



ROCHESTER AMERICANS

DAILY PRESS CLIPS

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TONIGHT'S GAME: Toronto @ Rochester

After clearing waivers, Wilson ready to continue rehab with Amerks
Buffalo Sabres.com
By: *Brian Duff*

April 7, 2018 was the last time Scott Wilson played in a professional regular season game. On Sept. 30, he fractured his ankle heading into the first week of the NHL's regular season. Now, 14-and-a-half weeks later, with surgery and extensive rehab behind him, the 26-year old forward is ready for the next step - in Rochester.

Wilson cleared waivers Wednesday at noon, and immediately joined the Amerks for practice. It took all of about five seconds for him to score during the first line rush with Kevin Porter and Wayne Simpson, followed immediately by some hoots and hollers.

"Last time I was in the American league I used to score a lot of goals so I'm hoping that will come back a little bit," Wilson, whose previous AHL time came with Wilkes-Barre/Scranton from 2014-2016, said.

His numbers with those Penguins: 41 goals and 77 points in 90 American Hockey League games. With C.J. Smith up with the Sabres, Wilson's presence could help offset that loss.

Other lines from Wednesday's practice at The Blue Cross Arena:

Victor Olofsson - Rasmus Asplund - Danny O'Regan
Alexander Nylander - Kyle Criscuolo - Eric Cornel
Dalton Smith - Sean Malone - Justin Bailey
Yannick Veilleux - Judd Peterson - Tyler Randell

(Note: Peterson was assigned to ECHL Cincinnati after the skate)

"It's good to have him and his leadership around," Amerks coach Chris Taylor said. "He's got a great shot. He's a great penalty killer, and a great person. He'll support the young guys and he wants to help the team win games, it's not about him. He's unselfish."

"It's almost eight or nine months since I've had a real game so," Wilson confirmed.

"I did a lot of skating there [Buffalo] but it doesn't do justice once you get into the games. So, getting some games under my belt and just kind of getting back in the swing of things, getting your timing back is the most important thing."

Skating with Porter specifically was very familiar for Wilson as the two had good times together in the Pens organization.

"I think half the battle when coming down to a new team is if you know a lot of the guys it's a lot easier, he said. "So I pretty much know all the guys whether it's from hockey in the past or just at training camp. It's definitely a good group here and it's nice to be a part of it."

As for which line he will play on, Taylor said he's not a lock to play with Porter and Simpson.

"We'll go through a couple days at practice and get him acclimated with all different types of guys and where we're going to use him and how we're going to use him and go from there," he said.

The Amerks are home to the Marlies this Friday, followed by a quick trip up the QEW for the late Saturday afternoon matinee in Toronto.

And despite three years in the NHL, the impending change in mode of transportation is not at all a concern.

"As much as it [the bus] sucks at 2 or 3 in the morning, it's kind of where you build friendships and stuff like that. It's part of the game," Wilson said. "...A lot of these young guys are doing it now, but one day they'll be flying on jets in the NHL so I'm just gonna go back to enjoying it and make the most of it."

As for how long he might be in Rochester, it's way too early to tell.

"You never know, honestly. There will come a point... I don't think it will come after two or three games," he said "...It's gonna come a little bit longer than that and up until this point, it's been on my own regard with how I'm feeling. So it's kind of just a feeling out process."

"Obviously I want to be a part of it [within the Sabres organization]. They made it clear to me, too, that a lot of times when you throw somebody on waivers, it's trying to get rid of them and they made that clear that that wasn't the case. I'm just excited to be back here and have some fun playing hockey."

Wilson excited to get season going in Rochester
Amerks.com
By: *Erica Whyte*

The Rochester Americans' roster just got one player deeper.

With two Stanley Cups and 172 NHL games under his belt, the addition of 26-year-old Scott Wilson is both a welcomed and anticipated addition.

After clearing waivers yesterday afternoon, the Buffalo Sabres assigned the Oakville, Ontario, native to their AHL affiliate to play his first games of this season.

Four days before the 2018-19 NHL regular-season began, Wilson broke his ankle during Sabres practice, forcing him to watch from the sidelines as Buffalo embarked on its historic start of the year.

"When you're injured that long you need to come down and play some games, so that's what he's going to do," said Amerks head coach Chris Taylor after Wilson's first practice with the team on Wednesday at Blue Cross Arena. "We've got to get him back to where he left off, because he hasn't played in a long time."

All in all, Taylor was pleased with what he saw out of the newcomer, who hasn't played a game since April 7, 2018.

"He's a hard forechecking guy, he can get on the puck, he's got a great shot and he's a great penalty killer," added Taylor. "He's also a great person and will add another dimension to the locker room. He'll add support for the young guys, and they'll learn from him, especially how he practices and gets ready for games."

Wilson has spent the last three seasons in the NHL, winning back-to-back Stanley Cups with the Pittsburgh Penguins in 2015-16 and 2016-17. After playing three games with the Pens to begin last season, he was traded to Detroit before finally landing in Buffalo, where he finished the year with 14 points (6+8) in 49 games.

According to the left-handed forward, the thing he is most excited for is just getting back on the ice.

"It's been eight or nine months since I've had a real game, so getting some games under my belt and getting back in the swing of things, getting my timing back, is the most important thing," Wilson said. "I'm feeling pretty good and I'm excited to get back after it."

No stranger to ankle injuries, Wilson said that his recovery process was more of a mental struggle than a physical one.

"It's way more of a mental battle. I went through this before, I broke the same ankle two years ago. And it was actually kind of an undercover blessing a little bit to learn through that experience. This time was a little bit easier to get through, mentally for sure. The worst thing you can do is get negative on yourself. You've kind of got to turn everything into a positive, whether it's just working on your shot or your hands, even if you're not even able to walk around. You're just sitting in a chair putting in the work that you can."

