

ROCHESTER AMERICANS HOCKEY CLUB

SIX-TIME CALDER CUP CHAMPIONS 1965 | 1966 | 1968 | 1983 | 1987 | 1996

Friday | **February 18, 2022** | 7:00 PM ET | Adirondack Bank Center | Game 706 | AHL TV, The Fan Rochester



GAME NOTES



TONIGHT'S GAME OVERVIEW

The Rochester Americans (24-15-3-2) continue their road swing tonight as they open their first three-in-three weekend of the season against the first-place Utica Comets (28-9-5-0) at the Adirondack Bank Center. Game time between the rivals is slated for a 7:00 p.m. stat and will be carried live on The Sports Leader 95.7FM/950 AM The Fan Rochester as well as AHLTV.

The Amerks have earned points in 22 of their last 32 games dating back to Nov. 19 and are coming off three straight games decided beyond regulation. The Comets enter tonight with a 5-4-1-0 record in their last 10 contests.

HEAD-TO-HEAD SERIES SNAPSHOT

The intrastate rivals have alternated wins through the first seven games of the season series, but Utica has a slight advantage with a 4-2-1-0 record coming into tonight. After Utica claimed the first three, Rochester responded with three straight wins of its own, including a 4-2 victory in the teams' previous get-together in Utica back on Nov. 24.

The Amerks were the first team to hand the Comets their first loss of the season after starting with an AHL-best 13-game win streak to begin the campaign.

Dating back to the start of the 2016-17 campaign, Rochester has collected at least one point in 33 of the last 52 games against Utica, going 26-19-3-4 over that span.

AMERKS TRIFECTA LEADING THE WAY

The Amerks own three of the league's top point-getters in veteran forward **Michael Mersch** and rookie sensations **JJ Peterka** and **Jack Quinn**. Mersch and Quinn, who is currently on recall with the Buffalo Sabres, rank among the AHL's top nine goal-scorers. Mersch (19+20) and Peterka (13+26), meanwhile, are tied for 14th in overall scoring with 39 points each.

Mersch, who despite seeing his career-best nine-game point streak halted in the 5-2 loss to Charlotte on Feb. 4, has points in 10 of his last 17 games as he inches closer to the 40-point mark for the fifth time in his career.

After scoring just four times through the first three months of the season, Peterka has notched 19 points (9+10) in 15 games to begin 2022, including goals in back-to-back games on three different occasions over that span.

Quinn continues to pace all AHL rookies in goals (18) and ranks fifth in points (35) while his team-high six power-play goals are also second-most among all first-year players.

Rochester enters the weekend with the AHL's third-best offense. Averaging just under four goals per game, the Amerks have scored the second-most goals in the AHL with 154 behind only the Ontario Reign.

POWER-PLAY PROFICIENCY

At the halfway point of the season, Rochester's power-play has gone 37-for-149 with a 24.8% conversion rate that is currently second-best in the AHL. The Amerks' 37 goals on the man-advantage are most among all North Division teams and are eight shy of the AHL lead behind Ontario.

The Amerks have scored at least one power-play goal in 24 of their first 43 games this season and have registered multiple power-play tallies in eight overall, including a season-high four goals in the 7-3 win over Hershey back on Nov. 26.

2021-22 AMERKS OVERALL SCORING & GOALTENDING LEADERS

SKATER	GP	G	A	PTS	PIM	+/-
Michael Mersch	44	19	20	39	18	-1
JJ Peterka	38	13	26	39	14	6
Jack Quinn*	24	18	17	35	15	-6
Brandon Biro	36	8	27	35	12	15
Ethan Prow	40	6	21	27	6	-1

GOALTENDER

	GP	REC	SVS	SV%	GAA
Aaron Dell	9	7-1-1	250	.919	2.42
Michael Houser	11	5-4-0	261	.900	2.98
Ukko-Pekka Luukkonen	14	7-6-1	363	.894	3.17
Mat Robson	10	5-3-2	265	.877	3.78

