



ROCHESTER AMERICANS

DAILY PRESS CLIPS

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TONIGHT'S GAME: Syracuse vs. Rochester

Lazar embracing opportunity with Amerks
Amerks.com
By: Suzie Cool
Nov. 12, 2019

October is here, which means the season of hockey is upon us and the Ottawa Senators are about to begin their 23rd season in the National Hockey League.

This year they'll start their campaign on the road, making their way down to the Bridgestone Arena, where they'll face the rowdy crowd of the Nashville Predators on Opening Night.

The day is October 9th. The year is 2014.

And rookie Curtis Lazar is lacing up his skates to make his NHL debut at just the young age of 19 years old.

Take a second and imagine that.

At just 19 years old this kid is throwing on a jersey, marching through a tunnel with some of the best in the game and making his way onto the biggest stage in professional hockey.

And now Lazar can remember that same day, that same game and those same emotions as if they just happened yesterday.

"When that game hit, I remember the anthem was going on and I was a little short on breath," recalled Lazar. "That's when Paul MacLean, the coach, leaned in and patted me on the back and said, 'It's the same game you've always played, just go out there and have fun.' When that wrapped up, you kind of realize everything you've gone through to get to this point and then you actually get to experience it and live it."

After the National Anthem and some pregame jitters, it was game-on and Lazar was put into the game just a couple of shifts in. With a little stumble going out onto the ice for his first shift, the forward finally found his way into the offensive zone and got that "first one" out of the way, making him more than prepared to take to the ice for more action in the game that he had always grown up playing.

But it wasn't until a couple of shifts later that Lazar had his true "welcome to the NHL" moment.

"Two shifts later, I was cutting through the neutral zone and Anton Volchenkov stepped up and open-ice hit me pretty good. That was kind of my welcome to the NHL moment. From there on out, it was just playing. You're a young kid and facing-off against the best players in the world."

Now, think about that.

At just 19 years old this kid was going out and playing hockey with the best players in the world. In his rookie season alone, Lazar appeared in 67 games with the Senators and registered 15 points, while also skating in six Stanley Cup Playoff contests.

The best part, he didn't realize he was one of the best players in the world, too.

Fast forward to five years later and Lazar is now with a completely new organization and donning a brand-new color scheme at the American Hockey League level. And on Oct. 4, 2019, that same kid was now 24 years old, lacing up his skates to play the same game he has his entire life and getting ready to make his Rochester Americans debut at The Blue Cross Arena.

Why, though?

Undoubtedly, this will be the most impressive and humble fact that you will ever discover about the Amerks newcomer.

No, it's not that he has 246 games of NHL experience, more games at the highest level of play compared to his AHL total. No, it's not the fact that he made the jump from junior hockey with the Edmonton Oil Kings to the NHL without seeing a single second of the minor league circuit with the Senators organization before his NHL debut. Or maybe you think it's that five-point game he notched a few weeks back against the Syracuse Crunch where he lit the lamp twice and added three helpers in 7-6 come-from-behind overtime victory. But again, that's not it.

After 200-plus games at the NHL level between Ottawa and the Calgary Flames, Lazar decided to take a step back prior to the start of last season. For him, it was time to reassess his skillset, and in order to make himself better and the type of player that these teams expected him to be, that meant taking the time to work on these intricacies at a different level — the AHL.

Yeah, you read that right.

Lazar willingly asked to be sent down to Calgary's AHL affiliate, the Stockton Heat, to start off the 2018-19 campaign. After appearing in 65 games with the big club the year prior and tallying just 12 points, the forward decided it was time to focus on what was needed to be done in order to be successful with the fresh start he had at hand.

"As I moved over to Calgary and got a fresh start, I just couldn't seem to find my role and I knew I owed it to myself to kind of take that step back and go and develop in the American Hockey League. I did just go from the juniors to the NHL, and that is quite the jump, so I had the chance to go down to Stockton last year and to play 20-25 minutes a night and play on the power-play and handle the puck again. It felt good, I found that passion again, I was having fun and the results were showing up."

In 57 games with the Heat, Lazar captured career-highs in every offensive category, earned an AHL All-Star Classic nod and posted 10 multi-point efforts. It seemed like Lazar accomplished everything he set out to do last year while in Stockton.

