



ROCHESTER AMERICANS

DAILY PRESS CLIPS

Wednesday, March 27, 2019

TONIGHT'S GAME: Lehigh Valley vs. Rochester

Sabres Notebook: Will Borgen a 'little nervous' before NHL debut in Ottawa
Buffalo News
By: Lance Lysowski
March 26, 2019

In the bowels of Canadian Tire Centre late Tuesday afternoon, assistant coach Steve Smith retrieved Will Borgen from an adjacent room and turned the hallway outside the Buffalo Sabres' dressing room into a makeshift classroom.

With only a few hours to prepare Borgen for his NHL debut against the Ottawa Senators, Smith set a white board on top of a high-seated stool and sketched out a few teaching points about the Sabres' structure. Borgen, a 22-year-old defenseman, was eating breakfast less than 12 hours earlier when he was told of his promotion from Rochester.

After a five-hour car ride and no morning skate, Borgen had only a few hours to physically and mentally prepare for his assignment of filling in for Rasmus Ristolainen, who fell ill and was unavailable for the first time this season.

"It was kind of a surprise," Borgen beamed. "I was downstairs having breakfast and [Amerks coach Chris Taylor] called me up and told me the news up in his room. It was pretty crazy. I got a little nervous right away, but excited, too."

Borgen, who was paired with Marco Scandella against the Senators, was an ideal fit to fill in since he is a right-shot defenseman like Ristolainen, however, the former fourth-round draft pick also earned the opportunity by flourishing with the Amerks. Borgen has two goals with 10 assists with a plus-7 rating in 66 games during his first full season with Rochester.

He began his professional career one year ago, following three seasons at St. Cloud State, and became the second defenseman in three days to be promoted by the Sabres. Lawrence Pilut joined the team Sunday in Newark because neither Zach Bogosian (lower body) nor Matt Hunwick (upper body) would be available to play in the Sabres' 3-1 loss to the New Jersey Devils on Monday.

Pilut, 23, played 20 minutes, 42 seconds and had three shots on goal against the Devils — his first NHL game since Feb. 19. Ristolainen's minutes have dropped over his last three games, he played only 20 minutes, 3 seconds against New Jersey.

With Bogosian and Hunwick unavailable Tuesday in Ottawa, the Sabres called upon Borgen, a defensive-minded prospect whose stock rose by finishing checks and playing with the type of snarl Buffalo has lacked for much of the season.

"Will brings a physical element to the game," Sabres coach Phil Housley said. "He's a shut down guy, plays very well in his own end. Defensively, boxes out tremendously well. Plays a simple game. Makes that first pass on the tape and that's what we're looking for tonight."

While the Amerks and Sabres run a similar defensive structure, Smith had to quickly teach Borgen the team's tendencies on the penalty kill while going over a brief game plan on the Senators. There were also conversations with the equipment staff and teammates, many of whom he had not played with since the preseason.

Housley expressed excitement for watching another prospect join the team, adding that Borgen's enthusiasm could "rub off" on the Sabres. It is unclear how long Borgen could stay — after all, Alex Nylander earned a full-time role during Jack Eichel's suspension — but he doesn't intend to change what earned him that call from Taylor.

"I just try to finish my checks," Borgen said. "That's always been a part of my game. Being physical is just part of my game. In front of the net, move guys out. I do a defenseman's job."

Fitzgerald signs, will join Amerks

Casey Fitzgerald, a 22-year-old defenseman, signed a two-year, entry-level contract with the Sabres on Tuesday and will report to Rochester on an amateur tryout. Fitzgerald had 17 goals and 65 assists in four seasons at Boston College, serving as team captain in his junior and senior seasons.

The right-shot defenseman was a third-round draft pick of the Sabres in 2016 and won a gold medal with the United States at the 2017 IIHF World Junior Championship. His contract won't begin until next season.

Sobotka sits for Mittelstadt

Casey Mittelstadt spent only one game as a spectator in the press box. The 20-year-old center was back in the Sabres' lineup Tuesday night after he sat out against the Devils. It was the first time the rookie had been a healthy scratch and only the fifth game he had missed all season.

Vladimir Sobotka, who has five goals among 13 points with a minus-19 rating in 68 games this season, was a healthy scratch against the Senators after he was called for two minor penalties Monday in New Jersey.

Botterill at World Championships

Sabres General Manager Jason Botterill is joining former Carolina Hurricanes General Manager Ron Francis and former Philadelphia Flyers General Manager Ron Hextall on the management team for Canada's 2019 team in the World Championships. The tournament will be held May 10-26 in Slovakia, and will also involve former Sabres captain Chris Drury, who was named the general manager for Team USA.

"We are excited to welcome these three gentlemen and their extensive experience in the NHL and international hockey, both as general managers and players," Tom Renney, chief executive officer of Hockey Canada, said in a statement. "We know Jason, Ron and Ron will represent our country with a tremendous amount of pride, and we look forward to working with this group as we set our sights on bringing home a gold medal at the 2019 IIHF world championship."

