



ROCHESTER AMERICANS

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TONIGHT'S GAME: Syracuse vs. Rochester

Linus Ullmark: Meet the man behind the Minions mask, quirks and all
Buffalo News
By: *Lance Lysowski*

A young boy pressed the paper sign against the glass adjacent to the Buffalo Sabres' bench inside KeyBank Center to catch Linus Ullmark's attention as the 25-year-old goalie skated off the ice at the end of a pregame warmup.

On the sign, underneath a header that read "Life goals," the boy listed two items: the Sabres' winning a Stanley Cup and receiving a stick from Ullmark. The affable, eccentric fan favorite skated over and gently flung his Bauer paddle over the pane of glass.

"He's a really good kid," said Carter Hutton, 33, of his fellow goaltender. "Really sincere."

The child beamed as he hoisted the treasure as if he had won the Stanley Cup.

Ullmark's gesture was seen by the thousands waiting for the puck drop of a game against Chicago. Ullmark, however, does not seek recognition for such kindness, nor did the act surprise his teammates.

On the ice, Ullmark can be perceived by opponents as ultra-serious — he was not afraid to tell Dallas Stars captain Jamie Benn to be quiet during a 1-0 loss Jan. 30 — but he is beloved by teammates for his quirks, quips and genuine kindness.

Ullmark, the Sabres' starter in eight of the past 12 games, is active in two charitable causes: Ullmark's Barks, which, in conjunction with the SPCA in Erie County, has helped six dogs find owners in two months, and AjaBajaCancer, a foundation in Sweden that helps families affected by childhood cancer.

"I would say I'm quirky, unique," Ullmark said, unabashedly, in KeyBank Center following practice last week. "I would rather be unique than normal. That's how I see it. I don't have any issues with me being me and people seeing me as quirky or fun or whatever they say. I try to be me every day, every week. Try to enjoy life as much as possible."

Those personality traits are on powerful display during Ullmark's postgame comments to reporters. He never seems interested in delivering the soundbite they desire, nor does he want to be drawn into a discussion about the meaning of wins or losses. Though his strategy can be maddening — "I didn't hide the cookies well enough" is among his best work — his interactions with fans and teammates reveal more about the man behind the mask.

Ullmark is hyper-focused when preparing for games and he holds himself to an elite standard, admittedly to a fault at times. But he also can come off as carefree, preferring to savor the moment rather than looking ahead or dwelling on the past.

As a child in Sweden, Ullmark used to arrive home from hockey practice to his mother asking when his team was holding another on-ice session at the rink. He rarely knew the answer, telling his mom to ask the coach. Ullmark was never worried about such details.

Goalies have long been known for their eccentricities, but Hutton said there's more than one way to approach what is arguably the sport's most pressure-packed position.

"He's quirky, more like your old-school goalies," Hutton said. "He has some odd things that he does. He's just kind of a goofball and, all in all, a good person.

He's not your typical hockey player, in the sense that most of these younger guys run around for a while and they're a little more reckless. He's a family man, an all-around good kid."

Adam Wilcox, the backup goalie for Rochester the past two seasons, incorrectly expected Ullmark to be quiet when the two first crossed paths in 2015. Wilcox, who faced the Amerks as a member of the Syracuse Crunch, did not learn until last season that Ullmark seems to always be smiling and rarely stops talking.

During Ullmark's starts with the Amerks last season, he often would crack a joke during television timeouts and kept the mood light with his random, unfiltered comments. When the two first met, Ullmark jokingly brought up how Wilcox struggled against Rochester in recent years.

"I loved playing with him," Wilcox said of Ullmark. "He's a great goalie partner to have off the ice. Whether he has allowed seven goals or has a shutout, he's always the same. He'll talk to anyone, and he's always in a good mood. Obviously, he's a goofball, but he's also a super nice guy. Linus will do anything for anyone."

His endearing personality can help brighten spirits during the rigorous regular season, Ullmark's teammates said. It's not a comedic act, either. He and his wife, Moa, each wore one of his goalie helmets during a picture on their wedding day.

Even the most relaxed goalies can fall into the habit of becoming too serious.

Ullmark learned that through difficult times. A sixth-round draft pick of the Sabres in 2012, he went a combined 36-43-2 in his first two seasons with the Amerks. His final two seasons in the Swedish Hockey League didn't go as planned, either.

Ullmark had a .931 save percentage in 31 games for Modo in 2013-14, only to post a 12-20 record the following season. He was an All-Star last season for Rochester, helping the Amerks snap a three-year postseason drought.

