



# ROCHESTER AMERICANS

DAILY PRESS CLIPS

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*TONIGHT'S GAME: Syracuse vs. Rochester*

Amerks drop the puck tonight: Here are 5 things to look for  
Democrat and Chronicle  
By: Leo Roth  
Oct. 4, 2019

The Rochester Americans will open their 64th anniversary season with pride on one shoulder and immense pressure on the other.

After missing the playoffs three consecutive seasons, they will be shooting for their third consecutive playoff berth when the puck drops on Friday against the rival Syracuse Crunch at Blue Cross Arena.

After a regime change with the parent Buffalo Sabres in 2017, general managers Jason Botterill and Randy Sexton promised to rebuild the organization's farm system and made good on that promise by giving coach Chris Taylor the tools to work with.

Unfortunately for one of the AHL's flagship franchises, 91- and 99-point seasons were followed by first-round playoff exits, and not just exits, three-game sweeps at the hands of the Crunch and Toronto Marlies.

"There are two goals that run concurrent with the Amerks, No. 1 is player development, and No. 2 is success both on and off the ice," Sexton said. "The off-ice part is easy, the on-ice is more difficult. We have had good regular-seasons, but clearly we've come up short in the playoffs. We'll have a further emphasis on that to make sure we have a strong playoff performance."

The Amerks return 15 regulars from a team that went 46-23-5-2, their best season since registering 98 points in 2006-07 under Randy Cunneyworth. Rochester had the AHL's best road record at 25-9-3-1. In addition to winning streaks of three, four and five games, the Amerks lost consecutive games only five times and their longest losing streak was three games twice.

Still, Toronto had their number, particularly goaltender Kasimir Kaskisuo. In Games 1 and 2 in Rochester, the Amerks hit nine posts and were stopped on five breakaways.

In order to ultimately succeed you have to understand what it's like to lose," Sexton said. "It left a bitter taste in everyone's mouth, the last two years, and the players here will be working hard to overcome that. Yeah, we hit some posts, we ran into a hot goalie. But if you're going to win you have to overcome those things. That is part of the development process."

It's been repeated before: The Amerks haven't won a playoff series since 2004-05 and they have been stuck at six Calder Cup championships since 1995-96.

"It's hard. A lot of people thought the games could've gone either way, but now we have to find a way to overcome the stigma of losing in the first round and move on," Taylor said. "I think with a lot of guys coming back for us, in their second and third years, they're going to be hungry."

As the hockey barn on Broad and Exchange comes to life again, here are five things to watch:

A 'new' head coach

Taylor won't be behind the bench for opening night. He was recalled to Buffalo on an interim basis until Sabres assistant Don Granato (pneumonia) returns from medical leave. Gord Dineen, 57, will assume head coaching duties in Taylor's absence and

this won't be his first rodeo. Dineen, who logged more than 1,100 professional games as a player, has previous head coaching experience with the Iowa Chops (2008-09) and Marlies (2014-15). "It's a bit of a curveball but the great thing about it is that Chris Taylor has put together such a good structure, it's an easy transition for me," Dineen said. "I don't have to change the way we approach the game because the makeup of our team is so good, most importantly the leadership we have in the room."

### The return of Zach Redmond

The Amerks defense is loaded with a mix of veterans and top prospects. Eddie Shore winner Zach Redmond, one of the best free agent signings in club history, returns for a third year looking to etch his name deeper into the record books. He set a single-season record for goals by a defenseman last year with 21 and has 97 points in an Amerks sweater. The other end of the spectrum includes four prospects the organization likes: Lawrence Pilut, 23, Will Borgen, 22, Casey Fitzgerald, 22, and Jacob Bryson, 21. Pilut, a free agent from Sweden, played 33 NHL games as a rookie and made a strong push to stick with the Sabres coming out of camp. Borgen (fourth round, 2015), Fitzgerald (third round, 2016) and Bryson (fourth round, 2017) are Sabres' draft picks. Borgen played 71 games as an Amerks rookie, scoring 3-11 – 14 with 56 penalty minutes. Fast, puck moving defensemen are in favor with new Sabres coach Ralph Krueger.

