



ROCHESTER AMERICANS

DAILY PRESS CLIPS

Saturday, December 30, 2017

TONIGHT'S GAME: Laval @ Rochester

Amerks win to take over 1st place

C&C WorldWide

By: Staff Report

In an early showdown for first place in the North Division, the Rochester Americans shut out the Toronto Marlies, 2-0, before 6,818 fans at Ricoh Coliseum on Friday night.

Rochester (20-7-3-3) pulled ahead of Toronto (22-11) into sole possession of first place in the North Division with 46 points. The Marlies have 44 points as both teams have played 33 games.

Goalie Linus Ullmark recorded 22 saves in keeping the Marlies off the scoreboard.

Seth Griffith opened the scoring in the final minute of the first period with a power play goal for Rochester. Defensemen Zach Redmond and Stuart Percy each earned his 16th assist of the campaign on the play.

The contest remained that way until late in the third when Sahir Gill tallied his 10th goal of the season, off assists from Griffith and team captain Kevin Porter.

The victory also ties Rochester with Lehigh Valley for most points in the Eastern Conference.

The Amerks have posted points in 21 of their last 24 games and have collected 38 points since Nov. 1 during their surge to the top of the North Division and Eastern Conference standings.

Rochester remains the only team in league with one regulation loss while on the on road this season. The Amerks are 12-1-3-2 in their 18 games away from the Blue Cross Arena.

The Amerks return to the Blue Cross Arena Saturday to take on the Laval Rocket at 7:05 pm. It is their fourth meeting in the last 5 games.

Linus Ullmark earns shutout as Americans hand Marlies third straight loss

Canadian Press

By: Staff Report

Linus Ullmark stopped all 22 shots he faced as the Rochester Americans shut out the Toronto Marlies 2-0 on Friday night in American Hockey League action.

Seth Griffith, on the power play, and Sahir Gill scored for the Americans (20-7-6).

Garret Sparks made 30 saves for Toronto (22-11-0). The Maple Leafs' AHL affiliate dropped their third in a row.

Rochester was 1 for 3 on the power play and the Marlies were scoreless on five attempts.

Rochester Americans take over top spot in North Division with shutout victory

Buffalo News

By: Staff Report

Rochester Americans goaltender Linus Ullmark made 22 saves in a 2-0 shutout victory against the Toronto Marlies on Friday at Ricoh Coliseum in Toronto.

The victory pushes the Amerks past Toronto in the standings for the top spot in the North Division. Rochester has won nine of its last 12 games and only trails the Manitoba Moose for the league lead in points.

Seth Griffith, a former Marlie, scored the first goal of the game with a snipe to the top left corner in the first period. Stuart Percy, who also spent time with Toronto, had the primary assist.

Sahir Gill scored the insurance goal with three minutes and 27 seconds remaining in the third period. He beat scrambling Marlies goalie Garret Sparks with a rebound shot.

Griffith had an assist on Gill's goal, making him the only Americans player with a multi-point game.

The Americans' penalty killing was strong, not allowing a goal on five opportunities.

Ullmark, last week's CCM/AHL Player of the Week, moves to 15-5-3-2 on the season.

The Americans are 5-1-0-1 in their last seven games against the Marlies dating back to last year. Rochester lost its lone previous matchup with Toronto this season, 3-2, on Dec. 15.

Rochester plays the Laval Rocket for the fourth time in five games tonight at 7:05 at Blue Cross Arena.

The Americans have won four of their five games with Laval this season, including two of the previous three.

Amerks beat Marlies, take over 1st place in North Division

13 Wham

By: Staff Report

The Rochester Americans (20-7-3-3) rode a 22-save effort from goaltender Linus Ullmark to clinch sole possession of first place in the American Hockey League's North Division with a 2-0 shutout victory over the Toronto Marlies (22-11-0-0) Friday night at Ricoh Coliseum.

With the victory, Rochester has notched points in 21 of its last 24 games and has collected 38 points since Nov. 1 during its recent surge up the Eastern Conference standings. The Amerks remain the only team in league with one regulation loss while on the on road this season and hold a record of 12-1-3-2 in their 18 games away from The Blue Cross Arena.

In his first trip back to Toronto, former Marlie and current Amerk Seth Griffith led Rochester to its 20th victory of the season as he tallied a goal and an assist. Sahir Gill notched his 10th goal of the campaign to finish off the scoring while Ullmark, the reigning CCM/AHL Player of the Week, picked up his second shutout of the season after stopping all 22 shots sent his way. The Swedish netminder holds a share of the league-lead with 15 wins while improving to 15-5-3 on the season.

