



ROCHESTER AMERICANS

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TONIGHT'S GAME: CHARLOTTE VS. ROCHESTER

Andrew Oglevie developing into one of Sabres' top forward prospects
Buffalo News
By: Bill Hoppe
Dec. 6, 2019

Andrew Oglevie thought nothing of that first hit he took three months ago. The Buffalo Sabres' prospect popped up and continued his shift in the Prospects Challenge opener.

But when he returned to the bench that night, a teammate asked the question on everyone's mind.

"Someone was like, 'You all right, Ogs?' And I'm like, 'Why wouldn't I be?' " Oglevie said following a recent practice in Blue Cross Arena. "And then I came back, 'Oh, yeah, I was concussed three times last year.' "

Oglevie, 24, has quickly bounced back from his concussion-riddled rookie season, developing into one of the Sabres' top forward prospects.

The Notre Dame product has scored a team-leading nine goals and 16 points through 21 games with the Americans entering Friday's contest against the Charlotte Checkers.

After injuries and recalls began decimating the Amerks' forward corps, Oglevie emerged as an offensive threat at right wing beside center Kevin Porter and Brett Murray, helping buoy their current 11-game point streak.

Oglevie, who signed with the Sabres as a free agent in 2018, recorded his first American Hockey League hat trick in Saturday's 3-2 road win against the Cleveland Monsters. He has scored seven times in the last seven games.

"He's got the hockey sense, he's got the skills, to play in the NHL," Amerks General Manager Randy Sexton said.

The 5-foot-10, 180-pound Oglevie showcased those skills in his first NHL training camp last year, making a strong impression with the Sabres. It felt like he could earn a recall.

Then a string of concussions stymied Oglevie's rookie year, limiting him to just 28 appearances. He had suffered two by November and missed two and a half months before leaving the lineup for good in late March.

"I got hit a couple more times, on two different occasions, and then I flared up again, the symptoms came back, and the third time they came back for a prolonged amount of time — longer than what is expected for a normal concussion," he said.

Oglevie said he essentially experienced "one big (concussion) that just kept reoccurring."

"A lot of it was neck-related, not so much concussion," he said. "I went to go see a specialist late in the season last year and he helped me fix a lot of things with my neck, which in turn helped my headaches and whatnot.

"So that was a big turning point for me."

Oglevie felt so good he said he "was in full swing" about a month after the season ended.

So Oglevie said he decided he wouldn't "hold anything back" during his training.

"I feel healthy, I feel good, I'm not even going to think about it," he said.

That's why when Oglevie took a lick in the corner Sept. 6 in LECOM Harborcenter, he had to be reminded what had just happened. For the second consecutive year, instead of going home to California, Oglevie spent the offseason in Buffalo training with the Sabres' staff.

"I really believe the results that we're seeing are as a result of that commitment to be in Buffalo," Sexton said.

Sexton said the Sabres identified three areas — speed, strength and quickness — for Oglevie to focus on during the summer.

"We could see the progress at the development camp (in June), we saw the progress at the rookie tournament, and we've seen the progress here during the regular season," Sexton said. "He's . . . not a real big body, so he's got to be real strong."

Oglevie's maturity — he's older than most second-year pros — helped that progression.

"He's able to keep things in perspective," Sexton said. "One of the challenging things for young players, sometimes they let their minds play tricks on them. They read too much into a decision that an organization makes. They create anxiety for themselves because they think they see signals that don't exist."

"Andrew's maturity allows him to look beyond that and focus on critical things he needs to focus on and not waste one ounce of negative energy or one ounce of anxiety on issues that he can't control that are quite likely not real."

Oglevie's upbeat personality also helped him handle the rough season.

"He's very outgoing and positive," said Amerks forward Sean Malone, Oglevie's roommate. "He always finds a way to make light of most situations."

Oglevie said: "Life gives you lemons, make lemonade. That's the saying. So I was handed some sour lemons, but I tried to do my best to make the best lemonade I could."

Still, Malone, a West Seneca native who endured his own injuries last season, said the concussions took their toll on his friend. "It's kind of scary. Your future's kind of unknown," he said. "But, yeah, I think we were both kind of hurt last year. So we kind of found a way to make light of the situation. I think he did a really good job of persevering."

Oglevie said he leaned on his roommates — Malone, Amerks defenseman Will Borgen and winger C.J. Smith — for support. The coaching staff and management also helped by allowing him to take road trips when he was healthy enough.

"It was a whole new group of guys, and they didn't want me to feel quarantined," Oglevie said. "They did a good job of helping me out and I tried to stay around them as much as I could."

Leier on the mend

Amerks forward Taylor Leier, out all season after undergoing offseason shoulder surgery, started full-contact practice this week. Sexton said Amerks don't have a timetable for Leier's return.

"It's imminent," he said. "We just want to make sure that when we turn him loose, because he's got a little of that Tasmanian devil in him, that he's fully healed and ready and go and can absorb it. Barring a setback, it won't be long."

With his mom visiting from Sweden, Amerks' Johansson gives her reason to smile
Pickin' Splinters
By: Kevin Oklobzija
Dec. 6, 2019

That Ulrica Johansson is getting to spend a little time with her son, Jonas, in December is surely enough of a treat in itself.

When you live 3,800 air miles away from Rochester, you don't get to prepare many home-cooked meals for your hockey-playing son.

But Jonas made his mother's trip from Galve, Sweden, even more special by posting his first career American Hockey League shutout Friday night as the Rochester Americans blanked the visiting Charlotte Checkers 4-0.

"You work hard every day to reach success, so obviously it feels good," Johansson said after the Amerks ran their point streak to 12 games (10-0-1-1) by upending the defending Calder Cup champions.

