

## **Coach Schafer's Notes for October 31-November 1, 2014**

@CORNELL 1, Nebraska-Omaha 1 OT  
Nebraska-Omaha 2, @CORNELL 1

The competition for an opening weekend was extremely tough, but you don't get better by playing weak teams. Omaha will be a team to heard from as the season progresses, and I liked what we did at times against a very good opponent.

On Friday night, we got off to a sluggish start, and had to kill off three power plays in the first 7 minutes, including a stretch of 1 minute, 38 seconds when we were down two skaters. We have now killed off 16 consecutive two-man disadvantages, spanning 14:50 and dating back to 2012. The visitors led in shots on goal, 9-3, at one point, but we got the offense going midway through the opening period.

After we had a defenseman hit after the whistle, we went to work on the power play. Senior defenseman Jacob MacDonald and sophomore defenseman Patrick McCarron passed the puck back and forth at the top of the zone on the right side before MacDonald set up sophomore forward Matt Buckles for a one-timer from the top of the left circle. The puck sailed by the Omaha goalie, hitting the far post and dropping into the net. We went into the first intermission leading 1-0.

In the second period, we had a great offensive opportunity at 4:10, but senior defenseman Joakim Ryan's shot hit the goaltender in the right shoulder. Just 48 seconds later, the visitors took advantage of our turnover at the offensive blue line. After a succession of passes, they scored a goal, tapping the puck past our helpless sophomore goaltender Mitch Gilliam.

We thought we had the go-ahead goal late in the second period. We created havoc in front of the net, and sophomore forward Jake Weidner converted a rebound. The score was reviewed, and it was ruled that the Omaha goaltender's mask was knocked off before the puck entered the net.

There was no scoring in the third period or the overtime. Gilliam played well in goal for us with 38 saves, including a couple of spectacular ones. Omaha's goaltender also did an excellent job with 29 saves. We were 1-for-6 on the power play, and Omaha was 0-for-4.

The following night vs. the same team we started out with two great opening shifts, firing four shots on goal in the first minute, but it clearly went down hill. Our defense was atrocious by turning the puck over, not moving the puck fast enough, and getting themselves in trouble. But what I liked was the way they rebounded. As a coach, you're looking for them not to drop their heads and feel sorry for themselves. They actually took the opposite approach and rose to the occasion, and played better in the last two periods. Freshman goaltender Hayden Stewart kept us in the game, stopping an early breakaway and making a number of outstanding saves.

Omaha took a 1-0 lead with 1:59 remaining in the opening period, sliding the puck under Stewart's pad. We came right back 71 seconds later. Sophomore forward Jeff Kubiak won a battle along the boards and freshman forward Trevor Yates chipped the puck away from a Mavericks defenseman toward the top of the circle. He got off an attempted shot that was blocked by Omaha's other defenseman, but Kubiak came streaking through the slot to pick up the loose puck and deked to his backhand around Massa. Kubiak's angle quickly disappeared, but Yates converted from the right side of the crease.

In the second period, we had an extended two-man advantage, but failed to score. We really controlled the puck in the offensive zone, but their goalie was outstanding. With 4:40 left in the middle stanza, Omaha scored the winning goal after a funny bounce off the glass came out to an Omaha player. He shot on net, Stewart made the save, but the rebound was jammed in at the near post. No one scored the rest of the way against some outstanding goaltending on both sides.

Stewart made 21 saves in his debut, while the Omaha goalie continued his fine play with 32 saves.

We could see growth in this first weekend alone. It's really early and it's going to be a long process. We'll be a different team next weekend, and two weeks, and that's how we'll judge ourselves.

We go on the road for the first time this season and open up the ECAC season. On Friday night we play at Princeton, and then travel to Quinnipiac on Saturday evening. If you're in the area, please come out and support the team. You'll be glad you did, and we will be too.