



ROCHESTER AMERICANS

DAILY PRESS CLIPS

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TONIGHT'S GAME: Toronto @ Rochester

Former Swedish rivals Victor Olofsson and Lawrence Pilut exchange raves as Rochester teammates

The Athletic

By: Joe Yerdon

Victor Olofsson and Lawrence Pilut may be new to Sabres and Rochester Americans fans alike, but the two Swedish arrivals have the scouting report on each other for years. Even though they're teammates now, the pair frequently faced each other as rivals since they were both 16.

Olofsson, 23, played for MODO and MODO's junior teams up until he joined Frolunda in 2016 and played against Pilut's HV71 men's and junior teams dating back to 2011. In his final season in Sweden in 2017-18, Olofsson played alongside Rasmus Dahlin in Frolunda and led the Swedish Hockey League in goals with 27. Pilut, meanwhile, won the Defenseman of the Year award. Opponents haven't gotten to know about them yet, but they're learning quickly.

"He's speedy, he's got a great shot as we've seen this week and everything, but I mean it's tough to play against him because you've got to have an extra eye on him," Pilut said about Olofsson. "But it's his shot and he's so quick all over."

That shot is what caught the eye of fans during Sabres development camp and again during training camp. He drew "oohs" and "ahhs" with his shot both in how fast it arrived on goal and how accurately he picked corners with it. Pilut, 22, has seen that more than a few times back home.

"(Coach's report) was basically don't let him shoot, that's the only thing," Pilut said with a laugh. "Over in Sweden we knew he was their weapon on the power play. Of course he can score anyways. That's the thing; you've got to keep an extra eye on him out there."

It's on the power play where Olofsson has done a lot of damage on the scoreboard, but not with his shot. He's racked up one goal and six assists with the extra man and the Amerks are scoring on 40.7 percent of their extra man opportunities. It's also helping Olofsson pile up the early season accolades.

Olofsson earned the AHL Player of the Week award for the week ending October 14th, putting up seven points in three wins. In a two-game series against the Bridgeport Sound Tigers over the weekend, Olofsson had two goals and two assists. Each goal was a game-winner, including one in overtime on Sunday.

Olofsson followed up his award-winning week with four points (two goals, two assists) in a 6-1 win against the Utica Comets on Wednesday.

"It's pretty cool to be along with him because I've seen him so much in Sweden and everything and how he can transition that play over here so quickly it's amazing to see," Pilut said. "He's an amazing player and I think he's just going to get better and better."

Olofsson isn't the only one piling up points early in the season. Pilut has two goals and eight assists and a team-high plus-7 rating.

"I think all the teams and the coaches (in Sweden) knew how skilled of a player he is and you've got to be aware when he's on the ice because he can make a lot of fakes and beat you when he's in the offensive zone," Olofsson said about Pilut. "We talked about it and I guess many other teams talk about it, too."

Talking and doing are two distinctly different things and words alone weren't enough to contain Pilut. He had 38 points (eight goals, 30 assists) in 52 games with HV71 and was their alternate captain. He was also a bit of a late bloomer when it came to point production as the previous season saw him put up 12 points in 48 games. That didn't make him any easier to deal with.

"He's a hard guy to play against because he's really solid defensively," Olofsson said. "He's real good offensively, too. He's hard to beat and hard to defend against. He was the best defender last year in the SHL and I think he continues to improve every day. He's a really good player for us."

"I actually scored a pretty good goal against him when he was on the ice last year," Olofsson said. "So that was nice."

So if we asked him about it he'd remember?

"Yeah, I won't let him forget it."

"Of *course* he (mentioned that)," Pilut said with a laugh casting his eyes skyward like the brother who knows his slightly older brother won't let him forget. "It's just funny. I remember the situation... it's just jokes between us now."

The Rochester teammates, who both signed two-year early level contracts with Buffalo in the offseason, are both making it hard for Jason Botterill and Phil Housley to ignore what they're doing at the minor league level.