His mother made a visit last season but never got to see Jonas play. This time, she saw him play perhaps his best game as an Amerk with at least six terrific stops among his 26 saves.

The Checkers blitzed the Amerks in the first period, unleashing an unrelenting speed-based attack. They outshot the Amerks 8-1 through the first 10 minutes and created at least two no-way-they-can't-score chances.

Yet somehow Johansson made those saves, the first by kicking out his left leg to rob Max McCormick just 18 seconds into the game and the second by lifting skyward while in a crouch to block with his right shoulder a shot by Jake Bean at 9:50.

"He saved us in the first period," said captain Kevin Porter, who scored the second goal. "It was mostly because of him that we won."

Sean Malone, off a strong play by Dalton Smith, Brady Vail and Eric Cornel scored the other goals as the Amerks improved to 15-3-2-2, the best record in the AHL's Eastern Conference.

They haven't lost in regulation since Oct. 30, 38 days ago.

"We're playing well right now, we have some confidence, a little bit of a swagger," Porter said.

That they're without five of their top nine forwards to either injury or recall hasn't mattered because they're getting secondary scoring nearly every game.

Vail's goal was his first since his recall from ECHL Cincinnati six games ago. His last AHL goal came with the Amerks in 2016-17. And his only other AHL goal was scored for the Hamilton Bulldogs in 2012-13.

Cornel's goal was his fourth and Malone scored his fifth.

"There's nothing better than getting secondary scoring," coach Chris Taylor said.

Well, getting great goaltending might be better. Andrew Hammond made 20 saves in a 4-0 home victory over the Toronto Marlies. On Friday it was Hammond who secured the puck during the post-game celebration so Johansson would have a souvenir.

The Amerks have recorded back-to-back shutouts for the first time since 2012-13, when Nathan Lieuwen won 3-0 at San Antonio on March 24 before David Leggio blanked Syracuse 1-0 on home ice three days later.

"The way they're playing, it gives us confidence to make mistakes," Porter said.

The Amerks were intent on not making mistakes in the third period in order to ensure Johansson the shutout.

"Everybody talked on the bench, make sure we protect our goaltender for the last 10 minutes," Taylor said. "To me, that makes a special team."

Amerks blank defending Cup champion Charlotte
C&C Worldwide
By: Staff Report
Dec. 6, 2019

Just two days after earning a 4-0 win over the Toronto Marlies, the Rochester Americans (15-3-2-2) duplicated the effort in shutting out the defending Calder Cup champion Charlotte Checkers (9-11-3-0) by the same score Friday before 4,136 fans at the Blue Cross Arena.

The only difference was goaltender Jonas Johansson, who was perfect in stopping all 26 shots he faced to earn his first AHL shutout while also collecting his 100th pro win. The 4-0 win served as the first of back-to-back meetings between the two clubs and also helped Rochester take over the top spot in the AHL's North Division standings.

The victory also pushed Rochester's point streak to 12 straight games (10-0-1-1), their longest since a 14-game run from Jan. 16 to Feb. 11 during the 2004-05 campaign. Additionally, the Amerks have now picked up points in 17 of the last 19 contests overall, going 13-2-2-2 over that span, while also earning 34 out of a possible 44 points through their first 22 contests of the season.

Dalton Smith notched his first AHL multi-point game since Nov. 14, 2014 as a member of the Syracuse Crunch and first as an Amerk while Zach Redmond produced his third two-assist outing of the season. Forwards Sean Malone, Kevin Porter, Brady Vail and Eric Cornel all lit the lamp as Johansson improved to 7-2-2 on the season as he made 26 all saves. With Andrew Hammond earning a shutout on Wednesday and Johansson tonight, it marks the first time the Amerks posted back-to-back shutout wins since March 24 and March 27 during the 2012-13 season.

Winger Steven Lorentz registered a team-high four shots for Charlotte, which suffered its second shutout in the last three games. Netminder Alex Nedeljkovic (4-7-1) stopped 27 shots of 31 in the defeat.

After overcoming a two-man disadvantage midway through the opening frame following consecutive tripping penalties, Smith dug the puck out from behind the Charlotte goaltender. His initial shot was denied, but the rebound caromed right to Malone and the Buffalo native banged it in for his fifth of the campaign with 2:15 left in the period.

"Killing the 5-on-3 was a big momentum swing," said Redmond. "Getting the goal by Sean (Malone) that we maybe didn't necessarily deserve as it was our first real chance, it gave us something to build off."

"Charlotte came out flying," Porter explained. "They are a good team and they were ready. JJ kept us in the game as we kind of weathered the storm a little bit, and then after the goal we rode that energy into the second period."

During the middle stanza, it appeared the Amerks were going to take the 1-0 lead into the intermission but three goals in a span of 2:53, including two in 60 seconds, gave them a four-goal cushion going into the final 20 minutes of regulation.

"Getting the secondary scoring again from our team is huge," Amerks head coach Chris Taylor said. "You need a team with depth, and much like it has been all season, it was good again."

The scoring fiery began at the 15:23 mark as Porter steered in his sixth of the season from Andrew Oglevie and Redmond before Vail and Cornel both redirected shots in-behind Nedeljkovic less than a minute apart.

Charlotte continued to pressure Johansson in an attempt to spoil his shutout bid, but thanks to timely saves much like he did in the first two periods, the Swedish netminder stonewalled the Checkers.

"It's big for me," said Johansson. "Of course, the thought (of the shutout) goes through your head, but the guys really helped me out a bunch, especially in the third. It was a reminder to keep the puck out of the net. I am happy to get the two points and the win, but the shutout feels good."

"JJ played awesome tonight," said Taylor. "If it was not for his effort, I don't know if I would be standing here talking about a win. He worked very hard over the summer and is being rewarded for his effort that he is doing after practices, too."

