



ROCHESTER AMERICANS

DAILY PRESS CLIPS

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Tonight's Game: Toronto @ Rochester

Captain America Gionta excited for 'special' night with Amerks

Democrat & Chronicle

By: Leo Roth

The last time Brian Gionta wore the storied emblem of the Rochester Americans in a game, he was a kid playing for Rochester Youth Hockey.

Friday, he'll wear "the shield" again when he suits up for the Amerks on a one-game professional contract that has the city's hockey fans abuzz.

Call it the latest chapter in a storybook career that has seen Gionta win NCAA and Stanley Cup titles, along with being named captain for the Montreal Canadiens and Buffalo Sabres.

This one-game stint with his hometown pro team will serve as preparation for the upcoming Winter Olympic Games in South Korea. Oh yes, Gionta has been named captain for Team USA. It just keeps getting better for the Greece native.

"It's pretty cool," Gionta, 39, said after practicing with the Amerks at Bill Gray's IcePlex on Thursday. "I grew up as a kid going and watching games (at the War Memorial), playing mini sticks in the hallways so I have a lot of fond memories of the rink, and it'll be a fun night.

"It's a team growing up watching all your life and I wore the jersey when a minor hockey kid, so it'll be fun to come full circle, especially at this point in my career."

The Amerks (25-10-5-5) host the Marlies (32-11-0-1) in a battle of the top two teams in the AHL's North Division. Five points separate Toronto (65) and Rochester (60).

Game time is 7:05 p.m. Fittingly, it is Hometown Heroes night. As of Thursday afternoon, nearly the entire lower bowl of the arena is sold out and team officials are anticipating a crowd of 10,000.

"I just think in warmups it'll be an eye-opener for people: Brian Gionta playing for the Rochester Americans, pretty cool," Amerks coach Chris Taylor said.

Gionta has been practicing with the Amerks to keep his game sharp. That a game would evolve from the arrangement just made sense.

"Getting into a game will help me see some of those scenarios that I haven't been able to work on, and obviously to play in front of family and friends, it'll be a lot of fun, too," Gionta said.

Taylor anticipates using Gionta, a 15-year NHL veteran with more than 1,000 games, to his advantage. That means power play and penalty-kill time.

"I skated with Brian 12, 13 years ago when I was playing and got to know him and to learn what a special person he is to the community," Taylor said. "To play in front of this crowd, with an Amerks jersey on, it's special. I'm really happy for him, for the city. It's going to be a special night."

Gionta has played at Blue Cross Arena before, appearing with the New Jersey Devils when they faced the Sabres in a regular season game.

Gionta ready for tune-up with the Amerks

Buffalo News

By: Amy Moritz

On Friday, Brian Gionta will be suiting up in the red, white and blue for the Rochester Americans.

Twelve days later, he'll be wearing the red, white and blue for Team USA.

Gionta, a Rochester native and former Buffalo Sabres captain, will be playing for the Amerks Friday night as they host the Toronto Marlies at 7 p.m. in Blue Cross Arena.

"Basically it's something we've floated around a little while ago and toyed with the idea," Gionta said. "It's more of a tune up to get me ready. We were just trying to time it right and it made sense for me to get in some game action. Obviously these guys have been great – the team, the players have all been great. I'm excited to get into a game."

Gionta has been practicing with the Amerks since October, his mind set on being part of the 2018 U.S. Olympic Team. He wasn't officially named to the team until Jan. 1, but had played with USA Hockey at the Deutschland Cup in November and had been part of the Team USA equation all season leading up to the PyeongChang Games. The U.S. opens the tournament on Feb. 14 vs. Slovenia.

Gionta's time with the Amerks has been invaluable as he is the only player on the U.S. roster not currently playing (the rest of the roster is active in college hockey, the AHL, or an overseas league) and the American Hockey League schedule has been beneficial.

"To be honest, it's a great situation," Gionta said. "In the AHL their practice schedule is much different than in the NHL. Guys in the NHL are playing every other day and not getting too much practice time. I've been getting in a good three to four practices solid every week in Rochester. The practices are great."

But there are elements that can only be honed in actual games. Gionta compares this one-game with the Amerks to the lockout-shortened 2012-13 NHL season.

"Little things in games, whether it's the power play or penalty kill or seeing different things or board play and overall timing, it's tough to pick up those things in practice," Gionta said. "This is like a little mini pre-season game, like you would get in the NHL. I liken it to the half-season lockout where we roughly had a week-long training camp and went right into the season. This is a little extra tune-up."

While it's a tune-up for Gionta, it's a key game for the Amerks tied for second place in the AHL's Eastern Conference, trailing the first-place Toronto Marlies by five points.

Rochester is seriously thinking Calder Cup for the first time in years and Gionta has seen a system in place that is helping young talent bloom.

