



ROCHESTER AMERICANS

DAILY PRESS CLIPS

Friday, November 9, 2018

TONIGHT'S GAME: Syracuse @ Rochester

Amerks honor military
Rochester First
By: Mark Gruba

The Rochester Americans will host their annual Military Appreciation Night this Friday, November 9 at the Blue Cross Arena.

The Amerks will host the Syracuse Crunch in a 7:05 p.m. face off. Proceeds from the game will support the programs of the Veterans Outreach Center in Rochester.

VOC Development and Marketing Director Matt McGee and Amerks Host Erica Whyte discussed the event Thursday during News 8 at Noon.

"This is one of my favorite games of the entire season because everything is military-themed," said Whyte. "The Amerks will be wearing special military jerseys.

They look like a Captain American jersey. They'll be auctioned off their backs and given to the highest bidders at the end of the game. We've got so many other awesome things happening within the arena itself. We've got Mystery Pucks, so they're signed by the Amerks and distributed for \$10 in the upper concourse area. We've got t-shirt packages. For \$30 you can get one of these awesome military t-shirts as well as a ticket to the night's game. It's a great reason for all of us to go out there and cheer on the Amerks and, of course, the great cause."

McGee said, "It's one of my favorite nights of the year. This is our fourth year that we're partnering with the Amerks to do this to honor the military and the community at large. The monies that come back to the VOC we see as a bonus, but those monies help support the work that we do in the community."

There will be lots of ways for fans to engage with the VOC and honor the different military branches. In addition, the Rochester Police Department and Monroe County Sheriff's Office will have a presence at the game too. "The RPD will be there and the Sheriff's Office with tactical vehicles," said McGee. "We'll have a rappel member from RPD deliver the game puck. That's a fan favorite so we have to continue that and keep that going. And all five services branches will be represented at the ceremonial face off that night as well."

Whyte added, "If you are a member of the military, either active or retired, you are coming to the game absolutely free!" For more information, visit Amerks.com/military.

Bailey, Simpson both score twice in Rochester Amerks win over Monsters *Pickin' Splinters*

By: Paul Gotham/Amerks.com

Justin Bailey and Wayne Simpson each scored twice as the Rochester Americans (9-3-1-0) came away with a 5-2 victory over the Cleveland Monsters (7-5-1-0) Wednesday night at KeyBank Center in downtown Buffalo.

With the victory, Rochester now has a four-point lead over Cleveland for the top spot in the American Hockey League's North Division standings while the Amerks have collected 19 of a possible 22 points in their last 11 contests.

In addition to Bailey and Simpson each scoring twice, veteran defenseman Zach Redmond recorded his ninth marker of the season for the Amerks, who dating back to the start of the 2011-12 season, hold a 21-5-2-3 record in the season series. Goaltender Scott Wedgewood stopped 24 of 26 shots he faced to improve his record to 6-3-0.

The Monsters, who have dropped each of the last two games, were led by former Buffalo Sabre Nathan Gerbe as he registered his third multi-point (1+1) performance of the campaign. Sonny Milano scored his first goal of the season while Jean-Francois Berube had 34 saves in a losing effort.

Late in the opening period with the game scoreless, Sean Malone, who made his season debut after missing the first 12 games due to a lower-body injury, won a face-off deep inside the Amerks zone to defenseman Taylor Fedun. After settling the puck, Fedun flipped it nearly the length of the ice. Showing off his speed in front of his hometown crowd, Bailey tracked it down before tucking the puck under the crossbar for his first goal of the night and first of the season.

"When you go 10 games without scoring, you want to do things that made you successful," said Bailey. "I felt I have had some chances in the last few games and tonight I was able to capitalize on them."

"I felt a little rusty early on," said Malone. "As the game progressed, I starting feeling better and more comfortable. Coming back from a long-term injury, it's hard to mimic the game-like situations, but it was fun to get back on the ice with the team."

Prior to the sound of the first-period horn, Redmond extended Rochester's lead to a pair as he fired home his team-leading ninth of the year with 43 seconds left in the frame. The goal put him in sole possession of the team's scoring lead with 17 points (9+8) in just 13 games this season.

Rochester emerged from intermission break with a 2-0 lead before Bailey gave the Amerks a three-goal cushion with his second of the contest at the 14:04 mark of the period. Similar to his first goal, Bailey won a footrace to a loose puck in the Cleveland zone, poked it beyond the reach of Berube and spun to fire it through the netminder's legs.