Yet, this amazing hockey player lands right here in the Flower City to start the 2019-20 season with the Amerks thanks to signing a one-year contract with the Buffalo Sabres in July earlier this year.

The day is October 4th. The year is 2019.

And Lazar is lacing up his skates to make his Rochester Americans debut at the age of 24 years old.

Fast forward a month later and it's time to embrace the caliber of the player Lazar has shown he is capable of being through just his first month in Rochester.

A sixth-year pro, a first-round selection back in 2013, a player who has seen over 200 games in the NHL and one of the best players in the world who is still humble enough to take a step back and focus on the intricacies that will get him back to the big stage in no time while here in the AHL — exactly where he asked to be.

Amerks auctioning off specialty jerseys

Rochester First

By: Staff Report

Nov. 12, 2019

The Rochester Amerks are auctioning off their specialty jerseys throughout the 2019-2020 season.

The Amerks will have four different specialty jerseys available for purchase using the online platform — Dash.

The jerseys include military appreciation night this Friday, defend the ice night, Irish night and pink the rink night.

Fans can bid on the military-themed jerseys now through 3 p.m. on Thursday.

Sabres prospect Tage Thompson having fun but doesn't want to get too comfortable in AHL
Buffalo News
By: Bill Hoppe
Nov. 12, 2019

With Friday's game tied at 2 in the third period, Rochester Americans winger Tage Thompson grabbed a pass from Scott Wilson at center ice and zoomed past a helpless defender into the Binghamton Devils zone.

"I had a couple of good chances earlier in the game from shooting and felt one was bound to go in if I kept testing him," the Buffalo Sabres prospect said.

So Thompson skated two long strides inside the blue line and unleashed the puck, beating goalie Gilles Senn.

The goal, Thompson's sixth in 13 games this season, showcased arguably his two greatest assets.

"It was a highlight-reel goal as far as using his speed and his shot," interim coach Gord Dineen said following the Amerks' 4-3 shootout loss. "You don't see that kind of shot, maybe Victor Olofsson a little bit last year. That was impressive on his part."

After Binghamton tied the game, Thompson nearly won it overtime, getting the puck past Senn before he recovered and stopped it.

Thompson, 22, has quickly morphed into the Amerks' top offensive threat, recording 12 points while pumping 56 shots on goal, the American Hockey League's second-highest total.

Counting his stint with the Amerks late last season and in the playoffs, Thompson has compiled 14 goals and 23 points in only 24 outings, making him one of the AHL's elite scorers.

His stay in the AHL could be short.

In addition to his offensive dominance this season, Thompson has evolved, displaying a heavier, more complete style.

"There's maturity and growth in his game," Dineen said.

So Dineen has been awarding Thompson opportunities to kill penalties and play against the opposition's top lines.

The Sabres, meanwhile, have a five-game winless streak. Other than Sam Reinhart, their right wingers haven't contributed much offense.

At some point, they might recall Thompson for a spark or simply to reward his hot start. He has played 106 NHL games, including 65 with the Sabres last season.

Thompson often looked overwhelmed in the NHL a year ago, when he compiled only six goals, 11 points and a ghastly minus-22 rating.

Packing on about 10 pounds of muscle over the summer has helped Thompson develop a body that can complement his skills. The Amerks list him at 6-foot-7 and 215 pounds.

"(He's) hard enough to contain as it is with that reach and ability, and when you put muscle on top of it, you're definitely going to see results," Dineen said. "So he's a real hard guy to play against, hard to contain. When he's moving his feet, he's a special player."

Thompson said he feels faster and stronger.

"The body's the best it's felt up to this point in my career," he said. "I think that goes to show I put in a lot of work in the summer and it's paid off."

Dineen also said Thompson's experience — he jumped from UConn to the AHL as a teenager late in 2016-17 — is starting to show.

"He's learned from his mistakes," he said. "He's not repeating them as often."

Having a linemate in center Rasmus Asplund who is so committed to the defensive side probably helps.

Thompson and Asplund, 21, enjoy strong chemistry. Asplund's checking helps generate offense for the duo.

"We've gotten a lot of our offense off of creating turnovers in the neutral zone with our forecheck or whoever it may be," Thompson said. "I think he's more of a pass-first kind of guy. For me, I just try to get open. He's got great vision, so he usually finds me."

Asplund said Thompson "can change the pattern of a game or a shift."

"He does the unexpected all the time," he said.

