



ROCHESTER AMERICANS

DAILY PRESS CLIPS

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TONIGHT'S GAME: Lehigh Valley @ Rochester

Guhle's OT breakaway goal is proof he needs to join rush much more ***Pickin' Splinters***

By: Kevin Oklobzija

You see the speed from Brendan Guhle and think, who can catch this guy?

You see his zero-to-60 acceleration seemingly in just three or four strides and think, shouldn't he do this more often?

You see him sense a free puck and open ice and then suddenly he's off on a breakaway barely a minute into overtime. And with the defense giving futile chase as Guhle tucks the shot 5-hole to give the Rochester Americans a 3-2 victory over the Bridgeport Sound Tigers on Friday night, you think, how does he not just jump up into the play all the time?

Don't worry, you're not alone if you're thinking that.

OK, maybe the rookie defenseman shouldn't be pretending to be Paul Coffey of the 1980s and 1990s or Erik Karlsson of today's NHL. But he needs to understand he can take off and join the rush — or even lead it — a whole lot more than he has through his first 34 games of his rookie AHL season.

You know who thinks so? Amerks coach Chris Taylor.

Friday was a perfect example of why. Guhle was high in the Amerks zone when Kevin Porter was wiped out along the boards in the neutral zone in a fight for a loose puck.

Realizing the other two Bridgeport players had no chance to catch him, Guhle hit overdrive, sprinted out to center, grabbed the puck at the red line, and in fewer than four seconds was sliding a backhand past goalie Kristers Gudlevskis just 1:01 into overtime.

"That's what we want him to do," Taylor said after the Amerks improved to 21-8-3-3. "I think he needs to do a lot more of that. He's young and he's learning. He's cautious. He doesn't want to hurt the team. But there's times he can be a little more aggressive."

Talk about a reverse universe. Usually it's the freewheeling young Sabres prospect who must be reined in by the Amerks coach. Think Don McSween. Think Brian Campbell. Think Marc-Andre Gragnani.

But in this case it's the rookie wanting to be careful.

"You have to pay attention to the score of the game, who you're on the ice against; there's a lot that goes into it," Guhle said.

Wanting to take care of his own end first is admirable. So, too, is making sure he's not giving the opposition unearned scoring chances by racing out of position.

And even with this somewhat conservative approach, his one-goal, one-assist game against Bridgeport gives him 7 goals, 13 assists and 20 points in 34 games.

“He’s a phenomenal skater,” said Amerks left winger Sahir Gill, who scored his team-leading 12th goal. “He saw the loose puck and as soon as he gets those legs going there’s no doubt it’s a breakaway.”

Guhle’s 20 points have him tied for ninth among AHL defensemen. Among rookie defensemen, only Manitoba’s Sami Niku has been more productive (5-18-23 in 33 games).

“The puck gets loose and he just takes off,” said Amerks goalie Linus Ullmark, who stopped 28 shots a day after being named to the All-Star Classic roster.

The Amerks are home again on Saturday to play the Lehigh Valley Phantoms.

Amerks top Bridgeport in OT

C&C WorldWide

By: Staff Report

After seeing the Bridgeport Sound Tigers (16-12-4-1) tie the game at 2-2 in the final minute of regulation, Rochester Americans (21-8-3-3) rookie defenseman Brendan Guhle scored the game-winner for the Amerks just 1:01 into overtime Friday at the Blue Cross Arena.

With the 3-2 victory in the extra session, the Amerks have compiled points in 22 of their last 26 games and collected 40 points dating back to Nov. 1. Additionally, the win gives the Amerks back-to-back wins for the first time in franchise history against the Sound Tigers.

With his two-point night (1+1), Guhle moves into second place among active rookies in the AHL with 20 points (7+13) on the season, while Kevin Porter, who tallied his 100th point as an Amerk tonight, finished the night with two assists. Garret Ross and Sahir Gill capped off scoring with their sixth and 12th goals of the campaign, respectively. Goaltender Linus Ullmark stopped 28 of 30 to record his league-leading 16th win of the season. The Swedish netminder also ups his record to 13-2-3 in his last 18 appearances.