Second-year forward Trevor Moore registered a game-high five shots for the Marlies as netminder Garret Sparks stopped 30 of 32 but suffered his third straight loss. The 25-year-old shows an 11-6-0 record on the slate while his 1.86 goals-against average ranks third-lowest in the AHL.

The Amerks drew their first penalty of the night late in the opening period, and despite entering the tilt just 1-for-25 in their last six games, Griffith gave Rochester a 1-0 lead on the man-advantage going into the break.

Griffith collected a pass from Zach Redmond and patiently picked the upper left corner of Sparks with 34 seconds left in the period. Stuart Percy and Redmond each recorded their 16th helper of the season, which are tied for second-most among all Rochester skaters, on Griffith's fourth goal of the campaign.

The tightly-contested game remained a one-goal affair until the 16:33 mark of the third period when Gill banged home an insurance marker past Sparks and squashed any thought of a Marlies comeback.

Crashing towards a loose puck in front of Sparks, Griffith fired a shot off the pads of the netminder but the rebound sat atop the crease before being swept into the cage by Gill. The goal gives Gill a share of the team-lead with rookie C.J. Smith as they each have 10 makers in 33 games this season.

The Marlies pulled Sparks for the extra skater for the final two minutes of the showdown but Ullmark held off the attack as he notched his second shutout of the season and third of his AHL career. Rochester's reigning team MVP boasts a 12-2-3 record in his last 17 appearances since Nov. 1. and has held the opposition to two or fewer goals in 12 games over that span.

Rochester returns home to close out the 2017 calendar year on Saturday, Dec. 30 with another get-together against the Laval Rocket at 7:05 p.m. at The Blue Cross Arena. The contest will be the fourth meeting over a nine-day span between the North Division rivals and can be heard live on The Sports Leader 95.7 FM/950 AM ESPN Rochester.

Amerks to host 'Star Wars Night' on Jan. 6

WHEC

By: Staff Report

Attention, Star Wars fans! The Rochester Americans will host 'Star Wars Night' on Saturday, Jan. 6 at the Blue Cross Arena.

Fans will have the chance to meet-and-greet with Officially Licensed Lucas Films characters prior to and during the game against the Lehigh Valley Phantoms.

The Amerks are offering a special 'Star Wars Light Sword and Ticket package' for the night, featuring one Light Sword and one 'Best Available' ticket.

Team officials say a portion of the proceeds from 'Star Wars Night' will be donated to Golisano Children's Hospital.

The puck drops on Jan. 6 at 7:05 p.m. Tickets are available online or by calling 1-855-GO-AMERKS.

Amerks to host 'Star Wars Night'

C&C WorldWide

By: Staff Report

The Rochester Americans announced on Thursday that the team will host Star Wars Night on Saturday, Jan. 6 when the Amerks entertain the Lehigh Valley Phantoms at 7:05 p.m. at the Blue Cross Arena.

Star Wars fans will be treated to a meet-and-greet with Officially Licensed Lucas Films characters, who will be on hand to meet with fans prior to and during the game, courtesy of The 501st Garrison Excelsior and Rebel Legion Echo Base.

The Amerks are again offering a special Star Wars Light Sword and Ticket package for the night, featuring one Light Sword and one Best Available ticket for just \$25. The special packages can be purchased online at www.amerks.com/starwars or by calling 1-855-GO-AMERKS.

Tickets for kids ages 12 and under can be purchased for just \$10 each while additional Best Available adult tickets are available for \$20.

A portion of the proceeds from Star Wars Night will be donated to the Golisano Children's Hospital.

Rochester's next home game is Saturday, Dec. 30 when the Amerks host the Laval Rocket at The Blue Cross Arena. Individual game tickets for the 2017-18 season start at just \$14. Amerks Season Ticket Memberships, which start as low as just \$12 per game, are on-sale now. The Amerks are also offering a variety of partial plans, including Half-Season Memberships and Flex Season Memberships with vouchers good for best available seating to any home game. All memberships are up to 40% off Box Office day of game pricing.

For more information, visit www.amerks.com or call 1-855-GO-AMERKS

Rocket – Americans: Laval Downs Rochester in Style

AHL Report

By: Amy Johnson

After a very abbreviated Christmas break, the Laval Rocket headed out on their next road trip to reignite their series against the Rochester Americans.

The first period moved quickly, as did the Rocket. They had plenty of jump in their skates, however it took just over eight minutes to register their first shot on goal.

After Daniel Audette took a high-sticking penalty, Niki Petti looked to have put Laval on the board shorthanded but the goal was called back after review.

