

Bloomington punches RoughRiders in nose

Written by Jim Ecker

Saturday, 06 December 2014 22:45 - Last Updated Saturday, 06 December 2014 23:06



Maybe a little fight was just what the Bloomington Thunder needed Saturday night against the Cedar Rapids RoughRiders.

The Thunder scored three unanswered goals in the third period after engaging in some fisticuffs and socked the RoughRiders, 4-2, before 2,344 fans in a rugged USHL game at the Cedar Rapids Ice Arena.

Bloomington forward Ryan Siroky dropped his gloves at the end of the second period and challenged Cedar Rapids center Adam Gaudette to a bare-knuckle fight after both clubs had done a fair shove of pushing and shoving during the stanza.

Gaudette accepted the challenge and they fired away at each other before an official broke it up. Both combatants were given 15 minutes in penalties for fighting, including a game misconduct penalty that banished both of them for the rest of the night.

The RoughRiders led 2-1 at the time, but the Thunder dominated the final stanza after the fight and handed the league-leading RoughRiders only their third loss of the season in 21 games.

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It's hard to know if the fight had anything to do with the outcome, but it seemed to inspire the visitors from Bloomington, Ill. in the final 20 minutes.

There's less fighting in the USHL this season due to stricter penalties, including one-game suspensions, but that did not stop Siroky from inviting Gaudette to do battle at center ice.

The RoughRiders grabbed a 2-0 lead in the second period on goals by Tyler Gernhofer and Derek Daschke. Bloomington pulled within 2-1 on a goal by Jacob Slaker with 1:54 left in the second period and the Saturday Night Fight broke out shortly after.

The Thunder tied the game, 2-2, with 11 minutes left in the contest and took a 3-2 lead with 8 1/2 minutes remaining.

Bloomington was called for a two-minute slashing penalty with 2:42 left in the game, giving Cedar Rapids a 5-on-4 advantage, and with about 40 seconds left in the penalty Cedar Rapids Coach Mark Carlson decided to pull goaltender Ben Blacker and go with a 6-on-4 advantage in a bold effort to tie the game.

The maneuver backfired, however, when Bloomington's Shane Bednard rolled the puck down the ice and it settled into the empty net to give the Thunder a 4-2 lead with 49 seconds left to play.

The RoughRiders fell to 18-3 for the season for 36 points and a three-point lead over Muskegon for first place in the Eastern Conference. Bloomington squared its record at 10-10-3 for 23 points.

Cedar Rapids hosts Green Bay Wednesday night.

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Bloomington 0 1 3 - 4

RoughRiders 0 2 0 - 2

CR - Tyler Gernhofer (Clark Kuster, Dylan McLaughlin)

CR - Derek Daschke (unassisted)

BL - Jacob Slaker (Ryan Galt, Patrick Curry)

BL - Shane Bednard (power play) (unassisted)

BL - Alex Mehr (Jacob Slaker)

BL - Shane Bednard (shorthanded (empty net) (Butrus Ghafari)