Sabres sign defenseman Casey Fitzgerald to entry-level contract

Buffalo News

By: Lance Lysowski

March 26, 2019

Following the recalls of Lawrence Pilut and Will Borgen to the NHL, the Buffalo Sabres signed defenseman Casey Fitzgerald a two-year, entry-level contract Tuesday night.

Fitzgerald, 22, recently completed his senior at Boston College, where he was a two-time captain and recorded 17 goals with 65 assists in 151 games over four seasons. He will immediately join the Rochester Americans on an amateur tryout and his contract will officially begin next season.

A third-round draft pick in 2016, Fitzgerald has a right-handed shot and won a gold medal with the United States at the 2017 World Junior Championship. He had two goals with 12 assists and a minus-6 rating as a senior this season, earning which led to a Hockey East All-Star Honorable Mention selection.

Fitzgerald was one of the Sabres' two third-round draft picks in 2016, following Cliff Pu, a forward who was traded to Carolina in exchange for Jeff Skinner in August. Fitzgerald's entry-level deal has an average annual value of \$925,000.

Sabres prospect Taylor Leier finding Rochester is a good fit
Buffalo Hockey Beat
By: Bill Hoppe
March 26, 2019

After spending his entire career in the Philadelphia Flyers organization, Taylor Leier has quickly acclimated to the Americans and his new surroundings.

On the ice, Leier has scored nine goals and 16 points in his first 24 games since arriving in a Jan. 17 trade that sent Justin Bailey to the Flyers organization.

Off the ice, Leier, a self-proclaimed "foodie," has found some local restaurants he enjoys. He also frequents Wegmans, a grocery store he discovered in Pennsylvania.

"I was real happy when I saw that was here," Leier said recently.

Rochester also offers Leier, 25, an opportunity to pursue one of his passions, fishing. "I'm like a fishing fanatic," Leier said.

Leier said he has gone ice fishing with Amerks teammate Dalton Smith six or seven times on Irondequoit Bay.

"As soon as the ice froze over, I got out there," Leier said.

Smith owns a portable hut they secure by pounding pegs in the ice. They also bring along a heater and some chairs. "Next thing you know, nice and cozy," Leier said.

Sitting for hours at a time on the ice offers Leier a much-needed respite from the grind and pressure of pro hockey. He said the peacefulness he experiences fishing has helped his transition to the Amerks "100 percent."

"I want to do the best I can in hockey," Leier said. "Sometimes I get, like, obsessed. When I get the chance to do different things I like to do, too, like ice fishing and kind of not think about hockey, I think that helps (me) come back to the game feeling more refreshed and not so overwhelmed sometimes."

In Rochester, Leier loves catching perch he can fry and eat. At home in Saskatchewan, he invites his friends, packs a lunch and takes his boat out looking for pike, trout and walleye.

"I love ... having my phone off and just doing me," he said.

Leier developed his love of fishing growing up. After school ended, his family would leave Saskatoon and spend the summer about two hours north at a cabin on Emma Lake.

He and his father, Tim, would go out every morning. Meanwhile, his mother, Cindy, and brother, Keaton, would stay back. "I would wake my dad up in the morning," Leier said. "Me and him would go together with our dogs every day."

Leier would eventually grow more interested in fishing than his father.

"I think he really just liked being with me more than fishing sometimes," Leier said. "But I was obsessed with it."

Leier and his family still spend summers on Emma Lake. He bought his own boat when he was 18 and started earning his own money. Two summers ago, he sold it and purchased a 2017 Pro Angler Smoker Craft, the boat he always wanted.

"I usually train in the morning and I'll go (fishing) for the rest of the day or the evening," Leier said. "You just don't worry about anything other than fishing. It's a good mind break. I think the rush-and-go lifestyle, it's everywhere now. I just really try to give my mind a break sometimes and it helps a ton."

Leier has contributed a ton to the Amerks, compiling six goals and nine points in the last eight games.

After spending all of last season with the Flyers, Leier took a positive approach to returning to the American Hockey League. The experience, he believes, has been valuable for his confidence.

The last two months, of course, have been a whirlwind for the former fourth-round pick. He left the organization he grew up in and the AHL team, the Lehigh Valley Phantoms, where he played 226 games over four seasons.

"I've adjusted well," Leier said of coming to Rochester. "I kind of just go with the flow and just try to stay true to my game and not really change too much. I'm playing with a lot of good players and I'm pretty happy with my game as of late. The coaches are kind of giving me a pretty long leash to do my thing."

Given his age, versatility and production, Leier could earn a recall to the Sabres someday, perhaps as a third- or fourth-liner. Overall this season, he has scored 19 goals, one off his career high.

Leier has been playing center regularly instead of left wing for the first time in his life. Taylor watched video of him taking faceoffs with Lehigh Valley and became intrigued.

But Leier was only in the circle because his regular center had a sore wrist.

