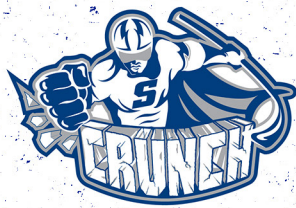


ROCHESTER AMERICANS HOCKEY CLUB

Saturday | **May 15, 2021** | 7:05 PM ET | The Blue Cross Arena | Broadcast: ESPN Rochester, AHLTV, CW Rochester



SYRACUSE CRUNCH

GAME NOTES

ROCHESTER AMERICANS



TONIGHT'S GAME OVERVIEW

The Rochester Americans (10-14-2-1) continue their final three-game homestand of the 2020-21 campaign tonight as they close out their season-series with the Syracuse Crunch (18-10-3-0) at The Blue Cross Arena.

The 7:05 p.m. North Division matchup will be the 12th and final meeting overall between the two teams this season with Rochester earning at least one point in six of the first 11 get-togethers thus far.

The game will be carried live on The Sports Leader 95.7 FM/950 AM ESPN Rochester and AHLTV. It will also be televised live locally on CW Rochester channel 16.

LAST TIME OUT

The Amerks began their final homestand of the season on the short end of a 1-0 loss to the intrastate rival Utica Comets in a goaltending duel Friday at The Blue Cross Arena.

Despite Friday's loss, Rochester has collected at least one point in 24 of the last 35 games against Utica dating back to the start of the 2017-18 campaign, going 17-12-2-4 over that span.

The matchup was the second of three get-togethers this week and the 10th meeting overall between the two teams this season.

Forward **Brett Murray**, playing in his second game back with the Amerks following a brief two-game stint with the Buffalo Sabres, and defenseman **Oskari Laaksonen** each registered four shots on net while **Michael Mersch**, **Steven Fogarty** and **Ryan Jones** all had three.

In his second appearance with Rochester since making his NHL debut, goaltender **Michael Houser** (0-2-0) made 26 saves but was dealt with the loss. In two starts in the Amerks crease, Houser has stopped 60 of the 63 shots he faced while posting a 1.55 goals-against average to go with a .952 save percentage.

POWER UP

Now 27 games into the season, Rochester's power-play has gone 26-for-102 with a 25.5% conversion rate that is currently third in the AHL. The Amerks 26 goals on the man-advantage are most among all North Division teams and eight off the AHL lead behind the San Diego Gulls.

The Amerks have scored at least one power-play goal in 17 of their first 27 games this season and have registered multiple power-play tallies in four overall, including a season-high three against Syracuse on April 3 and, most recently on April 23 against Utica.

LENDING A HAND

Despite having played just 27 games this season, the Amerks had 36 different players appear in at least one game, highlighted by rookie forward **Jack Quinn**, Buffalo's eighth overall pick in the 2020 NHL Draft. A total of 11 different rookies have suited up for Rochester, two of which spent time with the Sabres in goaltender **Ukko-Pekka Luukkonen** and defenseman **Mattias Samuelsson**, the Sabres' second-round selection in 2018.

Coming into the final weekend of the season, the Amerks saw 13 different players recalled to the big club while five made their NHL debuts in **Jacob Bryson**, **Brett Murray**, **Arttu Ruotsalainen**, Samuelsson and Luukkonen. They combined to skate in 73 NHL games with the Sabres this season.

2020-21 AMERKS OVERALL SCORING & GOALTENDING LEADERS

SKATER	GP	G	A	PTS	PIM	+/-
Brett Murray	25	9	10	19	23	-7
Remi Elie	26	9	9	18	14	-2
Michael Mersch	26	8	9	17	24	-1
Oskari Laaksonen	26	2	15	17	6	-6

GOALTENDER

GOALTENDER	GP	REC	SVS	SV%	GAA
Michael Houser	2	0-2-0	60	.952	1.55
Dustin Tokarski	2	1-1-0	68	.932	2.51
Ukko-Pekka Luukkonen	14	7-5-2	389	.888	3.60
Stefanos Lekkas	7	1-5-1	183	.863	4.32
Billy Christopoulos	5	1-1-0	75	.815	6.03

2020-21 CRUNCH OVERALL SCORING & GOALTENDING LEADERS

SKATER	GP	G	A	PTS	PIM	+/-
Boris Katchouk	29	11	23	34	18	17
Taylor Raddysch	27	12	17	29	10	2
Otto Somppi	31	11	14	25	22	15
Antoine Morand	39	6	10	16	29	-8

GOALTENDER

GOALTENDER	GP	REC	SVS	SV%	GAA
Christopher Gibson	2	2-0-0	62	.925	2.51
Ryan Bednard	2	1-1-0	54	.915	2.61
Spencer Martin	15	7-5-2	392	.907	2.83
Samuel Montembeault	13	8-4-1	325	.898	2.86

HEAD-TO-HEAD BREAKDOWN

Syracuse Crunch	Rochester Americans
18-10-3-0	Record 10-14-2-1
10-6-0-0	Home Record 3-8-2-0
8-4-3-0	Road Record 7-6-0-1
6-2-2-0	Last 10 Games 2-8-0-0
13-3-0-0	Record When Scoring First 6-5-1-0
3.71 (2nd)	Goals-For Per Game 3.11 (15th)
2.90 (p8th)	Goals-Against Per Game 4.07 (28th)
18.8% (12th)	Power-Play 25.5% (3rd)
80.3% (20th)	Penalty Kill 75.7% (25th)
3-0 L @ UTI	Last Game 1-0 L vs. UTI
N/A	Next Game May 16 vs. UTI



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BACK FROM BUFFALO

Earlier this week, the Sabres reassigned forwards **Steven Fogarty**, **Brett Murray** and **C.J. Smith**, defenseman **Mattias Samuelsson** and goaltender **Michael Houser** to Rochester for the team's final four games of the season.

