

Coach Schafer's Notes for February 20, 2019

CORNELL 3, @Brown 3 (OT)
@Yale 5, CORNELL 2,

This was not one of our better road weekends for the entire team, but especially for our defense. This week we're back to the drawing board and doing the simple things that we do well. We must play a lot more patient hockey and be above people, making it hard on the opposition.

On Friday night at Brown, we came to play in the first period. In typical fashion for this season, we scored first. Just 22 seconds into the game, sophomore forward Tristan Mullin ripped a shot from the left circle high over the goaltender's shoulder on the short side. About seven minutes later, we made it 2-0. Mullin started the play through the right circle and sent a pass across the top of the crease to senior forward Mitch Vanderlaan who tapped the puck into the net. We also had two more excellent chances to score, including a 3-on-1 situation.

Halfway through the second period, we increased our lead to 3-0. At 11:48, sophomore defenseman Matt Cairns (who has also played forward this year) scored his second goal of the season. Matt took a pass from junior forward Connor Murphy in stride at the point and rifled a shot that beat the goaltender on the glove side, low and inside the far post. We had a nice 3-0 lead going into the final period.

Beginning at 4:21 of the final period, the lead evaporated quickly in a span of one-minute! The Bears scored at 4:21 and 5:01 to make it 3-2. I called a timeout to settle us down. We sent out our best defensive pair and our best line, and 11 seconds later the score was tied at 3-all. It was very discouraging because we came ready to play in the first period and obviously didn't come ready to play in the third. We wasted two periods of hockey on Friday evening.

Brown played well, we got point hungry, and it came back to bite us. They had two good scoring chances while we were killing power plays late in the third period and in overtime. Mullin had an excellent opportunity with 2:21 left in OT, but his shot from the right circle was batted away by the goaltender's blocker.

Sophomore goaltender Matthew Galajda made 26 saves, while the Brown goalie stopped 25 shots. We scored first for the 21st time in 24 games and have outscored the opposition 30-6 in the first period. We were 0-for-1 on the power play and Brown was 0-for-2.

Hoping to regroup, we headed for New Haven for a game with Yale, with both of us fighting for first-round byes in the ECAC playoffs. The first period was played at a very fast pace, but there weren't really any quality scoring chances for either team. But just 17.8 seconds before the first intermission, the home team got on the board. It was just the fourth time in 25 games this season that we have been down 1-0 in the opening period.

That late goal seemed to spark Yale, as it came out flying with goals at 3:13 and 3:44 to increase the margin to 3-0. At this point, I removed Galajda and replaced him with classmate Austin McGrath.

We fought back. Skating 4-on-4, senior defenseman Alec McCrea took a pass from junior forward Jeff Malott and slammed a shot from the right circle past the goaltender's blocker at 4:40 of the second period. Mullin scored his fifth goal of the season at 11:22 of the second period as we converted on the power play. At this point, I gave our guys a lot of credit, battling back to make it 3-2. But then two minutes later, we gave up a soft goal to make it 4-2. I replaced McGrath and brought Matty back in the game. The Bulldogs had 17 shots to our nine in the second period alone. Yale scored again at 8:13 of the third period.

Galajda made 26 saves and McGrath four. The Yale netminder stopped 27 shots. We were 1-for-4 in extra-man situations, and Yale was 0-for-2.

You can't play that poorly defensively and expect to win hockey games. It was a collective team effort at Yale, from our forwards to our defense to our goaltending. We didn't get the job done in front of our goaltenders, and when pucks did get through, we didn't get the big saves that we needed.

We are 15-7-3 overall and 11-4-3 in the ECAC. We have 25 points for first place with Quinnipiac just one point back in second place, followed by Yale (23), Harvard (22) and Clarkson (22).

Our final home weekend of the regular season is coming up with Rensselaer here on Friday night and Union for Senior Night on Saturday evening. We wind up the regular season on March 1 and 2, at St. Lawrence and Clarkson, respectively.