First-year forward Anthony Beauvillier scored his first two goals of his AHL career, while Kristers Gudlevskis suffered his sixth straight loss despite making 25 saves in the blue paint for Bridgeport. The netminder is 0-3-3 in his last eight appearances and shows a 4-6-3 overall record in 15 games.

As the Amerks led 2-1 in the final minute of play, Beauvillier buried a shot over the left shoulder of Ullmark from the left circle to tie the game with Gudlevskis on the bench for the extra attacker. Travis St. Denis and Mitchell Vande Sompel were awarded the helpers on the play with 36 seconds remaining in the contest.

In the opening minute of the overtime period, Guhle picked up a loose puck in the neutral zone before sprinting into the offensive zone on a 2-on-0 rush towards the Bridgeport cage. The rookie blueliner faked a forehand shot before tucking the puck past the left pad of Gudlevskis to give the Amerks a 3-2 overtime win.

“I saw the loose puck after ‘Ports’ battled along the wall,” said Guhle. “I turned on the afterburners and went towards the net. I made a move that I have made before and luckily the puck went into the net. It felt good to get the goal but the win is more important.”

Beauvillier gave the Sound Tigers an early 1-0 as he opened the scoring just nine seconds into the contest after a turnover inside the Amerks zone. Bridgeport carried the lead into the first intermission.

“It was a tough goal,” Amerks head coach Chris Taylor said. “We won the face-off and made a D-to-D pass and the puck took a weird bounce. They made a pass and a good shot that unfortunately got behind us. Despite the goal, I liked our response tonight to get the win.”

As the teams emerged from the break, Ross tied the game with his sixth goal of the slate and 50th of his professional career at the 5:13 mark of the second period. Hudson Fasching forced Gudlveskis out of his crease before setting up Ross for a slick one-timer from the left of the Bridgeport net to earn the primary assist while Colin Blackwell tallied the secondary helper.

The game remained tied at 1-1 until the midway point of the final period when Gill banged in a rebound with 10:06 to play. The marker was his team-leading 12th of the season and assisted by Guhle and Porter. It also gave the Rochester its first lead of the night.

Bridgeport tied the game late in the final minute before Guhle's overtime goal 61 seconds into the extra period.

"It has been fun," said Gill talking about the team. "We have a great group of guys and we look forward to coming to the rink every day. We hang out a lot off the ice and I think that is big for our confidence in games like these when they are full of emotions."

Rochester's shorthanded unit finished the night by successfully killing off all six infractions and have not allowed a power-play goal in nine straight games dating back to Dec. 15 while going 34-for-34 during that span.

Rochester closes out the weekend at home again on Saturday, Jan. 6 as former Amerks Phil Varone and T.J. Brennan lead the Lehigh Valley Phantoms back to The Blue Cross Arena for the only time this season. The 7:05 p.m. matchup will be the first of just two meetings between the two clubs. All of the action will be carried live on The Sports Leader 95.7 FM/950 AM ESPN Rochester.

Sound Tigers score early, late, but lose in overtime at Rochester

CT Post

By: Michael Fornabaio

For 59 minutes Friday night, the Bridgeport Sound Tigers' offense couldn't solve Linus Ullmark. Big plays on either side of those 59 minutes got the Sound Tigers a point in Rochester, N.Y.

Anthony Beauvillier scored the fastest goal ever into a Sound Tigers game, then tied it in the final minute, but Brendan Guhle's goal 61 seconds into overtime gave the Americans a 3-2 win at Blue Cross Arena.

"One hundred percent, we definitely earned this point," Bridgeport coach Brent Thompson said. "We worked extremely hard and played a real solid team game. They're one of the more dynamic offensive teams, and I thought we did a good job defending."

A goal from Garret Ross in the second and Sahir Gill, crashing the net on the power play, midway through the third gave the Amerks a 2-1 lead.

Beauvillier, sent down from the New York Islanders on Monday, tied it on a left-circle blast, through Steve Bernier's screen, off the crossbar behind Ullmark and in with 35.8 seconds left. Mitch Vande Sompel had worked on the right-wing boards to get the puck to Travis St. Denis to set it up.

