

UMASS-LOWELL HEAD COACH BLAISE MacDONALD QUOTES

General Comments:

“We finished the season pretty strong. We went through a six-game losing streak around Christmas. We responded well in our last 13 games; we’re 8-3-2 with a lot of those games on the road. That builds confidence in a club. Some of the keys for our success have been our special teams, our penalty killing and our power play. We’ve been streaky in scoring goals, but overall our team defense has been pretty solid. We’ve gained a lot of confidence in playing well and winning on the road in some tough environments. That is something we will need for sure this weekend in Vermont.”

On Playing Vermont:

“When you go up there, you have to take what the game gives you. Friday night we were able to turn the puck over a little more and generate some scoring opportunities. [Saturday] night Vermont only had 21 shots as well [UML had 13 shots on goal]. It was just that type of game. It was a low shooting, scoring opportunity game. If I remember correctly there was a fair amount of power plays both ways. That has a tendency to disjoint a game.

On having success in Vermont again:

“Our first mission is to try to eliminate all of the weapons Vermont has up front. You’re not going to eliminate them, but just limit the high scoring opportunities their forwards are going to get. We have to play careful, tenacious defense. I think Viktor Stalberg is arguably one of the best if not the best three players in the entire country. He needs to be watched closely.

On goaltending:

“We’re going to see how this week of practice goes. We’ll lean on our goalie coach (Ed Walsh) and see who he thinks should play. We have a tremendous amount of confidence in both of our goaltenders. I’d expect both will see action this weekend.”

Teams playing on the road:

“You always want to manage the game appropriately. You’re management skills have to be at a higher level when you’re the road team. You have to control the controllables. You have to make good changes, make sure you stay out of the penalty box as best you can. You’re not going to be able to match lines so you have to be prepared for different line match ups that you may not want. You need solid defense. It starts with your defense being able to defend and transition the puck. We feel very confident that our core of defensemen is very good at that.”

On Maury Edwards:

“Maury is a talented young man that has a real drive to excellence. He works really hard at his game. He’s made big improvements from last year to this year and throughout the season. He’s part of a group of really talented defensemen that can really play gritty, tough hockey on defense as well as dynamic transition and offense.”