**NOTES* — The same two teams are right back at it again for another go-around on Saturday at 7:05 pm at the Blue Cross Arena... Rookie forward Brett Murray recorded 2 goals, 6 assists, and a pair of multi-point efforts over his last 7 games. He began the first weekend of December tied for seventh in scoring among all AHL rookies with 14 points (3+11) in 16 games while being held off the scoresheet only 5 times this season... Rookie defenseman Jacob Bryson leads all AHL first-year players with a plus-12 on-ice rating... Anchored by the goaltending duo of veteran Andrew Hammond and second-year pro Jonas Johansson, the Amerks enter the weekend having allowed 53 goals through first 21 games of the season, the fewest in the AHL. In addition to showing 2.52 goals-against average, the club has also allowed the fewest amount of shots in the Eastern Conference (583)... Wednesday's shutout against Toronto was Hammond's third in his last six appearances, matching his season total with the Iowa Wild last season. The netminder boasts an 8-1-2 record on the campaign while his eight wins are tied for seventh among all netminders. In his last 6 games, Hammond has posted 5 wins, 3 shutouts, a 1.32 goals-against average and a .950 save percentage... In last Saturday's 3-2 victory in Cleveland, goaltender Jonas Johansson improved his record to an AHL-best 6-2-2 while also upping his personal win streak to 4 games as he made 24 saves.

Amerks blank Checkers: Extend point streak to 12 games

13W ham-TV

By: Staff Report

Dec. 6, 2019

Another game. Another win for the Rochester Americans.

The Amerks shutout the defending Calder Cup champions in impressive fashion Friday night at the Blue Cross Arena.

Jonas Johansson stopped all 26 shots he faced to register the first shutout of his career.

It's also the second straight shutout for the Amerks.

With the win, Rochester has now picked up at least a point in 12 straight games. The Amerks have not lost in regulation since October 30th.

Sean Malone, Kevin Porter, Brady Vail and Eric Cornel scored for Rochester.

Back-to-back shutouts move Amerks to top of division

Rochester First

By: Staff Report

Dec. 6, 2019

Just two days after earning a 4-0 win over the Toronto Marlies, the Rochester Americans (15-3-2-2) duplicated the effort in shutting out the defending Calder Cup champion Charlotte Checkers (9-11-3-0) by the same score Friday at The Blue Cross Arena. The only difference was goaltender Jonas Johansson, who was perfect in stopping all 26 shots he faced to earn his first AHL shutout while also collecting his 100th pro win. The 4-0 win served as the first of back-to-back to meetings between the two clubs and also helped Rochester take over the top spot in the AHL's North Division standings.

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After a quick turnaround, the same two teams are right back at it again for another go-around on Saturday, Dec. 7 at The Blue Cross Arena.

Oglevie Making Up For Lost Time This Season

Amerks.com

By: Suzie Cool

Dec. 5, 2019

Step one: An immediate or on-ice assessment needs to be made that consists of checking for any red flags, looking for obvious observable signs, going through the memory assessment Maddocks questions, an examination of the Glasgow Coma Scale, a cervical spine assessment and doing an off-ice assessment on the athlete's concussion background.

Step two: It's time for a symptom evaluation where the athlete rates their symptoms based on how they feel post-injury. On a scale that ranges from none to severe, the athlete will give a rating on neck pain, dizziness, confusion and more in order for the doctor to correctly diagnose the situation at hand.

Step three: A cognitive screening evaluates the brain's processing and thinking function after a head injury. This screening ranges from figuring out if the athlete knows exactly where they are at, immediate memory capability and concentration when trying to repeat phrases and digits given to them to remember at that point in time.

Step four: Neurological screenings test the patient's ability to read aloud and follow instructions without difficulty, being able to look side-to-side or up-and-down with double-vision or moving their head and neck or having the patient perform the finger nose coordination test normally along with a balance examination.

Step five: The doctor will have the patient go back to step three and ask some of the same questions that were asked during the cognitive screening. This delayed recall should be performed five minutes after the initial immediate recall section.

Step six: It's time for the doctor to evaluate each section of the test and decide on the athlete's symptoms that have been presented to them.

So, let's take some time and imagine each step of this process after taking a big hit during a hockey game. You're led off the ice, taken to a small examination room in the back hallway and thrown into a series of tests that are going to dictate whether or not you'll be back out on the ice playing the game that you love any time soon. A process you had to endure not once, not twice, but three times while embarking on your first season in the pros.

The best way to describe Andrew Oglevie's rookie campaign last year? Exhausting.

Just nine days after making his professional debut with the Rochester Americans on Oct. 5, the rookie forward was sidelined for the next six games with his first concussion of the 2018-19 season. Upon his return to the lineup on Nov. 2, Oglevie would then see time in the next 10 tilts before suffering his second concussion of the year.

"This was the first time I had ever been out for an extended period of time, especially with a concussion. I've had previous concussions, but I haven't had them consecutively like that in such a short period of time," said Ogelvie.

After his second concussion of last year's campaign, Oglevie was out for an even more extended period of time, missing 29 games from Dec. 1 to Feb. 12. Following his second recovery, Oglevie got back into the Rochester lineup with a purpose, notching nine points (4+5) in his last 14 outings of the year with three multi-point efforts over that time.

Having only appeared in 28 games last year, Oglevie found himself missing the last 11 games of the 2018-19 regular season as well as the Calder Cup Playoffs due to suffering yet another concussion. Although an unfortunate way to end his first year in the pros, the Amerks forward finally had the summer to recover and find out how to prevent this ongoing issue by meeting with a concussion specialist in order to figure out the exact problem.