And although it's been just over nine months since he last played in a game, Wilson insists that he is feeling better than ever after recovering from this hurdle.

"I almost feel stronger and more confident now than I did before I got hurt, because I've been able to focus on my skills and my hands and shot. But it's been really nice to get back into it, skate with the guys and be part of a team again. I'm just excited to get going with the guys."

And it helps having some familiarity as well. He played alongside Amerks captain Kevin Porter during his time in Pittsburgh during the 2016-17 season and is of course familiar with Randy Sexton and Jason Botterill, the organization's two general managers who were instrumental in building the Penguins roster that won consecutive Stanley Cups that Wilson was a part of.

"I had a lot of fun with 'Ports,'" said Wilson. "It feels like back in the day even though it's not that long ago. We had a lot of fun together so I'm excited to be back with him."

Wilson is projected to make his Amerks debut as Rochester hosts the defending Calder Cup Champion Toronto Marlies on Friday, January 11. Tickets are available at www.amerks.com.

C.J. Smith, Lawrence Pilut score first NHL goals, help Sabres beat Devils
Buffalo Hockey Beat
By: *Bill Hoppe*

Early in Tuesday's 5-1 victory, Sabres rookie C.J. Smith utilized his speed and cranked a shot off the post, a sign the speedy winger's first NHL goal could be imminent.

Smith, 24, kept buzzing around the New Jersey Devils zone, creating more scoring chances.

"Got a little more confident tonight," Smith said after scoring 4:14 into the second period in his sixth NHL game, a goal that put the Sabres ahead for good.

Meanwhile, rookie defenseman Lawrence Pilut, 23, has generated offense since the Sabres recalled him in late November. Still, the slick Swede was looking for his first goal 12 games into his career.

"My first thought is always get the puck through and just try to get it on the edge of the goal all the time," Pilut said after scoring at the 17:45 mark, capping a wildly entertaining five-goal second period. "Just try to find those small spots."

One goal from a rookie would've been huge for the Sabres. They desperately need secondary scoring, especially with captain Jack Eichel out. Two goals helped the Sabres enjoy their most prolific period at home since Nov. 28, 2009 against Carolina.

Fourteen Sabres tallied a point during the dizzying second, tying the franchise record for most players with a point in a period, according to NHL PR. It previously happened Nov. 2, 2006 here against Tampa Bay and Oct. 21, 2009 at Florida.

"We had all four lines contributing, a lot of O-zone chances," said Sabres center Evan Rodrigues, who assisted on Jake McCabe's short-handed goal. "It could've been even more in the second. That's what happens when you're rolling shifts over in the O-zone and tiring teams out. That's when you start to get rewarded."

Tuesday marked the sixth time in Sabres history two players scored their first NHL goals in the same game. It last happened April 6, 2018 in Tampa Bay, when Casey Mittelstadt and Alexander Nylander both scored.

Mittelstadt also scored Tuesday, his first goal in 11 games.

After sniper Jeff Skinner's 29th goal tied the game, Smith pounced on a loose puck before beating goalie Keith Kinkaid from the right circle. The puck barely trickled over the goal line, leading to an odd celebration.

Nobody, it seemed, knew it went in besides Smith.

"I shot it, went behind the net and saw it was in," Smith said. "It was kinda funny, nobody else really knew it was in so I kind of celebrated by myself, but it felt good."

He added: "Finally a matter of time it went in. Felt really good."

Sabres coach Phil Housley said Smith "attacked the game."

"I just liked how he was poised, he was composed," Housley said.

Pilut, who possesses supreme vision and a knack for getting the puck on net, got his wrist shot from the right point through traffic.

"Today was a good boost for me to get the first one," Pilut said.

Housley said of the rookies: "It's going to help their confidence as we move forward."

The win, the Sabres' 23rd overall but just their third in nine tries, should boost everyone's confidence.

"It was a total team effort," Housley said.

He added: "Everybody was in attack mode and paid attention to detail when the puck got turned over."

Despite outplaying New Jersey early before the crowd of 18,212 inside KeyBank Center, the Sabres fell behind just 1:28 in when the puck deflected off Blake Coleman's skate.

"It's kind of a weird thing," Sabres goalie Carter Hutton said. "I'm playing his stick and it goes in off his skate. Just no real flow in first period."

While Hutton only made 20 saves, a few big stops kept the Sabres in it.

"I wasn't really called upon, but you make a couple timely ones," Hutton said.

New Jersey, of course, is hardly a powerhouse. But since the start of the 2014-15 season, the Devils were 6-0-0 against the Sabres here and 10-1-1 overall entering Tuesday.

The Sabres hadn't beaten them here since April, 1, 2014.

C.J. Smith scores first NHL goal; now he wants to remain with Sabres
Buffalo News
By: *Jason Wolf*

C.J. Smith always dreamed about scoring his first NHL goal.

But he never pictured it quite like this, the puck dribbling in slow motion past New Jersey Devils goalie Keith Kinkaid, it momentarily coming to rest just inside the far post, a question rippling through the arena as to whether defenseman Sami Vatanen had dug it out with his stick before it crossed the goal line. Smith had no doubt.

"When I shot it and went behind the net there, I saw it was in," Smith said. "It's kind of funny, nobody else really knew it was in, so I kind of celebrated by myself there. But it felt good."

The shot, called a goal on the ice and upheld on review, gave the Buffalo Sabres a 2-1 lead 4:14 into the second period and helped spark an explosive and unanswered five-goal middle stanza, as the Sabres buried the Devils in an avalanche of secondary scoring, 5-1, Tuesday night at KeyBank Center, no small feat without injured captain Jack Eichel.

Buffalo has been preaching about the importance of secondary scoring since its 10-game win streak ended in late November. The Sabres have since mustered a 6-8-4 record while hanging on to playoff positioning. The Sabres scored five goals on 15 shots in the second period against the Devils. Jeff Skinner's blast to put Buffalo on the board was followed by goals from Smith, Casey Mittelstadt, Jake McCabe and Lawrence Pilut, Smith's roommate in Rochester who also recorded his first NHL goal Tuesday night.

