



# ROCHESTER AMERICANS

## DAILY PRESS CLIPS

*Friday, April 6, 2018*

*TONIGHT'S GAME: Belleville @ Rochester*

## **Sabres' Porter thinks the team's future is bright**

**WGR 550**

**By: Paul Hamilton**

Kevin Porter played in the Sabres organization from 2012 through 2014. He played 43 games in Buffalo and 98 games in Rochester. Porter is 32 and he's been around. Jason Botterill brought him into Pittsburgh to help the young kids and to provide depth for the big club. Now that he's with Buffalo, Porter said it's nice to see guys like Brendan Guhle, Casey Nelson, Nick Baptiste and Linus Ullmark up and doing well, "I think it's pretty cool, they've been playing pretty well down there and then to come up here and play a lot of minutes in important situations is pretty cool."

Many more players have gotten time in Buffalo including Justin Bailey, Taylor Fedun, Hudson Fasching, Alex Nylander, Seth Griffith, Evan Rodrigues, Danny O'Regan, Kyle Criscuolo and Zach Redmond.

All those players are learning under head coach Chris Taylor. Porter thinks they really benefit from Taylor's pro experience, "He played the game for a long time and he knows the game really well, so I think he's great at teaching, he understands what players are going through, traveling and the hardships of hockey, so he's been really great down there."

The Amerks haven't had much playoff success lately, but this year they're back in. Porter said that experience for the kids will be invaluable, "They get that experience, there's going to be four, five, six, seven guys from that team coming up here and if they're used to losing, it's going to continue up here, but if we can go down there and get on a long playoff run and hopefully win a Calder Cup, that experience down there is going to translate up here."

"It happened in Wilkes-Barre and Pittsburgh and you see a lot of those guys that are now there that are fulltime NHL players that had a lot of playoff runs and learned how to win."

Many of the youngsters in Rochester look up to their captain. Porter has played 11 years since leaving Michigan. He said he has a way to lead, "I can be vocal when I need to be. I'm not going to come in and yell and scream every game."

"Hopefully they can watch me and see how hard I work, but if I need to sit a guy down and talk to him, I'll do that. Once in a while you have to come in and yell and scream a little bit and get the guys fired up."

People that have never played sports can't understand why Botterill puts so much emphasis on getting Rochester good. Pittsburgh, Chicago, Boston and Los Angeles have won Stanley Cups by providing a winning atmosphere for many players in the minors. Porter has lived it and he thinks players winning together in the minors, provides a culture for the big club, "That's just a whole different game I think, for them to get that experience and see how hard teams play in the playoffs, I think that'll be a great experience for those guys."

The Sabres worked off-ice on Thursday. The team did say that Linus Ullmark is going to travel with the team to Tampa along with Chad Johnson and Adam Wilcox.

## **For several Sabres, second chance awaits in Rochester**

*Sabres.com*

**By: Jourdon LaBarber**

Kevin Porter never put much thought into a recall to Buffalo, although he is happy to be here. The 32-year-old forward was too busy captaining the Rochester Americans, who are preparing to make a run in the Calder Cup Playoffs, to think about a call that was out of his control.

"That was really the main focus," Porter said of the impending playoff run. "I'm happy to be here, come up here and do what I can. It's always great to be back in the NHL. So, I'm not looking too much into it. If I get in the lineup I'm going to play hard, and that's about it."

If Porter dresses for one of Buffalo's last two games in Florida this weekend, it will be his first NHL game since April 9 of last year. Even if he doesn't, he still has the postseason to look forward to in Rochester, and he won't be alone.

The list of Sabres who are eligible to return to the Amerks for their postseason run includes forwards Alex Nylander Nicholas Baptiste; defensemen Brendan Guhle, Casey Nelson and Matt Tennyson; and goaltenders Linus Ullmark and Adam Wilcox.

Nelson's eyes lit up when asked about the thought of a playoff run.

"I want nothing more than to go win a championship," he said. "... I guess you can almost call it a second chance for a few of us to go make some noise in the playoffs."

While the Sabres' season will end upon the conclusion of their game in Florida on Saturday, what happens in Rochester in the coming weeks could one day have an impact on the future of the organization.

Building a winner in the AHL was always part of Jason Botterill's plan, from the moment he was introduced as general manager last May. It's why he brought in leaders like Porter and alternate captain Nathan Paetsch, players he was familiar with from past stops in his career.

Porter may not have played a game in a Sabres uniform this season, but that doesn't mean he hasn't affected the NHL club.

"He spent most of the season in Rochester, but it doesn't mean that he hasn't helped this team," Baptiste said. "From being in Rochester, he's developed so many young guys, myself included."

"... He's a guy that just keeps things light all the time. If things are going tough, he finds a way to lighten everybody up and get things right back on track. I can't say enough about what he's meant, not only to my season but also a lot of the young guys who have continue to come up here."

Porter saw first-hand how playoff experience in the AHL can translate to the NHL during his time in Pittsburgh, when regulars on playoff teams in Wilkes-Barre/Scranton were able to step in and become contributors to Pittsburgh's back-to-back Stanley Cup runs.

The Sabres will finish their season in last place after falling to Ottawa on Wednesday. But knowing the young players on the roster, Porter believes that many of the faces already in the organization can be a part of the turn-around. In that sense, their experience in this playoff run will be invaluable.

"They get that experience down there, there's going to be four, five, six, seven guys from there coming up here," Porter said. "If they're used to losing, it's going to continue up here. If we can get down there and go on a long playoff run and hopefully win a Calder Cup, that experience for them is going to translate up here."

When asked to name an MVP for the Amerks this season, many of the young players in the Sabres dressing room were quick to mention Porter's name. He was flattered by the sentiment, but thinks there's plenty of praise to go around.

"I think there's a lot of good players down there," he said. "We've all been playing well, we've been playing as a team. That's why we're getting to the playoffs and hopefully making a long run."

