

Wednesday | **December 20, 2023** | 7:05 PM ET | Blue Cross Arena | AHL Game 393 | AHL TV, The Fan Rochester



GAME NOTES



TONIGHT'S GAME OVERVIEW

The Rochester Americans (12-8-2-1) return home from their three-game Atlantic Division road swing tonight as they battle the first-place Cleveland Monsters (16-7-1-0) at The Blue Cross Arena. Game time is slated for a 7:05 p.m. start and will be carried live on The Sports Leader 95.7 FM/950 AM The Fan Rochester as well as AHLTV.

The Amerks and Monsters will meet eight times during the 2023-24 season with tonight being first in Rochester and third overall.

Six points separates the two teams in the AHL's North Division standings. With 33 points through its first 24 games, Cleveland is off to best start in franchise history under second-year head coach Trent Vogelhuber.

HEAD-TO-HEAD RESULTS AGAINST THE MONSTERS

Rochester boasts a 40-20-6-4 record against Cleveland over the last 10 years dating back to the start of the 2011-12 campaign and has earned at least one point in 29 of the last 44 games overall.

The Amerks have scored at least one power-play goal in 13 of the 26 games (16-for-84) against Cleveland since **Seth Appert** took over as head coach prior to the 2020-21 season.

Isak Rosen recorded a career-high four points (2+2) to help the Amerks earn a win over Cleveland at Rocket Mortgage FieldHouse back on Nov. 18.

Filip Cederqvist led all skaters last season with six goals and eight points in six games between the two clubs.

LAST TIME OUT

A late third-period goal proved to be the difference in a 2-1 score Saturday night as the Amerks came up short against the Wilkes-Barre/Scranton Penguins at Mohegan Sun Arena at Casey Plaza.

Jiri Kulich scored a power-play goal, his sixth of the campaign and league-leading 16th overall this season. **Linus Weissbach** and **Michael Mersch** both added an assist on the first-period marker. Weissbach has an assist in back-to-back games and five points (1+4) over his last seven games while Mersch also has five points (1+4) in his last five contests.

Goaltender **Dustin Tokarski** (4-4-1) made 29 saves against his former team, including all 14 shots he faced in the second period.

THE BEST OFFENSE IS A GOOD DEFENSE

The Amerks own two of the league's top scoring defensemen in **Jeremy Davies** and **Kale Clague**, who have combined for five goals and 26 points this season. Davies' four goals are tied for 13th-most amongst all blueliners.

Davies, who scored a career-high 11 goals last season, including three game-winning tallies, is tied for 14th amongst all defensemen with 54 shots. He's recorded at least one shot in all but three games this season. Davies, who closed out the month of October on a five-game point streak, has recorded one point in 11 of his first 22 games this season, never going more than three straight games without a point.

Clague, meanwhile, is tied for 16th among all rearguards with 12 assists in 21 games. Clague opened the campaign with three multi-point performances and enters the week with assists in four of his last eight games.

2023-24 AMERKS OVERALL SCORING & GOALTENDING LEADERS

SKATER	GP	G	A	PTS	+/-	PIM
Jiri Kulich	22	16	6	22	0	8
Isak Rosen	19	8	12	20	3	4
Brandon Biro	14	7	7	14	2	10
Mason Jobst	19	7	7	14	-7	8

GOALTENDER

GOALTENDER	GP	REC	SVS	SV%	GAA
Devon Levi*	2	1-1-0	70	.921	2.94
Devin Cooley	9	5-2-2	292	.898	3.64
Dustin Tokarski	9	4-4-1	271	.891	3.63

*=Currently on recall with Buffalo

2023-24 MONSTERS OVERALL SCORING & GOALTENDING LEADERS

SKATER	GP	G	A	PTS	+/-	PIM
Trey Fix-Wolansky	21	6	17	23	8	20
Jake Christiansen	24	4	13	17	2	16
Brendan Gaunce*	24	6	9	15	5	12
Kent Johnson*	10	5	10	15	5	0

GOALTENDER

GOALTENDER	GP	REC	SVS	SV%	GAA
Jet Greaves	14	11-3-0	394	.912	2.78
Pavel Cajan	8	3-3-1	212	.891	3.68

*=Currently with Columbus (NHL)