"He reads plays very well, he's a guy I think that he looks at his wingers and he can make plays," Taylor said. "He's a good passer. So I felt like I could trust him more than anybody at that time to play center. It's worked out."

Leier said it took him a little time to find a rhythm in the middle.

"You get a lot of touches on pucks," Leier said. "I like being engaged right off faceoffs. I've probably played around 20 games now at center my whole life. I grew up playing defense, then I liked scoring too much, so I switched to forward."

Sabres recall Will Borgen from Amerks

Buffalo News

By: Bill Hoppe

March 26, 2019

The Buffalo Sabres recalled Will Borgen from the Rochester Americans this morning, meaning a defenseman was possibly injured in Monday's 3-1 road loss to the New Jersey Devils.

The Sabres play another road contest tonight against the Ottawa Senators. Coach Phil Housley will have an update later in the day.

Borgen could make his NHL debut.

The 6-foot-2, 187-pound Borgen, 22, has compiled two goals, 12 points and a plus-7 rating in 66 games as an AHL rookie this season. He played eight games with the Amerks a year ago after leaving St. Cloud State following his junior season.

The Sabres drafted Borgen in the fourth round, 92nd overall, in 2015. Borgen represented Team USA at the Pyeongchang Olympic Games in 2018.

Update: Housley told reporters in Ottawa Borgen will be in for Rasmus Ristolainen, who is under the weather.

"Will brings a physical element to the game," Housley said. "He's a shutdown guy, he plays very well in his own end. Defensively, (he) boxes out tremendously well. (He) plays a simple game, makes that first pass on the tape."

Olofsson has four assists as Amerks rally to top Marlies in OT

Buffalo News

By: Bill Hoppe

March 24, 2019

The Rochester Americans overcame a three-goal third period deficit before Danny O'Regan scored just 17 seconds into overtime for a 5-4 victory over the Toronto Marlies on Sunday at Coca-Cola Coliseum in Toronto.

Victor Olofsson assisted on the winning goal, his fourth assist of the game on top of the two goals he recorded in Saturday night's 5-2 victory over the Marlies. The four assists give the 23-year-old winger 60 points for the season.

Rookie winger Rasmus Asplund had two goals and an assist in the victory. Besides his goal in OT, his 19th tally of the season, O'Regan had two assists for Rochester, giving him 26 for the season.

Asplund had the only goal of the first period with assists from Olofsson and O'Regan, but Toronto scored three times in the second period getting tallies from Scott Pooley, Jeremy Bracco and Pierre Engvall. Dmytro Timashov scored just 38 seconds into the third period to make it 4-1 but goals by C.J. Smith (No. 25), Asplund and Kyle Criscuolo tied it. Criscuolo's goal came with 22 seconds left in regulation.

Scott Wedgewood had 13 saves for Rochester. Adam Wilcox, who took over early in the third, stopped all seven Toronto shots he faced in 17 minutes and 57 seconds.

The Amerks (41-21-5, 87 points) picked up two points on first-place Syracuse (42-19-6, 90 points) in the North Division standings of the American Hockey League. The Crunch lost at Bridgeport, 4-1. Also, the win gave Rochester a sweep of the two-game weekend games in Toronto and a final record of four victories in five games against the Marlies this season, including a shootout win and Sunday's win in OT.

Amerks rally past the Marlies in overtime
C&C Worldwide
By: Staff Report/Amerks.com
March 25, 2019

After scoring three goals in the final 20 minutes of regulation to overcome a 4-1 deficit and force overtime in Sunday's rematch at Coca-Cola Coliseum, Danny O'Regan delivered the game-winner just 17 seconds into the extra period to cap a thrilling 5-4 come-from-behind win for the Rochester Americans (41-21-3-2) over the Toronto Marlies (35-22-7-4).

The victory, which gave Rochester a perfect 3-0-0-0 record in the three games against the Marlies in Toronto this season, moved the Amerks to within three points of the Syracuse Crunch for the AHL's North Division lead. The team has also earned 41 out of a possible 60 points in its last 30 games following the weekend sweep of the defending Calder Cup champion Marlies.

The line trio of O'Regan, Rasmus Asplund and Victor Olofsson combined for 10 of the Amerks' 14 points on the night to give Rochester its fifth win of the season against the Marlies. As Olofsson added a career-high four assists, Asplund recorded his second two-goal night to go with a helper while O'Regan posted his first three-point effort (1+2) of the season. C.J. Smith and Kyle Criscuolo rounded out the scoring while Adam Wilcox (11-8-3) was awarded the win as he stopped all seven shots he faced after replacing Scott Wedgewood (26-12-2) just 38 seconds into the third period.

Jeremy Bracco, Scott Pooley, Dmytro Timashov and Pierre Engvall all scored for Toronto, which remains six points behind the Amerks for third place in the AHL's North Division. Fourth-year netminder Kasimir Kaskisuo made 34 saves on the night but was handed the overtime loss.

After seeing the Marlies score three times in the second period, the Amerks responded with three straight goals of their own in the third to force overtime.