It was exactly what he needed for Oglevie to figure out how to prevent a rerun of his rookie year when preparing for his second season in the Flower City over the last summer.

"I was feeling good probably two weeks after the season ended. I was able to start skating right away and I didn't really take any time off. I did a lot of skating, lifting, lots of neck strengthening, lots of upper back and shoulder work just to make sure my neck and everything was stable so that I could take these hits and not be able to feel the symptoms."

Fast forward nearly eight months later and two months down in the Amerks current campaign and this second-year forward is putting in work and making himself known here in Rochester, easily becoming a fan favorite. Currently, Oglevie is one of just three skaters on the Amerks roster that has appeared in all 21 games so far this season. In those 21 games, Oglevie has made up for lost time, surpassing his goal (5), assist (5) and point (10) total from last season while leading the team with nine goals and 16 points.

Entering this week, Oglevie was riding a career-long seven-game point streak, which included goals in five of six games over that span. But on top of his previous point streak, skating in every game and surpassing his statistics from last year, the Amerks forward notched his first professional hat trick, lifting the team to a 3-2 victory over the Cleveland Monsters on Nov. 30 and being the first to achieve this feat for the club this year.

One thing Oglevie can admit to is that he came into this year with a chip on his shoulder, wanting to prove to people what exactly he could do when coming into a season healthy and feeling better than before.

"I think I said it once earlier this season, but I do want to prove that I'm still here just because people might have forgotten, or people might not have seen me play a whole lot last year. The 'still here' campaign is going on for me right now and I'm just happy to be contributing to the team."

Well Andrew Oglevie, you most certainly have our attention.

Aquin Scores First AHL Goal
Journal Pioneer
By: Staff Report
Dec. 5, 2019

Former Charlottetown Islanders left-winger Pascal Aquin scored his first AHL goal Wednesday.

He scored 3:15 into the first period as the host Rochester Americans defeated the Toronto Marlies 4-0.

The 22-year-old Le Gardeur, Que., native has a goal and two assists in eight games with the Americans this season after playing one game with them last season. He had 27 goals and 32 assists for 59 points and 81 penalty minutes in 68 games with the ECHL's Cincinnati Cyclones in 2018-19, his first year of pro hockey.

Aquin played two seasons with the Islanders, helping them make it to the Quebec Major Junior Hockey League semifinal both years.

Amerks blank Marlies 4-0 on home ice
Rochester First
By: Staff Report
Dec. 5, 2019

Two first period goals and a strong outing from goaltender Andrew Hammond helped the Rochester Amerks on their way to a 4-0 victory over the Toronto Marlies Wednesday night at the Blue Cross Arena.

The win pushed Rochester's point streak to 11 games, their first such streak since the 09-10 season. Furthermore, the Amerks have now picked up 16 points in their last 18 outings — good for second place in the north division and fourth in the whole AHL with 32 points.

Curtis Lazar and Casey Fitzgerald both recorded their second and third multi-point games of the season, respectively, with a goal and an assist each. Zach Redmond opened the scoring on the night with his third of the year while second-year forward Pascal Aquin netted his first career AHL goal.

Hammond (8-1-2), who appeared in his 200th pro game, picked up his first point as an Amerk while earning his third shutout of the season. In his last seven starts, Hammond has posted five wins, three shutouts, a 1.32 goals-against average and a .950 save percentage.

The Amerks continue their four-game homestand on Friday, Dec. 6 when they host the defending Calder Cup champion Charlotte Checkers at 7:05 p.m. in the first of back-to-back meetings at The Blue Cross Arena.

The Saturday night game against the Checkers is also Star Wars night at the Blue Cross Arena.

Rochester Americans: An Inside Look
The Hockey Writers
By: Daniel Kuter
Dec. 5, 2019

Get familiar with some of the young faces down in the minors, as the American Hockey League's Rochester Americans have some talented players that Buffalo Sabres fans may get to know down the road.

The Well-Known Name: Tage Thompson

For Sabres fans, Tage Thompson is the most familiar name due to the fact that he spent the majority of last season with Buffalo. He was a part of the Ryan O'Reilly deal, coming over from a St. Louis Blues team that couldn't quite figure out what to do with him.

The same can be said for Buffalo, who has sent Thompson bouncing around in the lineup, and even down to Rochester for the end of last season and beginning of this season. While in St. Louis, he played 41 games for the Blues, and 30 with the San Antonio Rampage in the minors.

Thompson was a stud at the University of Connecticut, compiling 64 points over his two collegiate campaigns. He was a highly-touted sniper, ultimately leading the Blues to spend a first-round draft pick on him. He stands at a towering 6-foot-6 and has characteristics of being a star in the making. It's safe to say this possibility is still a far ways away, but the shot release and size of him alone give him the potential to become elite someday.

From extensive analysis of Thompson over the past few years, I have come to find that he has gotten the short end of the stick. What I mean by this is that he has not been given an ample opportunity to play with elite players. He spent the majority of last season on the third or fourth line. I see him as a goal scorer, hence his need to play with playmakers, which has been a rare commodity for him.

I tend to wonder if Thompson will ever work out in Buffalo, as he is still in the minors and has not been dominant by any means.

The Other Familiar Face: Lawrence Pilut

Lawrence Pilut is another player that spent extensive time with Buffalo last season. He essentially came out of nowhere, which tends to be the case with undrafted players. With a depleted defense corps, he stepped up and showed some serious potential to eventually become a full-time pro.

By process of elimination, it was clear that Pilut would be starting this season in Rochester. With that being said, I have gotten the chance to see him play in person a few times this season and have been quite impressed. The game has clearly slowed down for Pilut, who seemed overwhelmed at times last season. Now, I understand the AHL is a completely different animal, but I will give credit where credit is due.

