



ROCHESTER AMERICANS

DAILY PRESS CLIPS

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TONIGHT'S GAME: Providence @ Rochester

How Swede it is: Your Wednesday Amerks 6-pack
Pickin' Splinters
By: *Kevin Oklobzija*

The new goalie played well, the Rochester Americans jumped out in front early, and history in terms of trivial information was made.

That's the quick recap of Wednesday's 5-2 victory by the Amerks over the Utica Comets. Here's your Amerks 6-pack:

1. Surprise, you're going up ... and starting

Goalie Jonas Johansson received a somewhat out-of-the-blue promotion to the Amerks on Tuesday and was given the start on Wednesday.

While he wasn't tested all that often, the 23-year-old Swede did make 25 saves. He was pitching a shutout for nearly 46 minutes, and the goals he allowed were both in extra-attacker situations when Utica pulled goalie Thatcher Demko.

Considering Scott Wedgewood and Adam Wilcox are healthy, Johansson didn't think he'd be leaving the ECHL's Cincinnati Cyclones anytime soon but was obviously glad he got the call-up.

"It's a big deal coming up here for me, this is where I want to be," he said after the game. "I was trying to see it in my head that it might happen so if it did happen it wouldn't be a surprise."

2. He earned it, that's why

Amerks coach Chris Taylor was adamant that there was no ulterior motive for bringing up the second-year goalie. Taylor said it had nothing to do with the play of Wedgewood or Wilcox.

A busy stretch of the schedule (nine games in 18 days), coupled with Johansson's solid play with Cincinnati, created the perfect chance to see what he could do, Taylor said.

"I'm not sending a message; this is a decision the organization made," Taylor said. "He earned it, he was playing really well (7-3-1, .912 save percentage, 2.49 goals-against average)."

3. History, without a doubt

The three stars were all Amerks and all natives of Sweden, which surely has never happened for Rochester.

Left winger Victor Olofsson (one goal, one assist) was No. 1, rookie right winger Rasmus Asplund (three assists) No. 2 and Johansson No. 3.

Asplund helped set up goals by Olofsson, Andrew MacWilliam and Wayne Simpson's empty-netter, his first three-point night in the AHL.

He came into Wednesday with just one goal and three assists in 21 games, though he now has 1-5-6 in his past six games.

"I thought this was Asplund's best game of the year," Taylor said. "He was getting into hands all night, he was touching the puck first on the forecheck."

"Sometimes you have a great game and get no points and think, 'Did I really help the team tonight?' Tonight he got rewarded."

Said Asplund: "I think it's just small details. I've been watching a lot of video and just trying to change up some small details."

4. A line to fear

The line of Danny O'Regan, Asplund and Olofsson was impressive again.

"I love the line," Taylor said. "They get on pucks, they're creative but responsible. O'Regan is really good on the walls, Asplund is always on the right side of guys and Olofsson is always looking for the offensive opportunity."

5. A long time coming for Big Mac

MacWilliam scored the game's third goal, pushing the Amerks lead to 3-0 at 13:35 of the second period.

The goal was his first since signing with the Amerks to start the 2017-18 season (70 without a goal as Amerk), and his first since April 4, 2016, when he played for the Manitoba Moose.

The drought had reached 137 games, and he even had to wait momentarily as the officials huddled after the goal, apparently to discuss an inadvertent whistle — or something relating to the legitimacy of the goal.

"Maybe it's because it's been so long, they were confused," MacWilliam joked.

6. Tennyson a factor

Matt Tennyson was called up to the Buffalo Sabres over the weekend after injuries on the blue line but returned after Tuesday's game against Toronto.

He scored the second goal and initiated a scrap that ended up with only roughing minors assessed.

NOTES: Olofsson's first-period goal ended the Amerks goal-less streak at 113 minutes, 52 seconds. They played 143 minutes, 39 seconds between goals by anyone not named Olofsson, a streak that ended with Tennyson's goal 1:40 into the second period. One of the referees, Carter Sandlak, was another on the growing list of officials to go right from playing the pro game to officiating. He was hired out of the NHL's Exposure Combine in August. His father, Jim, played nearly 600 NHL games and Carter spent most of his four-year playing career in the ECHL. Another rookie AHL referee hired out of this summer's combine was former Amerk Michael Duco.