"Our dream is to play in the NHL, of course," Olofsson said. "I feel like we both were kind of knocking on the door right away with the seasons we had last year. I think we were both real excited coming to camp, but we think we are patient too because we know it's a bit of a different game and we've got to develop here and learn how to play the North American game. We said we just have to have patience and give it a little bit of time and hopefully we'll wind up in Buffalo soon."

Sabres prospect Nylander quiets criticism with strong start for Amerks

Buffalo News

By: Bill Hoppe

Americans coach Chris Taylor didn't hesitate to answer a question about Alexander Nylander's early career struggles.

"Absolutely," Taylor quickly replied when asked if criticism of the Buffalo Sabres prospect has been unfair because he started his AHL career at such a young age, "I totally believe that."

This season, the much-maligned Nylander, 20, has enjoyed his best start as a pro, consistently showcasing the tenacity to complement his slick talents.

Following a strong NHL training camp, the Swedish winger has compiled two goals and seven points in six AHL outings.

Nylander needed 23 games to reach seven points last season.

"You can see the big difference, his skating is much (better) because he's got confidence, he wants to skate with the puck now," Taylor said following Tuesday's practice in Blue Cross Arena. "(In the past), he was kind of afraid. He was timid where to go. I just think with the confidence he has and the respect he's getting from his teammates in the locker room is big for him." Nylander's early play has silenced some critics who had labeled him a bust or said the Sabres wasted the eighth overall pick in 2016.

Right now, Nylander is brimming with confidence.

"I know I can play up there," he said.

And he said has more to put on display — his game has an even higher level.

"I think I could create more offensively, get more shots and obviously start scoring more goals," said Nylander, who wants to be the first forward the Sabres recall. "I think I can just do even better than this."

Taylor sees positive signs Nylander's work ethic will help him keep growing and return to the NHL.

"Just because if you score two goals the night before, the next day it's not just go out there, hit the ice and get it over with," Taylor said. "Work on something else. He's doing that. He's staying out after practice, working hard and working on things that he's not good at."

The genesis of Nylander's turnaround probably started last spring, when the Sabres stressed he would be entering the most important offseason of training in his life. He returned stronger with a more muscular physique and having put on a bit of weight.

"Organizationally, we all had a part in it," Taylor said of the message sent to Nylander. "But for me, it's Alex. Anybody can talk to anybody. It's the player. As coaches, I think some people take too much credit for a lot of different things. . . ."

"You give him foundations, you give him stuff you want him to do. Ultimately, the player's got to execute it, and right now, he's executing and he's doing his job."

Nylander, who has been skating on a line with center Kevin Porter and Wayne Simpson, said he "basically did what I've done every summer."

"I obviously knew I needed to improve stuff," said Nylander, who scored a goal and two points in Wednesday's 6-1 road win against the Utica Comets. "I just feel really good right now."

Nylander hasn't always felt comfortable in the AHL.

Two years ago, instead of returning Nylander to the junior Ontario Hockey League, the Sabres' old regime assigned him to the Amerks, making him the AHL's youngest player.

Nylander struggled competing against men for the first time. The Amerks, meanwhile, were awful.

"It was a little different playing against men my first year," Nylander said. "I sort of adapted to it. It might've took a little bit longer than I thought. I'm just happy where I am now. It's a lot better now."

Taylor said: "The way the team played, not making the playoffs, not winning too many games, that's a tough year for a guy that's 18 years old in the American League."

A year ago, Nylander said he felt similar to how he feels this season before a groin injury he suffered in rookie camp dogged him throughout the campaign.

"It was my first injury I've had in my life," said Nylander, who has played seven NHL games. "It was like basically three months that I was out. It was harder to come back than I thought."

When he finally made his season debut Nov. 17 with the Amerks, he was behind on and off the ice. He eventually played the last three games of the season with the Sabres, scoring his first goal.

"When you're hurt, you're not really around the guys as much as you should be," Taylor said. "Then we had some success, and it's tough to get back into it, it's tough to be involved in the room, it's tough to be that go-to mentality."

