



ROCHESTER AMERICANS

DAILY PRESS CLIPS

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TONIGHT'S GAME: Belleville vs. Rochester

Lawrence Pilut could have opportunity to stick with Sabres
Buffalo Hockey Beat
By: Bill Hoppe
Jan. 7, 2020

Before the Sabres departed for Sweden in early November, they recalled defenseman Lawrence Pilut from the Rochester Americans for some insurance.

While Pilut, 24, did not play overseas, he practiced, giving Sabres coach Ralph Krueger an opportunity to watch the slick prospect up close for the first time.

Despite missing all of training camp as he recovered from offseason shoulder surgery, Pilut, who was recalled Tuesday, had made a positive early impression on Krueger.

The Swede, of course, was still around the team — “He left a really good mark in the way he was as a person,” Krueger said — he just couldn’t practice.

So spending a week around the 5-foot-11, 194-pound Pilut in Sweden allowed Krueger to learn more about the youngster’s on-ice talents.

“I was able to see firsthand what he’s capable of and where his abilities are,” Krueger said following Tuesday’s practice inside KeyBank Center. “So the first part was the person, second part was the hockey player.”

The Sabres summoned Pilut because an upper-body injury will sideline defenseman Jake McCabe for Thursday’s road game against the St. Louis Blues.

Pilut, one of the Sabres’ top prospects, was expected to earn a trip to Buffalo sooner or later.

“He’s gone down and played really, really well,” Krueger said. “We’re getting good reports back to us.”

Pilut played 33 NHL games as a rookie last season. Following a standout campaign with the Amerks in 2018-19, he has ranked among the AHL’s most dynamic defensemen again, scoring five goals and 21 points in 29 games.

He just earned his second straight selection to the AHL All-Star Classic.

“He’s got that foot speed and the hunger to close gaps and to play aggressively all over the ice while adding a really good first pass,” Krueger said. “He adds nicely to the offense.”

But Pilut said he started slowly after making his season debut Oct. 18.

“It took a couple games to just find the flow again,” he said. “Once you find it just never let go of it.”

He added: “I’ve been getting into my game and getting into my groove more and more. Lately I’ve been playing a pretty good game.”

He dazzled and played one of his best games Dec. 27, a rousing 4-3 victory against the Belleville Senators. After tying the contest late, he set up winger Taylor Leier's game-winning goal with two seconds left in the third period.

Pilut's 15 assists rank second on the Amerks. His point total trails only center Jean-Sebastien Dea. He has recorded three goals and eight points in his last nine outings.

After five seasons in the Swedish Hockey League — he was named the circuit's top defenseman two years ago — Pilut quickly morphed into an AHL star last year, compiling a whopping 22 points in his first 15 games.

By early December 2018, he had forced the Sabres to give him a look. His impact, however, was minimal, and they sent him down in late February.

Pilut said the NHL taught him he must "keep being fresh."

"Make sure you come out with a lot of energy, just keep that mind fresh all the time, that's a big thing," he said. "I think that's what I worked on a lot. I think I'm ready for that."

Pilut, who practiced beside Brandon Montour on Tuesday, said his consistency has grown this season.

"(I'm) trying to play at a high level all the time and just try to focus on my D-zone play all the time," he said. "I think that's been a big part of me so far. I think I can just keep going on that and keep developing also the offensive skill I have."

Pilut will need to utilize his array of skills against the powerhouse Blues, the defending Stanley Cup champion.

"It would be really exciting," he said of facing the Blues. "I feel like I'll be ready when the opportunity's there."

An opportunity could materialize soon. The Sabres have had a crowded blue line all season. But trading Marco Scandella to the Montreal Canadiens on Thursday might've created a new spot.

If Pilut performs well, he could stick around.

Practices in Sweden allowed Lawrence Pilut to leave impression on Sabres
Buffalo News
By: Mike Harrington
Jan. 7, 2020

Lawrence Pilut got to make the trip with the Buffalo Sabres to Sweden in November and was there simply as insurance. Marco Scandella was hurt and the Sabres needed to have an extra defenseman.

Pilut didn't dress for either loss in his home country against the Tampa Bay Lightning but it was an important trip for him. After offseason shoulder surgery kept Pilut out of training camp, the Sweden trip was new coach Ralph Krueger's first chance to see Pilut on the ice.

Pilut made the right impression on Krueger. With Jake McCabe sidelined due to an upper-body injury, Pilut got the call from Rochester on Tuesday and his NHL debut for this season could come Thursday night, when the Sabres play the defending champion St. Louis Blues in Enterprise Center.

"It was really good that he was with us for that length of time, especially after all the things I heard about his ability," Krueger said Tuesday when asked about the week in Sweden. "You can even see today in practice he's got that footspeed, the hunger to close gaps and play aggressively all over the ice while adding a really good first pass. He adds nicely to the offense.

"The Sweden trip gave us that opportunity to spend all that time with him and for him also to feel comfortable in this environment and with this group. So let's see how the next step goes."

