



TYLER MIGNAULT/CHRONICLE

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STORRS — No. 9 Quinnipiac women's ice hockey faced off in the annual Nutmeg Classic annual tournament from Nov. 28-29.

In two hard fought battles, the Bobcats faced their earliest exit from the championship game since 2016.

NOVEMBER 28

The Quinnipiac Bobcats have been perennial contenders in the tournament for over a decade. On Friday afternoon, it's dominant stretch finally came to a close, falling in a tight, back-and-forth contest to the University of Connecticut 4-3.

This marks Quinnipiac's earliest exit since 2016 when the Bobcats failed to make it to the championship game. Throughout the game, it was the defensive struggles that forced Quinnipiac to play from behind for almost all 60 minutes of play.

"Offensively, we played the kind of game we need to win a championship," head coach Cass Turner said. "We didn't have that defensively."

The opening frame quickly turned into a goalie battle between sophomore Felicia Frank for the Bobcats and graduate student Tia Chan for the Huskies. The offense from both squads tested both keepers early, tallying 20 combined shots by the end of the first period.

One of those shots came from an offensive breakaway from senior center Emerson Jarvis. That breakaway would help the Quinnipiac offense limit the Husky attack to only two chances, both of which were saved by Frank.

Early into the second, Frank would continue to be tested. Back to back to back chances for the UConn offense put them on the doorstep of taking the advantage.

Thirty seconds later, the Huskies would do just that.

Skating deep into the Quinnipiac end, senior forward Brooke Campbell backhanded a pass to fellow senior forward Kyla Josifovic. The Burlington, Ontario native launched the puck past Frank, opening the scoring and giving UConn the 1-0 lead.

Around the halfway mark of the period, the Bobcats responded.

Skating four on four, senior defender Zoe Uens attempted to connect with junior for-

ward Kahlen Lamarche. With the puck still loose, senior center Tessa Holk picked up the puck and sniped it behind Chan and tie the game at one apiece.

The score would not stay tied for long, as junior forward Ashley Allard split the legs of graduate student defender Mia Lopata and found the back of the net minutes after, giving UConn the lead heading into the final frame of play.

Quinnipiac started the third period picking up right where it left off.

Driving into the Husky end, Jarvis found Uens just shy of the blue line. Uens would rip a snap shot that would deflect off junior forward Livvy Dewar and into the back of the net, tying the game once again.

Yet, the score wouldn't stay knotted for long, as less than 30 seconds later, UConn added to the scoring again.

Sophomore forward Sadie Hotles stole the puck off the skate of sophomore defender Makayla Watson and find Allard right in front of the net. Lightning would strike twice for the Ottawa, Ontario native as she would beat Frank again to give UConn the lead.

"We weren't helping Felicia at all," Turner said.

The score stayed at 3-2 until the halfway mark of the final frame. Coming off the bench, Watson weaved her way through the Husky defense and squeezed the puck in between the post and Chan, tying the game once again at three.

"They were shot ready," Turner said. "They were ready to fire the puck."

In the final five minutes of the closing period, UConn put the final nail in Quinnipiac's coffin. Campbell found herself on a two-on-one breakaway deep in the Quinnipiac end. She sent the puck to senior forward Megan Woodworth, who went go on to beat Frank again and give the Huskies the 4-3 lead.

The score remained that way for the rest of the period, as an empty net offensive rush with under a minute to go for Quinnipiac wasn't enough. As the final horn rang, the Husky

win became final.

NOVEMBER 29

No. 9 Quinnipiac women's ice hockey salvaged what would be a forgettable Nutmeg Classic weekend with a 2-0 win against the Sacred Heart Pioneers in the consolation game Saturday afternoon.

The win snaps the three-game skid for the Bobcats, their longest of the season. It also keeps their perfect record against the Pioneers, marking Quinnipiac's 10th win since 2009.

"We wanted to be in the championship game today," Watson said. "I'm proud of how our group responded today."

From the opening puck drop, Quinnipiac repeated the same mistakes on defense as the previous night's contest against UConn. Passes failing to connect in the Bobcat end combined with great Sacred Heart defense allowed for the Pioneers to create a lot of offense in front of Frank.

Five minutes into the first period, sophomore defender Reese Pascucci would lay into freshman forward Lincoln Brown for a boarding penalty. Less than 10 seconds into the Bobcat power play, Quinnipiac would open up the scoring.

Freshman forward Ella

Johnson would win the faceoff against senior center Sami Bowlby and dish the puck out to Watson awaiting at the blue line. Watson would find graduate student forward Laurence Frenette and junior forward Kahlen Lamarche right in front of the crease.

Despite the chaos, the puck found the stick of Lamarche, who flicked it past senior goaltender Jillian Petruno and into the back of the net, breaking open the scoring for Quinnipiac.

That was the sole goal for the period, as the game slowly evolved into a goaltender showcase between Frank and Petruno. Each netminder shut out the opposing team for the next 50 minutes of play, with Petruno recording 56 total saves to Frank's 22.

One of the best Bobcat chances in the second came halfway through the period. Jarvis won a faceoff and sophomore forward Avery Bairos scooped the loose puck and go end to end, driving with nothing but open ice in front of her.

Bairos finally got in range and launched her shot slightly to the left of Petruno, who would deflect the puck right in front of her. Sophomore forward Julia Zielinska cleared it out, keeping the Bobcat lead at one goal.

Quinnipiac's offensive dry spell continued well into the final frame. There was no shortage of shots from the Bobcats' blue and gold, but none of them were able to get behind Petruno and into the net.

In the closing minutes of the period, the Bobcats broke the scoreless drought.

Lopata found Lamarche just shy of the Pioneer zone, and the rest is history. Lamarche got down right in front of the Pioneer goal and backhanded a shot into the back of the net for her 21st goal of the year.

"She really wanted to be hungry to attack," Turner said. "She's clutch in big moments and likes to score that big one."

That was all the Bobcats would need as the clock ticked down to zero, finalizing Quinnipiac's win.



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