

# ROCHESTER AMERICANS HOCKEY CLUB

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

Friday | **Dec. 22, 2023** | 7:05 PM ET | Blue Cross Arena | AHL Game 411 | AHL TV, The Fan Rochester, CW Rochester



# GAME NOTES



## TONIGHT'S GAME OVERVIEW

The Rochester Americans (12-8-2-1) play their final home game prior to the annual Christmas break tonight when they welcome the Providence Bruins (13-11-2-2) to The Blue Cross Arena for the only time this season. Game time 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 matchup will also be televised live on CW Rochester.

The Amerks and Bruins will meet twice during the 2023-24 season with tonight being the only get-together in Rochester.

Following tonight's contest, the two clubs will remain idle until the Amerks make their lone visit to Amica Mutual Pavilion later this season on April 6.

## HEAD-TO-HEAD RESULTS AGAINST PROVIDENCE

Tonight is just the 17th meeting between the Amerks and the Bruins over the last 14 years. Dating back to the 2007-08 campaign, Rochester has gone 5-8-2-1 during that span, including earning five out of a six possible points in last three meetings with Providence. During the 2022-23 season-series, the Amerks posted a 2-0-0-0 mark and outscored the Bruins 9-4 over that span.

The Amerks are 1-2-1-1 in their last four visits to Providence compared to a 3-1-0-0 mark on home ice in the last five years.

Dating back to the 2007-08 season, there have been 10 one-goal games between Providence and Rochester, including a 4-3 overtime win for the Amerks in the first get-together last season on Nov. 23.

## LAST TIME OUT

Forwards **Brandon Biro** and **Lukas Rousek** (1+1) each recorded a multi-point effort, but the Amerks fell 5-3 to the North Division-leading Cleveland Monsters Wednesday night at The Blue Cross Arena.

While Biro and Rousek both notched a goal and an assist, **Brendan Warren**, who missed the previous 16 games due to an injury, scored his second goal of the campaign in his return to the lineup. Former Monster **Justin Richards**, **Viktor Neuchev** and **Brett Murray** all each recorded a helper for Rochester, which fell to 1-2-0-0 against Cleveland this season.

Goaltender **Dustin Tokarski** (4-5-1) made 26 saves in his 10th appearance of the year.

## 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 27 points this season. Davies' four goals are tied for 18th-most amongst all blueliners.

Davies, who scored a career-high 11 goals last season, including three game-winning tallies, ranks 11th amongst all defensemen with 58 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 23 games this season, never going more than three straight games without a point.

Clague, meanwhile, is tied for 17th among all rearguards with 12 assists in 22 games. Clague opened the campaign with three multi-point performances and enters the weekend with assists in four of his last nine games.

## 2023-24 AMERKS OVERALL SCORING & GOALTENDING LEADERS

SKATER	GP	G	A	PTS	+/-	PIM
Jiri Kulich	23	16	6	22	0	8
Isak Rosen	20	8	12	20	3	4
Brandon Biro	15	8	8	16	3	10
Mason Jobst	20	7	7	14	-9	8

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	10	4-5-1	297	.889	3.68

\*=Currently on recall with Buffalo

## 2023-24 BRUINS OVERALL SCORING & GOALTENDING LEADERS

SKATER	GP	G	A	PTS	+/-	PIM
Georgii Merkulov	28	11	14	25	-2	6
John Farinacci	28	6	14	20	8	2
Justin Brazeau	28	9	9	18	10	6
Fabian Lysell	24	7	10	17	-1	14

GOALTENDER	GP	REC	SVS	SV%	GAA
Michael DiPietro	10	6-4-0	256	.918	2.46
Brandon Bussi	17	7-6-3	447	.901	2.94
Kyle Keyser	2	0-1-1	48	.842	4.41

