

RoughRiders trim Muskegon, 4-3

Written by Mike Condon

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One thing looks pretty certain when it comes to the 2014-15 edition of the Cedar Rapids RoughRiders.

You better bring some speed to the rink in an effort to keep up. For two periods Friday night at the Cedar Rapids Ice Arena, Muskegon was able to keep up, but in the third period it was the Riders who got to the loose pucks just a bit quicker.

Aaron Thow's goal from the slot less than two minutes into the final period broke a 3-3 tie and the Riders (2-0) held the visitors off the rest of the way to post a 4-3 win before 1,467 fans.

"I thought it was a real good hockey game," said Riders Coach Mark Carlson. "Muskegon is a good club. It was a good up and down game and we'll see what we can improve on for tomorrow."

The same two teams meet at the Ice Arena Saturday night at 7:05.

The Lumberjacks came into Friday's game with three wins to open their season. They fell behind the Riders three times, but after each of the first three Cedar Rapids goals, Muskegon was able to tie within two minutes of each score.

Being able to remain composed and continue to battle impressed Carlson.

"I like our group," he said. "I thought we really stuck with it tonight and were able to get the win."

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Jiri Fronk got the Riders on the board at 15:32 off a beautiful feed from Andrew Oglevie. Muskegon tied it 1:21 later on a David Trinkberger goal.

The teams scored four goals in the second 20 minutes. Oglevie and Cal Burke scored for the Riders. Nicolas Carbone scored 34 seconds after Oglevie's goal and Tom Marchin's tying tally came 1:52 after Burke's goal.

"The guys really fought hard out there tonight," said Thow. "We'd score one, then let one up, but we kept coming strong. I think it shows the toughness of the guys we have."

It appeared Muskegon may have taken the lead late in the period. Officials ruled no goal off a mad scramble in front of Riders goaltender Ben Blacker and then went to review the overhead video on a monitor in the penalty box.

After a lengthy delay, it was ruled that Blacker had kept the puck out of the net.

Thow's game-winner came just as a Muskegon penalty was expiring. He got the puck in the high slot and rifled it past Lumberjack goalie Eric Schierhorn.

"I got a good pass (from Alec Marsh) and I just let it go," said Thow. "It felt good to put one in."

The Riders' speed may have been the difference the rest of the way in Thow's eyes.

"We have a fast team," Thow said. "We were doing great on the back check tonight so that allowed us to play up and down the ice really fast."

The fact the Lumberjacks outshot the Riders, 35-27, wasn't a concern for Carlson.

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"I am more concerned with scoring chances, not necessarily the number of shots," he said.

There won't be much time for either team to think about Friday's game heading into the rematch Saturday night.

"We're pumped. We love this," Thow said. "They were 3-0 coming in and one of the best teams in the league. We didn't want them taking a point from us so we're excited to see them again."

Muskegon    **1 2 0 - 3**

Cedar Rapids  **1 2 1 - 4**

CR - Jiri Fronk (Andrew Oglevie)

Musk - David Trinkberger (Cooper Marody, Ryker Killins)

CR - Andrew Oglevie (Zach Court)

Musk - Nicolas Carbone (Steven Merl)

CR - Cal Burke (Charlie Curti)

Musk - Tom Marchin (Matej Paulovic)

CR - Aaron Thow (Alec Marsh, Dylan McLaughlin)