### Re-loading on offense

No question the Amerks lost a lot of firepower with the departures of Victor Olofsson (30 goals), Wayne Simpson (21) and Danny O'Regan (20). Taylor Leier (22) is recovering from surgery. But former college free agent C.J. Smith, who has been a terrific find with 45 goals in two seasons, will have help on the scoresheet from AHL free agents Curtis Lazar, Jean-Sebastian Dea and hot Sabres' prospect Tage Thompson, the 6-7 winger picked up the Ryan O'Reilly trade with St. Louis. Lazar, a former first-round pick of Ottawa, had 20 goals and 54 points for Stockton last year and brings 246 games of NHL experience with him. Dea scored 17-24 – 44 for Wilkes-Barre and Springfield. Thompson, 21, who played most of last season in Buffalo, dominated during a late-season reassignment to Rochester with eight goals in 11 games. His stay in the minors will be brief if he picks up where he left off. "Just go down and continue to develop," Thompson said. "It's more about learning how to use my skills, get a lot of ice time and opportunity and take advantage of it."

### Changing of guard in net

Out are Scott Wedgewood and Adam Wilcox, in are veteran Andrew Hammond, 31, Jonas Johansson, 24, of Sweden, a third-round pick in 2014, and in the wings when he has recovered from hip surgery, Finland's Ukko-Pekka Luukkonen, 20, a second-round pick in 2017. As the No. 3 goalie in the organization, Hammond will be the Amerks workhorse early on. The "Hamburglar" was 19-14-0 with a 2.81 goals against average for Iowa last season. He's remembered for one of the great runs in NHL history. In 2014-15 when he was called up from Binghamton, he went 20-1-2 for Ottawa, helping the Senators reach the playoffs. Wedgewood was outplayed in the playoffs last year and Rochester needed to be a bit better in goal. "Andrew's a terrific veteran," he said. "I thought Scott Wedgewood did a very good job for us but Andrew's played NHL games. When we took a look at things, we just felt he was a good fit and we were fortunate to get him signed."

### 'Up-tempo' and attacking

In Buffalo, the new coaching staff wants to play an attacking style, with five men on the ice moving as one unit. "Ralph will want to play up-tempo, pace and pressure all over the ice and that's a style we've had to play in Rochester the last two years, and in (ECHL affiliate) Cincinnati," Sexton said. "I don't know if there'll major changes in the way we play, I think you'll see changes

on the defensive side of things, but overall I think Ralph's completely in sync with our management group and how we want to play across the organization."

Amerks 2019-20 season preview

Amerks.com

By: Suzie Cool

Oct. 3, 2019

The Rochester Americans are set to kick off their 64<sup>th</sup> American Hockey League season on Friday night against their North Division rival, the Syracuse Crunch, at The Blue Cross Arena. Friday's Home Opener, presented by Seneca Niagara Resort and Casino, is slated for a 7:05 puck drop to begin the 2019-20 season.

Rochester is coming off a season that saw the highest of highs and the lowest of lows. For the second straight year, the Amerks earned a playoff berth after racking up a 46-23-5-2 (99 points) mark during the regular season, their best record on the ice since the 2006-07 campaign. Heading into the Calder Cup Playoffs, the Amerks were confident to face-off against an opponent that they posted a 5-1 record against during regular season – the Toronto Marlies – a team the Amerks know all too well when it comes to the postseason. Toronto would come in with an attack plan, though, and for the second straight year, Rochester got knocked out of postseason play in a three-game sweep, ending their season on the road at Coca-Cola Coliseum.

Friday night will rehash a matchup that the Amerks saw a little over a week ago against the Crunch, a North Division foe that the Amerks will see 12 times this season, the most against any single opponent. During the first preseason tilt of the new season, Rochester fell to Syracuse 4-1 while facing a very strong veteran core coming from their opponent. Despite the final score line of their first preseason game, Amerks interim head coach Gord Dineen looks forward to the challenges heading into Friday's intrastate showdown.