2023-24 HEAD-TO-HEAD BREAKDOWN

Cleveland Monsters	Rochester Americans
16-7-1-0	Record 12-8-2-1
8-4-0-0	Home Record 5-2-2-0
8-3-1-0	Road Record 7-6-0-1
7-3-0-0	Last 10 Games 5-4-0-1
3-1	Overtime Record 5-2
2-0	Shootout Record 2-1
12-2-1-0	Record When Scoring First 6-2-0-1
3.46 (5th)	Goals-For Per Game 3.39 (T-6th)
3.17 (T-21st)	Goals-Against Per Game 4.00 (31st)
17.2% (T-19th)	Power-Play 22.1% (6th)
78.6% (T-24th)	Penalty Kill 76.4% (T-30th)
Dec. 15 @ BEL (2-1 W)	Last Game Dec. 16 @ WBS (2-1 L)
Dec. 22 @ SYR	Next Game Dec. 22 @ PRO
Trent Vogelhuber (2nd)	Head Coach Seth Appert (4th)



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ROCHESTER AMERICANS HOCKEY CLUB

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

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DYNAMIC DUO: THE SEQUEL

Jiri Kulich and **Isak Rosen** both return for their second seasons in Rochester after putting up one of the most impressive and productive seasons as teenagers in the history of the AHL during the 2022-23 campaign.

Kulich continued his torrid start to the season with three more goals over the team's three-game road trip last week, taking over the league's goal-scoring lead with 16 in just 22 games. Kulich, who also leads the AHL with four overtime game-winning tallies, remains on pace to become the first AHL player to reach the 20-goal mark in the fewest number of games to begin the season since Frank Vatrano scored 20 goals in just 18 games to begin the 2015-16 campaign.

Kulich, whose 24 goals last season were the second-most ever by an 18-year-old in league history, joins Luke Adam (2013-14) and Jack Quinn (2021-22) as the only other Amerks to score nine goals through their first 11 games. He hasn't gone more than the three straight games without a goal.

With seven points over his last six games, which includes a career-best four point (2+2) effort in Cleveland on Nov. 18, Rosen is two behind Kulich for the team lead in scoring with 20 points as he recently returned from his first recall with the Sabres earlier this past week. The Swedish forward is second amongst all Amerks in goals (8) and has matched his totaled from last season in game-winning tallies through just 19 games.

Back on Nov. 25, Kulich and Rosen both made their NHL debuts with the Buffalo Sabres against New Jersey Devils at Prudential Center

The duo has combined for 125 points (62+63) in 167 regular season games. Rochester boasts an impressive 21-3-2-1 record when they each record at least one point in the same game as well as a near-perfect 8-1-0-0 mark when they both score in the same game.

BRYSON BACK IN ROCHESTER

Rochester's blueline received another significant boost yesterday following the reassignment of defenseman **Jacob Bryson** to the Amerks. Bryson, a former fourth-round selection (99th overall) of the Sabres in the 2017 NHL Draft, began his professional career with Rochester.

Bryson appeared in three games with the Sabres this season as one of eight defensemen on Buffalo's roster.

The London, Ontario, native has totaled 30 points (4+26) in 66 career American Hockey League games with the Amerks over parts of two seasons. He's also recorded 28 points (3+25) over 173 career NHL games for Buffalo.

In 121 collegiate games during a three-year career at Providence College, he totaled 73 points on 11 goals and 62 assists. In his final season with the Friars, he earned Hockey East Second Team All-Star honors after recording 28 points (4+24) in 42 games and serving as a team captain.

As a senior, Bryson set career-highs in both assists (24) and points (28), both of which topped the club's defensemen, and ranked second and third overall, respectively. He also recorded an assist in all three NCAA Tournament games to help lead his team to a Frozen Four appearance and was the recipient of Hockey East's Len Ceglarski Sportsmanship Award for the second straight year in 2019.



SCORING IN BUNCHES

The Amerks come into the week with the AHL's sixth-best offense, averaging 3.39 goals per game through their first 23 games of the season. Their 78 goals are tied for 12th-most in the AHL.

Rochester has put up at least four goals in 10 of its first 23 games, including six outings with five goals or more.

The Amerks are a perfect 6-0-0-0 this season when scoring five goals in a game. Rochester is fourth in the AHL with 27 first-period tallies this season.

WORKING OVERTIME

Last Friday's overtime win in Hartford was the fifth game over the last nine for Rochester that went beyond regulation, which includes two shootout decisions this month. Overall, the Amerks have gone to extra time on 10 different occasions this season, including each of the first three games of the campaign.

Never before in the near 68-year history of the franchise have the Amerks opened a season with three consecutive overtime contests.

Rochester is the only team in the league with 10 games decided beyond regulation this season. Dating back to last season, 18 of Rochester's previous 36 regular-season games have required overtime to determine a winner.



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A (JOB)ST WELL DONE

Mason Jobst is making the most with the Amerks as the fifth-year pro is in the process of duplicating his career year from 2022-23.

Through 19 games this season, the Speedway, Indiana, native has already scored half as many goals (7) from his career-high 38-point campaign last season when he notched 14 goals and 24 assists in 61 games.

