

Skidding RoughRiders fall to Chicago

Written by Ryan Suchomel

Saturday, 14 December 2013 00:33 - Last Updated Saturday, 14 December 2013 00:41



The RoughRiders gave away paper hockey masks for Friday the 13th. On the ice, Chicago played the part of "Jason" by scaring out a 4-1 win over Cedar Rapids.

It marked the fourth loss in the last five games for Cedar Rapids (13-8-1).

"We need to get better, get tougher, both mentally and physically," RoughRiders Coach Mark Carlson said. "I thought we did a lot good in the game, but you've got to stay focused throughout the course of the game, and you have to earn victories."

Chicago (10-15-1) led 2-1 for most of the final two periods. The Steel added two goals in the final 4 minutes, including an empty-net score with 38 seconds left.

The RoughRiders couldn't get their offense on track over the final 58 minutes, despite both teams taking 34 shots on goal.

"I think we made this goalie look way better than he is tonight," RoughRider forward Judd Peterson said. "He's a big goalie. He was good high, and we kept shooting it up on him."

"Coach said to shoot low. We didn't do that enough. We tried to go away, be fancier. And it just didn't happen."

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Chicago goalie Chris Nell had 33 saves on 34 shots. He helped the Steel kill five penalties. Cedar Rapids was 0-for-5 in power plays.

"We didn't work hard enough on the power play and we were way too fancy," Carlson said. "We were trying to make passes instead of shooting. Trying to have a skills competition instead of shooting. Not hunting down pucks. All the things that require a lot of work."

Cedar Rapids got its only goal 1 minute, 31 seconds into the game when Peterson skated from left to right in front of Nell and put his own rebound into the net.

Chicago quieted the crowd of 2,140 at the Cedar Rapids Ice Arena at the start of the second period. C.J. Smith set up in front of the goal and scored off a one-time pass from Brendon Kearney.

Then, just 51 seconds later, Danny Fetzner stole the puck deep in the RoughRider zone and wristed a shot past goalie Danny Tirone to put Chicago up 2-1.

Both goal scorers set up in front of the goal untouched.

"You can't leave guys wide open," Peterson said. "They got free shots; we made mental mistakes."

"It's just mentally, guys not being prepared, not focused on who we should have. That's Day 1 stuff, communicating who we should have."

"You can't give the opponent those opportunities in those areas," Carlson said. "Otherwise, you are going to have an issue."

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The Steel put down almost any thought of overtime with a goal by Robbie Payne with 3:46 left in the third period - another straight-on shot off a pass from John Ernsting.

Cedar Rapids, outscored 22 to 11 over its last six games, needs to figure things out Saturday against Indiana (13-5-4), a team three points above them in the Eastern Conference standings.

It is the last game before the holiday break for the RoughRiders, who will return to action Dec. 27 at Des Moines.

"It's a good test for us heading into the break," Peterson said. "Coach said we need that win so we can head in on a positive note.

"What happened the last couple weeks, we need to forget about that now. Come out tomorrow on a new slate, focus on getting a win and going on break and come back and starting again. Forget about tonight; come back with a new mind. Be tougher."

The puck drops at 7:05 p.m. Saturday.

Chicago	0 2 2 - 4
Cedar Rapids	1 0 0 - 1

Period 1

CR - Judd Peterson (Nick Master, Andrew Poturlaski) 1:29.

Period 2

Chi - C.J. Smith (pp) (Brendon Kearnev) 1:04.

Chi - Danny Fetzner 1:55.

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Period 3

Chi - Robbie Payne (John Ernsting) 16:14.

Chi - Alec Vanko (empty net) 19:22.