



# ROCHESTER AMERICANS

DAILY PRESS CLIPS

*Friday, November 2, 2018*

*TONIGHT'S GAME: Hershey @ Rochester*

Rochester Amerks forward Victor Olofsson named AHL Player of the Month  
*Pickin' Splinters*  
By: Paul Gotham/Amerks.com

The American Hockey League announced today that Rochester Americans forward Victor Olofsson has been named the CCM/AHL Player of the Month for October.

Olofsson tallied five goals and 10 assists for a league-leading 15 points in 10 games during October.

Olofsson made his AHL debut on Oct. 5 and earned an assist while taking a team-high five shots on goal in a 6-2 loss to Charlotte. He then put together a seven-game scoring streak, beginning with a three-point effort in a 6-3 win over Syracuse on Oct. 10.

Olofsson had back-to-back two-point games at Bridgeport on Oct. 13 and 14, and then notched two goals and two assists in a 6-1 win at Utica on Oct. 17. Olofsson recorded an assist and a shootout goal in a 5-4 win over Toronto on Oct. 19 before notching single assists on Oct. 20 at Belleville and Oct. 26 vs. Utica.

In his first season of play in North America, the 23-year-old Olofsson leads all AHL skaters in scoring through the month of October and is one off the league lead with his 10 assists. In addition, nine of his points have come on the power play, helping the Amerks to a 29.5 percent efficiency through 10 games. Olofsson was a seventh-round selection by the Buffalo Sabres in the 2014 NHL Draft and played 200 games in the Swedish Hockey League, where he scored a league-best 27 goals for Frolunda in 2017-18.

Individual game tickets for the 2018-19 season start at just \$14. Amerks 2018-19 Season Ticket Memberships, which start as low as just \$12 per game, are on-sale now. Full-season ticket member benefits include, but are not limited to, Riverside Club VIP Room access with Amerks Alumni, family meet and greet and annual Skate with the Players event, an exclusive preseason Ice Breaker Party and Chalk Talk with the Amerks coaching staff, your very own Season Ticket Member ID and Discount Card and much more. For more information, visit [www.amerks.com/seasontickets](http://www.amerks.com/seasontickets) or call 1-855-GO-AMERKS

Rochester Amerks and Veterans Outreach Center partner to host Military Appreciation Night  
*Pickin' Splinters*  
By: Staff Report

The Rochester Americans and Veterans Outreach Center have once again partnered to host Military Appreciation Night on Friday, Nov. 9 when the Amerks face the Syracuse Crunch at 7:05 p.m. at The Blue Cross Arena.

"We are truly appreciative for great community partners like the Rochester Americans," said Laura Stradley, Executive Director for Veterans Outreach Center. "Veterans Outreach Center engages daily with soldiers, marines, sailors, airmen and coast guardsmen who have made great sacrifices in serving our nation. It is a testament to the Americans organization that they want to recognize those sacrifices and honor these courageous men and women by hosting an event like Military Appreciation Night. The entire staff and players alike take an interest in getting involved in our community and engage with both VOC and the veterans we serve directly. It is truly wonderful that the organization makes themselves so accessible."

"It is truly an honor for the Rochester Americans to once again partner with Veterans Outreach Center to host Military Appreciation Night," said Rob Minter, Vice President of Business Operations for the Amerks. "This is an event we take great pride in hosting each year as it gives us another opportunity to show our immense gratitude for the brave men and women in our community and in the U.S. Armed Forces who have served or are currently serving our country."

The team's Military Appreciation Night festivities feature the latest series of Mystery Pucks, where a limited number of Military-themed Amerks pucks, signed by various players, will be available for purchase for \$10 in the Upper Concourse.

Members of the Blue Star Mothers will be on hand in the main concourse to collect donation items for care packages that will be sent to local U.S. military service members who are currently deployed overseas. The items, which can include such things as Q-tips, lip balm, toothpaste/brushes, dental floss, beef jerky, sugarless gum/candy, granola bars, shampoo/body wash (travel size), sunscreen, peanuts and popcorn, will be collected at the game and shipped by Blue Star Mothers ROC, which is part of a national organization whose mission is to support all members of the Armed Forces and their families through a variety of supportive events and activities. Blue Star Mothers have or have had sons and daughters serving honorably in the United States military.

The Amerks will again wear special Military-themed jerseys along with matching socks as a tribute to the U.S. Armed Forces. Fans will have the opportunity to purchase the jerseys through a silent auction held during the game on the upper concourse of The Blue Cross Arena. Following the game, the winners of the auction will be able to take the ice and be presented with a "jersey off the back" from the Amerks players. Proceeds from the jersey auction, as well as from the sale of special Military Appreciation Night Mystery Pucks, will be donated to Veterans Outreach Center.

