

Coach Schafer's Notes for December 30th, 2016

FLORIDA COLLEGE CLASSIC – Estero, Florida

CORNELL 5, Northern Michigan 2

Championship Game - Colorado College 2, CORNELL 1 (OT)

On Thursday night at the Florida College Classic, our six-game winning streak ended in the championship round, losing a hard-fought overtime contest 2-1 to Colorado College. Upcoming on Saturday night January 7, we take our 8-4-1 record into the final non-league portion of the schedule returning to Merrimack College in Andover, Mass.

After our layoff for final exams, we never know what to expect when we play the first game of this tournament. One of the pluses of the first night was the return of senior forwards Jeff Kubiak and Matt Buckles to the lineup. They made their presence known immediately.

We opened the scoring vs. Northern Michigan with a power-play goal by Kubiak just 4:51 into the game. Kubiak, our leading scorer from a year ago, tallied when his centering pass bounced off an opposing defenseman into the net. Less than 2 minutes later, Northern Michigan knotted the score on a power play. With less than 5 minutes left in the first period, junior forward Trevor Yates sent us into the first intermission with a 2-1 lead. His sixth goal of the season was a laser over the glove hand of the goaltender.

Coming out for the second period, we really dominated for long stretches. Just 31 seconds into the period, junior forward Alex Rauter scored to make it 3-1, and then Buckles, who missed six games with an injury, banged in a rebound at 12:05 to make it a 4-1 game heading into the third period. We had 21 shots on goal to NMU's 5 in the second period alone.

In the third period, each team scored and I was disappointed that we didn't build our lead. Sophomore forward Mitch Vanderlaan scored his team-leading eighth goal at 2:31 and they tallied with 1:54 remaining. For the game, we out-shot NMU 42-20 and all four lines contributed. It was great to have Kubiak and Buckles back in the lineup.

Senior defenseman Patrick McCarron had three assists giving him 11 for season and Kubiak also had an assist to go with his first-period goal.

Senior Mitch Gillam made 18 saves and the Northern Michigan goaltender made 37 stops. We were 1-for-5 on the power play and they were 2-for-7.

The win set up a championship round with Colorado College, who beat Merrimack on Wednesday night. This was an evenly-played game throughout, although we didn't do the things we needed to do to win the game.

The first period didn't show too much with shots being in our favor 8-7. In the second period, it didn't take CC very long to grab the lead. We went on the power play just 19 seconds into the period. A puck miscue by one of our players in the neutral zone led to a Colorado College breakaway and their player skated in on junior goaltender Hayden Stewart slipping a forehand shot five-hole. This was the first shorthanded goal we've given up this season.

We took another penalty and on the 5-3, CC threatened again with a 2-on-1 rush. Stewart stood tall (he is 6-3) and made the save keeping it a 1-0 game going into the third period. Shots over the first 40 minutes were even at 16-16.

Just 6 seconds into our first power play of the third period, we tied the game on a goal by senior forward Jake Weidner at 4:19. A back-and-forth exchange between McCarron and sophomore forward Anthony Angello set up Weidner for a one-timer that went over the glove of the goaltender. For McCarron, it was the 10th time in the last 11 games that he had at least one point.

We couldn't get anything going the rest of the third period and CC had three power plays. One, I think, was a great hit, and the other two were undisciplined plays. We deserved the calls and had no one to blame but ourselves. Regulation ended at 1-1.

The overtime period didn't last long and at 1:02, a shot from the top of the left circle sailed through the legs of one of our shot blockers and over the right shoulder of Stewart for the game-winner.

Stewart made 21 saves and the CC goaltender stopped 23 shots. We were 1-for-6 on the power play and they were 0-for-6.

We did a great job of creating chances but couldn't capitalize. We hit four posts during the game and gave up very few opportunities except for the undisciplined penalties.

Weidner and McCarron were named to the all-tournament team.

We have a week to work hard getting ready for the rest of the season. After Merrimack, it will be ECAC competition the rest of the way. As I have said before, the caliber of the ECAC is

overlooked, and we will face a challenge every night. We look forward to competing and to seeing you at home and on the road.

HAPPY NEW YEAR!