

# ROCHESTER AMERICANS HOCKEY CLUB

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

Wed. | **March 13, 2024** | 7:00 PM ET | Upstate Medical Univ. Arena | AHL Game 901 | AHL TV, The Fan Rochester



# GAME NOTES



## TONIGHT'S GAME OVERVIEW

The Rochester Americans (26-21-6-2) embark on another three-game week tonight as they return to Upstate Medical University Arena for an intrastate showdown with the Syracuse Crunch (33-17-4-2) at 7 p.m. The North Division matchup will be carried live on The Sports Leader 95.7 FM/950 AM The Fan Rochester as well as AHLTV.

The Amerks, who have points in 15 of their last 22 games dating back to Jan. 17, currently trail the second-place Crunch by 10 points in the AHL's North Division standings.

Winners in five of its last six, Syracuse comes into the matchup riding a season-long six-game point streak, going 5-0-1-0 over that span. It's the fourth straight season the Crunch have posted a six-game point streak.

## SEASON SERIES SNAPSHOT

The season series has favored the visiting team as seven of the first 10 meetings thus far has been won by the road team and six of the 10 have been one-goal decisions.

The Amerks have scored at least one power-play goal in 27 of their 46 games (37-for-164) against Syracuse since **Seth Appert** took over as head coach prior to the 2020-21 season.

Forwards **Brandon Biro** (3+4) and **Isak Rosen** (2+4) both have seven points opposite the Crunch. Veteran netminder **Dustin Tokarski** posted back-to-back road wins against his former team while **Devon Levi** shows a 1-2-2 mark against Syracuse in his first five appearances.

## LAST TIME OUT

The Amerks seized a two-goal lead before **Brendan Warren** scored the game-winner in 3-2 victory over the Utica Comets in the weekend finale between the intrastate rivals Sunday afternoon at The Blue Cross Arena.

**Viktor Neuchev** opened the scoring before **Brett Murray** tallied his 15th in the opening frame. Warren (1+0) notched his first game-winning marker of the slate while **Brandon Biro**, **Jiri Kulich**, **Justin Richards**, **Mason Jobst** and **Calle Själín**, who made his debut, all added an assist.

Goaltender **Devon Levi** (9-7-5) made his 15th start in the last 18 games since being reassigned to Rochester on Jan. 20. The rookie netminder has held the opposition to three or fewer goals in 13 of his 17 starts.

## THE BEST OFFENSE IS A GOOD DEFENSE

**Jeremy Davies**, who scored his eighth goal of the year in Rochester's 2-1 overtime win at Toronto last month, enters the week tied for 11th in goals by a defenseman and remains on pace to match the career-high 11 he scored last season.

With two assists at Utica back on Feb. 14, **Kale Clague**, who's currently on recall with the Buffalo Sabres, 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. Clague is one point away from reaching 100 career points.

Coming off a season-long four-game point streak, **Zach Metsa** is tied for 11th in scoring amongst all rookie defensemen with 17 points (5+12) while his five goals are tied for eighth-most.

## 2023-24 AMERKS OVERALL SCORING & GOALTENDING LEADERS

SKATER	GP	G	A	PTS	+/-	PIM
Lukas Rousek*	48	10	28	38	-8	14
Mason Jobst	48	16	21	37	-8	34
Isak Rosen	52	13	20	33	-5	10
Brandon Biro	45	13	18	31	-4	24

GOALTENDER	GP	REC	SVS	SV%	GAA
Devon Levi	17	9-5-3	530	.925	2.52
Dustin Tokarski	19	7-8-3	511	.893	3.31

\*=Currently on recall with Buffalo (NHL)

## 2023-24 CRUNCH OVERALL SCORING & GOALTENDING LEADERS

SKATER	GP	G	A	PTS	+/-	PIM
Gage Goncalves	54	10	37	47	-5	24
Cole Koepke	42	15	15	30	8	10
Gabriel Dumont	47	14	14	28	-5	53
Felix Robert	40	11	17	28	6	24

GOALTENDER	GP	REC	SVS	SV%	GAA
Hugo Alnefelt	24	13-6-4	550	.911	2.29
Matt Tompkins	24	13-9-2	562	.898	2.66

\*=Currently on recall with Tampa Bay (NHL)

