

ROCHESTER AMERICANS HOCKEY CLUB

Wednesday | **April 21, 2021** | 7:05 PM ET | The Blue Cross Arena | Broadcast: ESPN Rochester, AHLTV



SYRACUSE CRUNCH

GAME NOTES

ROCHESTER AMERICANS



TONIGHT'S GAME OVERVIEW

The Rochester Americans (8-8-2-1) look to snap out of a three-game slide tonight as they open a busy stretch of three games in four nights against the intrastate rival Syracuse Crunch (12-8-1-0) at The Blue Cross Arena.

The 7:05 p.m. matchup will be the ninth of 12 meetings between the two teams this season with the Amerks boasting a 4-2-2-0 record thus far.

The North Division matchup will be carried live on The Sports Leader 95.7 FM/950 AM ESPN Rochester and AHLTV.

LAST TIME OUT

Despite opening the scoring for the third straight game against the Cleveland Monsters, the Amerks suffered a 6-3 setback in the series finale against the Monsters Saturday at The Rocket Mortgage Fieldhouse.

Forward **Remi Elie** (2+0) netted his sixth and seventh goals of the season for his second multi-goal outing of the year and is now tied for the team lead in that category. Rookie defenseman **Mattias Samuelsson** (1+1) lit the lamp for the third time this season and recorded his second multi-point contest of the year. Rookie forward **Matej Pekar** (0+2) tallied two assists on the night, giving him his first two points and multi-point outing as a pro. Defenseman **Casey Fitzgerald** (0+2) also added two assists on the night for his second multi-point game of the year.

First-year goaltender **Stefanos Lekkas** (0-2-1) made his second straight appearance in net and third with Rochester this season. The rookie netminder stopped 16 of the 21 shots he faced but suffered the loss.

The contest was the fifth of six scheduled meetings between the two teams this season and final of a three-game series. The Amerks, who are 30-11-4-4 record against the Monsters since the start of the 2011-12 season, opened the series with a 7-3 victory while Cleveland has now claimed each of the last four meetings.

POWER UP

Now 19 games into the campaign, Rochester's power-play has gone 21-for-76 with a 27.6% conversion rate that is currently third in the AHL. The Amerks' 21 goals on the man-advantage are most among all North Division teams and only six off the AHL lead behind only the San Diego Gulls and Chicago Wolves.

The Amerks have scored at least one power-play goal in 14 of their 19 games this season and have registered multiple power-play tallies in three of their last 12 outings overall, including three against Syracuse on April 3.

FINN-ISHING TOUCH

After leaving Finland in January as Liiga's top point-getter, forward **Arttu Ruotsalainen** has taken his first season in North America by storm, averaging a point per game with 13 points (5+8) through his first 13 games. The Oulu, Finland, native began the slate by recording a point in each of his first four games and now shows nine points (4+5) over his last seven outings, including goals in back-to-back games twice over that span.

After becoming the 12th different Amerks player this season to earn a recall last week, Ruotsalainen was the second to make his NHL debut when he took the ice against Washington on April 9. He later went on to score his first NHL goal two days later in Buffalo's 5-3 win over Philadelphia.

2020-21 AMERKS OVERALL SCORING & GOALTENDING LEADERS

SKATER	GP	G	A	PTS	PIM	+/-
Brett Murray	18	6	8	14	7	-3
Remi Elie	18	7	6	13	8	-1
Arttu Ruotsalainen	13	5	8	13	2	-2
J-S Dea	11	4	9	13	2	7

GOALTENDER	GP	REC	SVS	SV%	GAA
Dustin Tokarski	2	1-1-0	68	.932	2.51
Ukko-Pekka Luukkonen	14	7-5-2	389	.888	3.60
Stefanos Lekkas	3	0-2-1	69	.841	4.32
Billy Christopoulos	2	0-0-0	7	.583	9.42

2020-21 CRUNCH OVERALL SCORING & GOALTENDING LEADERS

SKATER	GP	G	A	PTS	PIM	+/-
Boris Katchouk	20	9	14	23	18	19
Otto Somppi	21	8	10	18	14	15
Taylor Raddysh	17	7	11	18	4	7
Alex Barre-Boulet	10	8	4	12	0	9

GOALTENDER	GP	REC	SVS	SV%	GAA
Christopher Gibson	2	2-0-0	62	.925	2.51
Spencer Martin	8	4-4-0	222	.910	2.76
Samuel Montembeault	11	6-4-1	294	.905	2.81

HEAD-TO-HEAD BREAKDOWN

Syracuse Crunch **Rochester Americans**

12-8-1-0 **Record** 8-8-2-1

6-5-0-0 **Home Record** 3-5-2-0

6-3-1-0 **Road Record** 5-3-0-1

7-3-0-0 **Last 10 Games** 2-5-2-1

9-3-0-0 **Record When Scoring First** 4-4-1-0

3.62 (3rd) **Goals-For Per Game** 3.21 (13th)

2.86 (7th) **Goals-Against Per Game** 4.00 (28th)

17.8% (15th) **Power-Play** 27.6% (3rd)

77.3% (23rd) **Penalty Kill** 74.1% (28th)

6-2 W vs. UTI **Last Game** 6-3 L vs. CLE

Apr. 24 vs. ROC **Next Game** Apr. 23 vs. UTI



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ROSTER MOVEMENT

Through 19 games this season, the Amerks have had 32 different players appear in at least one game, highlighted by rookie forward **Jack Quinn**, Buffalo's eighth overall pick in the 2020 NHL Draft. A total of 11 different rookies have suited up for Rochester, two of which are with the Sabres in defenseman **Mattias Samuelsson** and goaltender **Ukko-Pekka Luukkonen**. In addition to Samuelsson, 13 players have been recalled to the big club while three have made their NHL debuts (Ruotsalainen, Samuelsson and **Jacob Bryson**).

