

RoughRiders belted by Waterloo, 6-2

Written by Ryan Suchomel

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Down by one goal heading into the final period, Cedar Rapids came back onto the ice and was outshot by Waterloo 17 to 2 over the final 20 minutes.

The Black Hawks, who trailed early, scored six unanswered goals and beat the RoughRiders, 6-2, Saturday in USHL action at the Cedar Rapids Ice Arena.

"Concerning," RoughRiders Coach Mark Carlson said. "I think we need to play better at all three positions. At times we played well, but over 60 minutes, we didn't play well enough."

Cedar Rapids (14-10-1) was coming off a 5-4 win at Des Moines Friday after losing 6 of 7 before Christmas. But the December cold streak continued Saturday, and the RoughRiders fell to 2-5 in the month.

"There are a couple habits we had at the beginning of the year that are beginning to bite us," defenseman Clark Kuster said. "Things we had gotten away with, we're not getting away with anymore."

"We've just got to sharpen up in all areas of the game and get better."

Carlson, who brought in several new faces over the holiday break, on Saturday swapped goalies after falling behind 3-2. "Just trying to get a little spark," he said.

Chris Birdsall started and took the loss. He made 13 saves and gave up three goals in 34 minutes, 29 seconds in goal. Danny Tirone made 17 saves and gave up three goals in 25 minutes, 31 seconds in goal.

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Waterloo (20-5-1) kept the pressure on for the entire game, scoring goals in a variety of ways. "They wanted it more," Nate Widman said. "They were better tonight than we were."

The RoughRiders opened the game with a quick goal by Dylan Steman, who deflected a long shot by Mark Auk past Waterloo goalie Cal Petersen. Cedar Rapids went up 2-0 on a goal from Mitch Maloney - one of three newcomers to the RoughRiders roster - on the rebound from a shot attempt by Judd Pederson.

The crowd of 3,359 was loud and happy, even when Waterloo got a goal of its own late in the period when Patrick Russell beat Birdsall glove-side on a shot from near the blue line.

Russell struck again at the start of the second period on a breakaway, faking left and depositing the puck right. A few minutes later, John Witala wristed a long shot past Birdsall's glove to put the Black Hawks up 3-2.

That's when Carlson made the switch at goalie, taking out the lefty and bringing in Tirone, a righty.

It appeared to be a wise move, as Tirone kept a clean sheet the rest of the second period. He also had an impressive kick save on a hard shot by Russell midway through the third period.

But the Black Hawks kept the pressure on and scored three goals in the final period. Zach Sanford got a weird deflection off a shot by Mark Friedman, then less than two minutes later Peter Krieger hit a hard shot that was in Tirone's glove for a split-second, but then flopped out and into the goal.

Waterloo added insult to injury with a sixth goal, this one by Krieger that hit the pipe and bounced in past Tirone.

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"We came out there and played well to start out the game," Widman said. "But we kind of let up and let them back in. This team hasn't won at a high level.

"Part of the learning curve is getting up early, and then putting teams away."

During their current four-game losing streak at The Stable, Cedar Rapids has been outscored 21-7. "We need to be more consistent in everything that we're doing," Carlson said.

Cedar Rapids returns to the ice on Tuesday at Green Bay (14-8-5), then travels to a pair of games at Eastern Conference leader Indiana (16-5-4) next weekend.

The next home game is Wednesday, Jan. 8 against Sioux City (19-7-1).

"We're looking forward," Carlson said. "Looking forward to getting better tomorrow and going from there."

"There are always better days ahead," Widman said. "We'll use this as a learning opportunity and get better, and keep moving forward."

Waterloo	1	2	3	-	6
Cedar Rapids	2	0	0	-	2

First period

CR - Dylan Steman (Mark Auk, Corey Petrash) 3:36.

CR - Mitch Maloney (Judd Peterson) 10:23.

W - Patrick Russell (Liam Pecararo, Brandon Montour) 15:20.

Second period

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W - Patrick Russell (Peter Krieger, Brandon Motour) 2:49.

W - John Witala (Austin Vieth) 9:03.

Third period

W - Zach Sanford (pp) (Mark Friedman, Dane Cooper) 6:30.

W - Peter Krieger (Liam Pecararo) 8:21.

W - Peter Krieger (Brandon Montour, Alec McCrea) 14:34.