Thompson has also been utilizing his lethal shot more often.

"Trying not to stickhandle too much, trying to get pucks off quicker is something I've been focusing on and not passing up any Grade A, strong opportunities," he said.

Thompson's shot is so heavy it creates extra space and opportunities.

"Teams start cheating to take away that shot, so it opens up things for other players," Dineen said. "But when he is shooting the puck, it creates a lot of chaos around opposing teams' nets. There's rebounds there. Those are indefensible sometimes, when you're creating rebounds and guys don't know where they're going."

Thompson will likely be going to Buffalo this season. In the meantime, he has embraced another trip to Rochester.

"I love it down here," he said. "You want to play in the NHL, you don't want to get too comfortable where you're at, be hungry to get to the next level. But at the same time, it's an unbelievable group of guys. The staff down here is unbelievable. You have fun when you come to the rink."

Burton injury

Amerks forward Jarrett Burton was helped off the ice Friday and did not return after suffering a lower-body injury.

Dineen did not have an update on Burton, although he sensed the injury could be long-term.

The Amerks recalled forward Pascal Aquin from the Cincinnati Cyclones on Monday.

The team plays three games in four days beginning with a home game Wednesday against Syracuse, followed by a home game Friday against Cleveland and a trip to Utica on Saturday.

Sabres send Lawrence Pilut back to Americans
Buffalo Hockey Beat
By: Bill Hoppe
Nov. 12, 2019

The Buffalo Sabres sent defenseman Lawrence Pilut back to the Rochester Americans today.

The Sabres recalled Pilut, 23, last week to serve as a spare defenseman during their two-game trip to Sweden.

He was one of six Swedes on Buffalo's roster.

Pilut played 33 NHL games as a rookie in 2018-19. He has scored one goal and six points in eight AHL games this season.

The Sabres have today and Tuesday off before resuming practice Wednesday.

The Sabres send Lawrence Pilut back to Rochester

WGR 550

By: Paul Hamilton

Nov. 12, 2019

The Sabres got back from a week in Sweden on Sunday night. With the team off on Monday and being back in North America, they've sent defenseman Lawrence Pilut back to Rochester.

Pilut didn't play in either of the losses to Tampa Bay as he was called up in case of injury.

Buffalo doesn't play again until Thursday at home against Carolina.

Why goaltenders like Sabres' Ukko-Pekka Luukkonen are having hip surgeries

Buffalo News

By: Lance Lysowski

Nov. 11, 2019

Ukko-Pekka Luukkonen has learned to treasure even the slightest distractions since he underwent double-hip surgery in April.

There were dinners with Seamus Kotyk, the Sabres' goaltender development coach, in Buffalo during the early stages of physical rehabilitation; spending two summer months in Finland; joining the Rochester Americans for structured practices last month; a recent visit from his girlfriend; and even frantically having to piece together a routine to prepare for his first game in almost seven months. Anything to avoid thinking about his hips.

"There's always that 'what if' factor," the 20-year-old Sabres' prospect conceded.

No distraction was more rewarding than finally facing an opponent Nov. 2 in Brampton, where he stopped 25 of 28 shots for the Cincinnati Cyclones. He expressed joy afterward in CAA Centre, calling his return a "special moment."

Though the result was a 4-1 loss, Luukkonen's first game of the season was a victory for goaltenders across the globe, amateur and professional, who have fallen victim to a troubling trend in hockey. The butterfly style popularized by Patrick Roy in Montreal is wreaking havoc on young goalies' hips, causing an impingement that requires a surgical procedure and an arduous rehab.

"It puts a lot of stress on your hips because it's such an unnatural position for your body to be in," Sabres goalie Linus Ullmark, who underwent double-hip surgery in April 2015, said. "There are going to be a lot more goalies that have to do this kind of surgery. It's a bummer that we've gotten to this point."

Both goalies suffered from femoroacetabular impingement, a condition in which there is abnormal and wearing contact between the ball and socket of the hip joint. The problem typically begins when goalies in their early teens repeatedly drop to their knees to stop the puck. That causes a stress reaction and an extra bone forms along the head of the femur — which fits into the cup on the side of the pelvis to form the hip joint — and creates a square-peg-in-a-round-hole effect.

The head of the femur and pelvis start to rub together during movement, which leads to pain, loss of internal rotation, and in many cases, a tear of the labrum — a band of tissue that rings the hip joint, securing the head of the femur.

