



ROCHESTER AMERICANS

DAILY PRESS CLIPS

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TONIGHT'S GAME: Binghamton @ Rochester

Blue Jackets show how winning in the minors can create a culture shift

Buffalo News

By: Amy Moritz

Justin Falk smiles when remember that season. It was two years ago when he was with the Lake Erie Monsters, the American Hockey League affiliate of the Columbus Blue Jackets. While Falk split his season between the clubs, he was part of the Cleveland-based team's run to win the Calder Cup in 2016.

That run to a championship has made all the difference. For the Blue Jackets. Because playing in the postseason has its advantages, particularly when trying to build a winning culture throughout an organization.

"Any chance you get to play in a playoff-type atmosphere, those games are different," said Falk, now in his second season with the Buffalo Sabres.

"Whatever level, you can take something from that. And if you look at their lineup across the board, they have guys that were on that team as well. They're progressing well in their careers and gained a lot of experience and confidence in that aspect. It was a great year there. I had a lot of fun with those guys and good memories."

The Blue Jackets roster, which came to Buffalo for Monday's game with the Sabres, featured six players who were part of that 2016 Calder Cup champion team with Lake Erie.

Defenseman Zach Werenski was fresh off his collegiate career at Michigan when he joined the Monsters for the run. Werenski has six goals, including the game-winner in the last two games for the Blue Jackets. Also part of that team were forwards Sonny Milano (five goals, three assists through 17 games with Columbus), Oliver Bjorkstrand (five goals, seven assists in 20 games), Markus Hannikainen (two goals, two assists in 11 games) and Josh Anderson (seven goals, three assists in 18 games.) Also part of that roster is Columbus back-up goalie Joonas Korpisalo.

It's no surprise, then, that Columbus is having success with the help of players developed in the American Hockey League. It's part of building an organizational culture, one where work ethic and attention to detail lead to winning. It's something Falk has noticed throughout his career, which includes 270 AHL games with the Houston Aeros, Iowa Wild, Lake Erie Monsters, and Rochester Americans.

"We talk about wanting to build a culture and when you look at good teams it's not wanting to play a certain way, it's not trying to run a system," Falk said. "Everything is natural in what they do and how they show up and work. They're not trying to do that, it's just who they are and that's something guys need to learn and understand.

"The one thing I've noticed, maybe just because of me personally ... is you can't change who you are. I've done a lot of bouncing around and I've seen guys prepare really well in Rochester and expect things to go well and expect to get called up and as soon as they get here expect things to just keep going smoothly. I've also seen guys just not put in the time in Rochester or wherever in

the minors and expect a call-up and soon as they actually do get called up then all of a sudden they're preparing. You've got to be really focused and dedicated, committed to the process of being a good pro on and off the ice and all that so when opportunity does present itself, you take advantage of it."

While there are always individual opportunities throughout the course of a season (see Buffalo's 105 games lost to injury through the first 20 games for example), the development in the AHL contributes to a longer-term cultural shift. While there are adjustments to make from the AHL to the NHL, learning to win is learning to win.

And the good news for Sabres fans is that the Amerks are learning to win. Monday morning, Rochester was in fourth place in the Eastern Conference with a 9-5-1-1 record.

"Everybody's buying in," Amerks coach Chris Taylor said last week in Blue Cross Arena. "We didn't think we'd be using our depth as much as we are, especially on defense, but we have been and everybody's been buying in. That's what we tried to bring in – good people willing to work hard every day and care about each other. That's what we're doing. And the guys are caring. I think that's why we're having a little bit more success."

Amerks lose in OT to Syracuse

C&C WorldWide

By: Staff Report

In a seesaw game, the Rochester Americans lose to the Syracuse Crunch, 6-5, in overtime on Wednesday night before 4,722 fans at the Onondaga County War Memorial Arena.

Dennis Yan netted the game-winner for the Crunch as he beat Amerks goalie Linus Ullmark, who finished with 43 saves.

