



ROCHESTER AMERICANS

DAILY PRESS CLIPS

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TONIGHT'S Game: Charlotte @ Rochester

Borgen ready for his opportunity with the Rochester Americans

Buffalo News

By: Amy Moritz

The first thing that stands out about Will Borgen is his size.

The native of Moorehead, Minn., is listed at 6-foot-2, which, in itself, creates an advantage as a defenseman. But when he first arrived at St. Cloud State for his college career, he needed to adjust his game.

See, being the biggest guy on the ice when he was in high school meant he was a bit of a rover – expected to do it all.

When he arrived on campus for the Huskies, his role became more defined and his game was refined in large part by coach Bob Motzko.

"I think I got a little bit bigger, a little bit smarter in my decision making," Borgen said on Thursday after the Rochester Americans practiced in BlueCross Arena. "It was three years. I spent a while with (Motzko) and I learned a lot. He changed me into the game I play now. In high school I was part rover because you're not playing as good competition. He kinda put me in my place at St. Cloud and put me on defense playing penalty kill and stuff. I wasn't much of an offensive guy there."

Borgen didn't put up big points for the Huskies, netting two goals and 13 assists in his junior campaign. But he has a heavy shot and did record 56 blocks in 36 games this season, all things which Amerks coach Chris Taylor has seen from Borgen in the last three practices in Rochester.

The 21-year-old decided to forgo his senior season at St. Cloud State and join the Buffalo Sabres organization, which drafted him in the fourth round, 92nd overall, in the 2015 NHL Entry Draft.

Borgen signed a three-year entry level contract but also signed what's known as an ATO, or amateur tryout contract, which allows him to play the rest of this season, including playoffs, with Rochester.

"He's a big guy and adds some grit to our back end," Taylor said. "He's a simple player and has a big shot. That's what we're hoping he will bring to simplify our game back there. From what I've heard, he plays simple, he plays hard, guys don't want to go in front of the net. We need those type of players to give our goalie some space and clear out in front of the net. And he's got a big shot so we're hoping he creates and adds a lot to our defense corps. We're lucky to have him."

Lucky to have him, but it presents a bit of a challenge. Players have been working to get in the lineup all season long while others currently up with Buffalo will return to Rochester for the Amerks first playoff run since 2014.

But there is a certain luxury the Amerks have already clinching a playoff berth with eight regular season games left. Borgen did not play for Rochester Wednesday but will certainly see some game action soon.

"There's a challenge to get him in the lineup first and foremost because guys have been here all year," Taylor said. "And I respect the guys that have been here all year. But everybody's been in the same situation. Everyone's been Will Borgen at one point. So everyone's got to realize we've got eight games here, we can get some guys in, rest other guys and it's not bad to watch games from up top. We're using everybody and want to see where everybody fits in for the upcoming playoffs."

Borgen already has some experience around high-level players. He was part of the U.S. Olympic Team although he did not see any game action.

Still being around the likes of former Amerks standout Brian Gionta helped Borgen prepare for the latest step on his hockey journey.

"Obviously it was a little bit of a downer not being able to play but the rest of it was awesome," Borgen said. "The guys were great. The experience of going to the ceremonies and the village was cool. Going to Olympics was just great to meet some of those ex-NHL players and pros and to learn from them. It helps me, even from my small time being there, to come here and know a little what to expect."

Nathan Paetsch named Amerks' Man of the Year

Buffalo News

By: Amy Moritz

The Amerks have named defenseman Nathan Paetsch as the team's Man of the Year for his contributions to the Rochester community during the 2017-18 season.

Paetsch becomes one of 30 finalists for the American Hockey League's Yanick Dupre Memorial Award, honoring the league's overall Man of the Year. The award is named for the former Hershey Bears forward and AHL All-Star who died in 1997 following a 16-month battle with leukemia.

Drafted by the Sabres in 2003, Paetsch spent three seasons in Rochester and played for Buffalo from 2006 until 2010. He returned to the Amerks this season after five years with Grand Rapids, where he won two Calder Cup titles.

The 34-year-old suffered a broken leg in just his third game of the season and was out for nearly three months. He regularly met with fans and youth organizations at games as part of the Captain's Club program.

Paetsch took part in the Amerks' Reading Power Play Program at the Fairport Public Library, visited three Rochester-area hospitals at Christmastime and helped raise awareness of polar bear and ice-conservation efforts in partnership with the Seneca Park Zoo. He also provided on-ice instruction for the Rochester IceCats, a team of individuals with developmental disabilities.