Amerks keep rolling, beat Bridgeport in overtime behind Guhle's game-winner

13Wham

By: Staff Report

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Ads by ZINC

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Amerks keep rolling, beat Bridgeport in overtime behind Guhle's game-winner *Democratic & Chronicle*

By: Andy Lipari

Friday was a sleepy start for the Rochester Amerks who had yet to play in 2018. The Amerks found enough offense, capped off by Brendan Guhle's overtime winner for a 3-2 victory over the Bridgeport Sound Tigers at the Blue Cross Arena at the Community War Memorial in front of 3,839 fans who braced the arctic cold and blowing snow.

The Amerks (21-8-3-3) still sit two points behind Toronto for first place in the Eastern Conference and North Division, but Rochester has been racking up the points — 21, to be exact — by going 10-3-0-1 in their past 14 games. Rochester hosts Lehigh Valley at Blue Cross Arena on Saturday.

Here's a few more takeaways from Friday's win:

Amerks All-Stars

C.J. Smith and Linus Ullmark were named to the AHL All-Star Team. Smith leads the Amerks with 30 points, tied for the 10th most in the AHL. His 20 assists are also a team high and his 10 goals are second on the team to Sahir Gill, who now has 12 after scoring Friday. Smith also posts a plus-12 rating, the highest on the club.

Coming into Friday, Linus Ullmark was tied with a league-high 15 wins, now 16-5-3 overall after Friday's victory. He's third in the Eastern Conference with a 2.32 goals against average, first in the East with 696 saves and second in the conference with a .927 save percentage.

Taylor Fedun returns

Fedun, who had a lower body injury, returned to the ice for the first time since Nov. 14. Amerks head coach Chris Taylor lit up when Fedun was mentioned.

"It was one of the better games I've ever seen him play," Taylor said. "Even at the start of the year. He was in on plays, he was active, his skating was good, he was reading plays defensively, his penalty kill was great ... I can't say enough about him."

Penalty kill saved the day

Special teams were the difference in the game, with Bridgeport going 0-for-6 on the power play and the Amerks scoring a goal on one of their two chances with a man-advantage

Smith, Ullmark named to AHL All-Star Game

Buffalo News

By: Mike Harrington

Rochester Amerks forward C.J. Smith and goalie Linus Ullmark have been named to the North Division roster for the AHL All-Star Classic to be held Jan. 28-29 in Utica.

Smith, a college free agent signed last March out of Mass-Lowell, is tied for second in scoring among AHL rookies with 30 points. He leads the Amerks in scoring, assists (20) and multi-point outings (7).

Ullmark will play in the game for the second straight year after earning Top Goaltender honors last year following a 15-save performance. He has a 15-5-3 record ranks third and fifth, respectively, among AHL goalies with a .926 save percentage and 2.33 goals-against average.

A sixth-round pick in 2012, Ullmark is 8-11-2/.264/.913 in 21 career NHL games

The two-day event begins Jan. 28 at 8 p.m. with the skills competition. The round-robin 3-on-3 tournament, run much like the NHL has done the last two years, is Jan. 29 at 7 p.m. Former Sabres named to the game include Lehigh Valley defenseman T.J. Brennan, Milwaukee goalie Anders Lindback. Ontario goalie Cal Petersen, an AHL rookie who signed with Los Angeles as a free agent after not signing with the Sabres after leaving Notre Dame, was also named.

The Sabres' representative to the NHL All-Star Game Jan. 28 in Tampa, likely Jack Eichel or Evander Kane, is expected to be named on Wednesday.

World Juniors helping Sabres prospect Alexander Nylander's development

Buffalo Hockey Beat

By: Bill Hoppe

In the AHL, where Alexander Nylander has spent most of the last season and a half, the slick forward is still a youngster adjusting to pro hockey.

But at the World Junior Championship, Nylander, 19, is a veteran. In his third and final tournament, Team Sweden, which will compete for a gold medal tonight, has leaned heavily on the Sabres prospect.

