

Lata's Two Goals Propel Andover to the Semi-Finals

Assistant Captain Michael Lata '14 walked off the wall in Taft's zone and snapped a hard, low shot into the bottom right corner of the opposing net to complete Andover Boys Hockey's comeback from a 0-2 deficit this past Wednesday.

As the second seed in the Martin/Earl Large School Prep Hockey Playoff Tournament, Andover faced seventh seed Taft in the tournament quarterfinals. With the home ice advantage, the team found the energy to claim three consecutive goals for a 3-2 victory.

Taft scored first with 10 minutes left in the first period and followed up almost immediately with a power play goal to take a 0-2 lead.

"We started slow. We needed to come out faster than we did, and we could not take the lead early," said Payton Jancsy '16.

Andover showed a glimmer of life late in the second period, with Lata picking the puck on the boards and firing it past the Taft goalie's shoulder to bring Andover within a goal of Taft.

"We started to turn things around about halfway through the game," said Head Coach Dean Boylan. "I thought we had another gear in us, and the boys believed they did too. Once we achieved that, the game started to turn around."

In the third period, defenseman Nick Gorski '14 finally scored off of his own rebound in front of the net to tie the game.

"We had a lot of experience being down, it was something we had done before. Especially against a talented team like this, we just had to keep digging. We knew we had it in ourselves," said Gorski.

Taft surged back and kept the puck in Andover's defensive zone.

The teams traded shots and penalties until about two minutes were left in the game. Lata took the puck and fired a shot from the point, beating the goalie to seal Andover's victory.

Although Taft was the seventh seed, Andover barely escaped an upset.

Gorski said, "It seems like in the beginning of games we like to try to be a little fancy, and once we realize that is not working, we start to grind, and that's when things start working."

Andover will face Loomis for the second time this season on Saturday and looks to avenge its previous 2-2 tie.

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