"There's been a lot of change there over the last year," Gionta said of the Amerks. "They did a good job of bringing in a good veteran core of guys that can help the young guys like C.J. Smith and Brendan Guhle, guys that can make that jump in the next couple of years. You surround them with the right guys, which is key, and I think the chemistry on that team is great. They've been playing well all year and just having fun."

Brian Gionta plays with the Amerks on Friday

WHEC

By: Staff Report

The Captain of the Team USA Hockey team at the PyeongChang Olympics is gearing up to play his first game for the Rochester Americans.

Brian Gionta will skate in a game for the Amerks for the first time Friday night. The Greece-native has been practicing with the team in preparation for the Olympics for a few months now, but this will be his first actual game with the team.

On Thursday, Gionta and the rest of the Amerks were hard at work in practice, gearing up for Friday's game.

Gionta said there's an extra point of pride playing for his hometown team.

"It's a rink that I grew up as a kid, going to and watching games and playing mini sticks in the hallways," he said. "So I have a lot of fond memories of the rink, and it'll be a fun night. It's a team I grew up watching all your life and I was a minor hockey kid and wore the jersey with the Amerks. So it'll be fun to come full circle at this point in my career."

"As I got to know him, what a special person he is to the community and what he means to the community," said Amerks Head Coach Chris Taylor. "For him to play in front of the crowd with an Amerks jersey on is special."

News10NBC will be at Blue Cross Arena to cover the game on Friday.

You'll be able to see Gionta in action at the PyeongChang Olympics on NBC. Coverage of the games begins on February 8.

Gionta's career comes full circle with Amerks opportunity

Buffalo News

By: Tobias Motyka

The last time Brian Gionta played at the Blue Cross Arena, he didn't score. But Amerks coach Chris Taylor did.

Gionta played for the New Jersey Devils against the Buffalo Sabres, in a 2-2 tie back in November of 2003.

14 years later, the Rochester native has just about done it all, with the exception of suiting up for his hometown team in his hometown building.

That will change on Friday, when Gionta plays one game for the Rochester Americans before he leaves for the Olympics next week.

Toby Motyka has the story from Amerks practice Thursday.

Amerks honoring 'Hometown Heroes'

Fox Rochester

By: Staff Report

The Rochester Amerks are honoring first responders and military personnel tomorrow night.

Police officers, firefighters, EMTs and military members and veterans can receive one free ticket to tomorrow night's game between the Amerks and the Toronto Marlies, which starts at 7:05.

Those Hometown Heroes will also be able to submit a photo that will be used for a tribute and the video board during the game. The Amerks will donate \$2 from every ticket sold to the Monroe County Sheriff's Office Association of Retirees.

Prior to the Amerks game, members of the Monroe County Sheriff's Office will face off against members of the Rochester Police Department in an exhibition hockey game that will start at 4 p.m. at the Blue Cross Arena.

Capt. James McGowan of the Monroe County Sheriff's Office, Lt. Ralph Montinarelli from the Rochester Police Department and Amerks team reporter Erica Whyte joined us on Good Day Rochester this morning to explain more about Hometown Heroes Night.

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Brian Gionta Q&A: Team USA Men's Hockey Captain Talks Career, Family and Olympic Prep

Sports Illustrated

By: Alex Prewitt

Brian Gionta was back. Back at the PTA meetings, the Halloween parade, the winter concert—all the school events for his three children that he had missed. Ordinary calendar items to many parents were treasured by someone returning from 14-plus seasons in the NHL, most recently with his hometown Buffalo Sabres. He coached his daughter's soccer team, stood behind the bench at his sons' hockey games and skated on the ice for practices. "Being in that lifestyle," he says. Dad mode, some might call it.

Then Team USA dialed.

Brian Gionta is back. Now 38, almost twice the age of his youngest teammate, the fearless 5'7" winger was recently named captain for an American men's hockey roster that blends college students, minor leaguers and European-based pros, almost a dozen years after last representing the United States at the Winter Olympics. So each morning, he dropped his kids off at school, drove 15 minutes to a nearby arena where he used to play knee hockey in the hallways when he was their age, and trained with the AHL's Rochester Americans to prepare for PyeongChang.

Spurning contract offers to stay near his family, Gionta will lead the United States into a wide-open field absent of NHL talent. (Thanks a lot, IOC.) A few weeks ago, he spoke with SI.com about wearing the C for USA, communicating with a roster spread around the globe, advising young teammates on the Olympic experience, and memories from his last Winter Games—an eighth-place finish in Turin, Italy, where Gionta had four goals.

SI: How many people are calling you Captain America now?

BG: [laughs] Yeah there's been a handful of those texts when the Jan. 1 announcement came. A bunch of those came across, especially because I played up in Montreal. A lot of friends in Montreal texted me that kind of stuff. Captain America was the biggest one. They were pumped. Some said they couldn't root for me, but congratulations. Stuff like that. Go, Canada, go.