At least the Amerks won't meet Utica in round 1 of the playoffs

Pickin' Splinters

By: Kevin Oklobzija

As the American Hockey League's regular season winds down and the Rochester Americans tune up for the playoffs, their final eight games will determine whether they open the Calder Cup playoffs against the Toronto Marlies or Syracuse Crunch.

"Either one, I can't say we've played better or worse against them," defenseman Zach Redmond said. "You want to win to win, but I'm not sure the match-up is completely crucial."

The Amerks can at least be thankful that the Utica Comets are not an option for the first round, because they simply can't beat the Mohawk Valley's favorite hockey team. At least not with any regularity.

In the 10 meetings this season, Utica won seven, including Wednesday's matchup in downtown Rochester, 3-2 in overtime. Granted, seven went to overtime, but the Comets found a way to prevail five times beyond regulation.

And because Utica won on Wednesday, the Amerks hold third place in the North Division by just one point over the Comets. The team that finishes third gets the Crunch in round 1; the fourth-place team plays Toronto.

Wednesday was a chance for the Amerks to make a statement, a chance for the Amerks to show they're nearing playoff mode with just 17 days left in the regular season.

And while they outshot the Comets 33-22, and attempted a whopping 87 shots by the count of the Amerks coaching staff, they still lost. And still didn't play a complete game.

That's become a common refrain, and it's why the Amerks have won just eight of the past 30 games.

"I thought as a team we were working, we did a lot of good things, but at the same time we didn't win," said right winger Justin Bailey, who was reassigned by the parent Buffalo Sabres on Monday.

Gauging what lies ahead for Team Inconsistency isn't easy. Major components are still due back from the Sabres when the NHL regular season ends: goalie Linus Ullmark, defensemen Brendan Guhle and Casey Nelson, and forwards Nick Baptiste and Kyle Criscuolo (who is hurt).

Still, this isn't a team that scares the opposition. Not with just two wins in the past nine games, and six in the past 23.

Coach Chris Taylor will be using many of the final eight games to see if newcomers Will Borgen or Judd Peterson can help. They just joined the team this week following the end of their collegiate careers at St. Cloud State University.

But Taylor also wants to see who will be willing to play with playoff grit, intensity and passion.

“Every day we’re trying to figure out who’s going to be in our lineup,” Taylor said. “Who can be that big guy when we need it. Who’s going to put the puck in the net, who’s going to block a shot for us?”

Bailey could have been, actually should have been, that shot-blocker midway through the first period. Instead, a Frankie Simonelli point shot only hit the blade of Bailey’s stick in the high slot and continued on past goalie Adam Wilcox.

Taylor said the Amerks defensemen do quite well at shot blocking. The forwards need to be better. They need to sell out, they need to get into shot lanes quicker.

“It’s the new way of hockey,” he said. “It’s not just blocking shots but making them not shoot the puck.”

The positives on Wednesday: The power play went 2-for-4, with Redmond and Seth Griffith scoring the goals. The negatives: the penalty killing allowed two goals on six chances, although one came during two minutes of five-on-three man advantage for the Comets. The foolish penalties hurt the Amerks again.

In overtime, Comets center Michael Chaput stole the puck from Griffith from behind and then played sniper, picking the top left side of the net for the winning goal.

Excitement builds as Amerks eye postseason run
Spectrum News (Rochester, NY):
By: Staff Report

For the first time in four years, the Rochester Americans have a shot at the Calder Cup. Fans of all ages are excited to be a part of the action.

"It's definitely different than when they're playing because it's more exciting, because if they lose, then they're out," said Carson Masten.

While younger fans might not remember the postseason run in 2014, there's one fan who remembers them all. Season ticket holder Lou Grillo, 42, has seen the team lift the Calder Cup trophy in person three times.

"I saw, of course, the ones here, but I also went to Sherbrooke and saw them in '87 when they won the cup there. I love watching them win the cup, it's nice," said Grillo.

Fans are also excited to see some key pieces return to the lineup after their stints in Buffalo.

"Getting back to full strength is going to be important, I just hope that the chemistry comes back once the players show up," said Mike Meyers.

"They've been up there for so long, I just hope they come back and try to be a little more cohesive," said Grillo.

