Smiley helps ‘Saders cross-over Minutemen

BY BRAD HOLZWART

CRUSADERS SPORTS STAFF

“The best thing I can tell you was that it was a beast,” said UMass coach Steve Lappas sarcastically. “Everything we had worked so hard on didn’t happen. We reverted back to ... whatever.” Whatever proved to be many things that left both Lappas and 6600 screaming Mullins Center fans speechless as the upset Crusader men’s hoops team sent a shock wave through the once 4-0 Amherst Minutemen.

After trailing by a mere four points at halftime, four Crusaders all who finished in double figures including freshmen sensations Mike Smiley and Nate Luftkin, stifled UMass’ bid for their first 5-0 start since 1995 and snapped their own three-game losing streak when Holy Cross, in true upset fashion, left the Mullins Center with a 67-56 victory.

Holy Cross entered the match up after having their 10 game home winning streak snapped by BU on Dec. 1, 61-49. The loss was the Crusaders’ third in a row, adding onto what seemed to be a dismal and disappointing start. Entering the UMass game, the team looked to its four, three-point shooting, as a taste of what’s to come.

Enter the Minutemen. On the opposite end of the spectrum, UMass found itself at 5-0 for the first time in the last five years. The Minutemen were on fire, as the team was a 56 percent shooter from beyond the arc giving him a team lead of 10 made and 21 attempts.

When things began to look bleak and the Minutemen opened up their largest lead of the game at 21-15, the Crusaders looked for someone to step up. No one, however, would have expected it to come from the freshmen. Smiley, the 6’3” guard from Swampscott, Mass. took the helm for his Crusaders to silence the UMass crowd as well as any doubters. After Luftkin drained a three point shot against a UMass team that leads the Atlantic 10 in field goal percentage of 54.6, and is ranked second in three-point field goal percentage defense.

As David and Goliath squared off, the Crusaders found themselves down three, but Luftkin would not be disappointed. Luftkin was met with stride for stride, however, in the onset as UMass senior Micah Brand went to work inside on his own sinking his team’s first nine points. Eight lead changes occurred in the opening 4:37 of the first half as neither team could separate. It wasn’t until sophomore Rahjem Lamb threw down a dunk that not only ignited the crowd, but lit a fire under his own. The six point swing, with the Crusaders holding onto a 25-21 lead at the half, was held scoreless for 4:04.

With the team’s bench as quiet as a library, Holy Cross was 5-7 from three-point field goal range for 58 percent, with the Minutemen not scoring a three during that period, leaving it a 3-3 stalemate.

After sophomore Jave Meade drained another HC three pointer to extend the lead to 51-47, he was matched by an Anthony Anderson three point shot bringing the Minutemen within in one at 50-49 with 10:53 remaining. It was as close as UMass would get, however. Holy Cross’ defense smothered any glimmers of hope that the Minutemen would have.

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Freshmen nets four goals in strong week for women’s hockey

BY DARA ELY

CRUSADERS SPORTS STAFF

Holy Cross Women’s Ice Hockey scored a strong week with big wins over ECAC foes St. Michael’s and Massachusetts Institute of Technology to bring their record to 2-4-1, 2-4-0 ECAC. Standout freshman defender Meghan Mahoney leads the team with four goals and seven assists.

The team’s improved play during the last few games beds well for their record as they enter the winter break. The team will be back on campus early to play a series of games on January as they fight to take a high rank in the ECAC conference.

The Crusader’s first victim was St. Michael’s college who they took down on November 17 at the Hart Center, taking a strong 5-0 victory and securing the shutout for junior goaltender Jenelle DiSanto who had 11 saves on the day.

Holy Cross outshot the Purple Knights 54-20 with five different Crusaders scoring. Senior forward Shauna Kilcullen opened up the game with a goal just 5:59 into the first period and the score was doubled just six minutes later with a goal from sophomore forward Elizabeth Campbell.

Sophomore forward Rachelle Beaudoin scored early in the second period to take the 3-0 lead for Holy Cross and her goal was quickly followed by one from her classmate, forward Darci Repuacci. Meghan Mahoney sealed the victory with a goal in the third period and she also had one assist in the game. This was the Lady Sader’s first win, and it was a game that had three of the games that followed that week.

They next faced ECAC opponent Rensselaer on November 18, also at home, ending in a tough 3-1 loss. The team was again early, feeding off the goal of the season on a power play in the second period to spoil the shutout for Engineer’s goaltender Callie Wollstadt who had 21 saves for the win.

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On November 30, the Lady Saders took on ECAC league foe Southern Maine where they took tough 4-1 loss. At 12:07 in the third period, senior forward Stephanie Lieblich scored a goal to deny Karen Jannmick (nine saves) of the Southern Maine shutout. She was assisted by Meghan Mahoney and Caitlin Anderson. Freshman forward Rachel Wellstad had a big game for Southern Maine with two goals, but the strong defense was able to contain her and her teammates with Jenelle DiSanto coming up with 36 saves. The game was a hard loss for the Lady Saders, but they would soon bounce back, with an unsuspecting MIT team left to face their frustrations.

On Dec. 1, Holy Cross crushed MIT 13-0 on their home ice. The Crusaders outshot them 57-10 with ten different players scoring. The strong defense managed to fight off four MIT power plays and Jenelle DiSanto and freshman Vanessa Jones, who made her first appearance for Holy Cross, playing 40 minutes, combined for ten saves.

Regina Sullivan and Alana Lof- ferdy had 44 saves for MIT, but that was not enough to stop the powerful Holy Cross offense. Dara Re- pucci, Elizabeth Campbell and ju- nior forward Erin Williams had two goals each, with one of Williams’ coming on a power play. Freshman Kimberly Scinto and senior Mary Ellen Conforti each had one goal and three assists, while Meghan Mahoney picked up four assists during the game.

Also contributing the Crusader scoring were: Caitlin Anderson, Rachelle Beaudoin, Molly Corkery and sophomore defender Allison Hogan and Lindsay Jean.

This game was important for im- proving the spirit of the Lady Sader’s, whose improvement shows that they will be a powerful force in upcoming games.

The team will then take a deserved rest and return playing games in January with a full schedule and many home games.