The Amerks are offering all United States Military Veterans, Retired, Active Duty, Reserve and National Guard service members one complimentary ticket to the game with additional tickets available for as low as just \$12. Tickets can be requested by visiting [www.amerks.com/militarycomps](http://www.amerks.com/militarycomps). Military personnel, veterans and family members can also use the same link to submit photos that will be displayed on the video board during the game as part of the military tribute.

In addition, the team is offering a T-shirt and ticket package for just \$30 that includes a one-of-a-kind "Military Appreciation" shirt and a best-available ticket while \$2 from each package sold will be donated to Veterans Outreach Center.

Those interested in taking advantage of this special offer can do so by visiting [www.amerks.com/military](http://www.amerks.com/military) or by calling 1-855-GO-AMERKS.

Veterans Outreach Center is again the season-long sponsor of the Amerks "Hometown Heroes" program, which provides complimentary tickets to a United States Military Veteran, Retired, Active Duty, Reserve and National Guard service member as well as any law enforcement officials, first responders, fire fighters and EMS personnel at every home game.

Individual game tickets for the 2018-19 season start at just \$14. Amerks 2018-19 Season Ticket Memberships, which start as low as just \$12 per game, are on-sale now. Full-season ticket member benefits include, but are not limited to, Riverside Club VIP Room access with Amerks Alumni, family meet and greet and annual Skate with the Players event, an exclusive preseason Ice Breaker Party and Chalk Talk with the Amerks coaching staff, your very own Season Ticket Member ID and Discount Card and much more. For more information, visit [www.amerks.com/seasontickets](http://www.amerks.com/seasontickets) or call 1-855-GO-AMERKS.

#### About Veterans Outreach Center:

Founded locally in 1973 by returning Vietnam veterans, today's Veterans Outreach Center remains anchored in our community and offers a comprehensive portfolio of supportive services designed to meet the needs of veterans and their families. Through the generosity of our community, all of these programs and services are provided free of charge. Veterans Outreach Center provides comprehensive resources to current and former members of the U.S. Armed Forces and their families through direct service, community collaboration, and advocacy. Veterans Outreach Center's vision is to "Be the Nation's best provider of community-centered supportive services for veteran families."

Sabres' Jason Pominville experienced unique road to 1,000 games

*Buffalo Hockey Beat*

By: Bill Hoppe

With Of all the places it could've been played, it turns out [Jason Pominville](#) will hit the prestigious 1,000-game mark tonight in Ottawa, the site of the winger's signature moment, the dynamic short-handed overtime goal against the powerhouse Senators that pushed the underdog Sabres into the 2006 Eastern Conference final.

"(I) had some great, great moments there, probably my best moment as a player there," Pominville said earlier this week inside KeyBank Center. "The odds of it being there is crazy."

So were the odds Pominville would score a huge NHL goal that season. He had cleared waivers months earlier, meaning every team passed on him, and quietly returned for his fourth season with the Rochester Americans.

At that point, Pominville had played one NHL game.

In an organization loaded with prospects following an NHL lockout, nobody talked much about Pominville, a former second-round pick with two 30-goal AHL seasons. Rookies Ryan Miller, Derek Roy and Thomas Vanek all overshadowed him.

"He was a great player and he did a lot of nice things, but he wasn't one of the top guys," former Sabres goalie Martin Biron said of Pominville. "When the next year started, you knew he was close, but . . . you didn't think he's one of the top guys from Rochester that's coming in that's going to get a job."

But by late that November, after scoring 19 goals in 18 AHL games, the Sabres promoted Pominville for good.

"He's dominating Rochester, confident, ready," said former Sabres winger Andrew Peters, Pominville's roommate in Rochester.

Pominville compiled 18 goals and 30 points in 57 regular-season NHL outings before former Sabres coach Lindy Ruff utilized Pominville and Roy for a defensive zone faceoff barely two minutes into the extra session May 13, 2006.

How many rookies kill penalties in overtime of a road playoff game against the NHL's highest-scoring team?

After the Senators won the draw, Roy grabbed the puck in the left circle and one-handed it to Pominville, who took off down the ice seconds away ending the Eastern Conference semifinal.

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Pominville's father, Jean-Marie played goalie professionally and met his wife, Deborah, during his stint with the United States Hockey League's Green Bay Bobcats in 1977-78.

At first, Jason wanted to follow his father, who attended two NHL training camps with the Oakland Seals, and tend goal.

"When he was young, he wanted to be a goalie, but I told him, 'You're not going to play goalie,' because he was a good skater," Jean-Marie said.