SI: Who was the most out-of-the-blue person you heard from?

BG: One of my kids' first-grade teachers in Montreal. My son's first-grade teacher. He's in seventh-grade now. It's been a few years. Just congrats.

SI: Did you ever think you'd make it back here after 2006?

BG: No. The way things were going with the NHL involved, at that point in my career, I didn't think it was a possibility.

SI: So how does this happen?

BG: When things went down at the end of September, I had a couple opportunities to play in the NHL and it just didn't work family-wise for me. USA Hockey approached me with the possibility of trying to make it work. Had to make some things to stay in shape come about, but with those things, we had a great year and have been able to make it happen.

SI: Wind it back even further. Right after the season ends, how do you leave things with Buffalo? What are you thinking entering the summer?

BG: The approach was to re-sign with them, for sure. That was the outlook. All indications pointed to that. Then there was a management change and a coaching change, so they had to reassess things. When they made the decision not to re-sign me, I was looking at other opportunities in the NHL. Then this came about after that.

SI: Did that hurt, hearing that new management didn't want you back?

BG: For sure. It's a place you have a lot of great friends on the team, you've been here a few years, and that's where you thought you were going to be. At first, it does. But you move on fairly quickly. In this business, you get used to it.

SI: So July 1 comes and goes. Did you have interest?

BG: Yeah, right away. A few teams reached out. We took a lot of time to think about it. It was definitely not a rash decision. We checked out a lot of facets within a certain city, and at the end of the day it just didn't work family-wise.

SI: Was that the big determining factor?

BG: At the stage I'm at, it was tough to move my kids around. That was the biggest factor.

SI: The stage you're at?

BG: At the end of my career, you're not getting more than a one-year deal. Where I was in my career, that's why. It was mostly a decision with not wanting to continue to move my kids around.

SI: How is Coach Gionta behind the bench?

BG: [laughs] I don't know. Coach Gionta is pretty positive and likes to have fun. I'm not the head coach, so the assistant role suits me well. I can have fun and teach them at the same time. I don't have to be the bad guy. I can be the good guy on the bench.

SI: So how do you get from there to Team USA?

BG: It never stopped. I continued my summer training, skating, and carried that right through to training camp time. Then started practicing with the Rochester Amerks, about an hour's drive, so I've been practicing with them all season long.

SI: When does your focus narrow to PyeongChang?

BG: Going over to Germany for the Deutschland Cup with the USA team, that started really bringing things into focus. Then obviously the Jan. 1 announcement really puts something solid into it. So now it's like, okay, you're on the team, this is what we've got to do, this is how we've got to move forward.

SI: So they didn't say, "If you want in, you're in?"

BG: No, until the announcement I didn't ask them specifically. We never had a conversation before it was set. It was more, hey, we think we can make this happen and move forward together.

SI: What has your training regimen looked like, absent of playing regular games?

BG: It's basically been skating five days a week and lifting, pretty much the same. It's like the schedule I held during the last lockout, where we started playing roughly mid-January. But before it was just a handful of guys skating together, not a full team. It's nice to have practice time. You get the 5-on-5 play, power play, penalty kill time. Everything but real game action.

SI: How'd you find out you'd been named captain?

BG: [Head coach] Tony Granato and [late Team USA general manager] Jim Johansson called me, said they'd be honored to have me. Looking forward to it.

SI: Where were you?

BG: I was at home, waiting to pick up my kids from school. Just got back from practice. They phoned.

SI: What was your reaction?

BG: It's weird. It's a sense of pride, you're very honored by it, but you're caught off guard by it as well.

SI: Had you thought about that before?

BG: Not at all. It was hey, I want to make this team, I want to go out there and play in the Olympics. When they named me captain in Germany, it was pretty cool. But you don't think about it at all.

SI: What do the rest of your teammates, who are going for the first time, have to learn beforehand?

BG: It's getting their families set, getting their plans set, getting those types of logistics out of the way so they don't become a distraction. It's things like that, making sure that all those plans are out of the way and they don't have to worry about those things.

SI: What about on the flip side—what do they have to look forward to?

BG: It's the whole aura of the Olympics. You're in the Olympic Village, you're going to other events, it's a dream come true. I think everybody dreams of participating in the Olympics at some point. Everything shuts down for those three weeks and everyone's tuning into them. That stage is an unreal stage to be a part of.

SI: Do you remember how old you were when you first heard about the Miracle on Ice?

BG: Probably around 12 or so. When you started getting more serious in hockey and stuff like that.

SI: Was that the dream?

BG: Absolutely. Especially USA Hockey, when you start going to all the camps and stuff like that, that was the team to emulate. That was the ultimate underdog story, so everything was built around that '80 team.

