

# Rush drop home-opener

Roughnecks grab early lead, cruise to convincing win

**BY NATHAN LIEWICKI, EDMONTON JOURNAL**

Published: Saturday, January 29, 2011



Edmonton Rush transition Jim Quinlan, left, checks Calgary Roughnecks forward Dane Dobbie during National Lacrosse League action at Rexall Place on Friday. The Roughnecks downed the Rush 15-11.

**Photograph by:** Larry Wong , The Journal

A weak first-half goaltending performance by Matt Disher doomed the Edmonton Rush in their 2011 National Lacrosse League home-opener, a 15-11 loss to the rival Calgary Roughnecks at Rexall Place on Friday. The loss extended the team's losing streak to four games to begin the season, but head coach and general manager Derek Keenan wasn't waving the white flag after the game.

"Yeah it's tough. I mean, we're 0-4, but we're not going to sit around for a week and dwell about it," Keenan said. "We need the whole group willing to get dirty and bleed and do whatever you've got to do."

Keenan said that not enough of his players are making the commitment to win.

Conversely, Roughnecks head coach Dave Pym was glad his team kept their emotions in check in a heated contest.

"We controlled our emotions much better in this game (than last week)," Pym said. "We had poise. We weren't yelling at the referees. We weren't getting on each other. We played a good disciplined game and didn't get sucked into any of the crap and it results in a good two points."

Rush starting goaltender Matt Disher was pulled 5:15 into the second period after allowing eight goals on 17 shots. Five of those goals were probably shots he should have stopped.

His backup, Brandon Atherton, didn't fare much better, as he allowed two goals on the first two shots he faced.

Disher returned to the crease at the start of the second half, but by then the Roughnecks were up 11-6 and coasted to the final buzzer.

Still, Keenan didn't pin the loss solely on Disher's shoulders.

"Matt Disher stood on his head for three games and he might have been a little off tonight, but that's this league," Keenan said. "I thought Dish came back really strong in the second half, though."

Pym thought the decision-making of his players provided them with more quality shots.

"It doesn't matter how hot your goalie has been playing, I mean, you just have those kind of nights, right," Pym said.

The Rush outshot the Roughnecks 54-47 and managed to score more goals against Calgary than against their three previous opponents, but it wasn't enough.

Calgary continuously applied pressure to Edmonton on both sides of the ball. They also committed fewer turnovers and were more efficient on the power-play.

Keenan said dropped passes were a big problem for the Rush.

"These guys are pro lacrosse players ... It seemed to me that we were thinking about what we were going to do next before we (caught) the ball," Keenan said.

The Rush opened the scoring at 4:10 when Andy Secore took a nifty feed from Dane Stevens and buried a short-handed one past Roughnecks goalie Mike Poulin. It was the only lead the Rush would enjoy all night.

And it lasted a mere 18 seconds.

That's when Calgary's Dane Dobbie netted the tying goal on the power-play. Fifty-one seconds later -- on a delayed penalty -- Curtis Dickson gave the Roughnecks a 2-1 advantage.

That was one of five times the Roughnecks scored two goals in under one minute, something the Rush only managed to do once Friday night.

Among the few bright spots for the Rush were Corey Small and newcomer Scott Evans. Small scored three goals in the third period and added two assists.

Evans put forth a solid in his first game with his new team. The former Rochester Nighthawk was traded for defender Rory Glaves on Thursday and scored his first goal as a member of the Rush against Calgary and Keenan liked the effort he showed.

"He created a lot of chances for himself and for others. Balls were going in the net for him. He's a scorer," Keenan said.

With the loss, the Rush fall to 2-9 at home against their southern Alberta foes and 3-3 in home-openers.

They will get their chance to return the favour Saturday night in Calgary and look to notch their first win of the season.

Keenan is glad for the home-and-home and hopes his players will compete every shift.

"The quick turnaround is great. It's the best thing that could possibly happen," Keenan said.

"We got to get our friggin noses down to the turf and get dirty and start competing out there every friggin shift."

[nliewicki@edmontonjournal.com](mailto:nliewicki@edmontonjournal.com)