* = Currently on recall with Buffalo

2021-22 COMETS OVERALL SCORING & GOALTENDING LEADERS

SKATER	GP	G	A	PTS	PIM	+/-
Fabian Zetterlund	38	18	19	37	6	10
Chase De Leo	29	10	26	36	8	5
Alexander Holtz	28	17	16	33	2	6
Reilly Walsh	42	6	26	32	14	13
A.J. Greer	33	10	18	28	62	7

GOALTENDER

	GP	REC	SVS	SV%	GAA
Akira Schmid*	16	12-2-2	433	.929	2.15
Nico Daws	17	11-3-2	454	.917	2.44
Mareks Mitens	10	5-4-1	257	.880	3.49

* = Currently on recall with New Jersey

2021-22 HEAD-TO-HEAD BREAKDOWN

Utica Comets	Rochester Americans
28-9-5-0	Record 24-15-3-2
17-4-2-0	Home Record 13-6-2-1
11-5-3-0	Road Record 11-9-1-1
5-4-1-0	Last 10 Games 4-4-1-1
18-2-5-0	Record When Scoring First 16-6-1-0
3.64 (2nd)	Goals-For Per Game 3.50 (3rd)
2.67 (4th)	Goals-Against Per Game 3.50 (29th)
23.8% (T-3rd)	Power-Play 24.8% (2nd)
80.0% (21st)	Penalty Kill 80.9% (17th)
6-2 L @ TOR	Last Game 3-2 OTW @ BRI
Feb. 19 @ HER	Next Game Feb. 19 @ SYR



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QUINN-TESSENTIAL QUALITIES

Quinn became the first AHL player this season and just the 17th player in Amerks franchise history to score four goals in a game in the 6-5 overtime loss to Belleville on Jan. 15. More impressively, he scored all four goals consecutively, including the game-tying tally with 3.3 seconds remaining in regulation.

He's the first Amerk to have a four-goal game since Rochester native Derek Whitmore single-handedly outscored Hamilton on Nov. 25, 2011 (5-2 W).

With 18 goals through his first 24 games, he's on pace to become the first Amerk to score 20 goals in the fewest number of games since Luke Adam reached the mark in 31 games during the 2013-14 campaign.

He was named the **AHL's Rookie of the Month for October** after leading all first-year players with 10 points (5+5) through the first month of the regular season. In just six games to begin the season, Quinn surpassed his offensive output from his truncated 2020-21 campaign, and became the first AHL player to reach the 10-point mark this season.

Quinn has been held scoreless just four times all season and hasn't gone more than one game without recording a point. He has recorded 11 multi-point performances this year. More impressively, the Amerks are a near-perfect 10-0-1-0 this season when Quinn registers a multi-point game, including 6-0-1-0 on home ice.

On Nov. 12, Quinn became the first AHL rookie since Frank Vatrano in 2015-16 to score eight goals through his first 10 games of the season.

Despite again being out of the lineup for an extended period of time for the second time this season, Quinn is one of only two AHL rookies with at least six power-play goals this season, joining San Jose's Scott Reedy.

MERSCH LEADING BY EXAMPLE

Mersch will become the first Amerk and just the 14th player in the AHL this season to reach the 40-point mark on his very next point. In doing so, he will have reached the mark for the fifth time in his eight-year pro career.

Mersch has totaled 26 points (12+14) and four multi-point efforts over his last 30 games dating back to Nov. 24. He's been held scoreless 11 times over that span to move into 14th in the AHL in scoring with 39 points (19+20) on the season. The Amerks captain began that stretch with a five-game goal-scoring streak, the longest of his career and the longest in the AHL this season, while his recent nine-game point streak surpassed his previous career-best mark of seven he set during the 2014-15 season.

Mersch is also set to become just the eighth AHL player to join the 20-goal club on his next goal. It will mark the fifth time in eight years that he reached the mark and the first time since the 2018-19 season as a member of the Texas Stars.