Through the Amerks' run, Ullmark cracked jokes during the team's pregame soccer match and randomly gave teammates shoulder massages.

However, on the eve of the Calder Cup playoffs in April, he received news that his grandmother, Ruth, had died. That is when Ullmark learned it's OK not to hide behind a smile. He discussed his options with Amerks coach Chris Taylor: return home to Sweden or remain with the team.

In the end, Ullmark stayed, and he blamed himself for the result after allowing 16 goals in a three-game sweep against Syracuse.

"Obviously, that was a tough situation at that point," Taylor recalled. "You respect the hell out of a guy who does that. His character has never been in question with me. I know him as a guy in the room that all he cares about is wherever he puts that sweater on he's for that team. That's the way he played for us last year."

Ullmark's personal loss was not revealed until the Sabres released a video this season in which he spoke of the playoff defeat. Rather than suppressing his sadness, Ullmark said, he wishes now that he had expressed his emotions and made more time for

family. He realized the value of such introspection last offseason, he said, when former Sabres teammate Robin Lehner spoke publicly about seeking counseling for mental health and addiction. Lehner is having a breakout season with the New York Islanders.

"You want to use hockey as a sanctuary, so you come here and don't think about that stuff," Ullmark said. "But if it starts affecting your game, you should really start talking about it. I don't know how many guys in this league that keep things to themselves that might be good to talk about. I'm very happy about Robin that he's talked about his struggles; he took care of himself and he's playing tremendously now. He's in a good place. You see whenever there's a person who might be struggling, they might be struggling in their life. They might be doing all the right stuff on the ice, but just because they're struggling off the ice, there might be that tension."

Ullmark, the father of an 11-month-old boy, is happy again and has proven more than capable of playing in the NHL. Among Sabres goalies through their first 50 starts with the team, Ullmark's .914 save percentage ranks first in franchise history.

During his time in Rochester, Ullmark used to bring his two corgis, Barry and Bob, to the rink to play with teammates – a welcome sight during the always-tense days of minor leaguers – and always seemed to know how to make others feel better following a difficult game.

That has continued in Buffalo. Ullmark hosted Sabres defenseman Casey Nelson for Thanksgiving and had six young fellow Swedish teammates to his home for tacos during training camp in September.

"He's a great guy and always happy," said Rochester winger Victor Olofsson, a teammate of Ullmark's with Modo who attended Taco Friday. "Brings a smile to the rink every day. He likes to talk with everyone about everything. ... He tries to take care of everyone."

Ullmark has always had an interest in helping others and his arrival as a full-time NHL player finally gave him the avenue to make a difference. When the Sabres' community relations staff asked players to think of possible charitable causes to get involved with this season, Ullmark immediately thought of dogs.

When he wasn't chasing the family dogs as a child, Ullmark was "all up in the faces" of ones he encountered on the street. He also called his two corgis the "best companions" and wanted to help dogs who could not find a home. As part of Ullmark's Barks, Ullmark posts a picture of his latest "draft pick" available for adoption and expresses joy on Twitter when the SPCA serving Erie County posts a photo of the pet with its new owners.

Whether he is using his platforms to make a difference in the two places he calls home or eliciting laughs inside the Sabres' dressing room, the man whose expression is often hidden behind a Minions-emblazoned mask finds joy in watching others smile.

"It's the satisfaction you get from seeing people smile," Ullmark said, beaming.

"You know you made their day, week, month or year. It's not about praise or anything like that. People might think it is, but it's more about seeing the actual reaction from the person that you're trying to help."

Third period dooms Amerks in Cleveland

Rochester First

By: *Thad Brown/Amerks.com*

The Rochester Americans (29-15-3-2) came up on the short end of a 5-2 decision Tuesday night against the Cleveland Monsters (23-21-5-1) at Quicken Loans Arena. It was just the second time all season that the Amerks suffered back-to-back regulation road losses.

Even with tonight's defeat, the Amerks have collected 17 out of a possible 24 points in their last 12 games and maintain their first-place lead atop the AHL's North Division standings going into home-and-home series with the Syracuse Crunch. Rochester has also notched 25 points in its last 19 games dating back to a 4-0 shutout win in Cleveland on Dec. 26.

Forward Remi Elie scored his first goal as an Amerk and later assisted on Wayne Simpson's third-period goal for the Amerks, who show a record of 24-6-2-3 against Cleveland since the start of the 2011-12 season, which includes a 10-2-1-0 record in the last 14 meetings. Goaltender Scott Wedgewood (17-8-2), who has won eight of his last 11 games dating back to the day after Christmas, was tagged with the loss as he made 29 saves.