## **Sabres will soon replenish Amerks for AHL playoff run**

*Olean Times Herald*

**By: Bill Hoppe**

Casey Nelson believes the opportunity offers a “second chance.” In a few days, after the Sabres complete their disastrous season, about eight players will return to the AHL and begin the Rochester Americans’ first playoff series in four years.

“We all want nothing more than to win a championship,” the defenseman said Thursday inside KeyBank Center after the Sabres prepared for tonight’s tilt against the Tampa Bay Lightning, the start of a two-game, season-ending road trip.

The Amerks’ solid season quickly became the biggest positive in a Sabres campaign widely regarded as the worst in franchise history. As big club stumbled out of the gate, losing seven of its first eight games, the Amerks roared, winning nine of their opening 15 contests.

But not surprisingly, attrition has hurt the Amerks. The Sabres have experienced injuries all season. They also want to examine some of their best prospects.

That’s why top defenseman Brendan Guhle has earned a 16-game look. Goalie Linus Ullmark, meanwhile, played five times before suffering a concussion. Even winger Alexander Nylander was recalled Tuesday. The former first-round pick endured a miserable start before getting on track in February.

The Sabres’ new regime also wants to reward veterans, so they summoned Amerks captain Kevin Porter, 32, with Nylander. They also recalled defenseman Matt Tennyson on Monday to provide depth.

So by next week, the Sabres should infuse the Amerks with 43 goals, 129 points and Ullmark, an AHL All-Star, and his backup, Adam Wilcox. The goalies have combined for 31 of Rochester’s 34 wins this season.

Nelson, 25, and winger Nick Baptiste, 22, have received the longest looks from the Sabres, becoming regulars during the second half. The Amerks placed both on their clear day roster, meaning they’re eligible for the AHL playoffs.

Very quietly, Nelson has become the Sabres’ biggest surprise, morphing into a defenseman so reliable coach Phil Housley regularly plays him more than 20 minutes.

Baptiste, meanwhile, has played 31 games, compiling four goals and six points in mostly a checking-type role.

“In certain situations, you got to do the necessary things to stay up there,” said Baptiste, who’s in the final season of his entry-level contract. “I think that’s part of the reason for why I’m still up here is that I’ve been able to use my speed, draw a couple penalties, be physical.”

The youngsters' contributions haven't stopped the Sabres from losing. The NHL's worst team often defeats NHL heavyweights by operating as a cohesive unit. It falls apart against weak opponents, showcasing little effort and freelancing.

The Sabres demonstrated zero consistency all season, never winning more than three straight games.

"We'll have some good nights here and there, and then I feel like can't really chain them together as consistently as we want," said Nelson, who has compiled three goals and eight points in 35 games. "You know the good teams win one, two, three, four in a row multiple times ... through the year. That's what it's about is consistency."

Baptiste said the Sabres must "be better as a group." That means trusting the game plan and "be more willing to win for one another."

"That's the biggest thing," he said. "I think we need to understand that individually we're all talented players. When we're a group, that makes us a good hockey team. It's no secret we're in last place, it's a tough place to be. But there's only room for improvement."

"I think if, as a group, we can kind of look ourselves in the mirror and figure out what it is as an individual you can bring to the table to make to be better in a team sense, it'll help us immensely and improve this team."

In the near future, some Sabres will replenish Rochester's roster. None of the organization's prospects homegrown prospects have ever played in an AHL postseason game.

"That's just a whole different game, I think," said Porter, who won the Stanley Cup with the Pittsburgh Penguins in 2016. "For them to get that experience and see how hard teams play and guys play in playoffs, I think that's going to be a great experience."

## **Some Sabres hope long playoff run awaits in Rochester**

*Buffalo News*

**By: John Vogl**

The Buffalo Sabres have two games left. Brendan Guhle, Casey Nelson, Nick Baptiste, Alex Nylander, Kevin Porter and Linus Ullmark have as many as 29 remaining.

That's fine by them.

After the Sabres close the NHL season Friday in Tampa Bay and Saturday in Florida, the organization will send the aforementioned players back to Rochester. The Amerks have five regular-season games remaining as a tuneup for the playoffs. They hope the postseason goes on for four rounds.

"We'd all want nothing more than to go win a championship," Nelson said Thursday in KeyBank Center. "You can almost call it a second chance for a few of us to go make some noise in the playoffs."

Rochester has clinched an American Hockey League postseason spot, but its first-round opponent has yet to be determined. The Amerks (34-20-17) are in third place in the North Division with 85 points, and Utica is in fourth place with 83. The third-place team will play Syracuse (43-20-7) while the fourth-place team will face Toronto (51-18-2).

No matter the opponent, the current Sabres and former/future Amerks see championship potential.

"We have a really good shot at making a good run and some noise," Nelson said. "Hopefully, we'll have the city of Rochester rocking."

The Amerks haven't made the playoffs since 2013-14. Buffalo's minor-league team hasn't won a playoff series since 2010-11, when the prospects played in Portland, Maine.

"It would be great to get some playoff experience," Baptiste said. "It's obviously something I haven't done in a couple years now, and it would be exciting to try and win with a great group of guys down there."

The Amerks have stayed afloat despite a litany of callups, including extended ones. To have Guhle, Nelson, Baptiste and Ullmark return will be a boost now and in the future.

"There's going to be four, five, six, seven guys from that team coming up here," Porter said. "If they're used to losing, it's going to continue up here. But if we can get down there and go on a long playoff run and hopefully win a Calder Cup, that experience for them is going to translate up here. "

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Ullmark, who has missed the Sabres' last five games with a concussion, joined the team for its season-ending road trip. It's possible he plays, though Chad Johnson and Adam Wilcox also flew to the Sunshine State.

Fellow goaltender Robin Lehner stayed in Buffalo, so his season is over because of a lower-body injury. Lehner went 14-26-9 with a .908 save percentage and 3.01 goals-against average.



