

## **Coach Schafer's Notes for January 8, 2019**

#20 CORNELL 3, @Princeton 2

#20 CORNELL 2, @#3/5 Quinnipiac 2 OT

(This weekend's capsule is attributed to Associate Head Coach Ben Syer, who directed the team during Coach Mike Schafer's absence)

This past weekend surely demonstrated the benefits and misfortunes of having a 32-day layoff since last year. On the positive side, we got a couple of players back who had been injured, and they contributed immediately. This was the longest mid-season hiatus in program history.

We came out strong on Friday night at Princeton to take a 2-0 lead in the first period. The first goal of the "new year" came at 10:28. Sophomore forward Morgan Barron poked the puck away from under a Princeton defenseman's skates and it skidded into the path of classmate Brenden Locke breaking in from the circle. Brenden deked the goaltender to the ice and backhanded the puck into the net. The second goal came with 33 seconds remaining in the first period. Senior defenseman Matt Nuttle had the puck at the center point. With the defense recovering, Matt sent a pass to senior blue liner Brendan Smith in the right circle. His one-timer found the back of the net over the sprawling goalie.

Both Locke and Smith had been missing from the lineup due to injury since the Northern Michigan weekend (Nov. 9-10).

The first period was a great start, as we had 18 shots on goal. The second period saw us taking our foot off the pedal with just nine shots on goal. Princeton got back in the game at 16:06 of the second period, and the battle was on. We knew that Princeton is a skilled team, and it really pushed us hard in the middle stanza.

Midway through the third period, the home team tied the score on a shot that caromed off the back glass toward the bottom of the right circle to a Princeton player who shot the puck into an open net. Yes, the Princeton push was on as the score was 2-2 with 8:23 remaining in the game.

Just over a minute later (12:55), with us "pushing" hard, we scored the potential winning goal. It happened when freshman defenseman Joe Leahy retrieved a rebound of sophomore forward Tristan Mullin's shot, poked it back to freshman forward Max Andreev at the left point. Max worked the puck back out to senior defenseman Alec McCrea at the center point, who one-

timed a shot through freshman forward Michael Regush's screen and over the goaltender's glove.

Now it gets interesting because the referee nearest the play immediately waved off the goal. He said that Regush contacted a defender that resulted in interference on the goaltender. McCrea was adamant that there was no interference. Assistant Coach Sean Flanagan was chirping in my ear that we needed a break, and we called a timeout. This allowed the officials to review the goal, and after a lengthy review, the referees came back on the ice and pointed to center ice, meaning the goal counted. The game-leading goal, plus the needed rest from the timeout, gave us renewed energy to close out the game victorious.

Sophomore goaltender Austin McGrath, making his third start, made a career-high 30 saves, while the Princeton netminder stopped 33 shots. Austin was solid with some timely saves. He gave us the opportunity to win the game.

Power plays? There were none. No penalties were called. It was the first Division I game with no penalties since American International and Bentley played on Dec. 1, 2015, and it marked the first time Cornell didn't take a single penalty since Feb. 19, 1999, vs. Brown.

The next night at Quinnipiac, the game started out the opposite of the Friday night contest. Quinnipiac completely out-played us in the first period and scored goals at 8:33 and 14:19 to take a 2-0 lead, with the second tally on the power play.

With the bad news behind us, I liked the way the team responded back after being down two goals. Before the end of the period, we got a goal back on the power play. Barron took a shot, and the rebound came back off the glass to Mullin who won a battle with a defender. Tristan redirected the puck to sophomore forward Cam Donaldson in the open slot. His backhand shot on target slipped under the goaltender at the far post with 4:03 remaining in the first period.

The players realized that the first period wasn't the way our team plays, and they set out to change the tone of the game in the final 40 minutes. At 7:07 of the second period, we tied the score at 2-all. After a Quinnipiac miscue, Barron broke away on a one-on-one confrontation, but Donaldson beat everyone else up the ice in the middle leading to a two-on-one, forcing the Quinnipiac defender to back off. Barron reached the right circle and fired a shot over the goaltender's left shoulder for an unassisted goal. For both Donaldson and Barron, it was their team-leading sixth goals of the season.

McGrath made 35 saves, including 12 in the first period and 13 in the third. Austin does a great job. Being in the hole 2-0, he didn't quit. The Quinnipiac goaltender stopped 30 shots. We were 1-for-2 on the power play, and they were 1-for-1.

We now are 7-5-1, 5-2-1 ECAC, and with 11 points, we are two points out of first place. Both Yale and Quinnipiac have 13 points but have played more league games than us. We're out of the ECAC for the final weekend this coming week. Arizona State, a relatively newcomer to the Division I scene, will be at Lynah Rink for games on Friday and Saturday night. This season, against ECAC opponents, Arizona State split with Harvard, losing 4-1 and winning 3-2 in OT. They defeated Princeton twice, 4-0 and 3-2; and they lost to Clarkson in AZ, 3-0.

There should be plenty of seats available at Lynah Rink this weekend with the students still on break. Come and support our team.