



# ROCHESTER AMERICANS

DAILY PRESS CLIPS

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*TONIGHT'S GAME: Hartford @ Rochester*

Inside the Sabres: Q&A with Amerks coach Chris Taylor  
*Buffalo News*  
By: *Lance Lysowski*

When Chris Taylor was hired as coach of the Rochester Americans in June 2017, he was tasked with developing a roster dotted with former high draft picks, including Alexander Nylander.

The Amerks had missed the playoffs for three consecutive seasons and finished with 32 wins in 2016-17. That drought ended in Taylor's first season with 91 regular-season points, and Rochester entered Friday's games first in the AHL's North Division with 38 points.

The Buffalo Sabres' success has added to the excitement around Blue Cross Arena. Though the Amerks' singular focus is on their own play, they have enjoyed following the success of friends and former teammates. That resurgence has also motivated Taylor's players.

The Buffalo News spoke one-on-one with Taylor about his plan in Rochester, the Sabres' success and how some of the Amerks' players are developing this season.

Q: Is there anything you wanted to change about the team either on or off the ice in your second season here?

A: We tweaked a couple things here with practice and a few different things. Days off, when we should give them time to rest, our workout sessions. We changed a lot of different things like how we do video. All that kind of stuff. You're always trying to tweak things to get a little bit better. You're always learning and trying to do different things, how to adjust. I'm still learning every day. There's always a learning curve on my part, and there's a learning curve on these guys' part.

Q: Has it helped having a system already in place, even though you do have some new players like Victor Olofsson and Rasmus Asplund?

A: Definitely. It helps a lot. When you bring back some key members of your team, that really helps me and our staff get our systems and what we want and how we want the culture around here. When you keep having major turnover and change, it's tough to create that good culture that we want to keep having. With our key veterans and a lot of second-, third-year guys that are back, we're creating the culture we want and sustaining it to make our organization a good one.

Q: Does it help with player development when the Sabres have not needed to call up many players at this point in the season?

A: Yeah, you're consistently doing the same thing and consistently it's the same message every day. That's what we want. It takes time. You can't just tell someone, "This is what we want," and it's going to happen. It's talking to them consistently, showing them what we want and delivering that same message.

When they're here for a while, they can grasp that message a lot better and keep learning from it. That's what they're doing.

They're willing to put that hard work in and that's half the battle right there. We have good people in the locker room.

Q: Have you noticed the Sabres' success have an effect on this group?

A: Absolutely. It's huge. It's an organizational thing. That makes us want to play that much better because it's going to be hard to get up there. For us, it's great to see that some of our players from last year made the jump and they're part of that winning culture right now up there. It's great for the organization. That's what we want.

We want everybody to win, learn and get better. It was good for us last year and we're continuing this year. It's moved up to Buffalo this year. It's a great feeling and it's great to see. Phil [Housley] works hard at what he does and he does a great job.

There's nothing better than to see him and the team get rewarded with some wins.

Q: Was the dynamic here different when the Sabres were struggling?

A: It's difficult because you know how much time and work they put into training camp and they don't get the results they want. It's tough. It's hard. You always want the best for everybody. It's no different for Buffalo. I love watching them on TV. It's exciting. They're playing great hockey and we want them to win. When our players go up there, we want them to get into that winning experience and be part of it.

Q: Have you learned anything about your team that you didn't know at the beginning of the season?

A: It's been nice to see how much they care for each other. It doesn't matter how much talent you have. It doesn't matter if we have the best forwards, D or goaltender in this league — if you don't like each other or get along you're not going to win a lot of hockey games.

I believe our group cares about each other. When you do, you're going to win a lot of hockey games for each other. That's what we're all about. We enjoy when someone gets called up and we're happy for that person because it's a team that helps you get called up. It's not just you as an individual.

Q: How do you help a young player get acclimated to the North American game, whether it's Lawrence Pilut, Olofsson or Asplund?

A: It's getting to know them outside the rink as well. You see what they need, help them and get to understand them as a person, first and foremost. If you don't understand them as a person, it's going to be tough to get them to do what you want them to do at the rink. Those guys have been great. They love the game. When you love the game, it's that much easier to coach them. They're so coachable. They want to stay on the ice for so long that you have to kick them off. They fit in perfect.

That's what I like about [assistant general manager Randy Sexton] and [Sabres general manager Jason Botterill]. They bring quality people into the dressing room. That's the number one thing.

Q: How has Olofsson adapted since his strong first month of the season?

A: He's getting more comfortable. He's learning the North American game and how quick he needs to play. He may have a little more time, that extra second, over there that he can make a play, but it's a little quicker here because the ice surface is smaller.

He's understanding the North American game. It's a little bit more of a grind than wide open over there. He's doing a really good job with that.