Pilut, 24, is having an All-Star season in Rochester. He ranks third on the Amerks and is tied for 12th in scoring among AHL blueliners with 21 points in 29 games (five goals, 16 assists). He has 16 points over his last 21 games, including a season-high four-game point streak.

How happy was Pilut to be at KeyBank Center on Tuesday morning? He was the first player on the ice and he was still smiling in the dressing room when it was over an hour later.

"I think I had a pretty slow start to the season, but otherwise I think I've been getting into my game and getting into a groove more and more," Pilut said. "Lately I've been playing a pretty good game. ... I'm happy to be named to the all-star game. I couldn't do it without the guys down there and everything around the organization, very professional and all the guys around have been pushing me."

Krueger said he was impressed with Pilut during their conversations in training camp, when the defenseman was limited to off-ice work. And his curiosity was piqued during the summer by constant inquiries about Pilut's status.

"Pretty well everybody I knew that managed any team in Europe was checking whether he was available to play over there. That was positive," Krueger said. "He left quite a mark last year. People were checking if he was part of the plans or is he available to be an import in Europe. I just kept telling everybody, 'No, he's not available to be an import in Europe as far as I know.' We're pleased to have him in the organization and we're excited for what he can potentially bring us over time."

Pilut gives the Sabres another option as a puck-carrying defenseman, either by moving the puck himself or with a strong pass out of the defensive zone. And he can certainly chip in on the second power-play unit as well.

Pilot had one goal, five assists and a minus-8 rating in 33 games for Buffalo last year, averaging 17:25 per game and compiling a strong 53.3 Corsi rating at even strength. That was the best on the team among skaters who played in at least 30 games.

The buzz in the organization is that the 5-foot-11-inch, 194-pound Pilot has taken bigger steps in his game this year in Rochester.

"He makes passes that some guys would have to use the boards or the glass a lot. He doesn't panic under pressure and he's doing a lot better defensively," Amerks coach Chris Taylor told reporters last week in Rochester. "His game's growing, he's learning how to use his body compared to a guy that weighs 230 pounds. With the height on him, he's understanding how to maintain his stance and box out guys as much as possible. He's really good at using his stick, so he doesn't need to use his body as much."

"I've just been working on that consistency, trying to play at a high level all the time and just try to focus on my D-zone play all the time," Pilot said. "I think that's been a big part of me so far. I think I can just keep going on that and keep developing."

Pilot knows he'll face a supreme test Thursday against a St. Louis team that has seven straight wins at home over Buffalo and has not lost to the Sabres in the Arch City since Dec. 27, 2009.

"It would be really exciting. I feel like I'll be ready when the opportunity's there," he said. "When it comes, I'll go out and just be me out there. Make sure you come out with a lot of energy. Just keep that mind fresh all the time, that's a big thing. I think that's what I worked on a lot. I think I'm ready for that."

Amerks fall again to Binghamton in SO
C&C Worldwide
By: Staff Report
Jan. 7, 2020

The Rochester Americans (21-9-2-3) overcame a pair of one-goal deficits and forced overtime against the Binghamton Devils (14-17-4-0) before coming up short in the shootout by a 4-3 score Wednesday at the Blue Cross Arena.

Despite the shootout loss, the Amerks are sporting a 16-6-1-2 record over their last 25 games dating back to Nov. 1, earning points in 19 games over that span, and remain atop the AHL's North Division standings. Additionally, Rochester has picked up points in 24 of the last 32 contests overall, going 19-8-2-3, while also earning 47 out of a possible 70 points through its first 35 contests of the season.

Zach Redmond registered his fifth multi-point game of the season with a two-assist effort. Forward Casey Mittelstadt scored his third goal in as many games, giving him five points (3+2) over his last six outings, while Eric Cornel tallied his seventh marker of the season. Andrew MacWilliam rounded the scoring for the Amerks, who have points in 21 of their last 27 contests against Binghamton dating to the start of the 2017-18 campaign while producing a 15-6-3-3 record.

Goaltender Jonas Johansson (11-2-3), who entered the contest riding a nine-game win streak, made 27 saves in addition to stopping one of two shooters he faced in the shootout, but suffered the loss.

Nick Merkley, Brandon Baddock and Brandon Gignac all scored in regulation for Binghamton, while forward Mikhail Maltsev capped off the shootout win. Netminder Gilles Senn improved to 6-5-2 on the slate as he made 26 saves before denying all three Rochester shooters in the skills competition.

With the game even at 2-2 after 40 minutes of play, the Devils reclaimed the lead at the 9:16 mark as Baddock fired a shot past the glove of Johansson for his fourth of the season. The lead would be short-lived, however, as Rochester countered less than two minutes later.

Following a face-off win by Sean Malone inside the Binghamton zone, Redmond and Jacob Bryson exchanged passes before the latter fired a shot towards Senn. As the puck caromed its way to the net, Cornel steered it into the cage to even the game at 3-3 with 9:01 left in regulation.