**Amerks captain Kevin Porter grateful for recall to Sabres**  
*Olean Times Herald*  
**By: Bill Hoppe**

In three seasons between his stints in the Sabres organization, forward Kevin Porter played 43 NHL games. One year, the former Hobey Baker Award winner stayed in the minors all season. In another one, he played just two contests.

But two years ago, Porter, 32, earned regular duty with the Pittsburgh Penguins, playing 41 contests before an ankle injury ended his season.

While Porter missed the playoffs, he experienced the Stanley Cup run up close. When the Penguins clinched, he raised the trophy in full uniform during the team celebration.

Sharing the ice with Sidney Crosby, Evgeni Malkin and others taught him how hard some of the world's most talented players work.

The lessons Porter learned throughout the 2015-16 campaign have stuck with him.

"That was pretty special, you learn a lot from guys like that," Porter said this morning inside KeyBank Center. "I don't know if that was something I brought over to Rochester a little bit, but definitely a fun ride but I'll never forget."

Right now, Porter is back with the Sabres, "a reward for the work he's done in Rochester," coach Phil Housley said.

"He's been a terrific leader for them, he's molded those young guys done there," Housley said.

Porter won't play tonight against the Ottawa Senators. Still, reaching the NHL again is special.

"This is what I've worked for," Porter said.

Porter played 43 games with the Sabres during his first stint in 2012-13 and 2013-14. He also captained the Americans, a role he assumed again this season.

The presence of Sabres general manager Jason Botterill and Amerks coach Chris Taylor helped lure Porter back to the organization.

Botterill ran the Penguins' AHL affiliate in Wilkes-Barre Scranton as part of the duties as Pittsburgh's associate GM. Taylor, meanwhile, was an AHL assistant for the Penguins last season.

"There was a few factors in me ending up coming back to the organization, Chris Taylor and Jason Botterill, those are two big keys, both great hockey guys, they know what they're doing," Porter said. "I knew they'd be trying to win here, Rochester, so that was something I wanted to be a part of and they thought I could help. So I think it's been a good fit."

After three down years, the Amerks recently clinched their first playoff spot since 2014.

“That’s big, especially for the young guys getting some experience in playoff games,” said Porter, who has compiled 16 goals and 40 points in 64 games this season. “Those are different games, everyone knows that, they’re a little bit harder, they’re a little more intense.”

## **Blackwell's two goals lead Amerks to win**

*Buffalo News*

**By: Staff Report**

Collin Blackwell scored his second goal of the game 36 seconds into the third period to give the Rochester Americans a 3-2 victory over Laval Rocket at Place Bell in Laval, Quebec Wednesday night.

Blackwell continued his hot hand. He has 11 points in his last five games, 17 in his last 10. His overtime goal produced a win over Charlotte last Friday.

Danny O'Regan had an assist on each of Blackwell's goals as third-place Rochester (34-20-11-6) expanded its lead over fourth place Utica in the North Division standings of the American Hockey League. Utica was idle Wednesday, but will play an 11 a.m. game at Toronto today.

Blackwell's first goal tied the game at 1 in the first period. Sean Malone scored the second Amerks goal, tying the game at 2-all with 21 seconds left in the second period. It was his 11th of the season.

Jonas Johansson had 19 saves for Rochester, which will begin a four-game final home stand on Friday against Belleville on Friday night.

**Healthy and producing, Nylander gets chance to show he belongs in NHL**  
*Buffalo News*  
**By: John Vogl**

When Alex Nylander arrived in Buffalo last summer, he was eager to prove he belonged. He'd bulked up and said he'd grown up. He was determined to play for the Sabres.

Seven months later, the winger will get his chance.

An injury derailed the start of Nylander's season, but he has an opportunity to finish strong. The No. 8 overall pick in the 2016 NHL Draft will play in Buffalo's final three games, starting with Wednesday's home finale against Ottawa.

The games will give him a jump-start to prove he belongs in Buffalo next season.

"I'm going to take everything from here into next year," Nylander said after the morning skate in KeyBank Center. "It's obviously going to make me very prepared and get me going even more for the summer of training. I'll just take everything I learn these few games, be a pro in the way the game's played and bring it into next year."

Determination to be a pro has been what's hindered Nylander during his two seasons in the organization. Supremely skilled, the winger also disappears for long stretches.

"He's a skilled player, and when he works hard he can change a game," said Rochester captain Kevin Porter, who was recalled with Nylander. "He's got a lot of skill, and I think he just needs to be more consistent."

There are finally signs of consistency for the 20-year-old. Nylander has five goals and 17 points in the last 20 games with the Amerks, boosting his season totals to seven goals and 26 points in 48 games.

"I've been good there for a month or two, and I just really like the way I'm playing," Nylander said. "I need to bring it up here as well."

Consistency issues aside, there's no doubt the injury hurt Nylander. He suffered the lower-body ailment in the first game of Buffalo's prospects challenge in September, and he didn't join the Amerks until Nov. 17.

"It was a little tough there coming back from an injury, but I feel like it's a lot better now," Nylander said. "I'm more confident with the puck and stuff like that, so I'm just going to keep playing my game and bring what I did down there to a couple games up here."

This is the second straight season Nylander will get a taste of NHL life. He played in the final four games last year, recording an assist. He says he's more prepared this time, and the Sabres hope so.

"He's played really well the last 20 games," Sabres coach Phil Housley said. "He's got eight points in his last eight games. That's one of the reasons why he's gotten rewarded to come up here.

"I just want to see him do what he's done in Rochester recently. I think he's gotten to the hard areas. He's going to the net much harder and using his skill."

Nylander is getting a shot on a skill-filled line. The left winger will skate with center Casey Mittelstadt and right wing Kyle Okposo.

"I've played against him in international tournaments," Mittelstadt said. "He has a ton of talent, a ton of potential. The main thing that stands out for me is his vision. He can make plays all over the ice, and he's obviously especially good in the offensive zone."

