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Midget Mustangs lose close 4-2 game to Richmond



Photo by: VINCE FEDOROFF

HEAD OVER HEELS –
 Mustang’s Glen Skookum, right, is tripped up by a player from Richmond during Sunday’s game at the Canada Games Centre.



A late goal in the last five minutes of the final frame helped the Richmond I.B.C. secure a 4-2 victory over the Whitehorse Northern Cross Mustangs in the first contest of their three-game series held over the weekend.

Heading into last night’s final game, played on the Olympic-sized arena at the Canada Games Centre, each team had one victory in the series with the Rowdymen winning Friday’s opener 6-4, while the Mustangs bounced back on Saturday with an 8-1 win. “I think the bottom line is we played the game to keep it close, we didn’t plan to win and that’s what we explained to the players,” said Mustangs co-coach Dale Smeeton. “We have got a good, solid team and when they click and play together we can play at that ‘AAA’ level and we proved that in (Saturday’s) game, but we were a bit flat today (Sunday) and we just couldn’t get it going.”

Half of the seats were full at the arena while a number of fans chose to take the floor and played over two 22-minute periods, in the standing area, forming a line from one end of the facility to the other.

Despite the Mustangs getting off to a strong start, which resulted in them controlling the puck for the majority of the first few minutes, it was the Rowdymen who started scoring the first goal on a slap shot that went past the glove-side of Mustangs goalie Scott Smeeton. The goal was scored by Rudi Thorsteinson at 20:30 after the Mustangs had trouble getting the puck out of the zone, which resulted in a turnover.

The Mustangs battled back, scoring in close just before the 11-minute mark of the opening period to the delight of the crowd. Zach Moses scored the goal, which

Stuckey and Alexander Johnston were each credited with an assist. Richmond would retake the lead not even three minutes later after a defence Mustangs fell down while attempting to retrieve the puck in his own end, w in a two-on-one Richmond rush from deep within the zone. Stephen Saretsk keep the puck and fired a hard shot past the glove hand of Smeeton to make Rowdymen.

Richmond wasn't finished and added to their lead during the only Mustangs the game, scoring after Smeeton made the initial save, but couldn't gain cor rebound in time.

A late penalty against the Rowdymen would bring the Mustangs right back after the team scored a thrilling goal in the final second of the frame. Joe De the puck in after a hard shot was made from the point that took a timely bou goalie and right into the vicinity of the Whitehorse forward, who was positi perfectly at the side of the net.

The crowd cheered when the referee signalled it was a goal and had gone in buzzer sounded. Lowell Johnston and Kane Dawe each assisted on the play. This goal seemed to spark the Mustangs who began the final period strong, number of scoring chances in the first five minutes.

Smeeton was also very sharp when called upon as the two teams traded end as the period went on. The Mustangs came close to tying in up on more than occasion, but only to end up missing the net.

These missed opportunities ended up costing the Mustangs, as the Rowdym check picked up later in the frame. This resulted in additional pressure that final goal of the game, scored after a defensive error was made by a Mustan lost control of the puck from behind the net. Richmond capitalized on the m putting the puck past a sprawled-out Smeeton to restore their two goal lead. The Mustangs never gave up though, and battled hard right up until the fina the game, but despite pulling Smeeton, they couldn't put one past Richmond. Final shots on goal were 27-26 for the Rowdymen.

Kulych said he was pleased with his team's performance.

"I am happy with the way they played. There is room for improvement whe loss like that because you know you gave it to them and again you have to f positives, we discussed the negatives, we discussed the stuff where we screw the bottom line is that on the positive side we are progressing in the direction want to be going."

Densmore thought the team had trouble taking advantage of their opportunity. "We played pretty good on the offensive, but on the defensive end we were sloppy," he said. "In the offensive end we were getting chances, but we couldn't score. We missed the net, we just couldn't get a stick on it. I don't know what was happening out there, we were getting chances, but we just couldn't bury it." He said he enjoyed playing in front of the home crowd.

"It pumps you up quite a bit," Densmore said. "It is a lot more fun than playing on the road."

Lowell was pleased with his team's play over the three game series.

"This weekend I thought we played really well," he said. "This is probably our best performance against 'AAA' teams in B.C. and I think we gave it a good shot this weekend."

Both players said they are more confident heading into the rest of the season part in the series.

[Back to 1](#)

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