Then Markus Eisenschmid roofed the puck on a turnover to really put the visiting team up 1-0 over Rochester. Just minutes later, however, the Amerks created a ton of traffic in Charlie Lindgren's crease and managed to bang one home in the ensuing chaos.

In the middle frame, the Rocket really turned up the heat. They controlled the pace of play, the puck, and outshot their opponents 12-9. They played a textbook 20 minutes. But Linus Ullmark was up to the task at hand and managed to rob them on more than one occasion, including a pristine rush up ice along the boards by Michael McCarron who passed it perfectly to Jeremy Gregoire who shot the puck directly at the gaping net. But Ullmark got across just in time and swallowed the shot.

At the other end of the ice, Lindgren was completely locked in for the duration of this game. He tracked the puck well, and denied the Amerks of many good quality chances.

With tensions rising, and the game still tied at 1-1, Nikita Scherbak and Adam Cracknell combined just over three minutes into the third period to give Laval the go-ahead goal. Rochester fought hard to net an equalizer, but the defense and goaltender for the Rocket would not let them succeed.

Even the penalty killers were on top of their game tonight, having to battle through a four-minute high sticking penalty on Chris Terry, as well as a poorly timed boarding penalty by Scherbak in the final minutes of the game. Terry sealed the deal with an empty-netter with one second remaining.

This was an important win for Laval, and will provide a major confidence boost as they head to Belleville for a showdown with the Senators on Thursday night.

Amerks come up short vs Laval

Habs Eyes On The Prize

By: Adam Zadarnowski

The Laval Rocket were back to action on Wednesday after the Christmas break, with the first of three games before the New Year, starting with the Rochester Americans and their goaltender Linus Ullmark, the AHL Player of the Week.

The Americans are near the top of the North Division, and if the Rocket hope to see playoff action this season, every single divisional game is a crucial must-win for the team. The Rocket have had a very rough month of December, collecting only six points in ten games, on pace for their worst December in the Sylvain Lefebvre era.

The Rocket are hurt by the fact that many players have been recalled to the Montreal Canadiens, including defencemen Brett Lernout and Jakub Jerabek.

Scratches remained the same as they have for a while now, notably Thomas Ebbing, David Broll, and Willie Corrin.

Markus Eisenschmid opened the scoring for the Rocket eight minutes into the game by recovering a loose puck in the Amerks zone on a failed zone exit by the Rochester team. The German forward made no mistake and snapped the puck over Ullmark's shoulder on an unassisted go-ahead goal.

It was one of only seven shots that the Rocket had in the first period, four of which came from the fourth line of Kyle Baun, Jordan Boucher, and Eisenschmid.

Meanwhile one of the 10 shots for the Amerks managed to hit the back of the net when Colin Blackwell out-battled Adam Cracknell, Eric Gelin, and Matt Taormina in front of a wide open net when Charlie Lindgren was caught out of position, swatting the loose puck into the net to tie the game at one.

Overall Lindgren had a solid game, stopping 31 of 32 shots he faced on the night.

The game remained tied throughout the second period as Ullmark continued on his remarkable streak that earned him the AHL Player of the Week honours. He notably stopped Jeremy Gregoire with a tremendous glove save, one of 12 shots that he faced in the second period from a determined Rocket team.

The Rocket's momentum came to an end by the end of the second period when Chris Terry took a double-minor penalty for high sticking. The Rocket killed it off however, going a perfect 5-for-5 on the penalty kill. It's been the failure of the penalty kill this season that has cost the Rocket a lot of grief. Tom Parisi brought up in the post-game interview on 91.9 that the team focused on not just maintaining the penalty kill structure, but in the case of a break in the formation, that other players would immediately cover for the error, something that's been missing according to him.

Nikita Scherbak continued on his hot streak since returning from injury by scoring the eventual game-winning goal when he snapped the puck from nearly the identically same spot from where Eisenschmid scored his goal earlier in the game.

The game was in the final stretches of the third period, and the Rocket were up by a single goal, when Scherbak took an unacceptable boarding penalty on Colin Blackwell, putting the team at a man disadvantage.

The Rocket were able to kill the penalty, and Chris Terry put a final stamp on the game by scoring his 17th goal of the season into an empty net to put the Amerks away 3-1 and earn a couple of very important points.

However the talk after the game, beyond initial relief at the result, was of course Scherbak's penalty. In a post-game interview with 91.9, Scherbak accepted his mea culpas with humility, explaining what was going through his head.

