

Coach Schafer's Game Notes for March 15, 2016

ECAC Quarterfinals Played at Quinnipiac

Quinnipiac 5, Cornell 2

Cornell 5, Quinnipiac 4

Quinnipiac 6, Cornell 3

How many teams can say they tied and beat No. 1-ranked Quinnipiac this season? We did, and although the end result shows that our ECAC season is officially over, I have to be pleased with what this team accomplished throughout the entire season. Obviously, we had our ups and downs, but most games showed that we put out a complete team effort while fighting through adversity. This is a very close-knit team and they played very hard all year.

Looking at the quarterfinal games as a whole, in the first one, we didn't play well; certainly not like the previous weekend at home vs. Union. Game 2 saw us, once again, battle adversity, and bounce back to force a game three. You can characterize Game 3 as a special teams contest, and when Quinnipiac gets into a special teams game, they're very good. I thought our guys played their hearts out.

Looking back on Friday night's game, we didn't do the things we did the previous weekend which was pick guys up around our net, and be solid on the penalty kill and special teams. If you don't do these things, you're not going to win games against Quinnipiac.

I thought we were off to a great start when junior forward Jake Weidner gave us a 1-0 lead just 3:23 into the game. Senior forward John Knisley started the play from our end with a pass to the middle of the blue line to give us a 2-on-1. Junior forward Eric Freschi fed Weidner at the left circle, and Jake fired off a shot past the goaltender's blocker. The nation's No. 1 team then tied the score at 8:59, sending us into the locker room deadlocked at 1-1.

Quinnipiac took a 3-1 lead with converted-rebound goals at 0:30 and 2:10 of the second period before junior forward Jeff Kubiak tallied his ninth goal of the season on the power play at 10:15 to make the score 3-2. Late in the period, we took a penalty and they scored because we didn't block a shot in the lane. We misread what was going on, but at 3-2, that's a big goal to make it 4-2 going into the final period. We couldn't get anything going in the final period, and Quinnipiac tallied an empty-net goal with 1:24 remaining.

Junior goaltender Mitch Gillam made 36 saves, while the Quinnipiac net minder stopped 16 shots. Both teams were 1-for-3 on the power play. Although there were only two power-play

goals, there was a total of 10 penalties for 20 minutes between the two teams. There were a couple questionable calls both ways. I don't think it was that chippy of a game.

On Saturday night, we gave up two goals at 13:47 and 14:18 of the first period, and could have packed it in right then. But we didn't, and came back with four tallies in the second period. That first period was an odd one because the Bobcats didn't have a shot on goal until 13:47 of the period.

I thought we were physical in the second period, and the guys demonstrated a tremendous amount of tenacity. We played with much composure and brought pucks to the net. For the game, shots on goal were 28 for the home team and 25 for us.

Back to the second period, freshman forward Mitch Vanderlaan scored his eighth goal of the season with a shot through traffic just 57 seconds into the period. About 7 minutes later, Quinnipiac made it 3-1, but we answered back 58 seconds later on Kubiak's 10th goal on a scramble in front of the net to make it 3-2. Then on our third power play of the evening, junior forward Matt Buckles tallied his second goal of the playoffs to tie the game at 3-all at 11:34. The second period wasn't over yet, as Quinnipiac went back in front 4-3 at 12:32, but senior forward Christian Hilbrich scored a highlight goal to bring us back even at 4-4 with 5:37 still left before the second intermission. That was a strong period for us with the lead changing hands three times in 5 minutes. We had four goals; that's a month for us in scoring.

The game-winning goal came at 5:44 of the third period. Hilbrich fed the puck toward sophomore forward Dwyer Tschantz on the rush, but the puck slid through the slot and to the far boards. Dwyer gained control of the puck and circled around to find sophomore forward Trevor Yates in the slot. Yates flipped the puck over the shoulder of the goaltender and into the roof of the net for his sixth tally of the season. Quinnipiac played much of the final 3 minutes of the game with the goaltender pulled in favor of an extra skater. The nine combined goals in the game matched an earlier meeting with the Bearcats at Lynah Rink in a game we lost in overtime, 5-4.

Gillam made 24 saves for us, while the Quinnipiac had 20 stops. We were 1-for-4 on the power play, and they were 0-for-1.

Once again, on Sunday, we got behind early in the first period, as Quinnipiac scored at 1:10 and 1:41. They came out, and we knew they would really push, and we didn't respond early on. They got the two early ones, but we came back with our own power-play goal by Buckles at 4:12, and just trailed, 2-1, going into the first intermission.

The big goal was the third one just 2:45 into the second period making it 3-1. I felt we were playing well, and then power play, power play, power play. It was frustrating that we didn't kill it off, as they scored two extra-man goals in the second period. The game totally changed halfway through that second period of the way it was called during the previous eight periods; it took a U-turn, and we paid the price.

Down 5-1 going into the third period, we did sandwich a pair of tallies around one more Quinnipiac score. Junior forward Eric Freschi scored his second goal of the season at 5:56, and Weidner tallied No. 5 with 1:12 remaining.

Gillam made 29 saves, and the Quinnipiac goaltender had 30 saves. We were 1-for-3 on the power play, and the Bobcats were 2-for-6.

As I said at the top, the third contest was a special teams game, and Quinnipiac is really good being a man-up. They came out and we didn't respond very early on.

I liked the way we fought back, trying to overcome adversity in all different ways, shapes and forms. Our team showed a lot of heart and soul, coming back on Saturday after being down one game and two goals.

With a little over a minute to go on Sunday, I inserted junior goaltender Ryan Coon in the game to get a taste of his first collegiate game. It was a good opportunity for Coon to go into the net. The guys love him. He is a great kid, a great teammate.