

Men's Hockey Loses In Playoff Battle Versus St. Norbert

Posted: Friday, February 17, 2006

DE PERE - In a 3-1 game, the eighth-seeded UW-Eau Claire men's hockey team once again came close but could not pull off the victory versus the top-seeded St. Norbert Green Knights, except this time it was in the quarterfinals of the Northern Collegiate Hockey Association (NCHA) Peters Cup Playoffs.

After a scoreless first period in which the Green Knights outshot Eau Claire 15-3, St. Norbert got on the board twice in period two. Both were through a power-play as well. The first came at 5:56 off the stick of Troy Boisjoli while the second came at 9:10 from Andy Cote, who is the leader in NCHA play goals.

At the 8:40 mark in the third Eau Claire found the back of the net on a **Dan Fina** (*Fr.-Fontana/Glenbard South, IL*) power-play shot. **Brooks Lockwood** (*Jr.-Hudson*) provided the assist on the much needed goal. Late in the third, specifically at the 18:48 mark, Eau Claire pulled goalie **Steffan Braunlich** (*Sr.-Los Angeles, CA/Loyola*) for the extra attacker. Events did not go according to plan, as Green Knight Jeremy Mitchell scored an empty net goal at 18:52 to ice the game.

Braunlich put on an impressive display, dwarfing the play of his counterpart Kyle Jones, who has been in the hunt for many records and holds impressive stats in numerous categories on an outstanding season. The shots went 50-13 in favor of St. Norbert. That makes for 47 Braunlich saves, an incredible season high.

St. Norbert went two for eight power plays while Eau Claire went one for nine.

The Green Knights, who are ranked first in the USCHO.com Division III poll and are defending Peters Cup champions for three years straight, have had a tough time with Eau Claire this season. The first meeting resulted in a 2-2 tie and the last regular season matchup did not become the 6-0 St. Norbert blowout until the third period when the Green Knights converted on four advantages.

The best Eau Claire can hope for now is to win tomorrow and force a 20 minute "mini-game" to decide who moves on. It will be tough, as the Blugolds have not beaten the Green Knights at their place since 1994. In the past four years against everyone, St. Norbert has gone 73-5-4 at the Cornerstone Community Center.

The Blugolds look to force that "mini-game" tomorrow and upset the Green Knights in De Pere as the two face-off at 7:00 p.m.

NCHA Quarterfinal Game One Results

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