The organization is waiting for the offensive numbers to blossom. Buffalo selected Nylander in the first round after he recorded 34 goals and 87 points in 63 games in the Ontario Hockey League. He has 17 goals and 54 points in 113 games with Rochester.

At the start of last season, the Sabres had the option to put Nylander in Rochester, keep him in juniors or loan him to a European team. They opted to let him play against men in the American Hockey League, and Nylander is fine with the choice.

"It's been good for me," he said. "I've learned a lot of things. I've just got to keep going while I'm down there and hopefully get a call up.

"Obviously, the start of the next year I want to be here with the Buffalo Sabres, but I think my development has been good. Really now I'm getting more confident and getting to know the league and getting to play against men."

Nylander will return to the Amerks following Saturday's season finale in Florida, and the AHL playoffs await. Porter sees that as another important step for Nylander's learning curve.

"Playoffs down there is going to help a player like him a ton, just to see how hard it is and how hard he needs to play every night to make it up here," Porter said.

The goal for Nylander and the Sabres is to get the prospect ready to make it in the NHL.

"It was my goal at the beginning of this year, obviously, but I got an injury there that you can't really do anything about," Nylander said. "I'm going to be working really hard just like I did last summer, be as prepared as possible to be with the Buffalo Sabres next year."

## **Sabres reward Porter with late-season call-up**

*Buffalo News*

**By: John Vogl**

Kevin Porter's job was to lead the Rochester Americans into the playoffs and, in the process, teach the prospects how to be professionals.

With that accomplished, Porter is getting an NHL paycheck and a trip to Florida.

The Sabres have recalled the Amerks' captain for the final three games of the season. He won't play in Wednesday's home finale but might be in the lineup Friday in Tampa Bay or Saturday in Florida.

"It's just a reward for the work he's done down in Rochester," Sabres coach Phil Housley said in KeyBank Center. "He's been a terrific leader for them. He's molded those young guys down there, and it's just a reward for him."

Porter has 16 goals and 40 points in 64 games for the Amerks. He rejoined the organization on a two-year deal last summer after playing for Buffalo and Rochester from 2012 to 2014. The 32-year-old knew General Manager Jason Botterill and Amerks coach Chris Taylor after playing for them in Pittsburgh's organization the previous two years.

"I knew they'd be trying to win here and Rochester, so that was something I wanted to be a part of," Porter said. "They thought I could help, so I think it's been a good fit."

"It's obviously always good to be back. I'm excited to be up here and hopefully get in a game."

**Laval Rocket lose eighth straight game, falling 3-2 to Rochester**  
*Montreal Gazette*  
**By: Staff Report**

Colin Blackwell scored twice, including the winning goal, to help the Rochester Americans inflict an eighth consecutive loss on the Laval Rocket at Place Bell Wednesday night.

Sean Malone scored the Americans' second goal and Danny O'Reagan recorded two assists for the visitors. Goalie Jonas Johansson stopped 25 of the 27 shots he faced and allowed only one goal on four short-handed attempts.

Adam Cracknell and Antoine Waked led the Rocket, who squandered a one-goal lead twice to extend their losing streak. Charlie Lindgren made 30 saves in a losing effort.

The Rocket's Cracknell took advantage of the Americans' indiscipline to open the scoring at 11:20 of the first period.

Just over two minutes later, Trevor Owens coughed up the puck in the offensive, allowing Blackwell to tie the score.

Waked beat Johansson with a long shot, which seemed to surprise the netminder. Laval's Anthony Beaugard got an assist on the play and it was his first point in the American Hockey League.

Malone once again knotted the score at 2-2 with only 21 seconds left in the second period. Seth Griffith served a superb pass to Malone, who beat Lindgren.

Blackwell scored 36 seconds into the third period to give the Americans their final margin of victory.

## **Productive stretch earns Alexander Nylander recall to Sabres**

*Olean Times Herald*

**By: Bill Hoppe**

Four or five months ago, it appeared slick Sabres prospect Alexander Nylander's second pro season would be a dud.

In rookie camp, Nylander suffered a lower-body injury, costing him more than two months. The former eighth overall pick struggled following his season debut in mid-November, mustering only one goal and four points in his first 12 AHL outings.

But Nylander, 20, started turning a miserable campaign around early in the winter. The winger thrived during his third appearance with Team Sweden at the World Junior Championship in Buffalo after Christmas.

Nylander finally started producing for the Rochester Americans around mid-February. In his last 20 games, he has compiled five goals and 16 points, including two goals and eight points in the last eight contests.

"It was tough coming back from an injury, but I feel a lot better now, more confident with the puck and stuff like that," Nylander prior to Wednesday's 4-2 loss to the Ottawa Senators inside KeyBank Center. "I need to ... bring what I did down there."

The Sabres recalled Nylander on Tuesday, his first trip to the NHL since a four-game stint late last season.

"I just want to see him (do) what he's done in Rochester recently," Sabres coach Phil Housley said. "I think he's gone to the hard areas, he's going to the net much harder and using his skill."

As Housley said, physicality has helped buoy the 6-foot-1, 192-pound Nylander. The youngster has been occupying the front of the net during power plays in Rochester.

"I like ... he was going harder to the net," Housley said. "He was paying a price to score goals."

Nylander skated at left wing beside center Casey Mittelstadt, another first-round rookie, and veteran Kyle Okposo early on. Evan Rodrigues later replaced Mittelstadt, who moved to left wing beside center Jack Eichel and Jason Pominville.

To Mittelstadt, 19, Nylander's vision stands out.

"He can make plays all over the ice," said Mittelstadt, who made his NHL debut last week. "He's obviously especially good in the offensive zone."

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Sabres winger Zemgus Girgensons underwent facial surgery Wednesday and is out for the season, Housley said. Girgensons recently played several games wearing a cage.

Meanwhile, Housley said goalies Robin Lehner (lower body) and Linus Ullmark (concussion) are still day-to-day. The Sabres hope Ullmark can play this weekend.