So Jean-Marie told his son to play forward on the ice and he would buy him a pair of street hockey pads.

"I said, 'I'm not going to go watch a game and one game you're on the bench and one game you play,'" Jean-Marie recalled.

Hockey consumed Pominville as a child growing up in Montreal. Jean-Marie said Jason never had many other interests. He and Deborah tried to explain to Jason he needed something else if hockey did not work out.

But Pominville kept developing into an NHL prospect. In 2000-01, he scored 46 goals and 113 points in 71 games with the Quebec Major Junior Hockey League's Shawinigan Cataractes. After the Sabres drafted him 55th overall in 2001, he compiled 57 goals and 121 points in 66 games in his final junior season.

In 2002, he joined the Amerks and moved into a basement apartment in Brighton with Peters, a tough guy in his third AHL season.

"You had two different personalities living together, I can tell you that much," Peters said.

While both are affable, Peters possesses a *much* larger personality. Back then, their routines couldn't have been more different.

"Pommer is a creature of habit and detailed," Peters said.

Pominville was regimented, preparing the same way for each game.

"I was just a nonchalant guy," Peters said. "I just played hockey, I didn't do a pregame nap, I didn't care what time I ate."

He added: "That same routine is what has kept him playing so long."

Looking back, Peters, who retired in 2011, wishes he had adapted Pominville's routine.

"I might not have necessarily been a better player, but I might've played longer," Peters said.

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Pominville, 35, possesses one of the most impressive resumes in Sabres history.

In 2006-07, he scored a career-high 34 goals. The next season, he compiled a career-high 80 points. He was an [NHL All-Star in 2011-12](#), when he had the Sabres' last 30-goal season.

In Tuesday's 2-1 overtime loss to Calgary, Pominville recorded an assist, his 500th point with the Sabres, tying him for ninth in franchise history with Danny Gare.

Imagine if his only appearance with the Sabres had been Dec. 27, 2003, his NHL debut. Pominville said he probably wanted to get claimed when the Sabres waived him.

"But thank God I didn't and it ended up this way," Pominville said. "I never really envisioned myself for playing for any other team."

Overall, counting his time with the Minnesota Wild, Pominville has scored 282 goals and 706 points in the NHL.

Pominville's skills won't wow you. Think of him as being above average in all facets of the game. Combine that with his supreme smarts and you have perhaps one of the NHL's best two-way forwards of the last 10 or 15 years.

"I'll never be the strongest guy, I'll never be the biggest guy, I've never been the fastest guy, I never had the hardest shot," Pominville said. "I think I can do everything well and my hockey sense and smarts is something that can help me play a role."

Biron said: "He doesn't have great size (about 5-foot-11), but he's strong on the puck. He doesn't have blistering speed, but he'll turn it on just enough to be like a burst he can keep up."

Pominville's smarts have helped him adjust over the years and thrive at an age when most players have left the NHL.

"Any situation, I've been able to adjust because of that," Pominville said. "Hockey sense is a big part of that, an asset to have. It's not something you really teach, it's mostly a tool you can have and develop."

Biron believes Pominville's shot is his most underappreciated asset.

"He doesn't have the big slap shot . . . but his shot is so deceiving, it's kind of like a little slap to the puck with a straighter blade. There's a release that's really quick."

He added: "It's not hard, it's not like spectacular."

Biron said Pominville's shot "is really significant to what he is as a player."

"Very underrated, very surprising, understated," Biron said. "But it's so efficient and it's so good, and that's been a tool of him for a long time."

Pominville has occasionally shown signs of slowing down in recent seasons. In 2016-17, his fourth full year in Minnesota, the Wild occasionally scratched him. Minnesota traded him back to the Sabres on June 30, 2017.

Last season, despite [scoring 16 goals](#), he sometimes endured long droughts.

But right now, Pominville is a first-liner beside Jack Eichel. The veteran has five goals and 10 points through 12 contests, including four goals and nine points during his current five-game point streak.

There's another reason Pominville, who captained the Sabres for almost two years, has played 14 seasons and will become the 327th NHL player to reach 1,000 games.

"He's just a nice person, classy, very high character, good morals," Peters said. "But he's a good person. I think that, too, played into the longevity of his career."

As Pominville roared through the neutral zone that night inside Scotiabank Place, he cut to his left and heard his bench yelling he was approaching a forward.

"Forward, forward, forward, forward, because a lot of time when you kill a penalty, you pick up the puck and you don't really look up," Biron said.

That forward was Daniel Alfredsson, one of the NHL's biggest stars.

"If he didn't already know the guy in front of him was Daniel Alfredsson, he realized quickly and decided to turn on the jets," Biron said.