The Crunch tallied the first goal of the contest less than two minutes in, but Zach Redmond and Kevin Porter scored about two-and-a-half minutes apart late in the period to give the Amerks a 2-1 margin heading into the second stanza.

Syracuse evened the count at 2-2 before Sean Malone netted his first goal as an Amerk to give Rochester a 3-2 lead.

The hosts, however, accounted for the next two goals to forge ahead 4-3.

The first and third goals in the period by the Crunch came short-handed.

Nick Baptiste knocked home a power play goal for Rochester with 10 seconds to play in the period to even the count once again at 4-4.

Midway through the third period, the teams exchanged markers as Conor Allen tallied his first goal as an Amerk to tie the game at 5-5 and send it into overtime.

The Amerks (9-5-1-2 for 21 points) return to the Blue Cross Arena on Friday to face the Binghamton Devils at 7:05 pm.

*NOTES — Americans General Manager Randy Sexton announced on Wednesday that the team has re-assigned defenseman Devante Stephens to the Cincinnati Cyclones (ECHL)...

Amerks drop high-scoring overtime battle at Syracuse

Buffalo News

By: Staff Report

The Rochester Americans picked up at least a point for the eighth time in the last nine games with a 6-5 overtime loss at Syracuse on Wednesday.

Nicholas Baptiste had a goal and an assist, and Colin Blackwell picked up a pair of assists for the Amerks (9-5-2-1). Linus Ullmark stopped 43 of 49 shots, while Rochester registered 35 shots on goal.

The Crunch opened the scoring just 1:18 in, but the Amerks responded late in the first period with goals by Zach Redmond and Kevin Porter.

After Syracuse scored first again in the second period, West Seneca's Sean Malone put Rochester back up one on his first goal of the season. The Crunch responded with two more goals, the second of which was shorthanded, before Baptiste evened the score at 4-4 with 10 seconds to go in the middle frame.

Syracuse scored midway through the third period to regain the lead, and Conor Allen answered nearly 3 minutes later to make it 5-5.

The Crunch's Dennis Yan scored the game-winning goal 1:48 into overtime. Former Canisius star Cory Conacher had an assist for Syracuse. He currently leads the team with six goals and 13 points.

The Amerks host the Binghamton Devils on Friday and then head to Binghamton for a home-and-home series finale on Saturday. Both games start at 7:05 p.m.

Crunch outlast Amerks, 6-5, in overtime

WSYR

By: Grant DeBruin

Six different Crunch players scored and 12 earned a point in a victory that snaps a three-game winless streak and moves the team to 5-9-1-2 on the season. Matthew Peca paced Syracuse with a goal and two assists.

Louis Domingue earned his first win with the Crunch, turning aside 30-of-35.

Syracuse peppered 49 shots on Linus Ullmark. He stopped 45. The Crunch were unable to convert on two power play opportunities and killed 4-of-5 Amerks man-advantages.

The Crunch were first on the board just 1:18 into the game. Peca deked around a defender in the left circle and cut towards the slot where he dropped the puck off for Alexander Volkov to send home. Reid McNeill recorded the secondary assist.

The Amerks netted two late in the first period to quickly take a one-goal lead.

At the 14:34 mark, Zach Redmond ricocheted a shot off the post with the help of Nicholas Baptiste and Colin Blackwell. With three minutes remaining in the period, Steve Moses threw a centering feed for Kevin Porter to redirect in on the power play.

The second period saw five goals and ended with a 4-4 tie. At the 7:39 mark, Peca picked off a pass in the neutral zone and sped down the left wing to net his first of the season shorthanded. Rochester retaliated four minutes later when Sean Malone regain the lead on the man-advantage.

Beginning at the 14:43 mark, Syracuse netted back-to-back goals to take control of the game for a second time. Cory Conacher cut around the back of the net and fed Jamie McBain for a one-timer from the right face-off dot.

Daniel Walcott collected an assist. Dominik Masin then slid a shot past Ullmark from the high slot following a series of drop passes from Peca and Michael Bournival for the team's second shorthanded goal of the game.

