

Nowhere To Go But Up

Contributed by Justin Hester
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Last weekend's home series with Michigan State was another disappointment for Laker fans. In another home sweep of Lakers Hockey, Michigan State showed why it deserves to be ranked 4th in the nation with a 3-2 and 5-2 win.

Friday night's game was a disappointment from the beginning. The Lakers fell behind halfway through the first period, and played accordingly until the last minute of the game. In fact, except for a goal in the second period, the fans were mostly silenced by MSU's dominant play and LSSU's complete inability to capitalize on power plays, including a 5 minute power play in the 3rd period caused by MSU's Dustin Gazley executing a vicious check from behind that got him ejected from the game. It wasn't until the last minute of play that the team decided to start playing the true blue collar heavy action hockey they are capable of. However, that one minute of hard play wasn't enough.

The second game wasn't much of a different story, except that MSU's Jeff Lerg made some amazing saves, including a cross net diving save that was one of the more amazing saves made in the Taffy Abel Arena this season.

But this weekend's series wasn't only marred by poor play by the Lakers, but by very inconsistent officiating. Kevin Hall served as the referee for the game, and his officiating was so scattershot that this reporter saw something on Saturday that he hasn't seen in the CCHA for a long time: a linesman calling a penalty without the referee's consent. This inconsistency within the game didn't allow for either coach to adjust their team's play accordingly. "I can't even tell the kids what to expect anymore with that guy," said Coach Roque, "They have a tough job, I understand that, on the other hand, they have a big say in the game." Coach Roque was particularly upset over one play in which an LSSU player was cross checked in the face resulting in only a two minute penalty to MSU. However the same play at a game in Notre Dame resulted in a player getting disqualified from the game. "I am going to send that clip; I want to know what the difference is."

Regardless of the poor officiating, the question of the weekend was whether or not the Lakers have the capability to win. "We are in the bottom right now, there's nowhere else we can go," said team captain Troy Schwab. And he is right, with eleven losses for far this year, the Lakers have shown that they have perfected the art of losing. If the Lakers hope to turn their season around, they are going to have to go back to the blue collar play they are known for, and if they don't, no one will believe in blue this year.