The scoring in final frame started with Smith's bank shot off the back of Kaskisuo at the 6:07 mark before Asplund tallied his second of the night seven minutes later to bring Rochester within one.

With Rochester trailing 4-3 inside the final minute of regulation and Wilcox on the bench for the extra attacker, Amerks head coach Chris Taylor used his only timeout as a face-off was to the right of the Marlies zone.

The Amerks won the draw and the puck made its way over to Olofsson atop the left point and he fired it towards the cage. Before the shot could reach Kaskisuo, Criscuolo reached out his stick and deflected it into the net to tie the game at 4-4, which set-up the overtime period.

Rochester rode the momentum and began the three-on-three extra session with the line of O'Regan, Asplund and Olofsson. O'Regan won the draw back to Olofsson, who circled inside his own blueline before exchanging passes with Asplund. The puck eventually made its way back to O'Regan, who darted into the Toronto zone before flipping a shot overtop the glove of the Marlies goaltender to complete the 5-4 comeback win for Rochester.

The five-goal game by the Amerks marked the sixth time in the head-to-head matchup this season that the winning team had scored five goals, which includes Rochester outscoring the Marlies 15-7 north of the border.

Shortly after killing off a slashing penalty, the Amerks opened the scoring as Asplund fired in a cross-ice one-time feed from Olofsson with 7:04 left in the first period.

The Marlies, who trailed in shots 15-6 and 1-0 after the opening 20 minutes of play, emerged from the locker room and tested Wedgewood often in the first half of the middle period to grab a quick 2-1 lead just 5:33 in. Toronto added another later in the period with 7:17 left in the stanza as Engvall patiently drifted to his left before firing his 18th goal of the season by going across the grain to give Toronto a 3-1 lead after 40 minutes of regulation.

Despite seeing the Marlies extend their lead 38 seconds into the third period and end Wedgewood's night, the Amerks scored three straight goals over the final 13:53 of regulation, setting the stage for O'Regan's dramatic game-winner 17 seconds into overtime.

The Amerks return to action for the final week of March with 3 games in 4 nights beginning on Wednesday, March 27 as they welcome the Lehigh Valley Phantoms at 7:05 pm to the Blue Cross Arena for the only time this season.

**NOTES* — The Buffalo Sabres on Sunday announced the team has recalled defenseman Lawrence Pilut from the Rochester Americans. Pilut (23, 5-foot-11, 187 lbs.) re-joins the Sabres after appearing in 25 games with the team earlier in the season. In his first season in North America, Pilut has recorded 6 points (1+5) with the Sabres and added 26 points (4+22) in 28 AHL games. His plus-21 rating and his .93 points per game both rank second among all Rochester skaters in 2018-19. A native of Tingsryd, Sweden, Pilut signed with the Sabres as a free agent in May of 2018 after being named the 2017-18 SHL Defenseman of the Year.

Amerks stage incredible third-period comeback, stun Marlies in overtime
Pickin' Splinters
By: Staff Report/Amerks.com
March 24, 2019

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After seeing the Marlies score three times in the second period, the Amerks responded with three straight goals of their own in the third to force overtime.

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The Amerks return to action for the final week of March with three games in four nights beginning on Wednesday, March 27 as they welcome the Lehigh Valley Phantoms to The Blue Cross Arena for the only time this season. The 7:05 p.m. matchup will be the second and final meeting between the two teams this season and will be carried live on The Sports Leader AM 950/95.7 FM ESPN Rochester as well as AHLTV.

Amerks stage huge rally to beat Marlies

Rochester First

By: Staff Report/Amerks.com

March 24, 2019

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O'Regan scores OT winner to lead AHL Americans over Marlies 5-4

The Canadian Press

By: Staff Report

March 24, 2019

Danny O'Regan scored 17 seconds into overtime to lift the Rochester Americans to a 5-4 win over the Toronto Marlies on Sunday in American Hockey League action.

Rasmus Asplund scored twice for Rochester (40-21-5), which battled back from a 4-1 deficit with three consecutive goals in the third period.

Kyle Criscuolo capped the barrage with the tying goal with 22 seconds left in the third. C.J. Smith had the other Americans goal. Scott Pooley, Jeremy Bracco, Pierre Engvall and Dmytro Timashov scored for the Marlies (32-22-10).

Scott Wedgewood started in net for Rochester, allowing four goals on 17 shots through 40:38. Adam Wilcox stopped all seven shots he faced the rest of the way.

Sabres recall Lawrence Pilut from Amerks
Buffalo Hockey Beat
By: Bill Hoppe
March 24, 2019

The Buffalo Sabres recalled rookie defenseman Lawrence Pilut, who played 25 NHL games earlier this season, from the Rochester Americans this afternoon.

Pilut, 23, compiled one goal, six points and a minus-3 rating in nearly three months with the Sabres.

Sabres defenseman Zach Bogosian is missing from today's practice, according to reports from Newark. Defenseman Matt Hunwick (upper body) is also injured.

