

Riders top Dubuque, clinch playoffs

Written by Metro Sports Report

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DUBUQUE — The Cedar Rapids RoughRiders clinched a spot in the USHL playoffs Saturday night with a 3-1 victory over Dubuque before 3,098 fans at the Mystique Ice Center.

Perhaps of more importance, the RoughRiders moved three points ahead of the Fighting Saints for second place in the Eastern Conference. Cedar Rapids has a 33-20-3 record for 69 points, and Dubuque has a 31-19-4 mark for 66 points, although the Fighting Saints have two games in hand entering the last two weeks of the regular season.

Neither team scored during the first two periods of the defensive struggle Saturday night. The RoughRiders broke through on a goal by Alec Marsh at the 2:19 mark of the third period for a 1-0 lead with an assist from Dylan Steman.

Frederik Tiffels and Andrew Poturalski scored on power plays to give Cedar Rapids a 3-0 lead. Dubuque scored its only goal with 44 seconds left in the contest when it pulled its goalie for an extra attacker.

Danny Tirone pitched a shutout for more than 59 minutes for the RoughRiders.

Clark Kuster collected two assists for Cedar Rapids. Poturalski had a goal and an assist. Andrew Oglevie also had an assist.

Cedar Rapids can finish no worse than fourth in the Eastern Conference standings. The top four teams in each conference make the playoffs, so the RoughRiders have secured a spot in the postseason.

Cedar Rapids won the regular-season series from Dubuque, 4-3. The two teams are likely to meet in the first round of the playoffs.

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Cedar Rapids 0 0 3 - 3

Dubuque 0 0 1 - 1

CR - Alec Marsh (Dylan Steman)

CR - Frederik Tiffels (power play) (Clark Kuster, Andrew Poturalski)

CR - Poturalski (power play) (Andrew Oglevie, Kuster)

DUB - Dyan Gambrell (extra attacker) (Seamus Malone, Shane Eiserman)