He didn't appreciate that Blackwell took a shot on net after the whistle and wanted to send a message. He did feel bad though because the player hit the boards awkwardly and appeared to be hurt. He didn't want to be vicious, but he couldn't allow a player to take liberties with his goalie. Scherbak realized that he made a mistake however and fessed up.

Rocket head coach Sylvain Lefebvre did not appreciate the gesture at all, saying that he was "boiling from rage", that it was "unacceptable" and "better not become a habit." Lefebvre went on say that it wasn't the first time Scherbak let his emotions get the better of him, and that it can really hurt his career. "He's still young with a hot temper. He's competitive, but he just has to be careful. He owes his teammates for that one", concluded Lefebvre.

Scherbak received the first star of the game for his goal, but certainly it's his penalty that the coaches will remember.

The Rocket play Thursday against the Belleville Senators before playing the Americans again on Saturday to complete the road trip.

Charlie Lindgren stops 35 shots, Laval halts Rochester's win streak at four

Canadian Press

By: Staff Report

Charlie Lindgren made 31 saves as the Laval Rocket downed the Rochester Americans 3-1 on Wednesday in American Hockey League action.

Nikita Scherbak scored the eventual winner 3:11 into the third period for the Rocket (12-15-7). Markus Eisenschmid opened the scoring in the first while Chris Terry added an empty netter to seal the win.

Colin Blackwell found the back of the net for the Americans (19-7-6), who had their win streak halted at four games.

Linus Ullmark stopped 23-of-25 shots in a losing cause.

Laval went 0 for 3 on the power play while Rochester was 0 for 5.

Fasching's power-forward play among the likes for the Amerks

The Buffalo Star

By: Kevin Oklobzija

Things to like, and things to dislike, in the Rochester Americans' 3-1 loss to the Laval Rocket on Wednesday night in downtown Rochester:

Some of the notable likes:

◆ Second-year right winger Hudson Fasching showed just how effective he can be when he's playing the power forward role.

He assisted on the Amerks only goal of the game, by Colin Blackwell, had at least two great chances himself and was very strong in front of the net.

"He played really well," Amerks coach Chris Taylor said. "He made some great plays, he used his speed, his line rushes were really good and I liked how he was getting over the puck."

Like the rest of the Amerks, however, he was unable to score and has 6-4-10 in 25 games.

"Just going over it in my head, we had so many chances," Fasching said.

◆ Goalie Linus Ullmark stopped 23 shots, including all 12 he faced in the second period. The only shots that beat him were terrific shots by Markus Eisenschmid at 8:24 of the first period after a Brendan Guhle giveaway in the slot, and Nikita Scherbak at 3:11 of the third after a defensive-zone breakdown.

The problem for the Amerks, who fell to 19-7-3-3: Laval goalie Charlie Lindgren was just as good, or better. He made 31 saves.

"There were two really elite goaltenders out there," Fasching said. "There were a couple backdoor saves and I was like, 'Oh my goodness.'"

◆ Rookie Sean Malone (2-2-4 in 29 games) was tenacious and effective as the center on the fourth line and as a penalty killer.

With Eric Cornel on his right and Dalton Smith on his left, they created six shots (four by Cornel) and earned meaningful minutes.

◆ The Amerks are still tied with the Toronto Marlies (22-10-0-0) for first place in the American Hockey League's North Division with 44 points and a .688 points-earned percentage. They play at Ricoh Coliseum at 7 p.m. Friday, then the Amerks and Rocket play again in Rochester at 7:05 p.m. Saturday.

So how important are the standings in late December?

“For us, or the guys that are returning, we can look at how far we’ve come (from a team that finished 32-41-0-3 last season),” Fasching said. “I think the standings are a result of the good hockey we’ve been playing.”

Some of the not-to-likes:

◆ Guhle’s D-zone turnover that led to the first goal, and what he said needed to be a better decision with the puck on the winning goal.

He was at the end of a shift following a failed power play and ended up in a foot race with Adam Cracknell for the puck down the right wing wall. Guhle wedged himself to the boards and protected the puck from Cracknell, choosing to leave it for a trailing forward. Except that player never arrived, Scherbak swept it to take it and moved to the slot and scored.

“I tried to leave it for one of our forwards and he ended up slipping; it happens,” Guhle said. “I need to be better on that. I need to make a harder play.”

◆ Left winger C.J. Smith went without a point again and had just one shot on goal. That’s now four straight games without a point for the Amerks’ leading scorer.

It’s hardly a monumental slump, but he did misfire on a couple passes he usually makes, including what would have been a breakaway for Nick Baptiste.