With 10 seconds remaining in the second, Rochester potted another power-play goal to even the score. Domingue made a diving save on a backdoor shot, but the rebound dropped down for Baptiste to clean up over the outstretched goaltender.

Mat Bodie put the Crunch back up by one halfway through the third period.

Kevin Lynch won the face off in right circle and kicked the puck out to the defenseman. Bodie waited as he crossed the slot and fired over the netminder.

As was the story all game, Conor Allen responded three minutes later to tie the game yet again and force overtime.

Less than two minutes into the overtime frame, Yan went to coast-to-coast and chipped in the game-winner with the help of Masin and Anthony Cirelli.

The Crunch host the Wilkes-Barre/Scranton Penguins on Friday at 7 p.m.

Yan's overtime goal lifts Syracuse Crunch over Rochester Americans ***Auburn Pub***

By: Jeremy Houghtaling

Dennis Yan saw the opportunity and took advantage.

The Crunch rookie gathered the puck behind his own net, rushed up the right side of the ice, charged past the last defender and beat Americans goalie Linus Ullmark blocker side to lift Syracuse to a 6-5 overtime win over Rochester in a back-and-forth battle at the Onondaga County War Memorial Wednesday.

“I didn’t plan to go all the way to the net, but once I took the puck I saw a huge space and I put the jets on,” Yan said. “I had space there and tried to get to the net as fast as I could.”

For Crunch head coach Benoit Groulx, it was good to see his team rewarded after a pair of losses in Toronto over the weekend.

“I’m so happy for our guys,” Groulx said. “I think they’ve been working real hard the last month or so — since the beginning of the year, but especially the last month — and we were not rewarded. Tonight we had a great start but were still down 2-1 after one period. We could have been discouraged, but we came back in the second and were up 4-3 and they scored a late goal. ... Again, it was tough to take ... but we stayed focused, we stayed on our game and stuck with it.”

Matthew Peca paced the Syracuse offense with three points, including his first goal of the season. The Crunch center, who was held to five assists in 16 previous games, had 84 points in 133 games over the past two regular seasons.

“I feel like I’ve been playing well and getting chances. They just haven’t been going in,” Peca said. “Hopefully this will be the beginning of something different.”

Syracuse’s Dominik Masin recorded a goal and an assist. Jamie McBain, Mat Bodie and Alexander Volkov each scored once, while Reid McNeill, Anthony Cirelli, Kevin Lynch, Michael Bournival, Daniel Walcott and Cory Conacher each had one assist.

Louis Domingue, acquired in a trade last week, registered 30 saves to earn his first win in a Crunch uniform.

“I thought (Domingue) was very good. Maybe one goal he’d like to have back,” Groulx said. “As much as we played a solid game, we had some breakdowns and he had to make some stops. In overtime he made two great stops to keep the game alive for us.”

Volkov opened the scoring 1:18 into the game, but Zach Redmond evened the score and Kevin Porter gave Rochester a 2-1 lead heading into the first intermission despite Syracuse having an 18-8 advantage in shots on goal.

Peca took advantage of a turnover on the penalty kill to tie the score 7:39 into the second period, but Sean Malone put the Americans back ahead less than four minutes later. McBain and Masin scored back-to-back goals to give Syracuse the lead, but Nicholas Baptiste tied the score with 10 seconds left in the frame.

Bodie scored off a faceoff to put the Crunch back ahead midway through the third, but Conor Allen knotted the game at 5-5 with 6:49 left in regulation.

Yan's end-to-end goal 1:48 into overtime lifted Syracuse over Rochester.

"It feels good, especially against a team that's kind of had our number this year," Peca said. "I thought we played well all game, and we were rewarded for it in the end."

Syracuse (5-9-1-2) begins a home-and-home series by hosting Wilkes-Barre/Scranton on Friday night.

"They're a really good team and they gave us a hard time the last time we played them, so we have a little something to prove to them and to ourselves," Peca said. "I think we're on the right track with a win like that tonight."