Cleveland, which entered the game winless in five of its last six games, was paced by Kole Sherwood and Vitaly Abramov's two-goal night as well as Nikita Korostelev's multi-assist (0+2) performance. Paul Bittner finished off the scoring as netminder Jean-Francois Berube stopped 26 of 28 shots he faced to even his record on the slate to 15-15-4.

After allowing the Amerks to even the game at 1-1 just 2:46 into the second period, the Monsters scored three unanswered goals prior to the halfway point of the final frame to grab a three-goal cushion.

Shortly after Abramov scored his first of the night at the 4:23 mark, the Amerks appeared to shift the momentum in their favor as they drew an interference penalty, but the home club, much like the three prior infractions, successfully killed off the penalty.

The Monsters extended their lead as Abramov and Sherwood each tacked on their second goals of the night 1:40 apart to make it a 4-1 score at the 13:08 mark of the third period. While Simpson cut the lead in half as he redirected a Casey Nelson point shot, Cleveland put the game away as Bittner scored his seventh marker of the season into a vacant net.

With Simpson's 16th goal of the season, the Boxborough, Mass., native reached the 30-point plateau for the fourth straight season and tied a career-best in goals through 48 games.

The two North Division opponents, who will meet again in eight days at The Blue Cross Arena in Rochester, went into the third period knotted up at 1-1 before Cleveland scored four goals in the final 20 minutes of regulation.

During an end-to-end opportunistic first-period, the Monsters scored the only goal of the stanza as Sherwood gave Cleveland its first lead of the season-series at the 15:53 mark. As the Monsters kept the puck inside the Amerks zone, Sam Vigneault centered a pass to Sherwood before tucking behind the cage. Despite failing on his initial attempt, Sherwood bunted the puck over the left arm of Wedgewood for his 10th goal of the campaign and first of the contest.

Trailing for the first time in the season-series, the Amerks responded after the first intermission and tied the contest 2:46 into the middle frame as Elie, who had a career-high five shots, backhanded a breakaway shot over the glove-hand of Berube and made it a 1-1 game from Eric Cornel.

The Amerks open up their second three-in-three of the season beginning on Friday, Feb. 15 when they welcome back the Syracuse Crunch to The Blue Cross Arena. Game time is slated for a 7:05 p.m. start.

Ex-Amerk Gates Orlando cherishes second shot at life
Rochester Business Journal
By: *Scott Pitoniak*

The wintry air had turned his cheeks rosy red. An ear-to-ear smile creased his face. As Gates Orlando skated around the outdoor rink at Frontier Field that chilly eve six Decembers ago, he felt as unencumbered as he had on the frozen ponds of his youth outside of Montreal in the mid-1960s. Oh, how he had longed to experience a joyous moment such as this again. Oh, how he had wondered many times during his 208-day hospital stay if such a moment would ever come.

While carving the sheet of ice with his skate blades that night, Orlando reflected on his glory days as a speedy, pint-sized center with the Rochester Americans and Buffalo Sabres, and his two trips to the Winter Olympics with the Italian hockey team. He thought about loved ones, and all the fans who had made Rochester feel like home. He also recalled the days when he was restricted to slow treks on a treadmill rather than rapid rushes up a rink, and how dedicated doctors and nurses at Strong Memorial Hospital encouraged him to keep the faith, to keep moving forward, one step at a time.

Mostly, though, he thought about Paul Guyette — the total stranger whose donated heart gave Orlando a second shot at life.

“I definitely was skating for two that night,” he recalled during a recent break from his job as a National Hockey League scout for the New Jersey Devils. “It felt like Paul and I were going around that ice together. After not being able to lace ‘em up for two years, I was back out there, thanks to Paul and his family and the folks at Strong. That was one incredible night.”

And it would become even more memorable after he stepped off the ice to go shower and watch his former teammates participate in that night’s Amerks alumni game. While Orlando walked spiritedly to the locker room, he was intercepted by Rochester Red Wings general manager Dan Mason, who told him that Paul’s widow, Mary, wanted to meet him.

“We were supposed to chat twice before, but I don’t think she was ready emotionally,” Orlando recalled. “So, this caught me totally off-guard, but maybe it was better this way. The other two times I was nervous as hell, worrying about what I would say to her. This happened so fast that I didn’t have time to think or worry.”

