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Sports



Minnesota State junior defenseman Steve Wagner has picked up four of his six assists on the power play this season.

MSU: Penalty kill last in WCHA

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Going into this weekend's Western Collegiate Hockey Association series against Alaska-Anchorage, Minnesota State has lost four games in a row and five straight at Midwest Wireless Civic Center.

"Especially in your home barn," Wagner continued. "If you're good on the power play at home, everything is so much easier."

The Mavericks have experienced slow starts and so-so goaltending in their slump, but coach Troy Jutting didn't hesitate when asked what the key was to turning things around.

"I think scoring on the power play," he said. "I think that's going to be a huge factor. If you look at last weekend, if we score on the power play, we win. ..."

"I don't know if 25 percent (MSU's success rate before the Bemidji series) is realistic. But I do know that with Travis Morin and Mick Berge and Steve Wagner, we've got kids who can score."

Two of Morin's four goals have come on the power play,

as have four of Berge's team-leading six goals. Freshman forward Kael Mouillierat has two power-play goals.

Currently, Alaska-Anchorage has the WCHA's fourth-best power play with a 20.9 percent success rate. The Mavericks are seventh (and 22nd nationally) at 19.3.

Minnesota State's penalty kill is last in the conference at 77.2 percent, but it shut out the Beavers 11 times.

In the Seawolves' 2-1 upset win over Wisconsin last Saturday, all three goals came on the power play.

"I just don't see a lot of 5-on-5 goals being scored," Wagner said. "Teams in this league are pretty even."

Jutting said some of the Mavericks' power-play problems against Bemidji State — the Mavericks also allowed two short-handed goals — came down to fatigue, and Wagner agreed.

The coach canceled Monday's practice and had a short workout Tuesday.

"It gave them a chance to refresh the legs a little bit," Jutting said. "I hope it worked."

Mavericks hoping for power surge

MSU looks to erase last weekend's performance

By Shane Frederick
Free Press Staff Writer

MANKATO — Steve Wagner looks left and he's got Mick Berge. He looks right and there's Travis Morin.

Over the first six games of the college hockey season, those two forwards helped make Minnesota State's power play fourth-best in the country.

"I don't mind letting T-Mo or Mick shoot," said Wagner, a junior defenseman who has picked up four of his six assists during power-play situations.

But last week against Bemidji State, the Mavericks went dry. They were held scoreless on 14 chances with the man advantage and were swept in the nonconference series.

"You can't go through a game without scoring a power-play goal," Wagner said.

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