Pilut is a smart puck mover and walks the blue line with supreme confidence. His head never looks down at the puck and he rarely has point shots blocked, which is an essential factor for whether a young defenseman survives at the pro level. On top of this, he is responsible in his own end, with an emphasis put on making the easy read.

If Buffalo decides to move on from some of their defensemen, or they become plagued with injuries, I can see Pilut being an option for the Sabres.

Ascending Forwards: Andrew Oglevie & Brett Murray

Both Oglevie and Murray have found success in Rochester this season, in part because of the chemistry the two have developed from playing on the same line.

Oglevie is a former Notre Dame Fighting Irish, with whom he racked up 41 and 39 points, respectively, in his last two seasons at the Big Ten school. He plays with pace and has a nice wrist shot to accompany his slick playmaking skills.

Murray, on the other hand, is a 6-foot-4 winger who found success in the United States Hockey League after two lackluster seasons at Penn State. He possesses a unique blend of skill and physicality, with a willingness to hunt down the puck. This aspect of his game is what impresses me the most, as he uses his size to his advantage to strip players of the puck and create offensive chances off of the turnovers.

From a small sample size, I believe Murray has a bright future to eventually become a regular in the NHL. He already possesses the necessary size, and will only continue to become stronger and faster with his skating. The skill is clearly there with him, and I think his ceiling is quite high.

Will Borgen

The main reason I even bring Borgen's name up is the fact that he offers a tough, bruising element that the Sabres sorely lack. Borgen is one tough customer. He is not an overly large defenseman, but he plays with an edge that is hard to come by. He has dropped the gloves in two of the three Americans games I have attended.

With the Rasmus Dahlin hit still fresh in our minds I think it's fair to say that Buffalo would love to add a "Ryan Reaves" to their lineup. Now I'm not saying Borgen is Reaves by any stretch of the imagination, but I do think the Sabres can take something from what they have seen from him.

I don't expect Borgen to be called up anytime soon, I rather think he simply serves as a reminder of what Buffalo lacks.

As a whole, the Sabres farm team has some high potential players on their roster, and I would suggest familiarizing yourself with them before they one day wear the blue and gold.

Sabres' Ukko-Pekka Luukkonen named ECHL goalie of month
Buffalo Hockey Beat
By: Bill Hoppe
Dec. 4, 2019

Buffalo Sabres prospect Ukko-Pekka Luukkonen has been named ECHL Goaltender of the Month for November after compiling a 6-2-1-0 record with a 1.88 goals-against average, a .925 save percentage and two shutouts with the Cincinnati Cyclones.

After undergoing hip surgery in late April, the Sabres sent Luukkonen, 20, to the Cyclones last month to begin his pro career.

The Sabres drafted the Finn, the Ontario Hockey League's MVP and top goalie last season, in the second round in 2017, 54th overall.

In other prospect news, goalie Erik Portillo has been named to Team Sweden's squad for the upcoming World Junior Championship.

Portillo has compiled a 10-2-1 mark with 2.13 goals-against average and a .910 save percentage in 13 games with the junior United States Hockey League's Dubuque Fighting Saints this season.

The Sabres drafted Portillo, 19, in the third round this year, 67th overall.

Amerks' point streak reaches 11
Buffalo News
By: Staff Report
Dec. 5, 2019

Extending their point streak to 11 games, the Rochester Americans shut out the Toronto Marlies, 4-0, Wednesday before 2,872 at Blue Cross Arena in Rochester.

Goalie Andrew Hammond, the game's first star, stopped 20 shots to gain his third shutout of the season. Curtis Lazar and Casey Fitzgerald, who had a goal and assist each, were the second and third stars.

Zach Redmond scored on the power play at 1:01 of the opening period after Adam Brooks of the Marlies drew a hooking minor just 43 seconds into the game. Pascal Aquin scored his first of the season to make it 2-0 in the first. Lazar scored in the second and assist on Fitzgerald's goal in the third.

Rochester (14-3-2-2, 32 points) trails Toronto (15-4-2-1, 33) by a point in the North Division of the American Hockey League. Last time the Amerks failed to earn a point was a 4-3 loss to the Providence Bruins on Oct. 30.

Even without the A-team, the Amerks keep winning
Pickin' Splinters
By: Kevin Oklobzija
Dec. 4, 2019

Two of their top six forwards remain on recall, another three of their top nine are injured and a defenseman is playing forward.

And yet the Rochester Americans just keep winning.

Andrew Hammond stopped 20 shots and Zach Redmond, Pascal Aquin, Curtis Lazar and Casey Fitzgerald scored goals as the Amerks blitzed the visiting Toronto Marlies 4-0 on Wednesday night.

With the victory, the Amerks (14-3-2-2) moved within a point of the first-place Marlies in the American Hockey League's North Division. They have points in 11 straight (9-0-1-1) and haven't lost in regulation since a 4-3 setback at Providence on Oct. 30.

Their .762 points-earned percentage is second only to Milwaukee (17-4-1-2, .771) in the 31-team AHL.

Not bad considering the talent that is out of the lineup. But whoever fills in excels. On Wednesday the Amerks got goals from a guy up who played the first six weeks of the season in the ECHL, Aquin, and a defenseman-turned-forward, Fitzgerald.

"We have that next-man-up mentality," said Fitzgerald, a rookie out of Boston College who has 2 goals, 5 assists and 7 points in 16 games. "Guys are going to step up and do what they can for their team."

Some would say the adjustment from D-zone to forward shouldn't be that difficult for Fitzgerald. His father, Tom, played 17 pro seasons up front and brother, Ryan, is in his fourth pro season on the wing.

