

# Urdahl's Hat Trick Leads Omaha Past North Dakota Mavericks Will Play For First NCHC Title Saturday

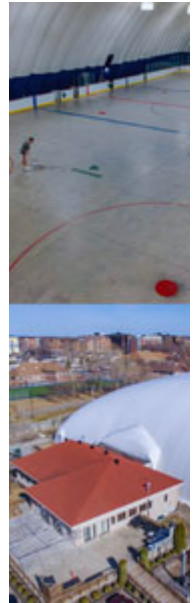
by *Heather Rule*/Special to CHN

ST. PAUL — Omaha junior Zach Urdahl came into the NCHC Frozen Faceoff with 20 career goals, including 10 combined over his last two seasons at Wisconsin before he transferred to Omaha ahead of this season.

He picked a good time for his first multi-goal game – and a hat trick, at that – in his collegiate career. Urdahl tied the game at 1-1 in the first period before scoring again in the third period for two-goal and three-goal leads helping his No. 5 seed Omaha team to a 6-3 victory over No. 1 seed North Dakota in Friday’s first NCHC Frozen Faceoff semifinal at Xcel Energy Center.

Urdahl scored his 11th, 12th and 13th goals of the season in the game.

“It obviously feels pretty great,” Urdahl said. “I think the puck was just kind of finding me. Kind of staying around the net. And the guys got me the puck, and I was able to put it in.”



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Urdahl, who added an assist for a four-point game, seemed just as pleased with the team's victory in its first appearance in the NCHC Frozen Faceoff semifinals.

"It's pretty awesome," Urdahl said.

He was part of the team's second line that was responsible for four of the team's six goals in the game. Miller assisted on Urdahl's second goal of the game and gave Omaha a 2-1 lead, for good, early in the second period. Urdahl's seventh goal of the season. Center Nolan Sullivan had two assists in the game, giving that line

"I think just the belief in one another," Miller said, of the key to success.

That belief has kept this train going through a 12-2-2 stretch that has assured Omaha of an NCAA Frozen Four berth in Sioux Falls next week. But first the job at hand tomorrow will be winning the program's national tournament championship.

Omaha tied the game with 1:30 left in the first period on Urdahl's first goal when he was left alone on a power play. The goal came near the end of the man advantage for the Mavericks, which came on a 100 percent power-play percentage that ranked first in the conference and ninth in the NCAA.

Omaha scored a pair of goals in the second period, first from Miller off an offensive zone draw 10 minutes into the middle period. The Mavericks pushed their lead to 3-1 with under three minutes left. Jimmy Glynn's blast from the blue line made it through traffic and into the net.

It seemed that Omaha was going to take that two-goal lead into the locker room at the second period. But the Mavericks had a pair of power plays it couldn't capitalize on in the second period, with the first opportunity to get much set up in the offensive zone.

But the Fighting Hawks' Hunter Johannes scored on a sharp-angle shot with 24.3 ticks remaining in the second period, cutting into the deficit and making it a 3-2 Omaha lead headed to the third period.

Omaha made sure to squash any momentum North Dakota got throughout the game, however. Bremer regained the two-goal lead for Omaha only 1:18 into the third period.

"That's tough," said North Dakota coach Brad Berry. "You didn't give us an opportunity to get into a situation like that, you're chasing again, and you're getting away from your game plan and pinning

risk plays to try to keep plays alive in the offensive zone.”

It only took 1:08 of game time later in the period for Urdahl to score his second goal for a 5-3 empty-netter on a puck he fired from center ice with under five minutes to play, about six seconds pulled goaltender Hobie Hedquist.

“They (North Dakota) got some crazy firepower, so us being able to respond like that was real Mike Gabinet.

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Not only did Omaha have North Dakota’s number Friday night but the whole season as well. ( against North Dakota, including a home sweep of the Fighting Hawks earlier this month (3-2, finale; it marked the first time in Omaha’s history that it swept North Dakota.

The Mavericks defeated the Fighting Hawks 5-4 in overtime and lost 3-1 during a series at No. Urdahl, Miller and Sullivan scored three of the team’s four goals in the 4-1 victory on March 9

“I think a big thing with our group is we don’t back down from anyone,” Urdahl said. “It doesn’t on, what you’re ranked. We have belief in the locker room that we’re going to win every night. it’s tough to beat us.”

The Mavericks won the game while playing from behind most of the first period and it took New winger Jackson Blake only 78 seconds into Friday’s game to record his 100th career point in assisting on a Jackson Kunz goal for the 1-0 North Dakota lead.

Friday was the 60th all-time meeting between the two teams, and the team that scored first had games in the series. Omaha bucked that trend Friday. Gabinet liked his team’s play for most of good forecheck.

“Obviously, they got one right off the bat there, which is never fun to do,” Gabinet said. “I think how you respond to situations that you’re dealt. We got dealt a tough start to the game there, but after that, we’re really good at re-establishing the way we want to play and getting ourselves back

“That’s all you can do when those things happen is respond appropriately, and that’s exactly what

Blake, named this season's NCHC Player of the Year and NCHC Forward of the Year, along with the Hobey Baker Award, just keeps making history in his sophomore season with North Dakota. Parise in 2003-04 made it to 100 career points in their sophomore campaigns.

His assist Friday extended his current point streak to 10 games. He also added another assist to his point total.

Blake was denied a breakaway chance in the first two minutes of the second period as he tried to beat Omaha goaltender Simon Latkoczy, but the netminder stuck his left toe out of the save. After his team didn't do a good job of puck management and finishing off the last 10 seconds of the game, the Fighting Hawks tied the goal for Omaha.

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"That can't happen," Perry said. "We need the full kill in order for us to get going again. Those are the goals that turn into big things."

North Dakota is 1-4 at Xcel Energy Center since the Frozen Faceoff returned to the X in 2017. The Fighting Hawks now look ahead to the 2018 in the third-place game over Minnesota Duluth.

"We need to make sure that everybody's going, and next weekend, we're going to make sure th