## 2023-24 HEAD-TO-HEAD BREAKDOWN

Providence Bruins	Rochester Americans
13-11-2-2	<b>Record</b> 12-9-2-1
5-5-1-2	<b>Home Record</b> 5-3-2-0
8-6-1-0	<b>Road Record</b> 7-6-0-1
6-3-1-0	<b>Last 10 Games</b> 4-5-0-1
2-2	<b>Overtime Record</b> 5-2
0-2	<b>Shootout Record</b> 2-1
8-4-1-2	<b>Record When Scoring First</b> 6-3-0-1
2.96 (T-21th)	<b>Goals-For Per Game</b> 3.38 (6th)
3.14 (20th)	<b>Goals-Against Per Game</b> 4.04 (31st)
15.9% (23rd)	<b>Power-Play</b> 22.5% (6th)
74.0% (31st)	<b>Penalty Kill</b> 73.9% (32nd)
Dec. 20 @ TOR (7-3 L)	<b>Last Game</b> Dec. 20 vs CLE (5-3 L)
Dec. 23 @ HER	<b>Next Game</b> Dec. 23 @ SYR
Ryan Mougengel (3rd)	<b>Head Coach</b> Seth Appert (4th)



ROCHESTER AMERICANS | MEDIA RELATIONS DEPARTMENT

@AMERKSPR | @AMERKSHOCKEY

Warren Kosel | Senior Director of Public & Media Relations | 1.585.286.9928

Ryan Harr | Public & Media Relations Coordinator | 1.585.286.9940



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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 recent three-game road trip last week, taking over the league's goal-scoring lead with 16 in just 23 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, has been officially reassigned to Czechia's national junior team ahead of the 2024 World Junior Championship. The annual event is scheduled to get underway Tuesday, Dec. 26 in Sweden.

With seven points over his last seven 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 last 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 20 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 169 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 Tuesday 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 made his Amerks season debut on Wednesday, and has totaled 30 points (4+26) in 67 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 3.38 goals per game through their first 24 games of the season. Their 81 goals are tied for 11th-most in the AHL.

Rochester has put up at least four goals in 10 of its first 24 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 third in the AHL with 28 first-period tallies this season.

## WORKING OVERTIME

Last Friday's overtime win in Hartford was the fifth game over the last 10 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 37 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 20 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 57 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 28 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 4-5-1 in his first 10 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 (211). He also ranks 18th all-time in games played (409) 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-BRUINS 2022-23 SEASON SERIES BREAKDOWN

### ROCHESTER

SKATER	GP	G	A	PTS	PIM	+/-
Linus Weissbach	1	1	1	2	0	1
Michael Mersch	1	1	0	1	0	0
Brett Murray	1	2	0	2	0	1
Mason Jobst	1	0	1	1	0	1

### GOALTENDER

	GP	REC	GA	SV%	GAA
Malcolm Subban	1	1-0-0	1	.976	1.00
Michael Houser	1	1-0-0	3	.912	2.77

### PROVIDENCE

SKATER	GP	G	A	PTS	PIM	+/-
Samuel Asselin	2	1	1	2	0	2
John Beecher	2	1	1	2	0	2
Mike Reilly	2	0	2	2	2	2
Fabian Lysell	2	1	0	1	0	-3

### GOALTENDER

	GP	REC	GA	SV%	GAA
Brandon Bussi	2	0-0-1	5	.918	2.64
Kyle Keyser	1	0-1-0	4	.429	20.96

## 2022-23 SERIES BREAKDOWN VS. PROVIDENCE

Date	Result	Score	SF-SA	PP	PK
Nov. 23	OTW	4-3	46-34	1-3	3-3
Nov. 23	W	5-1	22-42	0-3	2-2

## SERIES NOTABLES

**Linus Weissbach's** game-winning goal in the final seconds of overtime capped a wild third-period comeback as the Amerks scored three straight unanswered goals to erase a 3-1 deficit and stun the then league-leading Bruins with a 4-3 win in the first meeting of last season back on Nov. 23 at The Blue Cross Arena.

To close out the season-series between the two clubs on Feb. 26, Rochester jumped out to a 5-0 lead at the 16:31 mark of the second period before earning a 5-1 win. The Amerks used four first-period goals, including one 43 seconds into the contest.

**Linus Weissbach** (2+2) and **Michael Mersch** (0+4) led all scorers last season against Providence while **Brett Murray**, **Mason Jobst**, **Jiri Kulich**, and **Lukas Rousek** all finished with two points each.

Last Saturday's game against Wilkes-Barre/Scranton 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 96-80-17-8 record as well as two straight playoff appearances, which included a trip to the Eastern Conference Finals in 2023.

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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