As the third-period clock sounded, the game remained tied and the North Division rivals headed to overtime. The two teams traded chances in the extra stanza, but the shootout was needed to determine a winner as both netminders combined for seven saves, including Johansson stonewalling Binghamton's Joey Anderson on a penalty shot opportunity with 1:39 remaining in overtime.

"I think 'J.J.' played pretty well tonight," said Amerks head coach Chris Taylor. "They didn't get a lot of great scoring chances, but when they did he came up big, especially on the penalty shot. He gave us a chance to win, but as a group we have to be better."

Rochester elected to shoot first in the skills competition. Senn denied Mittelstadt, C.J. Smith and Jean-Sebastien Dea while Maltsev sealed the win in the second-round.

The two teams opened the scoring in the first period as both Merkley and Mittelstadt capitalized on their respective team's first power-play opportunity of the contest and the clubs went into the break even at one.

"Anytime you can get rewarded by getting points and scoring goals, it certainly is a good feeling," said Mittelstadt, who pushed his goal-scoring streak to three games. "In my first few games, I was getting the chances, but they just weren't going in. Normally, if you keep getting those chances eventually they will go in and that has been the case lately."

During the second stanza, after successfully killing off a 5-on-3 for nearly a full two minutes, the Amerks took their first lead of the night at the 11:18 mark as MacWilliam blasted a shot from the left point from Will Borgen and Dalton Smith.

"Mugsy' did a good job winning the face-off before 'Smitty' bumped it back," described MacWilliam on his first goal of slate. "I had a bunch of time and 'Mugsy' provided a good screen. It was a full effort by everyone that was on the ice and I am just glad it went in."

"It felt good to knock off the rust, a lot of rust," MacWilliam joked.

The Rochester lead was short-lived as Gignac responded to tie the game nearly four minutes later, setting up the final period of regulation.

Binghamton added its third goal of the night with 10:44 left in the third period only to have Cornel even the score and force overtime and the shootout.

The Amerks were unable to beat Senn on three attempts and would fall for the fourth time in five games.

"It's part of the season," said Taylor. "Every team goes through it and we have to step it up a notch."

**NOTES* — The Amerks remain at home on Friday when they play host to the Belleville Senators at 7:05 pm. . . Jean-Sebastien Dea leads the team in both goals (11) and points (25) in 33 games this season. Dea, who also leads all Amerks forwards with 67 shots on goal, has 8 points (2+6) in his last 10 games. . . Anchored by the elite goaltending tandem of veteran Andrew Hammond and third-year pro Jonas Johansson, the Amerks own the top defense in AHL, allowing only 82 goals through the first 32 games of the season, the fewest in the AHL coming into the first week of 2020.

Listless Amerks lose (again) to Binghamton
Pickin' Splinters
By: Kevin Oklobzija
Jan. 7, 2020

Casey Mittelstadt has regained his scoring touch, so the Rochester Americans can feel good about that.

Sent down by the Buffalo Sabres after scoring just one goal in 22 games, the second-year centerman has goals in three straight with the Amerks, including one Wednesday night.

And that's pretty much the end of the positives from a 4-3 shootout loss to the Binghamton Devils at Blue Cross Arena at the War Memorial.

All-Star goalie Jonas Johansson gave up one not-so-great goal to start the game, a giveaway by former All-Star defenseman Zach Redmond deep in the Amerks zone led to Binghamton's third goal, and the Amerks managed to fire just 26 shots on goal.

Not a good night for a team that had been rolling along atop the American Hockey League's North Division but now can't win with any sort of consistency.

Over the past nine games, the Amerks are 3-5-0-1, with three of those losses to the Devils. Despite the stumble, they're still a point ahead of second-place Utica. For the season, Rochester is 21-9-2-3 but just 3-2-0-2 against Binghamton (14-17-4-0).

"Right now they're playing exactly how we want to be playing," Redmond said. "They're playing predictable hockey, they're finishing checks and making it hard on defensemen. When we were putting those wins together, that's what we were doing."

If there's any bit of good news it's that they won't play the Devils again until Feb. 1. That's after playing four times in three weeks.

"For whatever reason, they've played us well the last couple years," Redmond said. "We play them enough times, we need to figure it out."

One obvious problem: The Devils have a size advantage, and they use it. They were intent on playing the body every chance they had on Wednesday.

"They come hard, they're a bigger team than us," Amerks coach Chris Taylor said.

The Devils play-the-body style didn't lead to penalties, however. The Amerks had just two power plays, with Mittelstadt capitalizing on the second.

In a 5-2 loss at Toronto on Saturday, they didn't even have a power play. To Taylor, that means they weren't working hard enough.

"We have to create our own calls," he said. "It just shows where we are as a team. We have to be better in dirty areas. We have to make them haul us down."

The Amerks' recent mediocre play isn't reason for panic, but Taylor said it must be corrected.

"As a group we've all got to be better," he said. "We all (as teams) go through it. These guys (Binghamton) went through it for two months. We've gone through it for five games."

Amerks fall to Binghamton in a shootout

13 WHAM

By: Staff Report

Jan. 7, 2020

The Rochester Americans (21-9-2-3) overcame a pair of one-goal deficits and forced overtime against the Binghamton Devils (14-17-4-0) before coming up short in the shootout by a 4-3 score Wednesday at The Blue Cross Arena.

