

No margin for error for **inconsistent** Predators

Kevan Dowd
The Lake Report

It's do or die for the Jr. A Niagara Predators and they are clearly feeling the heat. Starting last weekend with a 3-1 loss to the Tottenham Railers, the Predators fought hard Sunday to beat the St. George Ravens 6-5 in a shootout.

Niagara sits in sixth place of eight in the Greater Metro Hockey League's south division with just six games left before the playoffs.

While they have a healthy enough lead on seventh, they trail the Railers and Ravens by four points.

On paper, it's hard to know what went wrong for the Predators Friday night.

Outshooting Tottenham 37-33 and playing a clean game penalty-wise, Niagara's only goal of the night came from Reese Bisci halfway through the first period.

But a tying goal late in the first, another in the second period and an empty-netter late in the third sealed the deal for a Tottenham victory.

"This is a game we should have walked away



The Predators chase a rebound as a shot floats over the head of Tottenham goaltender Nicolas Perreault, the game's first star. Niagara lost 3-1 in a game they expected to win. KEVAN DOWD

with," said Predators head coach Kevin Taylor. "We had everything going. I don't know what happened tonight, I think they just wanted it a little more."

Despite his team putting in a good effort, Taylor felt they just couldn't seem to catch a break.

"The puck also wasn't bouncing our way tonight. Maybe it just went in their favour because they out-

worked us, I don't know," he said.

"I really thought this was our game. I was more worried about Sunday's game."

Thankfully, the Predators got the bounces two days later with a road win against St. George in what Taylor described as a totally different game.

"I was really happy with some of the guys I'd been waiting for to step

up and play their game and they came out that night," he said.

"It was a nice, gritty win. We got our two points. We have another game coming this weekend (versus the last-place Toronto Flyers) that should be another two points, but we'll see what happens."

Cameron Savoie opened up scoring for the Predators early in Sunday's game but

two goals for St. George had them trailing until Declan Fogarty tied things up just before the end of the first period.

Another tally for Savoie plus one for his brother Nick put the Predators ahead by two after 40 minutes.

A power-play goal for St. George narrowed the gap but Nolan Wyers notched his team's fifth of the night

with nine minutes to go.

The Ravens fought back, netting two and forcing five minutes of three-on-three overtime, which still was not enough to end things.

Savoie would come through in the shootout, with a clutch, hat-trick goal for the win.

"They were pumped, everybody was happy, they were thrilled with what happened and so was I," said Taylor about the win.

"It was a little nerve-racking. But we grinded out a good two points."

Up next for the Predators are the Toronto Flyers this Saturday and while he thinks the Predators will perform well, Taylor does not want to be overconfident.

"We need two points more than anything right now," he said.

"Toronto is playing better. We just have to outwork them and I think that's what we're going to focus on this week at practice."

With just one game scheduled this week, the Predators won't be back on home ice until Sunday, Feb. 4 against the Flyers.

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