When he reaches the 20-goal mark, he will have done so in the second-fewest number of games since 2015-16 when he scored 20 in 35 games with the Ontario Reign. He finished that season with 24 goals in only 52 appearances while also appearing in 17 games with the Los Angeles Kings.

Mersch has appeared in all but one of Rochester's 73 games dating back to last season, including the lone player to appear in all 44 contests in 2021-22.

AMERKS-COMETS 2021-22 SEASON SERIES BREAKDOWN

ROCHESTER

SKATER	GP	G	A	PTS	PIM	+/-
Sean Malone	5	3	5	8	2	-2
Oskari Laaksonen	6	0	8	8	2	0
Jack Quinn	5	2	5	7	8	-3
Michael Mersch	7	2	3	5	4	2

GOALTENDER

	GP	REC	GA	SV%	GAA
Michael Houser	1	0-0-0	1	.900	1.92
Mat Robson	3	2-1-0	12	.867	3.94
Ukko-Pekka Luukkonen	4	1-3-0	15	.821	4.42

UTICA

SKATER	GP	G	A	PTS	PIM	+/-
Reilly Walsh	7	1	8	9	4	6
Fabian Zetterlund	4	4	3	7	0	2
Robbie Russo	7	2	5	7	4	-1
Chase De Leo	4	2	4	6	2	2

GOALTENDER

	GP	REC	GA	SV%	GAA
Nico Daws	3	1-1-0	7	.897	2.53
Akira Schmid	3	2-0-1	7	.904	3.06
Mareks Mitens	1	0-1-0	7	.750	7.17

DELL-IVERING IN THE CREASE

Goaltender **Aaron Dell** began his Amerks career with an impressive six straight wins through his first six starts with Rochester. Until now, the veteran netminder had never began a season with a win in each of his first six starts at either the NHL or AHL level.

With a win against Wilkes-Barre/Scranton on Feb. 9, Dell matched his career-best 7-1-0 mark when he posted one from March 20 to April 10 during the 2014-15 season with Worcester. In seven of his eight appearances this season, he has made 25 or more saves while also averaging 30 shots-against.

WINNING BY NUMBERS

Rochester enters tonight as one of only two AHL teams to have scored at least 48 goals in all three periods this season. Additionally, the Amerks have scored the second-most first and third-period goals among any other team and have outscored the opposition 51-39 through the opening 20 minutes.

The Amerks have scored four or more goals in all but three of their 24 wins this season, two of which have come on home ice. Each of Rochester's 11 road victories have come with three or more goals despite being outscored 86-72 through their first 22 road games.



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THE BEST OFFENSE IS A GOOD DEFENSE

Rochester has two of the league's top point-producing defensemen in **Ethan Prow** (6+21) and **Oskari Laaksonen** (3+21), who enter the week seventh and ninth in scoring amongst all blueliners, respectively.

In addition to being seventh in scoring, Prow's 21 assists are equal to that of Laaksonen and are currently seventh-most among all defensemen. With nine points over his last 10 games, including a third-period goal against Providence on Feb. 11, he remains on pace to capture his third straight 30-point season in the AHL. The veteran defenseman has totaled 108 points (33+75) over his last 155 AHL contests dating back to the 2018-19 campaign.

Laaksonen, who boasts nine points (1+8) in his last 16 games since the turn of the New Year, also paces all defensemen with 17 power-play assists as all but four of his 21 assists this season have come on the man-advantage. Equally as impressive, 19 of his 24 points have come on the power-play.

His best performance of the season came back on Jan. 12 when he recorded a career-high four assists in the 7-6 win over Utica, including three in the first period and three of which came on the power-play. He finished two assists shy of tying the franchise record for most in a single game.

Prior to earning his second recall of the season to the Buffalo Sabres, rookie defenseman **Mattias Samuelsson** recorded two assists in the overtime loss to Belleville on Jan. 15, giving him 15 points (2+13) in 22 games. Samuelsson is tied for 11th in scoring among AHL rookie defensemen while his 13 assists are 10th-most. With his Sabres season debut at Ottawa on Jan. 18, he became the 13th different player to appear in a game for both Buffalo and Rochester.