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"It's part of the season," said Taylor. "Every team goes through it and we have to step it up a notch."

Pilot hopes to improve his consistency

WGR 550

By: Paul Hamilton

Jan. 7, 2020

Lawrence Pilot was up with the Sabres when they went to Sweden, but he didn't play in a game. Jake McCabe has an upper-body injury and won't play this Thursday in St. Louis. Pilot is back with the team after being selected to the AHL All-Star Game.

Pilot had some consistency problems near the end of last season. He also thinks his game has picked up lately with the Amerks, "I think I had a slow start, but otherwise I think I've been getting into my game, and lately I've been playing a pretty good game."

The consistency he lacked then is something he's really worked at in this season, "I've just been working on it, trying to play at that high level all the time and try to focus on my [defensive] zone play, and I think that's been a big part of me so far. Plus, I want to keep developing that offensive skill I have."

Pilot was injured last season in Game 3 of the Amerks' playoff series with Toronto. He had to rehab his shoulder and missed training camp. That likely contributed to the slow start, "I needed to get back into things and sometimes it takes a little while to find the flow again."

Being injured, Pilot didn't have an opportunity to fight for a job in training camp. He really wasn't disappointed because he had other things on his mind, "I really didn't focus on that. My main focus was always just to comeback and feel good again."

McCabe is listed as day-to-day with his injury. Ralph Krueger believes he'll be back at practice on Friday. Both Jack Eichel and Kyle Okposo were given days off from the ice on Tuesday. Krueger said, "There are minor issues there where we just feel better taking three days away from any type of contact and everybody will be fine tomorrow for those two."

Michael Frolik is still dealing with visa issues and wasn't at practice. Krueger hopes that situation is winding down, "We're hoping that all goes well and that he joins us tomorrow, but we won't know that until some other issues are cleared up this afternoon. So the hope, as a coach, is you get a good day of practice with him before St. Louis."

Sabres prospect Jacob Bryson fits in with rise of 'new age defensemen'
Buffalo Hockey Beat
By: Bill Hoppe
Jan. 7, 2020

If Buffalo Sabres prospect Jacob Bryson had been born a decade or two earlier, the chances of him making pro hockey as an undersized defenseman would've been slim.

The Rochester Americans list Bryson at just 5-foot-9, making him one of the American Hockey League's smallest defensemen.

But the game has changed dramatically. When the clutch-and-grab era ended, teams started valuing skill over size, opening the door for players like Bryson.

"The way the game is evolving, shorter, kind of sub-6-foot defensemen, they're now more than ever," Amerks General Manager Randy Sexton said. "He has a lot of the ingredients it takes to play in the NHL. He's smart, he's extremely mobile, has speed and lateral mobility, agility."

Bryson, 22, has developed into a strong prospect as a rookie in Rochester this season, registering 10 assists while playing all 34 games.

"He's definitely got some top-end speed, kind of got a lot of the tools that come along with that new age defenseman," said Amerks veteran Zach Redmond, Bryson's defense partner all season.

Still, the diminutive Bryson, a London, Ont., native, can be overlooked on the Amerks' stacked blue line, which goes 10 deep.

Redmond scored a team-record 21 goals last season and won the Eddie Shore Award as the AHL's top defenseman. Newcomer John Gilmour scored 20 goals for the Hartford Wolf Pack in 2018-19. Will Borgen and Lawrence Pilut are strong prospects who have already played NHL games with Pilut getting recalled Tuesday.

Amerks coach Chris Taylor said Bryson's hockey sense — "He's smart, he's intelligent," he said — and speed stand out.

"He's always moving, he's always on the right side of the puck, he's always active in the plays, he doesn't get out of position," he said.

It wasn't that long-ago Bryson said his size "was a barrier."

"At a young age . . . some people told me I was never going to make it because I was too small," he said. "I think that gave me a little boost to be successful. I wanted to prove those people wrong. I think so far, I've done a pretty good job."

He added: "As I got older, I heard a lot of people say, 'Oh, he's too small' and, 'You're never going to make it.' "

Bryson said he let those words go "in one ear, out the other." Still, what he experienced created a chip on his shoulder.

He was never drafted in the Ontario Hockey League. Instead, he played three seasons of NCAA hockey at Providence, earning second-team All-American honors as a sophomore in 2017-18.

After getting bypassed in the 2016 NHL Draft, the Sabres grabbed him in the fourth round in 2017, 99th overall.

Bryson turned pro after last season, joining the Amerks on a tryout following the Friars' run to the Frozen Four in Buffalo. The three-year, entry-level contract he signed with the Sabres in April kicked in this season.

In Rochester, Bryson has looked comfortable, forming perhaps the Amerks' most consistent tandem beside Redmond.

"He's probably the best player I've ever played with," Bryson said of Redmond. "Just to see his accomplishments and how good of a player he is and know I'm able to play with him it's an honor. But he's taught me a lot. He's the nicest guy I've ever met."