Houser, who signed his first NHL contract with the Sabres on March 19, earned the start in Buffalo's final four games of the season, finishing with a 2-2-0 record, a 3.46 goals-against average, .901 save percentage and 127 saves. He picked up his first NHL win in his NHL debut on May 3 as he made 34 saves and then added 45 more stops the following night in Buffalo's 4-3 shootout victory over the New York Islanders.

Murray returns to the Flower City after making his NHL debut on May 6 against the Pittsburgh Penguins. Murray skated in two games with the big club, recording one shot on net while averaging 10:30 of ice time.

In his first 12 games with Buffalo, Samuelsson notched his first two points (0+2) in the NHL after making his debut on April 18 against the Penguins. Samuelsson registered 10 shots in nearly 18 minutes of ice time per game.

Despite being shuffled between Buffalo and Rochester, Smith has totaled 13 points (4+9) in 14 contests this season with the Amerks, including nine points (2+7) in his last 11 appearances.

In his first season with the organization, Fogarty, the Amerks team captain, collected three points (1+2) in nine games with Buffalo while also producing 10 points (7+3) in 14 contests with Rochester.

MERSCH, ELIE HEATING UP DOWN FINAL STRETCH

With an assist in Rochester's 3-1 win at Syracuse back on May 1, veteran forward **Michael Mersch** has tallied 10 points (5+5) over his last 12 outings, including a season-high four-point effort on April 23 with a pair of goals and two assists. It was Mersch's best single-game performance since a career-high five-point effort (3+2) back on March 27, 2015, the very same year he would lead the Manchester Monarchs to the Calder Cup.

Despite seeing his season-long four-game point streak halted on April 30, **Remi Elie** remains one of the Amerks top goal-scorers with nine and is second on the team in overall scoring behind only **Brett Murray** with 18 points (9+9) in 26 games. With nine goals on the season already, including four in his last nine, Elie has tied his career-high from 2016-17 in 31 fewer games and needs just one more goal to record his first 10-goal season.

THE BEST OFFENSE IS A GOOD DEFENSE

Rochester comes into the weekend owning three of the AHL's top scoring rookie defensemen in **Oskari Laaksonen**, **Mattias Samuelsson** and **Ryan Jones**, all of whom have combined for 35 points (6+29) this season.

Among all AHL rookie defensemen, Laaksonen and Samuelsson currently rank fourth and 15th in both assists and points, respectively. Samuelsson has four points (2+2) in his last seven games, while Laaksonen has 11 points (2+9) over his last 16 outings, including three multi-point efforts over that span.

SCOUTING THE CRUNCH

The Crunch come into tonight's matchup after completing a five-game series with Utica as they went 3-1-1-0 during that span. Monday night in the final tilt between the two clubs this season, the Comets blanked the Crunch 3-0. Tonight's contest is Syracuse's final game of the 2020-21 season.

AMERKS-CRUNCH 2020-21 SEASON SERIES BREAKDOWN

ROCHESTER

SKATER	GP	G	A	PTS	PIM	+/-
Brett Murray	10	6	5	11	2	0
Remi Elie	11	5	4	9	6	4
Oskari Laaksonen	10	1	8	9	2	3

GOALTENDER

	GP	REC	GA	SV%	GAA
Dustin Tokarski	1	1-0-0	2	.949	2.00
Stefanos Lekkas	4	1-2-1	13	.891	3.46
Ukko-Pekka Luukkonen	6	3-2-1	21	.864	3.55
Billy Christopoulos	2	0-0-0	4	.500	11.86

SYRACUSE

SKATER	GP	G	A	PTS	PIM	+/-
Boris Katchouk	11	6	10	16	8	8
Taylor Raddysh	10	5	6	11	4	2
Otto Somppi	11	3	7	10	6	5

GOALTENDER

	GP	REC	GA	SV%	GAA
Samuel Montembeault	6	5-0-1	18	.874	3.00
Ryan Bednard	1	0-1-0	3	.857	3.26
Spencer Martin	5	1-3-0	18	.856	4.47

2020-21 SEASON SERIES GAME-BY-GAME BREAKDOWN

Date	Result	Score	SF-SA	PP	PK
Feb. 10	OTW	4-3	26-23	2-3	1-1
Feb. 20	W	3-2	32-39	0-3	3-4
Mar. 1	L	4-3	34-25	2-6	2-2
Mar. 6	W	4-2	27-29	2-5	6-8
Mar. 26	OTL	4-3	25-29	1-3	2-2
Apr. 2	L	6-2	27-29	1-4	3-5
Apr. 3	W	5-3	27-30	3-4	1-1
Apr. 7	OTL	4-3	28-21	0-3	3-4
Apr. 21	L	7-6	20-33	0-2	3-4
Apr. 24	L	5-3	22-30	0-2	1-2
May 1	W	3-1	21-33	1-3	3-3
May 15					

SERIES NOTABLES

The Amerks have scored a power-play goal in 12 of their last 19 games against Syracuse dating back to last season, going 19-for-69 (27.5%) with the man-advantage over that span.

Amerks defenseman **Dylan Blujus** spent time with the Crunch after being drafted by the Tampa Bay Lightning in 2012. He played his first three seasons with the Syracuse from 2014-2017, recording 49 points (11+38) in 151 games.

Rochester has recorded points in seven of the first 11 games this season and have posted a 17-11-3-1 record in its last 32 contests against Syracuse.



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