When Orlando entered the umpire’s room that Mason had made available, he saw Mary crying. The two embraced, then spent a good thirty minutes talking. Orlando told her he would never be able to thank her and Paul enough for the gift they had given him 10 months earlier. She told him it comforted her and her family to know that Paul was living on in him and in five other people who received his organs. Orlando wanted to learn more about her husband. She mentioned how Paul had been an electrician who loved hunting and attending games involving the Buffalo Bills, Sabres and Amerks.

“When we got ready to leave, Gates hugged me and asked if I wanted to touch Paul’s heart,” she recalled. “He placed my hand on his chest. I can’t put into words the emotions I felt at that moment. It was overwhelming. Gates has been so gracious and wonderful since the moment I met him. I tell him, ‘Gates, it’s not Paul’s heart. It’s your heart.’ He said, ‘No, Mary. It will always be Paul’s heart.’”

Feb. 4 marked the sixth anniversary of Paul’s death and Orlando’s rebirth. It was a bittersweet day for the Amerks’ Hall of Famer. A time of gratitude. And sadness. And reflection. His phone blew up with texts from loved ones wishing him a happy birthday. Like many transplant recipients, Orlando acknowledges two birthdays — this one, and his original one on Nov. 13, 1962.

"I'm happy and I'm sad each February 4, but ultimately I say to myself, 'Wow! Look what I've been given,'" said Orlando, who has been in excellent health since receiving his new heart. "I recount all the wonderful things I've experienced since that day, things I would have missed out on with my three sons and my friends if it weren't for Paul and Mary."

At first, Orlando was reluctant to go public with his story. But the more he thought about it, the more he realized he had an obligation as a recipient and a forum as a former professional hockey player.

"To not publicize it and encourage others about the importance of organ donation would have been a disservice to Paul and his family," he said. "Paul saved my life, and by telling our story, we have an opportunity to save many more lives. It can have a ripple effect."

Though he won't be able to attend, he is pleased the Amerks will be teaming up with the Finger Lakes Donor Recovery Network for the seventh annual Donate Life Night this Friday during Rochester's game with the Syracuse Crunch at the Blue Cross Arena. Fans will be able to sign up to become organ donors. Both Orlando and Mary are grateful this tradition is continuing.

"When we were told that Paul was brain dead (from an intracranial hemorrhage), we realized we couldn't change the outcome and wanted to honor his wishes not to remain on life support," Mary said. "We also asked ourselves, 'How can we make something good out of something bad?' That's what organ donation is about. Paul wound up making a difference not only in Gates' life, but in the lives of several others. That's a pretty powerful legacy."

About two weeks before Paul died, Mary's good friend, Laurie LoMonaco Newman, had donated one of her healthy kidneys to save the life of her boss's ailing friend. Her incredible act of kindness made a huge impression on Paul and his family, and influenced Mary's decision to donate his organs.

Fast forward to last summer and LoMonaco Newman's wedding. Mary was there. So was Orlando. When he saw Mary, he hugged her and her youngest daughter, Emma. As Orlando walked away, Emma turned to Mary and said excitedly: "Mom, I just felt Daddy's heart."

Daddy's heart. Orlando's heart. One and the same.

Amerks drop 5-2 decision to Cleveland
C&C Worldwide
By: *Staff Report/Amerks.com*

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Amerks: January in review

WRG 550

By: *Brayton Wilson*

The month of January was a nice rebound for the Rochester Americans after an up-and-down month of December that saw the team falling out of the top spot in the North Division.

In 10 games in January, the Amerks went 6-2-2 to improve their overall record to 26-13-3-1 and 56 points. That helped the Amerks back to the top of the division with a three-point lead over the Syracuse Crunch, a five-point lead over the Utica Comets and a six-point lead over the Toronto Marlies.

The only downside to their recent play has been the inability to string together more than three consecutive wins in the schedule. Rochester has not put together a three-game winning streak since early December, but the team did end the month riding a six-game point streak.

The month started with an exhilarating shootout victory over the visiting Bridgeport Sound Tigers at Blue Cross Arena. After the Amerks fell behind by a 3-1 score in the second period, the team got goals from Danny O'Regan in the second period and Andrew MacWilliam in the third period tied things up. However, the Sound Tigers scored again at the 6:13 mark of the third to re-gain the lead. With time running out and the Amerks needing the game-tying goal, Alex Nylander set up Rasmus Asplund with a perfect feed to the side of the Bridgeport net, and the rookie center tied the game with 12-seconds remaining in regulation.

After a scoreless overtime, Victor Olofsson's goal in the first round of the shootout was all the Amerks needed to down the Sound Tigers by a 5-4 score.