Redmond, 31, is known for maintaining an even keel, which has rubbed off on Bryson. Sexton said Bryson has kept his confidence all season.

"It's hard as a rookie, first-year player in the American League," he said. "Granted, we have a good team. I think Zach Redmond's been phenomenal for him, (defenseman) Andrew MacWilliam, our older guys have helped him, they talk to him, they mentor him, they encourage him, they support. . . .

"Young players, oftentimes it's hard to get your confidence and it's easy to lose it. So what I've been most pleased of, even when he doesn't have a particularly good game, he bounces back the next game, he plays well. So he's able to maintain his confidence."

Bryson has confidence undersized defensemen — he mentioned the Boston Bruins' Torey Krug and Colorado Avalanche's Samuel Girard — can play in the NHL.

"If you're able to play defense just like everyone else is," Bryson said, "there's no reason that a small guy can't play in the NHL."

With Jake McCabe injured, Sabres call up Lawrence Pilut from Rochester
Buffalo News
By: Mike Harrington
Jan. 7, 2020

The Buffalo Sabres have called up defenseman Lawrence Pilut from the Rochester Americans to take the spot of defenseman Jake McCabe, who is dealing with an upper-body injury and will not travel to St. Louis for Thursday's game against the Blues. He is listed as day to day.

The team also announced Jack Eichel and Kyle Okposo, both of whom were struck by high sticks during Saturday's game against Florida, were taking maintenance days and that newly acquired Michael Frolik has not yet joined the team due to immigration issues.

After practice Tuesday in KeyBank Center, coach Ralph Krueger said Eichel and Okposo will return to the team at practice on Wednesday and that he expects McCabe back on the ice Friday. The team is hopeful that Frolik's visa situation will allow him to practice Wednesday, and that would mean he would be in the lineup on Thursday.

Pilut, 24, ranks third on the Amerks and tied for 12th in scoring among AHL blueliners with 21 points (5 goals, 16 assists) in 29 games. He has 16 points over his last 21 games, including a season-high four-game point streak, and was named to the AHL All-Star Game.

Pilut played 33 games for the Sabres last year with one goal and five assists. He had four goals and 22 assists in 30 games for Rochester and was named to the AHL All-Star Game but didn't participate due to the recall to Buffalo.

Sabres recall Lawrence Pilut from Amerks
Buffalo Hockey
By: Bill Hoppe
Jan. 7, 2020

The Sabres recalled defenseman Lawrence Pilut from the Rochester Americans this morning.

Pilut, 24, has enjoyed a strong season with the Amerks, scoring five goals and 21 points in 29 games. His .87 points per game ranks first among AHL defensemen with at least five games played.

The Swede recently earned his second straight selection to the AHL All-Star Classic.

Pilut spent much of his rookie season with the Sabres in 2018-19, compiling one goal and six points in 33 games.

Lawrence Pilut returns to Sabres roster, recalled from Amerks
Buffalo News
By: Megan Erbacher
Jan. 7, 2020

The Buffalo Sabres recalled defenseman Lawrence Pilut from the Rochester Americans on Tuesday.

The 24-year-old Swedish blueliner is making his first appearance with the Sabres this season. Pilut missed training camp before the start of the season due to an offseason shoulder surgery.

In 29 games in the AHL this season, Pilut has tallied five goals and 16 assists. He was named to the AHL All-Star Game last week.

Pilut last played for the Sabres in the 2018-2019 season. He had six points in 33 games.

Remi Elie scores OT winner for Amerks; Casey Mittelstadt also scores
Buffalo News
By: Lance Lysowski
Jan. 3, 2020

Remi Elie scored at 1:01 of overtime and Casey Mittelstadt scored short-handed for his first goal as a Rochester American on Friday night in a 4-3 victory over the Belleville Senators in Ontario.

The win for the Amerks (21-8-2-2) plus losses by Utica (20-11-2-2) and Toronto (19-11-2-1) gave them a two-point lead over the second-place Comets and a three-point advantage over the third place Marlies in the North Division of the American Hockey League.

A former No. 1 pick of the Buffalo Sabres, Mittelstadt got his first minor league goal when he scored unassisted with 1:32 left in the second period to give the Amerks a 3-2 lead. However, Drake Batherson of the Senators tied it with his 13th of the season at 13:25 of the third period.

Mittelstadt, who had two assists and 13 shots on goal in his first six games with Rochester, put a season-high six on the net in Friday's game.

Sean Malone scored his seventh of the season at 1:59 of the second to tie the game for Rochester. Belleville went back in front on Alex Formenton's 14th before Jean-Sebastien Dea tied it again at 12:05.

Belleville struck first on Josh Norris' 17th of the season in the opening period.

Elie's winner was his third goal of the season.

Jonas Johansson had 19 saves in goal for Rochester. Joey Daccord needed 34 stops for Belleville.

Rochester will play at Toronto in a 4 p.m. game on Saturday in the Coca-Cola Coliseum in Toronto.

