

ROCHESTER AMERICANS HOCKEY CLUB

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

Sun. | **March 10, 2024** | 4:05 PM ET | The Blue Cross Arena | AHL Game 889 | AHL TV, The Fan Rochester



GAME NOTES



TODAY'S GAME OVERVIEW

The Rochester Americans (25-21-6-2) conclude their only three-in-three weekend of the season today with an afternoon matinee against the Utica Comets (24-22-4-4) at The Blue Cross Arena. The 4:05 p.m. contest will be carried live on The Sports Leader 95.7 FM/950 AM The Fan Rochester as well as AHLTV.

The Amerks have recorded at least one point in 14 of their last 21 games dating back to Jan. 17. Friday was Rochester's 19th contest this season decided beyond regulation, which is most in the AHL.

With a 3-2 win last night, the Comets come into the matchup with points in four straight games, going 3-0-1-0. Utica sits in sixth place in the North Division standings but has at least one game in hand on each team.

SEASON SERIES SNAPSHOT

Rochester has won 10 of the previous 11 games on the road against the Comets, the only exception being a 6-0 loss on Nov. 11. The Amerks maintain a 5-3-1-0 record through the first nine games of the season-series.

The Amerks boast a 13-10-1-1 record in Utica over the past five seasons while also showing an almost identical 12-11-1-1 mark in the Flower City.

The Amerks have scored at least one power-play goal in 22 of the 42 games (31-for-140) against Utica since **Seth Appert** took over as head coach.

After today's contest, the intrastate rivals will meet twice more times prior to season's end with one coming in each team's home arena.

LAST TIME OUT

Michael Mersch and **Brandon Biro** helped the Amerks grab a 2-1 lead, but the Syracuse Crunch countered with three unanswered goals to claim a 4-2 win in Saturday's rematch between at Upstate Medical University Arena.

Viktor Neuchev (0+2) recorded two assists for the Amerks while Mersch scored his 10th goal of the season, Biro notched his 30th point via his 13th tally. **Zach Metsa** pushed his point streak to a career-high four games as he tallied an assist while **Mason Jobst** was also credited with a helper

Goaltender **Dustin Tokarski** (7-8-3) made his 19th appearance of the season and first start since Feb. 23. The veteran netminder stopped 30 of the 33 shots he faced but took the defeat.

THE BEST OFFENSE IS A GOOD DEFENSE

Jeremy Davies and **Kale Clague** are among the AHL's top scoring defensemen, having combined for 11 goals and 45 points this season.

Davies, who had points in three straight games for the second time this season since closing out the month of October on a five-game point streak, scored his eighth goal of the year in Rochester's 2-1 overtime win at Toronto last month. He enters tonight tied for 10th in goals by a defenseman and remains on pace to match the career-high 11 he scored last season. He's never gone more than four straight games without a point.

Currently on recall with the Buffalo Sabres, Clague is tied for 30th among all blueliners with 20 assists. With two assists at Utica back on Feb. 14, he has reached the 20-assist mark for the second time in his career and has eclipsed the 20-point mark for the third time since his rookie campaign.

2023-24 AMERKS OVERALL SCORING & GOALTENDING LEADERS

SKATER	GP	G	A	PTS	+/-	PIM
Lukas Rousek*	48	10	28	38	-8	14
Mason Jobst	47	16	19	35	-9	34
Isak Rosen	51	13	20	33	-5	10
Brandon Biro	44	13	17	30	-4	24

GOALTENDER	GP	REC	SVS	SV%	GAA
Devon Levi	16	8-5-3	497	.924	2.55
Dustin Tokarski	19	7-8-3	511	.893	3.31

*=Currently on recall with Buffalo (NHL)

2023-24 COMETS OVERALL SCORING & GOALTENDING LEADERS

SKATER	GP	G	A	PTS	+/-	PIM
Graeme Clarke	52	20	20	40	4	20
Ryan Schmelzer	54	14	25	39	11	34
Xavier Parent	53	10	24	34	-13	43
Kyle Criscuolo	45	11	21	32	-2	15

GOALTENDER	GP	REC	SVS	SV%	GAA
Isaac Poulter	27	16-8-1	656	.912	2.54
Akira Schmid*	13	3-6-4	356	.886	3.47
Eric Källgren	15	4-5-3	306	.872	3.67