Defenseman Nathan Beaulieu (flu) and winger Jordan Nolan (healthy scratch) returned Wednesday. The Sabres scratched winger Benoit Pouliot and defensemen Josh Gorges and Matt Tennyson (all healthy).

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The Sabres announced the following season award winners prior to Wednesday's home finale: Eichel, MVP; Girgensons, Unsung Hero; defenseman Victor Antipin, Rookie of the Year; defenseman Zach Bogosian Sabres Foundation Man of the Year.

Players vote on the awards.

**Amerks Stay Hot**  
***13 Wham***  
**By: Staff Report**

The playoff-bound Rochester Americans (34-20-11-6) opened the final month of the 2017-18 regular season the same way they concluded the last two games of March; with a victory. With a 3-2 win Wednesday night at Place Bell against the Laval Rocket (24-38-7-2), the Amerks finished the eight-game season-series with a 6-2-0-0 record.

The win also gives Rochester a three-point cushion of the Utica Comets in the AHL's North Division standings with 11 days left of the regular season.

Colin Blackwell scored a pair of goals, including the game-winning tally for the third time in the last four games, while Danny O'Regan chipped in a two assists for Rochester. First-year forward Sean Malone scored his 11th of the season to round out the scoring while rookie goaltender Jonas Johansson picked up his third straight victory in as many games to improve his record to 3-2-0 on the campaign.

Three-time AHL All-Star and last year's AHL's Eddie Shore Award winner Matt Taormina notched his career-best 46 and 47th assists of the season for the Rocket, who have just two wins in the last 15 contests. Adam Cracknell scored his 28th goal of the slate while forward Antoine Waked tallied his seventh. Netminder Charlie Lindgren, who entered the game with an 8-0-2 record in his last 10 appearances against the Amerks dating back to last season as member of the St. John's IceCaps, took the loss.

As it appeared the Amerks were going to be trailing the Rocket 2-1 going into the second intermission, Malone tied the game at 2-2 with 21 seconds showing on the clock.

Gathering the puck to the left of the Amerks net, defenseman Nathan Paetsch sent an outlet pass to Seth Griffith standing near the far blueline. Upon entering the Rocket zone, the former AHL All-Star fired a shot-pass to the stick of Malone near Lindgren and the Buffalo native redirected the puck into the net.

It was the second straight game Malone and Paetsch have teamed up for a goal. As for Paetsch, he has four assists over his last eight games while Griffith shows seven points (4+3) over his last eight outings.

As the teams emerged from the break tied at 2-2, Blackwell gave Rochester its first and only lead of the night as he plotted his second of the contest and 14th of the season just 36 seconds into the third period.

With the Amerks controlling the opening face-off of the final frame, defenseman Taylor Fedun fired a shot from the right point. The puck, however, glanced off O'Regan's stick before coming to a rest in front of Lindgren's left arm as he was on his stomach. Blackwell scooped up the rebound and flipped it past the defenseless netminder to give the Amerks a 3-2 lead.

The marker gives Blackwell 40 points on the season in 56 games, after having just 11 points (4+7) in 57 games last season with San Jose Barracuda. Over his last 10 games, the second-year forward has 17 points (8+9) and six multi-point efforts dating back to Mar. 11. Currently, Blackwell is riding a career-long five-game point streak (7+4).

Over the final 19-plus minutes of regulation, the Amerks carried much of the play as they outshot the Rocket 11-6, but Lindgren kept the home team within a goal. Then, in an effort to tie the game, Laval pulled its netminder for the extra attacker for the final 1:13, but Johansson stood tall and held on for his third straight win.

The 3-2 victory gives Rochester a five-game point streak (4-0-1-0), and for Johansson, it establishes a personal career-long three-game winning streak.

The Amerks return home to The Blue Cross Arena to kick-off their final four-game homestand, beginning on Friday, Apr. 6 against the Belleville Senators before hosting the league-leading Toronto Marlies on Saturday night. Both games will start at 7:05 p.m. and can be heard live on The Sports Leader 95.7 FM/950 AM ESPN Rochester.

**Botterill: 'There's a lot of potential' with our young core**  
**WGR 550**  
**By: Staff Report**

Buffalo Sabres general manager Jason Botterill has not made a ton of moves in his first season in Buffalo. For the end of the season though, he's brought up a lot of young players to get a look at such as Casey Mittelstadt, Linus Ullmark, Casey Nelson, Brendan Guhle, and now Alex Nylander.

Here's some of the best from Jason Botterill's visit with Schopp and the Bulldog, including his opinion on Nylander:

*On Casey Mittelstadt signing with the Sabres:*

"Very proud of how Casey handled the World Juniors. Just wanted him to focus on University of Minnesota. There's always time after the season. It was an abrupt end to the season. Wanted to give him a little time to recover from that. If you're forcing a player to come out, it's not a recipe for success."

*On Will Borgen and Mittelstadt getting experience:*

"Think it'll be huge for Will to get the development down there. Unique thing with Casey is confirmation that he'd be able to play at World Championships. Casey hadn't played in almost a month. Great experience to play good teams in Nashville in Toronto. All that will set him up for success in September."

*On Nylander's development:*

"Been very happy with how he's performed in the second half. Excited to watch Nylander & Mittelstadt at development camp because of skill level. Injury really set him back. Second half, even when production hasn't come there's been a willingness from Alex to get into battles and get to the net. Think he's got 17 points in some amount of games, a lot around the net. Similar to Sam Reinhart."

*On the "core" of this Sabres' team:*

"It's been imperative that this group learn to win games. That was the disappointing thing with Jack's injury. Our group is a young group. Have to learn how to get some confidence and win together. There's no value in losing. Look at Colorado. Worst team last year, picked fourth, now they're in the playoffs."

*On the incoming young players:*

"We have young players we want to build with. There's a lot of potential there. Huge opportunity to change and take another step. We feel we have players in Rochester pushing for positions. Guys like Guhle and Nelson bringing speed we didn't have. Disappointing here that Ullmark isn't getting games. That's another guy that could take a step next year."