Ullmark, like many goalies, felt pain in his groin when he initially experienced symptoms as a 21-year-old. He was diagnosed with a muscle strain and received conservative treatment. However, the symptoms returned during his first game back and an X-ray revealed the impingement.

Conservative treatment is not an option since a surgical procedure is needed to remove the extra bone.

In baseball, Tommy John surgery used to be considered a last-resort attempt to save a valuable pitcher's career. Now more than half of the Tommy John surgeries performed are on teenagers, some of whom are not injured and undergo the procedure as a precautionary measure. Hockey has its hip impingement problem with goalies.

"I didn't think about it then, but when you start talking about goalies who are 14 years old having hip impingement, you start to realize it's a big problem in the hockey community," Ullmark said. "Sadly, it is what it is, but it's important to not just work

on butterfly with younger goalies. It would be better to keep them on their feet for a longer time and kind of playing it differently, not dropping down at all times."

Dr. Christopher Larson, a surgeon at Twin Cities Orthopedics in Minneapolis, estimated he has performed approximately 200 such surgeries in the past year with his patients ranging in age from 16 to 28, including goalies in high school, college, the American Hockey League and National Hockey League.

Oftentimes, the more abrupt a goalie's growth spurt, the more active they are, the more likely an impingement. Taller athletes such as Luukkonen and Ullmark, both listed at 6 feet, 4 inches, are more susceptible. Goalies also have a difficult time avoiding the wear and tear that can lead to the deformity.

After all, talented youth goaltenders often are asked to play every game for their teams and, in addition to practices and games, they participate in individual instruction or open skates with high-level players their age.

"If they play too much, which almost every good goalie does, suddenly they start to develop the extra bone and it pushes on the hip," Dr. Robert LaPrade, also of Twin Cities Orthopedics, said. "We think it happens during their growth spurts, so it's that pee-wee up through bantam age group and a lot of these high-level guys are the best on their team. The coaches want them to play all the time because it makes them look better, and, unfortunately, that leads to longer-term problems."

Larson said the surgery begins with two to three very small incisions and a camera is placed in the hip joint. Small instruments are used to reshape the head of the femur or modify the rim of the hip. The labrum and damaged cartilage also are repaired.

During the procedure, the surgeon moves the patient's hips into a number of positions — including the butterfly — to see where the head of the femur is making contact. Forming the femoral head into a light bulb shape improves mobility, range of motion and protects the labrum from future damage.

Luukkonen and Ullmark had the procedure on both hips, ensuring they won't have future issues. However, Eddie Lack took a different route after experiencing pain while playing for the AHL's Chicago Wolves in 2012-13.

Lack, then 23 years old, decided to have Dr. Marc Philippon, a surgeon at the Steadman Hawkins Clinic in Vail, Colo., perform surgery on his left hip. Six weeks post-op, Philippon jokingly suggested Lack have the procedure on the right hip.

Lack passed and continued with his rehab. The right hip started to bother him shortly after he returned to the ice, and he played through pain for five to six years. Lack, who has 143 games of NHL experience and most recently played for the AHL's Binghamton Devils, finally had surgery on his right hip last December, but the rehab is longer since there were complications from the chronic wear-and-tear.

Lack didn't want to put added pressure on himself to return from the second surgical procedure in time to play this season, so he ruled out playing and is working as a volunteer goaltender coach at Arizona State University while maintaining a strict rehab schedule. He plans to attempt to return to professional hockey at some point.

"I wish I did the right one right away," Lack admitted. "The first one was more panic from a mental standpoint, where I just wanted to get back as quick as possible and feel good, so I could finally reach the NHL. I wondered if I was going to play again. ... It's a frustrating rehab."

Luukkonen received help from the Sabres' performance staff, including Dr. Michael Adesso, head athletic trainer Rich Stinziano, strength and conditioning coaches Dr. Ed Gannon and J.T. Allaire, and Dennis Miller, the team's head of rehab and development.

The early portion of Luukkonen's rehab required him to stay in Buffalo, where his workouts were limited to repeating basic movements off ice. The process was also difficult for Luukkonen mentally. In addition to the angst of wondering whether the procedure would work, he spent many hours alone in his room at the LECOM Harborcenter Marriott.