Amerks begin busy week with win over Comets

Buffalo News

By: Staff Report

Rochester built a 3-0 lead after two periods and went in to 5-2 American Hockey League victory over the Utica Comets on Wednesday night before 2,929 at Blue Cross Arena.

Victor Olofsson, Matt Tennyson and Andrew MacWilliam scored for the Amerks with Rasmus Asplund getting two of his game total of three assists.

Utica broke through with a goal by Reid Boucher, his 11th, at 15:46 of the third but C.J. Smith responded for Rochester with his seventh to make it 4-1. Jonathan Dahlen of the Comets made it 4-2 at 17:16, but a shorthanded tally by Wayne Simpson of the Amerks matched that.

Jonas Johansson made 25 saves for Rochester. Thacher Demko had 22 stops for the Comets.

It's the first of three games in four nights for Rochester. The Providence Bruins will come to Blue Cross Arena on Friday night, their only visit to Rochester this season. The Amerks will play at the Syracuse Crunch on Saturday night in what shapes up as an important game for both teams.

Rochester (14-6-2) went into Wednesday night with a two-point lead over the idle Crunch. Syracuse (12-5-2) will be home to Binghamton on Friday night while the Amerks are hosting the Bruins.

Amerks defenseman Zach Redmond had only one shot on goal Wednesday in his quest for his 14th goal in 22 games this season. He had 15 goals all last season and the club record for a defenseman is 18.

Sabres prospect Brendan Guhle finding way out of 'rut'

Buffalo News

By: Bill Hoppe

It's easy to tell when Sabres prospect Brendan Guhle is feeling confident. At his best, the slick defenseman consistently joins the attack, generating offense.

"That's probably the biggest asset of my game," Guhle said following Friday's 3-0 win over the Wilkes-Barre/Scranton Penguins in Blue Cross Arena. "If I can help create scoring chances or goals off the rush, I think I'm doing part of my job."

Guhle, 21, led the offensive rush for the Americans a few times Friday, an outing he called one of his best of the season.

"I was just confident in myself," Guhle said.

That confidence resulted in Guhle looking "really dominant joining the rush," Amerks coach Chris Taylor said.

"I like him using his speed at the right time," Taylor said. "I thought our forwards did a great job covering up for him as well. That's what we want from him, that speed, he's got to use it. He's a big offensive threat when he starts skating like that."

For a bit, that aggressiveness was missing from Guhle's game, a stretch he called a "rut."

"Every player gets them," said Guhle, who has compiled two goals and nine points in 19 games this season. "All players get the yips or whatever, just kind of a taste of that, I think. I'm just working at it in practice and trying to get my confidence up."

Guhle, however, said ruts can be "good" for his development. He knows learning to battle and emerge from slumps will only benefit him in the long run.

"It's good for my development if I could go through ruts like that because I can learn how to bounce back from them maybe quicker next time," Guhle said. "It's going to happen over the course of a career."

While Guhle impressed the Sabres enough to stick around until the end of training camp, they've kept the second-year pro in the AHL all season, summoning defensemen Lawrence Pilut and Matt Tennyson ahead of him.

Guhle, who has played 21 NHL games, including 18 last season, has remained patient. The former second-round pick understands development time can be a harbinger for future success.

"You always have to respect the process," Guhle said. "You see good defensemen in the NHL who played two, three years in the AHL."

Taylor, of course, likes the attitude and focus that Guhle possesses.

"He doesn't look at anybody else or he's not worried about anybody else," Taylor said. "He's worried about what he needs to do to get better."

Paetsch debuts

After sitting out the Amerks' first 20 games as a healthy scratch, defenseman Nathan Paetsch, 35, made his season debut in Saturday's 1-0 road loss to the Binghamton Devils.

Why did Taylor finally dress the veteran?