Cleveland got within two goals as Milano banked a shot off the back of Wedgewood on the ensuing shift after Bailey's tally to complete the scoring in the middle period, but Simpson added a pair during the final period of regulation.

With the puck below the goal-line, C.J. Smith spotted Simpson parked to the right of the Monsters' netminder and Simpson banged in his third of the year just past the halfway point. Minutes later, Simpson, who was playing in his 200th consecutive AHL game, ripped a shot past the blocker of Berube to put Rochester up 5-1. Smith and Lawrence Pilut were each awarded with the assists on Simpson's fourth goal of the season at the 13:17 mark.

Gerbe scored his second of the slate for Cleveland in the final minute of play but it was too little, too late as the Amerks earned their fifth win in the home of the Sabres in the last seven years since Rochester and Buffalo renewed its affiliation.

"It was a great win," said Amerks head coach Chris Taylor. "Tonight's game was one of our best 60-minute games that we have played this season. I really liked every part of the game. Our goaltending, defense and our forwards did a great job and they stuck together tonight."

The Amerks are back at The Blue Cross Arena for their lone contest of the weekend on Friday, Nov. 9 when they take on the intrastate rival Syracuse Crunch on Military Appreciation Night. As in years past, the team will again wear special Military-themed jerseys along with matching socks as a tribute to the U.S. Armed Forces. Game time is slated for a 7:05 p.m. start. All of the action can be heard live on The Sports Leader AM 950/ 95.7 FM ESPN Rochester as well as AHLTV.

How Daniel Briere helped Justin Bailey deal with return to AHL
Buffalo Hockey Beat
By: Bill Hoppe

Not long after the Sabres waived Justin Bailey last month and assigned him to the Rochester Americans, Daniel Briere called to offer him some words of encouragement.

Briere knows Bailey, a Williamsville native, from his days starring for the Sabres. Before he morphed into an elite NHL scorer, Briere experienced what Bailey recently went through when the Phoenix Coyotes waived him and sent him back to the AHL.

So Briere, who retired in 2015, wanted to tell Bailey that returning to the Amerks for his fourth season would just be another challenge.

"You look at the career he had, it's kind of crazy to think that that ever happened," Bailey said after scoring his first two goals in Wednesday's 5-2 win against the Cleveland Monsters at KeyBank Center. "He told me he came down and put his head down and worked his butt off and was able to get back up and never come back down.

"So it was some great advice and a great talk from him," Bailey said.

Bailey, 23, has been leaning on friends such as Briere and family members throughout the worst start of his career. While it took the winger 12 games to score, he had slowly been building toward a performance like Wednesday's, Amerks coach Chris Taylor said.

"He's learning how to play the way we wanted him to play," Taylor said.

In a tilt between the AHL North Division's top two teams, Bailey was the best player on the ice, utilizing his speed to generate several scoring chances and pump seven shots on goal, tying his career high.

"Anytime I get out here is a time I want to have my best game," Bailey said of playing in Buffalo.

Bailey opened the scoring 18:11 into the contest, beating two Monsters to the puck and faking a shot before roofing it in from the right circle. He scored again 14:04 into the second period, chasing down a loose puck in the left circle before quickly spinning around and shooting.

"When you go (11) games without scoring, obviously, you want to try to clear your head, try do the things that make you successful," Bailey said.

He added: "I was moving my feet, I was using my speed to my advantage and making sure that every time I got the puck my first three steps were going forward."

Bailey, who has played 52 games with the Sabres, probably felt like he was moving backward last month. He admittedly handled going through waivers poorly. Then after a weak performance opening night, Taylor scratched him.

"You go through waivers for the first time, it affects people in different ways sometimes," Taylor said. "I think he felt a little bad about himself that 30 teams passed on him."

Taylor said Bailey “felt like maybe the organization gave up” on him.

“We didn’t give up,” Taylor said. “That’s part of his process. A lot of guys go through waivers, a lot of guys have to learn this way. He’s worked hard. He felt a little bit sorry for himself at the start, but he’s picked it up, done a really good job . . .

“It doesn’t mean he just stepped up his game tonight because he got two goals. He’s making a difference in other things as well, his penalty killing, his forecheck.”

At times during his first three seasons, Bailey ranked among the AHL’s top scorers.

He compiled 43 goals in his first two campaigns and was an AHL All-Star two years ago.

Not surprisingly, Bailey said he puts pressure on himself to score.

