

## **Coach Schafer's Notes for November 27, 2017**

@CORNELL 5, Niagara 4

CORNELL 4, Boston University 3 @Madison Square Garden

We certainly had another exciting week of Big Red hockey with a come-from-behind victory and a win where we went ahead early and held on for dear life. Anyway, it was two more wins and we are now 9-1 for the first time since 2002-03. This is the seventh time that a Cornell hockey team has had at least nine victories in its first 10 outings.

Tuesday night, we entertained Niagara, a team with a 5-1 record in their league. The first period was fairly even with Niagara scoring at 10:01 and we evened it up with a power-play goal by senior forward Alex Rauter at 15:52. Then, we unraveled in the second period and the visitors tallied twice in a span of 1:47, including a power-play goal, to make it 3-1 after two periods. In the second period, Niagara put 16 shots on goal to our eight.

Junior forward Mitch Vanderlaan scored early in the third period to make it 3-2, but less than a minute later, Niagara answered at 5:16 and it was 4-2. You know, it's easy to be upbeat and rah-rah when things are going well, but when team character shows best is when you face adversity. As I told one booster who left the game early, "you never give up". It only took 34 seconds for us to answer with a goal by freshman defenseman Alex Green.

With 11:25 remaining, we tied the game at 4-all with a goal by another defenseman, junior Brendan Smith. According to plan, our blue-liners have really gotten in on the offense this year. Junior defenseman Matt Nuttle had three assists for the night.

With 2:49 left in the game, senior forward Trevor Yates scored his team-leading sixth goal of the season to make it 5-4 and we gutted it out the rest of the way, including killing off a penalty with 2:25 left. This game showcased the team's identity as a group that finds a way to win. They were fired up in the third period, just put their nose to the grindstone and went after it. That's just what you want to see as a coach.

Freshman goaltender Matt Galajda recorded 21 saves and the Niagara goalie had 24 stops. We were 1-for-3 on the power play and they were 1-for-2.

The win gave us confidence and momentum going into the sixth Red Hot Hockey game vs. Boston University on Saturday at Madison Square Garden. There's a lot of anxiety with this game and with seven freshmen in the lineup, my hair gets lighter and lighter in color. Once again, the team was ready to play and demonstrated this with a 4-3 win to claim the Kelley-Harkness trophy in front of 14,606 fans for the first time in the biennial Red Hot Hockey series.

We scored first with a goal by junior forward Beau Starrett at 15:18 of the first period, his first of the year. In the second period, we jumped out to a 3-0 lead, with goals by Yates, and a power-play tally by junior defenseman Alec McCrea (another blue-liner goal). Yates became the first Cornell player to score three goals at MSG during his career. Just 4:48 into the third period, BU struck on the power-play to make it 3-1. We were not to be denied and freshman forward Tristan Mullin tallied his first collegiate goal at 11:51 of the third to give us our second three-goal margin. It was an exciting goal, as Mullin took a pass from senior Dwyer Tschantz, scooped it up with a forehand shot as he was falling to the ice and the puck flew over the BU goalie's blocker and inside the far post.

The game wasn't over! BU came back with a power-play goal 2 minutes after the Mullin tally and then added another score with 4:58 remaining in the game. At this time, Galajda took over. With a sixth BU skater on the ice (they pulled their goaltender) and pucks flying all over the ice, he maintained his composure to stop 35 shots on the night. As a freshman, Matt has had to carry the load for us all the way and he's risen to the occasion even after a bad outing. He has that type of warrior mentality that doesn't let things bother him and he doesn't drop his head.

This was a great game and symbolized the fantastic series between two teams that were the dominant teams of college hockey in the East back in the 1960s and 70s. The games never seem to disappoint. It's a great event and always a great crowd with two terrific fan bases.

Galajda made 35 saves and the BU netminder stopped 26 shots. We were 1-for-3 on the power play and they are 2-for-3.

Our start this season is almost unbelievable. Beginning the year with 10 freshmen on the roster, if you had wagered that we would be 9-1 at this time, I would've bet on the NY lottery first! Our upperclassmen have done a great job of welcoming the frosh into the program, teaching them the culture of Cornell hockey, and what it means to be a Big Red hockey player.

We have three more non-league games before the end of the calendar year. This coming weekend, we're on the road at Miami University (OH) for games on Friday and Saturday night. Then, we finish 2017 with a home game vs. Canisius College on Saturday, December 30.