

Dec. 29 2011 Hornet Holiday Classic



Hamilton's Sean Tohill is mobbed by his teammates after scoring one of his two short-handed goals against Steinert in today's Hornet Holiday Classic (Photo by John Blaine/purchase photos by e-mailing jbsportsphoto@aol.com).

Totally Tohill effort gives Hamilton a sweet victory over Steinert

By Ken Weingartner

Fish4scores.com

Dec. 29: Playing against rival Steinert gave Sean Tohill a little extra burst in his step.

He used it to score two shorthanded goals in a span of five seconds at the end of the first period, completing a hat trick in the process, to lead Hamilton West to a 3-0 win today over the Spartans in the third round of the Hamilton Holiday Invitational Tournament at Lawrenceville Prep.

With the victory, the Hornets finished preliminary play with a 3-0 record and moved into Friday night's championship game against St. Rose.

Evan Morris made 10 saves to get the shutout.

"I just got the puck and went as fast as I could knowing it's Steinert – it's a big game – and that gave me the extra oomph to go a little faster and put the puck in the net," Tohill said about his two-goal explosion that came in the final 21 seconds of the first period. "It was awesome.

"We really didn't know which way the momentum was going, so when I scored with 16 seconds left it really swung the momentum our way. I felt it brought them down a notch and helped us the rest of the game."

Steinert coach Ryan DeClerico, who saw his squad drop to 1-2 in the tourney, agreed.

"We came out of that period deflated," he said. "We tried to rally them back – and we played better hockey in the second and third periods – but still not to the talent level we have."

Tohill scored the game's first goal with 5:19 to go in the first period, off an assist from Rich Hauck. The second goal, which Tohill labeled "a garbage goal," resulted from a shot from the point by Gerry Gomez and the third off an assist from Jared Romanski.

"I'm happy to go to the championship game," Tohill said. "Plus, it's Steinert; like always, it's a big win. It's a hometown rivalry; bragging rights on Facebook – everything. We knew what we were walking into with Steinert. It's always a good game when we play them."

Both teams played with limited benches because of vacations and injuries. Each squad dressed two goaltenders and 11 skaters for the contest, which contributed to sluggish play in the second and third periods.

The teams combined for six shots in the second period and 12 in the third.

"When guys are getting that many shifts, legs are tired and the game slowed to a crawl for a while," Hornets coach Matt Hamilton said. "It was such a slow game; it was almost like being played in quicksand.

"But (Steinert) played tough. The thing we really have to work on is when the pace slowed down, when Steinert was possessing the puck, we didn't grind. We matched the pace with them and didn't want to work. We have to work on dictating the pace and forcing (our opponent) to move their legs."

Steinert, which played a strong first period in its previous game against St. Rose, getting out to a 2-1 lead before bowing 6-2, was unable to get started against the Hornets.

"The first period was horrible hockey," DeClerico said. "It was the complete opposite of the St. Rose game, where we came out and played the best period we have all year. We just didn't have our legs. We didn't have anything going. We didn't have any flow, any movement. They took it to us. Shorthanded or not, we should be playing better hockey."

The Spartans, who got 19 saves from goalie P.J. Alexiadis, spent the rest of the game trying to dig out of the first-period hole.

"We had the puck the majority of the time in our offensive zone and we had only six shots after two periods," DeClerico said. "We're not getting pucks on net, at the net, in front of the net; goals

aren't going to happen just by chance. It feels like everybody is trying to do a little too much. Everyone tries to do it themselves because they want something good to happen, but when you try to do it yourself it's never going to be an easy way to get a shot off."

The Hornets expect to have a limited bench again Friday in the championship game, but are anxious for the title test.

"We've got our hands full because St. Rose is a tough team," Hamilton said. "If we get back to our game plan and play good positional hockey, we've got a shot."

Terry's last-second goal gives Chis-Luca and Northstars their first victory

By Rich Fisher

Fish4Scores.com

A tough tournament had a happy ending for Nottingham, which claimed an exciting 2-1 victory over Hightstown in the final game of Hornet Holiday Classic round robin play.

John Terry's goal with 34.5 seconds left provided the game-winner.

It marked the first win of the season for the Northstars, and the first head coaching win for Alex Chis-Luca.

"We played strong on both sides of the puck," Chis-Luca said. "Our offense and defense were solid for the entire game and we, as a coaching staff, were proud of our boys for playing a complete 45-minute game."

The game was scoreless until 8:24 of the second period when Hightstown struck for a goal.

"We went into the third telling our guys they had a great chance to win their first game," Chis-Luca said. "We told them to keep up the intensity and pressure and they would come out victorious."

It was good advice indeed. At 9:15 of the third period, Zach Renitsky scored his first goal of the season off an assist from Kyle Ballschneider.

The game winner came in the final minute, when Ballschneider won a draw back to Terry at the point. Terry ripped one in for the game-winner.

Kyle O'Byrne gave the Northstars their chance to win by making 36 saves.

"Kyle had another strong game," Chis-Luca said. "He stood tall in the net for us."

And the Northstars stood as tall as they have all season.



Kyle Ballschneider (with Kevin Fuller in background) had plenty of reasons to celebrate as he assisted on both goals in Nottingham's first win of the season tonight (Photo by John Blaine/purchase photos by e-mailing jbsportsphoto@aol.com).