"It's Opening Night, whether it's different situations or you're playing in front of a sold-out crowd at times. You're playing your first game in pro hockey, or playoffs, those are good challenges for guys to optimize their game in the moment and keep their composure."

### The Return to the ROC

Returning to the Amerks roster are 18 players that have seen significant time in the red, white and blue.

On the blueline for Rochester this season are seven returners, including assistant captains Andrew MacWilliam, Zach Redmond and Nathan Paetsch. Both MacWilliam and Redmond are headed into their third season with the club following their stellar 2018-19 campaigns. Redmond was awarded the Eddie Shore Award last year as the AHL's most outstanding defenseman, leading the league's defensemen in goals scored with 21. MacWilliam matched a season-high of three goals on the season while playing in 66 tilts for Rochester, third-most games played on the Amerks current roster during last season.

Paetsch is headed into his 13<sup>th</sup> season in the AHL and seventh in a Rochester uniform. A guy with over 150 games in the National Hockey League, Paetsch helps bring a heavy veteran presence to the Amerks roster.

Following the first preseason matchup against Syracuse, Paetsch reflected on what the team's veteran forwards showed the newcomers during some preseason play.

"I thought our veteran forwards played really well. They got in there, they were aggressive, they were really physical and showed them what it means to be an Amerk and how hard you have to play every shift."

Some more familiar faces on the backend are three players that split time between Rochester and Buffalo last year. Will Borgen, Lawrence Pilut and Casey Nelson are all set to start 2019-20 with the Amerks. Borgen makes his return after appearing in 71 games at the AHL level. Pilut made his NHL debut with Buffalo back in November of last season and spent 33 games with the big club before being recalled to Rochester for some Calder Cup action during the 2019 playoff push. Nelson appeared in only five games for the Amerks on a rehab assignment, recording one assist before getting the call back up to Buffalo where he finished out the 2018-19 campaign.

One other blueliner that saw all of 2018-19 in a Rochester uniform, Brandon Hickey will be making his return as well. Hickey saw 38 games with the Amerks in his first professional hockey season just last year.

The 11 remaining returners are all loaded on the offensive side of the ice.

Heading up the forwards and in his fifth season with Rochester is team captain Kevin Porter. Like veteran teammate Paetsch, Porter is a player that has seen over 200 games at the NHL level with time in multiple organizations before settling into an Amerks jersey over the last couple of seasons. In his second year as team captain, Porter appeared in 58 games while tallying up 39 points, including his 300<sup>th</sup> AHL point with an assist against the Hershey Bears at The Blue Cross Arena back on Nov. 2.

During training camp, Porter emphasized what an exciting time of the year it was for the guys and what it will take to keep everyone levelheaded going into Friday night.

"It's an exciting time and we got some new guys and everyone is excited for the start of the new season. I think it's just getting everyone here, working hard, getting everyone on the same page on the ice and everything else will fall into place."

Among those sent down from Buffalo to begin the season are four forwards that have seen ample time at both the NHL and AHL levels over the last year. Returners Scott Wilson, C.J. Smith, Tage Thompson and Remi Elie have all made a statement, combining for 17 goals in their stints with Buffalo during 2018-19.

Wilson appeared in 17 games for Rochester last year before returning to the Sabres in late February. Smith finished second on the Amerks roster in scoring last season with 58 points in 62 games, while also getting the nod 11 times for the Sabres. Thompson starred in his second season at the NHL level, appearing in 65 games with Buffalo before being reassigned to Rochester prior to the team's 2019 playoff run when he notched two goals in the first-round series against the Marlies. Elie, who was claimed off waivers by the Sabres early last October and got the nod in 25 games with the Amerks last year, scored eight goals in his stint with Buffalo's affiliate.

The remaining six returners are all players that spent the entirety of the 2018-19 campaign on Rochester's roster. Andrew Oglevie, Sean Malone, Eric Cornel, Dalton Smith, Tyler Randell and Rasmus Asplund are all looking to notch another year under their belt at the AHL level.