The Sabres recently assigned Nylander to Team Sweden in the midst of what he called a "little bit frustrating" season. After suffering a lower-body injury in rookie camp, he missed two and a half months.

Following his Nov. 17 season debut, Nylander, the eighth overall pick in 2016, struggled with the Rochester Americans, compiling only two goals, six points and an ugly minus-9 rating in 15 games.

But Nylander quickly found a groove at the tournament, showcasing his offensive talents and, even more importantly, growth in other facets.

"It's tons of experience," coach Tomas Montén said Thursday of Nylander's presence following Team Sweden's 4-2 semifinal win against Team USA. "It's been great for our younger players. Playing (in) his third World Juniors, he doesn't need to get tense or anything. I think it developed his defensive game.

"He plays on our PK, he plays on our power play, he can play last-minute shifts ... he can play in all situations. I think that's the biggest difference."

Defensive development, of course, is vital for Nylander's future. In the modern NHL, strong defense – a 200-foot game, as they often say – generates offense.

In Thursday's win before an announced crowd of 7,524 inside KeyBank Center, Nylander assisted on the first goal, his seventh helper and eighth point for 6-0 Sweden.

But Nylander, who has been pegged as a one-dimensional player, displayed more notable play away from the puck.

"He was really good, especially in all situations," Montén said. "He played some real good PK shifts, won some important draws and he really battled for us. That's the player he's grown into. I think you can trust him."

Nylander said the tournament is a "huge help" for his confidence.

“It really helps my development,” said Nylander, who has scored 10 goals and 28 points in 20 career World Junior outings.

The Sabres’ old regime also sent Nylander to the World Juniors a year ago. A strong tournament, however, couldn’t boost his rookie AHL season, and he struggled before the Sabres gifted him a four-game recall.

This season, Nylander will likely have earned a promotion from Sabres general manager Jason Botterill, who knew the tournament could help him.

“We just told Buffalo if we can help and play him and you can feel it’s a good thing for him, a good experience, then we’re really happy to have him,” said Monten, whose team will face Team Canada tonight.

Team Sweden knocked off the defending gold medalists Thursday and will play for its first World Junior title since earning a silver in 2014. The country last won gold in 2012.

Holding Sabres forward prospect Casey Mittelstadt, the tournament’s leading scorer with four goals and 10 points in five contests for Team USA entering Thursday, was critical.

Team Sweden led 4-0 before two late goals made it interesting. Still, the game was scoreless until more than 13 minutes into the second period.

Shortly before Elias Petterson opened the scoring, Mittelstadt, the eighth overall pick last year, missed a three-on-zero breakaway.

Despite Thursday’s disappointing outcome, playing the tournament in Buffalo has been special for Mittelstadt, 19, a freshman at the University of Minnesota.

“I’ve loved it, obviously,” he said. “The fans have been great, everyone’s been great, everyone’s treated all of us really well and it’s been an absolute blast. It’s been one of the most fun times I’ve had.”

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Amerks goalie Linus Ullmark and rookie forward C.J. Smith have been named to the AHL All-Star Game on Jan. 29 in Utica, the league announced Thursday.

Ullmark, an All-Star last season, is tied for the AHL lead with 15 wins and two shutouts and has played a league-high 24 games.

Smith, meanwhile, has a team-high 20 assists and 30 points in 34 contests.

2 Amerks named to AHL All-Star roster

C&C WorldWide

By: Staff Report

The American Hockey League announced on Thursday that Rochester Americans forward C.J. Smith and goaltender Linus Ullmark have been named to the North Division All-Star roster for the 2018 AHL All-Star Classic presented by Turning Stone Resort Casino. The annual event will take place Jan. 28-29 at the Adirondack Bank Center at the Utica Memorial Auditorium in Utica, N.Y., home of the Utica Comets.

Currently in his first pro season, Smith paces the Amerks with 20 assists and 30 points and ranks second on the team with 10 goals while being one of just three skaters to appear in all 34 games this season. His 87 shots and plus-12 on-ice rating are also tops on the team. Coming into the New Year, the Des Moines, Iowa, native is tied for second among all AHL rookies in scoring and 10th overall among the league's top point-getters while his 20 assists lead all first-year skaters.