Pominville kept skating, burned past Alfredsson in the left circle and cut to the net.

To this day, Pominville said he doesn't know why he approached the play so aggressively.

"Most times when you're killing penalties . . . you don't go for it, especially in the playoffs when you're in overtime," Pominville said.

When Pominville reached the net, he tucked the puck past goalie Ray Emery's glove along the ice to give the Sabres a 3-2 victory.

"(I went) kind of blank after that until I saw Jay McKee hopping out of the penalty box," Pominville said. "The whole team jumping together was pretty cool."

The goal also turned into one of legendary Sabres play-by-play man Rick Jeanneret's most famous goal calls: "Oh, now do you believe, now do you believe? These guys are good, scary good!"

In the press box with Jeanneret, a stunned Peters, a scratch that night, couldn't believe what he had just watched.

"Jason Pominville had just put our team on a platform that nobody expected us to be on," Peters said. Watching the goal still gives Pominville chills.

"You're just going out there and making a hockey play, hockey read, something that you see," Pominville said. "But, yeah, I mean, now with a step back you realize how big a goal it was for the team and the organization.

"I mean, R.J. probably helped out, too, with the call of it. But, yeah, it's probably a goal that we'll see running around for a little while."

Amerks' Taylor Fedun doesn't like, but understands, being a healthy scratch  
*Buffalo News*  
By: Staff Report

Taylor Fedun understands the depth that has forced him to watch four games as a healthy scratch is critical to the Americans' success.

In his seven-year career, Fedun, 30, often has been one of the AHL's best offensive defensemen. Two years ago, he scored five goals and 23 points in 28 games with the Amerks and made a career-high 27 NHL appearances with the Sabres.

Buffalo's new regime, which passed on re-signing many of former General Manager Tim Murray's players, inked Fedun to a two-year, two-way contract in June 2017.

But with a glut of defensemen this season, the competition among the Amerks is high. So Fedun, who's earning \$300,000 in the AHL, occasionally has sat out during the team's torrid 7-2-1 start.

"It's extremely tough," Fedun said prior to Saturday's 3-2 win, a game in which he returned and recorded his first assist this season. "I've sat out games at the NHL level, but not at this level in many years. It takes some adjusting."

Fedun has adjusted well, handling the scratches "unbelievable," Amerks coach Chris Taylor said.

"He's upset that he's not playing, which I want him to be upset," Taylor said. "But he works his butt off like no other that he's never missed a beat. He's just a real pro to me. He's still trying to get better. He's not sulking about it.

"Is he mad? Of course, he is. He wants to play the game. I understand that. But is he a great teammate supporting his team? Absolutely."

Taylor said Fedun's reaction was "exactly what I expected from him."

"He's high character," Taylor said. "He's a guy that we put an assistant captain on for a reason. His true colors came out when we had to sit him."

Of course, scratching a respected veteran like Fedun can be difficult.

"Believe me, it's hard," Taylor said. "I lose a lot of sleep over it. It's not easy and it's not fun, especially his character, what he brings to everybody in the room."

Fedun, who has played 46 NHL games, including 34 with the Sabres, said the coaching staff's transparency during their conversations has been helpful.

"They're not sugarcoating anything for me," the Princeton graduate said. "When I'm playing well, I know it. When I'm not, I understand. I understand with the depth we have in our locker room, it's the situation we're in right now."

Injuries have whittled down that depth a bit. Taylor said he inserted Fedun for Saturday's tilt against the Laval Rocket because defenseman Matt Tennyson has a lower-body injury. Jack Dougherty also is sidelined with a lower-body ailment.

Fedun responded by helping ignite the Amerks' offense 8:02 into the second period, finding pinching defenseman Zach Redmond in front to tie the game in Blue Cross Arena.

The soft pass from the point through traffic illustrated Fedun's hands and vision.

"What a great game he played," Taylor said. "We expect that from him. He's always giving us that experience, leadership. What a great pass on the first goal."

Slick plays like that could help Fedun stay in the lineup. Still, even with some injuries, the Amerks have two extra defenders. Taylor also constantly tinkers with his lineup – "I go by individual basis and how they played," he said – so he often changes it following wins.

Fedun has veteran status, meaning it can be tougher to dress him. AHL teams can only play six veterans. The Amerks have eight. Twelve skaters each game must have 260 or fewer games of pro experience.

"We've got such a good group of guys in there that I still find myself having fun and working hard in practice," Fedun said. "It's a fun group to be around, and as much as it sucks being on the outside looking in on games, it's a winning formula for us right now, and at the end of the day, that's what we're here for."

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In Friday's 4-0 home victory over the Utica Comets, struggling Amerks winger Justin Bailey, 23, reacted angrily to a third-period tripping call against him, shouting and slamming his stick.

