

SAC Sweeps CISAA D1 Weekend Series with Upper Canada College

The St. Andrew's College Saints swept two games from Upper Canada College on the weekend in two vastly different ways.

The Saints shut out UCC 4-0 on Saturday afternoon in Toronto, after a wild 8-6 win on Friday in Aurora.

Jack Pridham's hat trick spurred the Saints to their home ice victory and Luke Brandon turned away 21 shots to shutout the Blues on the road to cue SAC's early-March sweep.

A common theme to both CISAA Division 1 victories was the Saints' power play that scored six times?three in each game?to impel SAC to a pair of victories.

Saints Head Coach David Manning commented about his team's efficacy with the man-advantage versus UCC.

?The power play has been good for us all year long. There's a level of comfort with the senior players running the power play. They've been dangerous when they're out there and have clicked all season. We went 3 for 3 on Friday and 3 for 4 on Saturday so the goals were timely, especially when they drew four-minute penalties. We made them pay for those penalties.?

Another highlight of the weekend was the offensive production of Saints' forward Jack Pridham. The Boston College commit produced five points in the Saints' wild home win on Friday, comprised of a hat trick, two assists, and the game-winning-goal.

Coach Manning said he was impressed with Pridham's six points versus UCC.

?He's definitely an opportunistic and skilled player who made the most of his chances this weekend. Jack makes a team play if they give him some room and he has a great collection of skills.?

On Saturday's win in Toronto versus UCC, the Saints' power play broke a 0-0 second period deadlock when Captain Jonathan Castagna tallied his 16th goal of the season at 11:03 assisted by Lucas Veilleux. SAC's power play struck again less than a minute later when Jack Good?on assists from Ryan Castle and Connor Arseneault?gave the Saints a 2-0 lead heading into the final frame.

Two minutes into the third period, the Saints built a three-goal cushion when defenceman Francesco Dell'Elce scored his team's third power play of the game on Veilleux's second assist of the game.

Dell'Elce tallied his second goal of the period with assists going to Dean Letourneau and Jack Pridham to provide the margin of victory over UCC.

In a stunning contrast to the prior game versus UCC, Coach Manning applauded the better defensive effort and the play of his goaltender Luke Brandon who turned away 21 shots for the shutout.

?Luke was solid and he made all the saves he was supposed to make to earn the shutout. We were more focused on playing proper defense. We were tougher to play against on Saturday and our team protected Luke better in the second game.?

The Saints outshot UCC 47-21 on Saturday afternoon, after blitzing their opposition for eight goals on 57 shots on Friday on home ice.

In Friday afternoon's lid-lifter, SAC jumped out to a 1-0 lead at La Brier Family Arena on Anselmo Rego's 24th goal of the season assisted by Dean Letourneau, but UCC drew even less than 2 minutes later on Louis Charles Tremblay's marker.

Saints' Captain Jonathan Castagna broke the 1-1 tie with an unassisted goal with 6 minutes left in the period. Two consecutive goals

by Jack Good 14 seconds apart gave SAC a commanding 4-1 lead after one period of play.

However, UCC struck back quickly ? just thirteen seconds into the second period ? when Tremblay scored his second goal of the game and Leo Schneeberg pulled the Blues within one at 6.51.

SAC responded to UCC's surge when Jack Pridham fired a power play goal with assists from Del'Elce and Veilleux to put the Saints up 5-3. Tremblay tallied his third goal of the game to reduce UCC's deficit to 5-4 and Blues' centre Atom Thususka tied the game 5-5 before the SAC power play went back to work.

Pridham's second goal with the man-advantage put the Saints back on top 6-5 on assists from Rego and Dell'Ecce with 24 seconds left in the period.

Pridham struck again to complete his hat trick ? assisted by Ben Power ? six minutes into the third period to put the Saints up 8-6 with what turned out to be the game-winning-goal.

UCC drew to within one when Matteo Russo struck at 9.45, but SAC's Lucas Veilleux removed the remaining suspense with 1.26 left in the game with his ninth goal of the season. Dell'Elce?on his third assist of the game?and Castagna set up the Saints' eighth and final goal of this ?Friday afternoon shootout in Aurora.?

Coach Manning praised the play of Austin Gao, a call-up defenseman from the Markham Majors of the GTHL, who ?played very consistently all weekend and was voted player of the game on Friday by his teammates.?

The Aurora resident was called up due to a rash of injuries that have struck the Saints.

Seven SAC players are currently hobbled by myriad injuries. Despite the number of regulars missing from the lineup, the Saints will soldier on and travel to Lake Placid to complete their PHC schedule this weekend.

The Saints' 2022-23 season comes to an end when they travel to New York to play two PHC games versus Northwood at the Olympic Center on March 10-11. The Saints were eliminated from PHC playoff competition in Minnesota earlier in February, but defeated Northwood 6-5 in a Consolation matchup.

Pridham led the SAC weekend points parade versus UCC with 6 (3 goals/3 assists) while Dell'Elce added 5 (2 goals/3 assists), and Veilleux totalled 4 (1 goal/3 assists). Good had 3 goals and Letourneau totaled 3 assists against the Blues.

By Jim Stewart