"We know what he can do," Johan Larsson said of Smith after centering the Sabres' third line between the rookie and veteran forward Kyle Okposo. "He's a smart hockey player and you can see he's got skills. He's a guy who knows where to go on the ice, works hard and it was nice to see him rewarded with a first goal."

It was the Sabres' most prolific period at home in a decade — since they scored five in the third period against Carolina on Nov. 28, 2009. They had scored only 15 goals in their previous eight games.

Smith, 24, was playing in just his fourth game since being called up from Rochester to make his season debut against the New York Islanders on New Year's Eve after Zemgus Girgensons had been placed on injured reserve. At the time, Smith led all Rochester forwards in scoring with 29 points, 13 goals and 16 assists in 33 games.

The Sabres hoped Smith would provide a spark, and though he'd been skating well, he hadn't done much, recording six shots in three games before taking the ice Tuesday night.

Smith attempted three shots against the Devils, two of them on goal, one ricocheting off the post on the first shift of the game.

"I just think he attacked the game," Sabres coach Phil Housley said. "I think everybody was in attack mode and paying attention to detail when the puck got turned over. They're one of those teams that a possession change in the offensive zone, they're getting out to attack. But I just liked (how) he was poised, he was composed, he found a way to get that one by Kinkaid, and it was a big goal, the second (Sabres) goal of the game, and it's good to see him contribute."

Smith signed with the Sabres as an undrafted free agent out of UMass Lowell in March 2017. He had 56 goals in three seasons in college and was named to the Hockey East All-Rookie Team in 2015.

Smith appeared in two games with the Sabres to end the 2016-17 season, recording his first NHL point on an assist in his debut against the Islanders, and had starred for Rochester ever since.

Last season, Smith tied for the Amerks' team lead with 17 goals. His 44 points were tied for 10th among AHL rookies. And he was named MVP of the league's All-Star Classic.

This was despite missing more than a month with an ankle injury that continued to hamper his production over the final 15 regular-season games and playoffs.

"I worked really hard to get back here in Buffalo and I think I had a good season in Roch last year, with a little injury that hurt me along the way," Smith said. "But you know what? You've got to stay positive and keep working and I came out to a hot start in Roch this year and we were playing really well, and I was excited to get the call-up and get that first goal."

Smith signed a one-year contract extension with the Sabres in July and participated in training camp before being assigned to Rochester.

It's possible Smith will be sent back as soon as Friday should Eichel return from an upper body injury that has caused him to miss the last three games. But Smith intends to stay.

"I've got to do whatever I can to help contribute to the team, help them win," Smith said. "Some nights that may not be scoring, but I've just got to do whatever I can to stay up, and that's my goal for the rest of the year."

Sabres' Scott Wilson clears waivers, assigned to Rochester

Buffalo News

By: *Jason Wolf*

Scott Wilson cleared waivers and was assigned to Rochester for a conditioning assignment on Wednesday, the Buffalo Sabres announced.

The forward, who hasn't played since breaking his ankle during a late September practice, was expected to be medically cleared for game action this week. The Amerks host the defending Calder Cup champion Toronto Marlies on Friday at 7:05 p.m. at Blue Cross Arena.

Wilson, 26, resumed practicing with the Sabres, but he has not played in an NHL regular-season game since April 7, 2018. He had six goals and 14 points with a minus-20 rating in 69 games between Pittsburgh, Detroit and Buffalo last season.

Wilson won two Stanley Cups with the Penguins, recording three goals and six assists in the 2016-17 playoffs. He is under contract through next season with an annual cap hit of \$1.05 million.

The Amerks assigned Judd Peterson to Cincinnati of the ECHL to make room for Wilson.

Doug Janik, Steve Langdon to enter Amerks Hall of Fame
C&C WorldWide
By: *Staff Report*

The Rochester Americans are pleased to announce today that the team will induct defenseman Doug Janik and forward Steve Langdon into the Amerks Hall of Fame as the Class of 2019. Janik and Langdon were unanimously selected for induction by the Amerks Hall of Fame Committee and will take their rightful place in the prestigious club on Friday, Feb. 8 when Rochester hosts the Springfield Thunderbirds at the Blue Cross Arena at 7:05 pm on Seneca Niagara Resort & Casino Legends Night.

Set to become the 63rd member of the exclusive club, Janik spent five seasons patrolling the Rochester blueline from 2001 to 2006, establishing himself as one of the most dominant defensemen in franchise history. Janik recorded 91 points (18+73) over his five seasons with the club, ranking 31st all-time among Rochester blueliners, while also leading the Amerks to four straight playoff appearances. His 376 career games are the third-most of any defenseman and rank 14th all-time.

"I'm forever grateful for the time I spent and the many great people I had the opportunity to meet during my time in Rochester," said Janik, a second-round pick (55th overall) of the Buffalo Sabres in 1999. "I'm honored to be recognized by such a proud franchise. My family and I are greatly appreciative for everything the Rochester Americans have helped us to achieve, both on and off ice."

Aside from his offensive contributions, Janik was widely known for his strong physical presence and hard-nosed tenacity that became symbolic with his rugged style of play. Janik averaged more than 100 penalty minutes in each of his five seasons in Rochester, including a career-best 196 penalty minutes during the 2004-05 campaign. He racked up 686 penalty minutes as an Amerk, the third-most among any defenseman and the 12th-most all-time in team history.

