

Timmins Scores Decisive Shootout Goal in Oilers' Dramatic Comeback

by Bradley Piros, Reporter
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GRANITE CITY - It wasn't looking too good for the East Alton-Wood River hockey team early on Thursday night at the Granite City Ice Rink.

The Oilers allowed three first period goals that all came within 1:26 from each other.

Blake Reinerman scored first at 7:18, followed by Luke Gunter at 6:23 and Wyatt Rinderer at 5:52 to give Highland the early advantage.

EAWR didn't have an immediate answer, trailing 3-0 after the first period, but they'd eventually come all the way back to win 6-5 after a shootout.

Oilers' head coach James Mitchell attributes the slow start to a little bit of nerves.

"We tried to go out there and get pumped up," Mitchell said. "But, I think they let their guard down a little bit."

"For sure, Highland was a little heavy on the forecheck. I think that really caught us off guard. We were also suffering from puck anxiety big time in that first period. They kept their heads cool, we regrouped in the first intermission and we bounced back."

Wood River found the back of the net at 10:14 in the second period from Daniel Welborn assisted by Cohen Mitchell.

The score would stay at 3-1 until three goals were scored in the final 65 seconds.

Elijah Edwards scored at 1:04 in the second period cutting the deficit to 3-2. But Gunter grabbed his second with 19.5 seconds remaining to make it a two goal lead again at 4-2. But Wood River still wasn't done. Mitchell scored with just 4.9 seconds remaining to make it a 4-3 heading into the third period.

At this point, the Oilers were rolling.

Abraham Edwards scored unassisted at 5:41 to tie the game up and 25 seconds later Elijah Edwards scored again assisted by Owen Timmins and Nick Winchester to take the 5-4 lead.

But with time winding down, Highland still had an answer. At 2:40 Rinderer scored his second of the night tying things back up at 5-5.

"I knew we'd be alright," coach Mitchell said about the game being tied back up at five.

Being game-one of the playoffs, this game wouldn't finish in a tie. Instead going straight into a shootout.

The Oilers won the shootout 1-0, the lone goal being scored by Timmins.

Gerold Myatt made 27 saves on the night, none bigger than the one in the shootout.

"I'm happy for the boys," coach Mitchell said. "I knew that Myatt would shut them down. I knew he would."

"He's just a solid goaltender, nothing gets past him. He handles that kind of pressure really well. He likes the pressure, performs better under pressure. With the situation like that, hands down I knew we had it in the shootout."

Game two of the series will be on Monday, Feb. 12 at RP Lumber Center in Edwardsville with a 7:45 p.m. puck drop. Game three will be on Tuesday at 9:15 p.m. at the East Alton Ice Arena if necessary.

"That's where we want to be," Mitchell said after winning game one.

"Put backs up against the wall, make them make the mistakes. Hopefully put that puck anxiety on them. We just got to be on them, stay calm, and hopefully win every battle."