"I just wanted to get him into a game," Taylor said. "He's worked hard, he's earned it. But we felt it was the right time to get him in the lineup. He played very well for his first game."

Paetsch began his 16th pro season as the Amerks' 10th defenseman, patiently waiting for an opportunity. After the Sabres traded Taylor Fedun and recalled Pilot and Tennyson, his chance appeared imminent.

"He's been a great pro, he's been unbelievable in the dressing room, he's been positive with everybody, he helps everybody out in practices," Taylor said. "He's a mentor for all our guys in the room."

Paetsch re-signed with the Amerks knowing his playing time could be limited and he would have more of a mentoring role. Still, Paetsch said he's "probably in the best shape of my career."

"I take a lot better care of myself," Paetsch said Friday. "You got to the older you get. The older you get, the smarter you get. So I definitely regret a few decisions when I was younger, of course, and now I know better, so I take a lot better care of my body."

Saturday was Paetsch's 631st AHL appearance.

Olofsson breaks through

On Friday, Amerks winger Victor Olofsson, 23, scored his first goal in six games and just his second in 11 contests.

"I've been playing pretty good recently even if I haven't scored as much," Olofsson said. "I think that's the most important part."

The Sabres' prospect has cooled off following a scorching start in which he compiled five goals and 15 points in his first nine AHL games.

"It doesn't come easy for him," Taylor said. "He's got to work to score goals and it's making him better." Taylor said he likes how the Swede's overall game has evolved.

"Away from the puck, he's doing a lot better job," Taylor said. "I like how he's forechecking. . . . He's not being a perimeter player. I like all aspects of the game."

Sabres goalie prospect Jonas Johansson gets a look in Rochester
Buffalo News
By: Bill Hoppe

Right now, the Rochester Americans just want to “get a look” at Buffalo Sabres goalie prospect Jonas Johansson, coach Chris Taylor said.

“We’re going to get him up here for a couple of days,” Taylor said.

Considering the first-place Amerks have two goalies in Scott Wedgewood and Adam Wilcox, Johansson’s recall from the ECHL Cincinnati Cyclones on Monday was a bit surprising.

Wedgewood had a 35-save shutout Friday and made 35 stops again Saturday.

“It has nothing to do with them,” Taylor said.

Do the Amerks have any plans to play Johansson?

“We’ll see,” Taylor said. “We’ll take that day by day. We’re not sure yet. We just want to get him in practice and see how he is, start practicing, see how he looks, how he handles himself.”

The Amerks host the Utica Comets on Wednesday and also have games on Friday and Saturday. The Cyclones, meanwhile, have a three-day break after playing Wednesday.

The 6-foot-5, 214-pound Johansson has recently found a groove with the Cyclones, winning six of his last eight starts and compiling a 1.74 goals-against average and a .940 save percentage over that span.

“He’s had a really good year,” Taylor said.

Overall, Johansson is 7-3-1-1 with a 2.49 goals-against average, a .910 save percentage and two shutouts in 12 games. The Swede earned ECHL Player of the Week honors last month.

Johansson, a third-round pick by the Sabres in 2014, 61st overall, played 14 AHL games over the last two seasons.

Sabres assign defenseman Matt Tennyson to Rochester

Buffalo News

By: Staff Report

The Sabres assigned defenseman Matt Tennyson to the Rochester Americans on Wednesday.

Tennyson was recalled as insurance before Friday's game at Florida because Marco Scandella and Jake McCabe were sidelined. Scandella is on injured reserve and McCabe was out of the Sabres' lineup Tuesday against Toronto.

The move likely means McCabe or Scandella will be available for Saturday's Sabres game against Philadelphia. The Sabres could make another move if both are expected to be available. Lawrence Pilut has played in the last three games since getting called up from the AHL.

Tennyson started the season with the Sabres and has appeared in 15 games with the team. He has one assist in seven games with the Amerks this season.

Rochester plays Wednesday night against Utica at Blue Cross Arena. The 7:05 p.m. game will be televised on MSG Network.