Earlier this week, the Amerks signed forward **Brandon Hawkins** to a Professional Tryout (PTO) while defenseman **Nick DeSimone** was loaned to the club from the Vegas Golden Knights (NHL).

Hawkins joins the Amerks after registering 19 goals and 12 assists for 31 points in 28 games with the Fort Wayne Komets (ECHL) to begin the 2020-21 season. The 5-foot-10, 198-pound forward currently paces all Komets skaters in both goals and points in addition to leading the ECHL with 10 power-play tallies. He also 11 games at the American Hockey League level with the Wilkes-Barre/Scranton Penguins over the previous two seasons.

A native of East Amherst, DeSimone began the 2020-21 season with the San Jose Barracuda (AHL), where he recorded five assists in 14 games while serving as an assistant captain. The 6-foot-2, 185-pound blueliner was recently acquired by the Golden Knights on April 12 in exchange for a fifth-round selection in the 2022 NHL Draft from the San Jose Sharks.

MURRAY ON THE MOVE

Coming off an impressive rookie campaign with Rochester in 2019-20, **Brett Murray** continues to be one of the Amerks' most consistent point-getters this season. With an assist last Wednesday against Cleveland, Murray officially took over the team's scoring lead with 14 points (6+8) in 18 games. More impressively, the second-year forward has not gone without a point in back-to-back games all season. Murray, who earned his first recall to the Sabres taxi squad earlier this season, posted a career-high three-point night back on April 3 in Syracuse as he tallied a pair of power-play goals to go with an assist, all of which came in the first period. He's also second among all Rochester skaters with eight points (4+4) while on the man-advantage this season, with more than half of his goals coming on the power-play.

THE BEST OFFENSE IS A GOOD DEFENSE

Rochester comes into the week owning three of the AHL's top scoring rookie defensemen in **Oskari Laaksonen**, **Mattias Samuelsson** and **Ryan Jones**, all of whom have combined for 29 points (7+22) with just one game all season being missed between the three blueliners.

Among all AHL rookie defensemen, Laaksonen and Samuelsson rank fourth and tied for sixth in assists while also sitting in fourth and seventh in points, respectively. Samuelsson has four points (2+2) in his last five games, while Laaksonen has six points (2+4) over his last eight outings, including back-to-back multi-point efforts over that span for the first time all season.

SCOUTING THE CRUNCH

Syracuse comes into the matchup on the heels of a 6-2 win over the Utica Comets Monday night. The Crunch are 7-3-0-0 in their last 10 games, and since the start of March, have gone 11-4-0-0 while outscoring their opponents 54-38 over that span.

Currently riding the AHL's second-longest active point streak at 12 games (8+10), Boris Katchouk leads all Crunch skaters with 14 assists and 23 points.

AMERKS-MONSTERS 2020-21 SEASON SERIES BREAKDOWN

ROCHESTER

SKATER	GP	G	A	PTS	PIM	+/-
Brett Murray	7	5	3	8	0	1
Arttu Ruotsalainen	6	3	5	8	2	0
J-S Dea	6	1	6	7	0	4

GOALTENDER

	GP	REC	GA	SV%	GAA
Dustin Tokarski	1	1-0-0	2	.949	2.00
Ukko-Pekka Luukkonen	6	3-2-1	21	.864	3.55
Stefanos Lekkas	1	0-0-1	4	.862	3.84

SYRACUSE

SKATER	GP	G	A	PTS	PIM	+/-
Boris Katchouk	8	4	7	11	8	8
Taylor Raddysh	7	3	3	6	2	2
Otto Sompfi	8	1	5	6	4	5

GOALTENDER

	GP	REC	GA	SV%	GAA
Samuel Montembeault	4	3-0-1	12	.887	2.93
Spencer Martin	4	1-3-0	15	.875	3.82

2020-21 SEASON SERIES GAME-BY-GAME BREAKDOWN

Date	Result	Score	SF-SA	PP	PK
Feb. 10	OTW	4-3	26-23	2-3	1-1
Feb. 20	W	3-2	32-39	0-3	3-4
Mar. 1	L	4-3	34-25	2-6	2-2
Mar. 6	W	4-2	27-29	2-5	6-8
Mar. 26	OTL	4-3	25-29	1-3	2-2
Apr. 2	L	6-2	27-29	1-4	3-5
Apr. 3	W	5-3	27-30	3-4	1-1
Apr. 7	OTL	4-3	28-21	0-3	3-4
Apr. 21					
Apr. 24					
May 1					
May 15					

SERIES NOTABLES

The Amerks have scored a power-play goal in 11 of their last 16 games against Syracuse dating back to last season, going 18-for-62 (29.0%) with the man-advantage over that span.

Amerks defenseman **Dylan Blujus** spent time with the Crunch after being drafted by the Tampa Bay Lightning in 2012. He played his first three seasons with the Syracuse from 2014-2017, recording 49 points (11+38) in 151 games.

Rochester has recorded points in six of the first eight games this season and have posted a 16-9-3-1 record in its last 29 contests against Syracuse.



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