2023-24 HEAD-TO-HEAD BREAKDOWN

Utica Comets	Rochester Americans
24-22-4-4	Record 26-21-6-2
12-12-1-4	Home Record 11-11-3-1
12-10-3-0	Road Record 15-10-3-1
5-4-0-1	Last 10 Games 3-5-1-1
2-4	Overtime Record 8-6
1-4	Shootout Record 3-2
16-6-1-2	Record When Scoring First 16-6-4-1
16.2% (T-26th)	Power-Play 17.7% (19th)
84.2 (T-5th)	Penalty Kill 78.6% (27th)
3.09 (T-13th)	Goals-For Per Game 3.09 (T-13th)
3.19 (22nd)	Goals-Against Per Game 3.51 (T-30th)
Mar. 9 vs BEL (2-1 W)	Last Game Mar. 9 @ SYR (4-2 L)
Mar. 13 @ BEL	Next Game Mar. 13 @ SYR
Kevin Dineen (3rd)	Head Coach 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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ROUSEK RACKING UP THE POINTS

Lukas Rousek has been one of the team's most consistent point-getters since the turn of 2024, having recorded points in 16 of 24 games in that stretch while also producing 22 points over his last 30 games since Dec. 20.

Rousek, a sixth-round selection (160th overall) by the Sabres in the 2019 NHL Draft, currently leads the team with 28 assists and 38 points while his 10 goals are tied for sixth. Among all Amerks who have appeared in at least 30 games, he is tops in points per game (0.79).

Also on recall with the big club, the AHL All-Star saw his career-long point streak come to an end on Jan. 26, stopping at 13 games. He totaled 14 points between Dec. 20 and Jan. 20, the second-longest point streak in the league behind only Toronto's Alex Steeves, who had a point in 16 straight games.

Rousek's point streak was the longest by an Amerk in 24 years since Hall of Famer **Domenic Pittis** had points in 14 straight contests from Jan. 22 to March 4 during the 1999-2000 campaign.

NEW YEAR, NEW NEUCHEV

After producing just five points in his first 23 games, rookie forward **Viktor Neuchev** has unsurprisingly emerged as Rochester's top scoring rookie through the start of March.

Dating back to Dec. 29 and the turn of the New Year, Neuchev has erupted for 15 points on five goals and 10 assists over his previous 19 games.

Neuchev has recorded at least one point in nine games over that span, including a season-long six-game point streak from Dec. 29 to Jan. 20 which saw him score three goals and record eight points.

Buffalo's third-round selection (74th overall) in 2022, Neuchev's most impressive performance of the season came back on Jan. 27, finding the back of the net for the third time in four games with the game-winning goal while also adding two assists in the 7-4 win over Laval. Since Jan. 5, Neuchev has recorded five multi-point games, which includes a pair of three-point efforts.

Of Neuchev's seven goals this season, five have been scored on home ice and three have come against Laval. Neuchev, who had a 40-goal season while playing for Russia's junior league during the 2021-22 campaign, currently leads all Amerks rookies with 21 points (7+14) and 58 shots in 41 games.



WORKING OVERTIME

The 4-3 overtime win against Syracuse Friday night was the fourth game over the last nine for Rochester that went beyond regulation, with three of the four producing a 2-1 score. Overall, the Amerks have gone to extra time on 19 different occasions, the most by any team this season, including each of the first three games of the campaign.

Five of the last 10 games against Syracuse have required extra time to determine a winner, including each of the three which saw the Crunch overcome a pair of 2-0 deficits before defeating Rochester in overtime on back-to-back nights.

Four of **Jiri Kulich's** team-high five game-winning goals this season have come by way of overtime while **Isak Rosen, Brandon Biro, Jeremy Davies, and Zach Metsa** have each netted the clinching goal during the extra frame.

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

Of Rochester's 12 games in February, five were decided past regulation. The club was 1-3 in overtime in the month and showed an 0-1 record in the shootout.

Dating back to Jan. 20 of last season, 29 of Rochester's previous 93 regular-season games have required overtime to determine a winner. Of the Amerks 42 wins during that same span, 16 have come following the end of regulation.

The Amerks show a 8-6 record in overtime this season and are 3-2 in the shootout. Rochester tied an AHL record with 29 overtime games in 2017-18, showing a 9-11 record in overtime and 3-6 in the shootout.

LEANING ON LEVI

Devon Levi has earned the start in 14 of the last 18 games since being reassigned to Rochester on Jan. 20, including five straight to open the month of February. He enters the weekend having won five of his last nine and seven of his last 12.

Levi, who boasts a 8-5-3 record in 16 appearances with the Amerks, totaled 130 saves on 136 shots he faced over his recent three-game win streak, boasting an impressive 1.95 goals-against average and a .956 save percentage over that span.