SI: What still sticks with you about 2006?

BG: To be honest, disappointment. Disappointment in our finish. Great experience, loved every minute of it, disappointing in the finish.

SI: Why do you think things went how they did?

BG: Tough to say. It's a tough tournament. You have to be peaking for that two-week period and you have to be the best team for that period. You may have the best team but not play the best in that time frame. A lot of things have to align. You have to make sure you're focused for that amount of time.

SI: USA Hockey was in a transition period at that time.

BG: Yeah, right after that was when they transitioned to the newer generation, for sure.

SI: Where are we at now?

BG: I think it's unreal. The depth that we have now at USA Hockey is awesome. You look at the world juniors, and the amount of U.S. kids who are getting drafted, that's how you really see the state of USA Hockey.

SI: How would you have felt if NHL players weren't allowed to go in 2006?

BG: It's tough. Every NHLer wants to be in this situation. They want to be playing for their country and the Olympics. But that's the business side of being in the NHL. I had to deal with it in college when they went to the NHL, then on the flip side, being able to participate in it as an NHLer was awesome.

SI: What lessons can you draw upon from your first time?

BG: You try to learn from every experience. A lot of that will be using the youthful energy that guys have, their first taste of it, being able to channel it and not get overwhelmed by the enormity of the event.

SI: Where does that enormity come from?

BG: The games, the whole process of the Olympics. You fly in, you have the Opening Ceremonies, you stay in the Olympic village, you're around other athletes, you're around other events. You're always in it, whether you have a game day or not.

SI: Did you see other events?

BG: Mostly the other ice events, because you don't have times to get into the mountains. There's two separate venues.

SI: Do you have a favorite Olympic story? A moment that still resonates?

BG: That first time you're walking onto the ice. That's what you remember most about it, the anticipation leading up to that first game.

SI: Pitch me on this U.S. roster. Why can you win?

BG: It's a bunch of guys that have been overlooked for parts of their careers. They're a hungry bunch that wants to prove that they're capable and deserving of this opportunity. Probably 75 percent have had NHL experience, and at some point been looked over or passed over. They're out to prove something.

SI: Does that make you underdogs?

BG: Not underdogs. I don't think you can get a true taste of where rosters are at because of the difference in player pool this year. But that's the mentality, I think, our team has.

SI: What has more pressure, captaining the Canadiens or Team USA?

BG: [laughs] They're much different. The Habs was over the course of a season and a few years. USA is a short thing, but maybe more people tuning in.

SI: You're probably the only recognizable name to the average fan.

BG: You use your experiences in the past. The spotlight in Montreal, the playoff games, all that comes into play.

SI: So what's the schedule between now and when you leave?

BG: We've got just over a month before we fly over there, then we'll have four or five practices, and then right into game time.

SI: But you're not getting together before then?

BG: No.

SI: How do you stay in touch?

BG: We have a group chat that there's constant back and forth on, just razzing guys to logistics of things, trying to figure things out. It's a wide range on there. Then the communication from the coaches, video and stuff. We have a portal set up that we can log into and catch video, be prepared ahead of time before we get there.

SI: Who's the most flagrant emoji user in the group text?

BG: I'd say [defenseman] Matt Gilroy.

SI: That's a very 2018 way of team-bonding.

BG: We never had that technology back in the day. It's awesome to have it.

SI: Is that daunting, not really having time together before the tournament?

BG: Not really. It's much the same as when the NHL players are involved. They're all with their own teams, then you fly over, get together, and play the games. It's pretty similar.

SI: Have you thought about joining an NHL team after the Olympics?

BG: The possibility is there. We'll see what opportunities are available. I'm at peace either way. If I go play, I'd love that. If not, I'm completely content with that as well.

SI: Gold medal's not a bad way to go out.

BG: Not at all.

Ex-UML star Smith the AHL All-Star MVP

The Lowell Sun

By: Staff Report

Rochester Americans rookie C.J. Smith scored the only goal of the championship game as the North Division captured the 2018 AHL All-Star Challenge title with a 1-0 win over the Pacific Division at the Adirondack Bank Center at the Utica Memorial Auditorium on Monday night.

Smith, a former UMass Lowell star, finished the night with three goals and two assists, earning Most Valuable Player honors. Smith turned professional last spring after three seasons as a River Hawk.

The AHL All-Star Challenge is a round-robin tournament among the league's four divisions, played at 3-on-3. The first six games are 10 minutes in length, followed by the six-minute championship final.

Down by three goals with less than three minutes remaining in the final preliminary contest, the North Division rallied for a 4-3 victory over the Atlantic Division to earn a berth in the championship.

Syracuse Crunch rookie Mitchell Stephens chipped in two goals and three assists and Belleville Senators forward Gabriel Gagne tallied a goal and four assists on the night for the North Division, which was also led by the goaltending of Rochester's Linus Ullmark and the Utica Comets' Thatcher Demko.