“When it’s not going in, it sucks, it’s been tough,” Bailey said. “At the same time, I’ve been trying to control what I can control and do the little things well, stay confident in myself I can produce.”

Amerks thriving

The first-place Amerks, who improved to 8-4-1-0 this season, have lost just once in regulation since Oct. 6, meaning they’ve enjoyed several fine performances.

Wednesday’s effort before about 2,000 fans in KeyBank Center might’ve been their most impressive victory.

“It was one of our best 60-minute games that we’ve played this year,” Taylor said. “I liked every part of it — our goaltender, our defense and our forwards.”

Amerks winger Wayne Simpson, who scored twice, added: “I think it was our best performance of the season.”

Defenseman Zach Redmond scored the Amerks’ other goal, putting them up 2-0 in the first period. Redmond has already scored nine goals and 17 points in 13 games.

Simpson, meanwhile, scored two late goals.

While prospects and teammates with NHL experience often overshadow Simpson, 28, he has scored 30 goals over the last two AHL seasons.

“He just does everything well and he’s kind of sneaky good,” Taylor said. “He kind of flies under the radar a little bit. . . .

“He’s a proven goal scorer in this league. It’s not like we got him out of nowhere.”

Amerks goalie Scott Wedgewood made 24 saves, improving to 6-3-0.

Malone's debut

Amerks center Sean Malone made his season debut, skating in a third-line role beside Bailey and Alexander Nylander. The West Seneca native also killed penalties.

Malone, 23, injured his knee in an NHL exhibition game Sept. 17 in Columbus.

"I felt a little rusty off the start, to be honest," Malone said. "As the game went on, I think I progressed and got a little bit better as things became easier for me."

Naturally, Malone said he "was really chomping at the bit" to play.

"It's tough watching your team from the stands, as anyone can attest to," Malone said. "Finally, I'm able to play and get the monkey off the back."

Malone's return means perhaps the AHL's deepest team possesses more depth.

"Adding that third-line depth to us that we can match up lines a little bit more is big for us," Taylor said. "I thought Sean did a great job for his first game back for being out such a long time."

Olofsson injury

Amerks winger Victor Olofsson, the AHL's third-leading scorer with 16 points in 13 games, left Wednesday's game with a lower-body injury, Taylor said.

The Swede will be examined Thursday.

Notes

Former Sabres winger Nathan Gerbe is in his second season with the Monsters. After a year and a half in Switzerland, he returned to North America last season. Gerbe, 31, is the Monsters' captain. ... Former Sabres forward Zac Dalpe, who went pointless for the Monsters on Wednesday, is tied for the AHL lead with 12 goals and 19 points.... Taylor said Amerks defenseman Brendan Guhle missed the game because of the flu. ... Bailey's first goal was his 100th AHL point. ... The Amerks hadn't played the Monsters since a 4-3 overtime loss April 9, 2016, in Rochester. The Monsters returned to the Eastern Conference this season. ... The Amerks are 5-2 in KeyBank Center since the Sabres renewed their affiliation with them in 2011.

Sabres prospect C.J. Smith trying to stay patient in Rochester
Buffalo Hockey Beat
By: Bill Hoppe

On Friday, Sabres prospect C.J. Smith heard center Yannick Gourde signed a six-year contract extension worth nearly \$31 million and felt inspired.

Gourde, 26, played 396 minor league contests, including a 38-game stint in the ECHL, before finally sticking in the NHL a year ago. Following a breakout 25-goal, 64-point campaign and a strong start this season, the Tampa Bay Lightning awarded him a massive new deal.

"There's guys that have played quite a few years in the AHL and it seems to pay off," Smith said Friday after scoring a goal in the Americans' 4-1 loss to the Hershey Bears in Blue Cross Arena. "I said, 'Stick with it, be patient and you can get that opportunity.' You just can't let it affect you at the AHL level."

So far, Smith, 23, is only 69 games into his AHL career. The UMass Lowell product cracked the NHL directly out of college, playing his only two contests after signing his entry-level contract in March 2017.

Gourde played four years before receiving his first NHL action.

Still, Smith hasn't earned a recall from the first-place Amerks, who host the Cleveland Monsters on Wednesday at KeyBank Center, a tilt between the North Division's top two teams.

As a rookie in 2017-18, Smith was an AHL All-Star, compiling 17 goals and 44 points in 57 games. If a high ankle sprain hadn't stymied his season — he tried to play through it and re-injured it — the winger might've maintained his early point-per-game pace.