Amerks come up short vs Laval

C&C WorldWide

By: Staff Report

The Rochester Americans' (19-7-3-3) bid for a fifth straight victory against the Laval Rocket (12-14-5-2) came up short as the Amerks fell 3-1 Wednesday night at the Blue Cross Arena.

Despite falling in regulation for just the fourth time since Nov. 1, Rochester has notched points in 20 of its last 23 games and has collected 36 points during that span. The Amerks remain tied atop the Eastern Conference and the North Division with the Toronto Marlies with 44 points.

Colin Blackwell established a career-high as he tallied his fifth goal of the season for Rochester while goaltender Linus Ullmark, who was named CCM/AHL Player of the Week, made 23 saves but took the loss. The Swedish netminder holds a share of the league-lead with 14 wins and boasts a 14-5-3 overall record on the season.

Laval's leading point-scorer, Chris Terry, pushed his point-streak (5+7) to seven games as he scored his team-leading 17th goal of the season. Nikita Scherbak tallied the game-winner while Markus Eisenschmid opened the scoring on the night with his second marker of the campaign. Charlie Lindgren earned the win in the blue paint as he stopped 31 of 32 on the night to improve 5-7-6 on the season.

With the score 2-1 in Laval's favor, the Amerks drew their fifth penalty of the night with 2:43 left in the contest. However, Rochester was unable find a way to beat Lindgren to tie the game as the Rocket successfully killed the infraction to earn their first win of the eight-game season series.

"We had a chance to win or tie the game on the power-play but we did not," said Amerks head coach Chris Taylor. "Laval came up big while shorthanded all game and in the third period, but again, we were unable to tie the game."

Laval opened the scoring on the night as Eisenschmid scored his second goal of the season when he fired a shot past Ullmark 8:24 into the first period.

Despite the Amerks holding a 7-2 shot advantage, they trailed the Rocket, but Blackwell knotted the score with his fifth of the year just five minutes after the Laval tally.

While along the near boards, Hudson Fasching dished a pass to Zach Redmond, who was streaking in the backdoor from his post at the right point. The defenseman caught Lindgren out of position before centering a puck towards the front of the crease. With multiple sticks trying swipe at the loose puck, Blackwell was able to convert from the top of the to tie the game at 1-1 with 6:02 left in the opening period.

"We had a lot of chances tonight," Fasching said. "We played pretty well but a couple defensive errors was ultimately the difference-maker tonight."

The game remained tied until Scherbak gave the Rocket a 2-1 lead just 3:11 into the final period of regulation. The marker held up as the game-winning goal as Terry would tack on the empty-netter in the final second of the contest.

“In the first four games against them, the games have been tight games,” said Ullmark. “Tonight’s game was no different but Laval was able to capitalize on some bounces that did not go our way.”

With first-place hanging in the balance, the top two teams in the Eastern Conference will go head-to-head on Friday, Dec. 29 when the Amerks head north of the border take on the Toronto Marlies in an all-important matchup at Ricoh Coliseum. The 7 pm contest will be the second of eight scheduled meetings between the two teams this season and will be carried live on The Sports Leader 95.7 FM/950 AM ESPN Rochester.

Ullmark named CCM/AHL Player of the Week

WHEC

By: Staff Report

The American Hockey League announced today that Rochester Americans goaltender Linus Ullmark has been selected as the CCM/AHL Player of the Week for the period ending Dec. 24, 2017.

Ullmark stopped 65 of the 68 shots he faced in two starts for the Americans last week, going 2-0-0 with a 1.46 goals-against average and a .956 save percentage as Rochester continued to surge towards the top of the Eastern Conference standings.

On Wednesday evening, Ullmark took a shutout bid into the final minute of regulation and finished with 31 saves in Rochester's 3-1 victory over Belleville. And on Friday, Ullmark improved to 6-0-3 on the road this season, making 34 saves as the Americans defeated Laval, 3-2 in overtime.

A sixth-round choice by the Buffalo Sabres in the 2012 NHL Entry Draft, Ullmark has a record of 14-4-3 in 22 appearances for Rochester this season, posting a 2.46 goals-against average and a .924 save percentage. The 24-year-old native of Lugnvik, Sweden, is tied for the AHL lead in wins and ranks first in saves (623) and minutes played (1,243). Ullmark is in his third season of pro hockey in North America and has played 105 AHL games with Rochester, going 50-47-5 with a 2.93 GAA, a .910 save percentage and two shutouts. The 2017 AHL All-Star has also made 21 career NHL appearances with Buffalo, posting a record of 8-11-2 (2.64, .913).

In recognition of his achievement, Ullmark will be presented with an etched crystal award prior to an upcoming Americans home game.