FANTASTIC FOUR

The Amerks currently own four of the AHL's top scoring rookies in **Jack Quinn**, **JJ Peterka**, **Linus Weissbach** and **Brandon Biro**, all of whom have combined for 131 points (48+83) through the first 44 games this season.

Despite being sidelined again for the second time this season, Quinn, Buffalo's eighth overall pick in 2020, continues to pace all first-year players in goals (18) while ranking fifth in points (35) in 24 games. Quinn became the 101st AHL player this season to make his NHL debut when he took the ice against the Tampa Bay Lightning on Jan. 11. He finished with team-highs in shots (3) and shot attempts (6) while earning 16:30 of total ice time. He then returned to the Sabres a day after scoring his 18th goal of the season for Rochester and was rewarded with his first two NHL points, including a goal against Vezina Trophy winner and Stanley Cup champion Braden Holtby in the Sabres' 5-4 loss to the Dallas Stars on Jan 20.

Peterka is second in rookie scoring with 39 points (13+26) after recording two more points against Bridgeport on Tuesday. He also ranks third among all first-year players and eighth overall with a 26 assists. He and Quinn, taken just 26 picks apart from one another by Buffalo in the 2020 NHL Draft, currently make up the only three rookie duos across the entire AHL to rank inside the top three on their respective team in scoring.

Biro has been one of the team's most consistent and impressive point-getters with 30 points (7+29) over his last 25 games dating back to Nov. 27. He has nine multi-point efforts in 21 games over that span, including five straight to open the month of February. He ranks second among all rookies with a team-high 27 assists and is tied for fifth with 35 points in 36 games.

MOVIN' ON UP

Players that have appeared in at least one game this season for both Rochester and Buffalo:

FORWARDS (7)

Mark Jankowski
Ryan MacInnis
Brett Murray
Arttu Ruotsalainen
Peyton Krebs
Jack Quinn*
JJ Peterka*

DEFENSEMEN (3)

Casey Fitzgerald*
Ethan Prow*
Mattias Samuelsson

GOALTENDERS (3)

Aaron Dell
Michael Houser
Ukko-Pekka Luukkonen

* = Made NHL debut

SERIES NOTABLES

Of the 14 different defensemen the Amerks have used this season, 13 have notched at least one point while nine have recorded at least one goal. Additionally, of the 20 different forwards to appear in one game for Rochester, 18 have scored a goal and 19 have produced a point.

Over his last 19 games since the turn of the New Year, Amerks forward **Arttu Ruotsalainen** has tallied 17 points on six goals and 11 assists, a stretch which began with a three-point effort versus Hartford on Jan. 2. Ruotsalainen has also turned in a multi-point effort in five games over that same span and had a career-best eight shots against Utica on Jan. 12. The Finnish forward has recorded at least one shot in 35 of 37 games with Rochester dating back to the start of the 2020-21 campaign.

In the first three games with Utica, Rochester was held to under three goals and combined to score two goals in the opening 20 minutes of play. In the four games since, the Amerks have scored four or more goals in three of the four and the club has totaled seven tallies in the first period.

2021-22 HEAD-TO-HEAD BREAKDOWN

Date	Result	Score	SF-SA	PP	PK
Oct. 17	L	6-2	27-24	0-5	2-3
Nov. 17	L	3-2	27-12	1-6	3-4
Nov. 20	L	5-3	37-29	1-5	2-4
Nov. 24	W	4-2	23-29	1-3	2-2
Dec. 8	OTW	4-3	28-35	2-2	2-2
Jan. 12	W	7-6	28-29	3-6	2-3
Jan. 29	L	4-2	30-27	0-1	4-6
Feb. 18					
Mar. 12					
Mar. 30					
Apr. 22					



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