So far, Bailey's fourth season has gone poorly. After clearing waivers earlier this month, Taylor scratched him for the Amerks' second game.

Through nine games, the Williamsville native has mustered zero goals and three assists.

"I think that was frustration for him not scoring, yeah, what's going on with him," Taylor said of the penalty. "Believe me, I looked at it like three times last night, he went right through the guy. I think he's just frustrated about everything. For me, I think he's just got to worry about what he can control."

At times earlier in his career, Bailey ranked among the AHL's best scorers, hitting the 20-goal mark twice and earning recalls to Buffalo. But right now, he's enduring his worst start as a pro.

"I don't know if he's lost his confidence," Taylor said. "I just think he's getting frustrated that pucks aren't going in the net for him. But if you stick with it, good things are going to happen. He's talented enough and he's strong enough, he can skate. "He's scored 20 goals in this league and he's had success. I have no reason to think he won't get rewarded for some of the things he's doing."

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Thanks to a porous defense, goalie Scott Wedgewood started slowly, allowing 10 goals in his first two outings, the Amerks' only two regulation losses this season.

But Wedgewood, 26, has settled down, winning five straight starts.

"The more and more I get out there, the more games and minutes you kind of accumulate, you're going to figure things out and get back into a rhythm," Wedgewood said following Friday's shutout, his ninth in the AHL.

Wedgewood's overall numbers – a 2.86 goals-against average and a .909 save percentage – are decent. His stats during his winning streak – a 1.98 and .933 – are among the league's best.

"He's been good right from the start of the year," Taylor said. "I don't look at his stats, what happened the first two games, nor should anybody. He played very well for us.

"In those first two games, we didn't give him the support that he needed. These last two games, he's come up big for us, a big part of why we got four points this weekend."

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Notes: Despite having his five game-point streak snapped Saturday, Amerks rookie defenseman Lawrence Pilut ranks third in AHL scoring with 13 points, trailing only teammates Victor Olofsson, Redmond and Lehigh Valley Phantoms forward Phil Varone.

Redmond's nine power-play points (five goals and four assists) lead the league. . . . The Amerks have scored an AHL-best 13 power-play goals and converted 29.5 percent of their chances, the Eastern Conference's best rate. . . . The Amerks have outscored their opponents 35-20 during their eight-game point streak (7-0-1).

Sabres prospect Lawrence Pilut piling up points in Rochester

*Buffalo News*

By: Bill Hoppe

Amerks rookie Lawrence Pilut, who missed two recent games with an upper-body injury, is back in the lineup and picked up where he left off.

Pilut, 22, had three assists in a 4-0 home victory against the Utica Comets on Friday.

He was held without a point in Saturday's 4-1 victory against the Laval Rocket to snap a five-game points streak.

Still, through his first eight AHL appearances, the Swedish defenseman has compiled two goals and a whopping 13 points.

"He just brings a poise to his game," Amerks coach Chris Taylor said. "He's confident with what he does. What I like about him is he can recover. Any time he makes a mistake, he's right there getting back to it. Most guys can't recover from that."

Pilut ranks fourth in the AHL in scoring, trailing two teammates – winger Victor Olofsson and Zach Redmond – and Lehigh Valley Phantoms center Phil Varone, a former Amerks star.

Initially, Pilut wanted to battle through the injury, but Taylor said he would rather have Pilut miss a game or two than potentially make the injury worse and miss significant time.

Up next

Rochester, which is tied with Milwaukee for the most goals scored in the league with 39, has a home-and-home with Hershey this weekend. The Amerks host Hershey on Friday and travel to Hershey on Saturday. Hershey is 4-6-0-1 on the season.

Wedgewood shines as Rochester Amerks win again  
*Pickin' Splinters*  
By: Kevin Oklobzija

The Derailed by injuries over the past year and half and then forced to do some soul searching after being traded twice in the first four months of last season, [Scott Wedgewood](#) said coming out of training camp he was going to need a little time to find his game.

Rochester Americans coach [Chris Taylor](#) is willing to give him as long as he wants — because right now just about every puck is finding Wedgewood's stick, glove, blocker, shoulder, skate, chest or whatever.

The seventh-year veteran made 37 saves on Saturday night as the Amerks, despite being short-handed 12 times, rallied to defeat the Laval Rocket 3-2 at Blue Cross Arena at the War Memorial.

On Friday, Wedgewood stopped 20 shots in shutting out the Utica Comets. Over his past five starts, he is 5-0 with a .933 save percentage and a 1.98 goals-against average.