The Sabres kept Nylander off the ice during development camp, but he had five points in the Prospects Challenge and then had four points in five preseason games. Despite making a case for a roster spot on the Sabres, he was sent down to Rochester and been undeterred since his arrival.

"I think this year was a big, important year for him to get off to a good start," Taylor said, "and he has."
Timely play on special teams

Before the Amerks extended their winning streak to four games Wednesday, Taylor said the way in which they triumphed in back-to-back road tilts over the weekend was crucial.

Rochester rallied in the third period both days against the Bridgeport Sound Tigers.

In Saturday's 4-3 win, Nylander's power-play goal tied it before winger Victor Olofsson won it late. In between, the Amerks killed a two-minute, two-man advantage.

In Sunday's 3-2 victory, defenseman Zach Redmond's power-play goal knotted it before Olofsson scored in overtime.

"We talked about it all the time," Taylor said. "The power-play goals, are they timely? Or are they just power-play goals? We had a couple power-play goals that were timely for us. The penalty kill, when we needed to kill at the right time, we got the kill.

"For me, that's a bigger signal of what lies ahead for our team. That means we're caring about each other, we're laying down, blocking shots for those big penalty kills, we're doing everything we need to do.

"Then our key guys need to score those big goals, and they did. For me, I honestly think our team just came together immensely after that game."

Olofsson scored two goals and four points Wednesday, giving him a whopping five goals and 12 points in his first six AHL appearances.

Redmond rallying

A year after his 47 points led the Amerks, Redmond has compiled four goals and nine points in the opening six games. Redmond scored twice Wednesday.

During the Amerks' 0-2 start, Taylor said the popular veteran struggled.

"He was trying to do too much," Taylor said Tuesday. "(It's) understandable. He wanted to be that guy off the bat to get our team going. . . . I thought these last three games he's been arguably one of our best players, not just because of the points, because he adds the defense, he's good on penalty killing, his calmness on the ice. He brings everybody to that level.

"He's got that calming effect on our team. What a great guy (he is) in the dressing room, just remarkable, everybody loves him, everybody wants to be around him, and that says a lot. He's the hardest-working guy in the locker room."

Up next

The Amerks are back on the ice Thursday for practice and then host the Toronto Marlies on Friday at Blue Cross Arena. It will be Hocktoberfest with German-themed food and drink specials and live music. The team travels Saturday to face the Belleville Senators.

Olofsson scores two more as Amerks win fourth in row

Buffalo News

By: Staff Report

Rookie winger Victor Olofsson continued his hot scoring for Rochester, scoring two goals and assisting on two others in the Americans' 6-1 victory over the Utica Comets at the Utica War Memorial.

Olofsson has five goals and 10 assists for 11 points in six games.

It was the fourth straight win for the Amerks (4-2-0), who took over first place in the American Hockey League North Division with a home game coming up against the Toronto Marlies on Friday and a road game at Belleville (Ont.) Senators on Saturday.

The Amerks score four power-play goals, raising their total to 10 for the season. They had three in the first period, taking a 3-0 lead.

Defenseman Zach Redmond got Rochester started with two power-play goals in the first 7:53 of the opening. Then Olofsson struck with the man advantage at 12:50. Lawrence Pilut, another rookie from Sweden, assisted.

Olofsson and Danny O'Regan scored even-strength goals in the second period for the Amerks, who added a power-play tally by Alexander Nylander in the third with assists by Rasmus Asplund and Brendan Guhle. It was Guhle's fourth assist of the season.

Scott Wedgewood made 24 saves in goal for Rochester. Richard Bachman also had 24 for Utica.

Americans rout Utica, 6-1

C&C WorldWide

By: Staff Report

The Rochester Americans (4-2-0-0) erupted for four power-play goals, including three in the first period, and never looked back on their way to a decisive 6-1 win over the North Division rival Utica Comets (3-3-0-0) Wednesday night at the Adirondack Bank Center. With the Amerks victory, Rochester extends its winning streak to four straight games and move into sole possession of first place in the AHL's North Division standings.

