

RoughRiders skate past Des Moines

Written by Ryan Suchomel

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The Cedar Rapids RoughRiders frustrated the Des Moines Buccaneers into bad shots and silly mistakes Friday night in a 3-1 victory before 2,242 fans in The Stable.

With the win the RoughRiders (8-2-1) kept pace in the East Division, four points back of Division-leading Team USA and one point behind Dubuque.

The defense was nearly flawless for Cedar Rapids. Goalie Danny Tirone had 23 saves on 24 shots. And that on a night when the RoughRiders had to survive 29 penalty-killing minutes.

"It's pretty tiring on penalty killing, but it says a lot about our team," Tirone said. "We were battling out there; willing to pay the price tonight, that's for sure."

Tirone was helped by a defensive unit that deflected or stopped a multitude of shots before they ever hit his stick or his pads.

"It starts with blocking shots," forward Dylan Steman said. "Team first. It's a huge deal, and shows you are willing to give everything to the team. If you block 10 shots on the ice, that's 10 shots not on the net."

Des Moines (4-8) outshot Cedar Rapids, 18-14, over the final two periods after the RoughRiders

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put together a big lead early.

The first goal came 6:33 into the game on a shot by Charlie Curti. About 10 minutes later, Dylan McLaughlin fed a perfect pass across the front of the goal to Corey Petrash, who lit the lamp to make it 2-0.

The third goal was the back-breaker. Short-handed, Steman found the puck deep in the Bucs' zone and flipped it into the goal to make it 3-0.

"It was a big momentum change," Steman said. "You are kind of on your heels on the penalty kill sometimes, trying to get it over with. When you score on it, it deflates the other team."

"That was huge," RoughRiders Coach Mark Carlson said. "That was great hustle and great effort."

Cedar Rapids circled the defensive wagons after that.

Des Moines got its only goal with 3.7 seconds left in the second period. A.J. Greer hit a shot on a breakaway that Tirone bounced off his leg pad, but right back to Greer, who scored on the deflection.

"We stuck with the plan," Carlson said. "There were lots of penalties in the game, but that's the way it goes sometimes."

The two teams got a little chippy at both ends of the ice and had 17 combined penalties. That included five penalties for roughing and four for fighting.

RoughRider Carlos Fornaris and Buccaneer Roman Uchyn were each ejected midway through

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the first period for fighting after the whistle.

Des Moines leads the USHL with 281 penalty minutes and had 31 minutes Friday. Cedar Rapids had 29 minutes of its own in penalties (but still has a league-low 131 minutes for the season), which led to a lot of penalty-killing.

"You try to attack the whole time," Steman said. "The best defense you can get is scoring more goals. Everyone in the D zone did their job tonight."

Cedar Rapids has to turn around and travel to Des Moines for a rematch Saturday night.

The RoughRiders will finish their postponed game against Dubuque on Tuesday in The Stable and return home again on Friday, Nov. 15 and Saturday, Nov. 16, against Fargo and Dubuque.

"Our defense has been great so far," Tirone said. "We've been high-scoring, but we try to be well-rounded with our scoring defense.

"The more we can score and keep the puck out of the net, the better we will be."

Des Moines 0 1 0 - 1
Cedar Rapids 2 1 0 - 3

Scoring

CR - Charlie Curti (Nick Master, Corey Petrash)
CR - Corey Petrash (Dylan McLaughlin, Nick Master)
CR - Dylan Steman (Corey Petrash)
DM - A.J. Greer (Joseph Gilhooly)