Following three years at the University of Maine, Janik began his pro career in Rochester in 2001-02, ranking third among all Amerks defensemen with 23 points (6+17) while appearing in all 80 regular-season games. After producing 16 points in each of the next two seasons, in addition to seeing time with the Buffalo Sabres, Janik helped the Amerks to their best regular-season record in franchise history during the 2004-05 campaign as Rochester finished the year with an AHL-best 51-19-6-4 record, winning the Macgregor Kilpatrick Trophy as regular-season champions. The Springfield, Mass., native accounted for two 12 points (2+10) that year and a team-best 196 penalty minutes.

The Amerks would set several single-season franchise records for the most points (112) and the longest home winning streak which saw Rochester win 17 consecutive home games between Dec. 17 and Mar. 4. The 51-win season would be the second-most in any season for Rochester and Randy Cunneynworth, the franchise's all-time leader in coaching wins, would be named the AHL's Coach of the Year.

Janik had his best season as an Amerk during the 2005-06 campaign, his final year in Rochester, scoring five goals and adding 19 assists for 24 points in 71 games. He would also go on to appear in five NHL playoff games for the Sabres, scoring what would be his only NHL postseason goal.

Janik departed the organization the following year and would spend the next six seasons with four different NHL organizations and their AHL affiliates. Janik split the 2013-14 season in the AHL between San Antonio and Chicago before playing one final year overseas. He retired following the 2014-15 campaign having played more than 870 professional games and 251 career points between the NHL, AHL, and Europe.

Janik is currently in his third season as an assistant coach with the AHL's Springfield Thunderbirds.

Langdon spent five of his six pro seasons in Rochester from 1974 to 1979, and much like Janik, helped the team to four straight playoff appearances, including a trip to the Calder Cup Finals in 1977. In 313 career games with the Amerks, Langdon scored 97 goals, ranking him 20th all-time, and added 87 assists for 184 points. He also recorded 14 points (3+11) in 35 postseason appearances.

"I'm very honored to join the Rochester Americans Hall of Fame," said Langdon. "It was a privilege to have spent the majority of my career with such a storied franchise. The city of Rochester has been home for me and my family for over 40 years and I'm proud to consider myself a lifelong Rochesterian."

Langdon's tenure in Rochester coincided over the Amerks' five-year affiliation with the Boston Bruins, the team that drafted him 63rd overall in the 1973 NHL Draft.

The Toronto, Ontario, native broke into professional hockey with the Albuquerque Six-Guns of the Central Hockey League in 1973-74. Langdon arrived in Rochester the following season, putting up 19 points (8+11) in 56 games while also making his NHL debut that year with Boston, appearing in one game for the Don Cherry-coached Bruins.

During the 1975-76 season, Langdon more than doubled his goal output from the previous year before helping the Amerks to their second playoff appearance in as many years under the Boston affiliation.

After leading the Amerks to the Calder Cup Finals in 1977, Langdon enjoyed his best season in 1977-78, finishing third on the team with a career-high 30 goals and fifth with 57 points, leading the Amerks to their fourth straight playoff appearance.

He would play one final season with the Amerks in 1978-79, scoring 25 more goals, appearing in all 80 games while serving as team captain. He closed out his career in Rochester ranked 35th in scoring among all-time forwards.

He went onto to appear in seven career games with the Bruins, recording one assist, as well as three games for the Broome County Dusters of the North American Hockey League.

Langdon's contributions to the organization extend off the ice as well, and for the past several years, has made a strong commitment to give back to the Rochester community through his work within the Amerks Alumni Association.

After retiring from the game as a player, Langdon served as a coach and administrator in Rochester Youth Hockey for over 20 years. He also founded the Stephanie Langdon Hockey School with the help of the Alumni. Over a five-year period, the program raised over \$30,000 for the Golisano Children's Hospital, in memory of his daughter.

For the past several years, Langdon has been instrumental in building and maintaining a network of local Amerks Alumni and has spearheaded numerous charitable endeavors, most notably the Thomas M. Nichols Scholarship Fund, which awards a scholarship to a local high school senior that actively participates in Section V hockey and displays excellence in their work ethic, character and determination.

He recently fostered a relationship between the Alumni and Oasis Adaptive Sports, a local organization that offers instruction, equipment and support to disabled military veterans in a variety of recreational sporting activities. Langdon, with the assistance of Alumni members, introduce hockey to the veterans and their families by providing on-ice instruction through their "Learn to Skate" program. His philanthropic and outreach efforts also extend to the Veteran Outreach Center, the Finger Lakes Donor Recovery Network and the annual Amerks Alumni Golf Tournament, which just celebrated its sixth year, and continues to generate thousands of dollars in support of other local charitable organizations.

Amerks Hall of Fame opens doors for Steve Langdon, Doug Janik
Rochester Democrat and Chronicle
By: *Leo Roth*

Right wing Steve Langdon played five seasons for the Rochester Americans, helping the storied American Hockey League franchise reach the playoffs four times and the Calder Cup finals once.

He made Rochester his permanent home, then made a bigger impact off the ice by volunteering his time to multiple charity endeavors.

Defenseman Doug Janik also played five seasons for the Amerks, also helping the club reach the playoffs four times while establishing himself as one of the most dominant blueliners in team history.

He was part of coach Randy Cunneynworth's 2004-05 team that won 51 games and set a franchise record with 112 points.

Now the doors of the Amerks Hall of Fame are swinging open.

Langdon and Janik will become the 63rd and 64th members of the hall, the team announced Wednesday. They will be enshrined on Friday, Feb. 8, before the Amerks host the Springfield Thunderbirds at Blue Cross Arena.

Janik, 38, is an assistant coach for Springfield.

"I'm forever grateful for the time I spent and the many great people I had the opportunity to meet during my time in Rochester," said Janik, a second-round draft pick of the parent Buffalo Sabres in 1999. "I'm honored to be recognized by such a proud franchise."

A native of Springfield, Massachusetts who starred at the University of Maine, Janik played in Rochester from 2001 to 2006. His 91 points (18-73) rank 31st among Rochester defenseman in career scoring while his 686 penalty minutes rank 12th overall and his 376 games rank 14th.