The Pacific Division was paced offensively by Tucson Roadrunners rookies Kyle Capobianco and Nick Merkley, who finished the evening with six points each.

USA Today

US captain Gionta to play AHL game prior to Olympics

By: Staff Report

U.S. Olympic men's hockey captain Brian Gionta will tune up for South Korea with his hometown Rochester Americans.

The American Hockey League team has signed Gionta to a one-game professional tryout contract, and he's expected to play against Toronto on Friday. The 39-year-old has spent the past four months practicing with the Buffalo Sabres' affiliate while training for the Pyeongchang Games, which open next week.

Gionta is a 16-season NHL veteran and spent the previous three years as the Sabres captain before his contract expired in July. Gionta turned down at least one contract offer from another NHL team to instead seek a spot at his second Olympics. He represented the U.S. in 2006 in Torino, Italy.

The NHL has barred players under contract with its teams from playing in the Olympics this year, including minor leaguers.

Brian Gionta to play for the Amerks Friday, then head to Olympics soon to captain Team USA

Democrat & Chronicle

By: Jeff DiVeronica

Before he becomes Captain America, Brian Gionta will play for the Americans.

The Rochester Americans announced that Gionta, 39, the Greece native and former Buffalo Sabres and Montreal Canadiens captain, has signed a "one-game professional tryout," and is expected to be in the lineup for Friday's game against Toronto at Blue Cross Arena at the War Memorial.

"Given the Olympics are just around the corner, a game was the final tune-up for him to get ready to captain the U.S. Olympic team. The entire Buffalo Sabres organization wishes Brian all the very best in his pursuit of a gold medal," said Amerks general manager Randy Sexton, whose team is off this week during the AHL All-Star break.

Gionta has practiced with the Amerks since October in preparation for the Olympics, which begin Feb. 9 in Pyeongchang, South Korea. He'll captain Team USA. Gionta has played in 1,006 National Hockey League games with the Sabres, Canadiens and New Jersey Devils over a 16-year professional career. He has 588 points (289 goals/299 assists). Gionta has also compiled 68 points (32/36) in 112 career playoff appearances and was part of a Stanley Cup champion in 2003 with the Devils.

Buffalo's captain the past three years totaled 103 points (40/63) in 230 career games with the Sabres from 2014-17, appearing in his 1,000th NHL game last season.

The timing is also perfect because Friday's Amerks game is billed as its "Hometown Heroes Night," presented by Advantage Federal Credit Union. The team will honor all first responders such as police officers, firefighters and EMTs, as well as military members and veterans. Prior to the Amerks-Marlies matchup, the Rochester Police Department will play the Monroe County Sheriff's Office Jail Bureau in a 4 p.m. exhibition hockey game.

For tickets and ticket deals, go to www.amerks.com/heroes. The Amerks will donate \$2 of every ticket sold to the County Sheriff's Office Association of Retirees (SOAR).

Former Sabre Gionta is going to play another professional game

ESPN Rochester

By: Staff Report

Brian Gionta will have at least one more professional hockey game. Amerks GM Randy Sexton announced that Gionta has inked a one-game Professional Tryout contract and will be in uniform on Friday night when Rochester hosts Toronto.

In a statement Sexton said, "Brian has been practicing with us on a regular basis since early in the season.

"These practices were part of his preparation for the Olympics and, given the Olympics are just around the corner, a game was the final tune-up for him to get ready to captain the U.S. Olympic team. The entire Buffalo Sabres organization wishes Brian all the very best in his pursuit of a gold medal."

Gionta played 1006 games in the NHL including 230 with Buffalo. He scored 40 goals and 63 assists with the Sabres. Gionta also played 303 games with Montreal and 473 with New Jersey.

Amerks sign Brian Gionta for one game Friday

13 Wham

By: Staff Report

Rochester Americans General Manager Randy Sexton announced Monday that the team has signed Brian Gionta to a one-game Professional Tryout. Gionta is expected to be in the lineup on Friday, Feb. 2 when the Amerks resume their 2017-18 regular season schedule following the AHL All-Star break against the Toronto Marlies at The Blue Cross Arena.

"Brian has been practicing with us on a regular basis since early in the season," said Sexton. "These practices were part of his preparation for the Olympics and, given the Olympics are just around the corner, a game was the final tune-up for him to get ready to captain the U.S. Olympic team. The entire Buffalo Sabres organization wishes Brian all the very best in his pursuit of a gold medal."

The 39-year-old Rochester native has practiced with the Amerks since October in preparation for the upcoming 2018 Winter Olympic Games, which are set to begin Friday, Feb. 9 in Pyeongchang, South Korea.

