

Ohio State Advances To WCHA Semifinals



After winning the conference's regular season crown, the No. 1 Ohio State women's hockey team is on to the semifinals of the WCHA conference tournament.

The Buckeyes beat Bemidji State 2-1 Saturday to sweep the Beavers 2-0 in the best-of-three series and advance in its first bit of postseason action.

Ohio State, the defending collegiate national champion, now stands at 30-4-2 on the season with Bemidji State at 5-30-1, and that gap was shown in game one Friday. That was a dominant 4-1 win for the Buckeyes.

Saturday, in a near-certain do-or-die situation, the Beavers put up much more of a fight.

Ohio State outshot Bemidji State 30-16 but needed each of the 15 saves made by junior goaltender Amanda Thiele to pull out the win.

It didn't look that way early on. The Buckeyes needed just two minutes to take their initial lead, with a goal from freshman forward Sloane Matthews in her first shift of the afternoon placing the team ahead 1-0.

That score held the rest of the way through the first period, however. And the second, despite OSU dominating the shot column 10-4. Thus, it was only a one-goal game entering the final period of play.

Time kept ticking away, and Bemidji State junior goalkeeper Hannah Hogenson kept standing on her head. She rattled off 27 consecutive saves following Matthews' opening goal, keeping the Beavers alive in the contest.

Finally, Ohio State senior forward Jenn Gardiner tucked one into the netting with 3:43 to play, extending the Buckeyes' advantage to 2-0. Bemidji State solved Thiele for the first time 1:20 later, but from there OSU held on for a 2-1 victory, not allowing another shot to land on-goal from the Beavers.

OSU moves on to the WCHA semifinals, where it will face the winner of St. Cloud State and Minnesota Duluth in Minneapolis for the first of a three-game series Friday.