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MEDIA ALERT

Toronto Six Struggle On Special Teams, Fall To Connecticut Whale 5-3 In Semifinal Opener

Penalties prove costly for Toronto as Six fall 5-3 to Whale in opening game of semifinals

On March 17, at Mattamy Athletic Centre, the [Toronto Six](#) (women's pro hockey team) fell to the Connecticut Whale by a final score of 5-3 in the opening game of the PHF Isobel Cup Semifinals.

"We didn't show up in the first two periods, but I thought we dominated in the third," said Geraldine Heaney, Head Coach of the Toronto Six. "When you look at their goals, they scored two on the power play, one shorthanded and an empty netter. They only scored one at five-on-five, and I thought when we're playing five-on-five, we're the better and stronger team. In the third period, there were times that they couldn't even keep up with us, and we just didn't get quite the lucky bounces that we needed, but you can't expect to win a hockey game playing one period."

Looking to make a quick impact in the opening game of the Isobel Cup Semifinals, Connecticut's Justine Reyes broke the ice on the power play five minutes into the opening period, tallying her first goal of the playoffs to put the visiting Whale up early.

Continuing to press the buttons of the second-place Six in the ensuing minutes of the frame, defender Allie Munroe connected with Melissa Samoskevich right off the face-off draw, who beat Elaine Chuli top shelf from the top of the right circle to double Connecticut's lead with her first tally of the playoffs.

Fighting from two goals back on their home soil at Mattamy Athletic Centre, forward Breanne Wilson-Bennett connected with forward Emma Woods on the doorstep following a two-on-one sequence, who buried the puck past Ives courtesy of a deflection, tallying her first goal of the playoffs to bring her team back within one of the visiting Whale.

"I think we've just been pushing on driving the net, nothing bad happens when you go to the net and put pucks in the net, and that's exactly what happened," explained Woods after the game. "We turned the puck over in the neutral zone, and my linemates made a good play, and I just drove the net hard and Bre [Breanne Wilson-Bennett] threw it on net hard and I got lucky there. That's the kind of stuff that happens in the playoffs. It's not always going to be pretty."

Representing three of the game's eight goals through the first 20 minutes, the Whale continued to build on that momentum in the middle frame, as forward Lenka Serdar tapped in a pass from Caitrin Lonergan over the blocker of Chuli on the power play, potting her first goal of the playoffs to double the Whale's lead for a second time in the contest.

Now just twenty minutes away from a statement first win to open the best-of-three series, the Whale didn't waste any time getting settled in for the third, as forward Taylor Girard tapped in a cross-ice feed from leading goalscorer Kennedy Marchment with a shorthanded effort, tallying her first goal of the playoffs to further extend her team's margin by three.

Itching to get back into the contest and stave off a series-opening defeat, forward Michela Cava put in one of her own thanks to a well-timed helper from Brittany Howard, netting her first goal of the playoffs to pull the Six back within two.

"The first one, it was just a good shot and then a rebound off the back wall, and I saw the goalie [Abbie Ives] was out of position a little bit, so I just tried to put it to the net, and luckily, it hit off the back of her leg and in," Cava explained after the game.

Still a ways out of reach from catching the visiting Whale, Toronto responded again in the ensuing five minutes, as captain Shiann Darkangelo connected with Cava from behind the Whale net, who slapped home a bullet from below the goal line on Ives to record her second of the playoffs and bring the hometown Six all the way back to within a single tally.

"My second goal, I honestly just tried to get it to the net as fast as possible and got Abbie Ives up-top," Cava recalled of her second marker after the game.

Refusing to give an inch to the relentless Six as the contest neared a conclusion, Taylor Girard delivered a final blow to Toronto by virtue of burying an empty net goal for her second tally of the playoffs, which capped off a big afternoon and propelled the Connecticut Whale en route to an all-important 5-3 semifinal victory.

"I think we did just come out a little flat," commented Emma Woods after the game. "We did have a lot of good moments, but penalties killed us a bit in the first with momentum. At the end of the day, we have to battle a little more. This is playoff hockey, we have to expect Connecticut's best. We should have expected it today, and we're going to expect it tomorrow. We just have to battle and compete and play our game."

"We just have to come out with that fire that we did in the third and part of the second," explained Shiann Darkangelo after the game. "We were flat in the first I think and it caught up to us. I thought there were spurts of the game that were really good that we can build off of for tomorrow. It's a quick bounce-back, so we just have to stay positive and come ready tomorrow."

Making her first start of the Isobel Cup playoffs in the series opener, Elaine Chuli made 28 saves between the pipes in the losing effort.

The Toronto Six, now with their season in limbo, head into a critical second game of the Isobel Cup Semifinals set to take place on Sunday afternoon at Toronto's Mattamy Athletic Centre. The second game will be available for viewing on ESPN+ in the United States, and on TSN Direct for viewers tuning in across Canada.

For standings or more information visit: <https://toronto.premierhockeyfederation.com/>

About The Toronto Six

The Toronto Six (The 6ix) is a professional women's hockey team. As girls and Women's Hockey registration in Canada continues to grow, The 6ix are on a mission to drive change for women (players, fans, and sponsors) by offering an elevated experience on the ice, in the locker room, and throughout our communities. The 6ix aims to be the gold standard in women's hockey, and to create the model for a sustainable sports organization that also serves as a platform for gender equity in sports and beyond. The 6ix aim to do this by EDUCATING about a new way to look at, consume and support women's professional sports, EMPOWERING women to take risks, skate outside the lines, and build meaningful confidence in sports and beyond, and INCLUDING people of diverse backgrounds and opinions.