

## **Coach Schafer's Game Notes for February 22, 2016**

CORNELL 2, @Harvard 2 /OT

CORNELL 1, @Dartmouth 0

We went to Harvard Friday night with the goal of staying out of the penalty box, unlike our previous game with Yale but the plan didn't work. Just 20 seconds into the game and we're killing a penalty but we successfully killed off the 2-minute disadvantage.

Eight minutes into the first period Harvard scored when the referee ended up by our net, the puck hit him and a Harvard player converted the rebound. However, we continued to plug away and generated some great chances. Though out-shot in the first period 15-9, junior goaltender Mitch Gillam was again equal to the challenge. Our guys did a good job letting Mitch see pucks and when he sees them, he stops them. We had two power-play opportunities but couldn't take advantage of the extra man.

In the second period we scored on a breakaway and also had a goal called back. The breakaway goal was started by freshman defenseman Alec McCrea on a normal breakout from behind the net but McCrea found senior forward Teemu Tiitinen with a perfect pass streaking up the ice through the slot. As a Harvard defenseman got close to Teemu, he fired a shot under the goalie's blocker to tie the contest at one each. In the final minutes of the period, we thought we had scored after a goal-mouth scrum sent the puck over the goal line. The officials ruled the whistle had already blown the play dead and obviously we didn't agree.

To make matters worse, Harvard took a 2-1 lead at 7:56 of the third on another controversial goal. On the power play, Harvard was credited with a goal after a scramble in front of the net with 'everyone and his brother' in front of the goal mouth pushed Gillam into the net.

Justice was served just a little over 2 minutes later, when sophomore defenseman Dan Wedman's innocent shot from the point hit a Harvard player and was redirected into the net. The goal was Dan's first in 54 collegiate games! We kept the pressure on for the rest of the evening and total shots for the game were Harvard 35 to Cornell 33. We out-shot them 13-9 in the third period and 2-1 in OT.

I felt the team gained confidence and played the way we did earlier in the season, and it carried over to Saturday night. We knew, going into the weekend that we had to have tight gaps and play well defensively because both Harvard and Dartmouth have been doing a great job this year creating offense.

At Harvard, Gillam made 33 saves, while the Crimson goaltender had 31 stops. We were 0-for-4 on the power play, and Harvard was 1-for-2.

At Dartmouth on Saturday night, we played a very patient game and continued to build momentum. Nearly 21 minutes of scoreless hockey were played before we took the only lead of the game. We had a great opportunity just 25 seconds into the second period when sophomore forward Alex Rauter stripped the puck from a Big Green defender and skated in for a shot that was gloved by the goaltender.

We continued to pressure and scored at 1:23 of the middle stanza. McCrea and Wedman exchanged a pass in our zone, and then Wedman fired a cross-ice pass toward junior forward Jeff Kubiak in the neutral zone. Kubiak deked one defenseman at the Dartmouth blue line and ripped a shot from the slot that flew over the goaltender's glove. It was Kubiak's eighth goal of the season. Just a minute after the Kubiak goal, junior forward Matt Buckles had another breakaway but couldn't convert. Gillam also stood tall on a couple of odd-man rushes to end the second period.

Dartmouth really put on the offensive pressure in the final 20 minutes, firing 12 shots on goal to our two, but the key to the game was killing off a 5-on-3 penalty for a full 2 minutes at 7:33 of the third period. We received extra-duty work from junior forward Eric Freschi, junior defenseman Patrick McCarron and senior defenseman Reece Wilcox who killed off the majority of the two-man down penalty. Dartmouth had two excellent offensive chances during the penalty but Gillam was the stalwart. Mitch recorded his sixth save of the season, stopped 65 of 68 shots and did a good job using his stick around the net controlling rebounds. He was just so solid and obviously didn't let things get through.

Gillam made 33 saves and the Dartmouth goaltender had 20 stops. We were 0-for-2 on the power play and Dartmouth was 0-for-3.

The guys played well this weekend and we look to carry that momentum into the coming weekend. After a horrendous stretch, we are now 2-1-3 over the last six games. With the wild ride we've been on, if the tournament started today, we would be in. That is how strong our league has been. The weekend was big in both the national and league picture. We knew we had to get points and focus on getting a win.

Union comes to Lynah Rink on Friday night. Senior Night celebration follows the game with Rensselaer on Saturday evening.