

Hickmott ignites Oil Kings' rout

Veteran has had career season in Edmonton, totalled 300 Western Hockey League games

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Not many players get a chance to play 300 games in the Western Hockey League, but first-year Edmonton Oil Kings centre Jordan Hickmott is one of them.

The six-foot-one Mission, B.C., native, who has also played for the Prince Albert Raiders and Medicine Hat Tigers, made sure it was a memorable night Tuesday by scoring the opening goal and later adding an assist in a 8-1 Oil Kings romp over the Lethbridge Hurricanes at Rexall Place.

"I knew coming into the year that I could reach it if I played every game except for two. It's pretty exciting, pretty special for me to reach that 300 mark," Hickmott said.

The ice was still quite fresh when Kristians Pelss sprung Hickmott on a break up the right side and the centre tucked a backhander around Lethbridge goalie Brandon Anderson 62 seconds into the game.

"I just turned up the ice and Pelss hit me with a nice pass and I knew I had a step on the D-man, so I just used my speed and broke in and deked out the goalie," Hickmott said.

Hickmott set career highs this season with 28 goals, 36 assists and 64 points. He is the Oil Kings' third-leading scorer and has played an instrumental role in helping Edmonton secure its second postseason berth in three seasons.

The Oil Kings qualified for the WHL playoffs on Saturday despite a 4-0 loss to the league-leading Saskatoon Blades, but they turned in a dominant all-around performance against the Hurricanes.

With Lethbridge forward Brady Ramsay sitting in the penalty box for slashing, the visitors evened the score when Brody Sutter squeezed one through the wickets of Oil Kings netminder Laurent Brossoit at 8:17 of the first period.

After that, it was all Edmonton.

Captain Mark Pysyk seemed to inspire his teammates. With just under nine minutes left in the opening period, Lethbridge forward Cam Braes levelled defenceman Keegan Lowe into the boards. Pysyk took exception to the hit and dropped the mitts with Lethbridge's leading point producer.

"You can't fault the kid for sticking up for his teammate, but we don't want Marky fighting in those situations because the last thing we want to do is see him get hurt going into the playoffs," said Oil Kings bench boss Derek Laxdal.

Before the period was out the Oil Kings grabbed hold of the lead again at 17:02 when defenceman Marek Hrbas broke his stick on a slapper from the point and Stephane Legault found the loose puck and roofed it over Anderson.

That was only the beginning as Edmonton received a trio of second period goals from T.J. Foster, Hrbas and Rhett Rachinski.

Anderson, who made his 16th straight start for the Hurricanes, was pulled after allowing five goals on 24 shots.

Anderson's replacement, Dylan Tait, didn't fair much better. In the third period, Dylan Wruck scored his team-leading 37th goal of the season, Legault notched his second goal of the game and Travis Ewanyk tallied the game's final goal.

As the score became more lopsided, the game got more physical and chippy. There were two more fights and the two teams combined for 82 minutes in penalties.

The Oil Kings outshot Lethbridge 39-23, went two-for-seven with the man advantage and added a shorthanded marker. The Hurricanes all but eliminated themselves from the playoffs with the loss.

"I think tonight our kids played a solid 60 minutes and we got contributions from all four lines," Laxdal said. "I thought our defence played a great game and I thought the key to the game was our penalty kill did a great job early in the first period and as we went along we shut them down."

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