Amerks roll over the Utica Comets

C&C Worldwide

By: Staff Report/Amerks.com

The Rochester Americans (14-6-2-0) scored twice in each of the last periods and rode a 25-save effort from goaltender Jonas Johansson to defeat the Utica Comets (10-13-1-1) by a 5-2 decision Wednesday night at the Blue Cross Arena.

With the 3-goal win, the Amerks became the first team in the North Division this season to reach the 30-point plateau and hold a 3-point lead over the Cleveland Monsters for first-place in the AHL's North Division standings.

Rookie forward Rasmus Asplund registered a career-high three-assist outing to give Rochester 30 out of a possible 40 points in the last 20 games. Wayne Simpson, Victor Olofsson, and Matt Tennyson, who was re-assigned by the Buffalo Sabres earlier today, all tallied a goal and an assist.

C.J. Smith and Andrew MacWilliam rounded out the scoring while Johansson made his season debut after earning his first recall of the season from the Cincinnati Cyclones of the ECHL. The 23-year-old netminder stopped 25 of 27 to record his first AHL win of the year.

Blueliner Evan McEneny posted a pair of helpers for Utica, which entered the contest with 4-2-0-0 record in its last 6 outings, while Reid Boucher and Jonathan Dahlen added a goal apiece. Thatcher Demko, who made his fourth start in the last 5 games, made 22 saves but was handed the loss.

Entering the third period with a 3-0 lead, the Amerks saw the Comets spoil Johansson's bid for a shutout as they scored a pair of markers during the frame, but Rochester answered each goal to come out with a 5-2 win.

"I felt really good," said Johansson, who made just his 15th appearance as an Amerk. "I tried to stay calm during the game and just play my game as I was a little nervous. It was an opportunity to show what I can do at this level."

Utica pulled Demko with just under 5 minutes left in the frame and Boucher made it a 2-goal game at the 15:46 mark. On the ensuing shift with the goaltender on the bench again, Smith slipped his seventh marker of the campaign into an empty Comets net just 22 seconds following Boucher's team-leading 11th tally of the season.

Just 1:08 after Smith restored Rochester's 3-goal cushion, Dahlen booked his fourth of the campaign while the Comets had the extra-attacker. Much like Smith, Simpson sealed the game as he found the back of another empty-net for his seventh of the season from Asplund and Tennyson while the Amerks were serving a cross-checking infraction.

"I thought we started the game simple," said MacWilliam. "We stuck to our game plan; getting pucks behind their defensemen, forechecking hard and forwards backchecking. When we play like that, we are a good hockey club and it is fun to watch."

As the first period was nearing its end, Olofsson gave the Amerks a 1-0 lead with 2:09 left in the stanza.

Picking up a loose puck in the right corner of his defensive zone, Brendan Guhle sprung Olofsson, Asplund and Zach Redmond on a 3-on-2 odd-man rush into the Comets end of the ice. As the two Swedes exchanged a give-and-go, Olofsson fired a shot from in-between the face-off dots to open the scoring.

"I liked how we started tonight," Amerks head coach Chris Taylor said. "We were ready to play and we took it to them right away. It was evident we were ready to play and we were committed to the game plan."

Rochester doubled its lead less than two minutes into the middle period as Tennyson snuck into the offensive zone from the right point and converted off a centering feed from Alexander Nylander that first caromed off the skate of Sean Malone.

Nearly 10 minutes after Tennyson's first goal of the season, MacWilliam also tallied his inaugural goal of the campaign to give Rochester a 3-0 lead going into the third period.

While keeping the Comets in the defensive zone, Olofsson rimmed the puck around the boards to the opposite half-wall to a waiting Asplund. The forward, who celebrated his 21st birthday on Monday, slid the puck to the point. As he kept the puck inside the blueline, MacWilliam slapped it towards the cage and it pinballed its way past Demko at the 13:35 mark of the frame. The goal was MacWilliam's first since April 6, 2016 as a member of the Manitoba Moose.

Rochester and Utica each tallied a pair of goals during the final 20 minutes before the Amerks prevailed with the 5-2 victory.