Oglevie missed the final 14 games of last season due to an injury, but not before he racked up nine points in his last 11 games out on the ice, finishing off his first season in the AHL on a hot streak. Malone appeared in his 100<sup>th</sup> AHL game just this past February in his third season with the Amerks. Cornel was the lone skater to appear in all 76 regular-season games for the Amerks

in his fifth season with Rochester, while tallying a career-high in points with 22. Dalton Smith is the returning, physical forward who set a team-high penalty minutes with 17 at Springfield back on Nov. 16 last season, helping push his season total to 111. And finally, the Amerks Rookie of the Year and Most Improved Player, Asplund returns to the roster after racking up 41 points in his rookie season with the club.

### New to the Flower City

The Amerks have a lot of familiar faces to start the season, but there's also no shortage of newcomers either. Seven new Amerks joined the squad this season with a mix of players that are in their rookie seasons to some that have years of professional experience under their belts.

New to Rochester, but not to the game, are three players that combine for 16 seasons in professional hockey. Jarrett Burton, Curtis Lazar and Jean-Sebastian Dea are three more players that the Amerks can count on to have a heavy veteran presence in the locker room. Burton comes from the Pittsburgh Penguins organization where he has spent the entirety of his career thus far. In his time with Pittsburgh, last year was Burton's first full season at the AHL level where he was named the Wilkes-Barre/Scranton Penguins Defensive Player of the Year.

Another player being added to the Amerks that put in several years with the Pittsburgh organization is Dea. Last year was Dea's first season experiencing what it was like to be traded and to go through waivers as he spent time between the NHL and AHL levels with multiple teams. Despite what seemed to be never-ending change, Dea still managed to net 21 goals in his 69 games on ice.

After Dea was reassigned to Rochester earlier in training camp, he reflected on why the transition to a brand-new organization has been easier for him due to the circumstances he experienced last season.

"It's never easy to change places and meet new people and obviously the systems are different. I've kind of been through a lot this last year and kind of know how it is now, so I'm not too nervous about meeting new people or having a new system."

Lazar, originally the Ottawa Senators first-round pick in the 2013 NHL Draft, has found his way to Rochester to begin the 2019-20 season. Back on July 1, the Sabres signed the young but experienced forward to a one-year contract. At just 24 years old, Lazar has already played in 246 NHL tilts with his best season dating back to the 2015-16 campaign when he racked up 20 points while tying a career-high of 10 goals.

When it comes to the "rookies" on Rochester's roster, four guys are in their first year of professional hockey or are headed into their first full season at the American League level. Casey Fitzgerald, Jacob Bryson, Pascal Aquin and Brett Murray are all new to the squad when starting off the brand-new year at The Blue Cross Arena.

Fitzgerald comes from a bloodline of professional hockey players, trying to follow in the footsteps of his father and brother. Fitzgerald saw four games with the Amerks last season after finishing up his final season at Boston College where he faced off against fellow H-East conference competitor, and now teammate, Bryson. Bryson attended Providence College for three years before signing an entry-level NHL contract with Buffalo on April 15 of this year. Fitzgerald and Bryson are two young defensemen that spent a good amount of time on the blueline together in the Amerks preseason games

Prior to Rochester's first preseason showdown against the Marlies, Bryson expressed his thoughts on the team's veteran presence and the benefits of being paired up with another new rookie defenseman.

“Take a lot of tools and learning experience from the vets. They help us a lot day in and day out. Obviously, it’s nice to play with vets as well because they’re pretty vocal on the ice and they kind of direct you on where to go, so it’s helpful. Playing with a new young guy, it’s good too. You kind of feel more comfortable, you guys are both new.”

Aquin spent 68 games with the Cincinnati Cyclones last year, notching 59 points in his time with Buffalo’s ECHL affiliate. During the Amerks preseason, Aquin saw time in all three matchups and knocked in the eventual go-ahead marker in Rochester’s first face-off against the Marlies. He’s since been reassigned to Cincinnati to start the season.

Finally, coming from the junior circuit, Brett Murray is a player who looks to make an immediate impact in his first season in pro hockey. The 6-foot-5 Murray spent all last season with the Youngstown Phantoms in the United States Hockey League last year, leading all skaters with 41 goals and ranking second with 76 points in 62 games. He also spent parts of two seasons with Nittany Lions at Penn State University.