"He was hurting a lot, he didn't have full explosion for his inside, outside moves," Amerks coach Chris Taylor said.

The 5-foot-11, 181-pound Smith said the ankle did not feel 100 percent again until the summer.

This season, Smith has scored five goals and nine points in 12 games. He's one of six Amerks who have already reached the nine-point mark.

"Sometimes it can be frustrating, you want to get that opportunity," Smith said of getting recalled. "It is a process, it is slow."

But Smith said he respects that process and wants to be patient. Examining the career path of Gourde and others tell him he's on the right track.

"A guy like (Vegas Golden Knights winger) Jonathan Marchessault played five years in the AHL, so there's guys that have played quite a few years in the AHL and it seems to pay off," Smith said.

At times last year, the undrafted Smith was the Amerks' best player, compiling 10 goals and 30 points in his first 27 games. The confidence he generated carried into this season. He enjoyed a strong training camp before the Sabres sent him down.

"I think I took quite a bit (of confidence)," Smith said. "I think I got a little more comfortable here to start the season. I think I did well in training camp, kind of carried that early on in the season, got myself to shoot more pucks, and I think I've been rewarded more with it."

Taylor said he wants Smith to utilize his "great shot," which can fool goalies because he releases the puck in stride. Smith beat Bears goalie Ilya Samsonov as he zoomed down the right wing.

Smith has pumped 2.8 shots on goal per game this season, up from 2.3 last year.

"He shoots in stride and it's very hard on the goalie," Taylor said. "When guys plant their feet, the goalie kind of knows where it goes before it's going. C.J. keeps his feet moving and throws a goalie off. Those are hard to stop. It was a great goal and he had a great game tonight. I thought he was really, really good."

Taylor traces Smith's strong start to his practice habits. He said the youngster wants to dictate how fast he plays and live up to what he accomplished as a rookie.

"His practice habits are paying off in games right now," Taylor said. "A lot of guys go through their second year having problems or that second-year jinx, or whatever you want to call it. But he's working hard to not make that happen."

"He's not living off of last year. He's trying to be better than what he was last year and you can tell. It's showing up in the (defense), it's showing up in practice and he's getting rewarded for it."

Malone awaits debut

The Sabres officially assigned forward Sean Malone to the Amerks on Tuesday.

Malone, 23, has been practicing with the AHL club after suffering a knee injury in an NHL exhibition game Sept. 17 in Columbus.

The West Seneca native could make his season debut Wednesday at KeyBank Center.

Malone compiled 12 goals and 22 points in 73 AHL games as a rookie last season.

In other injury news, rookie forward Andrew Oglevie returned Friday after an injury sidelined him for six games.

Taylor eased the Notre Dame product back into the lineup before giving him more ice time in Saturday's 4-1 win in Hershey.

"The second game he played very well for us," Taylor said.

Streaking

The 8-3-1 Amerks have earned 17 out of a possible 20 points in their last 10 games, outscoring their opponents 41-25 over that stretch.

Bailey scores two, Redmond stays hot as Amerks win at KeyBank Center

Buffalo News

By: Staff Report

The big league hockey surroundings at KeyBank Center suited the Rochester Americans just fine Wednesday night.

Williamsville native Justin Bailey scored his first two goals of the season, Wayne Simpson added two scores in the third period and Zach Redmond continued his goal-scoring tear in the Amerks' 5-2 victory over the Cleveland Monsters.

An crowd of about 2,000 saw Rochester (9-3-1, 19 points) solidify its hold on first place over Cleveland (7-5-1) in the North Division of the American Hockey League. There were 15,695 tickets distributed.

Right winger Bailey, who now has five points on the season, scored at 18:11 of the opening period and the Amerks lead the rest of the way. A little more than a minute later Redmond, the 30-year-old veteran defenseman, scored his ninth of the season and fourth in four games, increasing his season's point total to 17 points.

Bailey scored again 14:05 of the second to make it 3-0, but Sonny Milano of the Monsters countered that just 11 seconds later with an assist from former Sabre Nathan Gerbe.

It stayed 3-1 until Simpson scored his third (10:12) and fourth (13:17) of the season in the third period. Gerbe scored his second of the season with 32 seconds left to close out the scoring. Lawrence Pilut assisted Simpson's second goal and now has 14 assists and 16 points in 11 games.

The Amerks kept Cleveland's Zac Dalpe off the board. Dalpe came into the night tied for the AHL points lead with 19 points (12-7).

