



Alabama, Arkansas advance to final of club hockey tournament



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HUNTSVILLE, Alabama - Defending champion Alabama will face Arkansas on Sunday at 2:30 p.m. at the Iceplex for the championship of the South Eastern Collegiate Hockey Conference.

The club teams advanced to the final of the annual eight-team tournament. In tonight's semifinals, Arkansas beat Florida 7-1 and Alabama defeated South Carolina 3-2. Florida will play South Carolina in the third-place game Sunday at 11:30 a.m.

"Going to the net," Arkansas coach Brian Gallini said of the key to the Razorbacks' win. "We talked about it a lot before the game. We knew there was a lot of talent (for the) goaltenders for Florida. And we just wanted to get to the net as much as possible and make things as difficult as possible on them."

Mason Brower scored two goals for Arkansas (26-9-1). Garth Derry, Taylor Jones, Martin Sundstedt, Jansen Polk and Johnny Stromp had a goal apiece. Goalie Kevin Scheer made 19 saves.

Danny Hill scored the goal for Florida (17-6-1). Jake Lewis made five saves and Zac Asa had 39 for the Gators.

Alabama (20-11 plus one overtime win) got goals from Alex Dubrinsky, Andre Morard and Zach Dailey. Goalie Sean Vinson made 24 saves.

"It was a great game, great effort," Frozen Tide coach Mike Quenneville said. "Had a big goal from some freshmen out there (Morard with an assist from Bryan Puffer), great playmakers. Zach Dailey, a senior, had a big goal. It was huge. That was the game winner."

With the score tied 1-all, Alabama took the lead at 17:52 in the second period on the goal by Morard, a Huntsville High product. Puffer made a pass from behind the net to Morard on the left side of the crease.

Dailey, also from Huntsville, put the Frozen Tide up 3-1 at 18:55 in the period with his shot from the slot on the power play.

South Carolina (19-6) got goals from Derek Maggs and Michael Jonas. Goalie Dale Turner made 26 saves.

In the fifth-place game, Ole Miss blanked Georgia 11-0. Leo Cuzin had two goals and three assists for the Rebels

(16-10-1). Lane Aldredge added two goals and one assist. Goalie Justin Ragland made 19 saves for the shutout.

"Guys played well," Ole Miss coach Kristian Skou said. "They played the Ole Miss game which is the biggest difference today as opposed to yesterday. They played together, they worked well as a team and the scoreboard showed as a result of it."

Like Alabama, Ole Miss has qualified for the American College Hockey Association Division III national championship March 12-16 in Springfield, Mo. The Rebels will play club teams from Colorado State, Farmingdale (Long Island) and Adrian Gold (Mich.). "It's the sweet 16 for hockey," Skou said.

Ice Dogs goalie Vince DiCarlo made 32 saves for Georgia (11-16). Georgia's Shelby Saponari, a freshman who plays defense, was the lone female player in the tournament.

In the seventh-place game, Vanderbilt edged Auburn 4-3 in overtime. Anthony Bilotta scored the game winner 26 seconds into OT with an assist from Brad Pesce. Commodores goalie Andrew Keen made 20 saves.

"Honestly I'm really proud of our boys," said Pesce, who scored two goals. "We faced a lot of adversity this season. I'm really proud of the way we were able to come from behind in this game. It definitely feels good. It's going to be a good bus ride home."

Vanderbilt (10-13) trailed 2-0 at the end of the first period. With 28 seconds left in the period, Vanderbilt's Chad Wyatt was knocked unconscious in a collision with Auburn's Scott Thomasson. He was taken to Huntsville Hospital by ambulance for precautionary reasons but will be fine. "I'm glad he's OK," Thomasson said.

Michael Hite brought Vanderbilt to within 3-2 at 7:23 in the third period. Pesce tied the score 3-all at 18:24 with a power-play goal.

"I just thought their goalie played great," Commodores coach Thomas Bernstein said. "We finally got a lot of shots on net. That's really been a problem for us all year. It really took everything we had to beat them."

Auburn (7-16-1) goalie Miles Bishop made 47 saves. Evan Barber, Armin Gierow and Trevor Hightower scored a goal apiece for the Tigers.

Last week Alabama qualified for the ACHA Division III national championship by beating Arkansas and South Carolina in Irmo, S.C. The Frozen Tide will face club teams from Iowa State, California-Penn and Michigan-Flint.