

COLLEGE

Crusaders fall to SFU, clip UFV

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The expansion Okanagan Crusaders are holding their own in the B.C. Intercollegiate Hockey League.

Despite a 3-6-1 record to start their inaugural campaign, the Crusaders have been competitive in every contest and have twice given league-leading Simon Fraser (8-1-0) a run for their money.

After falling 5-1 to SFU on Oct. 9, a game that was tied 1-1 late in the second period, the Crusaders were again up to the challenge on Halloween.

A back-and-forth affair, OC dropped a 4-3 decision to SFU in Burnaby on Saturday evening, a game decided by special teams.

Host Simon Fraser scored a power play goal just 11 seconds into the third period that stood up as the winner. However, it was a short-handed marker by SFU in the second period that turned the tide. That goal gave SFU a 2-1 lead, and they added another two minutes later before OC's Aaron Hocking scored to cut the deficit to 3-2 after 40 minutes.



After SFU regained its two-goal advantage on a man advantage of their own, Matt Elia brought Okanagan College back within one at 5:38 of the final frame, but the Crusaders couldn't complete the comeback.

J.F. Verhaegan also scored for OC, while Adam Butler made 24 saves in a losing cause.

OC outshot SFU 30-28.

The Crusaders rebounded to beat University of the Fraser Valley 4-3 on Sunday afternoon in Abbotsford, with Butler stopping 26 shots for the victory. It was OC's second victory in three outings against second-place UFV (4-2-0), previously splitting a two-game set in Kelowna.

On Sunday, OC came out strong and built up a 4-0 lead through two periods, then managed to hold on despite surrendering three third-period goals.

Craig Materi, with two, Hocking and Dekker Mende scored for OC, while Kelly Loudoun counted two assists.

Hocking leads the Crusaders and is tied for seventh in league scoring with 11 points in 10 games, while Materi is tied for the league lead with nine goals.

Okanagan College, tied for fourth among seven teams in BCJHL standings, now has two weeks off before hosting the last-place Selkirk College Saints on Nov. 20 and 21.