*On Casey Nelson becoming a UFA:*

"He's important because of his age. There has been improvement in his game this year. We're trying to build a relationship with Casey Nelson and his agency. Feel really good with where we're

at right now. He's playing a lot of minutes right now. Great experience for both him and Guhle right now."

**Laval vs. Rochester recap & highlights: Rocket stumble against the Americans**  
*Eyes On The Prize*  
**By: Scott Matla**

It was a night of debuts for the Laval Rocket on Wednesday night as five players on tryout contracts made their first in-game appearance at Place Bell. For the Amerks, they already clinched their playoff spot and are looking to nail down a better seed, while the Rocket are looking at players for next season already.

Rinat Valiev returned to the Rocket on the top pair opposite of Adam Plant, while the newly-signed tryout Garret McFadden slid into the third pair with Trevor Owens. On offence Tye Felhaber slotted into the third line spot, while David Broll was a last minute addition due to Jeremiah Addison coming down with the flu. Charlie Lindgren got the start in net, and opposite him was Jonas Johansson for the Amerks.

It was a quiet start for both teams, with each side failing to generate much of anything through the first half of the period. Then a high sticking call on Taylor Fedun sent a vaunted Rocket power play out onto the ice and they would take full advantage. A quick cycle from Chris Terry to Matt Taormina led to a shot from the point which Johansson kicked out and Adam Cracknell was right on the spot to slot the puck home for his 28th of the year.

The lead would be short-lived however, with Rochester getting an equalizer from Colin Blackwell just over two minutes later on a goal mouth scramble. Rochester would nearly give the lead back with Eric Cornel sitting for hooking a Rocket player, but their penalty kill was able to hold off Laval this time. After Yannick Veilleux got a golden chance on Johansson, he would then take a seat for hooking himself, but Fedun would cut the Amerks power play short after interfering with Antoine Waked.

Much like the opening period, neither team really took advantage of the four on four or abbreviated power play that started the period. The Amerks would head to another power play of their own as the Rocket were caught with too many men on the ice, but outside of a lone Danny O'Regan chance they never truly tested Lindgren in net.

Laval's fourth line would be the one to finally break the tie game, thanks in part to a perfect cross-ice feed by Matt Taormina. The Rocket defender picked out a streaking Antoine Waked with a pass and Waked would uncork a bullet of a shot that beat Johansson clean and give Laval the lead once again.

Despite a strong defensive effort for the remainder of the period by the Rocket, Rochester would still find a way to equalize before the second period ended. Seth Griffith got a puck towards the Laval net, and Sean Malone tipped it past Lindgren to tie the game with just 20 seconds left in the period.

It wouldn't take long for Rochester to take a lead of their own in the third period, after an icing to start the period an O'Regan shot got lost in a scramble out front, and Colin Blackwell would flip it into the open cage to make it 3-2 Rochester. The Rocket wouldn't do much to help their

comeback as Nikita Korostelev was called on a high stick, forcing a struggling penalty kill onto the ice. The Amerks tested Lindgren a few more times, but the Rocket netminder was up to the task and kept the deficit at just one goal.

Just past the midway point of the period, the Rocket's power play got another chance to shine as Justin Bailey was whistled for tripping up Markus Eisenschmid. Laval wasn't able to generate much pressure in the offensive zone during the man advantage. Shortly after their power play expired, Trevor Owens would sit for hooking Sean Malone in front of the Rocket net.

The penalty kill would step up once more, with Lindgren holding the fort against a number of solid Rochester challenges, still keeping the Amerks lead at just one goal. With Lindgren on the bench the Rocket mounted one more push on Johansson, but were not able to put a third puck past the Swedish giant before the final horn sounded.

Next up for the Rocket is a home game on Friday night against the Springfield Thunderbirds, before the team travels to Belleville for one last game against the Senators on Saturday.

**Sabres Notebook: Nylander, Porter recalled from Rochester**  
*Buffalo News*  
**By: Amy Moritz**

With just three games left in the Buffalo Sabres regular season, Alexander Nylander and Kevin Porter got the call from the big club.

The Sabres recalled the two forwards from the Rochester Americans on Tuesday afternoon. It's the first call-up for both players this season.

After an injury sidelined Nylander for training camp and the first month of the season, the former first-round pick found his groove with the Amerks. His point production has picked up lately, including eight points (two goals, six assists) in his last eight games.

Nylander was the eighth overall pick at the 2016 NHL Draft by the Sabres and made his NHL debut last season with one assist in four games. In 113 career games with the Amerks he has 54 points (17 goals, 37 assists) and helped Sweden to the silver medal in the IIHF World Junior Championship in Buffalo this season.

Porter, the captain of the Amerks, was signed by the Sabres on July 1 to provide roster depth and much-needed leadership in Rochester as the organization looked to make a culture change. Porter ranks third on the Amerks with 40 points (16 goals, 24 assists) in 64 games this season and has helped the Amerks to their first playoff berth since 2014.

Porter has played in 249 career NHL games with 58 points (29 goals, 29 assists) and has 290 points (111 goals, 179 assists) in 421 career AHL games.

\* \* \*

It's the final home game of the season for the Buffalo Sabres which means two things – a celebration of the fans and an end to the suffering.

The team will host its annual Fan Appreciation Night with a 7:30 p.m. faceoff Wednesday against the Ottawa Senators in KeyBank Center.

Home hasn't been a friendly confine for the Sabres this season. They will finish with the worst home record in the National Hockey League. Through 40 games, they have an 11-24-5 record. They've scored 89 goals while giving up 133.

With the performance lagging, the Sabres have stepped up festivities for Wednesday, including giving every fan in attendance a Dominik Hasek bobblehead. Prices at the concession stands will be down for the game, too, as hot dogs, soft pretzels, popcorn tubs, and Sabres souvenir soda cups will be \$3 each.

