No loses, no wins for Men’s Hockey as they capture two ties against Mercyhurst and Canisius

BY BRAD HOLZWART
CRUSADER SPORTS STAFF

“This will be an early test.” These were the words of Holy Cross hockey Coach Paul Pearl in commenting about his team’s upcoming games versus Mercyhurst and Canisius. Riding the scoring wave of Sophomores Greg Kealy and Jeff Dams, the Crusaders rose to the challenge and came away with two ties on the road this past weekend, 5-5 versus Mercyhurst Nov. 2, and 3-3 versus Canisius Nov. 3.

The Lakers swaggered into the Mercyhurst Ice Center for their home opener. Their egos bolstered by the preseason hype that they would repeat as MAAC Champions, in addition to owning a 6-1-all time record versus the Crusaders. Coming off their season-opening win versus Bentley, Holy Cross entered undaunted.

Mercyhurst was able to draw first blood early, notching a power-play goal from David Wrigley 4:37 into the contest. The Greg Kealy show began here as Kealy retaliated with a power-play goal of his own as assists from Sophomore Tim Coskren and Freshman Andrew McKay less than three minutes later. Looking to end the brief euphoria, Mercyhurst regained its lead for Mercyhurst. The Lake's P. J. Hiscock had other ideas as he was able to beat Cunha at even strength to recapture the lead for Mercyhurst.

Less than two minutes later, Freshman defenseman Mike Kirby victimized the Crusaders for a 2-0 lead. A second when Sophomores Adam Tackaberry and Peter Rynshoven were able to elude Crusader goaltender Derek Cunha and find the back of the net.

Familiar with playing at a deficit, Holy Cross’ defense buckled down in the second period and paved the way for Dams. Dams was able to net the two lone goals of the period for either team, scoring early at 2:19 and later with 2:40 remaining in the period with Holy Cross up a man to set the tie going into the final stanza. “The second period was our best period both nights,” said Coach Pearl. “Our guys were really finishing well, and our scor- ing output was outstanding.”

Holy Cross’ offensive pressure out-shot the Lakers 13-9 in the second period.

The stingy HC defense continued early into the third when the Crusaders successfully killed a 5-on-3 penalty that looked to swing the momentum in their direction. The Lakers’ P. J. Hiscock had other ideas as he was able to beat Cunha at even strength to recapture the lead for Mercyhurst.

Less than two minutes later, Freshman defenseman Mike Kirby victimized the Crusaders for a short-handed goal to all but put the game out of reach. Kealy was not finished on the day, however. On the power-play once again, Kealy beat Mercyhurst goaltender Peter Aubry with 2:56 remaining to draw Holy Cross within one. In dramatic fashion, Kealy completed his hat trick with Cunha pulled and the extra-attacker on with a mere 38.7 seconds left to knot the game at 5-5.

“Our team showed a lot of char- acter,” commented Coach Pearl. “Our play has been consistent, and no one has taken any time off. That’s why we are able to play from behind.”

The Crusaders’ road stint continued on Saturday night when they traveled to Buffalo, NY to take on Canisius. The Griffins, like the Lakers, were also predicted to have a strong showing in the MAAC this year. Entering their match up with Holy Cross, they had yet to lose on the year in the MAAC. They sought to continue that trend as Rob Martin was able to beat HC goaltender Rick Massey just .17 sec- onds into the contest tainting his eighth goal of the year. His score would be the lone tally of the period.

Dams picked up right where he left off the previous night scoring the lone 47 seconds into the second period on the power play from Ju- nior Brandon Doria and Sophomore R.J. Irving. Kealy followed suit at 15:32 of the second, also scoring on the power play and amassing his fourth goal of the weekend. He was aided on assists by Doria once again and Senior Pat Rismiller.

“Both Greg (Kealy) and Jeff (Dams) played extremely well offensively for us this weekend,” noted Coach Pearl. “The power play situations are where they both excelled.”

Holy Cross finished 2-6 on the power play versus Canisius and they did just as well on the penalty kill going a perfect 8-8. Kealy’s goal gave Holy Cross its first lead of the weekend, however, it would not last as Senior Todd Houston re- fused to put away the Cru- saders as he tied the game less than 2 minutes later.

Holy Cross was not finished in the second, however. Junior Mark Spiers capitalized on a Griff's turnover and beat goaltender Sean Weaver to enter the locker room with a 3-2 lead. Fred Coccimiglio emerged for Canisius early in the third, tying the game 2.25 in and the game would end deadlocked.

The Crusaders received strong goaltending this past weekend from both Cunha and Massey. “Our abil- ity to play consistent and come from behind has said a lot for our players, leaders and captains,” said Coach Pearl. “It’s also a reflection of our goaltending. We are getting great goaltending this year. Ricky (Massey) and Derek (Cunha) are making big saves for us when we need them.” Cunha finished the weekend with 21 saves. He now boasts a .913 save percentage and improved his record to 1-0-1 in the MAAC. Massey was equally spec- tacular versus Canisius as he turned aside 40 Griffins shots.

Offensively, the Crusaders re- ceived big contributions from Doria and Rismiller. Doria finished with four assists on the weekend and leads the team with six overall. Rismiller finished with three assists and a team total of five on the year. Kealy is atop the points ladder with 11 overall to lead the team, with six goals and five assists.

The Crusaders will make their home debut Friday, Nov. 9 versus Iona at 7:00 at the Hart Center where they will put their unbeaten 1-0-1 record on the line. Iona will enter at first place in the MAAC league having notched two big wins thus far versus Quinnipiac and a tie versus UCONN.

The Crusader sports section is looking to recruit writers for next semester.

Interested?
Please contact
Kate Barker
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Men’s Soccer to host PL Tournament at Holy Cross

BY CRISTINA DE LA CERVA
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The Holy Cross Men’s Soccer team will be hosting the Patriot League Tournament from Nov. 16-18. The Crusaders finished the season undefeated, and will enter the championships as the number one seeded team. The other squads that make the Patriot League Tournament are American, Lehigh and Navy.

In league play, Holy Cross finished the season with a record of 6-0-1. American came in a close sec- ond with a record of 5-1-0. American’s only defeat came from the Crusaders who slipped by them in overtime with a game winning header from Junior Captain Rusty Giudici.

Lehigh and Navy also performed exceptionally well throughout the season earning themselves the third and fourth spots in the tournament. Lehigh finished with a record of 4-2-0 and Navy rapped up their sea- son with a final record of 3-2-2.

Junior midfielder Joey Forester states, “All the teams are very com- petitive but American has shown the most talent on the field this sea- son. On the other hand, any team that comes out prepared and ready to win has the potential to take the game. As long as we enter the tournament focused, we have the ability to become this year’s Patriot League Champions.”

The tournament begins with two single elimination games: the ri- valry between the first and fourth seeded teams, as well as the second and third seeded teams. Therefore, Holy Cross’ first challenge will be against the Navy Mids.

This will not be an easy defeat for the Crusaders since Navy is the only team they did not beat during regular season play.

“Defender Mike Mills comments, “I don’t think we, as a team, have played at our full capability yet this season. I think if we come together we can reach our potential during the tournament.”

The team agrees that the home crowd support will be their greatest advantage during the Champs- ionships. “When things aren’t going our way the crowd helps us get back into things” comments Forester.

The Crusaders hope everyone will come encourage them during the tournament which will be held the weekend of Nov. 16.