Smith, who also leads the Amerks with seven multi-point outings, made his NHL debut for the Buffalo Sabres at the end of last season, notching one assist in two games following the completion of his junior year at UMass-Lowell.

Ullmark secures his second straight AHL All-Star selection after a 15-save performance in last year's Skills Competition that earned him CCM Top Goaltender honors. A mainstay between the pipes again for the Amerks this season, no other goaltender has played more games than Ullmark, who boasts a 15-5-3 record and has won 14 of his last 20 starts dating back to Oct. 25, including a career-best five straight to open the month of November. Even more impressively, Ullmark is 7-0-3 on the road this season and is 12-2-3 over his last 17 appearances. Named the CCM/AHL Player of the Week for period ending Dec. 24, 2017, he currently ranks second in the AHL in saves (668) and minutes played (1,362) while being tied for first in wins (15) and shutouts (2). The former Swedish Goaltender of the Year and reigning team MVP also ranks third and fifth amongst all AHL goaltenders with a .926 save percentage and 2.33 goals-against average, respectively.

In his third season in Rochester, the 6-foot-4, 212-pound netminder owns a career AHL record of 51-48-5 with a 2.89 goals-against average, a .911 save percentage and three shutouts. A sixth-round pick of the Buffalo Sabres in 2012, Ullmark also boasts an 8-11-2 record with a 2.64 goals-against average and a .913 save percentage in 21 career NHL contests with Buffalo.

The two-day event begins on Sunday, Jan. 28 with the 2018 AHL All-Star Skills Competition at 8 pm. In keeping with its traditional format, the All-Stars from the two Eastern Conference divisions will be squaring off against the All-Stars from the two Western Conference divisions in seven skills events, including hardest shot, fastest skater and accuracy shooting.

Ullmark, Smith headed to AHL All-Star Classic

Pickin' Splinters

By: Kevin Oklobzija

Goalie Linus Ullmark and rookie left winger C.J. Smith will represent the Rochester Americans in the AHL All-Star Classic Jan. 28-29 in Utica.

Ullmark ranks third in the American Hockey League in save percentage (.926), fifth in goals-against average (2.33) and second in minutes played (1,361:56).

The third-year goaltender also participated in the 2017 All-Star event and earned the top goalie award during the skills competition.

Smith is tied for 10th in AHL scoring with 10 goals, 20 assists and 30 points in 34 games. He is tied for second in rookie scoring, one point behind Mason Appleton of Manitoba. An Amerk hasn't led AHL rookies in scoring since Todd Simon in 1993-94.

The skills competition begins at 8 p.m. on Jan. 28. The All-Star challenge, a round-robin tournament of 3-on-3 games between the all-stars from the four divisions, starts at 7 p.m. on Jan. 29.

Linus Ullmark, CJ Smith named to AHL all-star roster

13Wham

By: Staff Report

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The 2018 AHL All-Star Challenge will then take place on the evening of Monday, Jan. 29 at 7:00 p.m. For the third straight year, instead of a traditional 60-minute game, the league's all-stars will be divided into four teams, one representing each of the league's divisions (Atlantic, North, Central, Pacific). The teams will then play a round-robin tournament featuring six games of 10 minutes each played entirely at 3-on-3. The two teams with the best records at the end of the round-

robin tournament will face off for the championship, a six-minute game also played using the 3-on-3 format. Rosters for each team will be composed of 11 skaters and two goaltenders.

Tickets for the two-day 2018 AHL All-Star Classic presented by Turning Stone Resort Casino are priced at \$39, \$49, \$69 and \$89, and include admission to both the Skills Competition on Jan. 28 and the All-Star Challenge on Jan. 29. Tickets can be purchased either in person at the Adirondack Bank Center at the Utica Memorial Auditorium Box Office located at 400 Oriskany St. W in Utica, N.Y., online by visiting www.uticacomets.com or www.empirestatetix.com or by calling 1-315-790-9070.