Luukkonen's agency Titan Sports Management, connected him with goalies who shared how they dealt with the long recovery. He was able to return to Finland in June, where he worked off ice with two strength coaches and was cleared to begin basic on-ice workouts in July.

Kotyk, the Sabres' goaltender development coach, spoke to other coaches and goalies, including Ullmark, for additional perspective. Though there were clear timelines laid out by the medical staff, Kotyk asked Ullmark when he felt comfortable performing certain workouts on the ice.

Kotyk also spent four days in Helsinki, Finland, when Luukkonen was cleared to get on skates. The latter wasn't allowed to drop to the ice but worked on basic movements while standing and faced shots from NHLers working at the facility. Luukkonen worked with Kotyk and Miller upon returning to Buffalo in August, and finally was cleared to drop down to a butterfly shortly before Labor Day.

"A lot of what you're seeing on the ice is the results of the work done behind the scenes by the medical people and the performance staff and the strength department," Kotyk said. "Everything you do as a goalie, you had to reintroduce to him because you didn't want to put too much stress on his body."

Following Luukkonen's first game, he and Kotyk identified technical areas that need improvement, and Kotyk will decide how they work those into practices in Rochester. Luukkonen will continue to focus on his footwork, and he will perform off-ice workouts to build strength in both hips.

Luukkonen is considered one of the top drafted goaltender prospects in North America after his breakthrough season in 2018-19. In addition to winning gold at the IIHF World Junior Championship, Luukkonen was named the Ontario Hockey League's Most Valuable Player. He won a league-best 38 regular-season games, including six shutouts, for Sudbury. He started his professional career with Rochester in April and won his debut by making 32 of 34 saves. However, he underwent surgery less than two weeks later.

Many analysts have called him a future franchise goalie, yet the Sabres have no interest in rushing his rehab now that he's close to seven months post-op.

"You saw him play through the injury last year and he obviously had an amazing second half of the year and even went to Rochester and played well in his one game there," Sabres General Manager Jason Botterill said. "Just being a 20-year-old kid, this is something you don't want lingering through his entire career. We thought it was good to get this taken care of now so he could start his pro career on the right note and be healthy."

Though Ullmark suggested one way youth coaches could help goalies avoid hip issues, there does not seem to be an end in sight. The problem has plagued the position for more than a decade and NHL goalies who had the procedure include Semyon Varlamov, Thatcher Demko, Cory Schneider and Roberto Luongo. Sean Burke, who played 820 regular-season games, underwent surgery almost eight years following his retirement.

"That's the [terrible] part of the position, but it is what it is," Lack said.

After 'getting my mind right,' Sabres prospect Sean Malone finding his game
Buffalo News
By: Bill Hoppe
Nov. 7, 2019

When Sean Malone's injury-plagued, career-worst season ended in April, the West Seneca native needed a mental break from hockey.

So for about a month, Malone, a Rochester Americans forward, said he got away from the sport and "talked to a lot of people."

"I was able to mentally step away from everything, get my mind right," Malone said.

These days, Malone, 24, sounds refreshed. Having compiled three goals and five points in his last five games, he's enjoying perhaps the best start of his career.

"It's been good," Malone said the other day in Blue Cross Arena. "I feel a lot happier right now than I did last year, and I think it's shown in my play."

Still, Malone has struggled defensively, interim Amerks coach Gord Dineen said. The Amerks have three extra forwards, so the lineup changes regularly. Malone has sat out the last two games as a healthy scratch.

"Very hard," Dineen of scratching Malone for Friday's 4-2 win against Binghamton. "The offensive side of things are one thing, and playing a complete game is another. He . . . realizes the things he's got to work on to get back into it.

"The one thing is he's healthy, he's really got a resolve this year, so when he gets the opportunity, I know he's going to change his game."

It wasn't that long ago Malone looked finished in the Sabres organization. In the span of a few months last season, he morphed from a prospect into an afterthought in the American Hockey League.

The injuries — he hurt his knee in Buffalo's first preseason game before enduring upper- and lower-body problems — stymied his development, limiting him to 38 games. Following his appearances, he often looked beaten down by the mental and physical toll.

"It's hard when you're out for a long time, and then getting back and trying to get your confidence, getting hit with another thing," Malone said. "I care too much about this game, and it (stinks) when it happens."

Then in June, the Sabres did not give Malone a qualifying offer as a restricted free agent. Instead, he signed a one-year AHL contract.