Janik went on to play 190 NHL games for Buffalo, Tampa Bay, Dallas, Montreal and Detroit over his nearly 20-year career.

Langdon's career in Rochester spanned the team's five-year affiliation with the Boston Bruins and the Amerks' connection with colorful coach Don Cherry. After helping Rochester to the Calder Cup finals in 1977, Langdon produced his two best seasons, scoring 30 goals and 25 goals the next two years.

With 97 goals, 87 assists and 184 points, the one-time captain ranks 20th in goals 35th in career points among Rochester forwards.

"I'm very honored," said Langdon, 65, who appeared in 348 games overall. "It was a privilege to spend the majority of my career with such a storied franchise. The City of Rochester has been home for me and my family for over 40 years and I'm proud to consider myself a lifelong Rochesterian."

After retiring as a player, Langdon served as a coach and administrator for Rochester Youth Hockey for more than 20 years, helping grow the game locally.

He founded the Stephanie Langdon Hockey School in memory of his daughter and with the help of the Amerks Alumni Association, the program raised more than \$30,000 for the Golisano Children's Hospital.

Langdon's work with fellow alumni has assisted in the awarding of scholarships to Section V hockey players. They have also assisted disabled veterans through Oasis Adaptive Sports and the alumni's annual golf tournament raises thousands of dollars to support a variety of local charities.

Scott Wedgewood reestablishing himself with Amerks

13Wham

By: *Tobias Motyka*

Not long ago, Scott Wedgewood was considered one of the top goalies in the Devils Organization.

But after injuries cost him most of two seasons between 2015 and 2017, Wedgewood found himself on the move. Then he found himself on the move again. And then again.

The 26-year-old signed with the Sabres this offseason on a one-year, two-way deal after bouncing around between three organizations the previous year. And even though he's no longer considered "young" in prospect terms, Wedgewood is reestablishing himself as an elite AHL goalie with NHL aspirations.

Victor Olofsson solidifies himself as one of Sabres' top prospects

Buffalo News

By: *Bill Hoppe*

Things have a way of evening out in hockey. So when Sabres prospect Victor Olofsson scored five goals in his first six American Hockey League games with the Americans, few expected he would continue that torrid production.

"Sometimes it's hard to keep that pace up," Olofsson said last week.

But Olofsson, 23, roared into November. By the 11-game mark, the Swedish winger compiled six goals and 14 points. He even briefly led the AHL in scoring.

"I felt like I was getting that extra bounce," said Olofsson, whose 27 goals led the Swedish Hockey League last season.

That extra bounce hasn't materialized as much recently. Opponents have started paying closer attention to Olofsson, who possesses a lethal shot. He's also still adjusting to having less time and space to operate on the smaller North American ice surface.

"(He) has slowed in production somewhat due to people keying on him plus the adjustment phase," a pro scout who has watched Olofsson regularly this season said.

Olofsson has an eight-game goal drought and just two scores in the last 14 contests.

Of course, with 10 goals and 30 points overall, Olofsson's first AHL campaign has been stellar. He recorded six assists in four games before going pointless over the weekend.

Through 33 outings, Olofsson has solidified his place as one of the Sabres' top prospects.

"He's a big-time player," Amerks coach Chris Taylor said. "He wants to have the puck on his stick."

Olofsson, a seventh-round pick in 2014, 181st overall, seems destined to be recalled in the future. So far, the Sabres have only summoned one forward, C.J. Smith, from the Amerks this season.

"(Olofsson) has NHL shooting ability and NHL speed and quickness," said the scout, who believes Olofsson will play in the big leagues someday and provide scoring.

The scout also said Olofsson might need to spend a full season developing in the AHL and part of next season before he's ready.

"That's the dream I have and the next step in my career to be up there," Olofsson said of the NHL. "That's what I'm working for. I'm trying to be patient. Hopefully the chance will come eventually."

The 5-foot-11, 181-pound Olofsson said he has grown throughout his first three months in the AHL. He said he believes he's getting on the inside more regularly and moving to the front of the net, where he can score what he called "greasy goals."

Naturally, Olofsson said he wants to be an all-around guy "the team can trust." Early in Wednesday's victory, he illustrated that by racing from behind on a backcheck to stymie a play.

"I want to play in every situation out there, and that's the kind of thing you have to do," Olofsson said. "If it's break up a play or just get back to help out in the defense zone, it's the small things that matter in the long run."

Taylor said Olofsson has embraced playing away from the puck.

"It's hard for goal scorers to come over and learn that and think, 'Well, I have to score goals,' " Taylor said. "And you have to play away from the puck, defensive side of the puck, you have to be good on the walls, you got to hold up on faceoffs, and he's doing all those things. He's getting better at them, and that's all we can only ask for."

Nylander update

Sabres prospect Alexander Nylander quickly impacted the Amerks after an upper-body injury sidelined him two games.

On Wednesday, Nylander slickly created Rasmus Asplund's tying goal with 11.9 seconds left by finding the center beside the net from the point.

The winger sold the shot perfectly.

"The hockey sense on Alex, even to sell it, have two guys lay there (on the ice), to look for a player on the side of the net," Taylor said.

Nylander scored a goal and the shootout winner in Friday's 3-2 road win over the Laval Rocket.

MacWilliam tallies

On Wednesday, Amerks defenseman Andrew MacWilliam scored his first goal in 149 games, jamming in a rebound at the net to tie the game at 3.

MacWilliam hadn't scored since April 6, 2016, with the Manitoba Moose.

The veteran was credited with a goal earlier this season before it was awarded to a teammate.

They can't take this one back, right?

"Who knows?" a smiling MacWilliam said.

Taylor said MacWilliam has "a huge heart."