The Amerks followed that win up with another shootout win, this time on the road in Laval, Quebec against the Rocket. In this one, Nylander scored the game-winning goal in the fifth round of the shootout to give Rochester the extra point in a 3-2 win. That was on top of the goal he had scored in the second period to tie the game at 1-1. Judd Peterson scored his first goal in the American Hockey League to tie the game at 2-2 with just 49-seconds remaining in the second period as he tried a pass across the ice to O'Regan that went off a defenseman and into the net.

Rochester wrapped up the two-game series in Laval with a 2-1 loss, despite getting out to a 1-0 first period lead thanks to Zach Redmond's 16th goal of the season. It was Rocket forward Alexandre Grenier who beat goalie Adam Wilcox through a screen with 13:10 remaining to put Laval up for good.

Nearly one week later, the Amerks returned home to Blue Cross Arena to host the Toronto for the first game of a home-and-home set with the Marlies. However, they laid an egg in front of the home crowd with a 5-1 loss. After O'Regan scored in the second period to tie the game at 1-1, the Marlies went on to score four unanswered goals and did not allow too many high-danger chances to the Amerks.

The next day at the Coca-Cola Coliseum in Toronto, Ontario, C.J. Smith made his return to the lineup after being recently re-assigned to the Amerks by the Buffalo Sabres. In his return, Smith was dominant from start to finish by scoring a hat-trick and registering a four-point night in a 5-1 win on the road. The 24-year-old scored both of Rochester's first two goals, and capped off the night with an empty-netter to put the game on ice. It was Smith's second career hat-trick with the Amerks, and his first since March 18, 2018 against the Hartford Wolf Pack.

Then on Thursday, January 17, the Sabres pulled off a trade that saw long-time Amerks forward Justin Bailey get traded to the Philadelphia Flyers in exchange for forward Taylor Leier. Bailey finished his career with the Amerks playing in 196 games, scoring 62 goals and registering 116 points.

As for Leier, he came to the Amerks with 226 games under his belt with the Flyers' AHL affiliate. In parts of four seasons with the Phantoms, Leier scored a total of 56 goals and put up 136 points.

The Amerks continued their three-game road trip next Friday with a trip down to Wilkes-Barre, Pennsylvania for a meeting with the Wilkes-Barre/Scranton Penguins. The game was a back-and-forth affair with both teams exchanging lead changes heading into the third period. At the 8:55 mark of the third period, the Amerks took a 4-3 lead when O'Regan chased down a puck flipped into the Wilkes-Barre zone and dropped it back to Olofsson coming on with him. The 23-year-old winger then fired a low shot through the five-hole of goalie Tristan Jarry to give Rochester the lead. Olofsson was not done there as 5:36 later, the left winger fired home a one-time feed from Nylander to give the Amerks a 5-3 lead.

The Penguins managed to get one more goal by Scott Wedgewood in goal to make things interesting, but the Amerks goalie held down the fort to give the Amerks a 5-4 win.

The following night saw the Amerks dropping a 3-2 shootout decision to Bailey and the Lehigh Valley Phantoms in Allentown, Pa. Rochester got goals from Kevin Porter and Matt Tennyson in regulation, but failed to score in three rounds of the shootout to grab a third straight win.

In his debut with the Amerks, Leier only registered one shot on goal and was a plus-1 in the loss. On the other side of things, Bailey registered two shots on goal in the winning effort.

Rochester returned home on that next Wednesday to host the Binghamton Devils in another thrilling rollercoaster of a game. The Amerks ended up getting seven goals in regulation to down the Devils 7-5 at Blue Cross Arena, and got goals from six different players on the roster. Although the Amerks gave up a three-goal lead in the second period, they were able to get two goals in a 56-second span to re-take the lead at 6-4 before the end of the middle stanza.

Two nights later, the Amerks grabbed another shootout win at home with a 3-2 victory over the Comets on Defend the Ice Night. Heading into the third period tied at 1-1, Utica's Reid Boucher broke the tie with 8:46 to go as he turned and fired a high-rising shot over the short-side shoulder of goalie Jonas Johansson. However, the Amerks never quit, and their determination got them back in the hockey game with 1:44 to go in the game. After C.J. Smith's initial shot did not make it through to the net, Tennyson gathered the loose puck and fired a wrist shot through a screen and in behind Comets netminder Ivan Kulbakov.