"My first game at forward I was pretty lost," he said. "I've been a defenseman my whole life."

Yet while his future surely is on defense, he has worked hard to learn to be an effective forward, Amerks coach Chris Taylor said.

"I always like that guys are sometimes playing different positions," Taylor said. "Fitzzy's done a great job."

Aquin also did on Wednesday. A free-agent signee before the 2018-19 season, he produced 27-32-59 in 68 games for ECHL Cincinnati last year and had a one-game call-up to the Amerks as well.

But he went without a goal in his first 10 games for the Cyclones this season, and hadn't scored in his first seven with the Amerks until 3:15 of the first period on Wednesday.

"It was a good feeling," he said. "I struggled a little with it in Cincinnati, just trying to do too much. Normally I keep it simple; straight line."

He was back to that style of play on Wednesday, often using his speed to disrupt the Marlies in their own zone.

"I thought this was one of his best games," Taylor said. "He was all over the puck and his forechecking was really good."

Aquin started on a line with Fitzgerald and Brady Vail but ended up with Jean-Sebastien Dea and Lazar after Scott Wilson suffered an upper body injury. Taylor had no update on the severity.

Of course, it never hurts to have a reliable goalie just in case their are breakdowns. Hammond wasn't required to do much in the first period when the Amerks built a 2-0 lead, but was tested on occasion over the final 40 minutes.

The shutout was his third of the season, all in his past six starts, and sixth in his past 22 starts dating back to last year with the Iowa Wild.

On Wednesday, however, he gave most of the credit to the players in front of him.

"More than anything this was a team shutout," said Hammond, who lowered his goals-against average to 2.44, 12th-best in the AHL. "The guys are giving up so little and when they do, you want to be there for them."

In case you were wondering ...

Remember the odd play from the third period on Friday night, where Toronto scored a power-play goal but play continued and then Amerks winger Pascal Aquin took a penalty?

While all four officials somehow missed a puck shot into the middle of an open net, they did make the proper rulings in the aftermath.

When an apparent goal is missed, play continues until the next whistle. The officials then review video to determine if the puck entered the net. In this case, it did, so the goal is awarded, and the clock is wound back to the time the puck entered the net.

In this case, the goal came at 8:43, while the Amerks were short-handed. Because the clock is wound back, that ensuing penalty officially is recorded at that same time. That means the original penalty is wiped out by the goal, but the delayed penalty is enforced because the Amerks "officially" were short-handed at the time.

Amerks blank division leading Marlies
C&C Worldwide
By: Craig Potter
Dec. 4, 2019

Andrew Hammond posted his third shutout in his last 7 starts and Pascal Aquin notched his first AHL goal in leading the Rochester Americans to a 4-0 victory over the North Division leading Toronto Marlies on Wednesday night before a paid crowd of 2,872 fans at the Blue Cross Arena.

Hammond, playing in his 200th professional game, also recorded an assist as he made 20 saves in blanking the Marlies.

"I don't want to sound cliché, but I think it's the way we have played lately," said Hammond. "My approach lately is just making the key saves over the course of the game and my other routines have not changed.

"Tonight was a total team shutout. The guys played great in front of me. "They did not give up much, but even when they did, I wanted to be there for them."

The victory enabled the Amerks (14-3-2-2, 32 points) to pull within 1 point of Toronto (15-4-3-2, 33 points) for the North Division lead. Rochester also has 1 game in hand on the Marlies.

"Everyone played really well tonight," said Amerks head coach Chris Taylor. "It's obviously a team win, but I thought Hammond made some big saves whenever he needed to. We were a little sloppy in the second and third period as we allowed some chances that we normally do not give up, but Hammond came up big for us."

The Amerks jumped out to an early 2-0 advantage they scored on a power play just 61 seconds into the contest. Defenseman Zack Redmond fired home the shot with assists going to Lawrence Pilut and Hammond.

Rookie Pascal Aquin tallied his first AHL goal 2:14 later off assists from Casey Fitzgerald and John Gilmour.

"It's a great feeling," said Aquin when talking about his goal. "It was great to get it (the goal) early in the game on the first shift. We were having a good shift in the offensive zone and I saw the puck and I just tried to bury it into the net."

Midway through the second period, Brett Murray thought he had a goal on a shot towards the vacated Toronto net, but goalie Joseph Woll dove to his left and made the incredible save.

Rochester did go up 3-0 about 3 minutes later when Curtis Lazar scored with an assist going to Jean-Sebastien Dea.

The Amerks concluded the scoring in the third period off a turnover in the Marlies end. Casey Fitzgerald scored as Brady Vail and Lazar received assists. Normally a defenseman, Fitzgerald has been playing forward for a fourth consecutive game due to a shortage of forwards.

"I just try to do whatever I can do to help the team win," said Fitzgerald. "I'm new to the position and I just try to give it everything I have whenever I get on the ice.

"Tonight, I got rewarded with a goal and an assist, but much of the credit goes to my linemates (Aquin and Vail) as they were working hard to set me up, but it does feel good to contribute offensively."

The Amerks continue their four-game homestand on Friday, Dec. 6 when they play host to the defending Calder Cup champion Charlotte Checkers at 7:05 pm at the Blue Cross Arena in the first of back-to-back meetings. The two teams will square off again Saturday night in Rochester to conclude the 2-game set.

**NOTES* — In his last 7 starts, Andrew Hammond has posted 5 wins, 3 shutouts, a 1.32 goals-against average and a .950 save percentage...The Marlies suffered their first shutout since Feb. 22 of last season. Amerks General Manager Randy Sexton announced on Tuesday that the team reassigned forward Shaw Boomhower to the Cincinnati Cyclones...The Cincinnati Cyclones, in conjunction with the ECHL, announced that goaltender Ukko-Pekka Luukkonen has been named the recipient of the Warrior Hockey / ECHL Goaltender of the Month for November. The rookie sensation posted a record of 6-2-1-0 along with a 1.88 goals-against average and a .925 save percentage.

