

Coach Schafer's Notes for November 6, 2017

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Achieving a four-point weekend on the road never gets old and our team learned a lot from this first road trip. The players, especially the freshmen, found that every game is going to be a battle. There are no 'gimmies' in the ECAC and you need to be prepared for battle each time you step onto the ice.

On Friday night at Quinnipiac, we played the first two periods exactly the way we wanted to play. We were very strong and quick to pucks. We made a lot of pointed plays, and I was really pretty happy.

After a scoreless first period with the home team firing eight shots on goal and our players with nine, we got on the board at 8:34 of the middle stanza. Junior forward Mitch Vanderlaan entered the offensive zone and chipped an aerial backhand pass back to line mate Beau Starrett at the top of the right circle. Starrett moved the puck to junior defenseman Brendan Smith coming open on the left side of the slot. Quickly, Smith's laser flew past the goaltender's blocker to put us up 1-0. It was an outstanding play, and something we have been emphasizing this year of getting our defensemen more involved in the offense. We also had a breakaway opportunity just 2:13 before the end of the second period, but freshman forward Morgan Barron's backhand shot whizzed over the crossbar.

We got an opportunity for a power play halfway through the third period and converted. In the later part of the extra-man, Barron scored his second goal of the season with an assist from junior defenseman Alec McCrea to give us a 2-0 margin with 7:24 remaining. Officially, what happened was that McCrea's shot from the point hit Barron in the body and soared into the air and landed behind the Bobcats' goalie. It was eventually the winning tally because two minutes later, the home team recorded its lone goal of the game. They came at us hard in the third period and at different points we didn't handle it very well. It's a tough place to play and a great road win.

Freshman Matthew Galajda made 28 saves of which several were outstanding. The Quinnipiac netminder stopped 18 shots. We were 1-for-3 on the power play and they were 0-for-4.

At Princeton on Saturday evening, we scored just 1:43 into the game on the power play. McCrea made it 1-0 and it was the fourth straight game that a defenseman has opened the scoring. Princeton tied the game with a power-play tally, ending our streak of killing 17 straight penalties to start the season. Still in the first period, senior forward Alex Rauter made it 2-1 at 17:48 in an extra-man situation. Princeton didn't let up and tallied twice in the last 1:24 of the opening period to go up 3-2. It was our first deficit of the season.

With senior goaltender Hayden Stewart replacing Galajda in goal, Princeton was not finished. The Tigers increased their lead to 4-2 at 4:47 of the middle stanza. Princeton won the battles up to this point. They did a lot of things that we take pride in doing. Our guys never gave up and tied the score, 4-4, with goals by sophomore defenseman Yanni Kaldis (11:52) and senior forward Trevor Yates (11:52). The second period ended with teams deadlocked 4-4.

At 13:19 of the third period, freshman forward Brenden Locke became the hero. Princeton poked the puck away from one of our players and Locke came flying off the bench to pick it up. He skated to the top of the left circle and fired a shot that flew over the goaltender's blocker into the far corner of the net for his first collegiate goal. Locke has a lot of poise offensively. He played both left and right wing on Saturday and I don't know if he's ever played those positions in his life.

Galajda allowed three goals and made eight saves in one period of action. It was a good lesson for Matt because I didn't think he was very sharp. He left a lot of rebounds and Princeton was hungry around the net. Stewart saw his first action of the regular season, giving up one goal and making 13 saves. He has worked hard and really rose to the challenge. He made a huge save in the second period on a potential goal that could have made it 5-2 at the time. We were 2-for-5 on the power play and they were 1-for-5.

This was a huge win for us in a number of ways. We learned that we must come ready to get after it and we didn't do that at Princeton. We also gained the confidence that we can come back and we're never out of the game. It's not like we didn't play hard, we just didn't play REALLY hard. In college hockey, you need to be ready night-in, night-out.

We are now 4-0 for the first time since the 2006-07 season. Hopefully, we are gaining experience with every outing because we have a tough weekend coming at home vs. Dartmouth on Friday night and Harvard on Saturday evening. Lynah Rink will be jumping!