Sabres recall forward Scott Wilson from Rochester
Buffalo News
By: Lance Lysowski
Jan. 3, 2020

With newly-acquired forward Michael Frolik not expected to arrive in Buffalo until early next week and Victor Olofsson out five-to-six weeks, the Sabres recalled Scott Wilson from the Rochester Americans on Friday morning.

Wilson, a 27-year-old winger, had six goals among 14 points in 22 games with the Amerks, and he missed time this season because of injury. The Sabres were down to 12 active forwards before Victor Olofsson suffered a lower-body injury in the third period of their 3-2 overtime win over the Edmonton Oilers on Thursday night.

Wilson has 187 regular-season games of National Hockey League experience, most recently appearing in 15 games with the Sabres last season. He has 19 goals among 49 regular-season points in his career and appeared in 20 games during the Pittsburgh Penguins' run to the Stanley Cup in 2016-17.

The Sabres acquired Wilson from the Detroit Red Wings in December 2017 for a fifth-round draft pick. Injuries have prevented him from securing a full-time spot on Buffalo's roster. He appeared in only 32 games between the Sabres and Amerks last season, totaling three assists in 15 games with Buffalo. Wilson is a pending unrestricted free agent with a \$1.05 million salary cap hit.

Sabres notes: Scott Wilson rewarded for strong start with Amerks
Buffalo Hockey Beat
By: Bill Hoppe
Jan. 5, 2020

After winger Scott Wilson broke his right ankle in training camp last season and missed the first three months, he spent five weeks in the minors.

While Wilson, 27, made it back to the NHL — he played 15 late-season games with the Sabres — his recovery was far from over.

“Really dealing with that ankle was a full-year thing for me,” said Wilson, who was injured Sept. 30, 2018.

So when the Sabres waived Wilson before the season and sent him to the Rochester Americans, they gave him what coach Ralph Krueger called a “to-do list.”

“Just being aggressive,” Wilson said he was told by the Sabres. “They know, too, when you’re coming back from injuries, it’s kind of second nature to hold back (in) some areas of the ice. The last few weeks I really focused on being physical, being aggressive, getting in on the forecheck.

“And not only do I do that down there, but it’s my major role up here.”

The Sabres summoned Wilson on Friday after rookie winger Victor Olofsson suffered a lower-body injury in Thursday’s 3-2 overtime win against the Edmonton Oilers.

Wilson, who has played 65 games with the Sabres, mostly skated beside center Curtis Lazar and a few other wingers in Saturday afternoon’s game against the Florida Panthers inside KeyBank Center.

Krueger said “an acceptance of the kind of player he needs to be for us” helped Wilson earn his first recall this season.

“He’s fulfilled that ask out of training camp,” he said.

He added: “He’s checked all the boxes on the asks from training camp and very deservedly has a shot here back up with us.”

With Olofsson out five to six weeks and winger Jeff Skinner (upper body) sidelined another two or three weeks, Wilson could have a chance to stay in the lineup.

Wilson, a regular on the Pittsburgh Penguins’ 2017 Stanley Cup team, tried to seize the extra minutes and opportunities he received with the Amerks.

“I obviously feel a lot better playing a lot and put in tons of situations down there,” said Wilson, who scored six goals and 14 points in 22 games with the Amerks. “I’m thankful for the management and coaches to put me through that.”

Wilson has been hurt twice this season, missing 10 games.

"You can kind of go sideways and feel sorry for yourself. At the same time, I think I've learned that everybody goes through that stuff. At this point now, I'm just happy and ready to go."

Notes: Rookie winger Rasmus Asplund subbed for Olofsson on Saturday beside center Jack Eichel and Sam Reinhart. . . . The Sabres have beaten the Panthers three straight meetings for the first time since 2011. . . . The Sabres dressed 11 forwards and seven defensemen. . . . The Sabres scratched forward Evan Rodrigues for the third straight game.

Amerks close road trip w with loss
C&C Worldw ide
By: Staff Report
Jan. 4, 2020

The Rochester Americans (21-9-2-2) fought their way back from a 2-0 first-period deficit, but a three-goal run by the Toronto Marlies (19 -11-2-1) during the final frame proved to be the difference as the Amerks came out on the short end of a 5-2 loss to close out their four-game road swing Saturday afternoon at Coca-Cola Coliseum.

It was Rochester's first trip back to Toronto since Game 3 of the 2019 Calder Cup Playoffs.

Despite loss, the Amerks are sporting a 16-6-1-1 record over their last 23 games dating back to Nov. 1, earning points in 18 games over that span, and remain atop the AHL's North Division standings. Additionally, Rochester has picked up points in 23 of the last 31 contests overall, going 19-8-2-2, while also earning 46 out of a possible 68 points through its first 34 contests of the season.

Casey Mittelstadt (1+0) scored his second goal in as many nights, giving him four points (2+2) over his last five outings. Andrew MacWilliam and Jean-Sebastian Dea each notched an assist on Mittelstadt's first-period goal. Lawrence Pilut (1+0) picked up his fifth goal of the season, while captain Kevin Porter (0+1) added the lone assist on the marker. Andrew Hammond (10-7-2) stopped 22 of the 27 shots he faced in the crease.