His career-high 52 saves in the Amerks overtime win at Toronto on Feb. 19 were the most by an Amerks goaltender since **Ukko-Pekka Luukkonen** had 54 in a 2-1 win at Syracuse on Feb. 25, 2022.

Levi, who ranks 14th among rookie netminders with a 2.55 goals-against average, has held the opposition to three or fewer goals in 12 of his 16 starts. He's 8-1-3 this season in those games.

Levi won the Mike Richter Award, given annually to the top goaltender in men's college hockey, for the second straight year following the 2022-23 season.

The only two-time winner in the award's history, Levi led the nation again with a .933 save percentage, and tied for third in both shutouts (6) and saves (1,183).



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TOKARSKI ON THE MOVE

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 7-8-3 in his first 19 appearances, 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 tonight, the 34-year-old Tokarski is only six wins away from tying Red Almas for 11th all-time in career wins (218). He's also one game away from tying Neil Little for 15th all-time (419) and will tie Yann Danis for eighth all-time on his next shutout.

A (JOB)ST WELL DONE

Amerks forward **Mason Jobst** enters tonight with 21 points (9+12) over his last 23 games, the most by an Amerk since the turn of the new year. Jobst, who appeared in his 200th professional game at Utica on Feb. 14, recorded a career-best three-assist outing on Feb. 16 against Wilkes-Barre/Scranton and followed that up by scoring goals in three straight games, including his career-high 16th goal of the season against Belleville on Feb. 23.

After closing out the 2022-23 campaign with career-highs in all offensive categories, the fifth-year forward has already surpassed his goal total in 18 fewer games this season. Jobst, who is the second Amerk this season to reach the 30-point mark, is second on the team in goals (16) and points (36) while his 20 assists are second-most amongst all Rochester forwards.

In 208 career games, all in the American Hockey League with Rochester, San Jose, Bridgeport, and Binghamton, the Ohio State product has notched 45 goals and 67 assists for 112 points.



AMERKS-COMETES 2023-24 SEASON SERIES BREAKDOWN

ROCHESTER

SKATER	GP	G	A	PTS	PIM	+/-
Kale Clague	6	2	4	6	0	-2
Lukas Rousek	8	0	6	6	4	1
Mason Jobst	6	3	2	5	0	-3

GOALTENDER

	GP	REC	GA	SV%	GAA
Devon Levi	1	1-0-0	2	.949	2.01
Dustin Tokarski	5	3-0-1	11	.903	2.56
Devin Cooley	3	0-3-0	15	.844	5.40

UTICA

SKATER	GP	G	A	PTS	PIM	+/-
Kyle Criscuolo	9	4	8	12	0	4
Graeme Clarke	9	3	6	9	0	3
Xavier Parent	9	3	6	9	11	-1

GOALTENDER

	GP	REC	GA	SV%	GAA
Akira Schmid	1	0-0-1	2	.938	1.85
Isaac Poulter	6	3-3-0	13	.921	2.44
Erik Källgren	3	1-1-0	10	.859	3.90

2023-24 SERIES BREAKDOWN VS. UTICA

Date	Result	Score	SF-SA	PP	PK
Oct. 28	W	5-4	28-18	1-3	0-1
Nov. 3	OTL	4-3	32-20	0-4	1-1
Nov. 10	W	4-3	34-34	0-2	4-4
Nov. 11	L	6-0	23-40	0-2	4-5
Dec. 30	SOW	3-2	33-30	0-4	5-6
Jan. 19	W	2-1	29-25	1-2	2-2
Jan. 26	L	4-0	32-28	0-3	1-1
Feb. 14	W	6-2	25-39	2-5	2-2
Feb. 18	L	7-3	33-33	0-3	3-4

SERIES NOTABLES

Amerks captain **Michael Mersch** enters tonight having played 203 games with Rochester since joining the club during the 2020-21 campaign. Mersch, who has 145 points (61+84) with the Amerks, became the 58th forward in franchise history to skate in at least 200 games back on March 1 at Belleville. With goal last night, it marks the ninth time Mersch has recorded double figures in his career where he has skated in at least 30 games.

Should **Brett Murray** appear in today's game, he would become the 36th forward in Amerks team history to skate in 250 or more games. Since the start of the 2019-20 season, Murray has recorded 152 points (70+82).

Both Rochester (12-5-2-1) and Utica (12-3-1-1) come into the matchup sporting nearly identical winning records when leading after the first period. The Comets are a 16-1-1-3 this season when carrying a lead into the second period while the Amerks remain a perfect 15-0-0-1 in that regard.

The Amerks (19) top the league with games decided beyond regulation while Utica (11) has also appeared in double digit games in overtime this season.

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