Q: Have you noticed Alexander Nylander take another step forward in his development after another season in the AHL?

A: He's just turning 20. It's easy to forget that. He's learning every day. He's becoming a pro and he's understanding. You could tell in the summer that his body matured and how he was mentally he matured. He's getting better and better every day. It's nice to see. It's nice to see someone do the work and mature before our eyes.

Amerks squander lead in 5-4 loss to Belleville  
*Pickin' Splinters*  
By: Staff Report/Amerks.com

After building a 4-1 lead 1:24 into the second period of Wednesday's contest at The Blue Cross Arena, the Rochester Americans (18-8-2-0) saw their three-goal lead slip away as the Belleville Senators (13-15-2-0) erased the deficit with four straight unanswered goals, including two in the closing minutes, to come away with a 5-4 win.

Despite the loss, the Amerks have won seven of their last 10 games overall while also earning 38 out of a possible 52 points in the last 26 contests. Rochester also maintains a five-point lead atop the AHL's North Division standings heading into final two games before the Christmas break.

Matt Tennyson, who was reassigned by the Buffalo Sabres earlier this week, tied a career-best as the defenseman collected three assists, all of which came in the first period, while Victor Olofsson (2+0) and Sean Malone (0+2) each posted their own multi-point nights. Goaltender Scott Wedgewood appeared in his 13<sup>th</sup> game in the last 20 for the Amerks but was dealt with the loss. The netminder shows a record of 9-5-1 this season with Rochester.

Former Amerk Stuart Percy, Max McCormick and Paul Carey all posted a goal and an assist while Stefan Elliott (0+2) also turned in a multi-point performance to lead Belleville, which snapped a season-long four-game skid. Rudolfs Balcers and Aaron Luchuk rounded the scoring. Marcus Hogberg began the game in the blue paint for the B-Sens but was replaced by Filip Gustavsson after allowing three goals in 11 minutes of work. Gustavsson earned the win as he stopped 18 shots in 49 minutes of relief action.

With a 3-1 lead after the opening 20 minutes of play, Olofsson scored his second of the contest and 10<sup>th</sup> overall of the season just 84 seconds into the stanza from Rasmus Asplund and Zach Redmond. Belleville, however, made it a one-goal game going into the final period as they tallied a pair of markers during the stanza.

Four minutes after Olofsson's goal and while on the man-advantage, Balcers received a one-time feed in the high slot and banged it past Wedgewood at the 5:17 mark.

The goal was his team-leading 11<sup>th</sup> of the season and the Senators' second power-play tally of the game.

Midway through second frame, Luchuk tracked down a loose puck in the neutral zone and raced all alone towards the Amerks goaltender. The rookie, appearing in just his fourth AHL contest, slipped the puck between the pads of Wedgewood to make it a 4-3 score with 6:08 remaining in the middle frame.

As the teams entered the intermission break, Rochester held a one-goal lead despite being outshot 26-13.

The game opened up during the final 20 minutes of regulation as the North Division opponents traded prime scoring chances. With Rochester seemingly closing in on its 15<sup>th</sup> victory of the season when leading after two periods, Belleville struck twice in a span of 58 seconds to stun the Amerks and claim a 5-4 victory. Percy netted the equalizer off an Andrew Sturtz rebound before setting up Carey less than a minute later for the game-winner.

"We have to be mentally stronger in situations when we have the lead," said Amerks assistant captain Nathan Paetsch. "You could kind of see the game slipping away from us as we weren't playing well and they just kept coming and coming. We need to be better moving forward."

Rochester jumped out to a three-goal lead 11:45 into the contest as Olofsson, Cornel and Smith all lit the lamp to chase Hogberg from the net as he stopped two of the five shots he faced. Olofsson reached the 10-goal mark while Smith found the back of the net for the third straight game.

"We should have felt lucky that we were up 3-0 as pucks were going in for us but it was not a good start," said Amerks head coach Chris Taylor. "It was not a good start, it wasn't a good middle and it wasn't a good finish."

"I think that we were outworked tonight and that is the disappointing part," added Taylor. "There is no reason that we should have lost tonight. We seem to struggle against the Binghamton's, Belleville's and Utica's. When we don't play the way we should, we end up getting these types of results."

The B-Sens got on the board with 5:38 left in the opening frame before outscoring the Amerks 4-1 in the final 40 minutes.

"I don't think we played the way that we are capable of," said Olofsson after his fifth multi-point outing of the season. "When we did have the lead, it didn't feel comfortable as we let up way too many scoring chances and eventually it came back to bite us."