Pilut has been dynamic at times in his first American Hockey League season, registering four goals, 26 points and a plus-21 rating in 28 outings.

The Swede, however, hasn't been the same offensive force over the last month. After returning to the Amerks in late February, he scored one goal and four points in 12 contests.

The Sabres play a road game against the New Jersey Devils on Monday. The Amerks, meanwhile, play a road contest versus the Toronto Marlies this afternoon.

Stay tuned for more updates.

Update: Coach Phil Housley told reporters in Newark the Sabres recalled Pilut as a precaution because Bogosian is day-to-day for lower-body maintenance and Hunwick is hurt. Housley plans on Bogosian playing Monday.

Sabres recall defenseman Lawrence Pilut as a precaution

Buffalo News

By: Lance Lysowski

March 24, 2019

With Zach Bogosian and Matt Hunwick both absent from practice Sunday in Prudential Center, the Buffalo Sabres recalled defenseman Lawrence Pilut from Rochester.

Pilut, a 23-year-old defenseman, joined the team as a precaution because Bogosian and Hunwick are dealing with injuries. However, it remains unclear if Pilut will be needed when the Sabres play the New Jersey Devils on Monday at 7 p.m.

Buffalo coach Phil Housley said Bogosian is expected to be available against the Devils, and Pilut's arrival was simply a precaution because Hunwick has missed three consecutive games with an upper-body injury.

"We're sort of depleted with Matt Hunwick's situation as well," Housley said following practice. "We felt we needed some insurance and those decisions will be made at game time tomorrow."

Bogosian has been dealing with a lower-body injury and regularly has sat out practice the last couple of weeks. He played 19 minutes, 18 seconds in Saturday's 7-4 loss at Montreal and is averaging 21 minutes, 38 seconds in 65 games this season.

The Sabres also are without defenseman Jake McCabe, whose season ended earlier this month because of an upper-body injury, and the team had only six available defensemen with Hunwick day-to-day. Pilut was a natural fit for a recall despite the Amerks trying to improve their playoff position.

Pilut had one goal with six assists and a minus-3 rating in 25 games for the Sabres earlier this season. He was sent down because of recurring defensive lapses, but the rookie was able to make an impact with the puck on his stick.

He has four goals and 22 assists in 28 games for the Amerks, with a plus-21 rating and .93 points per game ratio that both rank second among Rochester skaters. Still, Pilut has been displeased with his play since returning to Rochester.

"I think I had great consistency in the beginning of the season, and I went back and struggled a little bit," Pilut said. "I'm finding my way back slowly. I thought yesterday was a good game for me. That somehow gave me a little push."

Pilut was referring to his performance in the Amerks' 5-2 victory over the Toronto Marlies Saturday night, when he had four shots on goal and a plus-1 rating. Despite bouts of inconsistency, the Sabres had a 51.15 percent 5-on-5 shot differential with Pilut on the ice this season, which ranks second behind Rasmus Dahlin among the team's defensemen.

The Sabres signed Pilut to an entry-level contract in May and he was recalled by Buffalo after he was tied for the AHL lead with 22 points through 15 games with the Amerks. A left-shot defenseman, Pilut will be a restricted free agent after next season.

"I try to learn from the bad things and keep the good things in mind," Pilut said of his first stint with the Sabres. "I just want to keep working on my consistency out there and just try to play as good as I can. That's what I have on my mind right now."

Mittelstadt could sit

Sabres rookie center Casey Mittelstadt filled in on defense with Pilot a late arrival and could be a healthy scratch Monday against the Devils despite assisting on Sam Reinhart's first-period goal against Montreal.

Mittelstadt, 20, has 11 goals with 12 assists and a minus-15 rating in 70 games. While his skill has tantalized at times, his defensive awareness has remained inconsistent. Tage Thompson is expected to draw back into the lineup if Mittelstadt sits.

"I think Casey's given us some really good games and sometimes in a player's development it's not a bad thing to take a step back," Housley said. "You look at our games, we're giving up way too much right now. And it's not what you make, it's what you leave on the table. Right now we're leaving way too much. In Casey's defense, it might be a good thing to just take a deep breath. He's played a lot of hockey up to this point, so we'll make that decision tomorrow."

Olofsson scores twice in Amerks' win in Toronto

Buffalo News

By: Staff Report

March 23, 2019

Victor Olofsson scored a tie-breaking goal in the third period, then added his 27th of the season just 3:16 later Saturday to lead the Rochester Americans over the Toronto Marlies, 5-2, at Coca-Cola Coliseum on the CNE grounds in Toronto.

It snapped a three-game Rochester losing streak which had dropped the Amerks (40-21-5) five points behind the first place Syracuse Crunch in the North of the American Hockey League. Syracuse (41-18-6) played a home game against Utica on Saturday.

The two goals gave the 23-year-old winger from Sweden three in the last two games and his ninth game-winner of the season tying him with teammate Zach Redmond for the AHL lead.