Amerks Top 10 Takeaways From November

Amerks.com

By: Suzie Cool

Dec. 3, 2019

The month of November has come and gone, which means another 10 games to mark off of the calendar for the Rochester Americans this season. At the close of October, the Amerks seemed much more comfortable in their second month of play, combining for eight wins, two shutouts, four recalls to Buffalo and ending November on a 10-game point streak. Here are your top 10 takeaways from the Amerks second month of regular season play here in 2019-20.

1. Taylor Is Back In Town

On Nov. 25, Amerks head coach Chris Taylor made his way back to the Flower City after his abrupt call-up to Buffalo just three days before Opening Night at The Blue Cross Arena.

After countless nights of double-duty pulled, time away from his family and countless drives up and down the I-90, Taylor is now more than ready to be back in Rochester and to finally embrace taking on his third season as the Amerks head coach.

Coming in amidst a five-game win streak, Taylor's first game back behind the bench was this past Friday as the Amerks took on the North Division rival Toronto Marlies. Although Rochester lost in overtime, Taylor's team still took home a point for their ninth straight game. On Saturday, the Amerks would head on the road to face-off against the Cleveland Monsters, where an Andrew Oglevie hat trick would lift Rochester to another win to close out the month of November.

2. Hats Off For Oglevie

After an injury-riddled rookie season limited him to just 28 games, Andrew Oglevie has certainly made up for lost time in his second season with the Amerks.

In just two months' time, Oglevie has already surpassed his goal (5), assist (5) and point (10) total from last season and now paces the Amerks with nine goals and 16 points while tied for third in assists. Oglevie, who's one of just three skaters to appear in all 20 games this season, enters the month of December riding a career-long seven-game point streak, including goals in five of six games over that span.

His best performance came this past Saturday when he recorded his first pro hat trick by scoring all three goals in Rochester's 3-2 road win at Cleveland. The second-year pro scored once in each period while single-handedly outscoring the Monsters. He's also netted the game-winning goal in three of his last six appearances.

3. No Regulation Losses

The Amerks have not seen a regulation loss since the month of October, having taken eight of their 10 tilts in November in winning fashion.

Rochester started off the month with back-to-back wins between the Binghamton Devils and Utica Comets. After almost a week of rest, the Devils would make their way back to The Blue Cross Arena on Nov. 8 when they would hand the Amerks their second shootout loss of the year. From then on, Rochester went on a five-game win streak from Nov. 13 to Nov. 23.

Upon the arrival of Taylor coming back to town, the Marlies made their way back to Rochester as well for the first time since the 2018-19 Calder Cup Playoffs. In the first of six matchups between the two clubs, the Marlies handed the Amerks their second loss of the month in overtime action.

Closing out November, Rochester headed to Rocket Mortgage Fieldhouse where they took on the Monsters for the final showdown of the month. The Amerks headed back home happy with their eighth win, ending the month on a 10-game point streak.

4. Amerks 10-Game Point Streak

November saw a number of extended streaks ranging from individual performances to team accolades. Put those altogether and the Amerks picked up a point in each of their 10 games in November with an 8-0-1-1 overall record, the second-best mark in the league over that span behind only the Milwaukee Admirals.

If Rochester can add another point on Wednesday against the Marlies, the Amerks will push their point streak to 11 games, their first since Oct. 12 to Nov. 10 during the 2009-10 season. In each of the last three seasons, Rochester has posted three different 10-game point streaks, with two of the three coming prior to the Christmas break.

5. Five Straight Wins

Speaking of streaks, between Nov. 13 and Nov. 23, Rochester posted a season-long five-game win streak.

After posting points in their first three contests of the month between two wins and a shootout loss, the Amerks went on to defeat the Syracuse Crunch, Cleveland Monsters, Utica Comets, Hartford Wolf Pack and Binghamton Devils one by one. Three of the five contests took place right here at The Blue Cross Arena, and just one of the contests over this span saw overtime action.

The Amerks win streak was put to a stop when the Marlies made their way into town for the first regular season matchup between the two clubs this past Friday night.

6. Battle For The Top Spot

Luckily for Rochester, redemption against Toronto comes as soon as the first face-off of the brand-new calendar month.

On Wednesday, the Marlies make a return trip into town for the second of six regular season matchups. Rochester enters the week just three points behind Toronto for the top spot in the AHL's North Division standings.

7. Road Success

So far this season, the Amerks have had 10 road contests and are sporting a 7-2-1-0 record when away from home ice.

While notching points in each of their 10 games in the month of November, the Amerks didn't spend much time away from home. With just four games spent on the road for Rochester last month, each game ended in winning fashion for the red, white and blue.

On Nov. 2, the Amerks got redemption in Utica, notching their first shutout of the 2019-20 season. A week later, Rochester found themselves back against the Comets, outscoring the opposition 4-3 without having to outshoot them for just the second time this season.

Following Military Appreciation Night, the Amerks made their way to Floyd L. Maines Veterans Memorial Arena to face-off against the Devils for the third time of the month on Saturday, Nov. 23. And for the third time in November, Rochester walked away with points against Binghamton, recording their second regulation win over New Jersey's affiliate.

The Amerks final road win of the month came just this past Saturday against the Cleveland Monsters. Andrew Oglevie helped lift his team to a 3-2 victory over the Monsters with his first professional hat trick.

8. Addition Of Gilmour

What's better than having the reigning Eddie Shore Award winner and two-time AHL All-Star leading your defense? Having two of the AHL's top three point-producing defensemen from last season on the same blueline.