"I just wanted to get my game back to where I know I'm capable of," he said. "Obviously, it's tough not getting qualified. But I think at the same time, they saw enough in me to bring me back."

Dineen said Malone, who played one game with the Sabres in 2016-17 after leaving college, has embraced returning to Rochester on a minor-league deal.

"You're kind of wondering how a guy would feel about it, and ... he's very excited about being back and getting another opportunity and being a part of this group," he said.

The genesis of Malone's turnaround started last spring.

"I was able to see the right people to help," said Malone, who wouldn't reveal with whom he spoke to.

The long offseason also helped the former sixth-round pick get healthy.

"It's huge," said Malone, who also battled hip problems in college. "It's a mental burden that's behind me."

Malone also learned to showcase a calmer style — "Not selling out," he said — and make himself less vulnerable when he gives or receives a hit.

"Everyday body maintenance and stuff like that is so important, and I've been doing a good job of getting here early and putting in the work that needs to be done as a pro hockey player," he said. "I had a really good summer. I think it's paid for me mentally and physically."

The versatile Malone has played nine games this season, moving up and down the lineup at center and wing.

"I have that mental ability to play different areas of the ice," he said.

He began the season pivoting a checking line before moving up to left wing beside center Rasmus Asplund and Tage Thompson.

"I'm playing a little more, playing with some pretty good players — offensive players," said Malone, who compiled 12 goals and 22 points as a rookie in 2017-18. "I know that I have the ability to produce offensively. Given the opportunity, I think I can succeed."

If Malone plays on a scoring line, he could pile up more goals. A breakout offensive season might help him earn another opportunity with the Sabres.

"I've been proving myself my whole life," he said. "I just want to prove to them that I deserve to be here and hopefully work my way up someday to an NHL deal."

C.J. Smith injured

Forward C.J. Smith suffered a lower-body injury in first period of Saturday's game against Utica and is expected to miss "weeks," Dineen said.

Smith was hit and did not return to the ice.

"He's somebody that we gear our team around as far as making other players better," Dineen said. "That's a significant loss, and for him, too. It's a year he wants to make an impact at every level, and so when you miss periods of time, that's disappointing."

Zach Redmond missed practice early this week with a lower-body injury and his status for Friday's game vs. Binghamton is uncertain. Dineen said he hopes the injury is short term.

Also, Taylor Leier practiced Tuesday in a non-contact jersey, his first practice of the season after undergoing offseason labrum surgery. Dineen said Leier is progressing but did not have a timetable.

Amerks fall in shootout to Binghamton
C&C Worldwide
By: Craig Potter
Nov. 9, 2019

Despite building a pair of leads, including a two-goal cushion in the first period, the Rochester Americans (7-3-1-2) were unable to stay in front as the Binghamton Devils (5-7-2-0) scored late in the third period before ultimately stealing a 4-3 win in the shootout Friday night at The Blue Cross Arena.

While appearing in their sixth game beyond regulation this season, the Amerks have earned 17 out of a possible 26 points through their first 13 games of the campaign. Additionally, Rochester has picked up points in eight of its last 10 games overall.

Forward Tage Thompson scored his team-leading sixth goal of the season while Curtis Lazar and Eric Cornel tallied their fourth and first goals, respectively. Goaltender Jonas Johansson (2-2-2) stopped 25 shots, plus three of four attempts in the skills competition, but suffered the overtime loss.

Brett Seney notched a season-high three points (2+1) while Ben Street also registered a multi-point game with two assists in addition to the shootout-clincher to give Binghamton its second straight win. Joey Anderson completed the scoring with his third of the campaign while rookie netminder Gilles Senn made 28 saves to improve to 3-2-1.

Following a timeout inside the final two minutes of regulation while trailing by a goal, Binghamton pulled Senn for the extra attacker. Rochester narrowly missed the vacant net with a shot, but the visitors raced up the ice before forcing overtime as Seney evened the game at 3-3 with 46 seconds remaining.

Neither team grabbed the extra point in the extra session and the shootout was needed to determine the winner.

Senn stopped all four Rochester skaters while Johansson made the save on the first three shooters he faced before Street snapped a shot over the glove to give Binghamton the victory.

Rochester opened the game with a pair of first-period goals from Cornel and Lazar to take a 2-0 lead after the first 20 minutes of play.

