Fri. | November 22, 2024 | 7:05 PM | Blue Cross Arena | AHL Game 235 | AHLTV on FloHockey, The Fan Rochester

ROCHESTER AMERICANS
GAME NOTES
Blue Cross Arena at the Rochester War Memorial | 1 War Memorial Square | Rochester, NY, 14614 | Amerks.com/Media | @AmerksPR

HERSHEY BEARS **VS** Americans

TONIGHT'S GAME OVERVIEW

The oldest rivalry in the AHL will be renewed tonight when the Rochester Americans (8-5-2-0) open a four-game homestand against the two-time defending Calder Cup champion Hershey Bears (11-4-2-0) for the only time this season at The Blue Cross Arena. The matchup will be the 467th all-time regular-season meeting between the league's two cornerstone franchises.

Following tonight's contest, the two clubs will remain idle until after the new year as Rochester will close out its first of four three-in-three weekends on Sunday, Jan. 19 at Giant Center.

The Bears, who have claimed each of the last two Calder Cup Championships, are third in the league in both wins (11) and points (24) while they have scored 58 goals through 17 games, which is good for second-most. Hershey is one of three teams in the league without a regulation loss on the road this season as they boast a 6-0-1-0 mark.

HEAD-TO-HEAD RESULTS AGAINST THE BEARS

While Rochester is seeking its first regulation win against Hershey since Dec. 19, 2021, the club has earned at least one point in two of the last four games as they hold a 0-2-1-1 mark during that stretch.

The Amerks have collected at least one point in seven of their last 15 games against Hershey overall, going 5-8-2-0 over that span dating back to the start of the 2016-17 campaign.

The Amerks have posted an even record or better against Hershey in each of last six seasons dating back to the 2017-18 season and have not suffered back-to-back regulation losses during that span.

Rochester returns four of seven players who recorded at one point in the head-to-head series with Hershey from last season. Forwards **Mason Jobst**, **Viktor Neuchev**, **Lukas Rousek** and **Brett Murray** all tallied an assist in two appearances last season while **Isak Rosén**, who is currently on recall with the parent Buffalo Sabres, scored once. Goaltender **Devon Levi** stopped 37 of 39 shots he faced but suffered the overtime defeat in his only appearance against Hershey back on Feb. 24, 2024.

Both teams have nearly identical records when leading after the second period: Rochester is 6-0-1-0 while Hershey is 8-0-1-0 in that regard.

LAST TIME OUT

A goaltending duel between **Devon Levi** and Jakub Dobeš ultimately ended in favor of the Amerks, who prevailed with a thrilling 2-1 victory over the first-place Laval Rocket after **Lukas Rousek** sealed the win in the final minute of overtime Wednesday night at Place Bell.

With the win, Rochester has earned at least one point in nine of its last 11 games dating back to Oct. 23. Additionally, the Amerks have picked up at least one point in 17 of their 23 road games in Laval, going 15-6-2-0 over that span.

Along with Rousek's overtime goal from **Ty Tullio**, **Brett Murray** notched his fourth of the season on the power-play during the opening frame from **Josh Dunne** and **Zachary Metsa**. **Riley Fiddler-Schultz** registered a pair of shots in his season debut.

Levi (1-0-0) also made his season debut for Rochester, stopping 26 of the 27 shots he faced to earn the win. He has held the opposition to three or fewer goals in all but four of his 27 appearances with Rochester dating back to the 2023-24 season and boasts a 17-2-4 record in those games.

2024-25 AMERKS OVERALL SCORING & GOALTENDING LEADERS

SKATER	GP	G	A	PTS	+/-	PIM
Isak Rosén*	14	4	9	13	-2	2
Zachary Metsa	15	1	10	11	2	6
Brett Murray	15	4	6	10	-2	2

GOALTENDER	GP	REC	SVS	SV%	GAA
Devon Levi	1	1-0-0	26	.963	0.94
Felix Sandström	6	3-2-1	126	.906	2.35
Michael Houser	9	4-3-1	200	.897	2.69

=Currently with Buffalo (NHL)

2024-25 BEARS OVERALL SCORING & GOALTENDING LEADERS

SKATER	GP	G	A	PTS	+/-	PIM
Ethen Frank	17	11	5	16	3	6
Ivan Miroshnichenko*	16	7	7	14	-1	8
Alex Limoges	15	3	9	12	-4	2

GOALTENDER	GP	REC	SVS	SV%	GAA
Hunter Shepard	12	9-2-1	297	.914	2.33
Clay Stevenson	4	1-2-1	101	.863	4.01