The last time the Amerks were able to advance past the first round was back in 2005. Fans hope that this year's squad can make a legitimate run.

"I guess you don't have much to root for in Buffalo at this point, but I'm hoping that the Amerks go at least a little bit into the playoffs," said Meyers.

The Amerks begin their chase for a seventh Calder Cup after the regular season wraps up on April 14th.

Power-play gets going, but Amerks fall in OT 3-2

13Wham

By: Staff Report

As the Utica Comets (34-24-6-4) and the Rochester Americans (31-20-11-6) combined for four power-play goals, it was the Amerks who came out on the wrong side of a 3-2 overtime score against their North Division rivals. It was also the fifth straight game between the two teams that went beyond regulation.

With Wednesday night's overtime loss at The Blue Cross Arena, the Amerks, who have appeared in 27 games this season decided after the third period, remain one point ahead of Utica for the third place in the North Division standings.

With his third goal in the last two games, Seth Griffith tallied his 15th marker of the campaign while Zach Redmond notched his 14th of the year for Rochester, which is winless in three straight games against Utica. Goaltender Adam Wilcox suffered the loss in-between the pipes as he finished the night with 19 saves. The South St. Paul, Minn., native shows a record of 11-7-7 on the season.

Michael Chaput tallied his second three-point (2+1) performance in the last four games for Utica, which has won four of its last five games. Patrick Wiercioch chipped in a pair of helpers to give him seven points in the last eight contests while fellow blueliner Frankie Simonelli collected his first multi-point outing of the season with a goal and an assist. Netminder Thatcher Demko improved to 6-1-1 in eight games against the Amerks this season as he stopped 31 of 33. The AHL All-Star also recorded his career-best 23rd victory of the campaign.

After Griffith slipped a loose puck behind Demko to even the score at 2-2 less than four minutes into the third period, the two clubs traded chances during the remaining 16:47, but overtime was required.

Utica controlled much of the extra session as they held a 4-0 shot-advantage. Chaput would then force a turnover inside the Amerks zone and be immediately rewarded for his efforts as he netted the game-winning goal at the 3:36 mark.

“It was not the result we wanted,” said Amerks head coach Chris Taylor. “I think we took too many penalties at the start and they scored two goals as a result. Anytime you give a team a two-man advantage, it’s not going to be easy. I was pleased, however, with the way we played at some points of the game. It was tough not being able to roll four lines, but I think if we play a whole 60 minutes, it will be good going into the playoffs.”

Despite holding Utica to just four shots in the opening frame, Rochester trailed 1-0 after 20 minutes. The Amerks tied the contest at the 3:04 mark with Redmond's power-play goal from atop the right face-off-dot.

Danny O'Regan and Sahir Gill were awarded the assists on the power-play tally.

“It will be huge in the playoffs,” said Griffith, who has four points (2+2) in his last two games, when talking about special teams. “We will have to bear down while on the man-advantage in the playoffs and do a better job of staying out of the box. Those two things will be important moving forward.”

However, Utica responded with its second power-play goal of the game with Chaput’s first of the night coming with 5:28 left in the period. The goal was scored while the Amerks were without a pair of players as they were serving high-sticking infractions.

The Comets carried a 2-1 lead into the intermission break, but Griffith knotted the score at 2-2 early in the third period to ultimately force overtime.

Griffith’s 15th goal of the season was set-up by Colin Blackwell, who celebrated his 25th birthday, and Kevin Porter, who reached the 40-point plateau for the second straight season.

Utica earned the extra point in the standings as Chaput picked the pocket of Griffith just inside the Rochester blueline and flung a shot over the blocker of Wilcox with 1:24 left in the extra frame.

“It’s more of the same results we have been getting all year,” said Redmond, who had a career-high 10 shots, when discussing overtime games. “We just haven’t found the luck in overtime this season for some reason. We did a lot of things right tonight, but we just have to learn our lessons and move on from it.”

The Amerks close out their four-game homestand on Friday, Mar. 30 when they host the Charlotte Checkers in the final meeting of the season between the two teams. Game time is slated for a 7:05 p.m. start and can be heard live on The Sports Leader 95.7 FM/950 AM ESPN Rochester.

Penalties costly once again for the Amerks

C&C Worldwide

By: Craig Potter

Once again penalties proved to be the downfall for the Rochester Americans as the Utica Comets scored 2 power play goals en route to a 3-2 overtime victory on Wednesday night before 4,174 fans at the Blue Cross Arena.

