

Coach Schafer's Notes for February 6, 2018

@CORNELL 4, Union 3

Rensselaer 2, @CORNELL 1

Well, our No. 1 ranking didn't last long but we have a lot of hockey to play and we're more concerned about the process. How we play over the last three weekends of the regular season will determine how far we advance in the post-season. We start with two games on the road at Clarkson and St. Lawrence. Brenden Smith, our top plus/minus defenseman, Cam Donaldson our freshman forward and captain Mitch Vanderlaan are out with injuries and others will need to step up.

I'm hoping this past weekend will be the wake-up call our team needed to get back to playing with intensity. When you're winning games, maybe those lessons didn't get through to guys and though we've been solid in our games up to this point, we haven't been good. It's a lesson that we all need to show up to play, we need to play hard, and we need to play simple.

On Friday night against Union, we came out firing and scored two goals in the first 13 minutes. The Lynah Faithful were in full force. It was an excellent crowd. Senior forward Alex Rauter blasted a sizzler at 5:33 from just inside the blue line on the second of three Cornell power plays in the first period. About 7 minutes later, senior forward Jared Fiegl scored his first goal of the season to put us up 2-0 and that's what it was after the first 20 minutes.

Union didn't give up the fight, came out flying for the second period and cut the deficit to one just 1:47 into the period. Sophomore forward Noah Bauld's fifth goal of the season put us up 3-1 at 2:15. But, penalty-killing let us down and Union tallied extra-man goals at 5:25 and 13:35 to tie the game at 3-all at the end of the second. When we were ahead 2-0, we thought it was going to be easy! But, we took a couple of undisciplined penalties and they capitalized.

Late in the second period, we thought we had another goal by freshman forward Brenden Locke, but it was reviewed and waved off. Locke tallied the game-winning goal with 2:12 remaining in the third period off a rebound during our fifth power-play of the evening. It was his second goal of the season. The Lynah roof nearly came off! We have had only one or two power-play goals the whole second half of January, but this one carried the day on Friday evening.

Sophomore goaltender Matt Galajda was called upon for 32 saves; the Union goaltender made 24 stops. We were 2-for-5 on the power play and they were 2-for-3.

Saturday night was a different story. RPI had won just four games previously but came ready to play and took a 1-0 lead 20 seconds into the game. A RPI slap shot went right up one of our player's stick and roofed the net over Galajda's right shoulder. We were

trailing for the first time since January 12th, and this seemed to predict the rest of the night.

The Engineers didn't stop the train and made it 2-0 at 6:15 of the second period. They capitalized on a turnover deep in our defensive zone that led to a short-handed goal, the first one we have allowed in 32 games dating back to February 17, 2017 vs. Brown.

RPI took the 2-0 lead into the final period but we got on the board just 1:35 into the third stanza. Fiegl out-worked the entire RPI defense to score a wrap-around goal and cut the deficit to 2-1. Fiegl has been battling illness and injuries and I thought he might be able play only one game this weekend. He got his first goal of the season on Friday night and wanted more on Saturday. He probably played with the most energy of anybody on the team!

You must give RPI credit because they played hard and we didn't respond. You've got to overcome adversity. We didn't react to it. A little taste of losing will go a long, long way for our hockey team.

Galajda made 26 saves and the Engineers' goaltender stopped 29 shots. We were 0-for-3 on the power play and they were 0-for-2.

Though we dropped to No. 3 in the rankings, they're not our main objective. We want to win the ECAC. Right now, we're in first place with 27 points, followed by Clarkson with 24, Union with 22, Harvard with 21, and Colgate with 17. Now, every weekend is big and it's always a tough trip to the North Country. Hope to see many of you there.