### Combo in the Crease

The guys guarding the net this year will be a mix of a young and newcomer combo.

After appearing in five games with Rochester last season, Jonas Johansson will be seeing some more time in the net with the Amerks this year as he enters his first full season with the team. Johansson posted a 4-1 record with Rochester during the 2018-19 campaign and got the nod in the first two preseason tilts, going 1-1 between the pipes this past week.

New to the red, white and blue is AHL veteran Andrew Hammond. Hammond comes from a background of NHL and AHL experience ranging from the 2013-14 season to just last year when he spent the entirety of 2018-2019 with the Iowa Wild. Last season with the Wild, Hammond saw 33 games in the crease with a .910 save percentage. In his one preseason start this past Sunday with the Amerks, Hammond received the win against the Toronto Marlies while notching 22 saves on the night.

Following stints with four other NHL affiliates, Hammond remarked earlier in training camp on his ultimate decision to join the Buffalo organization this season.

“As a player you want to go places where you feel wanted and that you think you’ll have a chance to have success, and I think for all those reasons it made a lot of sense for me to come here.”

### Looking into October

The Amerks will be in action 10 times during their first month of the new season, with four of those tilts happening right here in the Flower City at The Blue Cross Arena.

Prior to Friday night’s home opener, the Amerks are hosting a Rockin’ on the River pregame party, free for all fans to come as the team ushers in the 2019-20 season on home ice. After enjoying the brews, food and views out on the riverside terrace, gates open at 5:30 with each fan set to receive a 2019-20 Amerks magnet schedule, courtesy of Nissan, to keep their calendars marked on when they’ll be spending their time at Blue Cross Arena this season.

On Friday, October 18<sup>th</sup>, the Amerks will be hosting Hocktoberfest presented by Rohrbach Brewing Company. The first 500 fans will through the gates at Blue Cross Arena on the 18<sup>th</sup> will receive a limited edition Amerks/Rohrbach Brewing Company beer

stein. Along with a commemorative giveaway, the night will include live music by the Krazy Firemen and stick around afterwards to meet the entire team at the postgame meet and greet in the Hall of Fame area.

The month of October will close out at the Amerks home base with two midweek tilts on both Wednesday, Oct. 23 and Wednesday, Oct. 30. Both puck drops are set for 7:05 PM.

Business as usual for the Amerks

Amerks.com

By: Suzie Cool

Oct. 2, 2019

The Rochester Americans are set to embark on their 64<sup>th</sup> season in the American Hockey League Friday night when they host the Syracuse Crunch at The Blue Cross Arena. With new systematics in place and the implementation of new Buffalo Sabres head coach, Ralph Krueger, Amerks head coach Chris Taylor was getting ready to gear up for his third season as the bench boss in Rochester.

However, there was a sudden change of plans following the news that broke early Tuesday morning at The Blue Cross Arena and KeyBank Center in Buffalo, causing an organizational shift amongst the coaching staff.

The Sabres released earlier this week the conditions as to why the immediate coaching change was needed to take place just days before both teams open their respective seasons.

"Buffalo Sabres Assistant Coach Don Granato has been hospitalized with severe pneumonia and will be taking a medical leave from the team."

Taylor got the call-up to the National Hockey League to serve as Buffalo's interim assistant coach while Gord Dineen assumes the head coaching duties in Rochester. Additionally, Sabres development coach Adam Mair is being added to the Amerks coaching staff for the beginning of their regular season.

Despite the timing of the announcement, and with Opening Night just days away, the Amerks management, staff and players remain confident in what the team can bring even in Taylor's absence. Amerks General Manager Randy Sexton even seemed at ease when talking about Dineen taking over following Tuesday mornings practice.

Sexton joked about Dineen having a few more gray hairs than Taylor, but when it got down to the Amerks key principles on the ice, he hindered on the similarities that the two have in their beliefs while running a team.

"Their whole approach to the players is very similar. They believe, as we do, in building strong relationships with the players. They believe that honest, straight forward communication and honesty with the players. All of those key principles are the same, they just have a little different delivery style."

