



Sports

Michigan Tech snaps skid, routs MSU

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HOUGHTON, MICH. — If the Minnesota State men's hockey team thought that bottom-of-the-barrel Michigan Tech would cure what's been ailing it over the last few weeks, it was fooled.

The first dose of an opponent that hadn't won a game in nearly three months hardly went down like a spoonful of sugar. Instead, it made the Mavericks' stomachs turn even more, as they fell 4-1 Friday night at the MacInnis Ice Arena.

"We're very upset, obviously," MSU defenseman Kurt Davis said. "We felt like we came out and played at (Michigan Tech's) level. Everyone was looking around and waiting for something to happen."

Tech entered the game on a 15-game winless streak that included 14 losses. The Huskies' last win came on Nov. 13 at Minnesota Duluth on a night when freshman goalie Kevin Genoe had to make 48 saves.

On Friday, Genoe was solid, stopping 30 shots and not allowing a goal until Rylan Galiardi's short-hander with 4:25 remaining in the game. But he hardly had to be an acrobat to get his team's

fourth win of the season.

Part of that was the play of a disruptive defense in front of him that blocked shots and got pieces of passes. But a big part of that was the fact that some of the Mavericks' best scoring chances simply missed, compounding a goal-scoring issue that's been plaguing the team nearly all season.

"Give credit to their kid in net," MSU coach Troy Jutting said. "But when you get 30 shots, not that they were all great chances, you gotta score."

Especially against Michigan Tech, which entered the weekend allowing a national-worst 4.29 goals per game.

The loss was the fifth straight for the Mavericks (11-14-2, 5-13-1 in WCHA) and their sixth consecutive defeat in WCHA play. They sit one spot ahead of the Huskies in the league standings but have a five-point lead.

"It's not so much (losing to Tech), it's that we're frustrated with losing," Jutting said after a lengthy post-game team meeting. "It doesn't matter if it's that team or someone else."

Tech senior Malcolm Gwilliam scored two goals and assisted on another, while Drew Dobson and Brett Olson had the other goals.

After a scoreless first period, the Huskies broke the stalemate with three goals in the second. All three were scored right in front of goalie Austin Lee, with two coming on rebounds.

At 1:26, Drew Dobson crashed the net and tapped in a nice centering pass from Jordan Baker after a turnover at the MSU blue line.

Brett Olson made it 2-0 at 7:13, shooting in the rebound of John Kivisto's shot. Lee appeared unable to make the save after defenseman Tyler Elbrecht was checked into him.

Finally, with 2:22 remaining in the period, Lee stopped a Bennett Royer shot but the goalie's glove whiffed on the loose rebound lying at his side, and Gwilliam poked it into the net for what would be a commanding lead over a team that had been held to just one goal in five of its last nine games.

"If you look at (Tech's) goals, they didn't do anything special," Davis said. "They

just found the tough areas and got guys in front of the net. They pretty much out-battled guys to rebounds. That's what we have to do right now."

Jutting was upset with his team's inability to clear the zone on those goals. The last two came after long defensive shifts in the Mavericks' end of the rink.

"We had opportunities to clear the puck out of the zone," he said. "Those should have been out of our end."

Minnesota State had nearly four consecutive minutes of power-play time to close out the second period and to start the third but still couldn't score despite playing against the country's worst penalty kill.

"We came out flying in the third period," Davis said. "We were down by three goals, but they couldn't get out of their zone for the first 10 minutes.

"Where was that team in the first two periods? Where was the grit? Where was the determination and the drive to be successful?"

Gwilliam scored a 4-on-3 power play goal to make it 4-0 with 4:55 to go. Thirty seconds later, Galiardi got a steal and a score right in front of Genoe.

Lee finished the game with 24 saves.

The Mavericks and Huskies will play again at 4:07 p.m. today.