

# Stealth bomb Rush at Rexall as Edmonton falls to 2-8

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Lewis Ratcliff continues to dominate the Edmonton Rush. The Washington Stealth forward, led the way for the visitors with four goals and five assists in a 18-10 Stealth victory Saturday night at Rexall Place as the Stealth improved to 5-5 and the Rush dropped to 2-8.

In three head-to-head games this season the Victoria native has been difficult for the Rush to contain. Ratcliff tallied three goals and seven assists when the Rush beat the Stealth 14-12 for their first win of the season on Feb. 11, and he added two goals and six assists the next night in Everett, Wash., another Rush win.

Rush head coach and general manager Derek Keenan thinks Ratcliff has goalie Matt Disher's number.

"He kind of always has . and I thought we kind of kept him out to the areas we want to keep him to, but he made his shots in the first half anyway," Keenan said.

Ratcliff leaves Edmonton in the top spot in league scoring with 67 points, one ahead of Stephen Leblanc of the Toronto Rock.

Not only were the Rush unable to stop the all-star forward, they were unable to get many balls past Stealth goalie Tyler Richards. Edmonton battered Richards with 54 shots, but the Washington 'tender repeatedly turned aside the Rush.

The same can't be said for the Rush goalies. Disher started in net for the home squad, but 12:03 into the first quarter he got hooked in favour of Brandon Atherton after allowing four goals on just 10 shots.

"Let's be honest, I think he needs to be better," Keenan said of Disher. "I think the whole team needs to be better in front of him too."

Just 27 seconds after Atherton entered the game Rush captain Brodie Merrill tried to jump start his team when he dropped the gloves with Stealth defender Jeff Moleski. Merrill scored the TKO, but his team didn't respond on the scoreboard as the Stealth finished the first quarter up 4-0.

"I thought early on it was an even game. We just didn't put the ball in the net and they did," Keenan said.

Atherton didn't fair any better between the pipes. He only faced four shots, but was unable to stop three of them from crossing the goal line and was pulled for Disher.

Even after Disher's return the Rush were looking for a spark. With 4:01 left before half-time, Edmonton's Jimmy Quinlan and Washington's Tom Johnson partook in the second scrap of the night. At the half the Stealth were up 9-3.

The rough stuff continued just eight seconds into the third quarter, but it proved futile as the Rush were unable to generate any offensive push and trailed 12-6 after three quarters.

The Stealth continued to pile it on in the fourth quarter, including scoring four goals in 1:27 after the Rush had trimmed their deficit to four goals. The last of which prompted Keenan to again pull Disher.

That deficit was cut into by Rush forward Corey Small, who was by far the best Rush player on the floor Saturday. Small had four goals in the second half and now leads the Rush with 15 goals, but Keenan was left wondering who else would score.

"Tonight Corey Small had a good night," Keenan said.

"Where were the rest of the guys on offence?"

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