WOMEN'S HOCKEY: HUSKIES BOUNCE BACK AT HOME AGAINST MERCYHURST

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The University of Connecticut women's hockey (3-4-1) returned home looking to get back in the win column after a 0-2 weekend at Princeton. The Huskies hosted Mercyhurst University (5-4-1) in a two-game series on Friday and Saturday, winning one and tying one.

UConn got the first power play opportunity four minutes into the first period on Friday after interference was called on Mercyhurst. The Huskies looked to take advantage early but were unable to capitalize with five shots on target. The Lakers responded just ten seconds after returning to full strength to go up 1-0 with 13:28 to go in the first period. Goaltender Taylor Belchetz didn't let the early goal faze her, shutting down the Lakers' chances with six saves to keep the Huskies within one. UConn generated good looks late, but none found the net. Mercyhurst took a one-goal lead into the intermission despite the Huskies dominating in shots, 17-9.

Just a little over two minutes into the second period, Claire Murdoch slid a tight pass to set up Maya Serdachny point-blank, finding the net to tie the game at 1-1. The senior has been dominant on the ice recently, marking her fourth goal in three games. The Huskies looked to ride that momentum, putting immediate pressure on the Mercyhurst goal. The Lakers won a faceoff hoping to respond, but the UConn defense held strong, with three Belchetz saves and two blocks by Jade Lore stopping the Mercyhurst stretch into the media timeout. The Huskies reclaimed control, and after a pair of good-looking shots, they broke through again, this time Peyton Anzivino firing in her first goal of the season to put UConn in front 2-1. The Huskies continued to control the puck for most of the remaining time, but could not add on, taking the lead into the third period.

Mercyhurst controlled the opening minutes of the third, but none of their looks got past Belchetz and the UConn defense. Freshman Caleigh Tiller continued her incredible start to the year with her team-leading fifth goal to give the Huskies a cushion, leading 3-1 more than halfway through the last period. An interference penalty on Mercyhurst put UConn back on the power play, looking to seal the game. Despite generating plenty of chances, the Lakers successfully killed the penalty but were in a race against the clock to get back in the game. Mercyhurst emptied the net at 18:09 but were turned away by strong defensive efforts by the Huskies, closing it out to win 3-1.

The visitors began Saturday afternoon by putting pressure on UConn's goal, forcing Belchetz to make three saves in the opening two minutes. The Lakers sustained pressure for several more minutes but could not find the opening goal. The Huskies finally took control of the puck nine minutes into the period and made the most of the opportunity when Tiller delivered again after following through on a deflected shot by Grace Riley. The lead lasted just two minutes, however, as the Lakers put together a quick response to tie it back up at 1-1. Mercyhurst had plenty of chances to take a lead after heading to a power play, but the Huskies' penalty kill held them off, keeping the score tied to end the first period.

UConn got their first power-play chance less than a minute into the second period and nearly reclaimed the lead when a strike by Livvy Dewar banged off the pipe. After killing the penalty, both sides tightened up defensively, denying many chances at flipping the score.

The gridlock continued into the third period until UConn was given a power play with a little over two minutes left in regulation. The Huskies were eager to end it but were unable to take advantage of the extra skater, only recording one shot on goal. The clock ran out soon after, sending the game to overtime.

The Huskies got another chance on the power play 1:23 into OT, but once again the Mercyhurst penalty kill stepped up, stopping four shots on goal and a block to keep the game going. Tiller was sent to the box for slashing with four seconds remaining, giving the Lakers a penalty shot for a chance to win it. Belchetz held strong when it mattered most to keep the score tied to seal the tie heading into penalty shots.



The University of Connecticut women's ice hockey team faces Mercyhurst on Friday at the Toscano Family Ice Forum in Storrs. The Huskies scored three unanswered goals to defeat the Lakers 3-1 and improve to 3-4 on the season. PHOTO BY PARKER MEYERS, STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER/ THE DAILY CAMPUS

Mercyhurst converted their first two penalty shots, but Julia Pellerin and Murdoch responded to keep the shootout tied. The Lakers missed their third attempt, giving Tiller a chance to seal an impressive weekend. She slipped a shot past the goalie to find the back of the net, ending the week on a high note.

Tiller's freshman season could not be off to a better start, moving up to six goals in the first eight games, and now a shootout win to add to her resume. She also recorded a season-high 17 faceoff wins at a 65% rate. Belchetz had a strong showing in goal, recording 63 total saves to just two goals allowed over the weekend.

Next up, UConn takes on its first Hockey East opponent in Holy Cross for a home-and-home series this week. The first game is in Worcester, Massachusetts at 7 p.m. on Thursday, and the second game will be played at Toscano Family Ice Forum at 6 p.m. on Friday. Both games will be streamed live on ESPN+.