Just days after being selected by the American Hockey League as the CCM/AHL Player of the Week on Monday, Victor Olofsson, who totaled seven points (3+4) in three games last week, followed up with another impressive performance in tonight's contest as he registered a team-high four points (2+2). The rookie forward now leads the AHL in scoring with 12 points (5+7) and ranks second in the league with five goals through his first six games of the campaign.

Lawrence Pilut extended his point streak to four games as he added three assists while Zach Redmond, who recorded a pair of first-period power-play goals, pushed his point streak to four games as well. In Pilut's last four contests, the rookie defenseman shows eight points (1+7) to take over the scoring lead among AHL blueliners while Redmond has also tallied eight points (4+4) to remain at a close second, giving Rochester the top two point-producing defensemen.

Alexander Nylander added his six and seventh points in the last five games (2+5) while Danny O'Regan rounded out the scoring with his second goal of the campaign. Goaltender Scott Wedgewood made 24 saves to even his record to 2-2-0 on the year while he also was credited with his first point as an Amerk with an assist on Olofsson's first goal of the night.

Olli Juolevi scored his first American Hockey League goal for Utica during the second period while netminder Richard Bachman was handed his second straight loss and third on the year.

Rochester drew three penalties in the first 14 minutes of the game, and like they have done all season thus far, the Amerks' power-play unit seized the moment as they would take a 3-0 lead after the opening period.

Redmond tallied a pair of goals while on the man-advantage before Olofsson ripped his first of his two markers to cap the frame. Utica made it a 3-1 score at the 6:24 mark of the second period with its own power-play goal, but the Amerks responded to regain their three-goal cushion before the intermission break.

After the two clubs each sent a player to the penalty box near the halfway point of the second period, Olofsson picked the top right corner of the net from Nylander and Pilut to make it 4-1 with 10:03 left in stanza.

Nearly four minutes later, O'Regan caught a piece of an Olofsson redirect for his second goal of the season. Defenseman Andrew MacWilliam fired the initial shot from the left point to record his first point of the 2018-19 season.

To close out the scoring on the night, the Amerks tallied their sixth goal of the tilt when Nylander tucked in a cross-ice feed from Rasmus Asplund and Brendan Guhle with 10:09 left in regulation. The power-play helper was Asplund's first-career point in the AHL while Guhle extended his current assist streak to three games (0+4).

By recording four goals with the man-advantage tonight, the Amerks become the first team in the league this season to reach double-digits (11) in power-play goals. Additionally, with 10 combined power-play goals over its last four games, Rochester boasts the top ranked power-play in the AHL with a 40.7% conversion rate.

The Amerks return to the Blue Cross Arena on Friday night at 7:05 pm against the defending Calder Cup champion Toronto Marlies.

Penalty kill dooms Comets in loss to Amerks

CNY Homepage.com

By: Lucas Frankel

Trent Cull called it.

When asked about his keys to Wednesday night's game against the Amerks, he said the Comets had to limit penalties and play as much five-on-five hockey as possible.

As it turned out, Rochester struck for three power-play goals in the first period and never looked back beating Utica 6-1 at the Adirondack Bank Center.

Zach Redmond got the scoring started 2:16 in. He added another with just under eight minutes to go in the first and Victor Olofsson then extended the lead to 3-0.

In the second, Olli Juolevi got one back for the Comets scoring his first professional hockey league goal. However, the Amerks struck right back on a goal by Olofsson. Danny O'Regan made it 5-1 later in the frame and Alex Nylander capped the scoring with a goal in the third.

The Comets return to action on Friday night against the Cleveland Monsters.

Amerks rout Comets for fourth straight win
Pickin' Splinters
By: Paul Gotham

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The Amerks return home to face the defending Calder Cup champion Toronto Marlies for the first of six matchups between the two teams this season on Friday, Oct. 19 at The Blue Cross Arena. The 7:05 p.m. contest will be carried live on The Sports Leader 95.7 FM/950 AM ESPN Rochester and viewed on AHLTV.