Kalle Kossila (2+1) and Pontus Aberg (1+1) both notched a multi-point effort while scoring over half the Marlies goals on the night. Kenny Agostino (1+0) and Egor Korshkov (1+0) both contributed to the scoresheet with a goal apiece. Kasimir Kaskisuo (11-4-2) made the start in the net for Toronto and made 30 saves on 32 shots that he faced.

Trailing 2-1 heading into the second period, Rochester kept pressing to tie the game before Porter won a face-off back to Pilut midway through the frame. As the Swedish blueliner received the puck, he stepped to the center of the Marlies zone and snapped in his fifth goal of the season with 9:17 remaining to even the contest at 2-2.

Toronto took control in the third, scoring three times in a span of 3:20 to jump out to a 5-2 lead.

The Marlies got on the board twice before the Amerks found their way past Kaskisuo during the first frame. Kossila notched his first of the game at the 12:36 mark before Agostino knocked in his 18th of the season not even three minutes later.

Rochester trimmed the deficit in half in the final minutes of the first when Hammond sent a long stretch pass to Dea from deep in the Amerks zone. As Dea entered the offensive zone, he left a drop pass to MacWilliam, who had his initial offering blocked. Mittelstadt swooped in to pick up the loose puck before flipping in his second goal in as many nights for the Amerks first goal of the contest.

**NOTES* — The Amerks are back on home ice for a pair of North Division matchups beginning on Wednesday, Jan. 8 as they take on the Binghamton Devils before playing host to a return visit from the Belleville Senators on Friday, Jan. 10. . . Defenseman Lawrence Pilut and goaltender Jonas Johansson have been named to the North Division All-Star roster. The Swedish duo also will be joined by Amerks head coach, Chris Taylor, who clinched the honor of coaching the North Division squad earlier this week. . . Jean-Sebastien Dea leads the team in both goals (11) and points (23) in 31 games this season.

Amerks end losing streak with OT win
C&C Worldwide
By: Staff Report
Jan. 4, 2020

On the strength of multi-point efforts from Sean Malone and Jean-Sebastien Dea, and Remi Elie's game-winning goal 1:01 into overtime, the Rochester Americans (21-8-2-2) opened the New Year with a 4-3 victory over the Belleville Senators (19-12-0-1) at CAA Arena Friday night.

The contest, which served as the third of a four-game North Division road swing for Rochester, was the second of the six-game season series after the Amerks claimed the first meeting between the two teams by way of a 4-3 score back on Dec. 27.

With the win, the Amerks snapped their three-game road losing skid while improving to 16-5-1-1 over their last 23 games dating back to Nov. 1, earning points in 18 games over that span. By way of Rochester's win and a Utica loss Friday, the Amerks regained the top spot in the AHL's North Division standings. Additionally, Rochester has picked up points in 23 of the last 30 contests overall, going 19-7-2-2, while also earning 46 out of a possible 66 points through its first 33 contests of the season.

Malone and Dea both turned in a goal and assist effort while Casey Mittelstadt scored his first goal with Rochester during the second period and picked up his third point (1+2) over his last four games. Elie, who returned to the lineup Tuesday after missing the previous 19 games due to injury, finished off the scoring in overtime with his third marker of the campaign.

Goaltender Jonas Johansson, who was one of two Amerks named to the 2020 AHL All-Star Classic earlier today, pushed his AHL career-best record to 11-2-2 on the season as he made 19 saves. Dating back to Nov. 13, the third-year netminder boasts a perfect 9-0-0 record with two shutouts, a 1.88 goals-against average and a .940 save percentage while allowing just two goals or less in six consecutive starts over that span.

Erik Brannstrom returned to Belleville after spending the majority of December with the Ottawa Senators and turned in a two-assist outing. Josh Norris, Alex Formenton and Drake Batherson all lit the lamp for Belleville while rookie goaltender Joey Daccord (5-1-2) suffered the overtime loss.

Despite outshooting Belleville 36-22, which included a 29-10 shot advantage over the last two periods, the game required overtime as the score was knotted at three at the end of 60 minutes.

As Lawrence Pilut backpedaled out of the Senators zone with the puck early in overtime, he dished a bank-pass to Dea along the near boards. Dea flagged it down to the left of Daccord and skated across the goal-mouth before firing a shot towards the cage. After collecting the rebound, Elie banked it off the side of the netminder and in to give the Amerks a 4-3 overtime win just 61 seconds into the extra period.

The victory gives Rochester a 6-0-2-0 record in the road portion of the all-time series with Belleville. It also gives the Amerks at least one point in 10 of the first 14 meetings with the Senators dating back to the 2017-18 season.

After falling behind Belleville 1-0 at the 8:11 mark of the opening period, the Amerks tied the game just 1:59 into the middle stanza as Eric Cornel set up Malone's seventh tally of the season. It would be the first of three straight second-period tallies for Rochester.

