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Anchor Bay rolls to mercy-rule win Tars advance to semifinal round with shutout of Port Huron High

By STEVE KAMIDOI
Special to the Times Herald

PORT HURON TWP. - A five-goal second-period outburst by the Anchor Bay hockey team highlighted an 8-0 win over Port Huron High on Tuesday in a Division 2 pre-regional game at Glacier Pointe Ice Complex.

The Tars (9-14-1) advance to the semifinal round of the regional and will play Rochester Hills Stoney Creek on Thursday at the Macomb Suburban Rink. Game time is 8:45 p.m.

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Senior Zach Taylor led the Tars with two goals and assist; Adam Gainer (two assists), Kyle Handlon (assist), Anthony Shaner, Alex Kott (assist), Brian Sullivan and Brett Knybel (assist) each scored one goal. Goalies A.J. Gaglio and Jeremy Wierzbowski combined for the shutout.

Coach Daryel McCarrel said the game easily could have taken a different path after the first period ended with a slim 1-0 lead.

"We needed to stay focused because we just haven't scored a lot of goals this season (32)," McCarrel said. "Gaglio made a great save to keep the lead on a break in late in the period or else we're tied at 1-1.

"We got the bounces, put the puck at the net and created the traffic in front that led to the goals."

Big Reds' Coach Ben Pionk said the Tars didn't allow any room to mount a comeback similar to last week when High (3-20-1) chipped back from a 4-0 deficit and fell short 4-3.

"(Anchor Bay) took us out of our game and controlled the play," Pionk said. "We hurt ourselves with penalties too many times."

Gainer scored the game's first goal at the 1:55 mark of the first period and it wasn't until midway through the second period that the flurry of goals started for the Tars.

In a six minute stretch the Tars netted five goals, which included three on the power play to take a commanding 6-0 lead. The eight-goal lead came with 3:22 left in the third period to end the game under high school rules.

"We've had our moments that we've played with the best teams in the state and been happy in a loss, like against Livonia Churchill," McCarrel said. "And then we've been disappointed in the way we've played in a couple of our wins.

"It's important that we play competitive hockey without any excuses. The mental part of the game is so important at this point in the season."

Gaglio, a sophomore, said the "team chemistry" has developed strong as the season has progressed.

"We're all happy to be together as one," Gaglio said. "It was not that way early in the season; we've become a close group.

[Zoom Photo](#)



Zach Taylor

[Zoom Photo](#)

"It might be cliché but it's down to one game at a time. Coach (McCarrel) said before the game that we take it one goal at a time and to never be satisfied if we get the lead. It was the same thing after the first period and the second that he stressed. We all know that we can't afford any letdown."

McCarrel is hoping an injury in the first period to defenseman Aaron Teal is not serious and he can return the lineup Thursday.

"Aaron took a hard shot to the ankle and we said between periods that everyone would need to step up and pick it up. There was no question that we did."

Pionk was happy with the way the Big Reds played the second half of the season and expects good thing for next season.

"We came a long way as a team and we'll have 15 players back," Pionk said. "We'll need to work on replacing our two senior goalies (Nick Gordon and Trevor Prince), but the program is headed in the right direction."



Ben Pionk

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Originally published February 27, 2008

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