 4 marking the 16th meeting overall in 2023-24, the Amerks and Crunch have been fairly acquainted all season long. The Amerks finished with a 5-5-2-0 record against Syracuse, claiming points in five of the seven matchups.

Rochester owns a 3-28-5-2 record in the last 38 regular season games against the Crunch dating back to the start of 2016-17 season when they score two or fewer goals. On the other hand, when the Amerks score three or more goals over that same span, the club shows a 35-11-5-0.

Rochester tallied 15 goals in the opening frame compared to Syracuse's seven, however, the Crunch outscored the Amerks 29-11 in the final 40 minutes of regulation.

Rochester went 6-for-41 (14.6%) on the power-play this season against the Crunch while also showing an 80.0% success rate on the penalty kill (24-for-30).

The season series favored the visiting team as nine of the first 12 meetings were won by the road team and seven of the 12 were one-goal decisions.

In the final meeting of the season on Mar. 27, Rochester earned its first shutout in the regular season against the Crunch since Mar. 28, 2015, also a 2-0 road win and a span of 99 games between the North Division foes.

Forwards **Isak Rosén** (2+7) and **Brandon Biro** (3+4) have combined for 16 points against the Crunch this season, with Rosen being one of three Amerks to appear in all 12 contests opposite Syracuse.

Veteran netminder **Dustin Tokarski** posted back-to-back road wins against his former team while **Michael Houser** appeared in 12 minutes this season against the Crunch, making four saves. Houser and Tokarski combined to earn the shutout in the final meeting of the slate between the two clubs on Mar. 27.

Rookie goaltender **Devon Levi** went a 2-2-2 and made 118 saves in six contests opposite the Crunch, showing a 2.86 goals-against average while winning his last two decisions.

## SHARING THE WEALTH

After seeing three players reach the 20-goal mark in each of the past two seasons, the Amerks duplicated that feat in 2023-24.

**Jiri Kulich** scored a career-high 27 goals, becoming the first Amerk to score 20 or more in back-to-back seasons since Cole Schneider and Justin Bailey did so in 2015-16 and 2016-17. Kulich is also the first Rochester player to lead the team in goals in back-to-back seasons since AHL Hall of Famer and Amerk legend **Jody Gage** did so during in 1991-1992 and 1992-1993.

**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. Dating back to Jan. 5, the Speedway, Indiana, native totaled 15 goals and 20 assists over the final 40 games of the season.

**Isak Rosén**, who tied for the team-lead in points (50), reached the mark by way of his two-goal outing in the season-finale against Utica. Since March 13, the AHL All-Star notched seven goals and 10 assists over the final 15 games while recording at least one shot in all but four games in 2023-24.

## 2023-24 AMERKS REGULAR SEASON LEADERS

SKATER	GP	G	A	PTS	+/-	PIM
Mason Jobst	64	22	28	50	-9	49
Isak Rosén	67	20	30	50	4	12
Jiri Kulich	57	27	18	45	2	26
Brandon Biro	59	16	27	43	2	28

## GOALTENDER

	GP	REC	SVS	SV%	GAA
Devon Levi	26	16-6-4	803	.927	2.42
Dustin Tokarski	24	11-9-3	634	.890	3.32
Michael Houser	7	3-1-1	121	.871	3.39

## 2023-24 CRUNCH REGULAR SEASON LEADERS

SKATER	GP	G	A	PTS	+/-	PIM
Gage Goncalves	69	13	45	58	-8	43
Cole Koepke	53	20	19	38	8	14
Waltheri Merelä	55	15	19	34	-2	16
Felix Robert	53	13	21	34	5	34

## GOALTENDER

	GP	REC	SVS	SV%	GAA
Hugo Alnefelt	29	15-12-2	691	.904	2.53
Matt Tomkins	30	14-8-4	636	.893	2.76
Brandon Halverson	14	7-3-3	274	.913	2.18

## 2023-24 HEAD-TO-HEAD BREAKDOWN

### Syracuse Crunch

### Rochester Americans

39-24-4-5	<b>Record</b>	39-23-7-3
18-12-3-3	<b>Home Record</b>	18-12-4-2
21-12-1-2	<b>Road Record</b>	21-11-3-1
3-4-0-3	<b>Last 10 Games</b>	8-1-1-0
6-4	<b>Overtime Record</b>	10-7
3-5	<b>Shootout Record</b>	4-3
29-6-2-2	<b>Record When Scoring First</b>	26-6-4-2
19.4% (T-9th)	<b>Power-Play</b>	17.9% (T-19th)
83.9 (T-8th)	<b>Penalty Kill</b>	78.7% (27th)
3.06 (T-17th)	<b>Goals-For Per Game</b>	3.25 (T-6th)
2.82 (T-9th)	<b>Goals-Against Per Game</b>	3.32 (23rd)
Joel Bouchard (1st)	<b>Head Coach</b>	Seth Appert (4th)



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# GAME NOTES



## EARNING THEIR STARS AND STRIPES

**Nikita Novikov** (23) and **Zach Metsa** (24) became the first pair of first-year defensemen to record 20 or more points since the 2013-14 season (Chad Ruhwedel-28 and Rasmus Ristolainen-20).

