

Mavericks swept by N. Dakota

MSU gives up four third-period goals in 4-3 loss

By Shane Frederick
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GRAND FORKS, N.D. — The Minnesota State men's hockey team tried to defeat North Dakota with one hand tied behind its back Saturday night, but the act lost its magic the more they tried it. North Dakota — ranked 11th and rising — came from behind in the final seven minutes of the third period to defeat the Mavericks 4-3 and sweep the Western Collegiate Hockey Association series at Ralph Engelstad Arena.

The Mavericks put the Sioux on the power play 10 times, including seven times in the second and third periods. They grabbed a 3-2 lead with Trevor Bruess' short-handed goal midway through the third period but lost the advantage when they went back to the box and allowed a Chris VandeVelde power-play goal at 13:40.

"We were undisciplined; that can't happen this time of year," said Mavericks winger Kael Mouillierat, who assisted on all three of his team's goals. "We should know by now. The penalties we took were lazy penalties — holding, hooking, high-sticking. Those are the toughest kinds of penalties to kill off, and it bit us in the behind tonight."

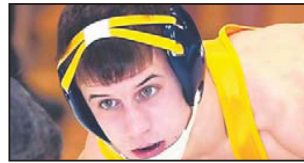
Freshman Jason Gregoire broke Minnesota State's heart — on Valentine's Day, no less — when he scored the game-winning goal with 2:52 left to play.

Gregoire's goal came with the teams skating 4-on-4. He put a rebound back behind goalie Mike Zacharias after teammate and Sioux leading scorer Chay Genoway's made an impressive individual play to carry the puck deep and get a shot on net.

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"I thought that the kids competed hard all night," Mavericks coach Troy Jutting said. "We played extremely hard, with a lot of heart and intensity. We took some dumb penalties, though. I don't know, I guess (North Dakota) only took two over the last 2½ periods."

Minnesota State had four power-play opportunities, and took a 1-0 lead on Geoff Irwin's 5-on-3 goal at 11:57 of the first period. In the third, Irwin made it 2-2 with a goal 53 seconds in before

Bruess took back the lead.

The Mavericks appeared on the verge of getting just their second win of the season when trailing after two periods. Instead, they fell to 1-11-1 in those games.

"If we're the team we want to be, we gotta be able to shut teams down at the end of games," Mouillierat said.

Mouillierat set up Bruess' short-handed goal — the Mavericks' 10th of the season and their fifth against North Dakota — by blocking a Sioux shot while on MSU's ninth kill of the night.

About two minutes later, however, the Sioux fans were

back into it as MSU defenseman Brian Kilburg was called for interference. VandeVelde tied the game by scoring on a cross-crease pass from Ryan Martens.

"There were all kinds of ups and downs in that hockey game," said North Dakota coach Dave Hakstol, whose team moved into a tie for first place in the WCHA standings. "Physically, maybe it wasn't our best game, but mentally, that was as good as any game we've had this year."

The Sioux got a big lift in the closing seconds of the first period.

The Mavericks were about to get out of the period with a 1-0 lead but didn't make it, as Matt Watkins scored with 2.4 seconds left in the frame.

Minnesota State defenseman Ben Youds lost a battle for the puck along the boards, and Andrew Kozek passed across to Watkins who was wide open between the circles and let loose a slap shot that slipped under goalie Zacharias' arm and trickled over the goal line.

The Sioux got its first lead at 1:53 the second period, when Ryan Duncan took advantage of one of Rylan Galiardi's three penalties.