

Firebirds Roll Over Sting, 6-2

FLINT – Sam McCue buried three goals for a hat trick in his return from injury as the Flint Firebirds steamrolled the Sarnia Sting, 6-2, at the Dort Financial Center on Saturday night.

HOW IT HAPPENED:

The Firebirds immediately took control of the contest and jumped out to a 1-0 lead five minutes in. McCue put pressure on a Sarnia defenseman in the Sting zone and forced a turnover. McCue took advantage and stuffed the puck home, giving Flint a 1-0 lead.

The Firebirds started the second period with a power play opportunity and wasted no time, scoring 30 seconds into the frame. Matthew Mania drifted on the blue line, waiting for a lane to shoot. When he saw his chance, he snapped the puck towards the goal, and Alex Kostov tipped it past Nick Surzycia for the first of four goals in the period.

Flint would get another opportunity on the man-advantage three minutes later and capitalized again. Urban Podrekar gave Blake Smith a pass across the blue line, who blasted it on goal. Surzycia made the initial save, but the rebound popped out to the middle of the slot, and Karlis Flugins wristed it low-blocker for a second Firebirds power play goal.

McCue added another for Flint in the second period to put the Firebirds ahead 4-0. Sarnia attempted to break out of its zone, but McCue jumped in the passing lane to intercept a pass, walked in on Surzycia, and fired the puck under the blocker for his second goal of the game. McCue wasn't done yet, as he completed his hat trick with nine minutes remaining in the second. Chris Thibodeau put a shot on the net during a scramble in front of the goal, and McCue swept home the rebound for the Firebirds' final goal of the second period as they led 5-0 through two.

Flint added one more goal at the beginning of the third period. Chris Thibodeau collected an entry pass from Jimmy Lombardi, then carried the puck on his backhand towards the net. He held off the defender, quickly shifted the puck to his forehand, and shoveled it home to give Flint a 6-0 lead.

The Sting showed some fight at the end as they scraped two goals together in the final frame. Daylen Moses eliminated Nathan Day's shutout to make it 6-1 and Liam Beamish had the final tally, but Flint closed out the 6-2 victory.

With the win, the Firebirds improved to 28-29-2-3 on the year, while Sarnia slid to 21-28-5-7.

POSTGAME NOTES:

Sam McCue's hat trick was his second of the season and of his OHL career. He previously had a hat trick in a 5-1 Flint win over the Windsor Spitfires on January 30...Jimmy Lombardi set a new career-high with three assists...Chris Thibodeau had a goal and an assist for his third-consecutive multi-point game...the Firebirds went 3-for-3 on the penalty kill and now have killed off 21 consecutive penalties.

UP NEXT:

The Firebirds return to the ice on Wednesday night in Owen Sound for a matchup against the Attack. Puck drop from the Harry Lumley Bayshore Community Centre is set for 7 p.m.

Link to article:

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