“It was not the result we wanted,” said Amerks head coach Chris Taylor. “I think we took too many penalties at the start and they scored two goals as a result. Anytime you give a team a two-man advantage, it’s not going to be easy.

“I was pleased, however, with the way we played at some points of the game. It was tough not being able to roll four lines, but I think if we play a whole 60 minutes, it will be good going into the playoffs.”

The Amerks (80), however, hold a 1-point lead for third place in the North Division over the Comets (79). Both teams have qualified for the Calder Cup playoffs, it’s just determining position for the opening round matchups.

Rochester was whistled for 6 penalties in the game.

Talking about special teams, Seth Griffith said, “It will be huge in the playoffs. We will have to bear down while on the man-advantage in the playoffs and do a better job of staying out of the box. Those two things will be important moving forward.”

The Comets opened the scoring with a power play tally in the first period.

Amerks defenseman Zach Redmond tied the game with a power play goal early in the second stanza.

However late in the period the Comets got a 5-on-3 advantage and made the most of it to regain the lead, 2-1.

Rochester also scored its second power play marker in the third period by Griffith, who had 4 points (2+2) in the last 2 games, to even the count once again.

But Utica won for the 7th time in 10 meetings this season with the goal in overtime.

“It’s more of the same results we have been getting all year,” said Redmond, who had a career-high 10 shots, when referring to overtime games. “We just haven’t found the luck in overtime this season for some reason. We did a lot of things right tonight, but we just have to learn our lessons and move on from it.”

*NOTES –Rochester Americans General Manager Randy Sexton announced today that the team has released forward Myles Powell from his Amateur Tryout...The Rochester Americans

announced today that tickets for the Amerks' first-round of home games for the 2018 Calder Cup Playoffs will go on sale on Monday, April 9 at 10:00 a.m. The complete opening round schedule will be released at a later date as soon as Rochester's first-round opponent has been determined. Individual game tickets for Round One of the 2018 Calder Cup Playoffs start as low as just \$14 and range in price up to \$28 depending on seat location. All tickets purchased on the day of the game will increase by \$2. Tickets are available for purchase either in person at the Blue Cross Arena Box Office, online at www.amerks.com or by calling 1-855-GO-AMERKS.

Chaput's overtime winner helps Comets edge Amerks

Utica Observer Dispatch

By: Ben Birnell

The Utica Comets added more intrigue to the North Division playoff race with a key win Wednesday against the Rochester Americans.

As has been the case between the rivals this season, the Comets needed extra time to get past the Amerks.

Michael Chaput was the hero, scoring with 1:24 left in overtime to help the Comets edge the Amerks 3-2 at Blue Cross Arena in the final regular-season meeting between the teams.

The Comets controlled 3-on-3 overtime — after the Amerks had the edge for much of the previous 60 minutes, outshooting them 33-18 — and Chaput capped it when the veteran forward forced a turnover near the blue line, skated into the slot and fired over Adam Wilcox (19 saves). Chaput's goal — his 16th of the season — hit the post in the back of the net and quickly popped out to give the Comets their fourth win in five games.

Chaput finished the game with two goals — the other his career-best eighth power-play goal of the season — and an assist and has seven points in last four games with the Comets, who finished 2-for-6 on the man advantage. The win pushes the Comets record to 7-1-1-1 against the Amerks this season. Seven of the 10 meetings needed overtime or more.

The overtime win means the fourth-place Comets (34-24-6-4, 78 points) are a point back of the third-place in the Amerks (31-20-11-6) in the North Division with eight regular-season games remaining. Toronto leads the division with 96 points and Syracuse is second with 91.

Frankie Simonelli added a power-play goal and an assist and Patrick Wiercioch had two assists in support of Thatcher Demko, who finished with 31 saves.

It was the 23rd win of the season for the standout goaltender, eclipsing his mark of 22 last season. Demko is a win from tying Joacim Eriksson's single-season record for victories as well as most wins (46) by a Comets' goaltender.

Season series: The Bears won the only other meeting this season following a 3-0 win over Utica on March 3 in Hershey.

The Comets' 13th-ranked power-play unit ran into the Amerks' third-ranked penalty kill in the first period, and the offense grabbed control when Simonelli's shot from the point found its way past Wilcox with 9:34 remaining.