Dineen is heading into his 18<sup>th</sup> season as an AHL coach and his third with the Amerks. In fact, the head coach nod at the AHL level is one that he's all too familiar dating back to his eight-year stint with the Toronto Marlies organization and before that as the inaugural head coach of the Iowa Chops for the 2008-09 season.

During the Marlies 2014-15 campaign, Dineen helped lead the team to a 40-27-9 overall record, good for second place in the AHL's North Division, and a berth in the Calder Cup Playoffs.

Along with Dineen's years of knowledge behind the bench, he brings a magnitude of playing time in the NHL. From 1982 to 2000, Dineen spent 18 years playing professional hockey, most of which was spent in the NHL.

Originally drafted by the New York Islanders in the 1981 NHL Draft at just 18 years old, Dineen saw time with the Islanders, Minnesota North Stars, Pittsburgh Penguins and Ottawa Senators. Dineen spent most of his NHL days with the Islanders, where he played 528 games and registered 106 points with the club.

Defenseman Zach Redmond touched on the relatability Dineen has with the players on the Amerks roster, making it easy to approach and call on him in his new position.

"He's got hundreds of games in the NHL, the American League. He's been up, down and he's gone through everything that any one of us could possibly go through. To have somebody like that around to call on and just to be able to ask those hard questions."

Being with the Amerks staff over the last two seasons, Dineen has a good feel for the guys returning to the Rochester roster. It's extremely helpful that the leadership core is back from the 2018-19 campaign with guys like Kevin Porter, Redmond, Nathan Paetsch and Andrew MacWilliam leading the way.

Porter, the Amerks 2018-19 team captain, discussed the easy transition it will be heading into Friday night's Home Opener with Dineen's new takeover.

"Obviously, it's never that easy, but with Gord it is. It makes it much better. He's been around, he knows the systems, he knows 'Tayls', he knows a lot of guys, the leadership group. So, I think it makes it a little bit easier."

Although the Amerks have been thrown a bit of a curveball to start the 2019-20 campaign, Dineen remains confident in the structure that Taylor has put together prior to his sudden promotion. The identity of the team and the approach to play will remain the same. All Dineen has to do is show up and continue to implement the systems that have been put in place to begin the season. Of course, the returning leadership core has helped make this transition as seamless as possible for Dineen at this time.

"It's an easy transition for me. I don't have to change the way we approach the game, the identity of our team. The make-up of our team is so good and definitely the most important part is the leadership that we have in the room."

After Dineen's first practice as interim head coach of the Amerks, first and foremost he made sure that hockey was set aside for a brief moment to address his condolences to Donato.

"First thoughts are to Donny Granato and wishing for good health for him and a quick recovery."

Sabres send Victor Olofsson, Henri Jokiharju to Amerks, make other moves  
Buffalo Hockey Beat  
By: Bill Hoppe  
*Oct. 1, 2019*

In what are almost certainly paper transactions, the Sabres sent winger Victor Olofsson and defenseman Henri Jokiharju to the Rochester Americans this afternoon.

The Sabres also recalled forwards Jean-Sebastien Dea and Curtis Lazar and defenseman Lawrence Pilut.

In addition, the Sabres placed defensemen Zach Bogosian, Matt Hunwick and Brandon Montour and goalie prospect Ukko-Pekka Luukkonen on injured reserve.

The moves will help the Sabres get under the NHL's \$81.5 million salary cap before today's 5 p.m. regular-season roster deadline.

Expect Olofsson and Jokiharju to return before Thursday's season opener against the Pittsburgh Penguins.

Fresh off a 30-goal season in the AHL, Olofsson, 24, enjoyed a terrific training camp and secured a roster spot. The Swede practiced on the first line today beside center Jack Eichel and Sam Reinhart.

The Sabres went over the cap when they re-signed defenseman Jake McCabe and goalie Linus Ullmark on Aug. 4.

Right now, they have \$83,022,024 in salary committed for this season, according to [capfriendly.com](http://capfriendly.com).