"It was a desperate play by him and . . . you respect guys like that," Taylor said. MacWilliam has scored five goals in 336 career AHL appearances.

Closing in

Zach Redmond scored his career-high 16th goal in Saturday's 2-1 loss in Laval, leaving him two short of Rick Pagnutti's single-season record for Amerks defensemen set in 1972-73.

Zach Redmond scores career-high 16th goal in Amerks' 2-1 loss

Buffalo News

By: *Staff Report*

There was no shootout magic Saturday afternoon for Rochester as the Americans fell to Laval, 2-1, to split a two-game series with the Rocket.

Zach Redmond netted his 16th goal of the season, a career high for the 30-year-old.

Redmond now is tied for first among AHL defensemen with 30 points.

He's also two goals away from the record for most goals by a Rochester defenseman, 18, set by Rick Pagnutti during the 1972-73 season.

Daniel Audette and Alexandre Greiner both scored goals for the Rocket, who improve to 15-16-3.

The Americans (22-12-2) outshot Laval 29-15, but were unable to solve Rocket goaltender Connor LaCouvee. He stopped 28 shots.

The Amerks only capitalized on one out of five power-play opportunities. That includes a 5-on-3 advantage that yielded only a handful of wide shots.

Rochester scored first midway through the first period after Laval was penalized for too many men on the ice.

An opportunity soon presented itself for the Amerks to grow their lead when Laval's Hayden Verbeek was sent to the box for high sticking.

That chance was nullified when defenseman Matt Tennyson was charged with a high sticking penalty.

Laval evened the score during a scramble in front of Rochester goalie Adam Wilcox when Audette tapped in the puck.

A big hit from Tennyson led to a skirmish on the ice and another man advantage for the Amerks.

The opportunity was fruitless, though, and the game remained tied at one apiece.

The Rocket took the lead midway through the third period on Greiner's goal and Rochester was unable to answer. The Amerks remain in first place in the North Division.

The Americans will be back in action on Friday when they open a two-game series at home against the Toronto Marlies.

Amerks fall short in rematch with Laval

C&C WorldWide

By: *Staff Report*

The Rochester Americans (22-12-2-0) came up on the short-end of a 2-1 score against the Laval Rocket (15-16-3-3) Saturday in the second game of a back-to-back set between the two North Division opponents at Place Bell. Dating back to last season, the one-goal outcome was the fourth straight game that has been decided by a goal.

Despite suffering just its fourth regulation loss on the road this season, which are tied for fewest in the entire AHL, Rochester holds a two-point lead atop the AHL's North Division standings to close out the first week of the New Year and have won 4 of its last 6 games.

Defenseman Zach Redmond, who was named to the North Division All-Star roster earlier this week, scored his team-leading 16th goal of season during the first period while goaltender Adam Wilcox stopped 13 of the 15 shots he faced but was given the loss. The netminder shows a 7-5-1 record in 15 appearances this season. Rochester also suffered just its third loss in the last 11 meetings with Laval dating back to the 2017-18 season, which includes a 5-1-0-0 mark inside Place Bell.

Daniel Audette and Alexandre Grenier each scored for the Rocket, who have points in 10 of their last 12 games. First-year goaltender Connor LaCouvee made a career-high 28 saves to earn his third straight victory.

After a fast-paced first 10 minutes of the contest, the Amerks had the first break of the afternoon as the Rocket were called for a too many men at the 9:57 mark.

Rochester, which entered this afternoon's rematch with Laval having scored eight power-play goals in the last five games, capitalized on the man-advantage as Redmond buried his team-leading 16th to give the Amerks a 1-0 lead with 9:10 left in the period.

Danny O'Regan and Matt Tennyson, who has six assists over his last six games, recorded the helpers on Redmond's eighth power-play goal of the season, which along with his 30 points, leads all AHL defenseman.

With the goal, the veteran blueliner established a new career-high in goals in a season through just 36 games this year after chipping in 15 in 66 outings during the 2017-18 campaign with the Amerks. Redmond is also just two goals shy from tying the franchise record of most goals by a defenseman of 18, set by Rick Pagnutti during the 1972-73 slate.

The Amerks carried their one-goal lead into the break but the Rocket countered with a goal in each of the final two periods to earn their first win in the season series between the two clubs.

Near the midway point of the middle period, Laval dumped the puck in behind Wilcox. As Byron Froese emerged from the right corner of the cage, he attempted to shovel the puck between the Amerks netminder's leg and the post but the puck made its way atop the crease. With bodies crashing the blue paint, Audette, the son of former Amerk Donald Audette, somehow managed to poke the puck behind Wilcox to even the game at 1-1 at the 12:24 mark.

Moments after the tying-goal, Rochester drew a pair of penalties and held a 5-on-3 two-man advantage for 1:36. LaCouvee and company, however, killed off the infractions and the two teams went into the second intermission tied for the second time in as many games.

During the final period, the Amerks continued to find the lead once again, but Laval moved in front for the first time of the afternoon with 13:10 left in frame.

Similar to the second-period goal, Grenier turned out of the corner with the puck, and with Nikita Jevpalovs providing a net-front screen, Wilcox never saw the shot and the home team grabbed a 2-1 lead they ultimately wouldn't surrender.

The Amerks, who allowed a season-low 15 total shots, kept pushing for the equalizer, and despite pulling Wilcox for the extra attacker, came up a goal short as Laval held on for the 2-1 win.

The Amerks return home on Friday, Jan. 11 at 7:05 pm as they begin a home-and-home set with the defending Calder Cup champion Toronto Marlies. The matchup will be the third straight game at the Blue Cross Arena between the two teams before the season-series shifts to the newly named Coca-Cola Coliseum on Saturday, Jan. 12 at 4 pm.