Novikov led all rookies with 20 assists and finished with a team-best plus-20 on-ice rating, which was third in the league amongst rookies. He recorded one goal and four assists in eight games in April.

Metsa finished with a plus-15 on-ice rating, which was second on the team. The Quinnipiac University product tallied two goals and five assists in eight games in April and had one shot in seven of eight games. The rookie tied for seventh amongst the AHL defensemen in goals and 11th in points.

In 66 games, defenseman **Jeremy Davies** established career-highs in goals (12) and points (35), both of which led all Amerks blueliners. Dating back to March 15, Davies recorded four goals and nine assists in 15 games while registering at least one shot in 10 of 11 games.

**Brandon Biro** appeared in career-high 59 games and matched a personal-best in goals (16). He also led the team with 16 power-play assists and 13 multi-point games. Since March 9, the Penn State University product totaled four goals and 10 assists in final 16 games while having a shot in 14 of those games.

Amerks captain **Michael Mersch** skated in 60 or more games for the seventh time in his AHL career while recording double figures in goals (15) for the ninth time. The five-time 20-goal scorer and Calder Cup Champion logged 20 or more assists (23) for the sixth time.

**Lukas Rousek** led the Amerks in assists (31) for the second straight season and reached the 40-point mark for the second consecutive campaign. Rousek tied for fourth on the team in power-play goals (4) and paced all qualified Rochester players with .80 points-per-game.

Forward **Viktor Neuchev** paced all Amerks rookies with 11 goals and 28 points in 57 games. He was one of 12 first-year skaters to record his first AHL point and one of nine to have at least one assist this season.

## LEANING ON LEVI

**Devon Levi** earned the start in 24 of the last 34 games since being reassigned to Rochester on Jan. 20, including five straight to open February. He won nine of his last 11 starts and 11 of 13 dating back to the start of March.

Levi, who showed a 16-6-4 record in 26 appearances with the Amerks, held the opposition to three or fewer goals in each game over a 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 led all rookie netminders with a .927 save percentage, held the opposition to three or fewer goals in all but four of his 26 appearances. He was 16-2-4 this season in those games.

A two-time winner of the Mike Richter Award, Levi finished with the second-best save percentage all-time behind only Hall of Famer **Martin Biron**.

## AMERKS-CRUNCH 2023-24 SEASON SERIES BREAKDOWN

### ROCHESTER

SKATER	GP	G	A	PTS	PIM	+/-
Isak Rosen	12	2	7	9	4	-5
Brandon Biro	9	3	4	7	4	-2
Brett Murray	11	4	2	6	0	-5

### GOALTENDER

	GP	REC	GA	SV%	GAA
Devon Levi	6	2-2-2	17	.900	2.86
Dustin Tokarski	5	3-2-0	12	.919	2.39
Michael Houser	2	0-0-0	1	.800	4.80

### SYRACUSE

SKATER	GP	G	A	PTS	PIM	+/-
Gage Goncalves	12	2	9	11	0	4
Cole Koepke	12	3	5	8	2	5
Declan Carlile	11	0	8	8	2	3

### GOALTENDER

	GP	REC	GA	SV%	GAA
Hugo Alnefelt	4	3-0-1	9	.899	2.21
Matt Tomkins	7	3-2-2	17	.898	2.42

## 2023-24 SERIES BREAKDOWN VS. SYRACUSE

Date	Result	Score	SF-SA	PP	PK
Nov. 1	L	7-2	21-32	0-3	1-3
Nov. 4	SOW	5-4	23-46	1-2	4-4
Dec. 23	OTW	3-2	31-26	1-4	3-3
Dec. 27	L	3-1	23-15	0-1	1-1
Jan. 31	L	2-1	23-18	0-4	2-2
Feb. 9	OTL	3-2	21-25	1-4	3-3
Feb. 10	OTL	3-2	25-36	1-4	2-2
Feb. 28	L	5-2	19-32	0-5	1-1
Mar. 8	OTW	4-3	26-23	1-4	2-2
Mar. 9	L	4-2	19-34	0-2	1-3
Mar. 13	W	3-2	19-37	1-3	2-3
Mar. 27	W	2-0	27-29	0-5	3-3

## SCOUTING THE CRUNCH

The Crunch finished third in the North Division and have now finished among the top three teams six times dating back to the 2016-17 season. Syracuse completed its 30th season in the AHL and reached the second round of the postseason for the sixth straight year dating back to 2016-17.