Gionta, who will serve as captain of the U.S. national team, has appeared in 1,006 National Hockey League games with the Buffalo Sabres, Montreal Canadiens and New Jersey Devils over a 16-year professional career in which he has recorded 588 points (289+299) and 375 penalty minutes. Gionta has also compiled 68 points (32+36) over 112 career playoff appearances and was a member of the 2003 Stanley Cup-winning Devils.

Gionta has served as team captain in each of his last seven seasons, including the previous three in Buffalo. He totaled 103 points (40+63) in 230 career games with the Sabres from 2014-17, appearing in his 1,000th NHL game during the 2016-17 campaign.

Ahead of Olympics, Gionta to play one game with Amerks

Rochester First

By: Howard Thompson

Before heading to South Korea for the Winter Games, Greece native and former NHL star Brian Gionta will suit up for the Amerks.

The team announced Monday that Gionta has signed a one-game professional tryout. The Amerks say he will join them for their first game following the AHL All-Star break on Friday, February 2 as Rochester takes on the Marlies at the Blue Cross Arena.

Earlier this month, Gionta was named to the Team USA. Because of a change this year, NHL players aren't allowed to take part in the Olympics, so, instead, Gionta opted to train with the Amerks in Rochester for the Olympics Games.

This Friday is also "Hometown Heroes Night" at the Blue Cross Arena.

Amerks sign Brian Gionta to 1-game PTO

C&C Worldwide

By: Staff Report

Rochester Americans General Manager Randy Sexton announced today that the team has signed Brian Gionta to a one-game Professional Tryout. Gionta is expected to be in the lineup on Friday, Feb. 2 when the Amerks resume their 2017-18 regular season schedule following the AHL All-Star break against the Toronto Marlies at the Blue Cross Arena.

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The Amerks are hosting “Hometown Heroes Night,” presented by Advantage Federal Credit Union, on Friday. The team will honor all first responders such as police officers, fire fighters, and emergency medical technicians, as well as military members and veterans. Prior to the Amerks-Marlies matchup that night, the Rochester Police Department will face-off against members of the Monroe County Sheriff’s Office Jail Bureau in an exhibition hockey game starting at 4:00 p.m.

As part of the night, the Amerks are offering all Hometown Heroes and military personnel one complimentary ticket to their game against the Marlies with additional tickets for family and friends available for as low as just \$12. Those interested in taking advantage of the offer can do so by visiting www.amerks.com/heroes. Hometown Heroes or their families can also use that link to submit a photo to be used during an in-game tribute on the video board.

The Amerks will donate \$2 for every ticket sold through www.amerks.com/heroes to the Monroe County Sheriff’s Office Association of Retirees (SOAR), courtesy of Advantage Federal Credit Union.

Amerks assign trio to Cincinnati

Rochester Americans General Manager Randy Sexton announced on Monday that the team has re-assigned forward Justin Danforth and defensemen Arvin Atwal and Eric Knodel to the Cincinnati Cyclones of the ECHL.

Amerks sign Brian Gionta to one-game professional tryout

Pickin' Splinters

By: Paul Gotham

Rochester Americans General Manager Randy Sexton announced today that the team has signed Brian Gionta to a one-game Professional Tryout. Gionta is expected to be in the lineup on Friday, Feb. 2 when the Amerks resume their 2017-18 regular season schedule following the AHL All-Star break against the Toronto Marlies at The Blue Cross Arena.

“Brian has been practicing with us on a regular basis since early in the season,” said Sexton. “These practices were part of his preparation for the Olympics and, given the Olympics are just around the corner, a game was the final tune-up for him to get ready to captain the U.S. Olympic team. The entire Buffalo Sabres organization wishes Brian all the very best in his pursuit of a gold medal.”

The 39-year-old Rochester native has practiced with the Amerks since October in preparation for the upcoming 2018 Winter Olympic Games, which are set to begin Friday, Feb. 9 in Pyeongchang, South Korea.

Gionta, who will serve as captain of the U.S. national team, has appeared in 1,006 National Hockey League games with the Buffalo Sabres, Montreal Canadiens and New Jersey Devils over a 16-year professional career in which he has recorded 588 points (289+299) and 375 penalty minutes. Gionta has also compiled 68 points (32+36) over 112 career playoff appearances and was a member of the 2003 Stanley Cup-winning Devils.

Gionta has served as team captain in each of his last seven seasons, including the previous three in Buffalo. He totaled 103 points (40+63) in 230 career games with the Sabres from 2014-17, appearing in his 1,000th NHL game during the 2016-17 campaign.

The Amerks are hosting “Hometown Heroes Night,” presented by Advantage Federal Credit Union, on Friday. The team will honor all first responders such as police officers, fire fighters, and emergency medical technicians, as well as military members and veterans. Prior to the Amerks-Marlies matchup that night, the Rochester Police Department will face-off against members of the Monroe County Sheriff’s Office Jail Bureau in an exhibition hockey game starting at 4:00 p.m.