"I thought we played really sound defensively and within our structure, but I think we got away from that in the second half of the game," said interim head coach Gord Dineen. "We scored both of our goals by winning puck battles and having net-front presence, but we got away from it as the game went on."

Less than three minutes into the contest, defensemen Jacob Bryson and Will Borgen exchanged passes inside the offensive zone before Bryson escaped a Binghamton skater and wired a shot towards the net. As the puck made its way to Senn, it glanced off Cornel and into the net 2:14 into the game.

About 10 minutes after Cornel's first marker of the slate, Lazar snapped in his fourth from Sean Malone and Jean-Sebastian Dea. Following Dea's face-off win to Senn's left, Malone stepped behind the net and pushed the puck to Lazar.

"It was a good play after an icing," Lazar described. "Mugsy (Malone) made a great play getting the puck to me behind the net and I just flung it towards the net."

With his primary helper, Malone extended his point streak (3+3) to a career-best six games.

"We started the game by playing simple, getting pucks behind them," explained Thompson. "I think once built a 2-0 lead, we started sitting back and got a little too comfortable. We started trying to make things in the neutral zone and that is what feeds their offense."

Midway through the second period, moments after Rochester was whistled for a pair of penalties, the Devils capitalized on the two-man advantage and made it one-goal game.

Binghamton pressed to find the equalizer, and despite trailing 2-1 after 40 minutes, they knotted the game at two goals apiece just 45 seconds into the final frame.

Shortly after Seney's goal to start the third period, Thompson gathered the puck near the center-ice dot, stepped inside the blueline and handcuffed Senn with a perfectly placed shot off the crossbar to regain Rochester's lead from Casey Nelson and Scott Wilson.

The score remained the same until Seney tied the game in the final minute to force overtime before the Devils completed the comeback in the shootout.

Rochester continues its three-game homestand on Wednesday, Nov. 13 when they welcome the Syracuse Crunch back to the Blue Cross Arena at 7:05 pm.

**NOTES* — The Amerks ended the matchup with points in 18 of the last 22 games against the Devils dating back to the start of the 2017-18 season. Rochester holds a 13-4-3-2 record during that span, which included a 6-game winning streak... Amerks rookie defenseman Casey Fitzgerald is the son of Binghamton's general manager Tom Fitzgerald... Coming off his third-period tally last Friday against the Devils, Amerks forward Jean-Sebastien Dea has recorded 16 points (8+8) over his last 18 AHL contests, dating back to last season.

Power (play)-less Amerks squander lead, lose
Pickin' Splinters
By: Kevin Oklobzija
Nov. 8, 2019

On Saturday, the Rochester Americans blitzed the riding-high Utica Comets 6-0 on the road, their signature win for the first 30 days of the season.

On Friday on home ice, that same Amerks team opened a 2-0 lead against the finding-their-way Binghamton Devils and managed to lose.

Brett Seney scored an extra-attacker goal with 45.6 seconds left, then Ben Street scored the only goal in the tiebreaker shootout on the fourth round and the Devils left town with a 4-3 victory.

Yes, the Amerks earned a point, and their record sits at 7-3-1-2 with 17 points through 13 games.

But when you're playing an inferior team, and when you build a 2-0 first period lead and take a 3-2 lead into the game's final minute, you're supposed to win.

When you don't, there are no consolation prizes, no positives to trumpet.

"Whenever you have a lead in the third, that's the poise you want to exhibit," interim coach Gord Dineen said. "I don't think we did that."

Of course, it's difficult to win in today's game when your power play is inept, especially at Blue Cross Arena at the War Memorial. The Amerks have scored just one power-play goal at home — in 32 attempts. That's a league-worst 3.1 percent. Overall, they're connecting just 9.2 percent of the time.

"Our power play was awful tonight," captain Kevin Porter said after an 0-for-6 showing. "We definitely have to fix that."

Tage Thompson had given the Amerks that 3-2 lead 3:03 into the third period. He attacked through the neutral zone with speed and gained a free entry into the Devils zone when Joey Anderson stumbled while trying to get position.

Thompson then zipped a bullet wrist shot past the glove of goalie Gilles Senn and into the top right corner of the net for his team-leading sixth goal.

"It was a highlight goal as far as using his speed and his shot," Dineen said.

