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PAC-8 HOCKEY CHAMPIONSHIPS



NICK MEDLEY/Emerald

Stanford's Tom Terbell sprawls in an attempt to stop USC's Paul Zimny from centering the puck.

USC claims Pac-8 championship

The Trojans will try to make their season a perfect 10 at the ACHA National Tournament

By Tim Pyle
Freelance Sports Reporter

Just one goal remains unattained from the list of ten the Southern California Club Sports hockey team made before the season began and gave to head coach Mark Wilbur on the back of a postcard.

That goal — to win a game at the American College Hockey Association National Tournament — can be realized in a couple of weeks.

For now, the Trojans are relishing the accomplishment of goal No. 9, which was secured when they beat two-time defending champion Stanford 4-1 in the championship game of the Pacific-8 Hockey Conference Tournament on Sunday at Lane County Ice Arena.

"It feels really good, especially for us seniors because it's our last year," USC captain Ken Clarke said. "Winston Churchill said, 'It may take time but we will win the war.' So, we finally did it, so it feels great."

The Trojans will have the

chance to make a perfect ten of their season at the national tournament at Rutgers in Piscataway, N. J., March 5-9.

"They've completed nine out of nine goals," USC head coach Mark Wilbur said. "I would say we're going to go to nationals, we're going to knock the tar out of two of them. And that third one, Life College, which is the No. 1 team coming into Division II, is in our bracket. We've got our hands full with them and we'll give it the best we can. You can bet we'll leave the Trojan blood on the ice trying."

The championship was not won without adversity for the Trojans, who fell behind 2-0 to Oregon in the first two minutes, 31 seconds of their first-round game. Senior forward Kevin Hoffman scored two goals to help USC to its come-from-behind, 3-2 victory over the Ducks.

Goalkeeper Wylie Diercks was named tournament most valuable player. After giving up those two Oregon scores, Diercks did not allow anything to get past him for the next 107 minutes of play. The Cardinal scored its lone goal of the championship game with 12:27 remaining in the game.

"Wylie came up huge a few times," Wilbur said, "which you hope to God your goaltender is

there in a big game like this. And Wylie, he has delivered for four straight years. He is the best goaltender in the Western United States, bar-none."

Freshman Robbie Harrison put the Trojans on top for good when he scored just over six minutes into the game on a pass from Clarke. USC outshot Stanford 10-6 in the first period and led 1-0 at its conclusion.

In the second period, Brendon Reimer found Hoffman alone in front of the Cardinal net for the Trojans' second goal. USC also scored on a power play with slightly more than six minutes left in the period when Clarke beat Cardinal goalkeeper Nick Flores with a slap shot from just inside the Stanford blue line.

Cardinal defenseman Filip Ronning scored his team's only goal on an assist from forward Tom Terbell one second after a power play ended midway through the third period. Brian Hoffman put the finishing touches on USC's win when he scored after stealing the puck in Stanford's zone.

"We played kind of flat and SC's goaltender played very strong," Stanford head coach Rick Fahey said. "The fourth goal took us out of it. We were still in it up to that point, but that fourth goal took us out of it."

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