Olofsson, the first Rochester to score 25 goals or more since Nick Baptiste two seasons ago, remained on pace to score 30 goals. That would make him the first Rochester player to score 30 or more since Thomas Vanek had 42 and Jason Pominville had 30 in 2004-05.

Olofsson leads Rochester with 56 points.

Chris Mueller's his 29th goal of the season gave Toronto the first lead at 12:27 of the first period. Remi Elie tied it for the Amerks at 16:51 with assists from Wayne Simpson and Kyle Crisuolo.

Rochester took its first lead at 1:54 of the second when Crisuolo scored his fifth with Jack Dougherty and Elie assisting. However, Baptiste, the former Amerk and Buffalo Sabres who was recently acquired by the Marlies, tied it at 13:30 of the second.

Olofsson broke the tie at 5:35 of the third with Danny O'Regan getting the assist. O'Regan picked up his 24th assist on the second Olofsson goal, too, at 8:51.

C.J. Smith scored his 24th into an empty net with 2:51 left with Kevin Porter (22nd assist) and Taylor Leier (17th) helping.

Scott Wedgewood of the Amerks, who is second in the AHL with 26 goalie wins, stopped 23 shots. Michael Hutchinson had 27 saves for the Marlies. Rochester killed all five Toronto power plays.

The teams will meet again today at 5 p.m. at the same local in Rochester's third game in three days.

Amerks snap losing skid with win over the Marlies
C&C Worldwide
By: Staff Report/Amerks.com
March 23, 2019

With three goals during the third period, including a pair from leading point-getter Victor Olofsson, the Rochester Americans (40-21-3-2) defeated the North Division rival Toronto Marlies (35-21-6-4) by way of a 5-2 victory Saturday night at Coca-Cola Coliseum in the first game of the back-to-back meetings north of the border.

The win snaps Rochester's three-game skid and moves the Amerks to within three points of the Syracuse Crunch for the North Division lead. The team has also earned 39 out of a possible 58 points in its last 29 games and has won five of its last eight heading into tomorrow's rematch with the defending Calder Cup champion Marlies.

The Amerks, who became the third different AHL team this season to reach the 40-win mark, have won seven of the first eight meetings in the head-to-head series while outscoring Toronto 38-23 over that span. Rochester head coach Chris Taylor also becomes the first bench boss to lead his team to the 40-win mark since Benoit Groulx in the 2009-10 season.

As Olofsson turned in his team-leading 15th multi-point effort of the season, which featured his ninth game-winning goal that ties him with teammate Zach Redmond for most in the league, Remi Elie (1+1), Kyle Criscuolo (1+1) and Danny O'Regan (0+2) all recorded a two-point outing for the Amerks. C.J. Smith sealed the win with his 24th goal of the campaign while goaltender Scott Wedgewood improved to 26-12-2 as he made 23 saves. The sixth-year netminder has won eight of his last 11 games and 16 of his last 23 appearances overall.

Timothy Liljegren posted two assists for Toronto, which remains five points behind the Amerks for third place in the AHL's North Division. Chris Mueller and former Amerk Nick Baptiste put the Marlies on the board while goaltender Michael Hutchinson stopped 27 of the 31 shots he faced but took the loss.

With the game tied at 2-2 to begin the final period of regulation, Olofsson scored a pair of tallies 3:16 apart to give the Amerks a 4-2 lead at the 8:51 mark of the stanza. Both of Olofsson's goals from O'Regan were nearly mirror images of each other. Moments before each goal, O'Regan forced a turnover inside the Marlies zone before handing Olofsson a pass which the Swedish forward converted on from in-between the face-off dots.

Rochester iced the 5-2 win with 2:51 left in regulation as Smith tucked the puck into the vacant net as Hutchinson was pulled for the extra attacker. With his 24th goal of the slate from Kevin Porter and Taylor Leier, Smith, who has 53 points (24+29) in 53 games this season, has collected 36 points (18+18) over his last 32 games dating back to Dec. 5.

Two minutes after the Marlies took a 1-0 lead, the Amerks quickly evened the score with 3:09 left in the opening 20 minutes of play. Criscuolo dumped the puck into the offensive zone before forcing a Toronto skater behind his own net. Wayne Simpson joined the two players and dished a centering pass onto the stick of Elie parked to the left of Hutchinson. Elie received the pass and quickly fired it past the blocker of the netminder.

The Amerks used the momentum of Elie's seventh goal of the year and took their first lead of the contest just 1:54 into the second period when Criscuolo tipped in a Jack Dougherty point shot for his fifth of the campaign.

Rochester held a 2-1 advantage for the next dozen minutes, but the Marlies tied the contest just five seconds after a holding penalty to Andrew MacWilliam had expired as Baptiste got a piece of a Pierre Engvall shot to even the game at two before the end of the second period.

The Amerks, who successfully killed off a Toronto two-man advantage for 52 seconds prior to the third period, tallied three straight unanswered goals over the final 20 minutes to defeat the Marlies 5-2.