As part of the night, the Amerks are offering all Hometown Heroes and military personnel one complimentary ticket to their game against the Marlies with additional tickets for family and friends available for as low as just \$12. Those interested in taking advantage of the offer can do so by visiting www.amerks.com/heroes. Hometown Heroes or their families can also use that link to submit a photo to be used during an in-game tribute on the video board.

The Amerks will donate \$2 for every ticket sold through www.amerks.com/heroes to the Monroe County Sheriff’s Office Association of Retirees (SOAR), courtesy of Advantage Federal Credit Union.

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.

US men's hockey captain returns to his roots

KAGS TV

By: Staff Report

Former Buffalo Sabre Brian Gionta has spent the year working out back where it all started for him, his hometown of Rochester, New York.

Gionta, now 39-years-old, turned down NHL contract offers this season to try and win an Olympic medal for Team USA. He's been working with the minor league Rochester Americans on a practice-only contract. He's also a veteran of 1,006 games over 15 NHL seasons.

And with current NHL players not allowed to compete in this year's Olympics, Gionta's experience will be key as Team USA's captain.

"As you get older you really appreciate the opportunities that you have. This is one of those being towards the end of my career that you really take in and really appreciate for what it is," Gionta explained.

He's looking forward to PyeongChang and looking back on his career.

Gionta is the only member of the 2018 U.S. Men's Olympic hockey team with any experience at past winter games. He wore the red, white, and blue representing the U.S. in the 2006 Torino games, where the U.S. finished eighth.

His parents, Sam and Penny, help run the family window and door business in Rochester and along with Brian are savoring the second Olympic opportunity.

"It's a dream he's always had," Penny Gionta said, "and to fulfill it this late in his career would be wonderful."

It's a career filled with championship highlights including winning a national title at Boston College in 2001 and a Stanley Cup with the Devils in 2003. Now Gionta has a chance to cap it off with an Olympic medal.

"It's the one thing I haven't been able to accomplish in my career and you know being at the end...to win it, go out like that, would be pretty special."

Gionta Back in Sabres Pipeline... For a Night

The Hockey Writers

By: Jeff Seide

When Sabres captain Brian Gionta finished the 2016-17 season, he had a feeling his chances of returning to the team were remote. The Greece, N.Y. native had just finished a strong season in which he compiled 15 goals and 30 points in 82 games. He skated more than 16 minutes a night, playing in all situations.

After his contract ran out, the veteran started to look at other opportunities. Roughly six months later, Gionta will captain Team U.S.A. at the 2018 Olympics.

From Americans to Team USA

The Sabres' American Hockey League affiliate, the Rochester Americans, announced Monday that the team has signed Gionta to a one-game professional tryout. "Gio" is expected to be in the lineup this Friday when the Toronto Marlies visit the Amerks. He'll then head to the Olympics.

"Brian has been practicing with us on a regular basis since early in the season," said Amerks GM Randy Sexton. "These practices were part of his preparation for the Olympics. Given the Olympics are just around the corner, a game was the final tune-up for him to get ready to captain the U.S. Olympic team. The entire Buffalo Sabres organization wishes Brian all the very best in his pursuit of a gold medal."

Friday night's Amerks' game is billed as its "Hometown Heroes Night." The team will honor police officers, firefighters, EMTs and military members. It will be preceded by an exhibition match between the Rochester Police Department and the Monroe County Sheriff's Office Jail Bureau at 4 p.m.

If Gionta can come home from South Korea with a gold medal, he'll be welcomed home as a different kind of hero.

A Decorated Career

Gionta, now 39, served as captain of the Sabres and the Montreal Canadiens. His resume includes a Stanley Cup with the New Jersey Devils in 2003 and 1,006 NHL games played with the Sabres, Habs and Devils over 16 seasons, collecting 588 points (289 goals and 299 assists).

Who's on the Team?

There will be no Jack Eichel, Patrick Kane, Auston Matthews or Johnny Gaudreau. These Olympics are the first without NHL players since 1994. It brings a different dynamic with the NHL choosing not to send players. Since national federations couldn't pick any player with an active NHL contract, the tournament is wide open.

The U.S. squad has versatility and experience consisting of several players from the NCAA, fifteen European professional leagues and a few AHLers. Collegiate players will join the team from Denver, Boston University, St. Cloud State and Harvard.

It's not a rag-tag bunch of college kids like the 1980 gold-medal-winning "Miracle on Ice" team. They have young talent and veteran players that bring leadership and experience. At least fifteen players on the roster have appeared in the NHL, including AHL-star Chris Bourque and European-based forwards Mark Arcobello and Jim Slater, and defensemen James Wisniewski and Bobby Sanguinetti. They will be coached by Tony Granato, who played at the 1988 Olympics and now coaches at Wisconsin.