## 2023-24 HEAD-TO-HEAD BREAKDOWN

Syracuse Crunch	Rochester Americans
33-17-4-2	<b>Record</b> .....27-21-6-2
15-8-3-1	<b>Home Record</b> .....12-11-3-1
18-9-1-1	<b>Road Record</b> ..... 15-10-3-1
7-2-1-0	<b>Last 10 Games</b> .....4-4-1-1
6-4	<b>Overtime Record</b> ..... 8-6
2-2	<b>Shootout Record</b> ..... 3-2
27-4-2-1	<b>Record When Scoring First</b> .....17-6-4-1
19.1% (15th)	<b>Power-Play</b> ..... 18.2% (18th)
85.0 (2nd)	<b>Penalty Kill</b> .....78.8% (T-26th)
3.13 (T-11th)	<b>Goals-For Per Game</b> .....3.09 (T-14th)
2.71 (6th)	<b>Goals-Against Per Game</b> ..... 3.48 (T-28th)
Mar. 9 vs ROC (4-2 W)	<b>Last Game</b> ..... Mar. 10 vs UTC (3-2 W)
Mar. 15 vs BEL	<b>Next Game</b> .....Mar. 15 vs TOR
Joel Bouchard (1st)	<b>Head Coach</b> .....Seth Appert (4th)



## ROCHESTER AMERICANS | MEDIA RELATIONS DEPARTMENT

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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 16 points on six goals and 10 assists over his previous 20 games.

Neuchev has recorded at least one point in 10 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 eight goals this season, six 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 22 points (8+14) and 60 shots in 42 games.



## WORKING OVERTIME

The 4-3 overtime win against Syracuse this past Friday was the fourth game over the last 10 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 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 94 regular-season games have required overtime to determine a winner. Of the Amerks 43 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 15 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 week having won three of his last four and six of his last 10 dating back to Feb. 14.

Levi, who boasts a 9-5-3 record in 17 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 12th among rookie netminders with a 2.52 goals-against average, has held the opposition to three or fewer goals in 13 of his 17 starts. He's 9-2-3 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

Forward **Mason Jobst** enters the contest with 22 points (9+13) over his last 24 games, the most by an Amerk since the turn of the new year. Jobst, who hasn't gone more than one game without a point over that span, 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 (37) while his 21 assists are second-most amongst all Rochester forwards.

In 209 career games, all in the American Hockey League with Rochester, San Jose, Bridgeport, and Binghamton, the Ohio State product has notched 45 goals and 68 assists for 113 points.



## AMERKS-CRUNCH 2023-24 SEASON SERIES BREAKDOWN

### ROCHESTER

SKATER	GP	G	A	PTS	PIM	+/-
Brandon Biro	8	3	4	7	4	-2
Isak Rosen	10	2	5	7	2	-5
Brett Murray	9	4	2	6	0	-6

### GOALTENDER

	GP	REC	GA	SV%	GAA
Dustin Tokarski	4	2-2-0	12	.900	2.98
Devon Levi	5	1-2-2	15	.887	3.03
Michael Houser	1	0-0-0	1	.800	5.03
Devin Cooley	1	0-1-0	6	.778	7.49

### SYRACUSE

SKATER	GP	G	A	PTS	PIM	+/-
Gage Goncalves	10	2	9	11	0	4
Cole Koepke	10	3	5	8	2	7
Declan Carlile	10	0	8	8	2	3

### GOALTENDER

	GP	REC	GA	SV%	GAA
Hugo Alnefelt	4	3-0-1	9	.899	2.21
Matt Tomkins	5	3-0-2	12	.900	2.37

## 2023-24 SERIES BREAKDOWN VS. SYRACUSE

Date	Result	Score	SF-SA	PP	PK
Nov. 1	L	7-2	21-32	0-3	1-3
Nov. 4	SOW	5-4	23-46	1-2	4-4
Dec. 23	OTW	3-2	31-26	1-4	3-3
Dec. 27	L	3-1	23-15	0-1	1-1
Jan. 31	L	2-1	23-18	0-4	2-2
Feb. 9	OTL	3-2	21-25	1-4	3-3
Feb. 10	OTL	3-2	25-36	1-4	2-2
Feb. 28	L	5-2	19-32	0-5	1-1
Mar. 8	OTW	4-3	26-23	1-4	2-2
Mar. 9	L	4-2	19-34	0-2	1-3

## SERIES NOTABLES

Amerks captain **Michael Mersch** enters tonight having played 204 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.

**Brett Murray** became the 36th forward in team history to skate in 250 or more games this past Sunday against Utica.

Amerks goaltender **Dustin Tokarski** spent the 2012-13 season with the Crunch, going 18-8-4 with a 2.46 goals-against average over 33 contests.

Rochester defenseman **Riley Stillman** recorded three assists in five games for Syracuse during the COVID-shortened 2020-21 campaign.

Crunch defenseman Devante Stephens, who was originally a fifth-round selection (122nd overall) of the Buffalo Sabres in the 2015 NHL Draft, played seven games with the Amerks over parts of two seasons (2017-19).



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