After being reassigned by the Sabres on Nov. 23, defenseman John Gilmour made an immediate impact on the scoresheet in his Amerks debut against the Devils, earning the secondary assist on Eric Cornel's game-winning goal.

Last season, Gilmour led the Harford Wolf Pack with a career-high 34 assists and 54 points in 70 games. Gilmour's 54 points were four better than Redmond's while Zach Redmond led all AHL blueliners with a franchise-record 21 goals.

9. Finding Comfort In The Crease

Along with a 10-game point streak came a comfort level that all the players on Rochester's roster could get behind – more specifically, the Amerks backstops.

Andrew Hammond posted his best month of the season thus far, going 4-0-1 with four straight wins to open the month, including a pair of shutouts. The veteran netminder finished the month with a 1.59 goals-against average and a .943 save percentage.

Alternatively, goaltender Jonas Johansson (6-2-2) pushed his win streak to four games as of this past Saturday night against Cleveland, as he made 24 saves while also earning his career-best sixth win of the season for Rochester.

10. Buffalo Came Calling

Injuries are bound to happen throughout a season, and the Buffalo Sabres seemed to be hit hard in the month of November. In turn, the organization was forced to bring up four forwards from the Amerks during their time of need.

Rasmus Asplund, Jean-Sebastien Dea, Curtis Lazar and Tage Thompson all got the call-up to the show last month. Asplund made his National Hockey League debut on Nov. 16 against the Ottawa Senators and notched his first NHL point with an assist against the Calgary Flames. In the same game as Asplund's first NHL point, Dea got his first nod in the blue and gold.

Over his last 27 games as an Amerk dating back to last season, Thompson, who's currently out injured, has totaled 23 points (14+9), making it no question as to why he would be the first of many mainstay recalls for the Sabres.

Lazar finally made his way back to the show mid-November, debuting for Buffalo against the Carolina Hurricanes. Lazar would go on to score his first goal a Sabre – and first since Feb. 15 of the 2017-18 season as a member of the Calgary Flames – in Buffalo's 5-4 overtime loss to Carolina.

Sabres assign Curtis Lazar to the Amerks
Buffalo News
By: Staff Report
Dec. 3, 2019

The Sabres have assigned forward Curtis Lazar to the Rochester Americans of the AHL, the team announced Tuesday.

Lazar had been with the Sabres since mid-November and has been a healthy scratch in the last three games after playing in five games since his recall.

He has a goal in six NHL games this season. He has nine points (four goals, five assists) in 11 AHL games.

Sabres' Rasmus Asplund thrilled to score first goal with parents watching
Buffalo Hockey Beat
By: Bill Hoppe
Dec. 3, 2019

After the Sabres recalled center Rasmus Asplund last month, his parents traveled from Sweden to catch some of his first NHL games.

For about a week, they watched their son, one of the Sabres' top prospects, grow more and more comfortable.

Asplund recorded his first NHL point, a short-handed assist, Wednesday. He nearly scored on a penalty shot Friday.

"I knew it was close," Asplund said of his first NHL goal.

But his parents planned to leave town following Monday's game against the New Jersey Devils.

"It was my last chance to score with them in the stands," said Asplund, who one-timed Casey Mittelstadt's pass in from high in the left circle 19:02 into the game.

Naturally, watching their son score in the Sabres' entertaining 7-1 win made his parents emotional.

"This is big, like we're living in a dream," Asplund said following his 10th NHL game. "I think none of us have realized how big this is and how much work we put in to get to this point."

In other news, Sabres forward Evan Rodrigues, out the last five games with a lower-body injury, practiced this morning inside KeyBank Center.

Rodrigues said he would like to return from his "little tweak" Thursday against the Calgary Flames, the start of a three-game road trip.

Following a slow start, Rodrigues was starting to find a groove before leaving the Sabres' 5-2 road win over the Florida Panthers on Nov. 24.

"I felt like I had my feet back under me, I was using my speed a lot, handling the puck," Rodrigues said. "I just have a lot of confidence. Obviously, it wasn't great timing, but it healed up pretty quick, which was nice, better than thought."

At the end of today's practice, the Zamboni doors opened and someone wearing a Buffalo Bills helmet and sandals drove a snowmobile on the ice.

It was Sabres defenseman Zach Bogosian, who presented the machine to assistant equipment manager George Babcock on behalf of the players for his 2,000th NHL game.

Sabres logos and "2,000" adorn the side.

After running out to hug the players and posing for a picture, Babcock took the machine for a spin on the ice.

Bogosian had a maintenance day from practice.

Amerks to host 'Star Wars Night' Saturday at the Blue Cross Arena
Rochester First
By: Staff Report
Dec. 2, 2019

The Rochester Americans announced Monday that the team will host Star Wars Night on Saturday December 7 when they host the defending Calder Cup Champion Charlotte Checkers at the Blue Cross Arena.

As part of the event, The Amerks players will wear special edition Star Wars-themed jerseys, along with matching socks. Those jerseys will be available for purchase through an in-game silent auction. Following the game, winners of the auction will be able to take to the ice to be presented with jerseys "off the backs" of Amerks players. A portion of silent auction proceeds will benefit Golisano Children's Hospital. No word yet on if Baby Yoda will be making an appearance.

Additionally, after Saturday's game, Amerks players will be stopping by The Distillery on Mount Hope Avenue for the team's first official post-game party of the seasons in which fans are invited to attend.

The Amerks are coming off a split weekend, with an overtime loss to the Toronto Marlies and a 3-2 road win against the Cleveland Monsters. The team is currently in second place in the North Division and tied for fourth in the whole league with 30 points.