Forward Gage Goncalves topped all Syracuse skaters with 45 assists and 58 points in 69 games. It marked the second straight season that the AHL All-Star reached 13-goal, 40-assist and 50-point plateau. In 212 games in the AHL, all with the Crunch, Goncalves has produced 43 goals and 102 assists for 145 points.

Matt Tomkins (15-12-2) and Hugo Alnefelt (14-8-4) split the majority of the goaltending duties for the Crunch. Tomkins appeared in a career-high 29 games while his 15 wins were also personal-best. Alnefelt (14) recorded double digits in wins for the third straight season.



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## NORTH DIVISION SEMIFINALS

### 2 ROCHESTER AMERICANS vs. 3 SYRACUSE CRUNCH



#### 2023-24 REGULAR SEASON COMPARISON

39-23-7-3, 88 pts.	<b>RECORD</b>	39-24-4-5, 87 pts.
2nd, North	<b>STANDINGS</b>	3rd, North
18-12-4-2	<b>HOME</b>	18-12-3-3
21-11-3-1	<b>ROAD</b>	21-12-1-2
234 (1-6th)	<b>GOALS FOR</b>	220 (1-17th)
239 (23rd)	<b>GOALS AGAINST</b>	203 (1-9th)
17.9% (19th), 12 SHGA	<b>POWER PLAY</b>	19.4% (10th), 9 SHGA
78.7% (27th), 10 SHGF	<b>PENALTY KILLING</b>	83.9% (9th), 8 SHGF
Jobst (22-28-50) Rosen (20-30-50) Kulich (27-18-45)	<b>LEADING SCORERS</b>	Goncalves (13-45-58) Koepeke (20-19-39) Merela (15-19-34) Robert (13-21-34)
Levi (16-6-4, 2.42, .927) Tokarski (11-9-3, 3.32, .890)	<b>LEADING GOALTENDERS</b>	Tomkins (15-12-2, 2.53, .904, 1.50) Alnefelt (14-8-4, 2.76, .893, 2.50)

SERIES SCHEDULE		WATCH EVERY PLAYOFF GAME LIVE	
Game 1 at ROC 7:00 ET	28	29	30
Game 2 at ROC 7:00 ET	31	32	33
Game 3 at SYR 7:00 ET	34	35	36
Game 4 at SYR 7:00 ET	37	38	39
Game 5 at ROC 7:00 ET	40	41	42

#### 2023-24 HEAD-TO-HEAD SERIES

5-5-2-0, 12 pts.	<b>RECORD</b>	7-2-2-1, 17 pts.
1-4-1-0	<b>HOME</b>	2-2-1-1
4-1-1-0	<b>ROAD</b>	5-0-1-0
29	<b>GOALS</b>	38
5/41 (14.6%)	<b>POWER PLAY</b>	6/30 (20.0%)
Rosen (12gp, 2-7-9) Biro (9gp, 3-4-7) Murray (11gp, 4-2-6) Rousek (7gp, 3-3-6)	<b>LEADING SCORERS</b>	Goncalves (12gp, 2-9-11) Koepeke (12gp, 3-5-8) Carlile (11gp, 0-8-8)
Tokarski (3-2-0, 2.39, .919) Levi (2-2-0, 2.86, .900)	<b>LEADING GOALTENDERS</b>	Alnefelt (3-0-1, 2.21, .899) Tomkins (3-2-2, 2.42, .898)

#### CALDER CUP PLAYOFF HISTORY

49th	<b>APPEARANCES</b>	18th
225-216	<b>RECORD (GAMES)</b>	66-71
48-42	<b>RECORD (SERIES)</b>	11-17
35-44	<b>OVERTIME</b>	13-15
'65, '66, '68, '83, '87, '96	<b>CALDER CUP TITLES</b>	none
'57, '60, '67, '74, '86, '91, '93, '98, '99	<b>LOSING FINALIST</b>	2013, 2017
4-1	<b>PREVIOUS MEETINGS</b>	1-4

1996 CF (W, 4-1)  
1997 DCF (W, 3-0)  
2004 DSF (W, 4-3)  
2023 DSF (W, 3-2)

2018 DSF (W, 3-0)



Rochester is the top development team of the Buffalo Sabres

#CALDERCUP



#ROCvsSYR

Syracuse is the top development team of the Tampa Bay Lightning



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