=Currently on recall with Washington

2024-25 HEAD-TO-HEAD BREAKDOWN

Hershey Bears		Rochester Americans
11-4-2-0	**Record**	8-5-2-0
6-3-1-0	**Last 10 Games**	6-2-2-0
5-4-1-0	**Home Record**	2-3-1-0
6-0-1-0	**Road Record**	6-2-1-0
1-2	**Overtime Record**	1-2
1-0	**Shootout Record**	2-0
7-5-1-1	**Record When Scoring First**	5-4-1-0
19.4% (T-9th)	**Power-Play**	14.9% (T-25th)
85.2% (7th)	**Penalty Kill**	83.3% (14th)
Nov. 20 @ TOR (4-3 OTL)	**Last Game**	Nov. 20 @ LAV (2-1 W)
Todd Nelson (3rd)	**Head Coach**	Michael Leone (1st)

2023-24 SERIES BREAKDOWN VS. HERSHEY

Date	Result	Score	SF-SA	PP	PK
Dec. 29	L	4-2	34-28	1-3	1-2
Feb. 24	OTL	2-1	25-39	1-7	4-4

LEVI LOANED TO ROCHESTER

Goaltender **Devon Levi** was reassigned by the Sabres earlier this week after starting the season in Buffalo before making his Amerks debut Wednesday.

The 22-year old netminder split his first full rookie season between Buffalo and Rochester in 2023-24 by combining to post a 26-14-6 mark in 49 appearances. The Quebec native also showed a 2-3 record in five Calder Cup Playoffs with the Amerks.

In Game 3 of the North Division Semifinals against Syracuse, Levi turned aside 60 of 62 shots he faced in the double-overtime victory. Levi was the first Amerks goaltender to make 21 or more saves in a single period during a Calder Cup Playoff game since **Tyler Plante** stopped all 23 shots he faced on April 21, 2010 against Abbotsford.

Levi, who showed a 16-6-4 record in 26 appearances with the Amerks, held the opposition to three or fewer goals in each game over a six-game win streak between March and April 6. He totaled 188 saves on 201 shots while boasting an impressive 2.17 goals-against average and a .935 save percentage over that span.

Levi earned the start in 24 of the last 34 games with Rochester since being reassigned on Jan. 20, including five straight to open February. He won nine of his last 11 starts and 11 of 13 dating back to the start of March.

His career-high 52-save performance 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 finished the season tied for fourth among all rookie netminders with a .927 save percentage, has held the opposition to three or fewer goals in all but four of his 27 appearances. He boasts a record 17-2-4 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. Levi is the only two-time winner in the award's history.

He led the nation again with a .933 save percentage, one year after he set the second-best mark in NCAA history with a .952 save percentage. He tied for third in the nation in both shutouts (6) and saves (1,183). Levi's 16-career shutouts are a Northeastern University school record.

In his two seasons at Northeastern, Levi finished with a 38-22-6 record. His resume includes a Beanpot title, a Hockey East regular-season championship and an NCAA tournament appearance. Levi was also named Hockey East Player of the Year for the second consecutive season in 2022-23 and was one of 10 finalists for the Hobey Baker Award.

NO METSA'IN AROUND

Second-year defenseman **Zachary Metsa** enters the weekend second on the team in scoring and first amongst all Rochester's blueliners with 11 points (1+10) through his first 15 games.

Metsa has points in six of his last 11 games, which included stringing together consecutive multi-point games for the first time in his career, logging five assists in that span and punctuated by a three-assist effort in the win over Hartford on Nov. 8.

The second-year blueliner's 11 points tie him for sixth-most in league scoring by a defenseman.

Last season, the Delafield, Wisconsin, native logged seven goals and 24 points and was named the team's co-Rookie of the Year with Viktor Neuchev.

Metsa, who captained Quinnipiac University to its first-ever NCAA National Championship in 2023, is also tied for first amongst all AHL defensemen with 10 assists, five of which have come on the power-play.

SCOUTING THE BEARS

Twenty players on this season's roster have their names on the Calder Cup from last June's championship with Herhsey. Two highly touted pieces are missing, however, as Bears captain Dylan McIlrath and 2024 Playoff MVP Hendrix Lapierre each earned promotions to the Washington Capitals. Of that group of 20, eight players also were members of the 2023 Cup win.

Additionally, the team's coaching staff, headed by five-time champion and former Amerk Todd Nelson, remains in place behind the bench. Nelson owns the distinction of being just the third person in AHL history to win a Calder Cup as a player (1994, Portland), assistant coach (2008, Chicago) and head coach (2017, Grand Rapids, 2023 and 2024, Hershey).

The Bears can become the first team to win the Calder Cup three consecutive times since the Springfield Indians did so in 1960, 1961 and 1962.

Hershey comes to Rochester fueled by forward Ethan Frank's team-leading 11 goals and 16 points in 17 games. After starting the year with a hat trick against Cleveland, the AHL All-Star has been held without a point in six of his 17 appearances while recording a shot in all but two contests this season. In 143 games at the AHL level, all with the Bears, Frank has tallied 71 goals and 42 assists for 113 points since the start of the 2021-22.