After another five minutes of hockey solved nothing, the Amerks and Comets proceeded to the shootout. After Olofsson and Smith scored in the second and third round to tie the shootout at 2-2, it was Leier who gave the Amerks the advantage in the seventh round. Johansson sealed the game with a stop on Carter Bancks to give Rochester the extra point.

The next night, the Amerks closed out the month of January with a road matchup against the Syracuse Crunch at the War Memorial Arena. Scott Wilson and Kyle Criscuolo scored Rochester's early goals as both teams headed into the third period with a 2-1 lead. After Jan Rutta tied the game early in the third, Brendan Guhle scored off a quick shot from the point to give the Amerks the lead with 10:41 to go. However, Crunch forward Carter Verhaeghe had a night as he scored his second goal of the night with just 1:27 remaining to tie the game at 3-3 and force overtime.

Just nine-seconds into overtime, Verhaeghe stole a puck that got away from Tennyson in the Rochester zone and fired a shot over the blocker of Adam Wilcox in goal to complete the hat-trick and hand Syracuse the crucial extra point.

In case you missed it, here is how the schedule played out for the month:

- Wednesday, January 2 - vs. Bridgeport (5-4 SO win)
- Friday, January 4 - at Laval (3-2 SO win)
- Saturday, January 5 - at Laval (2-1 loss)
- Friday, January 11 - vs. Toronto (5-1 loss)
- Saturday, January 12 - at Toronto (5-1 win)
- Friday, January 18 - at Wilkes-Barre/Scranton (5-4 win)
- Saturday, January 19 - at Lehigh Valley (3-2 SO loss)
- Wednesday, January 23 - vs. Binghamton (7-5 win)
- Friday, January 25 - vs. Utica (3-2 SO win)
- Saturday, January 26 - at Syracuse (4-3 OT loss)

Game of the Month: January 23 vs. Binghamton

The Amerks got out to an early 3-0 lead in the first period with goals from Wilson, O'Regan and Leier in the first 15:51 of the period. For both Wilson and Leier, it was their first goals in an Amerks uniform.

Rochester's momentum took a minor hit with just 45-seconds left in the period as Devils forward Nathan Bastian danced his way around Guhle at the top of the faceoff circle to the left of Wedgewood, cut to the slot and backhanded his shot low, off the post and in.

The Amerks re-gained their three-goal lead as Olofsson came off the bench and found some wide-open space to receive a pass from Asplund behind the net. Olofsson had all the time available to him to fire a wrist shot over the glove hand of goalie Cory Schneider from the faceoff circle to increase the lead to 4-1.

That's when the Amerks coughed up the three-goal lead, and it only took the Devils a span of 1:55 to tie the hockey game at 4-4.

The Devils scored just 1:47 after Olofsson's goal when Wedgewood was knocked off his feet in the crease by Michael McLeod, forcing him out of position. After a couple of whacks away at the puck in the crease, Eric Tangradi put the puck in to make it a 4-2 game. The Amerks argued that the goal shouldn't count because of goaltender interference, but it was allowed to stand. Another 1:46 later, the Devils cut the Amerks' lead to just one as Brandon Gignac used his speed to beat out Zach Redmond for a puck in the neutral zone and go in on a partial breakaway. Gignac then fired in a wicked wrist shot over the short-side, glove hand of Wedgewood for his eighth goal of the season.

Binghamton evened the game up just nine seconds later as the Devils quickly entered the Amerks zone off the ensuing faceoff. After a shot from McLeod was blocked by Tennyson, the rebound went to Bastian, who fired a shot over Wedgewood on the glove side to tie the game at 4-4.

However, the Devils got into some penalty trouble just moments later, giving the Amerks a 4-on-3 power play chance with 4:50 to go in the second period. Just 17-seconds into the power play for the Amerks, C.J. Smith's original shot goes off the post and

bounces behind Schneider and through the crease. After Olofsson whiffs on his rebound attempt, O'Regan came in and cleaned up the loose change to re-gain the lead for Rochester.

56-seconds later, with both teams back at full strength, Porter makes a nice play at the Binghamton blue line to force a turnover and get in behind the defense. Defenseman Zach Redmond read the play very well and streaked in to make it a 2-on-0 rush to the Devils net. The Amerks captain then fed Redmond, who quickly put his snap shot over the leg of a sprawling Schneider for his 19th goal of the season.

With the goal, Redmond set an Amerks franchise record for the most goals by a defenseman in a season, breaking a 45-year record set by Rick Pagnutti back in the 1972-73 season.

Devils forward Nick Saracino made things interesting in the third period with a goal to cut the Amerks' lead to 6-5 with 15:42 remaining in the third period. Saracino got the goal off a re-direction in front of Wedgewood that snuck its way through the five-hole.