Scott Wedgewood made 24 saves in goal for Rochester, Jean-Francois Berube made 34 saves for Cleveland.

Next for the Amerks is a Friday night game against the Syracuse Crunch at Blue Cross Arena in Rochester. It will be the second of 12 regular season games between the Amerks and Crunch this season.

Amerks utilize forecheck to win in Buffalo

C&C WorldWide/Diebytheblade.com

By: Staff Report/Melissa Burgess

The Rochester Americans captured a 5-2 win over the Cleveland Monsters at KeyBank Center Wednesday night, moving them four points ahead of the Monsters in the race for first place in the North Division.

“One of our best 60-minute games that we’ve played this year,” said head coach Chris Taylor after the win. “Liked every part of it, our goaltender, our defense, our forwards; I thought everybody did a great job tonight.”

With 19 points (9-3-1-0), the Amerks sit atop the North Division after Wednesday’s win. The Monsters aren’t far behind, at 7-5-1-0. Overall, the Amerks are second in the AHL’s Eastern Conference, one point behind the Charlotte Checkers.

The Amerks took a few minutes to find their feet in the game, getting outshot early by the Monsters. However, they started putting shots on net, and found the back of the net twice in the final two minutes of the opening period.

Justin Bailey opened the scoring for Rochester with just 1:50 to play in the first period as the Amerks began to take advantage of a strong forecheck. Bailey brought the puck into the zone and up the right side with a shot that went top-shelf over Jean-Francois Berube’s shoulder for his first goal of the season. The goal also marked the 100th point of Bailey’s AHL career.

“I was moving my feet, using my speed to my advantage,” Bailey said. “Making sure every time I got the puck, my first three strides are going forward.”

Just over a minute later, the Amerks found themselves up 2-0. Dalton Smith made some nice moves along the boards to get the puck to Zach Redmond, who shot it into the net with a laser for his team-leading 17th point of the season. He also leads the Amerks with nine goals – despite being a defenseman.

The Monsters got off to a slow start in the second period, registering just one shot on goal in the first 10 minutes to the Amerks’ six shots. After successfully killing a delay of game penalty, Rochester went up 3-0 on Bailey’s second of the night and second of the season. Berube came out of his crease to try to tip the puck, but Bailey beat him to it, did a quick turnaround slammed it home.

“Just a spur-of-the-moment thing,” Bailey said. “I was trying to get in front of it, try to get a breakaway, but the goalie came halfway out, so I figured I’d just put something on net.”

The Amerks’ three-goal lead lasted only 11 seconds, as Sonny Milano, recently demoted from the NHL’s Columbus Blue Jackets, found the back of the net for his first goal of the season. Former Buffalo Sabres forward Nathan Gerbe notched an assist.

Rochester kept up the strong play in the third period, holding the Monsters to just two shots in the first half of the period and controlling much of the play.

They took a 4-1 lead just over the halfway point of the third on a goal by Wayne Simpson, who slapped it into the net from down low. Simpson was appearing in his 199th consecutive game and is the AHL’s current leader in that category. C.J. Smith assisted on the goal for his 10th point of the season.

"Our line was playing fast, and I found the puck on my stick for a few opportunities," Simpson said. "I thought all four lines, all six D and the goalie, just a good game all-around."

Rochester continued adding to the board, going up 5-1 on Simpson's second of the night that came from a wrist shot from near the face-off circle to the right of the net.

"We've been struggling with the starts to the game over the last couple weeks, so it was good to see us go out and pretty much play 60 minutes," Simpson said. "Even though we've been playing well, we haven't really done that that many times, so it was good to see."

In the end, the Amerks outshot the Monsters by a 39-26 margin, including 15 shots in the final frame. Scott Wedgewood made 24 saves in the victory.

Of note, forward Victor Olofsson didn't play a shift in the third period and was not on the Amerks' bench for the final frame. Head coach Chris Taylor said after the game that Olofsson had a "little lower body-injury" and would be re-evaluated Thursday.

Defenseman Brendan Guhle also missed Wednesday's game in Buffalo. He has been sick for the past few days.

Returning to the Amerks lineup, however, was hometown forward Sean Malone. Malone suffered a knee injury in mid-September during training camp that kept him sidelined until tonight. He also faced injuries last season.

"Felt a little rusty, to be honest, off the start," Malone said of Wednesday's season debut, "But as the game went, I think I progressed a little bit better as things became easier for me. Coming back from a long-term injury like that, it's hard to mimic those situations you have in a game in practice or at rehab skates. I was happy with the way we performed tonight."