The Sabres store will offer 40 percent off purchases.



The team and its corporate sponsors will present awards in a pregame ceremony including Fan of the Year, Sabres Foundation Man of the Year, Unsung Hero, Rookie of the Year and Most Valuable Player.

\* \* \*

The Sabres were off on Tuesday following their 5-2 loss in Toronto to the Maple Leafs.

Buffalo scored twice on the power play, but a major lapse in the second period in which the Leafs scored three times in a span of 5:31, helped give playoff-bound Toronto the win.

In the second, the Sabres got away from "puck management," forward Jason Pominville said after the game. "We got away from what we do. We've got to defend hard to win games. Maybe too many turnovers fed their transition and what they do best. They're a good team. They stick to it. They don't deviate. We've got to defend and stick to what we do best to win games."

Sticking to the game plan has been an issue all season for the Sabres and Monday night's loss was another case study in their inconsistency. Buffalo had beaten the Leafs in Toronto a week earlier and had knocked off the Predators in Nashville, 7-4, on Saturday.

"That's the frustrating part," Pominville said. "At times you take a step forward and you think you're heading in the right direction and then we take a step back and didn't play the way we want to play. I mean we're playing good teams. We played a great game in Nashville and got a good start (Monday in Toronto) and then after that it just wasn't the way we need to play to win and we got the result we did."

\* \* \*

Wednesday will mark the fourth and final meeting between Ottawa and Buffalo this season with the Sabres holding a 2-0-1 advantage.

The Sabres opened the season series with a 3-2 win in KeyBank Center on Dec. 12. Buffalo scored three times in the second period to open up the lead on goals from Benoit Pouliot, Kyle Okposo and Evander Kane. The Sens came back with two in the third, but Robin Lehner shut the door with 23 saves against his former team.

The Senators picked up two points on Feb. 15 at home in a 3-2 overtime win. Buffalo had a 2-1 lead in the third period, thanks to a goal from Evan Rodrigues at the 15:31 mark. But Derick Brassard scored with 31 seconds left to send the game to overtime and Mike Hoffman tallied at 1:13 of OT to give Ottawa the win.

Their meeting on March 8 also went beyond regulation, but this time it was the Sabres picking up the two points in a shootout win. Marco Scandella, Sam Reinhart and Scott Wilson all scored in regulation while Jacob Josefson had the game-winner in the shootout.

Sabres recall Alexander Nylander, Kevin Porter from Amerks

*Olean Times Herald*

By: Bill Hoppe

The Sabres recalled prospect Alexander Nylander, the eighth overall pick in 2016, and veteran Kevin Porter from the Rochester Americans today.

Neither forward has played in the NHL this season. The Sabres finish their home schedule Wednesday against the Ottawa Senators.

Nylander, 20, played four NHL games last season. Following a slow start this year, the Swede has caught fire, compiling five goals and 16 points in his last 20 outings

Overall, Nylander has scored seven goals and 26 points in 48 games.

Meanwhile, Porter, 32, has scored 16 goals and 40 points in 64 contests this season. The captain played 43 games with the Sabres over stints in 2012-13 and 2013-14.

The Sabres have today off.

## **Sabres call up a pair from Rochester**

*ESPN Rochester*

**By: Staff Report**

With three games left in the 2017-18 season, the Buffalo Sabres have made a couple of call ups from the Rochester Americans.

Forwards Alexander Nylander and Kevin Porter were recalled from the Amerks on Wednesday as the team had the day off from practice.

Nylander got off to a rough start to the 2017-18 season in Rochester after returning from a lower-body injury during the Sabres Prospects Challenge in September. After just two goals and four assists in the first 15 games of the season, Nylander was loaned to the Swedish National Hockey team for the IIHF World Junior Championship in Buffalo. He scored a goal and added six assists for the Swedes, but ended up capturing the silver medal after losing out to Canada for the gold.

Since January 27, Nylander has been playing very well in Rochester, registering five goals and 20 points in 26 games.

The 20-year-old has been playing well enough in Rochester to garner another look at the NHL before the end of the season. Last season, Nylander spent the last four games of the year with the Sabres, registering his first career point on an assist in the final game against the Tampa Bay Lightning.

So far in 113 games in the AHL, Nylander has scored 17 goals and added 37 assists.

As for Porter, he will look to dress as a Sabre for the first time since December 21, 2013. Porter had spent two seasons with the Sabres organization, appearing in 43 games while scoring six goals and adding six assists. Since then, Porter had spent three seasons with the Pittsburgh Penguins organization and played in 43 games at the NHL level.

This season in Rochester, Porter has scored 16 goals and registered 40 points while serving as team captain.

The Sabres will return to the ice on Wednesday for the morning skate before the home finale against the Ottawa Senators.

## **Trade your plastic bag for free Amerks tickets**

*Spectrum News*

**By: Staff Report**

That leftover plastic grocery bag that's jammed in the kitchen cupboard is worth a free ticket to next week's Amerks game.

Monroe County, the Amerks and Wegmans are teaming up to hold a Refresh Recycle Night in an effort to get customers thinking more about recycling. To earn that free ticket, bring a recyclable item to the county's Ecopark off of Paul Road, during three designated times, to get a ticket voucher in exchange.

In addition, Wegmans will be providing reusable bags for all fans attending next Wednesday night's game against the Syracuse Crunch. Wegmans says the partnership is just another way to get customers thinking about recycling those pesty plastic bags.

"Plastic bags are not this evil thing of the environment if you do the right thing with them," said Jason Wadsworth, Wegmans manager of sustainability. "At Wegmans we're all about making a difference in our communities and this is one more way you can make a difference; if you forget your reusable bag, if you choose to use plastic for other reasons, you can bring that back to Wegmans and we're going to take that bag along with all of the other material like Cheryl [Dinolfo] mentioned; the cereal bag liners, bread bags, overwrap on bottled water, and we're going to make brand new bags out of that."

