

Rockies start season with loss

Cody Todd
Standard Reporter
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The Strathmore Rockies would like to forget their Western Women's Hockey League regular season home-opener Saturday night against the Calgary Oval X-Treme.

The Rockies got off to, well, a rocky start losing 10-1 in a game where clearly the Oval X-Treme were the better team.

"We played a very good team," said coach Wally Kozak. "The outcome didn't really surprise me. They will always be hard to beat for anyone in the league."

The first period was dominated by Calgary. The Rockies had trouble in their own end and played much of the period on defence. The X-Treme out-shot, out-skated and out-played their Strathmore counterparts.

The home team was in trouble early, going into the dressing room after 20 minutes down 5-0. "We had to address how we were forechecking and creating odd-man rushes," said Kozak about the discussion in the locker room.

The second period began the same as the first ended: the Rockies continued to be hemmed in their own end by the fast skating X-Treme.

"We discussed how to handle Kingsbury. You almost have to double-team her every time she touches the puck."

Gina Kingsbury scored three goals on the night for the X-Treme and added a helper.

Kozak said she has stepped up her game from last season and is the biggest threat on the Calgary roster.

"She was not only a threat but she made her teammates better."

The Rockies were able to muster only 11 shots on net in two periods. Meanwhile, Strathmore goaltender Lesley Reddon faced 38 shots.

"She wasn't at her best and she admitted that to the group," said Kozak.

The situation was compounded by Strathmore penalties. Once back to even strength, the Rockies were able to find some life in the last five minutes.

Several rushes into the offensive zone created scoring chances that were not capitalized on.

It left the home team trailing 8-0 going into the final period.

Strathmore was able to keep the momentum going into the third frame and got on the

scoreboard when Hedi Syme netted the first regular season goal for the Rockies at the 12:25 mark. Corinne Swirsky got the helper.

“We started rolling our lines and they were able to play a solid third period.”

Shots in the third were even between the teams at nine.

But the rout was already on and Calgary finished off the game with two more goals.

“We were really happy how we played in the third period,” said Kozak. “If we start the next game as we finished the third we should be doing a lot better.”

The Strathmore Rockies will face the Calgary Oval X-Treme again in Calgary Oct. 22 before returning home to host the B.C. Breakers Oct. 24 at the Strathmore Family Centre.



Strathmore Rockies goaltender Lesley Reddon stretches out to make a stop on a Calgary Oval X-Treme player during the second period of Saturdays' season opener at the Strathmore Family Centre.

Cody Todd Photo