The Amerks close out their schedule before the Christmas Break as they host the Hartford Wolf Pack on back-to-back nights at The Blue Cross Arena. Following Friday's 7:05 p.m. tilt, the two teams meet again on Saturday at 5:05 p.m. Both games will be carried live on The Sports Leader AM 950/ 95.7 FM ESPN Rochester and AHLTV.

Amerks blow three-goal lead, lose at home to Belleville

*Buffalo News*

By: *Staff Report*

Stuart Percy and Paul Carey scored third period goals and the Belleville Senators snapped out of their four-game losing streak and defeated the Rochester Americans, 5-4, Thursday night before 2,865 at Blue Cross Arena.

It was perhaps the Amerks' most disappointing loss of the season because they led 3-0 in the first period and 4-1 early in the second period. Belleville, though, scored the last four goals of the game.

Goals by Victor Olofsson, Eric Cornel and C.J. Smith got Rochester in front after 11:45 had been played. Max McCormick (power play) scored for the Sens before the first period was over but Olofsson got that one back when he scored at 1:24 of the second period with assists from Rasmus Asplund and Zach Redmond.

That was it for Rochester. Rudolfs Balcers (power play) and Aaron Luchuk scored to draw the Senators within one before the end of the second period. Percy tied it with the 2:43 left in the third and Carey got his fifth with 1:45 to go with Percy getting one of the assists.

Carey, who also had an assist, was the First Star. Percy was the second star. Rochester defenseman Matt Tennyson had three assists to get the third star.

Scott Wedgewood made 33 saves for Rochester. Filip Gustavsson took over in goal for the Senators after Marcus Hogberg gave up three goals in 11:00 and stopped 18 of the 19 shots he faced the rest of the way.

Rochester (18-8-2) still owns a five-point lead in the North Division of the AHL over second place Utica Comets (15-13-3) who were off Wednesday night.

The Amerks will be home for a two-game series against Hartford on Friday and Saturday night.

Sabres notes: Brendan Guhle returns to NHL confident  
*Buffalo Hockey Beat*  
By: *Bill Hoppe*

During the second intermission Saturday in Cleveland, defenseman Brendan Guhle was informed the Sabres needed his services the next day more than 600 miles away in Boston.

So instead of finishing the Rochester Americans' 2-1 victory against the Monsters, Guhle, who scored earlier in the game, spent all of the third period and overtime watching from the bench.

"It was pretty weird," Guhle said prior to Tuesday's 5-2 loss to the Florida Panthers inside KeyBank Center. "I was just kind of sitting there and everyone was kind of wondering like what was going on."

He added: "It was a close game and I wanted to be out there."

Guhle, 21, spent the night in Cleveland before flying out Sunday morning for his third game in three days, an afternoon tilt. In his first NHL outing since April 7, he skated 11 minutes, 59 seconds in the Sabres' 4-2 win against the Bruins.

"I was excited," Guhle said. "I didn't feel that tired."

Sabres coach Phil Housley said: "He played well under the circumstances."

Guhle, a second-year pro, was the organization's highest-touted young defenseman before Rasmus Dahlin arrived. At times this season, he has struggled a bit in the AHL.

In recent weeks, however, he has started showcasing his slick form with the Amerks.

"I started playing the way that I know that I can," Guhle said. "I started playing with a little more confidence and it worked out." He said that means "not being on my heels and pushing the pace."

"Those are two of my attributes that I can bring to the game," Guhle said. "I feel like I've been doing that lately."

Guhle spent most of Sunday's game partnered with defenseman Matt Hunwick, who was also playing his first NHL game of 2018-19. A neck injury sidelined Hunwick, 33, before he began a two-game AHL conditioning stint last week.

"They haven't played together, they're new partners," Housley said. "That sometimes takes some time, so communication plays a huge role, just sorting out things defensively."

"I'd like to see Brendan use his speed. At times, he did, but just adding to the rush or carrying the mail out of our zone." Hunwick said: "We did fine. We just have to up the communication in terms of talking, just to make sure you know where each other are at all times."

Housley said Hunwick's experience — this is his 12th NHL season — can help him join the team midseason without the benefit of a training camp.

"He's catching a moving training, let's face it," Housley said. "The timing through training camp and all of a sudden getting thrown in, he's well-prepared, he's ready. But I thought he played some really solid minutes for us against Boston. It was a good start for him."

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After skating with his teammates for the first time Tuesday morning since suffering an upper-body injury Nov. 29, Sabres defenseman Jake McCabe figures he can return by the weekend.

McCabe, who missed his ninth game, has skated eight of the last nine days, only taking Monday off.

While McCabe only has one team session under his belt — a light morning skate — he has spent the last week going through rigorous on-ice workouts from Dennis Miller, who rehabilitates the Sabres' injured players.

Miller, a former pro player, dresses in full gear to help mimic in-game situations.