MEN'S HOCKEY: ICE BUS SPLITS HOME AND HOME WITH BOSTON UNIVERSITY



The University of Connecticut men's ice hockey team warms up ahead of its matchup against No. 15 Boston University on Thursday at the Toscano Family Ice Forum in Storrs. The game marks the Huskies' Hockey East opener. PHOTO BY PARKER MEYERS, STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER/ THE DAILY CAMPUS

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The University of Connecticut men's hockey team won an overtime thriller against the Boston University Terriers on Thursday before falling on the road Saturday night.

UConn got to work right away Thursday as Kam Hendrickson left the net and passed the puck up the boards to Ethan Whitcomb. The junior took it up the right side of the ice and snuck it past Mikhail Yegorov to give UConn an early 1-0 lead.

That would not last long as Jack Murtagh got the rebound off a Ryder Ritchie shot and tipped it in to tie the tilt at 1-1 halfway through the first period.

The Terriers tried to take the lead on an odd-man rush, but Hendrickson made a phenomenal save on a Conrad Fondrk shot before also saving Jack Harvey's shot.

Kaden Shahan then made a marvelous play by picking Mick Frechette's pocket and scoring from the same spot that Whitcomb scored from to make it 2-1 Huskies.

BU entered Thursday's game 0-11 on the power play and had their first opportunity when Kai Janviriya was whistled for a high-sticking penalty.

Right before the first period was set to expire, Jonathan Morello snuck the puck over to Nick Roukounakis, who flipped it past Hendrickson to knot the game up at 2 after one period of play.

The Terriers got an early second-period power play thanks to an Alexander Blais tripping call. Hendrickson had another great stop on a Harvey shot, and the Ice Bus was back to full strength two minutes later.

After missed opportunities for both teams, Kamil Bednarik got two minutes for high-sticking. Trey Scott took the puck up the ice and hit Ethan Gardula at the blue line. Gardula passed it back to the cutting defensemen, who fired in his first goal of the year to give UConn the lead back 3-2.

UConn made two more penalty kills before the second period came to a close.

Blais was whistled for another penalty, and the puck found Murtagh's stick again. Hendrickson was there for the save, and the Ice Bus killed their fifth penalty of the game.

A few minutes later, Blais was back in the game and sent a pass off the boards to Carlin Dezainde. The sophomore ripped a shot past Yegorov to make it a 4-2 game.

The Huskies looked to be in the clear before Carter Amico sniped a goal from the blue line to make it 4-3 with three minutes remaining.

Joey Muldowney got called for a hooking penalty, and all of a sudden, the Terriers had life.

Hendrickson made a few great saves before the pressure finally mounted on the Connecticut defense. Boston University emptied the net, and when it was a 6-on-4, a Terrier shot rebounded its way to Ritchie, who caught Hendrickson off balance. Ritchie buried the goal to tie the game with 45 seconds left. The first BU power play goal of the season came at the perfect time.

The Terriers took two early shots before Muldowney called game. Mike Murtagh hit the forward at center ice, and Muldowney hit the dagger. It was pandemonium at Toscano as UConn won their home part of the series.

Hendrickson had a career high 46 saves in a massive win for the Huskies.

The tide changed for both teams when they arrived in Boston.

The Terriers started early in Saturday's game when Charlie Tretheway scored on goalie Veeti Louhivaara just two minutes into the tilt. Tretheway was assisted by Caleb Malhotra and Xavier Villeneuve.

Then it took just five more minutes before Ben Merrill added a score for BU. Aiden Celebrini and Bednarik were credited with assisting the sophomore.

The Huskies could not capitalize on a power play late in the first period and headed into the locker room down 2-0.

Another power play opportunity would be available for the Ice Bus, but they could not muster a shot during the two minutes, and the Terriers went back to full strength. Then it was time for a BU power play after Carter Sproule was whistled for a hooking penalty.

Tynan Lawrence got the Terriers back on the board, assisted by Ritchie and Villeneuve.

Fondrk added a fourth goal as it was getting spooky for the Huskies just halfway through the game. Bednarik added his second assist while Villeneuve dished out his third and final assist of the night.

UConn was on the attack in the final two minutes of the second period, and they finally broke through when Jeremy Loranger's shot took a bounce past Yegorov for a Husky goal. This goal made it 4-1 but, more importantly, was Loranger's first goal for Connecticut since transferring in from Nebraska-Omaha.

After being denied multiple goals Thursday night, Harvey finally broke through with a third-period goal on Saturday to make it 5-1 Terriers.

Shahan got back in the scoring column as Blais set the junior up with a one-timer that found the back of the net.

Things got physical in the third as multiple penalties were called, including a five-minute major on Bednarik for spearing. On the power play, Whitcomb fired a shot that was saved by Yegorov, and it rebounded to Dezainde. The sophomore could not get the shot past Yegorov, but third time was the charm for the Huskies as Shahan scored off the rebound for his second goal of the period.

All of a sudden, it was a two-goal game with seven minutes left, something BU came back from just 48 hours before.

Alas, BU added a late shorthanded goal, and the game ended in a 6-3 Connecticut defeat.

Another series split puts UConn at 3-3 and 1-1 in Hockey East after their conference opener against the Terriers. Their next two contests will be at Merrimack College next Friday and Saturday.