

## **@MERRIMACK 3, CORNELL 2**

The schedule-maker made this a very tough opener. First, Merrimack is a difficult place to play because of the different shape of the rink, and second, they have already played six games. And, we go back there on January 7.

We got off to a slow start, as Merrimack scored the game's first goal for the third time this season just 2:39 into the action. It looked like we were anxious to play, and the players tried way too hard, didn't think, or play with poise. The first goal came when a forecheck created a turnover deep in our territory.

Over the next 8 minutes, we were called for three penalties with the final two creating a two-man advantage of 90 seconds, and resulting in a power-play goal at 11:36 to make the score 2-0. At this point, we became desperate, but started to overcome the first-night jitters, and the shaky first period came to an end with no more damage. The shots after 20 minutes of play were Merrimack with 13 and we recorded nine.

The second period was different. We came out of the locker room on the fly, and had three great scoring opportunities in the first 3 minutes. Later in the second period we had a lengthy 5-on-3 power-play chance, but still couldn't put the puck in the back of the net. Our power-play showed a lack of poise early, but improved as the game progressed. At 11:24 of the second period, Merrimack made it 3-0 after a turnover in the neutral zone that gave the Warriors a 3-on-2 situation. At this point, I replaced senior goaltender Mitch Gillam with junior Hayden Stewart because it is hard to win on the road when your goaltending is not sharp, and Mitch was not sharp.

With fewer penalties, we started to get into the flow of the game, and scored our first goal of the season. Sophomore defenseman Alec McCrea fired the puck on net from the left circle and it was tipped by junior forward Jared Fiegl at the goaltender from the top of the crease. The rebound became loose in the middle, and senior forward Matt Buckles shot it into the back of the net to make it 3-1 with 1:33 remaining in the second period. We had the advantage in shots for the second period, 18-11.

In the third period, we were down two men for nearly 2 minutes, but our penalty kill unit got the job done without any more damage. We pulled junior goaltender Hayden Stewart for an extra skater and it earned a dividend. With 2:37 remaining, sophomore forward Mitch Vanderlaan scored on a one-timer from the right circle. The play was set up nicely by the work of junior forwards Trevor Yates and Dwyer Tschantz. But there was no further scoring, as we out-shot Merrimack, 35-33 for the game.

A total of 13 power plays were called in a 60-minute game and each team scored on the man advantage. If you take bad penalties like we did and you don't get good goaltending on the road, then it is tough to win. Gillam and Stewart each made 15 saves with the latter blanking the Warriors. I thought their goaltender was outstanding with 33 saves.

The guys continued to play hard to make it a 3-2 game. Next weekend, we're back on the road at Dartmouth who beat Michigan at home 2-1, and then on to Harvard who swept Arizona State last weekend.