"We have a decent amount of players that are already used to playing in Europe on the big ice, which can be helpful," said defenseman Ryan Gunderson, one of the eight players on the roster without NHL experience and who plays in Sweden. "(We have) some younger, college guys, which I'm sure will bring a lot of skill and energy, then proven AHL players that can produce, as well. Gio, of course, has experienced the Olympics before and will lead the way."

Going For Gold

The U.S. seeks its first Olympic gold medal since the 1980 "Miracle on Ice". They lost the bronze medal game to Finland in 2014 and won the silver in Vancouver in 2010.

In 2006, Gionta played for Team U.S.A. in Torino, Italy where the team failed to medal, finishing eighth overall. Gionta will be gunning for Gold. "It's one thing I don't have, I haven't been able to achieve, is an Olympic medal," he said. "I would love to end my career with something like that."

The Olympic Games are set to begin in PyeongChang, South Korea on Feb. 9. The U.S. faces Slovenia in its Olympic opener on Feb. 14.

Amerks sign Greece native Gionta to one-game professional tryout

WHEC

By: Staff Report

The Rochester Americans announced Monday that the team has signed Brian Gionta to a one-game professional tryout.

Gionta, a Greece native, is expected to be in the lineup on Friday, Feb. 2 when the Amerks resume their regular season schedule following the AHL All-Star break against the Toronto Marlies at the Blue Cross Arena.

The 39-year-old has practiced with the Amerks since October in preparation for the upcoming 2018 Winter Olympic Games, which are set to begin Friday, Feb. 9 in Pyeongchang, South Korea.

"Brian has been practicing with us on a regular basis since early in the season," said Amerks' General Manager Randy Sexton. "These practices were part of his preparation for the Olympics and, given the Olympics are just around the corner, a game was the final tune-up for him to get ready to captain the U.S. Olympic team. The entire Buffalo Sabres organization wishes Brian all the very best in his pursuit of a gold medal."

Gionta, who will serve as captain of the U.S. national team, has appeared in 1,006 National Hockey League games with the Buffalo Sabres, Montreal Canadiens, and New Jersey Devils over a 16-year professional career. He has served as team captain in each of his last seven seasons, including the previous three in Buffalo.

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

Gionta signs one-game contract with Amerks

WKBW

By: Matt Bove

Add the Rochester Americans to the list of teams Brian Gionta will have played for. On Monday the Amerks announced that they've signed Gionta to a one-game professional tryout. With the deal, Gionta is expected to be in the Amerks lineup on Friday when they host the Toronto Marlies.

Gionta, a Rochester native, has spent the last three months practicing with the Americans as he prepares for the upcoming Winter Olympics.

"Brian has been practicing with us on a regular basis since early in the season," said Americans General Manager Randy Sexton. "These practices were part of his preparation for the Olympics and, given the Olympics are just around the corner, a game was the final tune-up for him to get ready to captain the U.S. Olympic team. The entire Buffalo Sabres organization wishes Brian all the very best in his pursuit of a gold medal."

The former captain of the Buffalo Sabres and Montreal Canadiens will serve in the same role for Team USA in Pyeongchang.

Gionta to suit up for Amerks in Olympic tuneup on Friday
WIVB

By: Nick Filipowski

In what's expected to be a final tuneup ahead the 2018 Olympic Games in Pyeongchang, South Korea, former Sabres Captain Brian Gionta will suit up with the Rochester Americans for one game on Friday when they host the Toronto Marlies.

It'll mark the first time the Rochester native will suit up for his hometown team.

Gionta, who has been practicing with the Amerks since October, was named the Captain of Team USA on New Year's Day.

The 39-year-old will be playing in his second Olympic Games. He and the Americans finished 8th in 2006 in Torino.

Gionta To Play For Rochester Americans On Friday

Buffalo News

By: Amy Moritz

Welcome back, Brian Gionta. Well, at least for one game.

The Rochester Americans announced that Gionta, former captain of the Buffalo Sabres, is expected to be in the lineup Friday when the Amerks host the Toronto Marlies in Blue Cross Arena. The team signed Gionta to a one-game professional tryout contract for the game.

The game will serve as a tuneup for Gionta, who was named captain of Team USA for the upcoming Olympic Games. The 39-year-old Gionta, a native of Rochester, has been practicing with the Amerks since October.

"Brian has been practicing with us on a regular basis since early in the season," Amerks general manager Randy Sexton said in a team release. "These practices were part of his preparation for the Olympics and, given the Olympics are just around the corner, a game was the final tune-up for him to get ready to captain the U.S. Olympic team. The entire Buffalo Sabres organization wishes Brian all the very best in his pursuit of a gold medal."