But when it came time for the Amerks to close it out, they failed. As Street passed from the right point down to Chris Conner at the right edge of the crease, Seney came flying down the left side of the slot, behind Curtis Lazar.

Conner then passed through the deep slot and Seney one-timed it past goalie Jonas Johansson.

"I probably got a little too extended," Lazar said, "but there's a reason they have an extra skater. As good as we are as a team, we have to find a way to close it out."

Both teams had chances in overtime, including Thompson, whose rocket wristed from the middle of the slot slithered between the pads of Senn but the goalie was able to fall backward and smother the puck before it crossed the goal line.

"I thought I had that spot picked; he made a great save," Thompson said.

Amerks blow late lead, lose to Binghamton

Rochester First

By: Staff

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Despite building a pair of leads, including a two-goal cushion in the first period, the Rochester Americans (7-3-1-2) were unable to stay in front as the Binghamton Devils (5-7-2-0) scored late in the third period before ultimately stealing a 4-3 win in the shootout Friday night at The Blue Cross Arena.

While appearing in their sixth game beyond regulation this season, the Amerks have earned 17 out of a possible 26 points through their first 13 games of the campaign. Additionally, Rochester has picked up points in eight of its last 10 games overall.

Forward Tage Thompson scored his team-leading sixth goal of the season while Curtis Lazar and Eric Cornel tallied their fourth and first goals, respectively. Goaltender Jonas Johansson (2-2-2) stopped 25 shots, plus three of four attempts in the skills competition, but suffered the overtime loss.

Brett Seney notched a season-high three points (2+1) while Ben Street also registered a multi-point game with two assists in addition to the shootout-clincher to give Binghamton its second straight win. Joey Anderson completed the scoring with his third of the campaign while rookie netminder Gilles Senn made 28 saves to improve to 3-2-1.

Following a timeout inside the final two minutes of regulation while trailing by a goal, Binghamton pulled Senn for the extra attacker. Rochester narrowly missed the vacant net with a shot, but the visitors raced up the ice before forcing overtime as Seney evened the game at 3-3 with 46 seconds remaining.

Neither team grabbed the extra point in the extra session and the shootout was needed to determine the winner.

Senn stopped all four Rochester skaters while Johansson made the save on the first three shooters he faced before Street snapped a shot over the glove to give Binghamton the victory.

Rochester opened the game with a pair of first-period goals from Cornel and Lazar to take a 2-0 lead after the first 20 minutes of play.

"I thought we played really sound defensively and within our structure, but I think we got away from that in the second half of the game," said interim head coach Gord Dineen. "We scored both of our goals by winning puck battles and having net-front presence, but we got away from it as the game went on."

Less than three minutes into the contest, defensemen Jacob Bryson and Will Borgen exchanged passes inside the offensive zone before Bryson escaped a Binghamton skater and wired a shot towards the net. As the puck made its way to Senn, it glanced off Cornel and into the net 2:14 into the game.

About 10 minutes after Cornel's first marker of the slate, Lazar snapped in his fourth from Sean Malone and Jean-Sebastian Dea. Following Dea's face-off win to Senn's left, Malone stepped behind the net and pushed the puck to Lazar.

"It was a good play after an icing," Lazar described. "Mugsy (Malone) made a great play getting the puck to me behind the net and I just flung it towards the net."

With his primary helper, Malone extended his point streak (3+3) to a career-best six games.

"We started the game by playing simple, getting pucks behind them," explained Thompson. "I think once built a 2-0 lead, we started sitting back and got a little too comfortable. We started trying to make things in the neutral zone and that is what feeds their offense."

Midway through the second period, moments after Rochester was whistled for a pair of penalties, the Devils capitalized on the two-man advantage and made it one-goal game.

Binghamton pressed to find the equalizer, and despite trailing 2-1 after 40 minutes, they knotted the game at two goals apiece just 45 seconds into the final frame.

Shortly after Seney's goal to start the third period, Thompson gathered the puck near the center-ice dot, stepped inside the blueline and handcuffed Senn with a perfectly placed shot off the crossbar to regain Rochester's lead from Casey Nelson and Scott Wilson.

The score remained the same until Seney tied the game in the final minute to force overtime before the Devils completed the comeback in the shootout.

Rochester continues its three-game homestand on Wednesday, Nov. 13 when they welcome the Syracuse Crunch back to The Blue Cross Arena. Game time is slated for a 7:05 p.m.