The Senators reclaimed their one-goal lead with 11:54 to go in the second, but Rochester countered with a pair of markers to take a 3-2 lead into the third period.

Moments after Daccord turned aside Cornel on a grade-A scoring chance, Malone and Zach Redmond exchanged a give-and-go to enter the Belleville zone inside the 8:00 mark of the second. Malone fired a shot off the right pad of the netminder before Dea scooped up the rebound and slipped it inside the left goal post to even the score at 2-2 with his team-leading 11th goal of the slate.

As the middle period was nearing its end, the Amerks appeared to give Belleville an opportunity to grab the lead going into the final 20 minutes of play as they were whistled for a high-sticking infraction. Despite being down a skater, Mittelstadt lifted the stick of Senators defenseman Jordan Murray as he attempted to begin the Belleville power-play from just inside his own blueline. With the puck on his stick and defenders behind him in pursuit, Mittelstadt raced in all alone towards Daccord and roofed a backhanded shot past the diving glove of the netminder for his first goal as an Amerk.

The Amerks took the 3-2 lead into the third period, but Batherson tied the game at three with 6:35 to play to force overtime. In the extra session, Dea and Elie connected for the game-winner just 1:01 into the frame to give the Amerks the 4-3 victory.

Rochester wraps up its four-game road swing on Saturday, Jan. 4 when the Amerks make their first trip back to Coca-Cola Coliseum since Game 3 of the 2019 Calder Cup Playoffs for another go-around with the Toronto Marlies at 4 pm.

Pilot, Johansson named to All-Star team

The American Hockey League announced on Friday that Rochester Americans defenseman Lawrence Pilot and goaltender Jonas Johansson have been named to the North Division All-Star roster for the 2020 AHL All-Star Classic presented by Ontario International Airport. The annual event will take place Jan. 26-27 at Citizens Business Bank Arena in Ontario, CA., home of the Ontario Reign.

Pilot earned his second straight AHL All-Star selection after recording 20 points (4+16) in 27 games in his second season with the Amerks. Pilot, who also was named to the 2019 event but was unable to attend due to NHL recall, currently is tied for 10th among all AHL blueliners with a team-high 16 assists, and 13th in overall scoring coming into the New Year.

The Tingsryd, Sweden, native has been one of Rochester's most consistent point-getters as of late, showing 15 points (3+12) over his last 19 games dating back to Nov. 15, including a season-long 4-game point streak over that span. The former SHL Defenseman of the Year already has matched his goal total from last season in 3 fewer games and is on pace to set a career-high in points.

The 5-foot-11, 194-pound defenseman has amassed 46 points (8+38) and a plus-32 on-ice rating in 57 career games with Rochester.

Johansson earned his first AHL All-Star selection after posting a career-best 10-2-2 record with 2 shutouts in 15 games this season. He also has the second-best goal-against average in the league (2.00) and ranks second all netminders with a .933 save percentage.

Making up one half of Rochester's elite goaltending tandem, Johansson and the Amerks own the top defense in the league, having allowed only 74 goals through the first 32 games of the season, the fewest in the AHL coming into the weekend.

**NOTES* — Rochester Americans General Manager Randy Sexton announced on Friday that forward Brady Vail has been reassigned to the Cincinnati Cyclones...The Buffalo Sabres recalled forward Scott Wilson from the Rochester Americans Friday. Wilson, 27, earns his first recall of the season to Buffalo after recording 14 points (6+8) in 22 games with Rochester to begin the 2019-20 campaign. Last season, Wilson, a native of Oakville, Ontario, tallied seven points (3+4) in 17 games with the Amerks as well as three assists in 15 games for Buffalo. The 5-foot-11, 186-pound forward has collected 49 points (19+30) in 187 career NHL games with Buffalo, Detroit and Pittsburgh while also adding 129 points (50+48) in 129 AHL appearances with Rochester and Wilkes-Barre/Scranton. Wilson, who won the Stanley Cup with the Penguins in 2017, was originally drafted by Pittsburgh in the seventh round (208th overall) of the 2011 NHL Draft...Sabres rookie Victor Olofsson is out 5-6 weeks with a lower body injury.

Jim Kelly to appear at Amerks game on Jan. 24
Rochester Democrat & Chronicle
By: Zachary Memmott
Jan. 4, 2020

Former Buffalo Bills quarterback and Hall of Famer Jim Kelly will make a guest appearance for Seneca Legends Night on Friday, Jan. 24 when the Rochester Americans host the Laval Rocket at 7:05 p.m.

Kelly is scheduled to sign autographs from 5:45 p.m. to 7 p.m. in the upper concourse. He will also meet with fans throughout the night.

Kelly played 11 NFL seasons with the Bills from 1986-1996 and led them to four straight Super Bowl appearances. He was selected No. 14 overall in the 1983 NFL Draft.

He finished his career with 35,467 yards passing and 237 touchdowns, which are Buffalo franchise records. He also was named to five Pro Bowls and was named First Team All-Pro in 1991 and Second Team All-Pro twice.

For ticket prices go to the Amerks website.