

Riders miss chance to clinch playoffs

Written by Jim Ecker

Friday, 21 March 2014 22:06 -



The Cedar Rapids RoughRiders missed a chance to clinch a spot in the USHL playoffs Friday night when they lost to Omaha, 3-2, before 2,788 fans at the Cedar Rapids Ice Arena.

The RoughRiders will get another shot Saturday night when they visit the Dubuque Fighting Saints in a showdown for second place in the Eastern Conference.

Frederik Tiffels lifted Cedar Rapids into a 2-2 tie Friday when he scored with 14 minutes, 24 seconds left in the third quarter with an assist from Andrew Oglevie. That gave RoughRider fans something to cheer about, but it did not last long.

Luca Frigo scored just 13 seconds later to give Omaha a 3-2 lead and the RoughRiders never found the net again, despite two power plays and an extra skater when Coach Mark Carlson pulled goalie Danny Tirone in the final minute.

Cedar Rapids is sitting in great shape for the playoffs with a 32-20-3 record for 67 points in the Eastern Conference. Dubuque is in third place with a 31-18-4 mark for 66 points, and there's a three-way tie for fourth place with Chicago, Muskegon and Green Bay all with 56 points with two weeks left in the regular season.

The top four teams in the Eastern Conference will make the playoffs, and the RoughRiders can

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clinch the No. 4 seed with a victory over Dubuque Saturday night. Of more importance, the RoughRiders can stay in second place in the Eastern Conference with a victory over the Fighting Saints as they jockey for the playoffs.

In all likelihood, Cedar Rapids and Dubuque will finish second and third - or third and second - in the Eastern Conference and face each other in the first round of the USHL playoffs in a best-of-5 showdown. The higher seed will have home-ice advantage, so the RoughRiders and Fighting Saints will have plenty of incentive Saturday night.

Oglevie gave Cedar Rapids a 1-0 lead Friday with a power-play goal in the first period, with assists from Charlie Curti and Andrew Poturalski.

Omaha took a 2-1 lead on goals by Niklas Folin and Anthony Angello in the second period of the well-played game. Tiffels tied it for the RoughRiders in the third period and Cedar Rapids fans were still ringing their cowbells in celebration when Frigo scored what proved to be the game-winner for Omaha 13 seconds later.

The Lancers raised their record to 37-13-5 for 79 points, good for second place in the Western Conference.

Omaha 0 2 1 - 3

Cedar Rapids 1 0 1 - 2

CR - Andrew Oglevie (power play) (Charlie Curti, Andrew Poturalski)

OM - Niklas Folin (unassisted)

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OM - Anthony Angello (Folin, Jake Randolph)

CR - Frederik Tiffels (Oglevie)

OM - Luca Frigo (Randolph)