When injured players return, they often sing Miller's praises. His methods ready them for game action.

"I'm coming back, I'm ready to go," McCabe said. "It's not one of those things where you try to ease yourself back into it. We're working our (butt) off out there and we're battling so when I come back it's a seamless transition."

McCabe said Miller is "one of a kind."

"I don't think (there's) anybody in the league like him, so we're lucky to have him here," McCabe said. "He doesn't do a really great job of preparing us to get back with the team."

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The Sabres have been receiving huge contributions from the top line of center Jack Eichel, Jeff Skinner and Sam Reinhart.

But the secondary scoring has been, well, light. So Housley flipped the centers on his second and third lines Tuesday, putting Casey Mittelstadt between Evan Rodrigues and Jason Pominville and Vladimir Sobotka with Conor Sheary and Kyle Okposo.

"Just trying to look for some chemistry and balance," Housley said. "Obviously, Jack's line has been terrific for us contributing offensively. We're just trying to give a different look, a fresh look, and see where it plays out. I think they're very well balanced."

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Housley said defenseman Lawrence Pilut (lower body) could return this weekend, when the Sabres play their final games before a Christmas break.

Meanwhile, Housley said winger Scott Wilson (broken ankle) has been skating a week and is close to joining team sessions.

Notes: Reinhart's first-period assist extended his point streak to 11 games, the NHL's second-longest active streak this season. . . . Sabres goalie Linus Ullmark stayed home Tuesday morning because he was sick but was well enough to dress for the game. . . . Housley said defenseman Nathan Beaulieu (upper body) is day-to-day. Beaulieu missed his second straight game. . . . The Sabres scratched winger Remi Elie for the 27th time this season.

Amerks squander 3-goal lead, fall to Belleville  
*C&C WorldWide*  
By: *Craig Potter*

The last two Wednesdays have not been kind to the Rochester Americans at the Blue Cross Arena.

The Amerks squandered a 3-goal lead twice as the Belleville Senators snapped a season-long 4-game losing streak, all coming on the road, to pull out a 5-4 victory before 2,865 fans at the BCA.

"We have to be mentally stronger in situations when we have the lead," said Amerks assistant captain Nathan Paetsch, who was playing in just his second game of the season. "You could kind of see the game slipping away from us as we weren't playing well and they just kept coming and coming. We need to be better moving forward."

A week ago Wednesday, Rochester was blitzed by the Binghamton Devils, 5-1.

Despite being outshot 12-5 in the first period by the Senators, Rochester built a 3-0 lead and chased starting goalie Marcus Hogberg just 11 minutes into the contest.

"We should have felt lucky that we were up 3-0 as pucks were going in for us but it was not a good start," said Amerks head coach Chris Taylor. "It was not a good start, it wasn't a good middle and it wasn't a good finish."

Victor Olofsson, Eric Cornel, and C.J. Smith propelled Rochester to the 3-0 advantage.

The Senators broke into the scoring column with a power play tally late in the stanza.

Olofsson, the rookie from Sweden, netted his second goal of the contest, and 10th of the season, against backup goalie Filip Gustavsson to give the Amerks a 3-goal lead once again.

"I don't think we played the way that we are capable of," said Olofsson after his fifth multi-point game of the season. "When we did have the lead, it didn't feel comfortable as we let up way too many scoring chances and eventually it came back to bite us."

However, Belleville started its comeback with a pair of tallies in the second period against Rochester goalie Scott Wedgewood, and tacked on the tying and winning goals in the final 3 minutes of regulation.

"I think that we were outworked tonight and that is the disappointing part," said Taylor. "There is no reason that we should have lost tonight. We seem to struggle against the Binghamton's, Belleville's and Utica's. When we don't play the way we should, we end up getting these types of results."

Gustavsson stopped 18 of the 19 shots he faced to pick up the win for Belleville.

*\*NOTES* — The Buffalo Sabres placed forward Patrik Berglund on irrevocable waivers on Wednesday... Coming into tonight's game, the Amerks have on 7 of their last 9 games while earning 38 out of a possible 50 points in the last 25 contests. Rochester holds a 5-point lead atop the North Division heading into this week's games... The Amerks close out their schedule before

Christmas break by playing host to the Hartford Wolf Pack in back-to-back games Friday and Saturday with 7:05 pm and 5:05 pm starts, respectively. . . Former Amerk blueliner Erik Burgdoefer is in his second season with Belleville. The Senators captain just was re-assigned from Ottawa this week. . . Another former Amerk, defenseman Stuart Percy, returned to the Flower City after tallying career-bests in every offensive category last season with Rochester. He scored the tying goal for the Senators. . . Amerks forward Alex Nylander was a scratch with a lower body injury. He is listed as day-to-day.