

Coach Schafer's Notes for January 22, 2019

CORNELL 2, Harvard 0

CORNELL 5, Dartmouth 1

This was another gut-wrenching, successful weekend where we played well with every available player seeing action. After suffering two more injuries Friday night, on Saturday we had a defenseman playing forward and guys playing in all kinds of different positions. We're happy with the team's results on the weekend, as it extended our unbeaten streak to seven games.

With another four-point weekend, we (7-2-1 ECAC; 11-5-1 overall) have moved into a first-place tie (15 points) with Quinnipiac with two games in hand over them.

The students are back and were very evident on Friday evening vs. Harvard. Once again, the rink was rocking. The first period (after the fish were disposed) was even, as Harvard had 11 shots to our nine. The second period started quickly for us with a goal at the 2:07 mark. Our red-hot sophomore line got us on the board. Sophomore defenseman Cody Haiskanen fired a pass to forward Morgan Barron who was one-on-one with a defender at the blue line. The defender fell and Barron dished the puck to forward Brenden Locke coming down the slot; he slammed a quick shot past the goalie on his stick side. We doubled the score with 3:06 remaining in the period with our first power-play opportunity of the game. This time it was Barron's turn. Forward Cam Donaldson worked the puck to junior defenseman Yanni Kaldis who fired a shot from the right circle. The goalie made a kick save that came directly into the slot for Barron who swept it into the empty net for his team-leading fourth extra-man goal.

The sophomore line has now scored 10 of our 16 goals over the last five games that they had played together. From this point on, we did a good job limiting Harvard's scoring chances down the stretch. We had the first seven shots on goal in the third period, and the visitors didn't get a shot on goal until 5:20 remained on the clock.

I decided to start sophomore goalie Matt Galajda over classmate Austin McGrath, who has been playing so well for us, because Matty has been through the excitement and fanfare of the Harvard game before and seemed to thrive with the challenge. Galajda made my decision a good one, stopping all 25 shots he faced for his 10th career shutout. The Harvard goaltender made 28 saves. One of the things the coaching staff has wanted at that position is competition. Every time Matty has had competition, he's risen to the challenge and gotten better. We were 1-for-3 on the power play and we shut-down Harvard's No. 1 power-play unit 0-for-2.

Saturday's game was moved to 3 PM due to the snowstorm. As mentioned earlier, we didn't have enough healthy skaters to fill out the lineup, and some of the players who did see ice time, played outside their usual positions. We needed a team effort and that's what we received, as five different players scored against Dartmouth. Austin McGrath was the starting goalie on Saturday.

We started the scoring at 6:27 of the first period, the 14th time in our 17 games that we have scored the first goal of the game. Junior forward Connor Murphy, playing in his 23rd career game for the Big Red, converted a rebound for his second goal this season. Connor brings a lot of energy to the lineup and never stops moving. The first period ended with Dartmouth leading in shots, 9-7.

The visitors tied the score just 3:02 into the second period, with the goal coming on a delayed penalty on us. We blocked three shot attempts during the Dartmouth power play but they finally converted a rebound. We answered with power-play goals of our own at 10:20 and 17:12 of the second period. Donaldson scored the first one, his 10th of the season, senior forward Mitch Vanderlaan notched his third of the season giving us a 3-1 lead going into the third period. Since coming back after the holidays, our power-play unit ranks No. 6 in the country with a 37.5 percent conversion rate. Before the break we were 20th at 19.6 percent. Our power play really carried us vs. Dartmouth.

At 7:55 of the third period, Locke tallied his fourth goal of the season with senior defenseman Matt Nuttle picking up his eighth assist and Donaldson his sixth. The final goal into an empty net came with 30 seconds remaining. With Dartmouth sealing the wall with the extra attacker, Nuttle slipped the puck back toward the middle. Senior forward Beau Starrett flew into the open ice and shot a "home run" puck into the empty net for his 10th goal this season.

McGrath made 22 saves and the Dartmouth goaltender stopped 14 shots. We were 2-for-3 on the power play and the visitors were 0-for-3.

Guys really stepped up to the plate on Saturday afternoon, playing in odd positions for them. Sophomore defenseman Matt Cairns did a good job filling in at forward on the fourth line playing the entire game.

This coming weekend we have our home-and-home series with Colgate. We travel to Hamilton on Friday evening and will be back home at Lynah Rink against the Raiders on Saturday night. As always, come and cheer on YOUR Big Red.