

Coach Schafer's Notes for March 18, 2019

Union 3, @CORNELL 2

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Wow! What a weekend of college hockey at Lynah Rink. We had the toughest matchup of any team in NCAA hockey going into this weekend and we knew it. We knew it was going to be a battle and it was from start to finish. It was physical and well-played. ... It came down to the third period of a two-out-of-three series.

The first period on Sunday afternoon was wild with three goals scored in the first six minutes. Sophomore forward Kyle Betts scored his second goal of the season (and second in two nights) just 57 seconds into the game. A Union turnover behind their net allowed junior forward Noah Bauld to steer the puck to Betts in the slot and he put it in the back of the net. The Lynah Faithful were hoping we would continue the momentum from Saturday night's 4-0 game. As I guessed, Union didn't pack its bags and scored consecutive goals at 4:31 and 5:43 to take a 2-1 lead into the first intermission with the visitors leading in shots on goal, 13-11.

Senior forward Beau Starrett scored the only goal of the second period as we regained the momentum from the opening of the game. Starrett won a draw to the left of the Union goal, tipped a shot by senior forward Mitch Vanderlaan, and the puck descended off a defenseman's back into the net to tie the game at 2-all with 11:31 remaining in the middle stanza. Shots after 40 minutes of play were Union 23, Cornell 21.

The third period belonged to us offensively and defensively; Union only had six shots on goal to our 13. At the three-minute mark, we scored our only power-play of the game. It was the only extra-man tally between the two teams in 23 chances all weekend. Union was assessed a five-minute major for kneeing and with only 10 seconds left in the penalty, we had a faceoff in their zone. I told the players, if we win the draw, get the puck to the net. We also used five forwards on this eventual winning goal. Bauld, after Betts was kicked out of the faceoff, won the draw to sophomore forward Tristan Mullin along the half wall toward the slot. Mullin cut back and fired a backhand toward the goal mouth. The puck went through a shot-blocker's legs and past the goaltender.

This goal was the epitome of what this line meant to us on the weekend. Betts and Bauld entered the series with a combined eight points for the season. Bauld had five points (one goal, four assists) and Betts had two goals and one assist. These are the kind of guys who are such a

big part of who we are as a team. They kill penalties; they block shots. They've been unheralded guys all year.

It didn't take long for us to make it 4-2 (42 seconds to be exact). On our very next shift, junior forward Jeff Malott scored his sixth goal of the season on a fade-away one-timer over the goaltender's glove. Assists came from junior defenseman Yanni Kaldis (20 for the season) and Vanderlaan (18 for the year).

With sophomore goaltender Matthew Galajda's 27 saves, we are on to Lake Placid for an early Friday night game with Brown, who knocked out No. 1 seed Quinnipiac on consecutive nights. We were 1-for-6 on the power play and Union was 0-for-4.

On Friday night, after a scoreless first period with us getting 12 shots on goal, Union took a 1-0 lead at 9:37 of the middle stanza. About three minutes later, senior defenseman Matt Nuttle, a candidate for the ECAC Defensive Defenseman Award, scored his third goal of the season on a shot from beyond the far hash mark that squeaked between the Union goaltender and the near post to make it 1-1. No penalties called in the second period but the officials kept everyone on edge with three video reviews of possible goals. Union challenged Nuttle's goal for offsides, but to no avail.

Just 62 seconds before the end of the second period, we took a 2-1 lead. Betts scored his first goal of the season. Betts set up lineman Mullin for a quick shot from the top of the left circle. In the meantime, Betts had worked himself to the front of the net and redirected Mullin's shot past the glove of the goaltender. It was the 21st time in 30 games this season that we entered the third period with a lead and ended up as only the second time that we lost the game (Quinnipiac was the other).

Our lead stood up until midway through the final period (10:40) when Union tied the game, as the scorer blew past our defense down the slot with four defenders back. The winning goal came with 4:33 left to play. The goal was aided by a deflection off a defender's skate at close range before redirecting into the far corner of the net. We had some major mistakes from some of our best players that really cost us the game.

Galajda was called upon for 16 saves, while the Union goaltender stopped 32 shots. We had 15 shots on goal in the third period alone. Every chance you get, you must think it's your last scoring chance of the night and you must bury it. We had pucks in the crease all night, but it's got to be in the back of the net.

We were 0-for-3 on the power play and they were 0-for-2. The good news on Friday night was that we rolled four lines pretty much all night and that left plenty of jump to come back on Saturday evening.

That "jump" showed immediately on Saturday evening as we took a 2-0 lead in the first two minutes of the game. Sophomore forward Brenden Locke scored just 1:21 into the opening action with sophomore forward Cam Donaldson picking up his 12th assist of the year and classmate Morgan Barron his 19th. Forty-one seconds later, Vanderlaan notched his 10th tally with assists to Starrett and senior defenseman Brendan Smith. It was huge for us to respond like that. We were disappointed on Friday night by the way we played and ended up losing. We kept it going on Saturday night.

We increased the lead to 3-0 at 16:57 of the second period on Bauld's first goal of the season with assists to senior defenseman Alec McCrea and Malott. By the end of the second period, we had put 25 shots on goal to 11 for Union. Sophomore defenseman Alex Green capped the scoring at 11:05 of the third period for his first tally of the year. Assists went to Betts and Bauld. This game became quite physical with 30 penalties called. Our final two goals were scored in 4-on-4 situations. In 4-on-4 plays this season, we scored five goals to the opponents' one.

Galajda made 15 saves for his fourth shutout this season and the second during postseason play in his collegiate career. The Union goalie stopped 29 shots. We were 0-for-5 on the power play and Union was 0-for-3.

With the quarterfinal win and Quinnipiac out, we are the No. 1 seed in the ECAC tournament. We take on a high-flying Brown team at 4PM on Friday in the first game, with Clarkson facing Harvard at 7:30PM.

As always, we expect a large contingent of Cornell fans in Lake Placid. The entire team is looking forward to this coming weekend. Hope to see you there.