Jobst reached the 30-point plateau for the first time in his pro career last season, being one of 10 different Amerks to eclipse the mark. He also was one of 10 to score double figures in goals as he finished with a person-best 14 in 61 games.

Since the turn of the New Year, Jobst has amassed 18 goals and 39 points over his previous 56 games, which includes two hat tricks, both of which have come on home ice. He comes into tonight with eight goals and 12 assists over his previous 27 contests and has only been held with a point in back-to-back appearances just three over that span.

Jobst has totaled 65 points (25+40) in 107 career games with the Amerks dating back to the 2021-22 season.

TOKARSKI AMONG ELITE COMPANY

Veteran goaltender **Dustin Tokarski**, who missed the first eight games of the season due to an injury he sustained in training camp, made his season debut back on Nov. 3 against Utica.

In doing so, the two-time Calder Cup winner and AHL All-Star became just the 18th goaltender in league history to play in 400 career games, a list that also includes former Amerks Bobby Perreault (512), Michael Leighton (507), Drew MacIntyre (440) and Ed Chadwick (417).

Tokarski, who's in his second stint with the Amerks and 10th different AHL franchise, went 1-1-0 during a brief two-game stint with Rochester as part of the COVID-shortened 2020-21 campaign. He went 12-20-7 in 42 appearances with the Buffalo Sabres from 2021-23.

Currently in his 15th season, he joins Marcel Paille and Michael Leighton as the only goaltenders all-time to play at least 15 seasons in the AHL.

Tokarski, who's 4-4-1 in his first nine starts, surpassed the 10,000-save mark for his AHL career following a 31-save effort against Utica on Nov. 10. He also reached the 12,000-save mark for his pro career the week prior when he made his season debut against the Comets.

Entering this week, the 34-year-old Tokarski is two wins away from tying Nick Damore for 12th all-time in career wins (208). He also ranks 18th all-time in games played (408) and will tie Yann Danis for eighth all-time with his next shutout.

In addition to being a two-time Calder Cup winner (2012, 2019), Tokarski won a Memorial Cup with Spokane in 2008 followed by a gold medal with Canada at the 2009 World Junior Championship.

Tokarski has reached the 20-win mark five times over his 15-year pro career, including a career-best 32 wins in 2011-12 when he backstopped the Norfolk Admirals to a professional hockey record of 28 straight wins while leading the club to its and only Calder Cup.

AMERKS-MONSTERS 2023-24 SEASON SERIES BREAKDOWN

ROCHESTER

SKATER	GP	G	A	PTS	PIM	+/-
Isak Rosen	2	2	2	4	2	3
Brandon Biro	2	2	0	2	0	1
Michael Mersch	2	0	0	2	0	-2
Ethan Prow	2	0	0	2	0	1

GOALTENDER

GP	REC	GA	SV%	GAA	
Dustin Tokarski	2	1-1-0	7	.868	3.55

CLEVELAND

SKATER	GP	G	A	PTS	PIM	+/-
Tyler Angle	2	1	4	5	0	2
Emil Bemstrom	2	3	0	3	0	2
Brendan Gaunce	2	1	2	3	4	-1
Marcus Bjork	2	1	1	2	2	2

GOALTENDER

GP	REC	GA	SV%	GAA	
Jet Greaves	2	1-1-0	6	.880	3.04

2023-24 SERIES BREAKDOWN VS. CLEVELAND

Date	Result	Score	SF-SA	PP	PK
Nov. 16	L	2-0	27-22	0-5	2-3
Nov. 18	W	7-5	24-31	1-4	1-2

SERIES NOTABLES

The Amerks and Monsters played in a combined 38 games last season decided beyond regulation, including three of the last eight meetings between the two teams. The Amerks went 7-6 in overtime and 4-3 in the shootout while the Monsters showed a 6-5 mark in the extra frame and 5-2 in the skills competition, respectively.

In the 2022-23 season series finale between the two teams in Rochester on April 15, **Filip Cederqvist** recorded a natural hat trick in a span of 4:45, including a pair of goals in nine seconds in the opening minute of the second period.

Amerks forward **Justin Richards** spent the 2022-23 campaign with the Monsters, recording 39 points (10+29) in 61 games. He also made his NHL debut with the Columbus Blue Jackets, recording one assist in two games.

Last Saturday's game marked head coach **Seth Appert's** 200th regular-season game as Rochester's bench boss. Since the start of the 2020-21 campaign, Appert has guided the Amerks a 96-79-17-8 record as well as two straight playoff appearances, which includes a trip to the Eastern Conference Finals in 2022.

He became just the seventh head coach in franchise history to reach the mark. He's also four wins away from 100 career coaching victories, a list that also includes only six others before him.



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