"It's tough watching your team from the stands, as anyone can attest to here," he added. "Finally, I'm able to play and get the monkey off the back and have some fun out there. It was really exciting for me and I put a lot of work into getting back out here."

The Amerks are now on a two-game winning streak and will host Syracuse on Friday night before hitting the road for a three-in-three stretch next weekend, with games against Springfield, Providence and Hartford.

Amerks throttle the Monsters in Buffalo

WGR 550

By: Brayton Wilson

The Rochester Americans made their annual trip down Interstate 90 on Wednesday night to play in front of the Buffalo fan base at KeyBank Center against the Cleveland Monsters in a key North Division matchup.

The Amerks continued their strong play in front of the Buffalo faithful as they dominate the Monsters in the final 50 minutes of play to take a 5-2 win and improve to 9-3-1-0 on the season. Forwards Justin Bailey and Wayne Simpson each scored a pair of goals for the Amerks, while defenseman Zach Redmond scored his team-leading ninth goal of the season.

It wasn't a pretty start for the Amerks as the Monsters got the early jump with some quality chances on goalie Scott Wedgewood. At one point near the halfway point of the first period, Cleveland out-shot the Amerks 7-2, but then the tide turned as Rochester finally got their feet under them and started to utilize its speed.

Bailey played his best game of the season on Wednesday in front of his hometown crowd. The 23-year-old played his game of speed, power and skill throughout the night, and used his assets to score his first goal of the season. Bailey chased down a puck flipped down the ice by defenseman Taylor Fedun, sped down the right wing, and put a shot off the back bar behind goalie Jean-Francois Berube.

In the second period, Bailey used his speed again to beat out everyone in a Cleveland jersey to a loose puck, including the goalie, and then spun around and slid the puck through the five-hole for his second goal of the night.

Bailey ended his night with two goals and a team-high seven shots on goal while playing on a line with Alex Nylander and Sean Malone.

Zach Redmond netted his team-leading ninth goal of the season in the final minute of the first as he found a way to get the puck through a screen in front of Berube and into the net. The 30-year-old defenseman is now the team-leader in points with 17 points in 13 played.

First-year Amerks forward Wayne Simpson netted the other two goals in the third period. The first came off a beautiful play from C.J. Smith as he forces a turnover in the offensive zone, takes the puck around the Cleveland net, and then slings a pass to Simpson, who was wide open to the right of Berube. Simpson's second goal came as he cut through the middle of the ice and to the right wing, then fired a quick shot over the blocker-side shoulder of Berube to give Rochester a 5-1 lead.

It was another productive night for Smith as he had his lone assist, but was very aggressive on the forecheck and creating scoring chances for his linemates. The 24-year-old continues to impress with his improved speed and his smart play in all three zones. He continues to show that he is ready to make the jump to the National Hockey League when ready, but he will have to be patient for the time being.

Another player who played his best game of the season was rookie Andrew Oglevie. The 23-year-old skated on the fourth line with Eric Cornel and Dalton Smith, but was skating hard and creating chances by using his speed throughout the night. He ended the night with three shots on goal and a plus-1 rating.

Rasmus Asplund's game in North America continues to grow as the 20-year-old has played very well on a line with Victor Olofsson and Danny O'Regan. Asplund created a couple of chances for himself on Wednesday, and continues to show progression in his transition every game. He's also getting a ton of ice time in any and all situations as he's quickly earning the trust of Taylor. He may not put up the production in terms of points, but his work on the ice stands out.

Another young Swede who's game continues to stand out every night is Lawrence Pilut. The 22-year-old defenseman picked up his 14th assist and 16th point of the season on Simpson's second goal of the night, and continues to show off his quick transitional game and exceptional puck-moving abilities. Pilut is currently getting a ton of quality ice time playing on the top defensive pairing, which has also been paramount for his development.

Malone returned to the lineup on Wednesday in Buffalo after suffering a knee injury in the first preseason game while with the Sabres. The 23-year-old picked up two assists in his return, and provided the Amerks with some solid two-way play down the middle. He was Rochester's most consistent player last season from start to finish with 22 points in 73 games.

The Amerks were without defenseman Brendan Guhle on Wednesday night as he was battling a sickness earlier in the week.

Rochester also lost Olofsson in the win as he left after the second period with a lower-body injury. Head coach Chris Taylor didn't seem too concerned about the injury following the game, and said that he would be re-evaluated on Thursday.