Amerks rally for shootout win over Laval
C&C WorldWide
By: *Staff Report*

For the second consecutive game, the Rochester Americans (22-11-2-0) erased a deficit before completing the come-from-behind win in a shootout. Friday night's 3-2 five-round shootout win against the Laval Rocket (14-16-3-3) at Place Bell served as the first leg of a back-to-back set between the two North Division opponents.

With the victory, Rochester retains its two-point lead atop the AHL's North Division standings heading into Saturday's rematch with the Rocket. The Amerks have won four of their last five games and 11 of their last 17 contests overall. Rochester also became the fifth team in the Eastern Conference this season to reach double digits in road wins (10) while its three regulation losses are tied for fewest in the entire AHL.

Forward Judd Peterson, who made his Amerks debut after being recalled earlier this week from the ECHL, and Alexander Nylander both lit the lamp for the Amerks while netminder Scott Wedgewood turned in a 22-save effort to push his record to 13-6-1 on the season. Rochester also improved to 8-2-0 in its last 10 meetings with Laval dating back to the 2017-18 season, which includes a perfect 5-0-0-0 mark inside Place Bell.

David Sklenicka and Alex Belzile scored for the Rocket, who came into the matchup with a 6-3-0-1 record in their last 10 games, while goaltender Michael McNiven appeared in his first game with Laval in since Dec. 21. The goaltender, who was reassigned earlier this week from Montreal, stopped 32 of 34 shots he faced but was handed the loss.

As the game remained tied 2-2 after regulation and a five-minute overtime period, a shootout was needed to determine the outcome. The contest was the second straight game in which the Amerks were involved in the skills competition while it was Laval's first since mid-December.

Laval elected to shoot first in the shootout, and with the exception of Belzile in third-round, the four other skaters were denied by Wedgewood. Rochester's Wayne Simpson beat McNiven in the second round but because of Belzile's goal, the shootout continued until Nylander ended the five-round skills competition as he roofed a backhanded shot under the crossbar.

Other than each team drawing a penalty in the opening frame, the first period of play seemed to be a uneventful as both the Amerks and Rocket appeared to enter the break scoreless. However, Sklenicka gave Laval a late one-goal with just three seconds to play in the period.

As time was dwindling down in the first period, defenseman Maxim Lamarche fired a shot wide of the net only to have the rebound carom around the wall and onto the stick of Sklenicka. The blueliner skated down the boards before slapping a shot over the glove of Wedgewood for his second of the season.

Midway through the second period, Laval was whistled for an interference penalty and the Amerks seized the opportunity as Nylander knotted the game at 1-1 with his eighth of the season from Brendan Guhle and Zach Redmond.

The Rocket, however, quickly responded as they drew their own power-play and regained a 2-1 lead just 21 seconds into the infraction. With the puck at the top of the point, Xavier Ouellet fired a shot off the end boards, and after Daniel Audette fanned on the shot, Belzile tallied his seventh of the season at the 11:35 mark.

While facing a 2-1 deficit in the final minute of the period, Peterson received a bank-pass from Redmond as he made his way through the neutral zone. While Danny O'Regan drove the center lane into the zone, Peterson flipped a pass from the right half-wall in the direction of O'Regan. As a Rocket defender attempted to take away O'Regan's stick, the puck glanced off his stick and snuck inside the near post with 49 seconds left.

The goal was Peterson's first-career American Hockey League point.

Rochester tried to avoid the overtime period as they outshot Laval 12-3 during the final 20 minutes of regulation, but the contest was decided in the five-round shootout.

Following a quick turnaround, the Amerks and Rocket meet again on Saturday, Jan. 5 for a 3:00 p.m. matinee. The rematch from Place Bell will be the third of four meetings between the North Division rivals this season before one final get-together in Rochester on Mar. 29. Saturday's action will be carried live on The Sports Leader AM 950/95.7 FM ESPN Rochester and can also be viewed on AHLTV.

Amerks slip against Laval 2-1 Saturday

13Wham

By: *Staff Report/Amerks.com*

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Pickin' Splinters
By: Staff Report/Amerks.com

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Nylander lifts Amerks to shootout win over Rocket

Pickin' Splinters

By: *Staff Report/Amerks.com*

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As time was dwindling down in the first period, defenseman Maxim Lamarche fired a shot wide of the net only to have the rebound carom around the wall and onto the stick of Sklenicka. The blueliner skated down the boards before slapping a shot over the glove of Wedgewood for his second of the season.

Midway through the second period, Laval was whistled for an interference penalty and the Amerks seized the opportunity as Nylander knotted the game at 1-1 with his eighth of the season from Brendan Guhle and Zach Redmond.

The Rocket, however, quickly responded as they drew their own power-play and regained a 2-1 lead just 21 seconds into the infraction. With the puck at the top of the point, Xavier Ouellet fired a shot off the end boards, and after Daniel Audette fanned on the shot, Belzile tallied his seventh of the season at the 11:35 mark.

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Rocket vs. Americans game recap: Laval does just enough to beat Rochester as Connor LaCouvee remains undefeated

Habs Eyes On The Prize

By: *Julian McKenzie*

Alexandre Grenier scored the game-winning goal, while Connor LaCouvee made 28 saves on 29 shots as the Rocket beat the Rochester Americans 2-1 on Saturday afternoon at Place Bell. The Rocket earned three out of a possible four points in a weekend series with the Americans.

"Very happy with the way the guys competed," Rocket head coach Joël Bouchard said. "I think we were, a lot of times, better than we were last night."

Rochester defeated Laval 3-2 in a shootout Friday night, and both sides played a tight game Saturday afternoon. The Rocket still have a way to go if they want to qualify for the 2018-19 American Hockey League playoffs, but they've secured eight out of a possible 10 points in their last five games, including their recent performance against the North Division leaders.

LaCouvee has been perfect for the Rocket since he was signed to a professional tryout contract December 27. The British Columbia native is now 3-0-0 with a 1.68 goals-against average and a .932 save percentage as a member of the Rocket.

