

Michael Lazzaro
PSU vs. Potsdam

Nobody knew which Plattsburgh State Cardinal team was going to take the ice Saturday night at the Stafford Arena. The team that dominated Potsdam 11-1 in late October or the one that lost 4-2 in the season finale just eight days before.



The answer came relatively quick in the form of Dylan Clarke's redirection power-play goal just four minutes into the game. Plattsburgh never looked back, coasting to a 6-0 playoff win.

The Potsdam Bears

could only respond by recording a shot on goal for a quarter-period and only tallied their second on net halfway through the first and at the first intermission Plattsburgh was safely ahead by three goals. "Playing at home is such an advantage, the crowd's intensity really focuses you," team captain Nick Rolls said.

By the time the Bears awoke from hibernation it was too late for a comeback. The Cardinals pace was impressively matched for most of the second period by the Bears. Penalties and amazing stops by goalie Brian Hince kept them from capitalizing on their improving play. Rolls stretched the lead to 6-0 on two consecutive goals, one halfway through the second and a score with seven seconds in regulation.

Freshman Goalie Bryan Hince recorded his first playoff shutout. The first since they shut out Potsdam in 2005. One Hince save will be etched into Plattsburgh Men's Hockey lore. Playing the puck behind the net Potsdam was looking to mount their comeback. Hince anticipated a pass to the front for a one timer and positioned himself accordingly. Only to take one last glance to make sure the pass was coming something entirely different transpired. A shot from behind the net... and an amazing save not letting a bank shot enter the goal. Hince jumped and corkscrewed in the air, making even an Olympic diving coach proud of his form, smothering the puck with his chest protector and waiting for the whistle. "It was amazing to watch," Rolls commented. Coach Robert Emery also noticed the work, "he made some great saves for us when our team lost focus." The 2,100 fans in attendance roared in agreement.

Emery was not satisfied with his team's play. "We lost focus" he repeated. Up by four or five goals, it's easy to. But the team took an uncharacteristically high amount of penalties in the third period; spending half of it on the penalty-kill. This included a 5-on-3 to start the period because of Rolls' tripping and Mike Baccaro's (pictured) unsportsmanlike conduct penalties to end the second. "We have work to do," Emery added.

Work to prepare for dethroning the defending NCAA Division III Champion Oswego State Lakers. This time it's for the SUNYAC Championship. Oswego beat Fredonia 4-1 in their semi-final and will face Plattsburgh at 7 P.M. Saturday March 1st on Stafford Arena ice. "We're good, but they're still the team to beat" Rolls confessed, "They are the defending champs. This is why you're recruited, to add to the mystique

and the banners,” Rolls finished as teammates Ward Smith and C.J. Tozzo nodded in agreement. They’ll raise another if they win Saturday.