Wayne Simpson ended up putting the game to bed with an empty net goal with just 29-seconds remaining in the game. However, just moments before the goal, Redmond ended up falling in behind the Rochester net and came up injured with a lower-body injury. He went immediately to the dressing room and did not come out for the game's three star honors.

Here is a run down of how some players performed in the month of January:

- C.J. Smith

In the six games played in January since he was re-assigned to the Amerks, C.J. Smith registered a point in each of the games he has played. He kicked off the six-game point streak with a hat-trick and a four-point night, and then went on to register five assists in the following five games. Smith went back to Rochester and continued to flourish off the success he had in his short stint with the Sabres. In many games during the month of January, Smith was, by far, the best player on the ice by using his speed and offensive smarts to take advantage of his opponents. He also looked very good defensively, playing some smart hockey in his own end and making the right plays to help his team out of danger.

After two more games in February, Smith earned another call up to the Sabres where he has been since. Certainly, a well-deserved honor for the 24-year-old winger.

- Victor Olofsson

Olofsson continues to show some promising signs of his future with the Sabres organization with the way his first season in North America has played out so far. January was a solid month for the 23-year-old winger as he scored four goals and picked up eight assists in 10 games played. In the first 40 games of his AHL career, Olofsson has scored 14 goals and registered 37 points. His transition to the North American game has gone very well so far, not just with his speed but also the way he sees the game and his physical strength. It's starting to look more and more like his call to the NHL could be coming sooner rather than later.

- Alex Nylander

Nylander has continued to come along nicely in his third season in the AHL, despite his lack of production in the stats department. He's continuing to go to the dirty areas to engage in puck battles, and he's been doing a lot less puck watching and playing with more of an edge to his game. This past month only produced a goal and three assists, but it's what he's doing

away from the puck that has stood out more than anything this season. That's a huge step for him with the way his development has gone to this point. Although he suffered an upper-body injury at a practice last week, when he returns to the lineup, it's time to see a little more from him offensively.

- Taylor Leier

Since coming over from the Flyers organization, it has been a slow but steady transition to the Amerks for Leier. In the four games he played in the month of February, Leier scored a goal and also picked up a shootout goal. He's not a player that is going to completely stand out and be a consistent NHL player, but he's a serviceable offensive asset that can be reliable in a pinch.

- Danny O'Regan

January was a very good month for O'Regan as he lit up the scoresheet with six goals and nine points in 10 games. The 25-year-old continues to produce in all areas of the ice, and is playing consistent hockey on a line with Olofsson and Asplund. He's another guy who is eagerly awaiting his next chance at the NHL, and he will be ready when his name is called.

- Rasmus Asplund

Asplund continues his progression into becoming a solid depth center in North America. The 21-year-old scored a goal and picked up four assists in his 10 games during the month, and has shown how durable he's been for the Amerks with the amount of work he keeps getting handed to him from head coach Chris Taylor. It will be fun to see how he continues to develop over the next couple of months as the season winds down.

- Brendan Guhle

Guhle's All-Star appearance was nothing to bat an eye at, going pointless as the North Division went on to win the All-Star Classic in Springfield, Massachusetts. However, Guhle's season continues to have its ups and downs with some strong offensive play, but then the defensive lapses that can cost the team at the worst times. If he can even out his play and improve on his consistency, he could earn his shot at a spot in the NHL. Until he does that, he has to keep growing his game in the AHL.

Here's also an update on the list of injuries the Amerks have been dealing with since Feb. 13

- Zach Redmond - Lower-body injury (week-to-week)
- Alex Nylander - Upper-body injury (week-to-week)
- Andrew Oglevie - Upper-body injury (week-to-week)
- Sean Malone - Undisclosed injury (week-to-week)
- Kevin Porter - Lower-body injury (day-to-day)
- Kyle Criscuolo - Lower-body injury (day-to-day)

Recap: Abramov, Sherwood Lift Monsters to Win over Americans
SB Nation The Cannon
By: *Elaine Shircliff*

The Cleveland Monsters came into tonight's game against the Rochester Americans hungry for points to move them up the leaderboard.

For the first time in a while, Coach Madden mixed up the lines.

"Guys have been playing in bigger roles and have been playing good. We thought we'd give some guys some chances in situations, but I also like the fact I wanted to have four lines. Typically, Rochester has four lines. Obviously, they are missing a few of their key guys which helped. If we could roll four lines against them, I thought it would be an advantage to us." – Head Coach John Madden

You could see how much the line changes helped the Monsters right off the bat. They made better decisions when it came to passing and playmaking. The Monsters also had more pep in their step than I have seen in a while.

