

# Rebels strike early and often

## Oil Kings fall behind 2-0 with best-of-seven series heading to Edmonton next week

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RED DEER – A two-goal first period by the Red Deer Rebels proved to be too big of a wall to climb for the Edmonton Oil Kings at the Enmax Centrium on Saturday night.

The Rebels used their quick start to defeat the Oil Kings 5-1 in Western Hockey League playoff action and take a 2-0 lead in the best-of-seven Eastern Conference quarter-final series.

During the regular season, the Rebels were tough to beat when they scored first, posting a 37-3-3-1 record.

Nothing has changed in the playoffs, as Red Deer jumped out to a two-goal advantage for the second straight game.

On Friday night, the Oil Kings battled back to tie the game 2-2 and 3-3 before losing on a pair of late third-period goals by Ryan Nugent-Hopkins, but they were unable to muster much of a counterattack on Saturday.

Edmonton needs to score first when the series shifts to Rexall Place for Games 3 and 4 on Monday and Thursday, or the Rebels could sweep their way to the next round.

Nugent-Hopkins and linemate Andrej Kudrna picked up where they left off Friday night with a little give-and-go between them to open the scoring for the Rebels at 10:39 of the first period.

After taking a pass from Nugent-Hopkins, Kudrna stepped around Oil Kings defenceman Griffin Reinhart, carried the puck behind the net and found his linemate in front of the net for the tap-in goal.

It was his third goal and fifth point in two games.

At 17:44, Daulton Siwak scored his first goal of the series when he picked up a loose puck behind the Edmonton net and snuck it between the post and pad of unsuspecting Oil Kings goalie Jon Groenheyde to put the Rebels up 2-0.

The Oil Kings responded only 1:18 later before the opening period ended as Dylan Wruck found Jordan Hickmott in the slot and the Mission, B.C., native outwaited Rebels goalie Darcy Kuemper before putting the puck into the yawning cage to cut Red Deer's lead in half.

There was no scoring for the better part of the second period, but the Rebels had a couple of good opportunities to re-establish their two-goal lead.

The best of those chances came when Colten Mayor stole the puck from Oil Kings defenceman Keegan Lowe inside the Rebels blue-line and went in on a breakaway, but rung his shot off the left post.

Less than two minutes after Mayor's chance, the Rebels were shorthanded but went up 3-1 at 14:05 when a wide-open Adam Kambeitz took made good on a feed from Brett Ferguson.

That's when the physical play -absent for most of the game -picked up.

Three minutes after Ness's goal, Michael Dumba took an apparent head shot at Kristians Pelss at centre ice and Rhett Ruchinski took exception and instigated a fight with the Rebels' tough guy.

Just over a minute later, Reinhart took a shot at Nugent-Hopkins and a scrum ensued in the corner.

The physical play carried over into the third period when David Stephens wallpapered Red Deer's Brad Deagle into the boards behind the Rebels net.

Justin Weller and Kambeitz's second goal of the game, this time on the power play, upped Red Deer's lead to 5-1.

The game ended with a few scrums and cheap shots taken by both teams.

For the second game in a row, special teams were not so special for the Oil Kings as they were unable to generate many chances on the power play, gave up a short-handed and a power-play goal.

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