"He's been good right from the start," Taylor said. "I don't look at his numbers from those first two games (10 goals against on 71 shots), no one should, because we didn't give him any help.

"He was there again tonight to bail us out."

Thanks in part to their goalie the Amerks have earned points in eight consecutive games (7-0-1) and continue to lead the AHL's North Division with a 7-3-1 record.

Indeed, the Amerks relied on their goalie for much of the first period (outshot 15-9, outchanced maybe 6-2) but the game was scoreless until a disputed power-play goal by Laval's [Brett Kulak](#) at 14:17 of the second period.

Wedgewood's stick was knocked out of his hand before Kulak even shot, but referees Ryan Jenken and Mathieu Menniti disagreed and allowed the goal to stand. There is no review process for goaltender interference in the AHL.

The Amerks came to life in the third period, scoring three times, but they also ended up short-handed seven times, including being down two men for a stretched of 1:21 early in the period and for 41 seconds midway through.

"A lot of battle," Wedgewood said of the team's effort. "I don't think that's what we wanted to do for the first two periods, obviously a lot of penalties taken, but guys stepped up their game.

"We've got a lot of guys eating pucks. Even on the five-on-four, (Justin) Bailey took one in the head and got right back up." Over the past two nights, the Amerks penalty killers were 15-for-17.

"The penalty killing's starting to get back to where it was last year (84.1 percent)," captain [Kevin Porter](#) said.

The Amerks scoring came in a span of just 6:04. [Zach Redmond](#) steered home a terrific pass by [Taylor Fedun](#) at 8:02 for his sixth goal, and [C.J. Smith](#) then scored a short-handed goal 75 seconds later after a misplay by Laval goalie [Charlie Lindgren](#).

When Yannick Veilleux swept in the rebound of a Dalton Smith shot at 14:06, the Amerks were up 3-1 and seemingly in control. But Wayne Simpson took a double minor for high sticking at 15:07 and the Rocket converted on the first half, at 17:04. It's the last time Wedgewood let a puck get past him, however.

"You need your goalie to be your best penalty killer and 'Wedge' was again tonight," Taylor said.

Said Wedgewood: "I've said it before, the more I get out there, the more comfortable you're going to be. You get to see guys, their tendencies as a defensive corps and kinda of understand guys more and more and more.

"When we've been in some tough spots we've battled and that's going to build a lot of confidence going forward."

A long-time fixture at the rink says goodbye

Ray Slattery, who has worked at the arena for 48 years on security, worked his final game on Saturday. He's going to enjoy more time with family.

Nathan Paetsch develops into mentor for Sabres prospects with Amerks  
*Buffalo News*  
By: Bill Hoppe

Nathan Paetsch signed for his 16th pro season knowing this could happen: So far, the popular former Sabres defenseman has been scratched for all 10 of the Americans' games.

On a blue line that goes 10 deep, Paetsch, 35, ranks last on the depth chart.

But the affable Paetsch, who played 167 NHL games, understands why the Amerks brought him back for another year.

"The situation going in, I wasn't naive by any means," Paetsch said during the second intermission of a recent game in Blue Cross Arena. "That's really why I'm here, to help develop the younger guys, move them along. It's just as important as what I do."

Paetsch considers himself a mentor for Sabres prospects.

"He is kind of almost like another coach sometimes," Amerks defenseman Brendan Guhle said. But Paetsch is careful about using the word "coach."

"I would never step on their toes," Paetsch said. "I'm here to help with them."

So Paetsch might watch video with a youngster, an activity he has done for years, or talk to a defenseman during practice at the coaching staff's request. He said he wants to do whatever he can to "help build the organization."

"He's a classy guy," said Amerks coach Chris Taylor, who played three seasons with Paetsch in Rochester. "He teaches young kids how to practice every day, he loves the game. . . . He's just a guy that you want in the dressing room for young people to watch and learn."

Having played 849 pro games, including 630 in the AHL, Paetsch is uniquely qualified for his role. He developed in the Sabres system, spending three seasons with the Amerks.

In his early days, he fought for playing time, even occasionally skating at forward.

"He was just one of those guys he did anything," Taylor said.

Paetsch quietly developed into a strong prospect. After a 50-point season and an appearance in the AHL All-Star Game in 2005-06, he graduated to Buffalo, where he spent the next three and a half years.

When Paetsch's NHL career ended following a brief stint with the Columbus Blue Jackets in 2010, he transitioned into a new phase with the Grand Rapids Griffins.

He won two Calder Cups with the Detroit Red Wings' affiliate, morphing into one of the AHL's top veteran defensemen.

Paetsch re-signed with the Amerks last year, coming full circle and returning to his adopted home. He and his wife, Jaclyn, live in Spencerport with their children.