"I'm pretty confident in myself," LaCouvee said. "I've never tried to be arrogant but always had a healthy level of confidence in my ability on the ice and off the ice."

LaCouvee, however, found himself playing from behind after Rochester scored the first goal of the game, thanks to Zach Redmond. The former Montreal Canadiens defenceman, and American Hockey League MVP candidate, now has five points in his last five contests. One of the few bright spots of the period was forward Lukas Vejdemo, who created a number of turnovers for his team.

"Those back-to-backs for European players are quite hard to adjust for them," Bouchard said about Vejdemo. "I felt that's probably his best back-to-back game I've seen."

Laval's closest opportunity came in the dying seconds of the first period as the Rocket had a power play, but Amerks goaltender Adam Wilcox held down the fort. Byron Froese fed Jake Evans with a pass in the slot, but Wilcox stoned him. A goalmouth scramble ensued, but the Rocket could not cash in.

Laval tied the game in the second period after Daniel Audette banged away at the puck in the crease. Phelix Martineau passed it to Audette, who was surrounded by two Americans in the slot. Despite the cluster of players, Audette jammed the puck past Wilcox for his fourth of the season.

Moments after, a dangerous hit from Matt Tennyson on Michael Pezzetta sparked a scrum between the two sides. Pezzetta skated along the wing with his head down, only for Tennyson to hit him. Adam Plant tried to stick up for his teammate and he was assessed a four-minute minor for roughing. Moments later, the Rocket got into more penalty trouble with Alex Belzile getting called for high-sticking.

Both teams ended the period tied at one goal apiece.

Grenier's game-winner came with 13:10 left in the third period. He fired a shot on net and it went behind a screened Wilcox, who couldn't see past defenceman Matt Tennyson and Rocket forward Nikita Jevpalovs parked in front of him.

"Guys are starting to understand what the game plan is, what we need to do," Grenier said.

Laval's next games are January 10 and 11, both against the Manitoba Moose at the MTS Place in Winnipeg.

Laval vs. Rochester recap & highlights: Michael McNiven's return not enough for Rocket in shootout loss
Habs Eyes On The Prize
By: *Scott Matla*

For the first time in a few weeks, the Laval Rocket had one of their top two goaltenders back between the pipes, as Michael McNiven returned to the fold against the Rochester Americans. Still missing, however, were Michael McCarron, Hunter Shinkaruk, and Noah Juulsen, and it is expected they won't be back this weekend either.

Thankfully, the return of Byron Froese brought the power play back to life, as the captain was the catalyst in a 4-2 win over Belleville earlier this week.

As is the case most times when these two teams play, chances were traded back and forth in an evenly matched affair. Justin Bailey rang a shot off the iron for the Americans, while Nikita Jevpalovs did the same for the Rocket, but neither shot bounced the right way as the game remained goalless.

Rochester gained the game's first man advantage when Phelix Martineau fired a puck out of play over the glass for a delay of game penalty. McNiven and the penalty-killers did another fantastic job, giving up just a single shot to a potent Rochester power play in a key situation.

Laval then headed to a power play of their own thanks to a Brendan Guhle high-sticking penalty, and it was not a pretty special-teams display at first. Laval gave up a few short-handed rushes in the opening minute, including another great look by Bailey. When the Rocket did establish control in the Amerks' end, they nearly scored, with Alex Belzile finding iron off a Xavier Ouellet blocked shot.

Laval found the back of the net first though, and they did so in the dying seconds of the period. A Maxim Lamarche shot went wide around the net, and along the left boards David Sklenicka stepped in and blistered a shot into the far side of the net for his second goal of the year.

David Sklenicka with a wicked slap shot to open the scoring with just two seconds left in the period.

Early-second-period pressure by the Amerks was immediately halted after Andrew MacWilliam tripped up Martineau on a dump in, sending the Rocket to their second power play of the game. Despite maintaining zone time with ease, this time the Rocket could not find a second goal.

From there, McNiven took over the game, denying Wayne Simpson and Guhle on high-danger chances close to his net, including a lunging blocker save on a 2-on-1 chance.

Rochester immediately handed Laval another power play, with Dalton Smith taking out McNiven's legs by the net. The power play finally found paydirt on the third attempt, thanks to Belzile ripping home a goal after Daniel Audette fed him the puck in the slot area.

MacWilliam had shoved Jake Evans into the net causing it to come off its pegs as the puck entered the net. The officials reviewed it, but the puck was clearly in before the net moved, and Belzile had his seventh goal of the year.

AHL All-Star Alex Belzile scores his seventh of the year just before the net comes off it's moorings.

Even with Laval taking momentum to end the period, the Amerks tied things up in the final minute of the second. Danny O'Regan broke in to set up near the net, but a pass his way from Judd Peterson hit the inside of the post instead of O'Regan's stick, giving Peterson his first goal of the season just before the intermission.

The third period was non-stop action at both ends of the ice, as the Rocket and Amerks both created chances around the net, but both Wedgewood and McNiven turned away every puck directed at them. Laval came especially close when Michael Pezzetta had a wide-open look, but fanned on his one-time attempt.

Rochester was the far more dominant side as the minutes ticked away on the clock. Strong play from McNiven in net, and timely blocks from his defenders, kept the score tied as the period reached its conclusion.

The teams would need extra time to sort this game out, despite the Amerks' late shot clock domination. Three-on-three overtime brought plenty of exciting moments, perhaps none more than McNiven's lunging, cross-crease glove save to rob Rochester of a goal.

A shootout was needed to determine a winner in what was a night filled with action, right to the end. The Amerks came out on top after five shooters, thanks to goals from Wayne Simpson and Alexander Nylander, while only Belzile scored for the Rocket.

Final Score: Rochester 3, Laval 2 (SO)

The teams will meet again on Saturday afternoon in what will surely be another closely contested affair.