*NOTES — The Buffalo Sabres on Wednesday announced the team has assigned defenseman Matt Tennyson to the Rochester Americans... With the 5-2 victory, Rochester has collected at least 1 point in 11 of the last 12 games against Utica dating back to the start of the 2017-18 season, going 6-1-2-3 during that span... The Amerks remain at home on Friday, Dec. 7 as they host the Providence Bruins for their lone trip to the Flower City at 7:05 p.m. After the home matchup, Rochester makes its first trip back to Syracuse since the Opening Round of the 2018 Calder Cup for a clash with the Crunch on Saturday, Dec. 8 at 7 pm.

Amerks hold off Comets for victory on home ice

Rochester First

By: Staff Report/Amerks.com

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Blueliner Evan McEneny posted a pair of helpers for Utica, which entered tonight's contest with 4-2-0-0 record in its last six outings, while Reid Boucher and Jonathan Dahlen added a goal apiece. Thatcher Demko, who made his fourth start in the last five games, made 22 saves but was handed the loss.

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Comets strike late, but fall in Rochester
Utica Observer-Dispatch
By: Ben Birnell

The Utica Comets' best pressure Wednesday came too late against the Rochester Americans.

After struggling to get much going offensively for about 55 minutes, the Comets surged with two late goals in an eventual 5-2 loss to the Americans at Blue Cross Arena to close out a four-game road stretch.

It was the third loss in five games for the Comets (10-13-1-1; 22 points tied for fifth place in the North Division), who have had trouble scoring at even-strength. Utica was playing for the first time since forward Michael Carcone was dealt by the parent Vancouver Canucks earlier in the week, though captain Carter Bancks returned to the lineup after a three-game injury absence.

It was a far different outcome for the Comets from when they picked up a 5-4 victory Nov. 23 over the North-leading Amerks (14-6-2-0, 30 points).

Jonas Johansson made 25 stops in his first AHL start of the season and five players scored — including two empty-netters -- to help Rochester win for the second time in five games.

Reid Boucher scored his team-best 11th goal of the season and Jonathan Dahlen also added a goal late in the third period when the Comets totaled 13 of their 27 shots had extra attackers on the ice. Zack MacEwen also added an assist to extend a career-best point streak to six games.

Goaltender Thatcher Demko stopped 22 shots in his fifth start of the season since returning from an extended injury absence. He has lost three consecutive starts.

Rochester controlled its share of the first period — and limited Utica offensively — and grabbed the lead. With the teams playing 4-on-4, Victor Olofsson finished an odd-man rush with a shot from the slot past Demko's stick to give Rochester a 1-0 lead with 2:09 left. It snapped a more than 100-minute scoreless drought for Rochester.

The Comets had few quality chances; Darren Archibald and Brendan Gaunce each had good opportunities.

The Amerks extended their lead just 1:54 into the second on shot by defenseman Matt Tennyson — who skated in unchecked — from the slot over Demko's glove to make it 2-0.

Utica put on some pressure — Kole Lind, Jaime Sifers and Ashton Sautner had good chances — before Rochester struck again with 6:24 remaining when Andrew McWilliam's shot from the point through traffic in front took an odd bounce and fluttered over Demko.

The Comets got on the board late in the third after Demko was first pulled for an extra attacker with 5:30 to play. Each time the Comets scored — Boucher with 4:37 left and Dahlen's fourth of the season that found its way through with 2:44 remaining — the Amerks answered to hold them off.

Amerks restore order against Comets

CNY Homepage.com

By: Lucas Frankel

The Amerks weren't about to allow the Comets to beat them for a second straight time.

Rochester built a 3-0 lead after two periods and withstood a late Utica rally to come away with the 5-2 victory on Wednesday night.

Victor Olofsson scored the Amerks' lone goal in the first period. Rochester added two more in the second.

With five minutes remaining in the third, Reid Boucher cut the deficit to 3-1, but the Amerks immediately responded with an empty-netter.

History repeated itself minutes later, after Jonathan Dahlen made it 4-2 with Rochester again hitting the vacant goal.

The Comets return home on Friday night to face the Springfield Thunderbirds. Faceoff is set for 7pm.