He played only 22 games in 2017-18, partly because he broke a leg early in the season. Still, the Amerks re-signed him to a one-year AHL contract in June.

"I've taken pride in that part of what I (do)," Paetsch said. "I think that's the reason why a guy like me gets re-signed after playing (22) games. It's not because I tore up the league by any means, it's to help out the young guys.

"Guys just don't want to hear from coaches all the time. But when they can hear from a guy that's still playing, maybe sometimes the message gets through a little better, I hope."

Paetsch's warm personality might enhance that message. He always seems to have a smile etched on his face and some positive words to share.

"He's a good people guy," said Sabres winger Jason Pominville, who played with Paetsch in Rochester and Buffalo. "He's a guy that was always fun to hang out with, a guy I could see him probably coaching when he's done. I can see a lot of guys look up to (him) because of that, because you kind of get drawn into him because of his personality."

Not surprisingly, Paetsch said he would like to coach after he's done playing.

"I love this organization and the area and I want to stay within the organization," Paetsch said. "What capacity it is, I don't know. I'm not getting any younger and I know where I'm at in my career."

But Taylor, who played until he was 39, knows retiring isn't easy.

"He's pretty similar to what I was at that age," Taylor said. "I wanted to be a player and only a player. But you can see the attributes that he brings that he will be a coach someday just because of how he talk to players, how he handles players.

"But he's definitely a player, and that's what I like about him, he doesn't try to do both. He's just an extension of us. He fits in perfect. We couldn't have a better guy in our dressing room."

Paetsch knows how to handle sitting out. During his NHL days, he was usually the Sabres' seventh or eighth defenseman, meaning they sometimes scratched him for weeks at a time.

"When the situation does arise (to play), I'll be ready," Paetsch said.

That opportunity could materialize soon.

"There's no doubt in my mind he'll be playing lots of games for us," Taylor said. "It's one of those situations he understands. But he hasn't complained. He's one of the guys that just keeps working harder and keeps pushing the other guys."

Amerks rally to complete a successful weekend  
*C&C WorldWide*  
By: Craig Potter

Scott Wedgewood kept the Rochester Americans in the game against the Laval Rocket Saturday night before 3,696 fans at the Blue Cross Arena before the hosts rallied for 3 goals in the third for a 3-2 victory.

The Rocket peppered Wedgewood with 15 shots in the first period, but Wedgewood turned aside all the shots.

"We easily could have been down 3 or 4 goals," said Amerks coach Chris Taylor.

"He's been good right from the start. I don't look at his numbers from those first two games (10 goals against on 71 shots), no one should, because we didn't give him any help.

"He was there again tonight to bail us out."

Laval grabbed a 1-0 lead in the second stanza with a power play tally.

However, the Amerks netted 3 goals in just under 6 minutes midway through the third period. Defenseman Zach Redmond tied the game 1-1 off a nice pass play from Taylor Fedun and Eric Cornel.

"I've played on some good teams but this might be the best," said Redmond, an 8-year veteran. "I don't want to jinx it but we're headed in the right direction."

C.J. Smith put the Amerks in front to stay with excellent hustle while killing a penalty. The puck came to Laval goalie Charlie Lindgren, who attempted to clear the puck behind the net. However, Smith caught up to it and came around front to put it home into the vacated goal.

The goal came after the Amerks killed off their second 5-on-3 on infraction of the night.

"C.J.'s got a real knack for scoring big time goals," said Taylor. "He reads the play well and I thought he played really well tonight."

The Amerks were whistled for 12 penalties in the contest.

"We took too many penalties. We talked last night about improving our penalty kill and blocking shots is a way to improve it and help win hockey games," Taylor said.

However, the penalty killing squads did their job.

"A lot of battle," Wedgewood said of the team's effort. "I don't think that's what we wanted to do for the first two periods, obviously a lot of penalties taken, but guys stepped up their game.

"We've got a lot of guys eating pucks. Even on the 5-on-4, (Justin) Bailey took one in the head and got right back up."

Over the past 2 nights, the Rochester penalty killers went 15-for-17.

"The penalty killing's starting to get back to where it was last year (84.1 percent)," said team captain Kevin Porter.

Former Rocket Yannick Veilleux, playing in just his 4th game for the Amerks, scored what proved to be the game-winner as he put home a rebound off Lindgren's kick save for a 3-1 Rochester lead.

"It felt pretty good," Veilleux said with a grin. "I haven't had any of those kind of bounces in a while, but it was a relief to get that one. I was in the right spot at the right time."

The Rocket drew to within one with a power play with just under 3 minutes remaining in regulation.

Wedgewood finished with 37 saves as he improved his record to 5-2-0-1.