Amerks: October in review

WGR 550

By: Brayton Wilson

The Rochester Americans finished the month of October as one of the best teams in the American Hockey League.

It did not start that way as the Amerks dropped their first two games of the season to the Charlotte Checkers at Blue Cross Arena, getting out-played and looking like formidable from start to finish. However, Rochester finished the month by going 7-0-1 and out-scoring their opponents 35-20. Along the way, the Amerks went on a run of eight-straight games with earning a point, as well as a stretch of four-straight games with wins on home ice.

As of November 1, the Amerks sat atop the North Division standings with 15 points, just two points ahead of the Cleveland Monsters. Rochester also sat as one of the top-scoring teams in the AHL with 39 tallies in 10 games, while going 29.5-percent on the man-advantage. To start October, the Amerks had one of the best power play units in the entire league, but went cold at the end of the month and have not scored since their game on October 26 against the Utica Comets.

The Amerks were also playing some solid defensive hockey in October, giving up just a total of 30 goals against.

However, the Amerks struggled on the penalty kill and was one of the most penalized teams in the league. Rochester took a total of 52 penalties in 10 games during the month, and gave up 13 goals while down a man. That was just a 75-percent kill rate, which was one of the lowest rates in the AHL.

With the Amerks producing well offensively, the team went into November with three players in the top-five of league scoring.

Victor Olofsson led the way with 15 points (5+10) in 10 games played, and was honored as the CCM/AHL Player of the Month. In his first month in North America, Olofsson put up a seven-game point streak, which saw 14 of his 15 points scored. Olofsson also tied for the AHL lead with nine power play points (1+8), and he scored two game-winning goals for the Amerks in a weekend series against the Bridgeport Sound Tigers. Olofsson was also named the CCM/AHL Player of the Week for the period ending on October 14.

Olofsson's transition to North America has gone well to this point, leaving off from his 27-goal season in the Swedish Hockey League last season. The scoring winger has adjusted his speed well to the smaller ice surfaces, and is providing the scoring that had lacked numerous times last season.

Right behind the 23-year-old Swede was veteran defenseman Zach Redmond, who finished October with 14 points (6+8) in 10 games. The 30-year-old defenseman ended up scoring all 14 of his points as part of a nine-game point streak that started following the first game of the season, and he tied Olofsson for the league-lead in power play points. In addition, Redmond scored five of his six goals on the power play, which led the entire AHL.

Not far behind those two was another young Swedish up-and-comer in defenseman Lawrence Pilut. The 22-year-old started off his first season in North America by scoring two goals and registering 13 points in eight games played. Pilut also got things clicking on the power play, playing with Olofsson and Redmond on the same unit. He has scored both of his goals on the power play, as well as six helpers on the man-advantage for eight points.

Next to fellow Swede Rasmus Dahlin, Pilut may be the best puck-moving player in the entire organization. He is able to move the puck with confidence in pace, hitting his teammates with the tape-to-tape precision needed to start an offensive breakout. Pilut is also not afraid to be aggressive on the attack, always keeping his head up and looking for ways to jump up on an offensive rush to create a scoring chance. At this point, Pilut may be the most ready of the defensemen in Rochester to be called up to Buffalo if needed.

In goal, Scott Wedgewood's stats did not reflect with the way he has played for the Amerks this season. Wedgewood finished the month with a 5-2-0-0 record, a 2.86 goals-against average, a .909 save percentage and a shutout in seven games played. While those stats may not look all that impressive, the 26-year-old netminder has played solid in his own net, giving the Amerks plenty of chances to stick in games. After losing the first two games of the season, Wedgewood went on to win the next five games and show off a 1.98 goals-against average and a .933 save percentage.

Right behind Wedgewood is Adam Wilcox, who has certainly provided some nice backup work when Rochester's starter has needed a night off. The 25-year-old goalie appeared in three games during October, posting a 2-0-1-0 record with a 3.63 goals-against average and a .863 save percentage. Again, those numbers may not look all too pretty, but he has grinded it out in each of his games, helping the Amerks earn a point in his three appearances.