Following a quick turnaround, the Amerks and Marlies wrap up their season series on Sunday afternoon with a 5 pm rematch at Coca-Cola Coliseum.

Amerks snap skid, reach 40-w in mark
Pickin' Splinters
By: Staff Report/Amerks.com
March 23, 2019

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Following a quick turnaround, the Amerks and Marlies wrap up their season series on Sunday afternoon with a 5:00 p.m. rematch at Coca-Cola Coliseum. The North Division matchup will be carried live on The Sports Leader AM 950/95.7 FM ESPN Rochester as well as AHLTV. Additionally, the game will air live on the NHL Network.

Victor Olofsson scores twice, Rochester beats Toronto 5-2

The Canadian Press

By: Staff Report

March 23, 2019

Victor Olofsson had a pair of goals as the Rochester Americans downed the Toronto Marlies 5-2 on Saturday in American Hockey League action.

Olofsson broke a 2-2 tie at 5:35 of the third, then added another three minutes later for a 4-2 Rochester lead.

Remi Elie and Kyle Criscuolo had a goal and an assist apiece and C.J. Smith potted an empty netter for the Americans (40-21-5).

Chris Mueller and Nicholas Baptiste found the back of the net for the Marlies (35-22-10).

Rochester's Scott Wedgewood made 23 saves for the win as Michael Hutchinson stopped 23-of-27 shots for the Marlies.

Rochester give up two power-play goals in loss

Buffalo News

By: Staff Report

March 22, 2019

Penalties were the name of the game in Rochester's 5-2 loss to the Cleveland Monsters Friday Night at the Blue Cross Arena. Cleveland scored two of their five goals while on the power play, while Rochester only capitalized on one of six man-advantage opportunities.

C.J. Smith scored his 23rd goal of the season for the Amerks (39-21-3-2), who slip further out of first place in the North Division.

Smith now has 35 points in his past 31 games, 17 goals and 18 assists.

Victor Olofsson netted the Americans' only other goal of the evening.

Cleveland got two goals from Zac Dalpe and a goal each from Alexandre Texier, Justin Scott and Derek Barach.

The Monsters' last two goals were sent into an empty net; Coach Chris Taylor pulled goaltender Adam Wilcox with three minutes to go in a last-ditch attempt to tie the game. Wilcox finished the night with 22 saves on 25 shots.

Rochester outshot Cleveland, 37-25, but not enough of those shots hit their mark.

The Monsters scored first on Barach's goal at the end of the first period and again four minutes into the second period on Dalpe's shot.

While Smith made it 2-1, sloppy play prevented Rochester from making it any closer.

The Americans made it 3-2 later on but could not capitalize even with an extra player on the ice.

Rochester will open a series with Toronto today at 5 p.m.

Amerks drop 3rd straight

C&C Worldwide

By: Staff Report/Amerks.com

March 22, 2019

Doomed by a pair of power-play goals and two empty-net tallies from the opposition, the Rochester Americans (39-21-3-2) fell 5-2 to the Cleveland Monsters (30-26-7-1) Friday night at The Blue Cross Arena. The game served as the kick-off to a busy three-in-three weekend for the Amerks and was the third straight loss by Rochester.

The regulation defeat to the Monsters was Rochester's first on home ice since Apr. 5, 2013, a span of 13 games. Furthermore, the Amerks show a 25-7-2-3 record against Cleveland dating back to the start of the 2011-12 season.

Despite the three-game slide, the third of the season, the Amerks remain five points behind the Syracuse Crunch for the North Division lead despite having collected 37 out of a possible 56 points in their last 28 games.

Forwards C.J. Smith and Victor Olofsson each tallied their 23rd and 25th goals of the season, respectively, while goaltender Adam Wilcox (10-8-3) made his 23rd appearance but took the loss. The fourth-year goaltender made 22 saves.

Mark Letestu (1+2), Garret Cockerill (0+2) and former Amerk Zac Dalpe (1+1) all recorded a multi-point game for Cleveland, which moved within four points of the Belleville Senators for the fourth and final playoff spot in the North Division. Derek Barach and Alexandre Texier each scored their first professional goal while Justin Scott added his 12th of the season to round out the scoring. Jean-Francois Berube improved to 21-17-5 as he made 32 saves before being replaced by Brad Thiessen with just under three minutes left in regulation. Thiessen stopped all three shots he faced over the final 2:38 of regulation.

Facing a 3-1 deficit near the midway point of the third period, the Amerks sliced their deficit in half as Olofsson booked his team-leading 25th goal of the season at the 7:02 mark while Rochester was on the man-advantage.

"I feel okay with the goal, obviously, but as a team, we did not play well for two periods," Olofsson said. "We played a little better in the third, but overall it was not good enough."

The power-play goal from Lawrence Pilut and Rasmus Asplund ended an 0-for-14 stretch for the Amerks.

Rochester attempted to tie the game and pulled Wilcox twice in the final two minutes of the contest, but Cleveland added a pair of empty-net goals to come away with the 5-2 win.