With Adam Krause off tripping, the Amerks failed to clear and Chaput (22 assists) sent a short pass to Simonelli, whose shot through traffic appeared to redirect off an Amerks player's stick and in. Patrick Wiercioch added his career-best 25th assist of the season.

In the second period, the Comets and Amerks traded power-play goals.

The Amerks tied it with 16:44 left with the Comets' second-ranked unit killing double minors on Wacey Hamilton as Zach Redmond's shot from the point got through traffic.

The Comets re-gained the lead with help from a 5-on-3 advantage on back-to-back high-sticking infractions. On the goal, Simonelli sent a cross-ice feed to Chaput, who scored his 15th of the season on a one-timer from the right circle with 5:27 remaining. Wiercioch assisted for his ninth point in the last nine games.

The goal was the first time since March 9 the Comets scored multiple times on the man advantage in a game.

The Amerks nearly tied it minutes later when Seth Griffith had a breakaway chance glance off the post and the officials ruled the puck didn't go in.

However, Rochester's power-play struck early in the third to force overtime. Demko turned aside Matt Tennyson's initial shot before Seth Griffith stuffed in a rebound for his 15th of the season with 16:15 remaining. Rochester finished 2-for-4 on the power play.

Amerks fall in overtime loss to Utica

WHEC

By: Staff Report

The Rochester Amerks haven't been to the playoffs in 4 years, but that's about to change.

Amerks playoff tickets go on sale on Monday April 9.

A potential playoff preview Wednesday night as the Amerks faced off against Utica.

The two teams would head to overtime for the fourth straight game, though the Amerks would fall short losing 3-2.

Prior to the matchup the Amerks had won back-to-back home games for the first time since January.

Amerks playoff tickets go on-sale on April 9

Rochester First

By: Howard Thompson

The Rochester Amerks are back in the Calder Cup Playoffs for the first time since 2014.

Wednesday, the team announces ticket sales for playoff games will begin on Monday April 9 at 10 a.m.

Prices for individual tickets start at just \$14. You will be able to buy them online at the Amerks website or by phone at 1-855-Go-Amerks.

The playoff schedule and the Amerks' first round opponent will be announced at a later date.

Chaput lifts Comets past Amerks in OT

CNY Homepage.com

By: Lucas Frankel

The veteran forward had a 3-point night, including scoring the game-winning goal in overtime to lift Utica to a 3-2 victory over Rochester. The Comets are now one-point back of the Amerks for third place in the North Division.

Frankie Simonelli got the scoring started with his second goal of the season on a power-play tally in the opening frame.

Zach Redmond answered for Rochester with a power-play goal of his own in the second, but Chaput put the Comets back in front off a 5-on-3 advantage.

Seth Griffith knotted things up a two-apiece early in the third, sending the game to overtime where Chaput came through off an Amerks turnover to end it.

Thatcher Demko notched his 23rd victory of the season with 31 saves in net, surpassing his win total from all of last year.

The Comets are back in action on Friday night when they host the Hershey Bears. Faceoff from the Adirondack Bank Center is set for 7pm.

Comets move within one point of Amerks with OT win

WKTV

By: Spencer Davidson

The Utica Comets pulled within a single point of the Rochester Americans for third place in the North Division after beating them 3-2 in overtime at the Blue Cross Arena, Wednesday.

Frankie Simonelli scored halfway through the first period on the power play in order to give the Comets a 1-0 lead.

Zach Redmond then tied it in the second with a power play goal of his own off a wrist shot through the slot. Michael Chaput got a tic-tac-toe feed from Simonelli on another man advantage later in the frame to give Utica the lead back.

In the third, it was Seth Griffith slamming home a puck that was lying in the crease behind Thatcher Demko, on the power play, that tied things up yet again at 2-2.

We'd need overtime in this one and Chaput was up to the task as he took away the puck in the offensive zone, and ripped a shot off of the back post for his second of the night to win it for the Comets, as they pick up a valuable extra point.

Demko finished with 31 saves and improves to 23-12-6 on the season.

The Comets are next in action on Friday at the Adirondack Bank Center when they take on the Hershey Bears.

Comets clip Amerks in overtime

Spectrum News (Central, NY):

By: Staff Report

Michael Chaput scored twice, including the overtime winner, adding one assist as the Comets take down the Amerks 3-2 Wednesday night. Utica trails Rochester, despite the win, by one point for third place in the North Division standings.