

Nottingham Panthers Rip Hull Apart

Written by Administrator
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The fairytale upsets that no-one really expected never materialised as Hull Stingrays were brutally despatched by Nottingham Panthers setting up a final with Cardiff Devils who squeezed past Belfast on penalty shots in the earlier game.

The 10-3 defeat left Hull's player coach Sylvain Cloutier struggling to hold back the emotion in the post game press conference and Man of the Match Jason Silverthorn had to step in to field questions from the assembled media.

He composed himself to later say that he wasn't sure if there would be a team in Hull next season as the management are looking to sell the club and it certainly seemed that many of the players were saying their goodbyes to the travelling fans at the end of the game.

What is certain though is that Nottingham will not face anywhere near as easy a game in the final on Sunday.

Player Coach Corey Neilson dismissed the first question in the press conference, about why he hadn't won the league title, in his traditionally dry and offhand approach. The attitude that wins him as many friends as it does detractors. He even openly admitted that it was perhaps his own comments that stoke up opposing teams into playing better against Nottingham.

Corey and hat trick hero David Clarke appeared very relaxed, having been able to ease off in the third period and conserve energy. Answering the key to tonight's victory Neilson explained it was due to "untimely goaltending on [Hull's] part, I don't think Boucher was very strong, he let a lot of shots in early and that's tough to deal with when you're already short.

"The first period was tough and then they ran out of gas."

We asked how do you go from that game to the game tomorrow that will be most likely a little bit closer?

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Corey replied with his customary dry wit. "Most likely. No, it will be a lot closer. For sure. Cardiff's a fantastic team, another trapping team like Belfast they like to slow you down in the neutral zone and keep it very tight in front of goal and hope you make mistakes and try and beat you on the counter. So like they did to Belfast today it was pretty evident that Belfast got a little aggressive so we've got to be wary of that."

And when asked whether the history of the finals with Nottingham only ever winning against the Devils plays on his mind he responded: "We've only won this twice? That's it? I'm just so used to winning..."

"No, it doesn't. We've had a great team, great season. It's been a team that's really played well each and every night they've worked hard. It hasn't been this great sexy team we've had in the past. I don't think we're quite as top end explosive as we normally are and we're obviously much better defensively and the goaltending's strong and we've tried to change a lot of things in our game over the past few years, especially as each year I keep learning so this team's really been a workmanlike team."

The Panthers were able to conserve some energy for tomorrow with David Clarke admitting that they sat back for about 15 minutes in the third period as they didn't want to 'embarrass' Hull before explaining the game plan was to get the second wave to the net to pick up the rebounds from Boucher. Corey credited the win in part to the luck of the bounce with several of the goals being rather fortunate

On the spread of goal scoring throughout the side Clarke went on: "I think we've got depth. We're not top heavy as much as we have been over the years. There's not one line we lean on to get us goals every line kind of contributes night in night out.

"Marc Levers came off the bench and scored a big goal for us when we were at one nothing and that was his first shift of the night and I think on his first shift he was involved with two goals he had one goal and one assist."

Sunday will definitely be a bigger test for Nottingham and the hope is they can raise the game

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once more to send the Panther fans home happy with another 2 trophy season. Who's taking bets on whether Corey will be here next season to settle that 'unfinished business' of the league title?