RoughRiders bust out against Gamblers

Written by Ryan Suchomel

Saturday, 07 December 2013 00:09 - Last Updated Saturday, 07 December 2013 00:32

A rowdy second period couldn't put the RoughRiders off their game, and Cedar Rapids snapped a three-game losing streak on Friday with a 4-3 victory over Green Bay at The Stable.

Cedar Rapids killed five Green Bay (12-6-4) power plays and came up with two clutch goals in the third period to improve to 13-6-1.

The RoughRiders had lost their previous three games, and had scored just one goal combined in their last two contests.

"We just knew we had to keep going, keep plugging away," forward Jason Kalinowski said. "We knew we were playing well. We just had a couple bad bounces; we knew it was going to come with hard work."

RoughRider Coach Mark Carlson said he doesn't worry about losing streaks. Cedar Rapids has also enjoyed a five-game and three-game winning streaks this season.

"Why bring these things up?" Carlson said. "Do you live in yesterday? Because I don't. ... We happened to drop a couple."

The week of practice seemed to have jarred something loose, as Cedar Rapids put a puck in the net just 3 minutes, 49 seconds into the game. Judd Peterson, skating hard behind the Gamblers' net, sent a one-timer up to Alec Marsh, who buried it in the net.

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Later in the first period, Mark Auk got the puck off a face-off in Green Bay's zone, and hammered a 45-foot shot past Green Bay goalie Jared Rutledge during a power play.

"We wanted to outwork the other team," Auk said. "That's what we did in the first period there.

"It was definitley a good start for us."

The two Eastern Conference rivals picked up the intensity at the end of the first period, with a little scuffle after the buzzer.

That turned into several fights in the second period. The teams combined for 14 penalties (for 67 minutes) in just the second period, including two game misconducts and seven majors.

"We always have battles against Green Bay," Auk said. "They are a good team, and its just competitive spirits on both sides.

"It was a tough period there. We were in the box a lot. They got some penalties too. It was a rough period, but we managed."

The Gamblers didn't convert any of their power play chances (0-for-5 for the game), but they did crack the scoreboard late in the second period when Kevin Irwin passed it from behind the RoughRider net to Sebastian Weberg to make it 2-1.

Then, midway through the third period, Green Bay tied the game up off a long shot by Irwin after a face off in the RoughRiders' zone.

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Cedar Rapids responded quickly. Just 2 minutes and 8 seconds later, Dylan McLaughlin flipped a backhand pass to Kalinowski in front of the goal, and Kalinowski hit his own rebound in for the go-ahead goal.

"(Dylan) made a real nice play," Kalinowski said. "It felt good, but it wouldn't happen without my teammates. It was a good pass."

That put Cedar Rapids back on top 3-2, and the RoughRiders added an insurance goal a few minutes later.

Clark Kuster smacked a big shot from near the blue line, going top shelf to make it 4-2 with 7:36 left to play.

Cedar Rapids needed the insurance, as Gambler forward Ryan Lough hit a breakaway goal with 3:47 left.

But despite a late RoughRider penalty for hooking by Auk, and then Green Bay pulling its goalie, Cedar Rapids was able to kill the puck for the final few minutes.

"That's a big part of our game," Auk said of the penalty kills. "We always work on PKs. Its all about blocking shots."

The defense supported goalie Danny Tirone, who made 26 saves for Cedar Rapids.

The RoughRiders are back in action Saturday against Tri-City (5-14-2). The attendence at The Stable Friday was 2,004, a little off the season average of 2,303.

Saturday is the second game of a four-game homestand before the Christmas break.

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"It was good to get the first one," Auk said.

"The team is really fired up and looking forward to getting another win tomorrow," Kalinowski said.

Green Bay   0 1 2 - 3
Cedar Rapids 2 0 2 - 4

First period
CR - Alec Marsh (Judd Peterson, Charlie Curti) 3:49.
CR - Mark Auk (pp) (Dylan Steman) 12:18.
Second period
GB - Sebastian Weberg (Dawson Cook, Kevin Irwin) 17:47.
Third period
GB - Kevin Irwin (Dawson Cook) 7:46.
CR - Jason Kalinowski (Dylan McLaughlin) 9:54.
CR - Clark Kuster (Dylan McLaughlin, Jack Rowe) 12:24.
GB - Ryan Lough (Evan Tironese, Drew Best) 16:13.