

## **Coach Schafer's Notes for February 26, 2018**

CORNELL 4, @Rensselaer 1

@Union 4, CORNELL 3

We had another tale of two games this past weekend. We played like we really wanted revenge on Friday night. Then, slipped on Saturday evening looking like a team that had clinched the ECAC championship the night before and was satisfied to skate the season out.

On Friday evening, it was pretty much an even first period, but we took charge in the second and third. The defense had a boost with the return of two of our best defensemen, juniors Brendan Smith and Alec McCrea, both ranked in the top five nationally in rating.

Smith made his presence known scoring at 1:33 of the second period. Freshman forward Kyle Betts won a faceoff to the right of the goaltender and slid the puck back to Smith at the center point. He got off a shot quickly that went through traffic, hit the post and went into the back of the net. We missed a couple of defensive assignments allowing RPI to score just 18 seconds later to make it 1-1. We took a 2-1 lead into the second intermission, as junior forward Anthony Angello tallied his 13th goal of the season with a tap-in at 12:07 of the middle stanza.

At 1:24 of the third period, freshman forward Morgan Barron scored his fifth goal of the season with assists from his line mates, senior Trevor Yates and freshman Cam Donaldson. Midway through the period, freshman defenseman Cody Haiskanen scored his first collegiate goal, firing a shot through traffic to make it 4-1.

RPI didn't pack it in and took 14 shots on goal in the third period and scored once making it 4-2 with 3:43 remaining in the game. Sophomore defenseman Yanni Kaldis, in addition to quarterbacking our power play, had three assists in the game. Freshman Matt Galajda made 27 saves and the RPI goaltender stopped 27 shots. Both teams were 0-for-2 on the power play.

With the win, we captured our ninth ECAC regular-season title, the fourth since the trophy was named, 'The Cleary Cup', but our first since 2005.

Saturday night's game was between a team that didn't seem to want another win and a team hungry after their lackluster performance on Friday. Union came out blazing with 13 of the game's first 14 shots on goal. Even with showing no spark, we took a 1-0 lead at 13:47 of the first period. Senior forward Alex Rauter challenged the RPI goalie who made a great save but the rebound came to Kaldis coming down the slot and he ripped a shot into the back of the net for his fourth goal of the year.

Three minutes later, the home team scored their first of three power-play goals. Going into the game, we had killed 39 of 46 power-play chances (84.7%) but five of those seven extra-man tallies have been to Union in two games. On the first Union power-play goal, we didn't pick our sticks up around the net. The second one, we didn't squash down low and the Union player made a great play from behind the net. And, on the third one, our goaltender had to make the save.

Even with this lack of effort, we still led 2-1 after one period courtesy of freshman defenseman Matt Cairns first collegiate goal with 1:56 left in the period. Union scored the only goal of the second period to send us into the final 20 minutes at 2-all. That didn't last long, as the Dutchmen recorded a power-play goal at 3:03 of the third period to take a 3-2 lead. At 4:07, freshman forward Tristan Mullin picked up a loose puck, won a physical battle in the left corner, and circled all around the net before stuffing the puck into the net for an unassisted tally. We were tied again at 3-3.

At 11:10, Union scored the game-winner, as one of our players had his pocket picked and an open shot toward goal was tipped in by a forward cutting across the top of the crease. We had no attention to detail throughout the course of the night and that was disappointing.

Senior Hayden Stewart started in goal and made 32 saves. Though he hadn't been in a game since Jan. 5., I wanted to give Hayden another opportunity to play in his senior year. The Union goaltender made 21 saves. We were 1-for-2 on the power play and Union was 3-for-3.

This week, we have the benefit of the bye-weekend for finishing in the top four in the ECAC. For winning the Cleary Cup, we are the highest seed in the playoffs and host the lowest-remaining seed on March 9-11 at Lynah Rink. A lot of hockey has yet to be played and we have two weeks to straighten out our problems. We're looking forward to an exciting playoff series and hope you can come and see us in action at Lynah Rink during that weekend.