The Monsters kicked the scoring off with 4:07 left in the first period. Sam Vigneault tossed the puck from behind the net to Kole Sherwood. It had a little lift to it allowing Sherwood to bat it out of the air like a baseball. This left us all wondering if he has a second calling in life.

The Americans tied the game up a little under three minutes into the second period. A pass from Dillon Simpson intended for Justin Scott was intercepted. This allowed Remi Elie to fire off an almost point-blank shot at Jean-Francois Berube. Instead of firing the puck near Berube's five-hole, Elie lifted the puck just enough to bounce it off the crossbar into the net.

The third period started off on a bit of dicey note when Vigneault went to the box for holding. After the Monsters successfully killed the penalty, this went swimmingly for the rest of the games.

Vitaly Abramov broke the 1-1 tie 4:23 into the third. He received a pass from Nikita Korostelevand flicked it into the net from the top of the crease.

Seven minutes later, Abramov extended the Monsters over the Americans, 3-1. A shot bounced off Scott Wedgewood's backside. Abramov swooped in and cleaned up the trash.

"It was great play from the lineys. The first goal was a nice pass from Koro. The second one was MacInnis. He got a nice shot and I had a rebound. It was a great play." – Vitaly Abramov

With 6:52 left in the game, Sherwood wanted in on the two-goal game fun. Being in the right place at the right time allowed that to happen.

Adam Clendening launched a shot from the blue like that Sherwood was about to bat backwards into the net. Yet again, making us all wonder if he should head to Phoenix with the Cleveland Indians for spring training.

Not even a minute later, the Americans cut the Monsters lead in half. Casey Nelson launched a wicked bomb from the blue line which Wayne Simpson grabbed a piece of before it entered the net.

With around four minutes left in the game, the Americans pulled Wedgewood in hopes of closing the gap on the Monsters.

Instead, Paul Bittner scored on the empty net minutes after the Americans pulled their goalie.

The empty netter sealed the deal on the Monsters' 5-2 win over the Americans.

After this win, the Monsters sit one point behind the Belleville Senators and six points behind the Utica Comets. They will face both of these teams in a back-to-back-to-back this upcoming weekend. Walking away with six points this weekend will prove incredibly beneficial for the Monsters.

Williamsville product Justin Bailey back in the NHL with Philadelphia
Buffalo News
By: *Lance Lysowski*

Justin Bailey needed only 10 games away from Rochester to earn another call to the NHL.

Bailey, a 23-year-old Williamsville native traded by the Buffalo Sabres last month, was recalled by the Philadelphia Flyers on Sunday morning. The former second-round draft pick had five goals among seven points in 10 games for Lehigh Valley, the Flyers' AHL affiliate.

Bailey joined the Flyers for practice Sunday morning, however, interim coach Scott Gordon told reporters that Bailey will not play Monday night against the Pittsburgh Penguins. Instead, Bailey was recalled as a precaution and this gives him an opportunity to learn the team's system.

"I don't think you ever expect to get called up," Bailey told reporters following practice Sunday in Voorhees, N.J. "I think I put together a couple good games since I came over here. I was doing everything I could to earn my way up. I was pleasantly surprised [to get called up] and happy and really looking forward to the opportunity."

His tenure with the Sabres did not go as planned. On Jan. 17, Bailey, who was drafted 52nd overall by Buffalo in 2013, was traded for winger Taylor Leier after scoring five goals with three assists in 52 career games with the Sabres. Leier, a 24-year-old former fourth-round draft pick, has two goals and one assist in seven games with the Amerks.

Bailey had nine goals among 20 points in 37 games for Rochester at the time of the trade and was not on the verge of being recalled to Buffalo. He had eight points in 52 career games with the Sabres, including four with a minus-2 rating in 12 games last season.

Flyers General Manager Chuck Fletcher spoke highly of Bailey to reporters Saturday, adding that the team soon would make a determination if Bailey would join Philadelphia for a playoff push. The Flyers (25-23-7) entered Sunday six points back of the second wild-card playoff spot and four behind the Sabres.

The two teams will play in Philadelphia on Feb. 26, though it is unclear how long Bailey will be in a Flyers uniform.

"I was looking for a change of scenery," Bailey said. "I couldn't be happier that it was Philly. It's obviously an organization that has a great history, a place I've watched growing up as a kid."