In case you missed it, here is how the schedule played out for the month:

- Friday, October 5 - vs. Charlotte (6-2 loss)
- Saturday, October 6 - vs. Charlotte (4-2 loss)
- Wednesday, October 10 - vs. Syracuse (6-3 win)
- Friday, October 13 - at Bridgeport (4-3 win)
- Saturday, October 14 - at Bridgeport (3-2 OT win)
- Wednesday, October 17 - at Utica (6-1 win)
- Friday, October 19 - vs. Toronto (5-4 SO win)
- Saturday, October 20 - @ Belleville (5-4 OT loss)
- Friday, October 26 - vs. Utica (4-0 win)
- Saturday, October 27 - vs. Laval (3-2 win)

Here is some of the notable streaks the Amerks went on during the month of October:

- Amerks
 - Eight-game point streak (7-0-1-0)
 - Four-game home winning streak
- Victor Olofsson
 - Seven-game point streak (5+9)
- Zach Redmond
 - Nine-game point streak (6+8)
- Lawrence Pilut
 - Five-game point streak (1+10)
- Alexander Nylander
 - Six-game point streak (3+5)
- Brendan Guhle
 - Five-game point streak (2+4)
- Kevin Porter

- Five-game point streak (1+4)
 - *Has since extended the streak to seven through two games in November*

Here is a run down of some other Amerks players and how they performed in the month of October:

- Alexander Nylander

Nylander has quietly been playing a very good start to his season with the Amerks. The 20-year-old finished the month of November with four goals and nine points in 10 games, and has carried over his play from the preseason with the Buffalo Sabres. Nylander is actively engaged in all three zones of the ice, has been getting some quality time on the power play, as well as earning some trust with head coach Chris Taylor on the penalty kill. He certainly can use more time in the AHL to fine tune his game more, but he could certainly be a name we see back in Buffalo at some point this season.

- C.J. Smith

The 23-year-old winger has really shown off his physical presence on the ice, as well as his maturity to start the season in Rochester. Smith scored four goals and seven points in the first 10 games of the year. He has shown that he looks stronger with the puck, much faster on his feet, and he is also staying healthy at the start of the season. Smith may be the most NHL-ready player of the group the Sabres are in need of a body in Buffalo. His work in Rochester has paid off enough to garner that attention.

- Rasmus Asplund

The 20-year-old rookie has not flashed on the scoreboard in his first 10 games of the season (one assist), but he has earned the trust of Chris Taylor in just his short amount of time in the AHL. Asplund has earned himself a key role playing some important penalty kill minutes, while also playing as the center on the second power play unit. It may be a while before we see Asplund in the NHL with the Sabres, but his transition to the North American game has gone swimmingly to this point.

- Danny O'Regan

O'Regan started to find his scoring touch in the final five games of the month, but he has played a big role of being the leader on a line with Olofsson and Asplund. The 24-year-old had five goals and seven points through the first 10 games, and was getting the time on the power play and penalty kill.

- Will Borgen

Borgen is beginning to bud into a minutes muncher for the Amerks, which he did when he played at St. Cloud State. The 21-year-old played in all 10 games in October on a jam-packed blue line, and managed to score his first AHL goal and add two assists in that time. He has been getting plenty of work on the penalty kill, as well as helping the Amerks play a solid two-way game throughout. The more and more Borgen plays, the better he will get over time. Not to say that he hasn't played bad in the first place.

- Brendan Guhle

Guhle had shown some flashes of brilliance on offense in his first 10 games, but he continues to show signs of inconsistency in his overall game. Guhle gets shots to the net and creates plenty of chances offensively, but he still needs to get more pucks on goal and be more of a factor in the offensive end. In his own zone, Guhle still gets himself into trouble with trying to play too much with his stick and not integrating his physical play. If he can find some consistency, he will be back in the NHL soon. For the time being, the 21-year-old needs to continue his fine-tuning in the AHL.

- Justin Bailey

It has been a major struggle offensively for the 23-year-old Williamsville native. Bailey has not put enough shots on goal (19 in 10 games) and has no goals to account for his play. However, it is not that he isn't trying to help the Amerks produce. Bailey has been looked to as a young leader of the group, but will have to step up his game a bit more in order to make that additional impact.

- Andrew Oglevie

Oglevie went pointless in his first four games of the 2018-19 season before leaving after the first period of his fourth game with an undisclosed injury. The 23-year-old returned to action on Friday after a six-game absence.

- Sean Malone

The West Seneca native has not played yet this season after suffering a knee injury during the first game of the 2018 preseason in Buffalo. However, he has skated in practice for the Amerks, and was assigned to the Americans on Tuesday. Malone is expected to make his return to the lineup on Wednesday when the Amerks come to Buffalo to face the Cleveland Monsters.