To earn that free ticket voucher, bring a recyclable item to the Ecopark at 10 Avion Drive from 1 p.m. to 6:30 p.m. on April 4, 7:30 a.m. to 1 p.m. on April 7 and from 1 p.m. to 6:30 p.m. on April 11.

## **Sabres recall 2016 1st-round pick Nylander**

*The Score*

**By: Cory Wilkins**

Alexander Nylander is getting a late-season audition.

The 20-year-old forward was recalled from the AHL's Rochester Americans on Tuesday and could get into the Sabres' lineup for their three remaining regular-season games.

In 48 contests with the Americans this year, Nylander has notched seven goals and 19 assists. He made his NHL debut with the Sabres last season, appearing in four games, in which he picked up one assist.

The Sabres' next game comes Wednesday against the Ottawa Senators.

Nylander, selected with the eighth pick in the 2016 draft, is the younger brother of William Nylander of the Toronto Maple Leafs.

## **Nylander, Porter earn late-season call-ups to parent Sabres**

*Democrat & Chronicle*

**By: Leo Roth**

Alex Nylander and Kevin Porter are getting a late-season look from the parent Buffalo Sabres.

The Rochester Americans forwards were recalled on Tuesday. It's the first call-up of the season for each.

Nylander, Buffalo's first-round pick in 2016 and No. 8 overall, has spent the majority of his first two pro seasons in Rochester.

He has 17 goals and 37 assists in 113 career games for the Amerks, including eight (2-6) points in his last eight games. He recorded one assist in four games with the Sabres late last year.

Porter is third in scoring for the Amerks this season with 16 goals and 24 assists for 40 points in 64 games. The Detroit native has appeared in 249 NHL games and has scored 29 goals to go with 29 assists at the top level.

## **Monroe Co. makes push to deal with plastic bags**

*Rochester First*

**By: Staff Report**

Monroe County is teaming up with the Amerks and Wegmans for a renewed push to encourage proper recycling of plastic bags.

They don't belong in the trash or curbside recycling, as they can cause major issues at the recycling plant. They need to be recycled either back at the grocery store, or a recycling plant -- like the Monroe County Eco Park, and if you choose the Eco Park, you may get an extra bonus.

"Anyone that brings a recyclable item here to the Eco-Park either tomorrow, Saturday the 7th, or next Wednesday the 11th of April, you're going to get a free ticket voucher to our game on April 11 against the Syracuse Crunch," explains Rob Minter, Amerks VP of Business Operations.

That game is a big one for the Amerks: It's a potential playoff seeding game against Syracuse.

## **Recycling could land you with a free Amerks ticket**

*13 Wham*

**By: Staff Report**

Helping the environment can help you score a free ticket to next week's Amerks game.

All you have to do is bring a recyclable item to Monroe County's EcoPark off of Paul Road during three designated times to get a ticket voucher for Refresh Recycling Night at the Blue Cross Arena.

Additionally, Wegmans is offering people a convenient option for recycling plastic bags.

"You can bring that back to Wegmans, and we're going to take that bag with all other material -- cereal bag liners, bread bags, overwrap on bottled water -- and we're going to make brand new bags out of that," said Jason Wadsworth, manager of sustainability for Wegmans. "Now, when you bring your bags to the EcoPark, we're going to collect that as well. We'll bring it back to our facility, bale it and we're going to make brand new Wegmans bags."

**Amerks, MC partner for Refresh Recycling Night**  
***C&C World Wide***  
**By: Staff Report**

The Rochester Americans and Monroe County Executive Cheryl Dinolfo announced today the return of Refresh Recycling Night on Wednesday, April 11 when the Amerks take on the Syracuse Crunch at the Blue Cross Arena. The game will feature ticket deals and a recycling-themed giveaway.

“Teaming-up with the Amerks is a great way to highlight the importance of recycling, which protects taxpayers and the environment by keeping unnecessary waste out of landfills,” said Dinolfo. “Safeguarding this region’s unrivaled natural resources also helps support our ongoing work to attract more jobs and investment to Monroe County. I thank the Amerks for their partnership, and I encourage fans to exchange their plastic bags and other recyclables at our Ecopark to score free tickets to the game on April 11.”

Reducing consumption of plastic bags is the best environmental option for residents, so fans attending the game will receive a commemorative reusable shopping bag as a postgame handout. Additionally, any fan that brings a recyclable item to the Monroe County Ecopark on one of the following dates will receive a free ticket voucher to the Refresh Recycling Night game:

Wednesday, April 4  
Saturday, April 7  
Wednesday, April 11

“The Rochester Americans are excited to renew their partnership with Monroe County Executive Dinolfo and her staff in the Department of Environmental Services on this very worthwhile initiative,” said Rob Minter, Vice President of Business Operations for the Amerks. “Refresh Recycling Night provides yet another opportunity to not only help raise awareness for improving recycling measures here in our community, but also rewards County residents for doing their part with the chance to attend next Wednesday’s Amerks game.”

Refresh Recycling Night will remind residents to recycle their plastic bags properly, either by reuse or by bringing them to a retailer, supermarket or the Ecopark. Plastic bags should not be thrown in the garbage and should not be recycled in curbside bins.

The Ecopark is an innovative partnership between Monroe County and Waste Management. Located at 10 Avion Dr. in the town of Chili, the facility is open on Wednesdays from 1-6:30 pm., and on Saturdays from 7:30 am to 1 pm. For a full list of acceptable items, associated fees and necessary appointments, please visit [www.ecoparkmcny.com](http://www.ecoparkmcny.com)

Amerks to 'Pink the Rink' for breast cancer awareness

***Fox Rochester***

By: Staff Report

This Saturday, the Rochester Amerks will "Pink the Rink" for breast cancer awareness.

The event is presented by Gilda's Club of Rochester which helps people with cancer throughout the area.

Johanna Lester from Gilda's Club joined us on Good Day Rochester along with Amerks Reporter Erica Whyte to preview the event.