

Tri-City trips RoughRiders, 6-3

Written by Ryan Suchomel

Saturday, 07 December 2013 23:58 - Last Updated Sunday, 08 December 2013 00:03



Tri-City scored 21 seconds into the game Saturday night at the Cedar Rapids Ice Arena and things went downhill for the RoughRiders from there.

Cedar Rapids rallied but lost, 6-3, breaking a seven-game home winning streak.

Tri-City (6-15-2) broke a five-game losing streak and improved to 3-9 playing on the road.

"We needed this win real bad," Tri-City forward Joel L'Esperance said. "We needed these points."

Tri-City didn't look like a team that had dropped 10 of its last 11 when L'Esperance scored the first of his four goals just 21 seconds into the game.

"They came out ready to play and we didn't," Cedar Rapids forward Dylan Gareau said. "We didn't show up in the first period, and getting down 3-0 isn't going to help."

Goals by Christian Horn and L'Esperance made it 3-0 Tri-City early in the second period.

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"Got to give them credit," RoughRiders Coach Mark Carlson said. "We weren't ready to play."

Cedar Rapids (13-7-1) had stopped a three-game slide Friday with a 4-3 win over Green Bay. Tri-City looked like a big, juicy 'W' there for the taking.

"We just need to figure out what it takes to win every single night," Gareau said. "You win one night, it doesn't automatically carry over to the next night."

The RoughRiders seemed to get on track in a wild flurry in the second period.

Gareau put Cedar Rapids on the scoreboard with a shot near the blue line. Then, just 12 seconds later, Corey Petrash scored on a mad dash to the net after the faceoff at center ice. The cage came off, but the goal was ruled good after a video review.

Cedar Rapids then got a power play goal by Gareau 2 minutes and 15 seconds after its previous goal. That tied it 3-3 with 30:28 left in the game.

"I think we came together and realized it takes a lot of work to win in this league," Gareau said. "Then we just let our foot off the gas."

Despite having the momentum and the crowd of 1,951 behind them, the RoughRiders couldn't keep the scoring up.

Instead, a penalty by Petrash at the end of the second period for elbowing (charging) gave Tri-City a five-minute power play to start the third period. It also resulted in an ejection for Petrash.

"(Momentum) was kind of short-lived," Carlson said. "Funny in this game, the team that works

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the hardest and works the toughest is going to win most nights."

L'Esperance scored his third goal, going 1-on-1 against RoughRider goalie Chris Birdsall just 1 minute, 9 seconds into the third period.

"Those are the best times on the ice, when it gets a little chippy," L'Esperance said.

L'Esperance added the coffin nail with 14:18 left to play, his fourth goal of the night.

"It's been since Midgets that I've had a game like that," L'Esperance said. "I was just feeling it. My linemates were really helping me out."

Tri-City goalie Jacob Johansson, who had 29 saves, came up with several big stops as the clock ticked away on Cedar Rapids. Even a late RoughRider power play couldn't generate a big attack.

"We always have the mentality that we're in every single game," Gareau said. "We were just trying to go one goal at a time."

Tri-City added an empty-net goal by Ryan McMurphy with 46 seconds left.

Cedar Rapids fell to 7-2 at home.

The RoughRiders continue their holiday homestand next weekend with a Friday game against Chicago (8-15-1) and Saturday versus Indiana (12-5-4).

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"We're pretty sour right now," Gareau said. "Everyone is pretty upset. We'll move on from here and learn from this experience and get ready for next weekend."

Tri-City 2 1 3 - 6
Cedar Rapids 0 3 0 - 3

Period 1

TC - Joel L'Esperance (Christian Horn, Garrett Gamez) 0:21.

TC - Christian Horn (Garrett Gamez) 14:37.

Period 2

TC - Joel L'Esperance (Garrett Gamez, Tory Dello) 2:54.

CR - Dylan Gareau (Andrew Poturalski) 8:01.

CR - Corey Petrash (Ivan Provorov, Carlos Fornaris) 8:13.

CR - Dylan Gareau (pp) (Judd Peterson, Charlie Curti) 10:28.

Period 3

TC - Joel L'Esperance (pp) (Nolan Gluchowski) 1:09.

TC - Joe L'Esperance (Garrett Cecere, Garrett Gamez) 5:42.

TC - Ryan McMurphy (empty net) 19:14.