*\*NOTES* — The oldest rivalry in the American Hockey League will be renewed on Friday, Nov. 2 in Rochester as the Amerks welcome the Hershey Bears back to the BCA for the only time this season. . . Rochester (7-2-1-0) leads the North Division with 15 points and holds a 2-point margin over the Cleveland Monsters. . . Kyle Criscuolo sustained a lower body injury blocking a shot Friday night, and he sat out Saturday as well.

Big third period pushes Amerks point-streak to eight, 3-2

*13 Wham*

By: Staff Report

After 40 minutes of a penalty-filled North Division showdown between the Rochester Americans (7-2-1-0) and Laval Rocket (3-5-1-0) Saturday night, the Amerks entered the third period trailing 1-0. When the final horn sounded at The Blue Cross Arena, it was the Amerks who extended their point streak to eight straight games as they came away with 3-2 win thanks to three third-period goals.

With the victory, the Amerks have collected 15 out of a possible 16 points over their last eight games overall to maintain their lead atop the North Division standings. Rochester also improved to 7-2-0 all-time against the Rocket while winning three straight dating back to last season.

Zach Redmond scored his team-leading sixth goal of the season while pushing his career-long point streak to nine games. The veteran blueliner shows 14 points (6+8) through his last nine contests, as well as holding the longest-active point streak in the league. C.J. Smith tallied his fourth marker of the season while former Rocket forward Yannick Veilleux recorded his first goal as an Amerk and the game-winner to complete the scoring. Goaltender Scott Wedgewood, who turned in a 20-save and shutout performance last night, drew the nod between pipes for the fourth time in the last five games. The 26-year-old stopped 37 of 39 while picking up his fifth straight victory.

Rookie forward Jake Evans recorded his first-career AHL multi-assist game as he registered a helper on each of Brett Kulak and Kenny Agostino's goals for Laval, which lost their fourth straight contest. Netminder Charlie Lindgren finished the tilt with 22 saves on the night but was handed the loss. He now shows a record of 3-3-1 in seven appearance this season.

Following a 4-on-4 sequence for 55 seconds, the Redmond knotted the score at 1-1 at the 8:02 mark of the third period.

Intercepting a pass below the goal line, Eric Cornel circled the net and hit Taylor Fedun atop the Amerks blueline. Fedun, with his head up, skated to his right before sending a perfect pass to a waiting Redmond to the left of the netminder. The defenseman simply redirected the puck inside the near post and behind Lindgren.

Just 75 seconds after Redmond's game-tying goal while on the penalty-kill, Smith pressured Lindgren into a mistake as he stole the puck from the goaltender behind the cage. The second-year pro came around the net and deposited into a vacant net.

The unassisted, shorthanded tally was Smith's fourth of the slate and gave Rochester a 2-1 lead with 10:43 left in regulation.

"C.J.'s got a real knack for scoring big time goals," said Amerks head coach Chris Taylor. "He reads the play well and I thought he played really well tonight."

The goal came after the Amerks killed off their second 5-on-3 on infraction of the night.

"We talked last night about improving our penalty kill and blocking shots is a way to improve it and help win hockey games," Taylor explained.

Later in the frame, Veilleux forced a turnover inside the Laval zone before tallying his first point and goal as an Amerk with less than six minutes to play in regulation. Dalton Smith fired the puck off the left pad of Lindgren following the turnover and Veilleux swept the rebound into the net to double Rochester's lead.

"It felt pretty good," Veilleux offered with a grin. "I haven't had any of those kind of bounces in a while, but it was a relief to get that one. I was in the right spot at the right time."

Despite making it a one-goal game at the 17:04 mark and pulling Lindgren, Wedgewood and company hung on for a 3-2 come-from-behind win.

"We have a lot of guys who can battle," Wedgewood said. "The PK stepped up again tonight and it was a gritty game, but a big third period from the guys helped us to the win."

The two clubs played scoreless hockey until Kulak tallied the game's first goal of the contest with 5:43 left in the second stanza before the Amerks put a three-spot in the final 20 minutes.

"We knew we did not play our best two periods of hockey," team captain Kevin Porter said. "We were sort of flat in the first period and okay in the second, so we knew we had to play better in the third and we did just that."

The oldest rivalry in the American Hockey League will be renewed on Friday, Nov. 2 in Rochester as the Amerks welcome the Hershey Bears back to The Blue Cross Arena for the only time this season. The 7:05 p.m. matchup will be the first of a home-and-home series and the 457th all-time meeting between the league's two cornerstone franchises. The contest can be heard live on The Sports Leader 95.7 FM/950 AM ESPN Rochester and viewed on AHLTV.