Amerks coach Taylor called up to Buffalo on interim basis  
Democrat and Chronicle  
By: Leo Roth  
*Oct. 1, 2019*

The first callup to the Buffalo Sabres isn't a player. It is Rochester Americans coach Chris Taylor.

The Sabres announced Tuesday that assistant coach Don Granato is hospitalized with a case of pneumonia described as severe and he will need a medical leave of absence. In the interim, Taylor will join Steve Smith as new head coach Ralph Krueger's assistants to open the NHL regular season.

Gord Dineen will assume head coaching duties in Rochester. Toby Petersen and Sabres development coach Adam Mair will assist Dineen.

The Sabres open their 50th anniversary season at Pittsburgh on Thursday while the Amerks open play in the AHL hosting the Syracuse Crunch on Friday at Blue Cross Arena.

Taylor, 47, is entering his third season as head coach of the Amerks. He has taken them to back-to-back playoff appearances. He was a candidate to replace Phil Housley as head coach of the Sabres, and then to join Krueger's staff.

He and the organization ultimately preferred that he continue to lead Buffalo's top farm club.

In other news, forwards Remi Elie, Curtis Lazar and Scott Wilson and defenseman Casey Nelson each cleared waivers and were assigned to the Amerks.

Amerks' Chris Taylor joins Sabres after assistant takes medical leave, Gord Dineen now interim head coach  
Rochester First  
By: Staff Report  
Oct. 1, 2019

After years of shuffling players back and forth between the Buffalo Sabres and Rochester Americans, there is now a coach making the trip down the thruway.

Amerks head coach Chris Taylor joined the Sabres on Tuesday in an interim assistant coach role while Sabres assistant Don Granato recovers from "severe pneumonia."

With Taylor working for the big league club, his top assistant Gord Dineen will fill in as the Amerks head coach.

"We wish [Granato] the best and a speedy recovery," said Amerks captain Kevin Porter after practice on Tuesday. "It's tough to lose [Taylor], he's a big part of this team, but Gord is stepping in and we all believe in him."

There is no timetable for Taylor's return to the Amerks. The Sabres open the season Thursday in Pittsburgh, while the Amerks begin the year Friday night at home against Syracuse.

"We miss Tails [Taylor] for sure, but Gord— you wouldn't be able to tell the difference out there," said Amerks defenseman Zach Redmond. "Everyone was still working hard."

Gord Dineen joined Chris Taylor's coaching staff when he took over the Amerks bench in 2017. His style is quieter than Taylor's, but the Amerks will be the first to admit that Dineen knows how to push the right buttons as a head coach.

"I won't say it doesn't matter who is behind the bench because it is different voices, and I'll be a different voice than Chris, but I'll be touting the same message as Chris," said Dineen. "These guys, their approach is so professional and that makes it easy for me to be behind the bench and change my role."

Dineen's career in pro hockey dates back to the early 1980s. Perhaps his most memorable moment in the NHL came when he scored the game-winning goal for the New York Islanders in the 4th overtime of Game 7 in their 1987 Stanley Cup Playoff series with the Washington Capitals.

Gord Dineen Named Amerks Interim Head Coach  
Spectrum News Rochester  
By: Staff Report  
*Oct. 1, 2019*

While Sabres Assistant Coach Don Granato recovers from a bout with pneumonia, Amerks Head Coach Chris Taylor will be helping out on Ralph Krueger's staff.

The Amerks are getting set for their opener Friday night at home. Assistant Coach Gord Dineen will handle the head coaching duties. There weren't any noticeable changes at practice Tuesday. Players said it's still business as usual.

"You wouldn't have been able to tell the difference out there," defenseman Zach Redmond said. "Everyone was still working hard. That's our goal is to make it as seamless as possible. We'll always miss Tayls. Hopefully he's back soon but we love Gordo too."

"I won't say it doesn't matter who's behind the bench because it's different voices and I'll be a different voice than Chris but I'll be touting the same message as Chris," Interim Head Coach, Gord Dineen said. "But these guys, their approach is so professional. They come to work every day and that makes it easy for me to be behind the bench and change my role."

Sabres Development Coach Adam Mair will be joining the Amerks staff until Taylor returns.