"We didn't play very well at all," said Amerks head coach Chris Taylor. "I didn't like how we started the game, didn't like the end of the game or anything in-between. Overall, it was a bad game."

"We need to be better in every aspect the rest of the weekend," Taylor added.

After each team successfully killed off its initial penalty of the opening period, the Monsters took the lead with 2:10 left. Despite the Amerks gathering the puck to the left of Wilcox, their attempt to clear the puck out of the zone was knocked down at the blueline by Tommy Cross. The blueliner took a few strides in-between the dots and fired the puck towards net. The rebound landed on the stick of Barach and he tucked it inside the right post.

"We seemed to take a good team lightly," said team captain Kevin Porter, who recorded the primary assist on Smith's second-period goal. "We didn't start off the game well and they came out hard and out-played us for two periods. In the third, we had to play catch up and it just was not enough."

Moments after killing their third penalty of the night, the Monsters doubled their lead 4:57 into the second period as Dalpe tipped in a shot from the right face-off circle inside Rochester's zone.

The Amerks cut into the lead with 7:59 left in stanza as Smith lifted a shot under the crossbar off a cross-ice feed from Porter, but Cleveland responded less than three minutes later to take a 3-1 lead into the final period of regulation.

"It might have been a lack of execution and guys may have been trying too hard and over-thinking our systems," Smith said when explaining the loss. "We have to continue to work hard and keep it simple moving forward."

Rochester made it a one-goal game inside the 13:00 mark of the third period, but the Monsters scored a pair of empty-net tallies to secure the 5-2 victory.

The Amerks wrap up their season series north of the border with the first of back-to-back meetings against the defending Calder Cup champion rival Toronto Marlies on Saturday, March 23 at Coca-Cola Coliseum. Game time is slated for 5 pm.

'Nothing' to like as Amerks lose; did someone say 3rd place?

Pickin' Splinters

By: Kevin Oklobzija

March 22, 2019

Remember when the Rochester Americans were sailing along in first place and confidently talking about the talent and potential they possessed?

Well, they're still talking with confidence but they're no longer in first place. If they don't win at least once this weekend in Toronto, they won't even be in second.

And if they play in Toronto on Saturday and Sunday as they did on Friday night on home ice against the Cleveland Monsters, they'll have no chance of holding on to second place.

The Amerks played a lackluster first 40 minutes, spotted the Monsters a 3-1 lead and couldn't recover, losing 5-2 in front of 6,203 fans at Blue Cross Arena at the War Memorial.

"We didn't play well at all at any position, at anything," coach Chris Taylor said. "I didn't like how we started the game, how we finished the game or anything in between."

Yeah, it was that bad.

The loss was their third straight, and they've fallen five points behind front-running Syracuse in the AHL's North Division, 88-83. Third-place Toronto, meanwhile, has crept to within three points.

Suddenly home-ice advantage for the best-of-five first round Calder Cup playoff series is in jeopardy.

But the Amerks are saying there's no panic, or any reason to fret.

"We're still a confident team," said winger C.J. Smith, who scored the Amerks first goal. "Obviously we set pretty high standards for ourselves. I think we're still in a great spot and have some great things ahead of us."

Maybe it was just a matter of a team with a 39-20-3-2 record overlooking a team 15 points their lesser. Maybe it was failing to get back to the grind after having Sunday, Monday and Tuesday off (although Sunday was a travel day).

Or maybe it was playing in hideous Teenage Mutant Turtles sweaters (the Amerks were the "Foot Clan," the Monsters were the "Turtles" in this Nickelodeon-approved promotion).

Whatever the reason, they weren't good in the first or second period, and the Monsters took advantage.

"We came out soft in the first two periods and had to play catch-up in the third and it wasn't enough," captain Kevin Porter said. Even when they pulled within 3-2 on Victor Olofsson's goal (his 25th) with 12:58 remaining, they couldn't score the equalizer.

And that's despite Cleveland goalie Jean-Francois Berube being forced to leave with 2:38 remaining due to injury.

With the faceoff in the Monsters zone, Taylor pulled goalie Adam Wilcox and went with six attackers. Danny O'Regan won the faceoff and Olofsson was in prime shooting position between the hash marks.

But instead of firing right away, he did a little back-and-forth with the puck, and then maybe another, and then finally shot. At least one defender, if not two, deflected his shot 30 feet up into the and out of play.

"We just didn't play fast," Taylor said.

That play summed up an evening when there were few rebound chances, few shots with traffic, few dynamic, crisp tape-to-tape passes.

"There were a lot of one-and-dones," Smith said.

So now the Amerks play a pair of 5 p.m. games in Toronto, which was idle last night. The Marlies are 10-3-1 in their past 14, which is why they're just three points behind the Amerks. So, yes, these are important games.

"They're huge," Porter said. "We want home ice advantage. We have to take care of these two games."

Said Olofsson: "We just have to play better hockey than we did today."